NARRATIVE TOLERANCE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CONCEPTUAL TOOLS OF THE NARRATIVE THEORY OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE[1]

Olena Mishalova

https://doi.org/10.61095/815-0047-2026-1-280-317

© Olena Mishalova
PhD, Associate Professor of the Philosophy Department, Kryvyi Rih State Pedagogical University
E-mail: elenmishalova@gmail.com
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5469-6451

Abstract. The article is devoted to the elaboration of the concept of narrative tolerance as a conceptual and methodological tool for processing the past, based on such conceptual grounds of the narrative theory of historical knowledge as constructivism, methodological openness, instrumentalist approach to the understanding of historical narrative, revisionism and perspectivism. Narrative tolerance is proposed to be understood as a refusal to impose one's historical narrative on others (in accordance with the principle that "history is written by the victors"), as well as the possibility of including the voices of different historical agents in the narrative and taking into account different points of view without reducing the overall conclusions of the investigation to a "common denominator", especially in situations with long-term historical conflicts.

It is pointed out that the historical past — the historical reality as we know it through historical works — is always, to a large extent, an "augmented reality" to the real past. The components that a historian "adds" to the real past, creating the historical past in the process of researching, explaining and interpreting the available material, include theories, methodologies, and conceptual apparatus that are modern and regularly updated. The main mechanism for creating and changing the historical past as an

1 This research has been funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation), Walter Benjamin Programme, project number 527615740.

augmented reality is the historical narrative. Thus, a set of historical narratives can be viewed as a way and mechanism of narrative engineering, a permanent process of re-description and re-evaluation of existing historical knowledge in the light of new data or theoretical and methodological approaches within the contemporary humanities.

Keywords: narrative, narrative theory of historical knowledge, past, tolerance, "piecemeal engineering".

Introduction

The fundamental principles of a democratic rule-of-law state are guaranteed by the force of law. It is a widely recognized thesis. But laws are written and followed by people who live in a particular historical and cultural context. In this regard, it is interesting to examine whether the narrative theory of historical knowledge can also be a foundation for the development of democracy and a culturally inclusive state, as well as contribute to socio-cultural (historical and religious) reconciliation in modern fragmented societies and between societies. I argue that the narrative theory of historical knowledge provides us with a whole system of effective conceptual and methodological tools for dealing with conflicting narratives and contradictory historical information, especially given the practices of modern hybrid information wars.

The narrative philosophy of history within the analytic tradition emerged in the works of Arthur Danto, Louis Mink, and Hayden White as a response to the attempts of some early analytic philosophers to automatically apply positivist methodology to the study of the past. The natural sciences have benefited from its employment, and this fact has inspired philosophers such as Karl Hempel (Hempel 1942) and William Drey (Dray 1959) to try to implement the basic positivist principles (empiricism, the unity of science and scientific methods, the principle of verification, the objectivity of scientific knowledge, and the possibility of studying human society using scientific methods) in a more "softened" form in the methodology of studying the past. In this way, they strived to preserve the idea of the unity of science and to protect the scientific position of historical disciplines in the face of the popular neo-positivism of the Vienna Circle with its theses about the primacy of experiential knowledge (based on what "is directly given to us") and the method of logical analysis (which should be applied to empirical material), which set a certain limit to the content of legitimate science (Karnap & Han & Neirat 2012: 105).

In a broader context, the emergence and development of the narrative theory of historical knowledge meant a fruitful attempt to help historians to restore the dignity of history as a science. The main role in this process, of course, was to be played by historians, according to Hayden White. In his opinion, the "burden of the historian" in our time is to restore the dignity of the historical studies on a basis that will make them consonant with the goals and objectives of the modern intellectual context, that is, to transform the historical sciences in such a way as to be able to positively participate in the liberation of modernity from the "burden of history" (White 1966: 124). Before the First World War, historical studies were at the center of humanitarian and social research, and great hopes and expectations of an almost enlightened nature were pinned on them. However, the unprecedented destruction of the two world wars and the crimes against humanity that accompanied them clearly demonstrated the futility of such expectations. Therefore, it is quite understandable that history has become a major target for criticism by scholars and philosophers, as well as artists and writers. Hayden White writes about this as follows:

> "The First World War did much to destroy what remained of history's prestige among both artists and social scientists; for the war seemed to confirm what Nietzsche had maintained two generations earlier. History, which was supposed to provide some sort of training for life, which was supposed to be "philosophy teaching by examples", had done little to prepare men for the coming of the war; it had not taught them what would be expected of them during the war; and when the war was over historians seemed incapable of rising above narrow partisan loyalties and making sense of the war in any significant way (White 1966: 120).

White states that in the middle of the twentieth century historians found themselves in a very difficult situation and had to admit, first of all to themselves, that it was an impossible task to explain the world wars for strictly historical reasons (White 1966: 120). Moreover, history deals with the study of the past; it does not provide any mechanisms for predicting the future. Arthur Danto makes this point quite clearly in his books and essays. Such ambitions as predicting the future, in his opinion, are the ambitions of the substantive philosophy of history, which he considers to be an inherently false way of thinking about the past, since it claims to be a complete description of all history (both past and future), which is significantly different from even the most extensive historical texts (Danto 2007: 4, 15). Danto means that substantive philosophers of history tend to take the works of professional

historians as data (factual materials) for their constructions, applying narrative structure and practices of interpreting past events in a similar way to historians. But whereas historians study only the past and become interested in the future only when it has become the past, substantive philosophers go further and often extrapolate their narrative structures into the future, telling the story in advance, i.e., they try to write a story before it can be told in principle. In essence, they try to write a history of events before they have even happened and provide an account of the past based on a "fictional" understanding of the future (Danto 2007: 11, 13).

In this aspect, Danto's view is in line with Karl Popper's criticism of historicism regarding the falsity and illegitimacy of the idea of predicting the future development of human history. Popper proceeds from the following statements: the course of human history is strongly influenced by the growth of human knowledge, we cannot predict the future development of our scientific knowledge using rational or scientific methods, and therefore we cannot predict the future course of human history. Popper considers the following thesis to be self-evident: if there is such a thing as growing human knowledge, then we cannot anticipate today what we will know only tomorrow (to prescribe in advance, as Danto would say). Thus, no society can scientifically predict the future state of its knowledge and the course of history. Any prediction is possible only as a retrovision, that is, after the events themselves have taken place (Popper 1986: vi–vii).

Danto elaborates a project of an analytical philosophy of history, where he provides a classical definition of narrative, its structure, and its purpose as an alternative to the substantive philosophy of history. If the purpose of history as a science is to order historical events, organize the past into temporal entities, and explain historical changes, then the goal of the analytical philosophy of history is to provide a systematic philosophical analysis of the ways in which historians organize and order the past (narratives). That is, Danto emphasizes, the analytical philosophy of history is not just related to philosophy: it is the philosophy that is used to solve special conceptual problems that arise in the practice of historical studies (Danto 2007: 1, 15, 255).

Nevertheless, not all critical remarks on historiographical practices have received sufficient attention within the narrative theory of historical knowledge. In particular, Popper's critique of the tendency to reduce human history to political history and to construct narratives of national and world history around wars, conquests, and violence remains relevant to this day. In his seminal *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Popper highlights the fact that the content of world history, as taught in schools and universities, is usually reduced to the

history of international crimes and mass murder. He stresses the following:

> "There is no history of mankind, there are only many histories of all kinds of aspects of human life. And one of these is the history of political power. This is elevated into the history of the world. But this, I hold, is an offence against every decent conception of mankind. It is hardly better than to treat the history of embezzlement or of robbery or of poisoning as the history of mankind; for *the history of power politics is nothing but the history of international crime and mass murder* (including, it is true, some of the attempts to suppress them). This history is taught in schools, and many of the greatest criminals are presented as heroes" (Popper 2013: 475).

Popper's thought seems to be a kind of continuation of Walter Benjamin's reflections on how history is made to work for politics and on the barbarism that is passed down from generation to generation as a result of this. This is remarkably interesting fact, given that Benjamin and Popper represent fundamentally different philosophical approaches. Nevertheless, Benjamin also wonders who gets more empathy from adherents — the conquerors or the defeated — and comes to the conclusion that, as a rule, the conquerors. The reason for this is that history protects the victors, and all rulers see themselves as heirs to those who conquered before them. The defeated are usually seen as "cultural treasures" belonging to the victors. Thus, it can be argued that all contemporary (and future) conquerors and "greatest criminals" are inspired and justified in this way before themselves and the world. Therefore, Benjamin underlines that every proof or testimony of civilization is at the same time a proof and testimony of its barbarism. Moreover, just as the evidence of civilization is not free from barbarism, the very way in which it is passed from one owner to another is also "poisoned" by barbarism (Benjamin 2015: 248). In other words, history documents both the development of human civilization and its barbaric manifestations, and often passes all this in a mixed form from one generation to the next without placing accents, which can also be considered barbaric to some extent in our time.

Despite the fact that in the second half of the twentieth century, given the devastating experience of the two world wars, a number of fairly successful attempts were made to change the way history was written and taught (including class, religious, and gender perspectives), the national historical narrative not only did not lose its position, but also strengthened its leading role in historiography. As Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz aptly point out, the situation has changed little in

understanding the practical functions of historical education since the early nineteenth century. Solid historical education (the canon) has as its main goal the unification of society, the integration into the "nation" of even those who seem to be unwilling to integrate (migrants, refugees, i.e. people with different cultural backgrounds). Accordingly, despite the fact that national history has been repeatedly declared "dead" over the past century, the belief in the salutary practical results of national history education remains relevant (Berger & Lorenz 2006). Thus, we are faced with a *dilemma*: on the one hand, writing national history will remain an important way of history writing for a long time to come, and on the other hand, we must realize that since the nineteenth century, national narratives have been reactionary and extremely dangerous in their consequences (they have typically been used to legitimize wars and genocides) (Berger 2007: 66).

National and world histories are still written primarily as political histories, i.e., they focus on political issues (creation and collapse of empires, wars, formation of political blocs and military alliances). The victorious wars in the history of one's own country and the expansion of its territories through the capture and occupation of the lands of other (often neighboring) nations are usually glorified. Only those who have encroached on the integrity of "our" state are recognized as "invaders", i.e., only violence against our own country is condemned, while the aggression of "our" state against all others is considered correct and justified by the goal of state development, strengthening its influence and power. When such approaches to writing history do meet, which usually happens in a situation with complex traumatic pages of the past that exist in the history of every nation in relation to its closest neighbors, we get a long-term politicized historical conflict. It, in turn, becomes a source of permanent return of this conflict to modern relations between states, its reinvention or modernization, provokes tension and hostility in the attitude of peoples to each other in our time without so-called "real" reasons that remain deep in the past, which is not here and now. The age of the information society and information manipulation (post-truth), as well as the largely globalized world, only increase the danger posed by the controversial past, or rather, its contradictory versions and explanations (narratives). Therefore, in my opinion, the usual way of writing history should be changed so that history provides not only an educational and practical function (education of loyal citizens), but also, as White emphasized, performs a humanizing role — serves to humanize the experience of social life (White 1966: 134).

The narrative philosophy of history can help us with this. By gradually and permanently changing the way history is written, we can

change the fundamental national narratives, shaping them as narratives of cultural convergency (in the sense of interaction). An important principle and conceptual tool in this regard, in my opinion, is a narrative tolerance[2].

Conceptual Grounds of the Narrative Theory of Historical Knowledge

The narrative theory of historical knowledge is actually a set of separate, often competing, conceptions of the narrative philosophy of history of the second half of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. The terms "narrativism" and "narrativists", as Eva Domanska notes, were first used by William Dray to refer to history theorists who pay serious attention to the nature and role of narrative in historical studies (Domanska 2012: 30). According to Dray, narrativists are philosophers who emphasize "the centrality of narration in history". He also provided the main arguments of the critics of the narrativist approach, who view narrative as a way for historians to simply "record" what they have discovered in the course of their own historical investigation (Dray 1971: 153–155). From Maurice Mandelbaum's point of view, narrative inevitably simplifies the past. This concerns the rigid linear and plot sequence of a historical work that a historian constructs when writing a narrative history. Moreover, attention to the narrative aspect of historical works distracts philosophers from studying those features of history that make it a form of research or cognition (Mandelbaum 1967: 414–416).

Among the critics of the narrativist position, Leon Goldstein should also be mentioned, who asserts that history is a way of knowing the past, not just a mode of discourse, so narrative cannot be considered the essence of history. Like Mandelbaum, Goldstein believes that the focus of history theory on the narrative form of historical account

2 It is important to make a distinction between a master narrative as a framework for writing national and international history (broad understanding) and a narrative as a tool or form of organization and representation of historical knowledge — a model for describing and explaining a certain aspect of the past (epistemological understanding). The historical narrative of cultural convergency is a model of the master narrative, which should be constructed as a narrative of successful interaction between a large number of ethnocultural and religious groups (who historically lived and still live in a particular state or between states) and the settlement of conflicts between them that have occurred in the past and may arise in the future, based on the idea of protecting equal human rights and freedoms, unconditional respect for human dignity and tolerance of cultural differences.

leads to a decrease in research attention to the study of the epistemic features of history as a type of knowledge (Goldstein 1976: 17, 154). But at the same time, in his reflections, he actually proceeds from the same premise of the indirectness of historical knowing as the narrativists, and also thoroughly develops a constructivist theory of historical cognition, creating an epistemological basis for the development of the narrative theory of history. Therefore, there is a reason to believe that Goldstein puts himself in fundamental opposition to the narrativists, primarily because of the limited understanding of the concept of historical narrative and its purpose by some early narrativists, that is, as a historical work in narrative (literary) form, the plot of which revolves around the description of the change of someone or something. Goldstein sums up: "What narrativists demand is that the historian tell a story in the course of which the change is seen to have occurred and is rendered intelligible, being necessitated by the requirements of the story itself" (Goldstein 1976: 171).

Here we should partially agree with Dray and Goldstein's criticism of narrativists, because the category of "historical change" is indeed important for classical narrativists. For example, in Danto's concept, the explanatory function of narrative is associated with the explanation of "change" in the development of events and processes. The reason for this is that the narrative creates a natural context in which the event acquires historical significance (Danto 2007: 141, 234). Danto's idea of narrative as a mode of explanation specific to historical studies is further developed within the modern analytical tradition by Paul Roth. He argues that only a narrative can explain events that are stated in the form of narrative sentences (which may also contain an evaluation of these events) (Roth 2017: 43, 50).

Returning to the issue of the emergence of the narrative theory of historical knowledge, it should be stressed that its main ideas were formulated in the 1960s and 1970s in the works of such philosophers as Danto, Louis Mink, and Hayden White, and were significantly complemented later by Frank Ankersmit (Ankersmit 1983). It is worth noting that in his later works, Ankersmit addresses the topic of historical experience, revealing a fundamentally different perspective in the theory of history (Ankersmit 1994). Nowadays, the narrative philosophy of history provides a powerful theoretical foundation for contemporary historical studies. Controversies and discussions between the different conceptions of narrativist philosophers, as well as between narrativism and other theoretical approaches in the contemporary philosophy of history (for example, the position of "internal realism" by Chris Lorenz, the postnarrativist approach by Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen, the pragmatists view by Veronica Tozzi, or certain history theorists

such as Goldstein) stimulate the further development both philosophy of history in general and the narrative theory of historical knowledge in particular, as the conceptual basis of the modern historical studies.

The conceptual grounds of the narrative theory of historical knowledge include the following: (1) constructivism in the theory of knowledge, which underlines that historical reality is constructed or created by historians; (2) methodological openness, which means wide possibilities for successful combination of ideas and methodological tools of different philosophical traditions and approaches, which also means openness to criticism; (3) understanding a narrative as a form of organization of historical knowledge that is most suitable for the purposes of history as a scientific discipline (description, explanation and interpretation of the past); (4) revisionism, which consists in permanent revision — "re-discription and re-evaluation" of the existing historical knowledge in connection with the discovery of new facts or new approaches to their understanding and explanation, which should serve the purposes of humanizing history and contribute to the therapeutic function of history; (5) perspectivism, which is the theoretical understanding of the concepts of "point of view", "time perspective", and "cultural context", which allows for a scientific analysis of the ideological and value dimension of historical works, and not just reject it as something "non-scientific".

The constructivist position in the narrative theory of historical knowledge was first most clearly reflected in the works of Danto, in particular in his concept of the "narrative sentence". The concept of "narrative sentence" was proposed by him to mark and explain a very interesting feature of historical knowledge. We get the full amount of knowledge about a particular event from the past through knowledge about events that are in the future in relation to this event, that is, depending on what later historical events we connect it with (Danto 2007: 17). While narrative sentences can be found in various types of narratives and everyday language, Danto considers them to be a specifically historical type of sentence. These are sentences in which the historian refers to at least two events separated in time, but describes the chronologically earlier event by means of the later event (Danto 1962: 146). In the case of narrative sentences, the following points are important: first, the events referred to in the sentence actually took place (i.e., there is evidence of them in historical sources); second, the historian draws a direct (causal) or indirect connection between them; third, it is the historian who also chooses the events that he or she connects in this way within the historical narrative (Roth 2017: 47, 50).

The real constructivist stage in the narrative philosophy of history begins in the works of White, who believes that traditional "chronicle"

and "story" are "primitive elements" of historical narrative that serve to select historically significant material. White postulates a deeper — metahistorical — level of historical thinking (or consciousness), at which the historian or philosopher of history chooses conceptual strategies for explaining, interpreting, and representing historical material, performing a prefigurative act (White 1975: x, 5-6, 427). He writes: "On this level, I believe, the historian performs an essentially poetic act, in which he prefigures the historical field and constitutes it as a domain upon which to bring to bear the specific theories he will use to explain "what was really happening" in it" (White 1975: x).

According to Eugen Zelenak, the narrative approach most fruitfully develops and popularizes the constructivist position in the philosophy of history. Within narrativism itself, he distinguishes two versions of constructivism: representationalism (historical texts are representations of the past) and non-representationalism (historical texts are the result of specific practices). But both of these positions are characterized by an understanding of historical texts as complex constructions, not just descriptions of the past, and by an emphasis on the active creative role of historians in shaping points of view or generating interpretations of the past that do not directly reflect past events. As a result, Zelenak states, the narrative theory of historical knowledge has contributed the following ideas to the general context of the modern philosophy of history: rather than merely finding the facts, historians invent specific concepts and theories to explain the date from the sources; rather than copying a preexisting order of things, historians impose their narrative or other organizational structures to provide meaningful presentations of past human actions; viewing such concepts as the French Revolution or the World War I as original tools for dealing with the past or as historian's special techniques to organize and communicate chaotic information about past events; understanding historical texts not as mirrors (not even selective mirrors) or approximate maps of the past, but rather as creative constructions offered by historians to account for what happened in the past (Zelenak 2015: 209-210).

This also points to another attribute of the narrativist approach: *methodological openness*, which means a broad possibility of successfully combining and implementing conceptual tools from different philosophical traditions. A striking example of methodological interdisciplinarity is White's narrative theory of history, who in one of his early works, *The Burden of History*, calls for the methodological cosmopolitanism of historical studies, for wider involvement of the newest tools from the theory of literature and philosophy of science in the contemporary philosophy of history (White 1966: 126). From

White's point of view, history has always been a multidisciplinary field of knowledge, similar to bricolage in terms of its methodology. Historians always borrow objects of study from other disciplines simply because these objects "live" in the same world as the main objects of the historian's analysis. For example, historians often study economic phenomena and artistic phenomena alongside the political and social structures that primarily interest them. Thus, they draw on as much expertise from other disciplines as they deem necessary to properly justify the results of their investigations. Such a bricolage is much more congenial to the professional historians' community than any attempts to import the methodology from "outside" (Domanska 2008: 14). Therefore, in his theory of history, White tries to fruitfully combine the achievements of the analytical and continental traditions in the philosophy of history, in particular, he thoroughly explores the epistemological findings of Michel Foucault, one of the leading French poststructuralists (White 1975: 1, 3). Jerzy Topolski, for example, emphasizes the deep interconnection between White's fundamental philosophical ideas of White on the one hand, and those of Foucault and Roland Barthes on the other (Topolskyi 2012: 96).

An important example of the methodological openness of narrativism is the elaboration of Veronica Tozzi's narrative pragmatist-oriented philosophy of history, which aims to implement the ideas of pragmatism in the modern narrative philosophy of history. Tozzi emphasizes that this alliance (of narrativism and pragmatism) will reinforce the former's most provocative — and therefore, more productive — thesis: that the means of production of historical writing are central to clarifying controversies about the past. In Tozzi's pragmatic conception, narrativism argues that the meaning of discourse about the past is not revealed as a result of its representative relationship to past reality, but rather in terms of the future consequences of accepting such discourses as answers to problems that have arisen in the context of our current research practices (Tozzi 2016: 170). Such practical consequences do not imply utility, but instead are related to the future procedure of justification and imply acceptance of responsibility for our future actions. Therefore, the idea that historical interpretations can be ethically neutral is indefensible. The pragmatic notion of "practical" (and "practical meaning") would help us understand how historical ideas (narratives or interpretations) produced by academic historiography, literature, or lay people are incomprehensible without considering their practical implications. Thus, Tozzi concludes, a dialogue between narrativism and a pragmatic philosophy of meaning would be very productive in two ways: a pragmatic approach would build the necessary bridges between the various forms of appropriation of the

past by academic historiography, literature, and life, while at the same time strengthening the narrativist program as the most appropriate for discussing the social, ethical, and political role of academic history (Tozzi 2018: 66).

The instrumentalist understanding of narrative as a form of organization of historical knowledge that is most suitable for the purposes of history as a scientific discipline (description, explanation, and interpretation of the past) is found primarily in Danto's concept. It is reflected in his program statement: "The difference between history and science is not that history does and science does not employ organizing schemes which go beyond what is giving. Both do. The difference has to to with the *kind* of organizing schemes employed by each. *History* tells stories" (Danto 2007: 111). Danto compares historical narratives and scientific theories as universal schemes for organizing knowledge. The task of a historian, even based on the nature of his or her work, should not be a simple reproduction of the past, but a certain organization of the past. Hence, a historical narrative is a way of organizing the past into temporal wholes by describing and explaining large-scale historical changes using a temporal perspective linguistically reflected in narrative sentences (Danto 2007: 102, 255).

This instrumentalist definition of historical narrative allows us to consider it as a kind of functional equivalent of a theory in science, which structures and explains historical material, and also requires verification and factual confirmation. However, as Danto notes, we should take into account the fact that, unlike general theories, historical narratives are always tied to the place and time of their writing, representing answers to specific historical questions (Danto 2007: 11, 137). Louis Mink also demonstrates an instrumentalist approach to understanding the nature and tasks of historical narrative. He argues that the narrative form cannot be equated with fairy tales, myths, or novels, because "narrative is a primarily cognitive instrument — an instrument rivaled, in fact, only by theory and by metaphor as irreducible ways of making the flux of experience comprehensible" (Mink 1978: 131).

An extremely significant step in the theoretical understanding of the role and functions of the historical narrative is made by White. According to White's concept, a historical work is a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that claims to be a model of past structures and processes in order to explain what they were by representing them (White 1975: 2). He proposes to distinguish 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, and makes an essential clarification:

> "I take "chronicle" and "story" to refer to "primitive elements" in the *historical account*, but both represent processes of selection and arrangement of data from the *unprocessed historical record* in the interest of rendering that record more comprehensible to an *audience* of a particular kind. As thus conceived, the historical work represents an attempt to mediate among what I will call the *historical field*, the unprocessed *historical record*, *other historical accounts*, and an *audience*" (White 1975: 5).

This understanding of the historical narrative as a discursive model of the unfolding of historical processes, events, and phenomena that is aimed at creating the "effect of reality" is of great conceptual importance. Since it is a historian who is its constructor, he or she "processes" selected events from chronicles and other historical narratives into a story, using certain narrative tactics of explanation and interpretation to create the "effect of reality". These narrative tactics or ways of narrativization (explanation and interpretation) include the following: first, explanation by emplotment; second, explanation by argument; third, explanation by ideological implication (White 1975: 7). White stresses that we cannot talk about science in the modern sense without a theory, and probably the essential sign of the modernity of a particular field of scientific work is that it has a division into "theoretical" and "practical" (or "applied") dimensions (White 2014: 44).

Perspectivism and revisionism as conceptual grounds of the narrative theory of history are outlined and thoroughly analyzed by Danto, who believes that they are rooted in the very nature of historical knowledge. The inherent perspective of historical research and, accordingly, the permanent revision and reassessment of its results are necessary conditions for the functioning of history as a system of knowledge. At the time of actions, we often do not realize the significance that we assign to them later. This is a key feature of the historical ordering of events: historical events are constantly being re-described, and their significance is being re-evaluated in the light of later information. With this information, a historian can say a little more about events than witnesses or contemporaries of those events. This is a common feature and a significant advantage of the historical view of the world. Danto puts it this way: "The whole truth concerning an event can only be known after, and sometimes only *long* after the event itself has taken place, and this part of the story historians alone can tell. It is something even the best sort of witness cannot know" (Danto 2007: 151).

For this reason, historical knowledge can never be complete or unchangeable. Danto points out that we are always revising our ideas

about the past, and to assume that they should be "unchangeable" would be unfair to the spirit of historical inquiry (Danto 2007: 143, 145). A historian has the unique privilege of seeing events in a temporal perspective, therefore, as Danto repeatedly stresses, it should not be considered a disadvantage that a historian, being temporally distant from the events he or she studies, is unable to know them as eyewitnesses would, because he or she does not have to know them in this way. "For the whole point of history is *not* to know about actions as witnesses might, but as historians do, in connection with later events and as parts of temporal wholes. <…> Men would give a great deal to be able to see their actions through the eyes of historians" (Danto 2007: 183) .

In addition, we should always remember that a historian, like any other person, has beliefs, worldviews, and specific interests. This does not prevent or diminish historian's ability to achieve his or her "minimal goal", as Danto calls it, which is to express truthful statements about the past. Historical narrative is always selective, it draws attention to something as more important in the context of research, and leaves something out of consideration as less important. However, besides this, a historian may have other motives for talking about some events and not mentioning others. Our way of organizing the past, Danto insists, is causally related to our particular interests (Danto 2007: 30-31, 33). "We cannot conceive of history without organizational schemes, nor of historically organizing schemes apart from specific human interests" (Danto 2007: 111).

For White, there is no non-ideological basis on which it would be possible to objectively examine the various conceptions of the historical process and historical knowledge appealed to different ideologies. Therefore, one cannot claim that one conception of historical knowledge is more "realistic" or "scientific" than another without showing a certain bias as to what a specific historical or social science should be. In his conception of the theory of history, he tries to show how ideological beliefs are incorporated into the historian's attempts to explain the historical field and construct a verbal model of historical events or processes in the narrative (White 1975: 26).

The practical interest of a historian is analyzed in detail by Chris Lorenz, who successfully implements Hilary Putnam's conception of internal realism into the narrative theory of history. According to Lorenz, the normative aspects related to the choice of perspective of seeing the past are the most important in historiography because historians argue about them the most. Similar to descriptive statements, normative assertions in historical narratives do not exist alone, but appear one after the other, as they are interconnected on a conceptual level. Just as descriptive statements are based on theories of

observation, so normative assertions are always based on theories of morality, which obviously act as background knowledge. Therefore, Lorenz states, it is better to openly agree on the normative perspectives of historians from the very beginning (declare and subject to scientific analysis, rather than to judge from the position of "ethical neutrality"), which will eventually strengthen the rationality of historical discussions (Lorenz 1994, 317-318, 321-322).

Taking into account the above-mentioned conceptual grounds of the narrative theory of history, we can also speak of *narrative tolerance* as an integral part of the narrative approach in the philosophy of history. Here, narrative tolerance is proposed to be understood as a decisive refusal to impose one's historical narrative on others (in accordance with the principle that "history is written by the victors"), as well as the possibility of including the voices of different historical agents in the narrative and taking into account different points of view without reducing the overall conclusions of the investigation to a "common denominator", especially in situations with long-term historical conflicts. However, it is important to underscore that this does not apply to proven cases of crimes against humanity and violations of international law.

Narrative Tolerance as a Conceptual and Practical Tool

The philosophical basis for the concept of narrative tolerance is the idea of multiplicity of pasts proposed by Paul Roth, as well as the common understanding of historical fact as an event under description, shared by Danto and White.

Roth argues for the plurality of pasts that is possible because the constructing of the past always depends to some extent on socially mediated negotiations about the match between our descriptions and experiences. Roth states that the past is constructed (rather than found) and emphasizes the priority of classification over perception in the order of understanding and verification of historical knowledge. Such things as events, facts, actions, kinds exist and have explanation only in a theory. From Roth's point of view, the temporal distance in the case of history may accentuate some of the problems of understanding others and what they did in the past, but the problems raised are not unique to the theory of knowledge as such (Roth 2012: 333-336). Roth notes that the constant changes in the way we describe and narrate past events do not change "the past itself," but only change our appreciation of what happened. He maintains:

> "Given alternative modes for structuring what happens, changes in description can alter relations among events imputed to a past, and so how a past thus structured impacts what becomes possible going forward. A plurality of pasts results because constituting a past depends to some degree on socially mediated negotiations of a fit between descriptions and experience. Even what we take to mark what can change and what cannot itself depends on the possibility of descriptive change or reclassification, human histories will continue to reveal a multiplicity of pasts" (Roth 2012: 339).

In other words, most of the categories that we usually use to construct the past are largely dependent on the socially determined narrative strategies of the present. This view of Roth's is in line with Danto's position that the past itself does not change, but the way we organize it does. Nothing can happen to the past in itself to change it or make it "false," but over time we increasingly feel the need to add new or more "fresh" descriptions of certain events and processes (Danto 2007: 166–167, 180). Thus, the "temporal wholes" into which the historian organizes historical events by means of a narrative are permanently changing, and therefore, the results of any historical research are open to ongoing re-description in accordance with changes the descriptive strategies.

Roth grounds his idea of the plurality of pasts in the thesis of the existence of two fundamentally different dimensions of the past, proposed by Goldstein. In *Historical Knowing*, Goldstein proposes to distinguish between the real past, which exists outside the totality of historical texts and direct experience of historians, and the historical past (the totality of historical texts or narratives), which is created by historians (Goldstein 1976: xix-xxi, 136). He also stresses that the historical fact is not found in the past because a fact is a statement about the past formulated by a historian on the basis of his research. "Historical facts are the products, or outcome, of historical research. … We have simply no approach to the human past other than by means of historical research" (Goldstein 1976: 88-89).

The idea that historical facts exist only in thought, language, and discourse is not new to the narrative theory of history. The conceptual distinction between a historical event (a state of affairs that took place in a certain time and space) and a historical fact (a statement about that state of affairs) was clearly drawn by White. Events happen and are more or less properly reflected in historical texts, while facts are theoretically constructed in thought and/or imaginatively in the imagination. In an interview with Eva Domanska, White admitted that at this point he adopts Danto's position that the historical fact is

the event under description (Domanska 2008: 5-6). According to Danto, a historical fact is an event under the narrative description, and thus the same event can form the basis for a large number of historical facts (Danto 2007: 235). However, this does not mean that relativism prevails. White emphasizes that the historian always deals with "real events". These events are real not because they occurred but because they were remembered and are capable of being fixed in a chronologically ordered sequence. To qualify as historical, an event must have at least two narrations of its occurrence. Unless at least two versions of the same set of events can be imagined, there is no reason for a historian to take upon himself the authority of giving the true account of what really happened. Thus, history as a science belongs to the category of what can be called "the discourse of the real" (White 1987: 20).

Thus, we come to two paradoxical conclusions: first, the past, as it is given to us, is constructed, multiple, and at the same time real, and second, that our knowledge of the past can be both contradictory and true. This situation requires us to develop additional conceptual and methodological tools for dealing with the historical knowledge. The notion of narrative tolerance is one of such tools.

Narrative tolerance, as a strategy for historical research, implies a refusal to impose one's own national historical narrative on other (neighboring) countries and gradually replace it with a transnational perspective or with a narrative of cultural convergency (Mishalova 2019: 52-53). Narrative tolerance as a methodological tool is a way of writing a historical narrative that involves at least two points of view on a certain sequence of historical events, except in cases of violations of international law and crimes against humanity. For example, there can be no explanation of the Holocaust or the Holodomor from the point of view of the organizers of these crimes — the Nazi and Soviet regimes, respectively. This also implies avoiding the use of expressions that provoke hate speech in the practice of historiography, such as "old enemy", "endless enmity", and "glorious victory", as they serve as triggers for the resumption of past conflicts and encourage hostility and belligerence.

In his essay *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Benjamin offers an interesting metaphor of the "angel of history", which very aptly reflects the constructive character of the work of every historian. Benjamin writes:

> "A Klee painting named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one

> catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to say, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress" (Benjamin 2015: 249).

The historian constructs and reconstructs the historical past, supplementing the existing view of the past with new facts or new approaches to their interpretation, thus enriching our knowledge of the past in itself. Collingwood argues that history as a scientific discipline is constructive by its very nature (Collingwood 1946: 240). Popper underscores that there can be no history of the past as "what actually happened". There can only be historical interpretations, none of which are final. And each generation has the right to form their own interpretation. However, in his opinion, this is not only a right, but also a kind of obligation (Popper 2013: 473).

That is why it is extremely important to develop and promote the notion of narrative tolerance as a principle (a basic framework) and methodological tool in the historical studies, including in history teaching. We must recognize that the historical past, as we know it through historical works, is always to a large extent an "argumented reality" to the real past. The components that a historian "adds" to the real past, creating the historical past in the process of researching, explaining, and interpreting the available material, include theories, methodologies, and conceptual apparatus that are modern and regularly updated. The main mechanism for creating and changing the historical past as an augmented reality is the historical narrative. So, a set of historical narratives can be viewed not only as a way of existence of the historical past (metaphysical dimension), but also as a method and/or mechanism of narrative engineering (epistemological dimension), a permanent process of re-description and re-evaluation of existing historical knowledge (as Danto points out it) in the light of new data or theoretical and methodological approaches within the contemporary humanities.

In turn, narrative engineering, which is actually practiced by historians, can be considered by analogy with Popper's piecemeal social engineering or even as a component of the latter. By social engineering, Popper means the planning and design of institutions for the purpose of social changes (delaying or controlling, or subduing the next historical development) (Popper 1986: 45). He accentuates:

> "The only course open to the social sciences is to forget all about the verbal fireworks and to tackle the practical problems of our time with the help of the theoretical methods which are fundamentally the same in all sciences. I mean the methods of trial and error, of inventing hypotheses which can be practically tested, and of submitting them to practical tests. A social technology is needed whose results can be tested by piecemeal social engineering" (Popper 2013: 428).

In view of the above, narrative tolerance as a conceptual framework and methodological tool can be seen as a kind of narrative technology aimed at enabling and conceptually supporting piecemeal narrative engineering — "piecemeal tinkering" in Popper's terms, that is, progressive changes in the descriptions and explanations of controversial and/or conflictual pages of the past. Long-lasting historical conflicts are necessarily reflected in historiographical traditions and result in contradictory historical conclusions, making them difficult to resolve overnight, even if there is political will to settle the conflict (which is actually sometimes lacking in such situations). According to Popper, one of the most important tasks of any technology is to point out what cannot be achieved (Popper 1986: 58, 61).

Narrative tolerance as a tool for progressive changes in the historiography simultaneously shows the possibility of changing our vision of the past (through changes in the narratives) and the limitations associated with this, namely, the gradual nature of these changes, the contradictory results, etc. Just as the course of the historical process can never be theoretically modeled, since the end result will always differ from the rational project (Popper 1986: 47–48), narrative tolerance cannot guarantee one hundred percent effectiveness either. However, it can lay the groundwork for this and, in White's words, transform historical research in such a way as to allow historians to participate positively in liberating the present from the "burden of history" (White 1966: 124).

Finally, it should be stressed that narrative tolerance as a conceptual and methodological tool cannot be considered separately from the methodological canons of the historical profession, in particular, Leopold von Ranke's method of source criticism, based on the rational critical tradition of the New Age. The "piecemeal tinkering" within Popper's concept of social engineering should be used in conjunction with critical analysis, which, in his opinion, is the best way to achieve practical results in both the social and natural sciences (Popper 1986: 58).

In this context, the position of critical rationalism, with its focus on arguments and experience within the epistemology of history, can

be seen as a kind of continuation of the Rankean critical approach at the conceptual level, i.e., the level of theoretical and moral and ethical assumptions of scientific work. The basic principle of this position is as follows: "I may be wrong and you may be right, and by an effort we may get nearer to the truth". And according to Popper, this principle is very close to the scientific approach, as it is associated with the idea that everyone can be wrong, so either the scholar or other researchers can identify their mistakes through criticism and self-criticism (Popper 2013: 442). It is a mechanism for the development of science, the growth and clarification of academic knowledge, based on the scientific method and academic objectivity as intersubjectively recognized research results in the natural sciences, engineering, and humanities. Popper notes: "What we call 'scientific objectivity' is not a product of the individual scientist's impartiality, but a product of the social or public character of scientific method; and the individual scientist's impartiality is, so far as it exists, not the source but rather the result of this socially or institutionally organized objectivity of science" (Popper 2013: 426).

Within the analytical philosophy of history, Goldstein, like Popper, emphasizes the important role of historians' prior theoretical beliefs and the intersubjective nature of the scientific method in history. He argues that the historian's description is true because it is reasonable to believe that some part of the past had such characteristics, and not because it corresponds to an real event as a witness may have observed it, but it does not mean the subjectivity of historians as historians constitute the historical past. Historical knowledge is relative to the discipline of history in the same way that any sort of knowledge is relative to the disciplined way in which it is produced. According to the methodological approach, historical objectivity is an intersubjective agreement between historians. In terms of methodology, historical objectivity is an intersubjective agreement between historians (Goldstein 1976: 211–213).

Critical rationalism leads to another interesting conclusion, namely that everyone has the right to be heard and to defend his or her position, that guarantees the right to tolerance. Popper formulates this as follows: "Rationalism is therefore bound up with the idea that the other fellow has a right to be heard, and to defend his arguments. It thus implies the recognition of the claim to tolerance, at least of all those who are not intolerant themselves" (Popper 2013: 443). Popper insists that the adoption of rationalism implies that there is a common means of communication — a common language of reason. This establishes a kind of moral obligation towards this language, an obligation to maintain its standards of clarity and to use it in academic studies

and discussions in such a way that it can retain its function as a means of argumentation, i.e., to use it as a tool for rational communication rather than as a means of "self-expression" (Popper 2013: 443).

However, critical rationalism tells us that we have an obligation not only to listen to the arguments of our opponents, but also to respond accordingly, i.e., to respond simply and tolerantly. However, absolute tolerance leads to the disappearance of tolerance, which is known as the "paradox of tolerance". Here, Popper calls on us to demand that in order to preserve tolerance, we should not tolerate the intolerant. We must demand that any movement that preaches intolerance outlaws itself, and we must make incitement to intolerance and persecution criminal, just as we must make incitement to murder, kidnapping, or the revival of the slave trade criminal. For if we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them (Popper 2013: 581).

Therefore, narrative tolerance must also be limited, i.e., it cannot apply to "alternative" justifications for proven crimes against humanity (the Holocaust or the Holodomor), violations of international law (Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 or Russia's full-scale military invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022), or ideologies such as Fascism, Nazism, or Stalinism. Following the principle of narrative tolerance, as well as determining its limits in each specific research case, is a collective effort and responsibility of the community of historians. In order to be able to adequately perceive and deal with the plurality of visions of the past, which implies the contradiction of positions as a "norm", we need not only critical but also tolerant historical thinking.

References

Ankersmit, F. R. (1994). *History and Tropology: The Rise and Fall of Metaphor*. Berkeley and Los Angeles and London: University of California Press.

Ankersmit, F. R. (1983). *Narrative Logic. A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language*. Den Haag: Nijhoff.

Benjamin, W. (2015). Theses on Philosophy of History, in: *Illuminations* (ed. by Hannah Arendt). London: The Bodley Head: 245–255.

Berger, S. (2007). Writing National Histories in Europe: Reflections on the Pasts, Presents, and Futures of a Tradition, in Jarausch, K. H. & Lindenberger, T. (eds.) *Conflicted Memories: Europeanizing Contemporary Histories*. New York — Oxford: Berghahn Books: 55-68.

Berger, S. & Lorenz, Ch. (2006). National Narratives and their "Others": Ethnicity, Class, Religion and the Gendering of National Histories. *Storia della Storiografia/Geschichte der Geschichtsschreibung* 50: 59-98.

Collingwood R. G. (1946). *The Idea of History*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.

Danto, A. C. (2007). *Narration and Knowledge*. New-York : Columbia University Press.
Danto, A. C. (1962). Narrative Sentences. *History and Theory* 2(2): 146–179. https://doi.org/10.2307/2504460.
Dray, W. H. (1959). "Explaining What" in History. in: *Theories of History* (ed. by Patrick Gardiner). New York: Free Press: 403–408.
Dray W. H. (1971). On the Nature and Role of Narrative in Historiography. *History and Theory* 10(2): 153–171. https://doi.org/10.2307/2504290.
Domanska, E. (2008). A Conversation with Hayden White. Rethinking History. *The Journal of Theory and Practice* 12(1): 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642520701838744.
Domanska, E. (2012). *Istoriia ta suchasna humanitarystyka: doslidzhennia z teorii znannia pro mynule*. Kyiv: Nika-Tsentr. — in Ukr.
[Доманська, Е. (2012). *Історія та сучасна гуманітаристика: дослідження з теорії знання про минуле*. Київ: Ніка-Центр.]
Goldstein, L. (1976). *Historical Knowing*. Austin & London: University of Texas Press.
Hempel, C.G. (1942). The Function of General Laws in History. *The Journal of Philosophy* 39(2): 35–48.
Karnap, R. & Han, H. & Neirat, O. (2012). Naukove svitorozuminnia — Videnskyi hurtok. *Aktualni problemy dukhovnosti* 13: 97–114. — in Ukr. https://doi.org/10.31812/apd.v0i13.1809.
[Карнап, Р., Ган, Г., Нейрат, О. (2012). Наукове світорозуміння — Віденський гурток. *Актуальні проблеми духовності* 13: 97–114.]
Mandelbaum, M. (1967). A Note on History as Narrative. *History and Theory* 6(3): 413–419. https://doi.org/10.2307/2504424.
Mink, O. L. (1978). Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument. in: Canary, R. H. & Kozicki, H. (eds.) *The Writing History: Literary Form and Historical Understanding*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press: 129–149.
Mishalova, O. V. (2019). Naratyvna tolerantnist: vykhid z labiryntu natsionalnykh istorychnykh naratyviv. *Aktualni problemy dukhovnosti* 20: 46–71. https://doi.org/10.31812/apd.v0i20.2780.
[Мішалова, О. В. (2019). Наративна толерантність: вихід з лабіринту національних історичних наративів. *Актуальні проблеми духовності* 20: 46–71.]
Popper, K.R. (2013). *The Open Society and its Enemies. New One-Volume Edition*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
Popper, K.R. (1986). *The Poverty of Historicism*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
Roth, P. A. (2017). Essentially Narrative Explanations. *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 62: 42–50. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.shpsa.2017.03.008.
Roth, P. A. (2012). The Pasts. *History and Theory* 51(3): 313–339. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23277657.
Topolskyi, Ye. (2012). *Yak my pyshemo ta rozumiiemo istoriiu. Taiemnytsi istorychnoi naratsii*. Kyiv : K.I.S. — In Ukr.
[Топольський, Є. (2012). *Як ми пишемо та розуміємо історію. Таємниці історичної нарації.* Київ : К.І.С.]
Tozzi, V. (2018). A Pragmatist View on Two Accounts of the Nature of our "Connection" with the Past: Hayden White and David Carr Thirty Years Later. *Rethinking History* 22(1): 65–85. https://doi.org/10.1080/13642529.201

7.1423010.
Tozzi, V. (2016). Dewey, Mead, John Ford, and Writing of History: Pragmatist Contributions to Narrativism. *European Journal of Pragmatist and American Philosophy* 8(2): 170. (167–189). https://doi.org/10.4000/ejpap.641.
White, H. (1975). *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
White, H. (1966). The Burden of History. *History and Theory* 5(2): 111–134. https://doi.org/10.2307/2504510.
White, H. (2014). The Historical Event, in: White, H. *The Practical Past*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
Zelenak, E. (2015). Two Version of a Constructivist View of Historical Work. *History and Theory* 54: 209–225. https://www.jstor.org/stable/24543100.