

Rhetoric as a Method of Historiography in a Modern Social Philosophy

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Abstract: The article is devoted to the discussion of modern historical knowledge methodological problems, the relation of form and content of historical knowledge, as well as identifying strengths and weaknesses of rhetoric as a methodological strategy of history. It is noted that historical science develops by means of the unique reduction and can not be deprived of the ontology. It is given the analysis of the Hegelian logic using in the historical knowledge. It is revealed that the historical representation is based on the logic of life, as it is lived in controversy. In the genesis of the philosophical thought the phenomenon of “historical consciousness” is examined. The levels of historical research in the H. White philosophy are analyzed.

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Introduction

The historical research in the postmodern cognitive scheme is extremely problematic. Self-description of himself, both present and past states by a man is a daunting intellectual activity, not devoid of false illusion of clarity [1]. The created image is fragile and is broken from any touch to it by rationally-logical thinking [2]. Knowledge about a person obtained by philosophizing does not lead neither to understanding of a human (generalized understanding of a man – a myth), nor even to demarcation of anthropological and social [3]. A man does not far advance in the knowledge of the nature, but apparently paid for it because of himself ignorance.

Main part

Even more difficult task is the attempt to describe the society because a person tries to testify about the social world, staying at the same time in the anthropological world. The fact that these worlds are very different in their structural-functional and dynamic characteristics obvious: a man is mortal, his life is short and is not comparable with a historical distance of the society; a man lives in a private world and very rarely becomes “a social man”, only inclusive, dot, accidentally when his anthropological intention is converged to sociocultural intentional movements [4]. A man lives his life without being able to observe and understand the whole of the society entirely: it is too tremendous and vast for him. Anthropological world is built from a small social environment, considering which a person produces inductive inferences about the whole society. Such knowledge based on incomplete induction, distorted judgments about human society very much,

appending gaps and ambiguities using mythological tools to the state of completion.

However, the most difficult is the work of the historic description, that is, attempts to obtain reliable knowledge of the past states of society [5]. From the point of view of formal logic, the writing of history has nothing to do with reality. Any existing object, phenomenon or process can not be described as “essential”, “casual”, “natural”, “likely”, “relative”, etc., as any of these characteristics – abstraction but the subject of description is concrete, that is, has an infinite set of irreducible connections. Historiography in its essence – a long chain of abstractions arbitrarily chosen by reductions, well or bad interconnected. And for this reason it is not a reliable evidence about past states of the object (society), but only an unreliable evidence that the subject is its author (possibly, collective) reflected on the dynamic side of life and has taken a number of intellectual efforts on ranking object predicates which he has seen.

In addition, a significant knowledge of the past society is difficult because of history creation ultimate goals. A man is attracted by paradoxical, unique, exceptions to the rules; a modern man is more interested in interpretation than in facts [6]. For the history as a science, all these evidence of anthropological world are superfluous, they clutter it with exceptions, shackled in a narrative format, depriving the slightest movement of a thought. In an effort to gain freedom, history science is moving towards a reduction of the unique and strives to keep the predominantly regular, recurring, universal. In the mind of a person, writing the history, there is a continuous struggle between the duty and the interest,

freedom and lack of freedom [7]. Moreover, beyond the boundaries of anthropological and present, a man is deprived a privilege to describe his observations. He denies them himself. Intruding into a dynamic dimension, he loses directions of a clear activity: one can not be certain, clear, complete in time. And for this reason a man is not able to give a final judgment about the past. He hypostatizes, existentially projecting his own "here and now" to choose time by him. And without ontological certainty he can not do, and can not find it anywhere, but to borrow it from him. History can not be deprived from ontology and not become reflective speculation. However, it can not fully capture by the ontology itself and turn into a narrative.

The logic of historical research and the phenomenon of historical consciousness

Historical research is really problematic. Historians think themselves empirical scientists, but this empiricism has nothing to do with laboratory experiments. They think of themselves as theorists, but the content of history is not systematical and philosophically theoretical. They think of themselves as they are analysts, but do not have the object of analysis, since working with images and representations.

The above reasons, it would seem to be enough to infer that the history as science is impossible. However, the practice shows the opposite: history is a science, historians reconstruct and describe past events, assign them certain values. And the society anyway shares these values. Moreover, social theorists, speculating about historical knowledge, have learned how to resolve and remove the logical contradiction between the unique and universal. Hayden White describes it in terms of replacing logic into rhetoric (or the introduction of an alternative kind of logic, the logic of praxis) [8]. He believes, that the use of historical knowledge of Hegel's logic is not only superfluous but also harmful, because the logic of Hegel is highly formalized practical thinking. Relations and communications of people, describing by history, are not syllogistical, it is enthymeme, not following the rules of strict output.

The appearance of praxis logic is not modern. J.S. Mill, and Hegel, for example, believed that for the practical description of social life less categorical logic is needed, because the logic of praxis can not follow the laws of identity and non-contradiction. And this type of thinking can not be axiologically negatively evaluated, as it meets the quality of its referent: the society itself constantly creates situations in which a person is forced to think and act contradictory and inconsistent. (This thesis, stated by H. White, reflects the key contradiction, on which

"vulgar" Marxists stumbled, believed that if it was found a contradiction in the argument, then such argument must be destroyed. Probably it should not be, because otherwise we get a tool which is not able to describe a life). People constantly think, live and act in contradictions, contradictions compensated their lives. Consequently, the historical representation should not rely on formal logic, but on the logic of life, living in the contradictions and systematic deviations from the rules. Moreover, the description of such life should not be narrative but could keep freedom of improvisation. The greatest danger of narrative theory of history may lie in the fact that the story will lose the status of a classic academic discipline and cease to play its vital role in the cultural and political life.

One of the important discoveries, allowing historical writing legitimately usurp the status of reliable knowledge, given these conditions, it became the description of German philosophers such phenomenon as "historical consciousness" [9]. This is, to put the term by P. Bourdieu, a special symbolic medium, a medial instance of values, decoded and hidden meanings about the past, which allows speak about the world in different languages to share and match meanings [10]. As Protagoras noted at his time, language is arbitrary in relation to the world, which it says about [11], and especially the history language is arbitrary, because the world of which it says does not exist. The truth of such speech is not established objectively, but intersubjectively – people certify it, those who have the authority to do this. In historical knowledge there is no truth, separated from the representation, as this is clearly proven by linguistic philosophy in the twentieth century [12]. Therefore, intuitively fearing to call history writing not the law, but the rhetoric, it must be mentioned that the rhetoric is largely consistent with the goals of historical research, because the values are not opened (detected), but are made [13].

H. White shows two "faces" of historical research, that is, two levels, the first of which is called "scientific", and the second – "artistic". On the first stage historian engaged in scientific research chronicles sources. In this sense he acts as an empiricist and an analyst. But beginning to pick up facts and arguments for the production of the story, he ceases to be in this role. On the second stage a historian produces "a plot", explains certain facts by his own way, often in the ideological plane. The problem is that it is possible to speak about historical science with regard to the first part of the work. And the second both in form and content particularly narrative. But the most unpleasant discovery for scientists is that these two levels can not be separated from each other, because, as it was mentioned above,

the truth in a social theory needs representation. That is, taken separately, they obsessively.

In historical research concept "point of view" performs as the main epistemological unit, the narrative judgment, which can be accepted or rejected, but it can not be challenged because it is such a unique experience of the author. And because there are always opposing views, exclusive is this one [14].

Conclusion

Thus, the discovery of historical consciousness as a discussion of the intersubjective field is very important, because judgments are not valuable in themselves and not absolute in themselves, they have an advisory, problematic nature and need the certificate. And understanding how a history forms has more relevance to the theory of judgment, the rhetorical concept of discourse, than to classical science and formal logic. Historical consciousness as a part of these public consciousness creates a semantic field, in which it may occur the conventions of historical meanings and values. And it is in this plane in turn derives from the history from literature disassociation, ideology and philosophy.

However, the rhetoric, despite many ways of using to the modern historical writing, is not at all a favorite method of historians. They always resist it and anyone, who indicates its availability, and are more willing to confess the abuse of formal logical speculation, than to be responsible for the production of handwritten values. Values, as noted by J. Ryuzen, easily dehistoricise history, easily turn it into a religious, ideological or artistic creativity [15]. Evaluative discourse in history is also fraught with the fact that historical writing is assigned with opposite values. That is, it is described and emphasized not what had been done, but what could not be done, did not have time to do. And such judgments are also conventional and meaningfully inseparable from meaningful representation. These are problematical judgments, which are often represented by metaphors and they also can not be true in terms of formal logic. The tool of their production, despite the reluctance of historians to admit it, was and remains rhetoric.

Apparently, in the historical study of the relationship of truth / error should not become strict disjunction relations, as in the boundaries of this dialectical contradiction between the truth and falsehood, most value judgments lie, made by

historians as a response to the requirement of the society to present a representation.

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