

## Social Memory Within the Frameworks of Historism

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**Abstract:** Article is devoted to the conceptual dominant analysis of social memory as a specific phenomenon of the modern society. Methodological bases of this process are philosophical-hermeneutic project discourse of social memory. The urgency of the problem is determined by prevailing in modern society contradiction between global processes of social memory and regional trends focused on historical and cultural features of the local communities.

**Key words:** Social memory • Historical memory • Social existence

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### INTRODUCTION

Analysis of deep roots of a human in the world of memory, which tradition dates back to Ancient times, is a keynote of philosophy and history studies. "The Case with Memory" is one of the philosophical short novels of renowned freethinker Voltaire. Hare-brained and ungrateful humankind offended memory again. Children of Mnemosyne protected their mother and deprive people of their memory to take revenge. Having lost the gift of memory people failed to do simple things. They didn't recognize each other and they were unable to earn their living. The chaos came to the Earth, but Mnemosyne took pity on silly people and turned the gift of memory back. She said „There are no brains without memory“ [1]. But it is about one question what kind of memory is meant. Is it social or historical memory? The Terms „collective Memory“ and „social memory“ have been appearing in literature of sociology since the beginning of the discipline's institutionalization in the late nineteenth century and have stimulated a wide range of conceptual analyses since the midtwentieth century“ [2, P.7].

#### **Social Memory and Historical Memory: Scientific**

**Position:** The answer to the question posed implies revealing of two problems. They are similarity and difference of social and historical memory and the correlation that is relevant in terms of social and historical memory „age“ [3. S. 63-64].

First and foremost, historical memory is conscious addressing to the past implying all the positive and

negative sides. It is an attempt to restore the true character of past events reflected in historical theory. Historical memory is a subject of research by historians who have the aim to reveal what was really happening during this or that historical event as well as it is a subject of research by philosophers who try to find out main tendencies and meaning of historical development that are reflected in historical consciousness. The correlation of real past, its preservation and adequate understanding by actual present is meant. But according to academician V. Egorov the contemporary level of historical memory research is directly „connected with axiological components that to a greater extent determine the contents of historical memory of a nation“ [4. P. 24]. It is the value and meaning load of historical memory contents that stimulates research of its interconnections with social memory. This interconnection is analysed by historians with regard to functional relations.

In the work of B. Mogilnitskiy the separate chapter is devoted to function of social memory. According to the author social memory changes its contents at different stages of historical science not only due to selective character of approach to past phenomena but also due to its evaluation not to a lesser extent. „The same phenomena of the past get completely different evaluation in the different systems of historical thought that determines their different meaning in the memory of various social classes. It is no wonder that the function of social memory is of prominent ideological character“ [5.P. 158].

Due to its common character the world view is aimed at social memory as a rather stable system of most common views on the world and the place of a human in it whereas historical memory due to its temporary character addresses to more definite phenomena including both process of remembering their contents and their forgetting. The general understanding of remembering as a totally conscious act is not dialectical in its basis because we actually remember not only what we want (know, understand) but also what is not the aim of our remembering (something we are unaware of, we don't understand at a definite moment). It is as true as if something is remembered must be necessarily forgotten. Here remembering acts as elementary initial eternal object of the memory which is equal to forgetting. Rather detailed analysis of profound dialectics of memory and forgetting is presented in the book by F.G. Junger called "Gedächtnis und Erinnerung". Junger says "Thought is turned into conceived. Thought about conceived is memory as a repetition of thought. Something that was in the past appears again if we care about this recollection" [6. S. 11]. According to him, forgetting is equal to memory, but "event that was in the past by means of its conscious remembering stays in memory" (Im-Gedächtnis-Behaltenes)" [6. S.12].

It is advisable to analyze the memory concept of French historical and methodological school realized in series of editions under the common heading "the Place of Memory" as a theoretical point that proves those not indisputable statements mentioned above. The first result of separation of history as a science from historical memory is seen by these authors in historiographical conscious itself. They say "The history of historians has shaped special medium of memory that is gradually formed starting from authors of the Middle Ages chronics up to representative of history as a science, every of which reconstruct the picture of limited memory that is memory of dynasties, monarchs, peoples, nations. Something that we call memory today is not memory any more it is history which takes over memory" [7. P. 47].

The authors of historical resources themselves invented rather universal means of forgetting the facts of historical memory that is to report some false facts about the event happened or to conceal the truth.

In the article "Cap Klimentisa (notes on memory and oblivion in the political discourse)" there is fact of such concealing the truth. In February 1948 the leader of Czech communists delivered the speech to the huge crowd of listeners in Prague. That was the time when the history of communistic Czech Republic started.

"It is snowing. The snow falls on the uncovered head of K. Gotvald. Klimentis one of the comrades of Gotvald was so eager to help that he put his fur hat on the head of the leader. The fact that Gotvald is in the fur hat was registered and depicted in numerous photos thus becoming textbook example. Four years later Klimentis was charged with treason and hung.

Propaganda department immediately withdrew any mentioning of his from history as well as all the photos. Since that time Gotvald has been standing on the balcony alone. There is only a white wall at the place where Klimentis used to stand. The only thing that reminds about Klimentis is a fur hat" [8. P. 101].

By the same token some statements and facts are deliberately doomed to be removed and forgotten that leads to distortion of historical memory contents. In this case historical memory acts as a reflection of unique «order» to this or that vision of the past. As a consequence there is rewriting and reevaluation of historical past where its contents are deliberately defiled or sublimated.

As a preliminary conclusion we must say that such manipulations, distortions of social memory contents are relatively scarce. Social memory while covering a greater volume of material being remembered is less connected with material carriers of its contents therefore is less subjected to manipulations. Besides, the process of social memory existence itself is implemented in such forms of its existence that embrace profound essential character of society rooted in myths and antitypes.

At the same time the analysis of social memory in terms of historicism that is carried out in a number of studies allows to transfer the problem of "forgetting-remembering" into the "knowledge - lack of knowledge" [9. P. 57] paradigm. Knowledge implies recording last state of society in the public consciousness as well as reproduction of social relations types formed or definite sides of these relations. Lack of knowledge acts as conscious refusal from the use of social experience already thought of and checked by history as well as an attempt to create something new in social relations. Such lack of knowledge leads to anarchy in social relations, unreasoned reforms of current social institutes either in the sphere of education, culture or economy. In this case the conscious refusal from facts which are basic in historical memory occurs.

The interpretation of historical fact contents depends not only on subjective tastes of a researcher but also on scientific paradigm he works within. While doing their research historians themselves are not free from certain

mass stereotypes, social stimuli of their theoretical activity as well as from work when creating “new myths” on the one hand. On the other hand they are not free from intellectualization of ordinary historical consciousness no matter how contradictory they are. I Olabbari write “Historians are faced with the task to learn how and why traditions are established rather than invent them. We must formulate a certain historical anthropology of our own tribe. But it is one thing when anthropologists have liking for the tribe they study and another thing is when they become its shamans” [10. P.178]. The concern of Spanish historian is understandable since even hypothetical implementation of this program leads to excessive subjectivity while evaluating the past that is fraught with danger of manipulation of both historical consciousness and memory contents in its turn.

We can assume that the question is not so much about the fact reflecting memory contents itself as how it is understood by subsequent generations. Historical fact is regarded here as both belonging to history itself and something that consigns to science as well as reflection of the fact in the science that was in real life. Knowledge as reflection of reality reproduces only a part of reality that is past in this case. Conjunction of the fact of life and fact of science is a problem that is unlikely to be sold up to the end.

The problem of historical memory indeed takes the form of historical hermeneutics whereas historical memory itself acts as one of the social memory measurements. But the process of understanding of essence and meaning of history reflected in historical memory can be to a greater extent burdened by subjective, psychological, cultural or other likings of historians themselves. „Memory is material and highly socially construed from which is entirely contingent to the diachronic fluxes of history and shifting social needs“[11. S. 16]. O. G. Oexle's point of view doesn't seem sound enough as well. O.G. Oexle almost erase the differences between social and historical memory while regarding them as forms of memory “where historical and social essence are perceived as closely interconnected elements” [11. S. 75]. According to O. G. Oexle there is only one difference between these two forms of memory. Social memory, “Memoria” in its spiritual meaning, is the memory about eternity in the Gospel meaning of existence whereas historical memory describes mundane, profane things.

Such dichotomy as, „ spiritual-profane” that is introduced without enough reasoning can result in evident distortion of both social and historical memory contents.

There is one more attempt to describe historical and social memory without introducing definite system-forming reasons that doesn't allow determining criteria to analyze both historical and social memory that means in its turn to answer the question posed at the beginning of the article. At the same time opinions provided allow to reveal similarities of historical and social memory as well as specification of each.

A man (humankind as a whole) is a central system-forming element that connects social and historical memory, who acts as a carrier of both historical and social memory. But a man while combining temporary and eternal, common and unique is constantly building his attitude to the world. Thus social memory appears from this creative dialogue. So, a man, a social group and society as a whole act as objects and subjects of both historical and social memory at the same time. They are objects to the degree they open their objective social existence in the environment. They are subjects because they are able to actively change and even manipulate memory contents. But there is a question about the «age» of the environment memory [12]. Historical memory as an earlier form of existence perception by a man and humankind has much longer history and therefore older. It began since the first historical descriptions of the past have been fixed in the texts.

## CONCLUSION

Social memory could arise when the original unity of the environment was lost thus it was necessary to create other theoretical constructs that reflected social existence of a separate person, group or a state. Social memory appears when a person starts to realize himself not only as a member of tribal, clan or craft organization but also a free subject who is able to define value and meaningful goals himself. Thus, the unity of subject-object reasoning of historical and social memory generates the difference between them if there is a question about information as well as cultural and semiotic profound meaning of the phenomena.

Historical memory records in its contents what has already been? Social memory is able to include in it contents what is or what will be but is latent right now and here. Social memory is intended to reach value and meaning consensus whereas historical memory strives for preserving and handing over true knowledge about the past.

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