The Narrative Organization of Collective Memory

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Abstract Collective memory is analyzed from the perspective of narrative organization. Specifically, narratives provided by a sociocultural context, especially the modern state, are examined in their capacity to serve as cultural tools for members of a collective as they recount the past. The power of these tools to shape collective remembering is examined with the help of a distinction between specific narratives and schematic narrative templates. The former include information about specific dates, places, actors, and so forth, whereas the latter are abstract forms of narrative representation and typically shape several specific narratives. The utility of these notions is assessed by examining the ''expulsion-of-foreign-enemies'' schematic narrative template that shapes much of Russian collective memory, both during the Soviet period and post-Soviet periods. [collective memory, narrative, schematic narrative template, Russia]

Collective memory is a representation of the past shared by members of a group such as a generation or nation-state. The modern study of this topic is usually traced to the writings of the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1887–1945), who argued in the early part of the twentieth century that remembering is shaped by participation in collective life and that different groups generate different accounts of the past (Halbwachs 1980).

In the 1920s and 1930s Halbwachs's ideas about collective memory were considered by some as interesting, but incomplete, and by others as fundamentally flawed. Partly as a result of criticism by figures such as Frederic Bartlett (1995), these ideas received relatively little attention for several decades. More recently, however, collective memory and related notions such as "public memory" (Bodnar 1992) have re-emerged in academic disciplines such as anthropology (Cole 2001), history (e.g., Novick 1999), sociology (e.g., Alexander 2002), and psychology (e.g., Pennebaker et al. 1997). An interest in collective memory is also to be found in popular culture with its debates about memory for the Vietnam War, the Holocaust, and other such topics.

Strong and Distributed Accounts of Collective Memory

Collective memory is often understood in terms of loose analogies with memory in the individual. Many discussions of America's memory about Vietnam, for example, seem

to presuppose that America is some sort of large organism that has intentions, desires, memories, and beliefs just as individuals do, something reflected in assertions such as: "America's collective memory of Vietnam makes it reluctant to accept combat deaths."

Assumptions about this issue are often not well grounded and have been the object of legitimate criticism. Bartlett was critical of the "more or less absolute likeness [that] has been drawn between social groups and the human individual" (1995:293), and he warned that collectives do not have memory in their own right. As Mary Douglas (1980) and James Wertsch (2002) have noted, Bartlett may have misinterpreted Halbwachs in this debate, but the general cautionary note he sounded deserves attention. Bartlett himself argued that memory of individuals is fundamentally influenced by the social context in which they function. Indeed, a central point of his argument is that "social organisation gives a persistent framework into which all detailed recall must fit, and it very powerfully influences both the manner and the matter of recall" (1995:296). In short, he espoused a position that recognized "memory *in* the group, [but] not memory *of* the group" (1995:294).

Claims about memory "of the group" constitute a strong version of collective memory (Wertsch 2002), and when made explicit, they have usually been rejected. An alternative that recognizes "memory in the group" without slipping into questionable assumptions about memory of the group is a "distributed version." From this perspective, memory is viewed as being distributed: (1) socially in small group interaction, as well as (2) "instrumentally" in the sense that it involves both people and instruments of memory (Wertsch 2002). In the case of social distribution, for example, Mary Weldon (2001) has examined the "collaborative remembering" that occurs when groups of individuals work together to recall information or events from the past.

"Instrumental distribution," the focus of what follows, involves agents, acting individually or collectively, and the cultural tools they employ, tools such as calendars, the Internet, or narratives. An important transformation of memory in human cognitive evolution occurred with the emergence of various forms of cultural tools, thus allowing for "external symbolic storage" (Donald 1991). This does not mean that such memory somehow resides in texts or records, but it does mean that with the rise of new forms of external symbolic storage such as written texts or the Internet, the possibilities for remembering undergo fundamental change.

Such change has both psychological and social dimensions. Or to borrow the formulation of Jerome Bruner it involves "*mind* as somehow 'inside' and subjective [as well as] *culture* as 'outside' and superorganic" (this issue). An implication of this is that by becoming skilled at using a certain set of cultural tools, new mental habits and schemata emerge that shape remembering for members of a collective (Bartlett 1995).

Narratives as Textual Resources for Collective Memory

Borrowing from Bruner (1990, 2002), Mikhail Bakhtin (1986), and Lev Vygotsky (1987), I formulate a distributed version of collective memory by examining how it is fundamentally organized by the "textual resources" it employs, especially textual resources in the form of narratives, both spoken and written. From this perspective, collective remembering involves an irreducible tension between active agents and textual resources, and it calls for the analysis both of textual resources and the specifics of how they are used by active agents.

An account of collective memory grounded in these notions emphasizes the power of narrative to shape representations of the past. As Bruner notes, the implications of such an approach are sometimes surprising in that they go against the common sense that "stoutly holds that the story form is a transparent window on reality, not a cookie cutter imposing a shape on it" (2002:6–7). Bruner goes on to argue that narrative is "our preferred, perhaps even our obligatory medium for expressing human aspirations and their vicissitudes, our own and those of others. Our stories also impose a structure, a compelling reality on what we experience, even a philosophical stance" (2002:89).

The definitions of *narrative* and *collective memory* are notoriously contested, and my task in what follows is not to provide an overview of either. Instead, I focus on the more limited task of examining how a few aspects of narrative play a role in organizing collective memory. One issue I take up is a distinction between two levels of narrative analysis, "specific narratives" and "schematic narrative templates."

I also examine the issue of narrator's voice. Bruner notes that "narrative requires something approximating a narrator's perspective: it cannot, in the jargon of narratology, be 'voice-less'" (1990:77). My particular interest is in how more than one voice is reflected in narrative performance. What I have in mind derives from the fact that the textual resources used to produce narratives invariably have a history of use by others. Paraphrasing Mikhail Bakhtin (1981:293), this means that narratives are always half someone else's, and it leads to questions about how narrators can coordinate their voice with those of others that are built into the textual resources they employ. I shall be especially concerned with how the perspective of the modern state is manifested in collective memory about events such as wars and political movements.

Specific Narratives and Schematic Narrative Templates

When speaking of the narrative organization of collective memory, we usually have in mind items from a "stock of stories" (MacIntyre 1984) about the past. The items in this "cultural tool kit" (Bruner 1990) typically are narratives having to do with specific events, which means that they qualify as what I call "specific narratives." The events involved in specific narratives are uniquely situated in space and time, and they may have occurred during one's own lifetime or in earlier periods.

In what follows, however, I argue that the study of collective memory requires taking into account a second level of narrative organization, one concerned with general patterns rather than specific events and actors. This level of narrative organization is grounded in what I call "schematic narrative templates." These narrative templates can produce replicas that vary in their details but reflect a single general story line. In contrast to specific narratives, these templates do not deal with just one concrete episode from the past. Instead, each takes the form of a generalized schema that is in evidence when talking about any one of several episodes.

The notion of a schematic narrative template can be traced to a variety of sources. One of the most important of these is the Russian folklorist Vladimir Propp. In developing his line of reasoning about Russian folk tales, Propp focused on "recurrent constants" (1968:20) that can be found across many narratives. Because "a tale often attributes identical actions to various personages," Propp believed it possible to study the tale "according to the functions of its *dramatis personae*" (1968:20).

This focus on abstract functions means that each of several specific events and actors meets the criteria of a generalized function in a narrative. In Propp's view, "Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements of a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled" (1968:21). He identified an extensive network of generalized functions such as "THE VILLIAN RECEIVES INFORMATION ABOUT HIS VICTIM" (1968:28) and "THE VILLIAN IS DEFEATED" (1968:53).

For my purposes the value of Propp's ideas about narrative functions derives from his general line of reasoning rather than detailed claims about particular functions, claims that were developed in connection with Russian folk tales. Specifically, I am concerned with the notion that a generalized narrative form may underlie a range of narratives in a cultural tradition. This means that the focus in analyzing the narrative organization of collective memory changes from a list of specific narratives to an underlying pattern that is instantiated by each of several specific narratives.

Switching from folklore to psychology, an analogous line of reasoning may be found in the writings of Bartlett (1995). His classic book *Remembering* spawned a host of research efforts that continue to this day in the psychology of memory. In Bartlett's view human cognitive functioning is usually more of a "constructive" process (1995:312) than a product of stimuli, and this led him to examine the generalized patterns or "schemata" brought to this process by the agent doing the constructing.

Bartlett took as a starting point for his inquiry the assumption that one can "speak of every human cognitive reaction—perceiving, imagining, remembering, thinking and reasoning—as an *effort after meaning*" (1995:44). This effort is grounded in "tendencies which the subject brings with him into the situation with which he is called upon to deal" (1995:44). Bartlett discussed these tendencies in terms of "schemes" that "are utilised so as to make [the

subject's] reaction the 'easiest', or the least disagreeable, or the quickest and least obstructed that is at the time possible" (1995:44).

The writings of figures like Propp and Bartlett contribute different points to an understanding of schematic narrative templates. Drawing on both of them, the point is that narrative templates are schematic in the sense that they concern abstract, generalized functions of the sort that Propp discussed in his structural analysis of folk tales or that Bartlett discussed under the heading of "schemalike knowledge structures." They are concerned with narrative, a point that is explicit in Propp's writings and consistent with what Bartlett proposes. And the notion of template is involved because these abstract structures can underlie several different specific narratives, each of which has a particular setting, cast of characters, dates, and so forth.

Before going further, it is worth noting that schematic narrative templates are not some sort of universal archetypes. Instead, they belong to particular narrative traditions that can be expected to differ from one cultural setting to another. Another attribute they share is that they are not readily available to consciousness. As Bartlett noted, they are used in an "unreflective, unanalytical and unwitting manner" (1995:45).

A Natural Laboratory for Collective Memory Studies: Russian Accounts of WWII

To develop the distinction between specific narratives and schematic narrative templates, I turn to a natural laboratory for the study of collective memory, namely, Russia during its transition from Soviet to post-Soviet times. This setting has witnessed a transition from strict, centralized control over collective memory to open, if not chaotic public debate and disagreement, and the result is that it provides examples of an unusually wide range of collective memory forms. At the same time, many aspects of this natural laboratory illustrate state control of memory that can be found anywhere in the world.

My focus on the state control of collective memory is not meant to suggest that states are the only social entities concerned with memory. Clearly, groups of all types are routinely concerned with the past, and for a variety of reasons. However, the state is an obvious focus of study since it has engaged in the largest single effort to control collective memory in modern times (Wertsch 2002). Its capacity to control the production, and often the consumption, of the narrative resources employed in understanding the past is unmatched by any other collective.

The specific episode of Russian collective memory that I examine is WWII. In contrast to events such as the Russian Revolution and the Russian Civil War, events that have been fundamentally reemplotted in post-Soviet official history (Wertsch 2002), WWII has undergone less of a transformation in Russian collective memory. The most plausible reason

for this is that it serves as a "dominant myth" (Weiner 1996) that played a central role in Soviet life and continues to be positively viewed in post-Soviet Russia.

In many respects Russian collective memory for WWII has undergone striking change during the transition from Soviet to post-Soviet times. These changes have been noted by many, often with great concern. Older generations in Russia have been alarmed at what they see as the loss of memory for the war, especially among the generation that came of age after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

To understand this generational difference, I present three essays that were written in 1999 or 2000 by Russians of different ages in response to the request: "Please write a short essay on the theme: 'What was the course of the Second World War from its beginning to its conclusion?'" These essays were drawn from a larger study involving 38 adults ranging from 22 to 78 years of age. All of these adults had received their primary and secondary education during the Soviet period. In addition, 139 younger subjects who had finished high school in the post-Soviet era were included. These essays were part of a larger study based on the analysis of history textbooks and of essays and interviews from Russians of various ages (Wertsch 2002). The three narratives reflect a transition from a highly regimented and officially sanctioned collective memory, to a more critical form, and finally to an account of the past that retains only the skeleton of previous versions.

The first essay I examine comes from a 55-year-old man in the first group who was from the Siberian city of Novosibirsk. It was written in 1999 in Russian. The following is my translation.

> The Second World War began September 1, 1939 with the seizure of Poland by Fascist Germany. The goal of this invasion was to bring their forces to the border of the Soviet Union for a future attack on it. For this the general headquarters of Hitler worked out the so-called plan Barbarossa, which indicated the direction of the main strike by Germany and the further conduct of the war on the territory of the USSR. According to the intention of Hitler and his brothers-in-arms, this war had to be flash-like (a "Blitzkrieg") and unexpected. This was realized on June 22, 1941. German forces crossed our western borders and began attacks along the entire front from Barents Sea to the Black Sea. But the main attack was toward Moscow, which they approached in the fall of 1941. Lacking success there, the Germans changed tactics and decided to force their way through to the Volga in the area of Stalingrad and make their way to Moscow from there. But they also experienced failure there. The war took on a long, drawn-out character. The basic turning point occurred after the Battle of the Kursk salient, where the back of the Fascist beast was broken. The Red Army went over to the attack and began to liberate the Soviet land, a task that was finished in 1944. Then began the liberation from the Fascist yoke of the countries of Eastern Europe, where our army was welcomed as liberators. In May of 1945 Germany's capitulation was accepted, and May 9 was declared the day of victory. In 1946 the Nuremberg Trials were begun, where the Fascist ringleaders were judged.

At many points in this essay, the voice of the Soviet state comes through so clearly that readers might be tempted to ask: Who is really doing the speaking? Expressions such as "Fascist Germany" and "the Fascist beast" are striking in this regard. As is the case for any narrative, the Bakhtinian answer to this question is: At least two voices. In this case there are elements in the text that belong to this 55-year-old man producing a text in 1999 in Novosibirsk. At the same time, however, it is possible to hear the voice of the Soviet state and the Marxist–Leninist-inspired history teaching that was so closely controlled by its central authority.

In this connection it is also worth noting what was *not* mentioned in this essay. Consistent with late Soviet official history of WWII, Stalin has been discretely left out of the picture. In contrast to earlier Soviet accounts of this episode from the 1940's or the beginning of the 1950's, accounts that would have extolled the deeds of the "Great Leader," and also, ironically, in contrast with post-Soviet accounts that once again recognize Stalin's role in WWII, there is no mention made of him in this essay. During much of the time this man was learning about WWII in Soviet schools, Stalin's picture and name had been airbrushed out of history textbooks and the media. Also in keeping with the voice of official history from the late Soviet period, there is no mention of embarrassing episodes such as the secret protocol in the Molotov–Ribbentropp Pact.

In addition to the expressions used in this narrative, the voice of the Soviet state is reflected in how events are emplotted. The basic structure of official Soviet narratives about WWII was built around a small set of events. These appeared in Soviet textbooks and other official accounts, as well as in Soviet-educated subjects' essays and interviews about WWII. This standard narrative could be extended or elaborated, but it was inconceivable to those who had mastered it that any one of a core of basic events could be missing. These events, all of which are included in the account provided by this subject provide the basic plot structure of the Great Patriotic War from this perspective. They are:

1. the German invasion of USSR on June 22, 1941
2. the Battle of Moscow, winter of 1941–42
3. the Battle of Stalingrad, winter of 1942–43
4. the Soviet victory over the German army and the march to Berlin and victory on May 9, 1945

In actuality, this is the basic plot structure for the "Great Patriotic War" that Soviet and post-Soviet Russians consider to be the main act of WWII. From this perspective, events in places like Poland, Holland, Denmark, and Great Britain before the German invasion of the Soviet Union, as well as events in the Pacific following Germany's surrender in 1945, provide surrounding material for events on the central stage of this great struggle.

Reviewing this 55-year-old's essay, some events are familiar to U.S. or western European perspectives. For example, the beginning of the war in 1939 is an obvious candidate in this

regard, but even this is re-emplotted in this subject's essay as being a preliminary chapter to the invasion of the Soviet Union. Other events are not likely to be so familiar, however. In particular, taking the Battle of Stalingrad or the Kursk salient as the major turning point in the war is not something that is part of the story line most likely to be known in the West. Furthermore, the fact that any mention of events such as the attack of Pearl Harbor or D-Day is missing provides a reminder that the textual resources around which the Soviet narrative was constructed are different from those commonly employed in the West.

In addition to controlling the selection of events included in specific narratives about the past, official state accounts usually involve a particular level of description of these events. Namely, they are presented as "mid-level" events (Wertsch 2002). In general, events can range from being narrowly defined and concrete, involving particular, identifiable individuals acting in a limited, local setting to vaguely defined happenings involving unspecified actors and settings. Events of the former sort can be termed "concrete" and those of the latter sort "abstract." For example, Hitler's committing suicide would qualify as a concrete event if it is not situated in a larger political setting. In contrast, the suffering inflicted in WWII concentrations camps—at least when described in these vague terms—counts as an abstract event since it does not specify the agents involved or the setting in which they acted.

The notion of a "mid-level event" falls between concrete and abstract events. In state sponsored collective memory, midlevel events such as the Battle of Stalingrad typically involve groups operating in an extended, but clearly identified setting. Individuals can also be the actors in midlevel events as long as they are presented as acting on behalf of, or as leaders of collectives, especially political groups. As was the case for virtually all Soviet-educated subjects in a larger study (Wertsch 2002), this 55-year-old organized his account of WWII around midlevel events. This reflects the textual resources he was required to master in Soviet history education, resources such as history textbooks that focused on events such as wars, revolutions, and other political happenings.

In sum, there are several indications that the narrative resources used in this essay were provided by central authorities of the Soviet state. One can detect the voice of this state in the expressions used, in the events that were and were not included, in the emplotment of these events, and in their level of description. Of course these narrative resources are strikingly different from those likely to be used in Western Europe or North America, and this provides a reminder of why and how collective memory is socioculturally situated and hence a relevant topic for the sort of cultural psychology envisioned by figures such as Bruner (this issue).

The second essay about WWII that I examine was written by a 15-year-old boy in 2000, also from Novosibirsk. This is a student who has lived almost entirely in the post-Soviet period and whose education has been carried out completely in that context. Again the original is in Russian and translated by me. He wrote:

> After its defeat in the First World War, Germany wants revenge, but at that time it was weak, with massive unemployment. Then Krupp, the well-known arms producer, looks for a person who would lead Germany to victory. This person turned out to be Hitler, whose election campaign Krupp organized. Hitler becomes chancellor and is guided by ultrarightist, nationalistic ideas. In a short while he brings order to Germany through criminal means and executions. Then the output of the massive military technology sector increases: Germany is prepared for war.
>
> In August of 1939 German forces invade Poland. The USSR and Germany conclude a pact and agree not to attack one another. The Germans seize many countries in Europe, bomb England, and in 1941 (June 22), attack the Soviet Union. Stalin orders that all strategically important factories be moved from the eastern regions of the USSR to Siberia and behind the Urals. Only in 1943 did the output of arms in the relocated factories rise to its former levels. Since there were many more factories than in Germany, we gained the advantage. In the course of several battles (the Kursk salient, Stalingrad, Moscow) Soviet forces mounted a massive blow on the Germans and went over to the offensive. In this manner they got to Berlin from the east. At the same time, the USA and England, in order to receive the laurels of victory attained by the USSR, launched an attack from the west and also marched to Berlin.
>
> On May 9, 1945 Germany capitulated, but the war still went on with its ally Japan. Then in an agreement between the victorious parties Germany was divided up.

This student's essay has some similarities, as well as some important differences with that of the 55-year-old examined earlier. He made at least a passing mention of all four of the items in the basic plot structure of the Great Patriotic War outlined above. In contrast to the older subject's essay, however, there are several indications here of the loss of centralized state control over collective memory. For example, this young student organized a good deal of his essay around the movement of Soviet industry beyond the Urals, an episode that probably reflects the local perspective of the Siberian city of Novosibirsk. The 55-year-old who wrote the first essay above was also from Novosibirsk and probably knew much more about this chapter of the Soviet war effort than did the 15-year-old. However, the narrative resources the older subject employed when writing his essay, resources that had been much more closely controlled by centralized state authority during his socialization than was the case for the 15-year-old, did not accord great importance to this episode, and this is probably why it did not appear in the older subject's account.

Other differences between the two essays emerge in terms of the level of description of events. In several instances the student presented events as growing out of the motives of an individual such as Krupp, Hitler, or Stalin. It is certainly possible to encounter the names of these three individuals in accounts of WWII provided by older subjects. However, in such accounts they would be mentioned in connection with a wider set of specific events rather than as isolated individuals who are guided primarily by their own motives.

This tendency to focus on concrete, as opposed to midlevel events, is characteristic of many of the younger subjects who participated in the larger study from which this example is drawn (Wertsch 2002). Instead of bringing individuals into the picture because they reflect

the motives and actions of larger groups, they were often presented as being guided by individual, self-centered motives. Hence this 15-year-old attributed Hitler's rise to Krupp's decision to hand pick someone who could lead Germany in ways that would be of direct personal interest to him and, perhaps, his family's company. In contrast, the only mention of Hitler by the 55-year-old was in connection with large-scale collective action of a nation.

The two essays I have outlined differ in some interesting ways. The older subject produced an account that was constrained by the voice of centralized state authority in a fairly standard way. In the larger study from which his case was selected, Soviet-educated subjects generally produced accounts that were quite similar to his, reflecting the efficacy with which the Soviet state controlled the production and use of narrative resources in collective memory. In contrast, while the 15-year-old did include the four basic events that would be obligatory for older subjects (something that is not true for many other younger subjects in the larger study), his essay also includes local information that was not part of the standard account provided by the central Soviet government, and he did not represent events at the midlevel as they were typically presented in official state history during the late Soviet period. In short, this younger subject was apparently less constrained by the rigid form of official history provided by the state, instead using a mixture of his and others' interpretations and perspectives.

While recognizing these differences, it is important to keep in mind the overall similarities between these two essays, at least compared to what many of the younger, post-Soviet subjects produced. In many cases the responses of these younger subjects barely qualify as essays at all. They were characterized by their brevity and lack of content and by the appearance of the individual writer's voice in the form of critical, even dismissive comments. Such responses are often viewed by members of the Soviet-educated generation as shocking, if not blasphemous. On reading these accounts, their response was one of anger, or sometimes resigned laughter. In this connection, the 15-year-old's essay presented above is an exception rather than the rule.

As an example of what many of the younger subjects in this study produced when asked to write about WWII, consider the following essay written by a 15-year-old from Moscow in 2000:

> The beginning [of the war] was very unexpected for the whole world except for Hitler. Also unexpected was the massive amount of bloodshed, the human losses, the Fascist concentration camps. The emergence of a second Napoleon, Adolf Hitler, was also unexpected and strange. The course of the war was hard for the countries of the defenders. Terrible, hard, bloody.

This sort of "essay" is considered shocking, humorous, or pathetic by Soviet-educated Russians. It is difficult for them to accept the idea that memory for an event that is such an important source of Russian pride and identity could have disappeared so completely, and it

is what lies behind dismissive statements about younger Russians' knowing nothing about history. Such assessments are problematic, however, because they leave little more than an account of what younger Russians are not doing and no insight into how the collective memory of this generation might be taking shape. While it may be true that members of this younger generation are less capable of providing details about events such as WWII, they clearly do have ideas and strong opinions about the past, and there is a need to specify what these are.

To begin with the negatives, however, this last essay includes only an indirect reference to only one of the midlevel events usually mentioned by Soviet-educated subjects (the beginning of the war). Instead of constructing an essay around events like the battles of Moscow and Stalingrad, this subject used information about Hitler as an individual, hence relying on information that places the agency for events in a concrete individual rather than in midlevel entities such as "German forces" or "Hitlerites." In addition, he included information about other issues at such an abstract level that they hardly qualify as events at all (e.g., "the massive amount of bloodshed, the human losses, the Fascist concentration camps"). These are what I earlier called "abstract events," which contrast with midlevel events in that they are not specific as to time and place.

In short, this third essay is largely devoid of specific, midlevel event descriptions. This is one indication that the voice of centralized state control has been diminished to the point of disappearing and is in the process of being replaced by whatever members of the younger generation can come up with. At least during the years immediately following the break-up of the Soviet Union, an important fact about Russia seems to have been the loss of state control of collective memory (Wertsch 2002).

It may appear at first glance that this student's essay is simply devoid of coherent information or is simply the product of his unique imagination and voice. Again, however, such a characterization only says what the student was not providing in the way of an account of WWII. In what follows, I argue that others' voices and textual resources are still very much part of the picture. The key to understanding what these are lies in a particular schematic narrative template.

The Russian ''Expulsion of Foreign Enemies'' Narrative Template

The particular organizational device that can provide insight into all three essays I have provided, but is particularly useful when trying to make sense of the third one, is what I term "expulsion of foreign enemies" schematic narrative template. This template may be instantiated using a range of concrete characters, events, dates, and circumstances, but its basic plot remains relatively constant and contains the following items:

1. An "initial situation" (Propp 1968:26) in which Russia is peaceful and not interfering with others.

2. The initiation of trouble in which a foreign enemy viciously and wantonly attacks Russia without provocation.
3. Russia almost loses everything in defeat as it suffers from the enemy's attempts to destroy it as a civilization.
4. Through heroism and exceptionalism, and against all odds, Russia, acting alone, triumphs and succeeds in expelling the foreign enemy.

To some it may appear that there is little that is peculiarly Russian about this narrative template because it may be found just about anywhere. For example, by replacing *Russian* with *American*, it would seem to provide a foundation for American collective memory of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. My point is not that this narrative template is available only to members of the Russian narrative tradition or that this is the only schematic narrative template in this tradition. Indeed, this is a cultural tool employed by many people around the world, and there are other items in the cultural tool kit of the Russian narrative tradition. However, there are some points that suggest this template plays a particularly important role and takes on a particular form in the Russian narrative tradition and hence in collective remembering.

The first of these concerns its wide use. Whereas the United States and many other societies have accounts of past events that fit this narrative template, it is my experience that it is employed much more widely in Russia than in many other places. It forms the basic plot line for several of the most important events in Russian history including the Mongol invasion in the 13th century, the Swedish invasion in the 18th century, Napoleon's invasion in the 19th century, and Hitler's invasion in the 20th century. Indeed, many would say this narrative template is *the* underlying story of Russian collective remembering, and hence contrasts with items that people from other nations might employ. For example, it contrasts with American items such as the "mystique of Manifest Destiny" (Lowenthal 1992:53) or a "quest for freedom" narrative (Wertsch 1994; Wertsch and O'Connor 1994).

An obvious reason for the ubiquity of this narrative template in Russian collective remembering is that it reflects actual experience. Over its history, Russia clearly has been the victim of several invasions and other acts of aggression, and I do not wish to argue that this narrative has no foundation in actual events. Instead, my intent is to examine how this narrative template serves in what Bartlett called the "effort after meaning" that shapes remembering everywhere. As Bruner (2002:6–7) has put it, this narrative template is a "cookie cutter imposing a shape" on people's understanding of the past.

When trying to make sense of the third essay presented above, the triumph-over-alien-forces narrative template can provide especially useful insight. For example, the comments about bloodshed and human loss reflect item 3 in this narrative template. And the emphasis on the unexpected nature of the attack suggests that Russia was peaceful and non-threaten-

ing as specified in the initial situation or first element of the narrative template. Perhaps most striking in this regard, however, is this subject's comment about Hitler as a "second Napoleon." This comment suggests that he viewed the two figures as being essentially similar and that in his view the story of Hitler and WWII is basically the same as the story of Napoleon and the invasion of Russia in the early 19th century. These two stories appear to be stamped out of the expulsion of foreign enemies template, and for all practical purposes can be reduced to it.

To some it may appear that this student's use of the parallel between Napoleon and Hitler grew out of some original (although simple) analogy that he came up with himself. However, Hitler as a second Napoleon is a notion with which at least a substantial number of young people in Russia are familiar. Although this parallel was seldom drawn in such a blatant way as in the case of this young man, the younger subjects in this study were generally less likely to give details of specific narratives and more likely to rely on generalities from the schematic narrative template than the older, Soviet-educated subjects.

In short, the expulsion-of-foreign-enemies schematic narrative template is consistent with all three of the essays presented above. In the first two cases, it can be viewed as providing an underlying narrative form that is fleshed out with a set of events, the difference being that in the first essay these were midlevel events, whereas in the second some actors and episodes were presented at a more concrete level.

In contrast, the third essay contains very little information about events at any level. Instead, it is largely devoid of specific information. One response to this might be simply to dismiss this and many other members of this young generation in post-Soviet Russia as revealing no collective memory for WWII. However, there are indications in this young man's essay that he was a member of a collective with a memory—a memory specific to his national perspective, however devoid his account may have been of the details found in the essays of older subjects who had been educated in the Soviet period.

The key to this is to examine his essay for things that are included rather than listing all the items that are not. His mention of Hitler as a second Napoleon, something that was not found in older subjects' essays, provides insight into what he was doing. Instead of providing a set of midlevel event descriptions that instantiates a specific narrative version of the schematic narrative template in this case, he simply gestured toward this narrative template with the mention of "Hitler as a second Napoleon." In short, he came about as close as possible to representing the past in terms of little other than a schematic narrative template and had very little to say at any level that would constitute a specific narrative about WWII. While this tack appeared only rarely, and only among subjects of the post-Soviet generation, its appearance at all is revealing of a particular underlying structure that can be found in most subjects' effort after meaning.

Conclusion

In this article I have argued that understanding the narrative organization of collective memory may require invoking more than one level at which this organization exists. Specifically, I have identified two levels of analysis: specific narratives and schematic narrative templates. Although much of what we would call collective memory for an event such as WWII involves the first, and by implication the second as well, there may be instances where there is little evidence for narratives at any level of specificity. In the absence of specific narratives, it may be tempting to conclude that all representation of the past has simply disappeared, but such an assessment brings with it some serious drawbacks. Specifically, it provides an account only of what subjects are not doing and provides little insight into the transformations that give rise to new forms of collective memory.

The striking absence of specific information about actors and events in the third essay presented above certainly does suggest that collective memory has undergone important change in post-Soviet Russia. However, what this 15-year-old did include in his essay indicates that some organized version of collective memory for WWII is still very much intact.

The paucity of detailed information in his account probably reflects the temporary loss of state control over collective memory in post-Soviet Russia. This was manifested in the chaotic situation of history instruction in Russian schools in the 1990's (Wertsch 2002). However, what he did include in his account is coherent to at least some degree and differs markedly from what anyone in North America or Western Europe would be likely to recognize, let alone produce.

This coherence almost certainly reflects the continuing influence of spontaneous Russian nationalism rather than state control. Hence even in the absence of such control a recognizable perspective continues to exist thanks to the functioning of a schematic narrative template, and the narrative remains half someone else's, just as was the case for the first two essays examined above.

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Note

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