

Life stories in Social Science: between the hermeneutic and the philosophy of history

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Abstract:

Inside the production of knowledge in Social Sciences, the concept of “Life history” goes through the Social paradigms in general and through concepts such as «subjectivity», «construction», «experience» and «truth» in particular. Firstly, the paper focuses in the cognitive, cultural and political value of the «hermeneutics of the Social Sciences» (Heller, 1990), in an interpretation that conceives these Sciences as genres of modernity which are interested in self-understanding. Secondly, and from epistemological reflection about the assumptions of the biographical methods, the paper focuses critically on the relationship between «knowledge like redemption» (Benjamin, 1996) and «standard of likelihood» as a criterion of objectivity. Finally, the paper suggests some ontological and political assumptions in response to the narrative construction in the life stories.

Keywords: hermeneutics, truth, experience, narrative, polyphony.

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