Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionalala

Romanian Journal for Multidimensional Education

ISSN: 2066 – 7329 (print), ISSN: 2067 – 9270 (electronic)

Coverd in: Index Copernicus, Ideas. RePeC, EconPapers, Socionet, Ulrich Pro Quest, Cabbel, SSRN, Appreciative Inquiry Commons, Journalseek, Scipio, EBSCO


Antonio SANDU

Revista Romaneasca pentru Educatie Multidimensionalala, 2011, Year 3, No. 8, December, pp: 115-117

The online version of this article can be found at:

http://revistaromaneasca.ro

Published by:

Lumen Publishing House

On behalf of:

Lumen Research Center in Social and Humanistic Sciences

Antonio SANDU¹

Abstract

The volume "Soviet-Afghan War (1979-1989). Study of verbal history. Perceptions. Documents" of the author Ion Xenofontov, published at Lumen Publishing House in 2011, has the merit of turning recent history research into a sui generis audition of second voices. The soldiers, the officer, the combatant in general are seldom seen by the eye of official history, always careful to winners. War is a social fact that rebuilds the life of those who live it. In the volume "The Soviet Afghan War (1979-1989). Verbal history studies. Perceptions. Documents." written by the historian Ion Xenofontov, from Institute of Encyclopedic Research Institute of Academy of Sciences from Moldova, is used a phenomenological approach in the narrative perspective of historiographical research.

Keywords:
Ion Xenofontov, War from Afghanistan, narrative methodology, interviews with ex-soldiers

¹ Antonio SANDU – Lecturer Ph.D., “Mihail Kogalniceanu” University, Iasi, Email Address: antonio1907@yahoo.com, Phone no. 0040 740 151455
Lumen Publishing House and I personally want to congratulate Mr. Ion Xenofontov, primarily for the courage to propose to academic world the return to life as a form of understanding of history.

As a philosopher, I have often considered that philosophy "is an archeology of the mind". Reading Mr. Xenofontov Ion's book I had primarily an epistemological revelation: social sciences and humanities are increasingly methodological closer. The recent decision of Romania Ministry of Education to separate social sciences and humanities in a .. I would say, an unnatural fragmentation, suddenly becomes superfluous before a historical text is no less sociological, anthropological.

The discussed narrative methodology has the merit of turning recent history research into a "suigeneris" hearing of secondary voices. The soldier, officer, combatant in general is seldom seen by the eye of official history, always careful to winners. I read the book with the eyes of an philosopher of social field, and it brought me to face a challenge: war as a fact of life, war as a state of things. Suddenly the war is no longer an anxiety in front of inevitability and often in front of futility of death, and not even an apotheotic moment where a hero had the chance on his side. War is a social fact that rebuilds the life of those who live it. The perspective brought by Mr. Ion Xenofontov is the one of the combatants, not of the fighters. The difference between the two terms is the epistemic centering on the individual that plays the social and military role, rather on the heroic projection we invest him as a fighter.

Heroism is an accidental fact, a possibility that in the case of Fyodor Popovschii, which happened to be there when the projectile hit directly into a mechanic and he was killed on the spot. Death and disaster appear daily. The narrative methodology proposes us to understanding war from different angles. War has many faces as many soldiers participated in the war. The role of history using narrative methodology is to take concepts from the war sides. The liberator soldiers, which when they were upset, they took water and light of locals (RB: 69), am the same that are shot a few days before release, refusing to join KGB.

The interviews speak for themselves and therefore the researcher Ion Xenofontov distanced himself, leaving them to speak without any interpretation. The anthropologist John Xenofontov left interpretation for the reader, as the source text, interviews, are actually themselves a
cultural fact, not just a historical source. The historian Ion Xenofontov updated the data directly obtained from subjects, using them as interpretive grid in his other volume, published in 2010 at Lumen Publishing House under the title War in Afghanistan (1979-1989). In this volume Ion Xenofontov approaches a hermeneutical type method, of qualitative analysis of data obtained through interviews. He constructs a category of analysis that includes the war as a state of life. Are presented: adversaries, allies, civilians, fighting deaths, leisure, voices of combatants, and not least the situation after the war. It is an historical and sociological radiography of the war itself, having the Soviet Afghan war as an hermeneutical pretext.

Returning to the volume "Soviet-Afghan War. (1979-1989) Studies of Verbal History. Perceptions. Documents", we appreciate the use of synchronous phenomenological approach and narrative perspective. The researcher's questions focused on war and combatant at the same time. They turned to his memory, asking him at the same time to offer significance to events, and also subjective perceptions, feelings and reinterpretations that are given by the actual war veteran. Oral history goes beyond the source understood in positivist or post-positivist sense, and fits in a rather postmodern constructionist perspective.

The author cites as research themes, the gender difference in the approach of the military. Social construction of military status-role, on one side, and the very concept of the military is based on "an image of virility where the individual tends to be known as an active and direct actor in the great event" - Ion Xenofontov. Female perspective is seen tougher in the testimonies identified with a higher emotional intensity (Xenofontov, 2011). The author put in stage a mediation process between the interpretation of the personal fact and the personal history of the war veteran that re-builds it as historical fact through the eyes of the researcher.

We appreciate the methodological innovation and the epistemic courage of Mr. Ion Xenofontov, who presents to readers a different historical narrative: the story of the Moldovian militar sent in a war that he can not win, but he is not allowed to lose it.