

Editorial

Nursing Historiography and Collective Memory

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History is essentially the science of change

M. Bloch, L'Étrange Défaite, 1940.

The knowledge of the past is undergoing transformation (1). It provides a tool that services legitimization of professions relegated to the background of the health sciences history. It incorporates a renewed vision of past conceptions that have been crystallized into strongly rooted values, labels, and stereotypes (2).

Historiography, understood as the critical study of the writings on history, its sources and authors, is a synthesis task, a logic and methodologic exercise that allows the evaluation of consistency and coherence of past research results (3, 4). A rereading of history sets a baseline for continuing and deepening the study of the past. This perspective makes it possible to advance towards the construction of a profile that goes beyond role assignment and participation in health teams of nursing professionals to address the nature and scope of the care construct and its implications (2).

The assertion is based on the following assumptions (5):

- Narrating historical events intervenes in the signification processes of nurses' professional identity.
- Nursing professionals' identity can be built without necessarily resorting to historiography, in a sort of "history of the future".
- Role stereotypes and the new generations' representations about the discipline arise from reading professional training texts.

- The narrator's cropping intervenes in the selection and creation of professional historical texts and the interpretation of past events.

One of the obstacles to adopt this mode of analysis is that although nursing curricula have included subjects related to the study of history, the classroom time allocated to these subjects has decreased over time (6). Consequently, working with sources (primary and secondary) becomes a methodological challenge for those involved in the research and training fields.

Recovering the stories confronts traditional historiography, reflecting the ideology of political, professional, and social elites that neglects or ignores the directly involved sectors' conceptions. Thus, various segments of the population have sought to establish their identities outside the hegemonic spheres (7). Deconstructing the available sources helps researchers inquire into the nature of professional representations reflected in significant performance aspects at different times (2).

Studies on history allow us to notice that writing entails the researchers' choice of an alternative, a possibility of knowledge offered to the writer: literature is endowed with a historical, sociological, anthropological aptitude (8). The search, preservation, and archiving of data used by the professional collective have the revision of nursing disciplinary frameworks as a goal. This perspective integrates three spheres (5):

- **Epistemological:** Changes of implicit conceptions from a philanthropic or missionary point of view towards visions based on the responsibilities attributable to the nursing staff and the health team without neglecting the professional environment diversity.
- **Theoretical:** Assumptions that describe the individual, the context (epochal, institutional, or political), and their mutual relationships. It questions the subjection to the biological model, derived from the Cartesian paradigm, which splits or fragments body and mind (9).
- **Axiological:** Changes towards professionalization and positioning within the health care gear. It considers adopting a system of values that bases the professional principles on a paradigm change aimed at the leveling of nursing social image with respect to other professions (10).

Windows to the past (11) and the use of historiography as a methodological tool point to categories that are reiterated, mutated, and constructed. Considering the role of discourses in the domination processes broadens the analysis by taking into account the disciplinary history from a critical-political perspective (12).

The historiographic analysis allows professions such as nursing to illustrate membership, its professional archeology, and cultural capital. An across-the-board inclusion in curricula and lines of research is compelling in times when the professional practice has the global health in its hands.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

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