

Abstract

The goal of this work is to offer a new approach towards a literary reading of history without subordinating it to the realm of fiction, the troubling solution previous narrativist approaches resorted to. Instead, this work conceives of historical writing as a genre of its own, intertwining both explanation and narration and thus creating a distinctive aesthetic horizon or effect of reading that enriches our perception of the past. The work develops this rhetoric of history in three subsequent steps, elaborated in three different parts. The first introduces the oeuvre of Paul Ricoeur, namely his *Time and Narrative*, which allows us to define historical discourse as a narrative genre that represents traces of the past and, via the tools of *quasi-intrigue*, refigures them into the temporal categories of *narrative identity* and *historical consciousness*. As it turns out, historiography is a genre prone to represent historical time, which is the main reason why it must both narrate and explicate. The second part puts this theoretical model into practice to prove that it can be used as a method of reading historiographic texts. To demonstrate its viability, a wide variety of texts is interpreted: a postmodern historiography, positivistic texts, a big scale history, microhistories. The third part confronts the previous findings with the narrativist theoretical tradition. The work engages in debate with the works of Hayden White, Franklin Ankersmit, Hans Kellner, and others. In the conclusions, we offer our own theory: the rhetoric of history. It distinguishes history as an interplay of figuration, explication, and time implication, a whole that targets the reader and that is to be read from the perspective of narrative identity and under the arch of historical consciousness.