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## History in Public: Public Past in Present Culture of Concepts

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### Abstract

This article is a theoretical understanding with the viewpoint about the implication of history in public as discourse of radical trust for social reconstruction and representational cultural materialism. The positions of the past have been long debated in the intellectual landscape. However, the present relations of past in contemporary culture of concepts marked an important site after the emergence of public history in the second half of twentieth century. Historical theory after cultural turn has intensely affected the concepts of modernist historiographical writings which challenge objectivity. The relation of past and objectivity have an important discussion in historical studies which expended multiple perspectives. This article tried to reenact the concepts and interpretations of historical with the lived and perceived past to better understand in the methodological complication of history in public regarding sources authority, authenticity of narrative, re-interpretations of inaccessible stories, and role of memory in the development of public consciousness. This article is an attempt to reconnect the ontology of academic historical Studies with public history in the presence of post-concept culture which has already suspended the regime of traditional truth and objectivity.

Keywords: Public history, conceptual history, radical trust, public consciousness.

### Introduction

Since ancient time, the nature of history has been the subject of discussion which deals between factual manifestation and literary representation of the past. The objective reliable and authentic claims of knowledge production is always confronted by the skeptic consciousness of civilized sapiens (Durant, 1976). Herodotus (484-425 BC), Thucydides (460-400 BC), Pamphile of Epidaurus 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (she lived during Nero's reign), and Publius Cornillus Tacitus (56-120 AD) documented historia as inquiry of the political tension in contesting ancient world between the Roman and Persian empires. Thucydides stressed upon documented official sources, eyewitness, secondary sources which were reliable and authentic according to him (Ferrario, 2023, p. 50).

In the southeastern traditions Sima Tan and Sima Qian (165-86 BC) compiled the 'Record of Grand Historian' (Grant, 1994, p. 20-38) during Han China history which emphasized upon the use of *Shiji* and *Tso chuan* narrative, a set models against traditional continuity of historical process but rather focused on more small units, individuals and authenticity of historiographic values (Nienhauser, 1986, p. 175-194). Another important female historian from ancient Chinna Ban Zhao, (45-120 AD) wrote *Lessons for Women* in Eastern Han dynasty introduced a different form of familial female agency intact with the communities and public (Lee, 2009, p. 47-66).



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Traditions from the middle eastern Asia emerged with the claim of historical cycles as anthropocentric aspect in the broader socio-economic and *asabiyyah* as social cohesion context connect reason with revelation in public past (Shafique, 2010). Tunisian scholar Ibne Khaldun divided human society into three categories, first, those who communicate with divinity, second, those who lived under divinity and third were the acephalous which are primary the common and public communities without hierarchies (Pišev, n.d., p. 20).

All historical traditions in ancient and medieval world primarily lack public representation. In the later medieval and early modern period writers tried to use history for the development of civic duties and responsibilities. Renaissance and liberal humanism primally placed human in the center of all historical developments and measurements which turned the intellectual practices and priorities toward public and civil society (Gellner, 1994). In ancient and medieval historical studies of the world public discourse of history in public was to be helped and established communal, tribal, primordial national identities to strengthen rituals, myths, moral and political legitimacy in the regime of power. History in public influenced the later medieval and modern trends of methods and concepts related to civil society, like the use of preserved past in the form of monuments, museum, archives etc. These efforts engage and educate society around citizenship and human rights. History in public is the fundamental fabric of understanding and preserving public human freedom, which is the highest value in public history.

There are grand narratives of historical knowledge which deal with the sacred and legitimate political voices of social hierarchy from ancient to late medieval. The Abrahamic traditions of monotheistic religions scripture' revolutionaries how to re-enact the Historiosophy of past with present however, eradicated the difference and distinction of public and political perspective. All these efforts developed a sense of representational materials for chronology. Chronology and periodization enhance better understandings of different phases of the political past but lacks for reconstruction of public past. It divides public consciousness into a dichotomy of Dark and Golden, Ignorant and cultured eras (Anjum, 2012, p. 27-48).

There is a discussion in public history which represents the nature of time which depicts that we are more similar to our time than to our ancestors (Ali, 2014, p. 19-23). Historical theory reflects the mindset of historian which is reinforced by the epistemic and cultural context of their time. Herodotus as founder of historiography introduced his work, "This is a publication of the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, in order that the actions of men may not be effaced by time, nor the great and wondrous deeds displayed both by Greeks and barbarians deprived of renown, and why the Greeks and barbarians waged war on one another (Cheyney, 1907)."

Herodotus recorded the struggles between the Greeks and barbarians, he was trying to trace the causes of the great events of his history, to recount the origin of that mighty contest between liberty and despotism which marked the whole period. The medieval period historiography was inspired mostly by the genre of biographies of rulers and mystical personalities. The discussion about the validity of hadith amongst the fellow Muslims led to the emergence of sources and textual criticism in the realm of historiography. The expansion of the medieval



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period empire new reforms in administration which enhance the quantity and quality of information. The late medieval period truly changes in nature and form of historical knowledge. The early medieval historiography was based upon the script of religion while the latter was truly inspired by political and human intervention in the definition of the course of history. The later medieval period in western renaissance and modern western colonialism, though revolutionaries' modern disciplinary exploration but distorted the face of public orient.

The contemporary period of historical writings from 1945 to the present emphasized rethinking and redefining the course of history to resolve the problems of liberal humanism which led the world once to extreme crisis of violence, displacement and resistance in the late twentieth century. A lot of work has been done from different perspectives to understand the actual situation and to find a way forward. Meanwhile grand narrative, universal truth, totalization and speculative ideas were challenged. Research saw a total rejection of theoretical work of modernity which started from the Renaissance in the western world.

Intellectual milieu deeply impacted culture, politics and administration as well as intelligentsia. The past in intellectual culture of concepts tried to explore the unexplored portion of culture, peripheries, local and other narrative which became the center of discussion. This research is an attempt to analysis the phenomenon of epistemological representation and meaning in the historical writings within the discipline of history to make it relevance in public domain.

Modernist historical theory remained stigmatized for a long time in the community of public scholars. However, the concept of public history demands that history is not just a collection of objective and official facts, even if these facts are valid, the historians need something to add to make it relevance for public in the process of doing history. The re-enactment of public perspective with politics makes these facts and structure intelligible. The structure of the past is dictating the philosophical and conceptual understanding of historical studies. Post conceptual culture of historical studies introduces some very important themes in intellectual history like the narrative discourse, literary interpretation of history, theory of historical work and relation of memory and public consciousness in doing history. Modernist objectivist historians and scholars are skeptic of contemporary historical theory and use of philosophy of historiography which is more public in its nature and functions and raises questions on the authority of traditional historical epistemology. One of the important novelists for philosophy of History Herman Hesse in his novel *The Glass Bead Game* narrated that:

“Whenever you became a teacher, scholar or musician have respect for meaning but don't imagine that it can be taught. Once upon a time the philosophers of history ruined half of the world history with their efforts to teach such meaning (Hesse, 1970, p. 365).”

### **Why Public History or History in Public?**

About the foundation of history as discipline theoreticians in post concept culture raised the question why we devote discipline to history. Whether history



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deserves to be marginalized or not? All the twentieth century theories and philosopher and critic from Marcuse, Camus, Sartre and Heidegger were against history as a discipline. Public historians put forward the question of how history ought to be studied. This question repeatedly asked in literature form Ibsen to Camus in philosophy from Nietzsche to Sartre and in social science from Weber to Popper. Public historians and researchers challenge the perceived continuities in power, identity, meaning and truth between past and present (White, 2005, p. 333-335).

### **The Problem of History in Public: Origin, Structure and Prospective**

Public history functions at the intersection of academic professional history and public perspective. This situation creates methodological challenges for history in public which also reinforces possibilities for epistemic and cultural solutions. The first breakthrough is the oversimplification and generalization of complex events and concepts into popular appeal which sometime distorts the existence of historical accuracy of process and perspective. The second important methodological challenge in public history engages the inclusivity and representation of hegemonic cultural narratives which sometime neglect voices from periphery. The third important epistemic challenge of history in public deals with the engagement of a diverse audience of multiple perspectives and context.

History is the discourse of desire in which interpretations play a major role in the building of a concept and perspectives. Public history primarily shaped by the politics of memory, which has a complex system of remembering and representing the imaginary in actual. Sometime the traumatic memories priorities and polarized interpretations which completely reshaped the structure of overall phenomena. Last but not the least, the old debate of historical preservation and hermeneutical formulation for distant old ancient and medieval cultural and civilizational continuity introduces public spaces which are fundamental in building authority for sources, ideas and cultural symbols.

These challenges can uphold by the collaboration of multidisciplinary and diverse archeology of cultural understanding and multiple sources in the presence of historical theory, which is the major fabric of dissection and deconstruction for understanding the historical community and individuals' position in building of society and advance culture of citizenship. Comparative civilizational studies can better re-enact and reconstruct the past with the present which can strengthen history in public in the contemporary culture of concepts.

Traditional historical methodology produces the worst form of suppressed meanings and representations in historical studies especially in the time of colonialism. Historical epistemology before the Second World War relied upon the modernist theory of history, which was a social theory, however, public history has introduced more critical and analytic approaches to resolve the intra-war time question of how to restore liberal humanism with contesting narratives of leftist-Marxist theory. The paradox of progress split into left and right directions. The historians after the First World War tried to overcome the absurdity of modernity around re-enactment of past with present for meaningful representation. All hopes were in ruins. The democratic values of eighteenth and





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nineteenth centuries did not resolve the issue of World War II. Despite these political changes, a change in the notion of reason took place. History as an event or as a process experienced the death of God,<sup>i</sup> the death of man (Foucault, 2002, p. 136-179), the death of author (Barthes, 1967) and now the death of reason (Heidegger, 1989), directly reinforced death of the discipline (Spivak, 2003), of history. These rhetorical statements of death end upon 'the death of reader' (Domanska & Kellner, 1994). Michel Rolph Trouillot (1949-2012) once offers a very different insight into the meaning and use of historicity. "The ways in which what happened and what is said to have happened are and are not the same may itself be historical (Trouillot, 2015, p. 4)."

Public consciousness is the understanding of private temporality of experiences which connect past with present to each other in the presence of cultural continuity. The presence of spaces in public histories charting out in private and personal memories. Public consciousness is different from historical consciousness in terms of conceptualization, which does not depend upon the nature of chronologies, sources and period to theorize. It does not depend upon the consistency, coherence and illumination of historical studies which are dependent upon the objective material sources of cultural hegemony.

In the long course of historical writings history as discipline experienced meaninglessness and an absurd historiography of modernism. The emergence of public turn in historical studies tried to transform that into a meaningful genre of writing. The disciplinary crisis within the discipline history still exists. However, conventional historians denied this perspective. The advanced phenomenological understanding, the emergence of public narrative and the specialization of multiple methods and new perspectives in the twentieth century is challenging historical epistemology.<sup>ii</sup> The discussion of how to restore public meaning and representation within the discipline of history is still going on. Until history is taken as a fundamental and basic inherent method for all epistemological researches, the crisis of prejudgment, untranslatable epistemological discourses, historical representation and disconnected discourse from public will thus lead the dialogue not to truth but to a dead end.

### **The Use of Methodology in Public History: Theory in Practice**

The emergence of public turn in historical studies reinforced and restructured historical knowledge more inclusive, accessible and publicly relevant to people perspective. Historical studies after the Second World War, when Marxism declared dead at least theoretically in eastern Europe in the post concept time have deeply changed from theory to practice. Many theoreticians like Robert Kelley in his popular article *Public History: Its Origins, Nature, and Prospects*, (1978) who institutionalized public history focusing outside of traditional academic historical studies and setting into public places like museum, archives and public memorial sites, Barbara Krishenblatt, in *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage* (1998) explore the performance of history in public places and its significance in building the identities and cultural perspectives of public, Micheal Frisch, *Shared Authority*, (1990) Rapheal Sameul, *Theatres of Memory: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, (1994) participation in history from below, David Lowenthal perspective in *The Past as a Foreign Country*, (1985) highlight the selected past and its use in



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public history raised questioned about the epistemic value of interpretations, preservation and commodification of selective memory played an important role which helps and develop methodology of public history (Flett, 1991). Pierre Nora concept of sites of memory in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking French Past*, (1996) developed new boundaries between physical and symbolic public places in which collective memory function as subjective and history as critical and analytical tool for cultural and historical communication. Hayden White philosophy of historiography and historical theory helps in understanding the formation of structure in stories through Emplotment and its consumption for public use radically challenged the objectivity of pseudo-scientific perspective of historical knowledge. Jorn Rusen, making sense of historical studies, deals with public dimensions of how individual and society communicate the events and concepts of the past with the present.

Researchers or historians are mostly engaging in the evaluation of primary and secondary sources to theorize the situation in the process of historical developments. However, all historical researches cannot be done in such circumstances. The nature of researches about intellectual history or ideas of histories are mostly reflective. In reflective research the mind of a researcher always thinks about its own thought. R. G. Collingwood describes it a 'thought of the second degree' (Collingwood, 2010, p. 1) and Hayden White defines it 'vicarious sex' (White, 2010, p. 82). However, there are problems with reflective research, for instance, how to accommodate the originality of ideas and evidence of the influence of other ideas. Reflective research has unconscious and subconscious ideas of influences to its own originality. Consequently, the uses of methodological theory of history and idea should be exposed and present clearly (Koufou, 2007).

This study uses phenomenological hermeneutics to understand historical theory as an experience of historical knowledge implication and production. It opens the consciousness or inner thought of discourse desire which suggests an alternative way out in historical writings. To further elaborate and explore history manifesto works, this research experiment to reunites poststructural and semiotics as method and as a tool, to unsettle the perplexed and de-romanticized meaning in historical theory. These meanings have seemed interpretative, descriptive, constructive, deconstructive and critical in nature but function like simulation i.e. historical system, historical past, practical past, de-sublimation, redemption and metaphysics of history. The methodological implication is important for understanding the evolution of historical theory. Consequently, this study discusses historical discourse as a narrative and as a method to transform and communicate historical theory with public readers.

This study has many reasons for investigating the implication of history in public in contemporary culture of concepts. The first reason affirms that there is great influence and relevance of public in contemporary democratic world which have unheard and unprecedented voices regarding their own subjectivity, culture and political decisions and unions, which does not require modernist historical methodology to investigate something like a forgotten thing of past. This research is about the contemporary uses of historian researches and cultural theorists which are responsible for emplots several literary, structural, hermeneutical, existential, psychic, philosophical and other cultural tools and



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theories for historical writings in public domain. The second reason upholds that history in public in present shape is influenced by the intellectual trends of postmodernity, which condemn the epistemic value of historicism. History in public resists the epistemic absolutism of historical methodology which insists upon authenticity, availability, credibility, reliability and responsibility of sources and interpretation.

These different methods explore the surface of historical works to connect the meaning of surface to in-depth contemporary culture of text and context with public perspective. The reliability of this methodology is relative with the questions having public interest put to it to see across all the intellectual agnosticism in contemporary culture of concept and the public hope of reconstruction of past and place it according to the needs of present. As a researcher it is very difficult to use the correct methodological use of historical theory for exploration of public will in epistemic structure. In *The Politics of Meaning* Clifford Geertz stated that:

“These issues are multiple, involving questions of definition, verification, causality, representativeness, objectivity, measurement, communication. But at base they all boil down to one question: how to frame an analysis of meaning—the conceptual structures individuals use to construe experience—which will be at once circumstantial enough to carry conviction and abstract enough to forward theory (Geertz, 2000, p. 313).”

The key to historical hermeneutics in understanding historical theory is holism. It explores that the meaning of a whole text of theory would not be the meaning of its parts. The larger or smaller parts of text in historical work accordingly to develop a facilitating interpretative dialogue across the periphery of public. Both public history and hermeneutics help each other in the determination of meaning according to the contemporary audience in more inclusive narrative by giving space to marginalized voices. Philosophical hermeneutics for the textual analysis of historical theory primarily deals with methodological implementation which helps to investigate and interpret history dynamically.

Hermeneutics emphasizes the correct set of questions and holistic collaboration of different context to better engage lived experience into the process of narrative. The development of correct and valid questions about history in public ensures inclusive projection of historical understanding. A fruitful public oriented multidimensional question leads to other important questions. The fundamental question of epistemological concerns about historical theory in public perspective highlights the deflection and reflection of historical knowledge production. Consequently, to check out whether a question is correct one or not researcher must follow the fundamental of public perspective.

There are three popular forms of logical argumentation, inductive, deductive and dialectic in the field of logical syllogism in philosophy. However, in the field of intellectual history three other forms of argumentation are also at work, which are adductive reasoning introduced by David Hackett Fischer (Fischer, 1970, p. xv), abductive reasoning expressed by Charles Sander Peirce (1839-1914) (Peirce, 1877-1878) and narrative reasoning which used for centuries to present a



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phenomenon of reality in form of lived and told stories. White believes that history is a discourse of desire which project presence through narrative argument for representation (White, 1987).

### **Discontent and Discourse of History in Public**

There is a difference between academic history and history in public which primarily based and influenced the distinction of primary and secondary sources including personal memories, cultural narratives, public interpretations of past events, oral traditions, in which people “preferred constructing their own versions of the past to digesting those prepared by others (Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998, p. 178)” which sometime disagree with the academic perspective due to personal and private experiences. “If public historians want to share authority, they need to grasp how people use and make sense of the past (Cauvin, 2022, p. 217).”

Professional historians are limited to the classrooms debate while public versions of non-historians reproduce their own past which primarily functions and based on oral and popular traditions. Public historians can better bridge with collaboration of accessibility and interactivity with wider public audience. History in public involves sources with the participation of shared authority for the reconstruction of historical narratives. The concept of radical trust as discussed by Thamos Cauvin significantly looking into public for content, direction and allowing the public through communities to restructure and reshape the future of public past (Cauvin, 2022, p. 15).

This study investigates the deflection of knowledge production in historical studies, which happened during the late twentieth century in the post war period. Analysis indicates that postmodern theorization about historical knowledge did not contribute to the deflection of historical knowledge but rather introduced and established alternatives way out for historical knowledge production in public perspective. Historical theory shares boundaries with other disciplines. It clearly presents transcendental hope and public relevance for a new form of historical studies which have the capacity to resolve the existential crisis and transform itself into a more advanced genre of the public consciousness. Historical theorization in contemporary time confirms that the deflection in historical knowledge happened due to its own modernist historicist nature, rather, than owing to postmodernity and public perspectives. The development in historical studies from classic humanism to liberal humanism, which transformed history into anti-humanistic and post-humanistic epistemology in the twentieth century have presented multiple shades of conceptual changes in philosophy of historiography. A comprehensive analysis asserts that historical knowledge functions both as fiction and faction. Historical theory writings resolved the old question of history as a science, or an art. History as a discourse of desires has epistemic freedom and cultural responsibility. Historical theory and public history condemned politically domesticated possibility of having claims for only truthful and authentic representation. Historiosophy project questions like what dose history signify and does history follow and proceed with a purposeful trajectory which can reconnect historical narrative with public audience. Historiosophy believes that historians have imaginations for story which are an attempt to present the real (Kudrya, n.d.). This perplexity of narration deals with





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dead stories from the past through annals and chronicles. Historical theory through alternatives public history exists in applied history and historical hermeneutics to bridge the non-communicative past into translatable present. However, political ideology is always there in the text. He tried to reinvestigate how to represent ghettoization of memories in the post-war Germany. The problem of truth and reconciliation faced terror and violence regarding rights, freedom and value of citizenship. Desired historical manifestation propagates political agendas, like the manifestation of Holocaust in western literature deliberately discouraged acts of war crimes against the people of Palestine. Regarding the application of methodology, this study came across several issues and problems. A historian or a researcher primarily uses historical methodology to explore the unexplored phenomenon in historical process, however, in case of historical theory; it clearly challenged the authenticity and probability of historical methodology. However, historical theory resistance was not just limited to historical methodology. Historical theory in contemporary culture of writings challenges other schools of thought like analytical, dialectical, positivist and relativist theorization. Historical studies and writing in contemporary time freely move from psychologism to semiotics and from semiotics to ontology in historical context which makes it more difficult but inclusive in term of contextualization of knowledge. Historical theory in contemporary time committed to investigate structuralist and existential phenomenologist crisis in knowledge production and wanted to free humanity from the burden and perplexity of past. Narrative discontinuity from one discussion to another makes it more complex to penetrate the text and its symbolic power in construction and reconstruction of knowledge in contemporary culture of concepts. Applied history needs to be practiced in different disciplinary areas such as field work to investigate static archival and official narratives of historical writings. There are different paradoxical approaches like de-idealizing story, a narration without narrator, anti-narrative mode, and blindness in historical representation and mask of meaning which addresses historical theorization. It appears that historical theory in contemporary time has the potential to make meaning and memories possible and how to remember it and how to forget these things when needed. It appears that historical production of meaning is the utmost important process of historical knowledge. Historical theory develops a system of re-enactment in which it functions under a complex sign and figurative system to construct an alternative medium for its legitimacy. Historical theory perspective in the conventional historiography presented as an ahistorical manuscript which does have the potential to make historical meanings. Historical theory never meant to reject the phenomenological existence of the past. If the interpretation cannot bridge the structure with the rest of the plot of story it needs a willingness to realize a historical pluralism where the entire materials in this political polarization count as a system of signs. Historical theory calls for making sense of these all-unrealized historiographical representations into meaningful genre. What happened or what is mapped out about the past is not important but what must be in the present is a matter of the common good for historical studies. Conventional historical knowledge cannot help the individual problem in the present. The ideological practices in the early twentieth century even made it worse for the sake of public good. Historical theory suggests a narrative-less form



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of historization, in which elements of fiction are equally important in the Emplotment and explanations of events. Historical discourse digests the imposed archival politics of objective past as a part of moralizing narratives and dues to the domestication of political ideology. Theory develops alternative meanings for representation which flow from cultural humanism to digital nomadism.

The development of public consciousness is the understanding of temporality of experience which connects past, present and future to each other. Presence of public places and epistemic structure in public histories charting out in private and personal memories. Public consciousness is different from historical consciousness in terms of conceptualization, which does not depend upon the nature of date and period to theorized. It does not depend upon the consistency, coherence and illumination of political rhetoric of truth which are dependent upon the objective material sources in traditional historical studies. The use of historical theory directs public historians which can create more inclusive and relevant interpretations of complex narrative meaningfully.

### **Historical Value of Public Past**

History is not just a collection of facts even if these facts are valid, the historians need something to add in the process of doing History. That is a structure which makes these facts intelligible. The narrative structure of past dictating the philosophy of history. History in public in present culture of concepts deals with this narrative structure to uphold the crisis of knowledge production in historical studies. It raised the question: what kind of meaning is absent in the narrative building while using historical methodology. According to historical theory the question of presence and the question of actuality would only be possible by rhetorical devices and hermeneutical intervention into representation.<sup>iii</sup>

In “The value of narrativity in the representation of reality, (1980)” Hayden White argued the question of how much it is important to translate knowing into telling. The absence of narrative from text and public perspective as a form of representation which confirms the absence of meaning in historical writings. The totalitarian and authoritarian political use of traditional history is not just dangerous but immoral for public history. Humanism of the modern period destroyed the twentieth century global world in which the last attempt of Korean version of history failed to uphold the crisis of liberal historiography.

### **Historical Theory as an Interpretation of Public Perspective**

Theoretical framing accommodates textual and structural anxieties while doing historiography. Theory would most likely be a predictable source for examining the craft of history, its method and its practices in public perspective. The following are the details which exhibit the above statement.

### **Theory as History: Orientation, Process and Shift**

Theory as history has been widely practiced by the liberal nationalist, reformist conservative and leftist progressive traditions of nineteenth and twentieth century. In historical materialism, modes of production and means of production are theoretical history. But here theory is not just bound to interpret the historical process or to understand the historical societies, but to change these all situation through ‘a philosophical defense of history in the metonymical mode’



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(White, 1973, p. 28). The ‘comic conception’ (White, 1973, p. 28) of Hegelian interpretation of histories carried out by Marxist into new possibilities which are ‘romantic (White, 1973, p. 28)’ in nature in which everything will be settled once and for all. Jorn Rusen a foundational contemporary German philosopher of history and historiography highlights how historical consciousness shape moral consciousness. Which means how theory becomes history and history becomes theory? He introduced us to a linguistic form in which narrative competences play a role in shaping and re-shaping the above understanding.

Narrative competence is subdivided into three competences like competence of historical experience<sup>iv</sup>, competence of historical interpretation<sup>v</sup> and competence of historical orientation<sup>vi</sup> which is based on elements of content, form and function. White believes that content deals the synchronization of historical process (White, 1987, pp. 2–66). Form defines its ultimate structure, to explain the bridging materials in understanding historical function of writings, which highlights how the above two condition; content and form help historical theory in constructing the human culture to practice a meaningful order of history (Rosen, 2005, p. 26). The theoretical legitimacy of historical model ensures the collapse of ‘philosophy of subject’<sup>vii</sup> and fall of human as a center of knowledge which ensured an anti-humanist philosophy of history.<sup>viii</sup>

### **Theory as Method: Ethics, Manifesto and Ideology**

Methodological form of theory calls for action to identify the fabricated facts and domesticated events from the ideological implementation in historical writings. Manifestos are attempts to communicate with the possible future.

#### *Ethics:*

Methodological scrutiny demands different tools and methods, but among these all things the intentions of historians play a decisive role in the construction of historical knowledge. These intentions are a matter of ethical and epistemological concern. White was very much conscious about the ethical position of historians. Historians’ intentions can only be scrutinized and transmitted by the act of ethical certification and authorization. White believes that meanwhile epistemic values suffer deflection due to ethical and willfulness of our historical interventions in documentation of historical understanding.

#### *Manifesto:*

History in public and historical theory is like historical materialism, when used to determine the fate of masses, it turn to organize masses and public by political and civil manifestos, thus theory play as an important role to propagate that manifesto. Theory as manifesto is not just limited to political objectives; one can also see it in the epistemic manifestation like cultural discourse or discourse of historians about the process of history. White discusses that the script of manifesto is less interesting in the past but more interested in the present and future (Jenkins, Morgan, Munslow, Bourke, & White, 2007, pp. 220–231). White has raised some very interesting questions while dealing Manifesto. “What of a manifesto for history? Does it make any sense to manifest for a scholarly discipline, and especially a contemplative rather than a drastic one, fixated on the past, committed to the long view, suspicious of generalization, and hostile to every futurism? (White, 2007, p. 220)”

White while defining the nature of manifestos and its relation to the past,



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Derrida's book *Specters of Marx* highlights that time is out of our supposed arrangement, we put together things and then propose our intention to move toward a better future (White, 2007, p. 220).

Frank Ankersmit, a Dutch philosopher of contemporary philosophy of history and theory stresses that history is not just a passive activity where historians are supposed to present past as it looks but also ensure intervention in the process of its presentation. Manifesto impact historiography by its orientations and by its objectives. The manifesto to annals schools or subaltern studies deeply transforms the historiographical narrations of truth and meaning about the community and about the discipline itself.

### *Ideology:*

The applicability of ideology here does not mean to reopen the old nineteenth and early twentieth century discussion to see its political function. Ideology historically determined and speculates an individualistic and universalistic aspect of the historical world. Here ideology stands to define the historian's transcendental instinct which synchronizes the reflection of ideas within historical studies while looking into the methodological undertaking of historical theory. Theoretical ethics and manifestation have no choice but to move into the ideology of meaning full representation. The theoretical frame upon which this research is based, to investigate the structure of historical studies and historical knowledge, which transforms itself into an ideological foundation, which is not that neutral but at least not 'fundamental'<sup>ix</sup> and speculative. It belongs to historical theory, rather than political spectrum. Off course it resists sometime while doing and making history, but that would be judged by the ultimate will of masses consciousness, as people are now living in the age of information and technology.

### **Theory as Practice: Anxiety, Will, and Aesthetics**

Public perspective of historical knowledge cannot be bound to a specific interpretation. Historical theory is not just a history of historiography or approaches to philosophy of history but rather it has more cultural and peoples' themes, even in the time of postmodern challenges, like identity, future of past and communication with different temporality (Bhatti, 2012, p. 137). Theory as practice is an attempt to undo the mystery of 'things in itself (Kant, 2000, p. 115)' and to see how much our anxiety can turn the aesthetics of our will, to present the story which chooses to impose upon the past. History of philosophy highlights in Heideggerian perspective that anxiety is a good thing (Sartre, 1956). Anxiety is the ultimate reply to the question of human existence which has limitations. Anxiety is a bigger fear of our existence as human being in the world. This anxiety brings us as individuals and public to care about historical thinking. The aesthetic of public perspective of historical theory is that things get revealed and communicate into it like Heideggerian dasian in which a being revealed into itself in the process of becoming. But historical things are not that easy. The wishful will of historians is decisive in making all aesthetics of existence. This will of historians came face to face with the claim objectivity of historical studies.<sup>x</sup>

E. P. Thompson practice of historical studies transforms theory into a social activism (Partner, 2013, p. 318). His *Making of English working Class* was an attempt of public perspective against the deterministic school of historical





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writings. He strikes the so called intellectual and political border line, and impulsively supports public activism to overcome historic anxiety by the will of historical knowledge in public places and spaces. Thus, on the same patterns the will of postcolonial historians be tried to give voice to the unspeakable narratives. There are three layers of theoretical practices reflecting the nature of historical theory. The first one is the epistemological legitimacy of doing history, like social and cultural historical theories, second is to verify the historical position of theory, like historian's use of specific historical methodology and third one is to separate historical theory from the rest of other theoretical framework, like scientism or art and humanities (Lorenz, 2011, p. 15). Theory especially historical theory needs more inclusive public practice in the present time. It could help our psycho-cultural confusion of how to overcome upon our own memory as past and how to wake up from the condensation of unconscious dreams work to a more conscious historical work.

### **The Presence Historical Theory in Public History as Anti-Historiographic Culture**

Public audience, narrative frames, interpretations dimensions and collective memory in public history formulated and guided by historical theory which functions as anti-historiographic cultural site in public and intellectual places. Purpose, meaning and uses of public perspective helps public historians in transforming memory and identity for general audience.

The early twentieth century Heideggerian interpretation as an anti-humanistic discourse is not agreed with the question of skepticism, which is absurd and useless. Heideggerian epistemology cannot pretend to be skeptical but always understands the development of historical process which in phenomenology calls it, being in the world. For phenomenology, human being is the ultimate being which have the capacity to project a network of meanings in which things are revealed. Understanding of human being as *dasein*, Heidegger was sure about the possibility to perceive and conceive the meaning of historical existence which developed in the long period of historical shifts and process. Derrida examines it like a deconstructionist desire and hope in which unstable becomes stable and impossible become possible. Jenkins believes that if there would a continuity of peace and stability there would not be politics, chaos is there and thus our actions are possible for the consensus of change and replacement of the instability. Instability is not natural rather it is a constructed phenomenon (Jenkins, 1999, p. 29). However, White believes that the political intervention of historians into representational meanings create ethical possibility and responsibility about the past as a story of freedom and as an epistemic choice (White, 1978, p. 22). Impossibility of alternative representation in the discourse of nineteenth century historical studies impact the function and neutrality of historical theory. On one side if the epistemic suppression of other genres like literature and rhetoric gave an advantage to historical studies to practice independently it also led this analysis to edge of chaos.

### **The Sublime of Public Presence in Historical Theory**

Public history reinforced emotional resonance with deep feeling of connectivity with specific events, concepts and phenomena. Its temporal reflection develops



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new parameters of connectivity between past and present. Reconstruction of public places like memorials, museums and memories sites exhibits and depicts compelling stories in political and cultural ideals.

Sublime is the overwhelming experience of nature and the function of historical theory in the determination of historical meaning within the atmosphere of constructed facts and fictions. The intellectual, aesthetic and metaphysical greatness of historical theory has the capability to expend without border placed theory in the sublimity of understanding, reason, independence of imagination and transition of feeling which travels from ruins to reasons. Historical theory rejects the modernist universality at its beginning but then the ideological foundation within historical theory concerned itself with the universal claims like universal historical work, universal narrative discourse and the universal literariness of history. That's why the history of theory is considered a historical cynicism for many critics because it represents a contradiction of scrutiny which this study earlier mentioned in the case of universality of ideas (Balfour, 2002, p. 110). The sublimity of historical theory is hidden in the possibility of knowledge which is constructive and deconstructive in nature not conventional which determined to unearth the facts and then the facts will speak for itself.

### **Isolation, Alienation and Possibility in Public History**

The isolation and alienation in historical narration existed for centuries within the nature and function of historical knowledge. It is only in the present contemporary time that it started to rethink systematically on an analytical basis. R.G Collingwood described 'history as the science of human actions (Collingwood, 1946, p. 20)' in which things belong to the world of change but in old Greek they thought that things which are changeable are impossible to know. So according to Greek the knowledge of history is impossible. For Greek only the permanent things are capable to be known as objects of knowledge. For them only mathematical knowledge fulfills the status and nature of knowledge. But in this alienation Greek had those who believe that change is rational, and a changeable thing first comes in the sphere of thought process. This possibility of historical knowledge was against the anti-historical narration of Greeks.

Basically, there was a discussion in the pre-Socrates philosophy about the possibility of knowledge. The discussion was about the problem of motion. The obscurantism was broadly anti-intellectual, and they were dominated at that time. 'The way of truth'<sup>xi</sup> and 'the way of opinion' represents the truth and appearance of the world in which change is impossible. Opinion for the philosopher of Greek was semi-knowledge not a complete rationality. For them knowledge is a universal phenomenon which can be useful everywhere. The metaphysical and ontological discussion during pre-Socrates period deeply influenced every bit of knowledge whether it was historical or other than it. The histories wrote in Greek were mostly inspired by these approaches.

However, the medieval world of historical knowledge had developed under different circumstances which possess different nature and function. Mostly the dichotomy of possibility and impossibility of knowledge was at work. The fundamentalist Judo-Christians were subjected any creation in the presence of metanarrative or grand holly narrative while those scholars of Judo-Christians who believes in the Biblical hermeneutics take part in the production of



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knowledge. The Islamic world further strengthens the historical methodology while justifying historicity of Hadith and recognition and acknowledgement of history as an independent branch of knowledge. The late twentieth century crisis of knowledge production in historical studies was due to the late nineteenth century failure of scientism and objectivism which collectively known as Historicism. Hayden White condemns this notion that postmodernists are responsible for the failure of historical knowledge rather he believes that the problem was there in the structure of historical studies itself (White, 2005, pp. 147–157). The delusion of old regime and fantasy of old political order had been deconstructed by historical knowledge. The revolutionary nineteenth century Europe evolves into a factual historiographical tradition which later become a central point for the critic of late twentieth century historical theory (White, 2010, p. 306).

Historical studies from its early institutionalization have differences of opinion about the practice and theory in hermeneutics and philosophy of history. The fundamental empiricists and objectivists of the late nineteenth century were strictly against the culture of theoretical dominance in the domain of history. They even reject romanticist historians like Jules Michelet's *On History* was considers rhetoric and fiction. In early twentieth century his work recognized and acknowledged among historian as historical craft in the historical and historiographical writings in France.

Will Durant was very much Optimist about the possibility of pastological investigation. He believes that the past is living as a heredity material and function as well, which has been transformed to us personally and collectively. The alienation, which raises from the impossibility of knowledge from past resurfaces here. The past lives within us and the production of historical knowledge are possible (Durant, 2014, pp. 87–97). Present is ontologically a dead entity. Again, these narrations have encouraged isolation and alienation of historical theory in which the present is not working as an epistemological temporality. This is clearly an act of historical fallacy which can turn our own existence into silence. If such is the situation, theory is making a wrong and an obscure analysis. But in the context of development happened in the discipline of history one can clearly imagine the politics, which did for the epistemological status of historical studies, to impact the earlier analysis of obscurity. These challenges on the one hand has given a tough time to historical theory while on other hand it rooted the growth of theory in these circumstances to develop into an independent entity, in the spectrum of research and other methodologies.

Historical theory with all these ironies is an alternative possibility for our ethical and aesthetic worldview. Many philosophers of social humanities and physical sciences in writings uses history as a methodology. Those who learn from historical studies, literary critics and other intellectuals are doing work with historical theory.<sup>xii</sup> Historical study can treat methodological skepticism by investigating it in the historical process. Historical study could function both in reflective role as theory and in field work as practice. It challenges the universality of procedure and structure of ideas and connects it with the locality of alternative meaning to represent a hope in a discourse of meaninglessness. Whether the discourse is humanistic, like thinking about a specific theoretical formation of what and where it happened or anti-humanistic i.e. how the



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structure of theory and practice came into being, the analysis will produce its meaningful representation without skeptic notions.

History in public and historical theory evolved in the post war era; however, we can't ignore the nineteenth century empiricist, objectivist and speculative traditions and the early twentieth century analytical philosophy of history which make possible a theoretical shift in historical studies. These hopes, which are full of miseries, doubt and unbridged realities have constructive factors, like a desire and proof of research, for which Carlo Ginsburg is so sure that he proclaimed, that the production of historical knowledge is possible. The evolution and developments in the last five decades in historical theory make it possible that historical knowledge is now possible and even decisive with respect to other discipline. In the third chapter this study would explore how Hayden White's theoretical approaches would uphold the crisis of historical knowledge production systematically.

These possibilities in historical studies encourage Hayden White to rethink that meaning is possible and historical theory is making it practical for public discourse. Even in the most cynical situation, when historians were leaving professional writing in history White was there doing and making history to make and uphold the crisis of historical knowledge production for public good in the second half of twentieth century. Anyhow his critique about historical studies sometime took a calculated risk, which would some time seems that it will ultimately confirm the failure of theory and practice in historiographical traditions. However, in the coming chapter this study would be better to try to explain how to understand our theorist White which would link theory and practice of historical studies. How our theorist contributed with different approaches, tools and techniques will see into consideration.

### **Conclusion**

The present study tried to understand history in public in the presence of historical theory in culture of concepts to explore the structural formation of historical writings which accommodate and re-settle the debate of suppressed narratives through philosophy of historiography in public history. Modernist objectivism developed a consciousness of reductionist perspective from public history which encouraged dehumanization and hatred of historical understandings amongst communities. In the case of history in public, many traumatic events and experiences which produced in long political failure of global world have been denied historically in objectivist historical studies. Public history considers it ahistorical act, inviting a radical structural hermeneutical middle voice addressing itself to itself as a writing subjectivity which can unsettle the imposed meaning of lying and denying experiences based upon epistemic violence. The subject will resume inside the action to authorize the sources of violence and would decide how to proceed into the future from assume displaced past. The suppression of real events in the historiography of the public produces an idealist desire to secure the legitimacy of historical meaning. Public history and historical theory offer that militant tendency as a memory which contains all miseries needs to be studied according to a secure and correct sense of historical inquiry.

The reflection and deflection of history in public in present culture of concepts





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illustrates the dynamic and evolving nature of historical scholarship which has challenged traditional notions of historical knowledge, leading to a more inclusive and critical approach to understanding the unexplored past.

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<sup>i</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Gay Science*, disliked Christianity not due its religious superstitions but due to its egalitarian nature which introduced a form of slave morality upon human being. “Hope is possible again! Our German mission is not over yet.” See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>ii</sup> Muhammad Shafique Bhatti interview by Danyal Masood, at Department of History and Civilizations Studies BZU, Multan, Pakistan, December 16(?), 2018.

<sup>iii</sup> See for details discussion Danyal Masood, “Sources, Nature and Narrative of Pashtun Public History: Historiographic Freedom and Responsibility,” *International Journal of Politics & Social Sciences Review (IJPSSR)* 3, no. III (2024): 30–43, <https://ojs.ijpssr.org.pk/index.php/ijpssr/article/view/37>.

<sup>iv</sup> It is about the understanding of past and to know the temporality of its time by separating from present.

<sup>v</sup> It is about how to bridge the past with present and make a possible future which respects the temporality.

<sup>vi</sup> It is about identity, human action and aesthetics with respect to historical knowledge.

<sup>vii</sup> Philosophy of subject rose after the renaissance whose liberal humanistic claim which acknowledge a pre-Socrates model of knowledge in which man is the center of all measurement. This philosophy bankrupted after the emergence of postmodernism. Philosophy of subject contains both continental and analytical traditions.

<sup>viii</sup> For Heidegger humanistic was an invalid and anthropocentric mistake in all the history of philosophical traditions of western philosophy from ancient to modern.

<sup>ix</sup> Here term fundamental uses in modernist connotation which refers to the fundamental ideologies like Rankian model of historical methodology etc.

<sup>x</sup> Lorenz, “History and Theory” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing*, 14. Note: Immanuel Kant uses this phrase an epistemological battlefield between scientists will with objectivity.

<sup>xi</sup> Parmenides was a Pre-Socrates Greek ontological Philosopher, famous for his poem *On Nature* in which he discussed way of opinion and way of truth.

<sup>xii</sup> International network for theory of history supports the argument that history and other disciplines should work together.