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STRATEGIES OF SYNTHESIS IN NARRATIVE HISTORICAL WRITING

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Summary. In the article synthesis of theory and research programs, synthesis of world-views, synthesis of languages are defined as basis strategies of synthesis in narrative historical writing, historiographical styles and types of historical narrative are accented as revealing of synthesis in historical writing. Based on research of H. White's and J. Rusen's approaches the synthesis is identified as a promising in the historical work on the criterion grounds the synthesis of formation of structure or content of narrative text.

Keywords: interdisciplinary synthesis in history; «double (binocular) vision»; linguistic synthesis in historical text; formation of structure or content of the historical text; historical thinking; historical memory; historical experience.

Today there are paradigmatic shifts in the field of historical science. Accordingly, the historians face new challenges and at the same time there is a reformulation and search of new solutions within those key subjects of the historical discourse, with have already arisen in it in 1950th. The presence of different theoretical approaches to interpretation of the past in history leads to need for their synthesis in theory and practice. A questions of synthesis of scientific approaches is not only a problem of history, rather it is common to philosophy, sociology and other disciplines of social and human cycle and in due time acquired the relevance in each of them. However, exactly in history it became especially acute and philosophers and historians offered a series of productive decisions in this area.

I. Nikolaeva is examining interdisciplinary synthesis matters in contemporary historical scholarship. The researcher attributes such synthesis to historical focusing on the new objectivity and defines it as a combination of methodological resources of macro- and micro-levels of historical search and appeal to both rational and unconscious sphere of human existence. She shares the position of L. Repina for determining backbone strategy integration / synthesis of historical knowledge, the core of with is «search for unifying principle in construction of the past» [8, p. 11].

Researchers are studying separate experience of methodological synthesis in historiography. Particularly, A. Gurevich and B. Mohilnitskyi studied the experience that that has been gained by School «Annals» [2, p. 6]. T. Romadina appealed to



the synthesis of research strategies in the works of M. Bloch – founder of the School «Annals» – and focused on use of the resources of comparative method in his research [11]. Yu. Vermenych speculates about of the new methodological synthesis in history. He believes that one way to achieve this synthesis is the combination in scientific cognition of world-system and civilization approaches, as well as macro-, meso- and micro-approaches and offset of historians' focus to regional history [1]. Yu. Troickiy outlines a combination of different discursive strategies in historical writing and formation upon this basis of a new type of historiographical writing as a promising direction of a methodological synthesis in historiography [15]. In V. Kervov's opinion methodological synthesis should be carried out on the basis of combination of traditional and postmodern approaches [3].

Some scientists study how methodological synthesis in historical scholarship was applied to various subjects under research. In particular, D. Chernienko chooses in this sense the ethnic image in history as subject of research [16]. I. Nikolaeva investigates charisma of French kings in early medieval Europe, mentality and historical personage [8].

Idea of methodological synthesis in historical science appeared at School «Annals» from its inception as a methodological contrast to the «narrative history». «Event-history» is a direction in historiography, with has been prevailing from the 19th century, and its result in the form of historical writing – historical narrative – has been criticized because different aspects of social life in it are separated by impervious framework of case studies. The principle of complex analysis of social phenomena and interdisciplinary became basis curriculum principles of School «Annals». Another feature that distinguishes of School «Annals» from of «narrative history» in historiography is to focus of the former on the «long cycle» of social life.

However, social history, which was mostly produced by School «Annals» later revealed the narrowness of the methodological basis and tools in the study of the historical past. Exclusion of political history and history of nations from historical analysis, non-acquaintance of role of case in history, fragmentarity and, therefore, lack of integral image of the past, «tyranny of facts» – these are just some of the drawbacks of this direction mentioned by L. Stone [13, p. 160–163].

Historical research being guided by the program narrative approach can reveal relevant topics of history. Coverage of topics related to identification of an individual historical measurement and historicity of human existence, in historical science conforms to guidelines of narrative philosophy of history: to understand and interpret historical past. Today due to the «narrative turn» in history the question of synthesis of approaches, theories, methods on the basis of narrative historical writing raises. The purpose of the article is to study the basic synthesis strategies of the narrative historical writing and to identify the ways, upon with the present synthesis is grounded.

Narrative historians' work in condition of structural approach followers' criticism and new challenges before historical scholarship change the established practices of narrative historical writing. Understanding of the complexity of insight of the past in the narrow framework of the traditional historical narrative was also among the representatives of the «new intellectual history». L. Repina, referring to reasoning of G. Spiegel, observes: «...it is unclear how to describe multidimensional, vaguely articulated dynamics of social practice, which is devoid of a dominant vector, in traditional forms of the historical narrative» [9, p. 19].

L. Stone, like to H. White and F. Ankersmit, treats narrative as «...Narrative is taken to mean organization of material in a chronological order and focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit



with sub-plots” [18, p. 3], and as «a mode of historical writing, but it is a mode which also affects and is affected by the content and the method» [18, p. 4], and as well as text, with «is... directed by some “pregnant principle”, and with possesses a theme and an argument» [18, p. 4].

One of synthesis options is implemented non on the basis of subordination to a specific strategy or synthesis of epistemological strategies on the basis of a single, dominant one, but taking into consideration the change of the objectivity of historical discourse, the subject of the historical research. Methodological synthesis in a historical narrative text is stipulated by some objectivity that is recognized by scientific community as relevant. Characterizing the priority directions of modern historiographical discourse, Yu. Vermenych traces its thematization within the 20th century. He identifies the following broad topics of historical research: the first half of the 20th century – global studies represented by O. Spengler and A. Toynbee’s concepts of cyclic development and formation approach in Marxist social science theory, in the second half of the century – focus on local history, at the beginning of the 21st century – historian return to the problems of globalistics. The last period is qualitatively different by its content from the ideas that prevailed in the philosophy of history in the first half of the 20th century – in contemporary historical discourse, according to Yu. Vermenych, dominated models “universal history”, “new international history”, “transnational history” [1, p. 12].

It is clear that an interdisciplinary synthesis in the historical research is not an end in itself: in every particular study it is conditioned by subject of the research and must to meet the goal and objectives of the study. I. Nikolaeva affirms: “The problem of historical synthesis is only outwardly related to the matter of coordination of different disciplinary methods, but, in fact, it has deeper methodological

grounds” [8, p. 11]. The use of methods and concepts borrowed from other sciences in the historical research foresees a preliminary work on their adaptation to the specific research purposes and testing. First of all, two conditions are important for interdisciplinary analysis must be taken into account: these are – “internal coherence of concepts and tools borrowed from other disciplines, and their compatibility with theories and methods selected for analysis of the specific historical problem” [8, p. 33–34].

The question of determination of philosophical theoretical directions, which can be the foundation of the research either mutually exclusive or complementary, is usually solved in practice of historical research. As for the theoretical developments in this area, idea of synthesis of hermeneutics and structural semantics within the limits of development of concept of «double meaning», with was developed by P. Ricoeur in his work “The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics” (1969) [10].

Another strategy of narrative synthesis, which is realized in the process of the research and objectified in historical text, refers to the synthesis of paintings of the world. In this case, the history is represented through based a set of problems based on double subjective measurement as an unexpressed presence in historical texts of present (time of historian) or, as it is defended by J. Rusen, «the present of conditional», and as subjectivity that belongs to the time exploring researched. On this occasion, A. Lubskyi expresses his opinion, referring to A. Gurevich, about stereoscopy of the picture of the story represented in such a way: “Due to a combination of “internal and external” descriptions a historian gets a “double (binocular) vision” one is based on analysis of the past flown through a categorical grid (so-called “scientific understanding of history”); another vision is the result of perception of the life by people of the past that being studied.



These two pictures, with in principle cannot coincide, however, must be coordinated with each other" [5, p. 152]. The combination of a great erudition and a bright imagination in historian's research activity is important for comprehension of the past in the spirit of this installation.

According to Yu. Lotman, "standpoint (...) is directly correlated with such issues in the secondary modeling systems as position of the author of the text, the problem of truth and the problem of personality" [4, p. 254]. Modeling of the world in the text (to characterize this method of action Yu. Lotman uses such terms as "type of outlook", "picture of the world", "model of culture" [4, p. 254–256], has resulted in the presence in the letter of the certain system of values, and every text is ideological in this sense.

Another aspect of narrative synthesis strategy is a combination terminological and metaphorical language in the historical texts. Yu. Troickiy examines this problem using R. Bart's thesis about combination of «system» of belligerent "historical languages" in the text [15, p. 160]. Indeed, the trend towards metaphor promotes a deep understanding of the past – it is confirmed by different functions of metaphors in the historical text. According to Ye. Topolskiy, "...metaphor is one of means of conceptualization in the historiography" [14, p. 196]. Comparing various authors' position he focuses on heuristic, cognitive (interpretation) and figurative functions of metaphor distinguished by M. Mandelbaum and notes that "condition for implementation of figurative function is obviously an interpretational competence of the recipient related to his linguistic competence" [14, p. 203]. Consequently, metaphorization of the past is tangent to deep layers of reflection over the past that are related to familiarization with the language, culture, mentality and time, with provides rather taking roots in culture than an outsider's view. Furthermore, "...metaphor is a specific abbreviated state-

ment of opinion, which allows to perform a laconic representation of complex information necessary to construct of narrative historian" [14, p. 197].

When studying the linguistic synthesis available in the historical text, Yu. Troickiy is guided by approaches of D. Rice and P. Schuffer, who "...identified four types of rhetorical strategies in the area of figurative discourse: metaphorical, metonymical, synecdochical and ironical" [15, p. 160]. In his opinion, the combination of these strategies in the historical text provides a description of the desired fullness. H. White defined the same types of rhetorical strategies in his work "Metahistory. The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe" (1973) justifying his concept of historical style of a historians or a philosopher of history. Each of the above rhetorical strategies performs its function in historical text. H. White defined the historical text as an integral one not on the ground of mechanical combination of different type of theoretical strategies. He defined the ideal types of historical texts based on the study of their structural content by applying the following criteria to them, or, in his word, "the following levels of conceptualization in the historical work:

- 1) chronicle;
- 2) story;
- 3) mode of emplotment;
- 4) mode of argument;
- 5) mode of ideological implication" [19, p. 5].

In the context of H. White's logic of historical texts construction a conclusion is made that the use in the one type of text of the components of other types would destroy of historiographical style. H. White don't realize the narrative synthesis under the principle of "combining all", as a consequence there is eclecticism, but under the principle of integrity to be implemented in particular type of historical narrative (for example, in the second part of the above work he examines possible ways of historical realism implementation (as Romance,



as Comedy, as Tragedy, as Satire) in works of Alexis de Tocqueville, Leopold von Ranke, Jules Michelet, Jacob Burckhardt) [19].

J. Rusen identifies the following principles of formation of historical content ensuring presentation of the past in the historical text: “a rising base memory, representation about the passage of time, form of communication, the concept of identity” [12, p. 28]. Application of the proposed criteria enables typology of historical texts. Types of historical content formation distinguished by J. Rusen – traditional, exemplary, critical and genetical – are characterized as historically modifiable, although the author typology does not exclude at present an opportunity of their co-existence. One of the applications of this typology J. Rusen defines “to classify historical works” and gives examples of such classification [17, p. 93].

Synthesis of the historical text, which is the result professional historians’ scientific research, is aimed at strengthening of the integrity and content of presentation of the past. “History... is the problem of memory, reality, truth”, – says P. Ricoeur [7, p. 178]. So, in the historical narrative these problems are intertwined and require both differentiation and synthesis, which would be carried out on the new basis.

Broadly speaking, the historical narrative is a unity of historical thinking, historical memory and historical experience. Historical thinking reflects the view to the past, which prevails among contemporaries. Special attention should be paid to J. Rusen’s analysis of thematization in the philosophy of the history of developmental peculiarities of historical thinking to contemporary ideas about dominance of “verbal procedure” in historical thinking [12, p. 34]. Historical memory “interferes” in the field of historical narrative, as it provides connection of the past with the present, in other words – “mental continuity of generations”. It allows to interpret the present and to place it in the time continuum, its inclusion in the network of

cause-and-effect relationships. Historical memory makes event important, distinguishes variable ones and actualizes them [12, p. 34]. However, there are inconsistencies between on the fact-oriented history and of the memory work: “A gap of memory and fact occurs at three levels:

1) *documentary*. These are traces, which have been converted into the archives. Here one can ask questions about the truth. However, evidence can be untrue;

2) *explanatory (explication)*. This is a long list of events, facts that organize. At the same time this is criticism of economic, political (economy, politics) events, role of the personality in the history. Here begins the history of compromising interpretation;

3) *biographical* (history of periodic, comparative publications demonstrates this gap). At this level the totalitarianism in the history is possible” [7, p. 178].

Prerequisite of historical content formation / creation is an experience of the previous life of bygone: “Before competence of reflexively fulfilled formation of content can show itself in the relevant narrative practices, subject has to get it as social reality of his life” [12, p. 60]. Historical experience may acquire positive or negative values depending on the current estimates of events associated with it. To understand ourselves in history (whoever was the subject of awareness – an individual or the whole nation) both positive and negative historical experience (but in different ways) should be integrated as well as experience of others, who are tangential to our historical existence. According to J. Rusen, this is especially important in the process of acquisition of historical identity and formation of historical culture. The historical experience is involved in the development of historical content, together with historical thinking and historical memory: “Historical experience will loses its meaning, if it loses touch with other dimensions of historical content” [12, p. 69]. Narrative synthesis in the text of such kind, in with content the above components are combined,



in our opinion, is to a considerable degree realized in the works, the way of historical writing of which can be determined as “a new historical narrative”.

The article discussed the strategy of synthesis in historical writing, how they act at the level of separate narrative text, however, this range of problems is not exhausted with such raising of the question. The broader approach may involve the synthesis of historical writing of one historical event or history or subject of historical research, with is localized in space and represented by various researches and, consequently, in different text, with have to “carry on a dialogue”. Thus, the narrative synthesis should be considered not only in relation to a particular text, but to the whole set of texts united with a common theme in representation of the image of the past.

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