

BEYOND HISTORICIZATION: EMBRACING RESPONSIBILITY AS A SUBJECT OF HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the limitations of traditional historiography and proposes a novel approach incorporating the existential concept of responsibility into historical understanding and writing. It argues that conventional historicization methods are inadequate, especially when addressing catastrophic events like genocide that transcend mere factuality. These events challenge historians to move beyond passive documentation and engage in responsible historicization. The proposed approach emphasizes the historian's active role in shaping historical narratives, particularly in preserving the memory of silenced voices. By integrating responsibility into historiography, historians can more effectively address the ethical implications of their work, especially in contexts where memory erasure and non-existence are central concerns. This responsible historicization offers a more profound and ethically grounded engagement with history. It acknowledges the historian's duty not only to record facts but also to grapple with the moral dimensions of historical events and their representation. The paper suggests that this approach can lead to a more nuanced understanding of the past, particularly in dealing with traumatic events that challenge traditional historical methodologies. By adopting this framework, historians can contribute more meaningfully to collective memory and the ongoing process of coming to terms with difficult histories.

Keywords: historicization, catastrophe, past, memory, responsibility

INTRODUCTION

Historiography has traditionally focused on the recording and analysis of events, often overlooking the deeper philosophical implications of history as a lived experience. The conventional approach to history tends to flatten individual narratives, reducing the complexities of human existence to mere data points within a larger, often impersonal, narrative. However, recent philosophical discourse, particularly within existentialist thought, has emphasized the importance of responsibility in shaping our relationship with history [4], [7].

The title of my paper captures the essence of an intellectual endeavor that transcends the mere recording and analysis of historical events. The challenge lies in describing what exists beyond the traditional confines of historiography, compelling us to venture into uncertain and uncharted territories. In this endeavor, the concept of responsibility emerges as a pivotal element. Responsibility is not merely an ethical imperative; it is a fundamental aspect of human existence, central to the formation of individual identity and agency. Existentialist philosophers have long argued that true individuation occurs