

Living to tell : rewriting the self through memory and mourning – AYERAY MEDINA
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In this paper I will argue that to reconstruct the past within historical memory involves a deep analysis of the process of remembering in the society, the construction of the searching for new meanings of what happened and of the significance it has nowadays.

It is through this remembering that we can start mourning our past.

I will also point out that keeping the memory alive of those who are not alive anymore and of those who survived the conflict is a crucial matter that helps to the 'healing' of the societies. By telling their stories, survivors are able to reconstruct their past, and the nation's history. One way to preventing the return of violence is by confronting the past. Through the testimony of victims, public memory is not only revealed, but also helps to 'heal victims and the community as a whole. The content of the 'stories' discloses what victims had live through.

An example of these testimonies are the ones documented in the 'Nunca Mas' (Never Again) projects in Latin America, in which there is a recording of atrocities and reports as an official memory of events that had occurred in those countries.

However, memory of violence is not always accessible because it refers to a traumatic experience that is sometimes hard to put into words. Furthermore, the fact of remembering is often avoided as a defence against re-experiencing pain.

The experience of loss and death must be mourned, through taking part into the society. This socialization of mourning can be seen through the creation of museums of memory; the symbolic inauguration of the "*Nunca Mas*" Museum of Memory in Argentina's is a clear example of that. Another way of maintaining the memory alive was done by former President Nestor Kichner in Argentina, succeeding in making

March 24th a permanent holiday, to be called the 'National Day of Memory for Truth and Justice'.

Memory is essential for the development of identities. Furthermore, the narrative testimony entails individual recovery of memory about the past that helps to re-establish self-identity. Thus, when a collective memory is established, it becomes difficult for people to reject what happened in the past. The transmission of the memory also allows creating new readings of the past. Therefore, to legitimize the discourse leads to establish new shared values and new identities in the community.

The fact that victims can make their stories public provides them the strength to work and go through the pain and have a better understanding of what had happened.

Learning through the past makes then possible for people, to move forward towards the future.