

White Memory, Black Memory of the Crimea War

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Abstract

This theoretical reflection bears bearing on the construction of the art of care from a hegemonic historical perspective. In post-modern times, the legitimizing metarelates and correlates of “essential dogmas” [1] of modernism are called into question to bring out truth and plausibility. Historically, caring has been identified with the need to globalize thought through intellectual colonization, which converts knowledge into linear.

This work of analysis, if you want, comparative, contributes to re-signify the theoretical basis of Nursing, assigning a new vision for its teaching. In this way, care takes on another face and another sense, which is expected to be more human and bring greater autonomy.

Keywords: *History of Nursing; Florence Nightingale; Mary Grant; Crimean War*

Introduction

“Si la historia la escriben los que ganan,
eso quiere decir que hay otra historia:
la verdadera historia,
quien quiera oír que oiga”.

Litto Nebbia

“If history is written by those who win,
that means that there is another history:
the true story,
whoever wants to hear it.

Litto Nebbia

From the Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer [2], hermeneutics represents a theory of truth and a method that expresses the universalization of the phenomenon interpretive from the concrete and personal historicity. The construction of the truth history is based on the memories that speak and on the replicated discursive reproduction until they become indisputable postulates of the past, without other witnesses, the that, even though it is true, they are not the only ones.

Individual or collective memories that do not suit a person are left in oblivion idiosyncrasy. This is the case of white hegemony over other ethnic groups. The history of the Nursing, art and science of care, focused mainly on others, is not oblivious to this question of racial anthropocentrism, influencing its construction disciplinary. In this way, the theory of nursing knowledge, together with its history and international organizations structure mental frameworks that refer to the model Anglo-Saxon (British and North American) and Spanish, on Latin American soil.

Nursing history praises the British Florence Nightingale (May 12, 1820; August 13, 1910) as the heroine of the Crimean War (1853 - 1856), but every story has at least another side.

The war of florence

Florence's first clinical work dates back to 1853, since it gave him the opportunity to exercise their erudition and training. She was appointed Lady Superintendent of a London Women's Clinic for Good Society Ladies. Proves to be a first-rate manager. In the wards, she made sure that she and her nurses were submissive and obedient to doctors with the intention that patients receive a good treatment, but before the Directorate, he questioned the policy in the interests of the sick. Over time, he decided to impose changes and then justify their effectiveness.

In 1854, Florence Nightingale (30 years old) is sent to serve in the War of Crimea (now Ukraine) by mandate of the Secretary of State for War, Sydney Herbert. It is a decisive milestone in his biography because his habit of visiting the hospital doing rounds with a lamp to check the status of your patients during the night, which others would surely do, brought her to fame as 'the lady of the lamp'.

The appointment of Florence Nightingale to lead a group of nurses (38) did not had historical precedents: with a strong social patriarchy, no woman had ever previously held a post as an officer in the army and choosing Florence as Head nurse was interesting because, although she had professional experience and great intelligence, was scarcely inclined to accept orders from a medical hierarchy that multiplied errors.

At that time, the organization of British hospitals was no worse than the setting in practice during the Napoleonic Wars. Socially, the British population educated expected much more from the health services offered, extended to these war hospitals that, according to the newspapers, left something to be desired.

Arrival by boat with her group of nurses, she immediately understood the situation at Scutari, where the main British military hospital was located, with the same name, which was his destiny. Inadvertently jeopardizing your idea of organizational reform alienating himself to medical precepts, he began by placing nurses under his command in key places.

His first organizational reform consisted of running a laundry. In a month, he had managed to improve the maintenance of the rooms, obtain clothes from new bed and night clothes for the soldiers and improved the food. The nurses under his command would thoroughly clean the hospital and bring in the sunlight and the air to the closed rooms, on the orders of the doctors, removing the dark curtains and opening windows. The doctors were not very in agreement with this "Entrance of nature", but their simple actions led to a reduction soldier mortality from 40% to 2%.

Dissatisfied with her task of supervising the care given to men, she found time to dictate letters, making requests to their families, anticipating the establishment of reading rooms and games for the convalescent. Allied with military authorities, his action echoed among

the ranks of the army, calling him “the angel of the soldiers”. Recognized as the Chief Nurse of the Secretary of State of Guerra, a friend of his family, he followed his recommendations, which became quickly in part from policies applied to all army hospitals.

The growing interest in their efforts to improve living conditions within the hospitals made him win the sympathy of British society. Queen Victoria and many members of the imperial government openly expressed their respect. His interest in improving the health of the wounded and giving them humane care, positioned as a symbol of change and hope. To such an extent that a group of fanatics, in 1855, organized and raised funds so that on their return to England reform civil hospitals and create a training center for nurses and auxiliaries of these, which he did in 1860.

He will return triumphantly to England on August 7, 1857 and will dedicate the remainder of his life to promote his profession, which he had exercised by direct revelation from God, received one day when being in the garden, surrounded by trees, meditating on her luck imposed by his parents, unhappy with his life of wealth. There the sun seemed to him get brighter and brighter and heard the voice of God saying that his life he belonged and that there was a job he had to do. He was very lucky not to have finished on a bonfire burned by witchcraft.

He then notes, with horror, that the government was satisfied with the conclusions arrived from investigations into the disastrous way in which it had been conducted the war, training 16,000 deaths from disease versus 4,000 from cause of combat. Annoyed by this comfortable position of the authorities, she throws herself into a statistical and thought adventure on health and disease, creating the first nursing conceptual model.

His maternal grandfather, William Smith, was a member of parliament for forty-six years and, like many members of his family, they were interested in politics. Is not wonder that Florence was deeply concerned with the great problems of your time.

She wrote in her book Notes on Nursing (1858) “Intuition is not worth without education, In the same way that a charlatan is considered a charlatan who cures without having studied, one must reject the nurse without specific education”. Also, it is she who lays the foundations deontological for the profession. “Nursing is an art and if it is intended to be an art, requires such exclusive devotion, such hard preparation, as the work of a painter or a sculptor; But how can dead cloth or cold marble compare with having to work with the living body, the temple of the spirit of God? It is one of the Fine arts; almost, I would say, the most beautiful of Fine Arts” reflected Florence Nightingale [3].

Praised and empowered, in 1883, she received the Royal Cross from the hands of Queen Victoria Red and in 1907 she became the first woman to receive the Kingdom Order of Merit United. In 1908, he was awarded the Keys to the City of London. The oath Nightingale performed by nurses upon graduation, was created in his honor in 1893 and International Nursing Day is celebrated on your birthday.

By then, aspiring nurses had to accept the Nightingale Oath (1893, created by Lystra Eggert Gretter) the one who symbolizes the ideal nurse, faithful physician’s assistant (devout) and willing to work hard (suffering) [4]. A International Code of Ethics is elaborated in 1953 by the CIE, based on this.

The other side of the coin:

“And wherever the need arises,

on any distant shore,

I ask no greater privilege,

to attend to her”.

Maria Juana Grant- Seacole.

Mary Jane Grant (1805 - 1881) was a Jamaican healer or healer who offered her services as a volunteer during the Crimean War. When the war started from Crimea, Ms Seacole (her husband's last name) went to London and introduced herself to serve as a nurse in the Secretary of War, other military agencies, and the same Florence Nightingale's nursing group [5]. The bullets were not killing as much as cholera, typhus and dysentery, and she could bring her knowledge on tropical diseases, thereby improving the health of many soldiers [6].

However, they all told him that his services were not necessary, request rejected due to racist prejudices, to which is added his traditional history of health care. “There were also other factors against her: she never prepared formally, she had no hospital experience and had passed the normal age of nursing” [7].

In his memoirs his disappointment is read: “The doubts and suspicions arose in my heart for the first and last time, thank heaven. Was it possible that American prejudices against color had some roots here? Did these ladies not accept my help because my blood flowed under a skin something else dark than theirs?” ([8], p. 126). Resolute, in her 50s, she made the trip of 6,500 km alone and on their own to get to the front, having to request economic aid to the settlers [9].

Unlike having a wealthy family, she was born to a Jamaican healer mother and from a Scottish officer in the British Army, at Kingston, Jamaica. His mother, a woman Free black woman, she ran a boarding house frequented by soldiers and sailors, some of them invalids and permanent residents of the pensioner. He applied traditional remedies Africans and Caribbean, herbs, to fight against yellow fever and cholera that suffered residents of the city. Mary learns gradually, by her side, first, by imitating her on dolls and then, assisting her with her 12 years, in the field.

In 1850, cholera swept the island of Jamaica and more than 31,000 people died. Mary worked with physicians as a budding nurse, gaining first-rate knowledge hand on the disease and developed a medicine that produced remarkable results [10]. She said the disease was contagious, but that was not the belief British doctors and it was for a long time. I also felt that cleanliness, fresh air and good food were important, though those ideas weren't very well received, even if they were practiced in the inns, in the hotels and in the houses Jamaicans.

In Crimea he worked tirelessly to care for the sick and wounded, often going to the battlefield to aid the fallen and comfort the dying. His bravery and compassion earned her the nickname “Mother Seacole” becoming well known throughout Crimea and in England itself. During the day he worked at his hotel to sick, as she always had and then volunteered with Florence Nightingale at night [11].

In her book, she highlights the many letters she received in appreciation of her care. His fame increased further when she was seen tending the wounded in the fields of battle, even while the battle was still taking place. Turned into a picture familiar with her colorful outfit: “yellow dress and blue hat with red ribbons and her famous medical bag” ([12], p. 45). He regularly carried his bags of provisions on a mule and his black bag of “medical equipment”, cottons, bandages, needle and yarn on a second mule and would head to the scene of battle. After its success, quickly passed into oblivion.

Her autobiography, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* [13] was very popular for a time. In it he recounts his adventures on trips to England, Panama, Bahamas, Haiti and Cuba and in each of his trips he opens posadas and receives, among his clients, the sick. “Some people, in fact, have called me a woman Ulysses”. It was one of the first travel memoirs published by a black woman. Written for a popular audience hungry for Crimean War stories, the book was a success. He quickly entered a second impression. Its various participation in the yellow fever epidemics made it known among the soldiers, sailors and civilians like the “Yellow Doctor”.

Queen Victoria, the future King Edward VII and his brother the Duke of Edinburgh helped with a second “Seacole Fund”. This was the one that provided a comfortable income for the rest of his life [14].

Long after the war ended, the British government awarded him the Medal of Crimea for services rendered to the sick and wounded [15]. It was Posthumously awarded the Order of Merit by the government of Jamaica (1991).

In 2004, she was proclaimed “the greatest black Briton”. In addition, there is a Foundation of Unesco that bears his name

And then the long-winded oblivion

“In history, memory and oblivion.

In memory and oblivion, life”.

Paul Ricoeur

Both Nightingale and Seacole were legally British. Mrs. Seacole disappeared public attention for more than 100 years, regressing its figure due to the advance of the racism and Victorian and American prejudices, always present and little disguised, which, probably, were the main cause to remove it from history. Erased from the Nursing books, her figure was buried under the light that was received Florence Nightingale.

There is no doubt that both of them contributed to health, but they both did since different possibilities. Nightingale acted based on what he knew as formal training medical and its changes did not disturb too much, limiting itself to management, philosophy, the statistics. The rigidity of the structure and the idea of order are very present in its thought. Seacole made it from an empyrean inherited and augmented by her own experience. Blacks received no formal education. You seem more interested in living without so stiff and flowing with life in freedom.

Reflections (Interrogations?)

It is worth wondering about the value that theory plays over practice (would it be less mother a mother who has not studied to take her child’s temperature in front of a mother nurse who has studied to position the thermometer and to read it as she does the first?)

The values nobility, generosity, compassion, are they exclusive to one race, one group? social, subculture and gender?

The image, the appearance, is it built by the dress or is it built by knowing how to be and do? This point was paramount for Florence, who wants to turn nurses into respected professionals, away from drunkards, slobs and prostitutes.

For a free, mature and happy woman like María Juana, dress in red, yellow, wear hat or caps decorated with blue ribbons was nothing more than respecting their ethnicity and her colorful personality. Obviously, she did not fit the sober and gloomy image that Nightingale intended.

Conclusion

Many nurses have received half stories as indoctrination, without the sieve critical judgment, affecting the art and science of care. In *The Satanic Verses*, Salman Rushdie [16] writes: “What are they? Well, wax figures, nothing more. Who are they? The history. Look, here’s Mary Seacole, who in Crimea did so much like another wonderful nurse but who, being dark skinned, was hardly seen, when side of the bright flame of Florence”.

Florence Nightingale is said to have viewed Maria Juana Grant as an independent rival and strong-willed ([17], p. 45) demonstrating an insane competition, for, after all, the two women did what they could under the beliefs and education they had. Maria Seacole demonstrated to understand the value of life, offering a model and practice of care that suits blacks and whites.

There is no doubt that history is written by those in power and it needs to be reconstructed. Memory is maintained by hegemonic repetition and Florence Nightingale appears as a messianic figure where his writings become The Bible Nurse. Instead, because of the color, Maria Seacole quickly passed into oblivion on land British, lasting longer among its Caribbean roots. These dead, there were no more living memory. Though forgotten for many years, Ms. Seacole has been rediscovered, but treated as a “wine and sandwich seller” by fans by Florencia Nightingale [18]. Now, inquire about the 38 stories of the Nightingale Angels. Inconclusion.

Disclosure

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