

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ORAL SPEECH IN PARALLEL WITH THE MEMORIALISTIC TEXT

PhD Candidate. Mihaela Diana COSTEA
”Babeş-Bolyai” University of Cluj-Napoca

ABSTRACT:

THE HISTORY OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WAS MARKED BY EVENTS THAT HAVE BROUGHT DRAMATICAL CHANGES IN THE EVOLUTION OF HUMAN KIND. THE INTENSITY OF THESE EVENTS CREATES A PRESSURE BETWEEN WHAT IS OFFICIALY KNOWN FROM THE HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS AND WHAT CAN SOME WITNESSES THAT ARE STILL ALIVE TELL, BEING ACTIVE AND LIVING PARTAKERS OF THESE MOMENTS.

FOR THE RECONSTITUTION OF THIS RECENT HISTORY THE ORAL HISTORY WAS USED, A HISTORY WHICH COLLECTS IN AN ORGANIZED WAY THE TESTIMONIALS RESULTED FROM THE PARTAKERS' FEELINGS, PERFORMED OUTSIDE THE INSTITUTIONALIZED HISTORY.

SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THIS APPROACH, THE MEMORIALISTIC SOURCES HAVE AN IMPORTANT, AND AT THE SAME TIME, COMPLEMENTARY ROLE. ION HOLBAN CONSIDERS THAT THE SUBJECTIVE WRITINGS PROPOSE THE INTERSECTION OF MORE TIME POINTS: A TIME OF LECTURE (WHICH IS BEING VERIFIED MANY TIMES BY INTRODUCING THE READER IN THE SPEECH), AND A TIME OF WRITING (DEFINED AS "TEMPORARY CATEGORY CARRYING THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PACT, WHICH NECESSARILY ASSUMES THAT THE MESSAGE RECEIVER IS THE SUBJECT OF LECTURE") AND A TIME OF MEMORY (WHICH BELONGS TO THE SELF). THIS LAST ONE WILL BE DIFFERENT FROM THE TIME OF LECTURE (WHICH TARGETS THE READER) AND IT WILL BELONG TO THE SELF WHO RECALLS AND FINDS HIMSELF BY APPEALING AT THE 1ST PERSON OF THE IMPERFECT INDICATIVE VERB. THE NARRATOR SELF BECOMES CONTEMPORARY WITH THE TIME OF LIVING, RELOCATING HIMSELF IN "THE TIME OF ACTION"

KEYWORDS: ORAL HISTORY, ORAL DISCOURSE, THE MEMORIALISTIC TEXT

XX-th century's new orientations of history suggest an approach of the „whole end part of the contemporary history”, through the memory which is activated by verbalisation which generates historical narrations. The phrase recent history [1]– oral history validates the type of historiography in the context of a double proximity: the temporal proximity of the studied subject and the proximity towards the event. The new way of making history, although it capitalizes „the alive archives”, it does not privilege the oral before the document, but it equates the two sources in the reconstruction process of the historical facts. [2]

Regarding the oral history reported to the traditional historiography, it is additional through the extended sources and the vision on reality- history, but, in the same time it establishes a parallel lecture of the past through the capitalization of the “living history”. [3]

If the traditional history has a purpose of finding great facts of the past and of their accreditation as everybody's facts, the oral history brings to the fore the incidence between the great history and the biographies of the people, this history being told by the people's stories. Through these stories you not only get the fragments of the "reality - history", but also new grounds of research which open analitic and interpretative directions not well enough exploited. The oral history's speech, is organized in the memory, bringing up the problems regarding the history – memory [4].

Through it's methodology and the new reconstruction grid and interpretation of the past, the oral history willofer new themes and research fields, innovating the historiographical speech promoting "marginalized" themes, of the hidden histories in which the life experiences of the people were beyond the official history, institutionalized. [5] The oral history is inevitably subjective, its subjectivity being crucial to the understanding of the meaning we give to the past and present. The great stake for the quality research and the oral history is the unveiling of the experiences lived. The oral inquiry gives the advantage of having a contact with the other people's world in it's whole complexity.

From the begging we have to say that the oral sources we talk about today are oposing a public history speech of yesterday. It's one of the main arguments of the necessity of using them in the current romanian histography, defining two of their fundamental characteristics: the complementarity and the alternative of the traditional historical sources, especially when they prove to be unavailable for certain periods of time or for certain subjects in our recent history. If the public speech este the one that rumors ideas, information, concepts that belong to a society or a culture through authorized voices, in the communist period, history's public speech is nothing else but the oficial speech of the power. Oral surces, in parallel with the memorialistic text, through their content of living and participation, are just the reverse of the stuck sentence and their urgent recovery. [6]

The „momorial,, concept comes from the term: „ „memorial” and is a literary species, related with the journey notes and memoirs which tell the scientific observations, memories or personal impresions of the facts in which someone has participated or that have happened during somebody's lifetime. Based on this definition, we can say that the „memorialist ,, is the writer that composes memories. The memorialist identifies with the *witness*. The witness is the character that, through it's own memories recalls in the present, a past- which is his past, too. Sometimes, this witness is a writer of memories; unequal as a value in general, but sometimes very good and useful, the memories humanize the historical speech in a way that few other sources can. [7]

So, the memorialistic speech is a writing, autobiographical, in which the author presents, stories, events, small or significant facts, people, personalities, etc, all known directly, without the recount circumstances being reconstructed through scientific procedures (archives, documents)

Paul Zumthor thinks that at the base of the historical writing is the living memory, that can exist only through storyrecounting, creating this „linguistic place that facilitates any trade between me and the other” [8]. As a real *homo narrativus* [9], the person will write about the encounter between history and personal destiny, may it be oral (through interview), or in writing (through the texts about itself) . As a guardian of the memories [10], the writing will provide information about who is the man that participates in history in such a way that the person (the narrator, the character) seems to be the center of the history. [11]

The memorialistic is a part of the old critics called the *confessions's literature*[12]. In the memorialistic field there are: autobiographies, memoirs, intimate journals, confessions, journey notes and mail. Tudor Vianul called these “subjective literature”, Silvian Iosifescucalled it „ frontier literature” while Eugen Simion named them „biographical genders”.The memoirs, confessions and the literary autobiographies are retrospective living moments, filtered by the mature person’s mind and seen from the perspective of conclusions drawn from the life experience , so they have to be treated with a certain suspicion , imposed by the subjective substance but it’s not necessary that a preconceived doubtful attitude should hover on the authentication level. [13]

D. Bertaux states there are three dimensions of the reality with which de memory carrier operates: an actual historical reality which gathers the objective facts, the *semantic reality* which denominates the evaluations, the existing value judgements post – event, and a speech reality,formulated in the self-referenced speech about own life course, includingthe historical, objective and semantic realities which implies subjective rationalisations.

Depending on the type of speech and articulation style, on the channel that transmits the message (written or oral), the autoreferential speeches divided the exposure regimes into: the written document’s literature – which built it’s meaning, challenged or not, starting from the graphical signs of the codes and offer a final image, and the oral witness literature -which is basedon challenges, giving an ongoing tabulation .

Parts of the written document literature are: autobiography, confession, the letter, the journal and the gulag’s memorial.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

The definition is found in the etymology of the word. The word *autobiography* comes from the Greek language and is made out of three lexical segments: the first one is *auto*, which defines the personal possession, the second is *bios* which means*life* and the last one, *graphy*, that means to write.

So, we can define the word *autobiography* as a personal writing about the events of your own life. Or, the autobiography is a recounting, as a story, written and presented at first person about events, as they happened.

From this point of view, the autobiography always represents a written speech, although Dan Lungu mentions that there are researchers saying that autobiography is the oral recountingof life [14].

THE CONFESSION

Confession is a literary writing that can have two meanings: a religious one, in which case the writing has the belief of a branch from the orthodox church, or a laic one, referring to the confession of thoughts and feelings about the author’s personal life. In both cases, one gets in the privacy of the person who writes it, reflecting facts about the inner self.

THE LETTER

The letter is an intermediary species, at the crossroad between the old letter and the pure literary species. [15] The letter’s transformation in literature (when it’s not written with such a finality) takes place when the hazard takes it out of the informal circuit which it was meant for [16], leaving it in the public (cultural) space. One of the oposition forms againstthe Ceausescu regime were the “open letters”.

THE JOURNAL

The journal is a form of daily notes about events lived very recently. Unlike the memorialistic text, in which the moment you write follows the one when it happened, in the journal the writing is usually done right after the events took place.

In a regime of imposed interdictions by the communist period, the journal, that can be a sign of clandestine and resistance through writing, will become a later revenge, by publishing, it's a “ sign of all the bad times, of a chaotic history, of the lack of freedom of expression”. [17]

Doing a short analogy between the autobiography, journal and memoirs, we can say that the memoirs author is like a double witness: of his existence and of his time. In the autobiography and the intimate journal, the speech is about the man himself (the one who narrates), and in the memoirs, the narrator tells about the world he lives in.

Another difference is that in the memoirs, *the pact with the history* prevails, while in the autobiography and the journal the *author's pact* is essential.

„THE SMALL MEMORIALISTIC”

It would be unfair not to remind ourselves of the „small memorialistic” made out of notes and remarks, and of their importance in the history, sociology, psychology, etc. For instance, for the XVIII-th and XIX-th centuries, the information gathered by the priests that were the elite of the Romanian villages are full of notes about life, cultural and professional aspects, even notes that belong to great personalities of the Romanian cultures.

THE GULAG'S MEMORIAL

The freedom of finding your own identity asserted by oral speech and text, so the memorialistic works about detention, that were published from 1990, are the result of the rehabilitation of the individual biography.

Of course, the fundamental feature of these writings represent the unveiling of the truth about the communist prisons and communist system. *The unveiling of the truth* has different general subfeatures for all of this type of memoirs. *The dialogs appear very seldom* in this literature. This is because of the bet that the memorialists made with themselves, i.e. to be very faithful to the reality.

Detention memories offer the demonized but real image of the late communist regime. Regarding forgiveness, some seem willing to offer it, others don't.

In conclusion, we can say that the encounter between history and personal destiny is useful from the oral history's perspective, „taking advantage” of the eternal „obsessions of the historiographic speech to reconstruct the past in an objective, and truthful way”. [18]

Recovering pieces of life reunited in a coherent ensemble which the subject attributes values and significance to, the oral history accesses a type of identity speech through which we can follow the formation of self, as a process in its confrontation with the condition of social environment and history. Life's story becomes a remarkable source of revealing social frameworks of memory, surrounding the identity. The uniqueness of the speech about self does not isolate the person, but it relates him to other biographies, suggesting human interactions.

The memory process depends not only on the individual understanding, but also on the interest, the memory is exact when the interest and social need are involved. On the other hand,

the rememoration is an active process, the desire and disposition being important aspects involved in this phenomenon, relevant for the oral work. The memory can be prevented through many ways: the denial of reliving traumatic events, the conscious avoiding of some disagreeable facts or even an unconscious repression.

Of note, the memories which we keep along time, years or tens of years, aren't just plain memories, but exceptional memories, that due to the intensity which we have lived them, the importance we have gave them, the consequences they had (they changed major things in our way of being, acting or thinking) and the frequency which we rememored them, the memories stay well anchored in our autobiographical memory. The scientific research has proven that the *intensity and the surprise* which the event was lived, the *importance* given to the event, or it's consequences on a long term and the *frequency* of reliving the event are the most important predictors of the consistency and accuracy of our autobiographical memories.

History is the one that gives birth to the participants consciousness to the historical act and any form of expression, either direct or symbolic has it's own relevance.

Oral history does not mean only the alternative of a type of documentation or a historical documentation, but is in the first place, a new way of reference to history.

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