Formation of the New Historicism concept in the Russian literary criticism

Liliya Ravilevna Khuzeeva
Kazan Federal University, Kremlyovskaya str, 18, 420008, Kazan, Russian Federation

Abstract

Article is devoted to the methodological principles analysis of the new historicism on the verge of the XX-XXI centuries in Russian literary criticisms. Currently the theory of literature, methodology of literary criticism endures a peculiar internal reorganization period, the new paradigm of scientific knowledge is formed; it corresponds to revision of many cardinal methodological principles and provisions. Artwork communication disclosure over time of the creation and with future historical eras is the detection of literature historicism, throughout for a long time it was an integral part of the literary critic work, however the principle of historicism, basic for the Russian literary criticism, was re-vised on the verge of the XX-XXI centuries. On the basis of historical and functional, sociological, typological approaches, as well as comparative and typological, system methods the essence of methodological approaches of the new historicism theory in the Russian literary criticism on the verge of the XX-XXI centuries comes to light in the article, along with its genetic linkage both with the American science, and with the Russian literary tradition comes, which allows to speak about continuity in development of scientific knowledge.

Key terms: literary criticism, new historicism, school of sciences, methodology, theory of literature.
Introduction

Throughout long time the principle of historicism is one of the major methodological categories in many scientific areas [1]. It gained the special importance in the humanitarian disciplines turned, first of all, to the person. By definition of M. M. Bakhtin, the humanities are "sciences about the person in its specifics <…> where the person is studied out of the text and irrespective of it, it is more than humanities (anatomy and human physiology, etc.)" [2]. Studying the relations between the person and the text he created also became the subject of the historicism principle attention.

During the different periods interest of literary critics changed, and to the forefront came different aspects of this problem: the history and its reflection in the text, conditionality of work and its era was most important for representatives of cultural and historical school, the writer was considered as a reality product. There was a question of individual author's style later, and it resulted in need to recognize and realize that there is a certain instance which influences work and does not depend on history. Since then subjectivity of author's will was not called in question, and the idea of "historicity" of texts still remained one of the leading [3].

The Russian formal school with its theoretical and practical developments made essential additions to historicism methodology: special attention, by the way, attention to literary life – all this allowed to broaden area of researches and to reveal some regularities of literary process development (for example, works Y. N. Tynyanov, B. M. Eikhenbaum). Further exerted impact not only literary, but also all-philosophical theories on the principle of historicism (for example, the theory of reflection and phenomenology).

The theory of literature which is in constant dynamics raises questions of the general character, each of that repeatedly gets the researchers attention [4]. Variability of answers caused need of versatile approach to the studied material: studying of theoretical and historic-literary works, materials of journal discussions about the principle of historicism, as well as attraction of these other literary and philosophical theories.

The distinct tendency connected with change of the attitude towards the principle of historicism is traced in modern literary criticism. Without denying its needs, many researchers are not satisfied with its isolation on a historical context and seek to open narrow borders. The desire "to exempt" the theory from shortcomings exists from the moment of its emergence, and at each stage this problem was solved depending on the massif of the accumulated knowledge, the general condition of the humanities and from the most historical situation (for example, a certain constraint of literary criticism by an ideological and political situation in Russia in days of the Soviet power).

It should be noted that development of the historicism principle never stopped, even then, when the theories focused, first of all, on studying the immanent properties of works put in the forefront.

Methods

For fuller studying of literary criticism history and methodology, the analysis and data synthesis, it is necessary to use the set of research methods. In this regard the historical and functional approach allowing to track history of literary thought development on the verge of the 20-21st centuries in dynamics is used as basic. Focus of work on studying of the theory uniting various directions of science involves need to combine sociological, typological approaches. The comparative and typological method allows to reveal the invariant lines inherent in the formed methodology, and the genetic method allows to track sources of a new paradigm formation. At last, the system method allows to consider new historicism as a complete complex of the elements which are in close interrelation. At the same time it is important not to forget that the system always possesses property of emergence, that it possesses properties which are not possessed by the
elements entering it. This situation is essentially important for identification of a new scientific paradigm potential, as well as for defining research prospects.

**Results**

New historicism began to develop actively in the Russian literary criticism on the verge of the XX-XXI centuries on one hand, under the influence of the American science about literature, and on the other hand, on the basis of strong traditions of the Russian literary science. On the basis of the texts complex analysis researches within methodology of new historicism it is possible to select its key provisions and the principles:

1. One of the main statements of new historicism methodology is connected with a context concept. The sense of work is constantly transformed at change of a context. It is possible to claim that any context cannot give final interpretation of the text. Infinite process of a meaning-making is the devil of literary process [5]. In a certain moment work answers certain questions. If it does not possess this ability, then there is a loss of its relevance, work "drops out" of a reader's interest focus. The sense of work can be understood as a result of the three component analysis consisting: intertextual, discourse and biographic approach to the text [6].

2. New historicism declares a logo-centric world, only partly agreeing with statement by J. Derrida about historicity of texts and textualism of history: researchers recognize existence of other realities except text. In this regard they understand intertextuality rather widely. According to new historists not only texts, but also all culture in general can be citing sources [6]. The researcher also divides two branches of possible searches. On one hand, the image in work can be cast by some specific text ("an intertextual hypothesis"), on the other hand, the author himself could meet the similar person or phenomenon in real life ("an extratextual hypothesis"). The second source seems less probable to A. Etkind. In this regard A. Etkind considers "an intertextuality presumption" to be an important installation in the course of the work analysis. The most part of efforts, in his opinion, is spent on sorting out the relations between various texts. Those cases when it is possible to sort out the text relations to extra text, vital reality, he sees as "rare and powerful fortune of the interpreter" [6].

3. The special text corpus is represented by documents. I. Smirmov in work "New historicism as the truth moment" calls them hypotexts. He includes not only actually historical documents, but also contracts, protocols, instructions, codes and laws into this concept. Documents, in his understanding, differ from actual texts because they set a certain scheme of actions, but do not interpret them. In the 20th century surge of documentary literature interest was observed, but it did not become the leading literature genre [7]. Thus, from a position of modern literary criticism studying documents can be used not only for reconstruction of a historical situation, but also for reconstruction of the general cultural situation, for removal of certain norms and regularities of human behavior of a certain historical period. In modern process we see increase of interest in the historical document again. At the same time there is an experience revaluation of the past from a position of the present and taking into account the accumulated knowledge.

4. The idea of intertextuality in new historicism consists in showing different layers in the text and, keeping their values, showing mechanisms of new meanings generation and options of interpretation. In other words, the researcher, differentiating reality and text, seeks to show their communication and interactions [8].

5. For implementation of inter- and the extra-textuality analysis it is necessary to have the wide knowledge base. For this purpose, according to new historians, it is necessary to include the considered sources in a circle of not only the classical texts established by literary canon, but also works of minor and insignificant authors. The great value is given to so-called hypotexts (see above
in work of I. Smirnov "New historicism as the truth moment"), the biographic analysis, studying of an era ideas and their embodiment in real life.

6. The text cannot be considered separately. Closed in itself, it means nothing until it is staticized in the perceiving consciousness. The idea of art works dialogicity is known already from works of M. M. Bakhtin and presented in works of the historical and functional direction, remains one of the major in modern literary criticism. A. Etkind defined new historicism concept as history of "people and texts in their relation to each other". That means it is possible to claim that the modern methodology in many respects proceeds from the idea of dialog, interaction between the author and the reader, between the reader and the text.

7. New historicism denies the idea of the author's death presented in works of R. Bart, in number of important individual authorships, literal reading and "strong reading" (focused on intertextuality searches in a broad sense, that is communications with all cultural situation).

8. The methodology of new historicism is essentially inter-disciplinary; it also seeks to combine achievements of other methodologies. Consideration of reactions and interpretations of works by readers during various historical eras demands attraction of the analysis techniques developed by receptive aesthetics. In this case the emphasis is placed on the perception of work based on cultural and spiritual experience of the person. This idea quite corresponds to V. Alexandrov's instructions for a role of "hermeneutical indexes" in the course of interpretation. At the same time an important role is played by coincidence and discrepancy of "the expectation horizons" of the specific text and the recipient.

Discussion.

In context expansion it is worth being afraid of any interpretation based not on potential values, but on subjective will of the researcher. In the analysis of work it is necessary to correlate each assumption to a plan in general, to the so-called "hermeneutical indexes" establishing borders of possible interpretations. Vladimir Alexandrov in article "Otherness: hermeneutical indexes and borders of interpretation" writes that literary work is a difficult interlacing of statements and individual indexes which are in difficult relations with each other [9].

The context in this case is understood ambiguously. For example, as "all social ways, all concepts, representations, views" [10], or as "the final horizon which has to help define the conventional values accepted in society of this type" [11]. A. Etkind writes that the new understanding of "events, people and texts consists in their re-context-making <…> reading against history again (and back to intension of the author) immerses the text in a context and re-vises the historical moment in the light of the literary text" [6].

New historicism, relying on the concepts entering it, has to treat loaning ideas with care and attention. Without denying the idea of intertextuality, it is necessary to consider the idea of historicism, that is not to cancel "the diachronic direction", but to allow a free spatial arrangement of texts within historical development.

Here quite fairly before literary critics arises a serious problem of a new classical canon of authors selection. S. Zenkin writes about it that at all aspiration of philology to integrated history of literature the "second row" authors will remain as "a reserve for filling of vacancies in future classical canon <…>, or as the tank of the intertextual musters helping to understand the main, "classical" texts of national culture" [12]. Really, the task set by new historist is not simple, and it is necessary to develop new ways and approaches for its performance. Thus, for example, one of solution ways can consider the differentiation of two types of texts offered by S. Zenkin. The first type is the same texts (a lot of those are written in the course of the Russian literature): they are possible to describe all together, but not each separately. The second type is "custom-made", "single
special issue among which S. Zenkin selects "autometatexts" which interpret themselves and can start the infinite mechanism of a meaning-making [12].

The communication which is formed between the text and the reader can be considered, according to new historist, in different aspects. First, it is possible to investigate the movement from life in the text [13], A. Etkind called it "textward"; it, for example, is work interpretation as an era reflections, searches for prototypes of heroes. Secondly, dialog is shown in transition which A. Etkind called text-out, that is the movement from the text to life. Thirdly, it is possible to restore the picture of mass reading common to this historical stage.

**Summary.**

The term "historicism" has two meanings today. In traditional sense historicism is a judgment of unique shape and specific historical maintenance of a certain era. However, it is impossible to identify fiction with a factual account, and to reduce function of literature to simple reproduction of real life. Literature is not mechanical reflection of life, it is always a product of conscious creativity, it is always the creation fact. And the literary criticism of the XX-XXI centuries seeks to overcome, open a narrow framework of former methodology.

Literature as one of the reality perceiving ways has a task of studying the person, the public laws, the universal principles of life. Literature comprehends not the individual in life, but the general, essential, distinctly and actively shown in individual.

The second option of the term historicism understanding is connected with the idea of development, dynamics, change of text work perception depending on changes of cultural and historical and other experience of those who perceive the text. The purpose of new methodology consists in "new understanding of events, people and texts, their re-contextualization" [6]. The text against history is urged not only to consider new historicism, but also to enter the text in a context and through the text to reinterpret the historical moment.

It is obvious that the principle of new historicism needs further development. Despite the demonstrated provision of new historist about disconnection of literary criticism borders, concentration of researchers attention on certain "key points" of work remains the main lack of methodology still. The following section of work is also devoted to consideration of disputes around the present stage of the historicism principle development.

Traditionally it is considered that the principle of new historicism came to Russia from the USA. Both its opponents, and its supporters point to it. However traditions of cultural and historical, formal schools of the Russian literary criticism, as well as the Soviet stage of the science development were also the predecessors which paved a fertile field for development of new methodological approaches. Certainly, we do not claim that the new methodology grew only on the Russian basis, however, it is worth recognizing that new historicism is an organic continuation of cultural and historical school traditions and domestic literary criticism of the XX century in general.

It should be noted that the Russian new historicism differs from its American option which actively develops from 1980th [14]. Emphasizing ideological and political contexts, the researcher's task is to identify of economic and political interests struggle, collision of ideologies in literature - all that is common to the American methodology [15, 16]. For modern Russian science priority lyes in studying the unique personality, "elite" creativity, reconstruction of contexts, restoration at the different levels of cultural and historical links.

**Conclusion.**

Prospects of further research are rather broad. Thus, for fuller and deeper identification of historicism methodological bases it makes sense to compare new historicism with the receptive aesthetics developed by Konstantsky school and its chief representatives H. R. Yauss and V. Izer, as
their theory generated by postmodernism era became popular in literary criticism of the different countries and exerts impact on many modern concepts. It is also necessary to track development of new historicism in the 21st century. At last, more difficult and, at the same time, actual task is to create methodology of the art texts analysis on the basis of the latest concepts and the traditional theory synthesis.

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