

The 'literary' disenchantments of popular memory and the enchantment of dominant memory: A 'scientific accident' or an attempt to blur remembrance?

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the power relations in historical and cultural processes that influences what counts as 'literary', in levelling down historical memory, tradition and the act of remembrance in general. It emphasizes the meaning of historical memory and its enchantment for living.

The traditional idea of 'literary' as concerning the writing, study, or content of literature, especially of the kind valued for quality of form, is extended to include digital, visual data that is included as evidence in narrative enquiries into educational influences in learning.

The focus of the analysis is on the 'literary' disenchantments of popular memory through its replacement in academic discourses on educational theory, with the enchantment of dominant memory in the conceptual frameworks and methods of validity of traditional disciplinary knowledge. A Living Theory research approach is outlined as a scientific response to counteract the blurring of remembrance. This research approach is focused on the individual explanations of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. A distinguishing quality of what counts as educational learning is the use, as explanatory principles, of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

Power relations in historical and cultural processes

This paper analyzes the power relations in historical and cultural processes that influence what counts as 'literary', in levelling down historical memory, tradition and the act of remembrance in general. It emphasizes the meaning of historical memory and its enchantment for living.

Historical and cultural influences can be understood in relation to what counts as knowledge in the Academy (the global collection of Universities). Historically, Western Academies in particular have been influenced by Aristotle's logic, from almost 2,500 years ago. The name traces back to Plato's school of philosophy, founded approximately 385 BC at **Akademia**, a sanctuary of Athena, the goddess of wisdom and skill, north of Athens, Greece. Aristotle attended the Academy, before founding the Lyceum.

Whilst Plato emphasized the importance of the art of the dialectician with its capacity to hold both the One and the Many together, Aristotle's Law of Contradiction stated that two mutually exclusive statements cannot both be true simultaneously. The historical battle between formal logicians and dialecticians, in which each denies the rationality of the others logic can be seen in the work of Marcuse (1964, p. 105) and Popper (1963, p, 316. The dominance of Aristotelian logic, with its elimination of contradictions between statements, structures the majority of contributions in refereed journals around the world. The power of it's cultural influence can be seen in power relations of examiners' academic judgments as to what counts as an original contribution to knowledge. For centuries these judgments have focused solely on printed texts that conformed to Aristotelian logic. With the rapid spread of communications through the Internet and the use of digital visual media, the form of presentation of research degrees can now change. Such changes will need to be supported by a change in the regulations that govern the submission of research degrees. For example, in 2003 I was a member of a Senate working party of the University of Bath to review the regulations governing the submission of research degrees. The working party made a recommendation to Senate that the regulations should be changed to permit the submission of e-media. The recommendation was accepted. You can see that this change opened up the possibility of original contributions to knowledge transcending the battle between formal and dialecticians with original contributions to knowledge that included within their living logics (Whitehead 2013) the rationalities of both formal and dialectical logicians. You can access these original contributions to knowledge at:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/living/living.shtml> .

These contributions are now extending their influences from within the power relations of the cultural processes that legitimate and communicate around the world, what counts as knowledge. The are also extending the meanings of 'literary' to include digital visual data and narratives.

Such multi-media narratives, grounded in a practitioner-researchers own practice, can include 'I' as a living contradiction in answering questions of the

kind, 'How do I improve what I am doing?'. They can help to communicate the meanings of the embodied expressions of values that form explanation principles in explanations of influence. I am thinking of the values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity and that can be clarified in the course of their emergence in practice.

Clear evidence exists of the literary disenchantments of popular memory and the enchantment of dominant memory.

The enchantment of dominant memory and the disenchantments of popular memory are carried through historical and cultural power relations, into the minds of some individuals. How this has been, and is being done, can be appreciated through the elimination of the popular memory of individuals about their own lives and the practical principles that they use to explain their actions. This elimination can be seen in the explicit replacement of the popular memory by Academics who supported and support the disciplines approach to educational theory. These academics believed that much understanding of educational theory will be developed:

"... in the context of immediate practical experience and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular, many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalizations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices.

In many characterizations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake. Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate."
(Hirst, 1983, p. 18)

This replacement can carry the historical and cultural pressures to replace the popular memory by the dominant memory. I suggest below how extending 'literary' to include digital visual data and narratives and Living Theory research can contribute to resisting and transcending these pressures.

Whether these pressures are a 'scientific accident' or an attempt to blur remembrance is difficult to say. Historically, it is clear and beyond reasonable doubt that dominant interest groups in the Church, State, Banks and Academy have used their cultural power to sustain the dominance of their own ideologically based and non-scientific narratives and claims to truth which serve to blur remembrance of popular memory and its significance. The cultural power of the Academy to blur the remembrances can be resisted and transcended by extending 'literary' to include digital visual data and narratives

and through changes in university regulations governing the submission of the knowledge-claims in research degrees.

Extending 'literary' to include digital visual data and narratives

The traditional idea of 'literary' concerns the writing, study, or content of literature, especially of the kind valued for quality of form. When the literature, as it does in academic work, includes theories that can explain the actions and influences of individual, the logic of the explanation determines whether it can be recognised as rational. For centuries this logic of explanations has conformed to Aristotelean logic with its elimination of contradictions between statements.

Changes in University regulations governing the submission of research degrees to include e-media, can extend the meanings of 'literary' to include digital, visual data that can be both included as evidence in explanations within narrative enquiries into educational influences in learning and help to communicate meanings of the living logics that define the rationality of the explanations.

Countering the blurring of remembrance with Living Theory research.

The focus of the analysis is on the 'literary' disenchantments of popular memory through its replacement in academic discourses on educational theory, with the enchantment of dominant memory in the conceptual frameworks and methods of validity of traditional disciplinary knowledge. A Living Theory research approach, as a scientific response to the enchantment of dominant culture, can counteract the blurring of remembrance.

Living Theory research is focused on explanations of individuals of their educational influences in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formations within which the practice is located. A distinguishing quality of what counts as educational learning is the use, as explanatory principles, of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity. There is an important distinction between Living Theory research and a living-theory. The ideas of Living Theory research are expressed as the abstract principles of concepts that provide the boundaries for distinguishing this research from other forms of research. A living-theory can be understood as being an example of Living Theory research whilst at the same time moves beyond the boundaries in being an original contribution to educational knowledge that cannot be subsumed or reduced to any conceptual framework.

Bearing in mind the theme of the conference on *The role of Critical Memory in a process of Personal, National and European Awareness* and Kosmidou-Hardy's (2015) video presentation on *Communication and Memory: 'Remembering the future'*? I want to say a few words about the past, present and future in relation to the Inca idea of Naupaj + mampuni from Quechua. This is the language of the Inca's now spoken in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia and Argentina.

Fernando Galindo, a Professor in Boliva explained this idea to me:

On 23 May 2011, at 14:09, J. Fernando Galindo wrote:

Hi Jack

Ñaupaj means past and when we add mampuni to the other word means towards the future taking the past with us, or creating the future based in the past.

I hope this helps, Fernando

We could introduce this idea of explaining our influences in creating the future in a way that takes the past with us as part of the role of critical memory in a process of personal, national and European awareness.

I think we could do this as we work and research to ensure that we become enchanted with validated popular memories whilst at the same time valuing useful insights from the dominant memory within this enchantment. I'd like to go further than the boundaries of European awareness in suggesting that we could also work to embrace the value of living-global citizenship (Coombs, Potts & Whitehead, 2014) in the enquiries of practitioner-researchers around the world. Each living-theory explains a present practice in terms of an evaluation of past learning and an intention to create a future, that is not yet realized, but which enhances the flow of values that carry hope for the flourishing of humanity.

For example, there was a Town Hall Meeting of the Action Research Network of the Americas on the 8th May 2015 in Toronto, which included the 'virtual presences' of many practitioner-researchers from around the world with their living posters below. You can access these by dragging and dropping the file onto your desktop, opening it, and accessing the live urls to the posters. Or, you can click on:

<http://www.actionresearch.net/writings/aran/arnaposters270415.pdf>



What I am suggesting is that the networks of practitioner-researchers along the top of the poster, together with the individual accounts in the main body of the poster, are creating literary enchantments of popular memory without becoming disenchanted with useful insights from the dominant memory.

Through creating and sharing our living-theories I am suggesting that we engage in joint action. I am thinking of joint action to bring popular memory into a necessary relationship with a scientific approach to improving practice through living as fully as possible the values and understandings that carry hope for the future of humanity. In engaging in joint actions, in which we learn with and from one another, and through sharing our living-theories, we can resist attempts to blur remembrance in showing how we are explaining our educational influences in living as fully as possible these values of humanity.

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