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Disciplined Subjectivity In Historical Evidence: Balancing Objectivity And Interpretation

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Abstract: *The article reviews how historians can balance objectivity with subjectivity in their assessment of historical evidence, which is arguably the major theme in both historiography and in the philosophy of history: How does one write history with epistemic integrity while recognizing and accepting that the discipline is interpretively mediated? The article engages the theoretical work of Leopold von Ranke, E. H. Carr, Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit, and Michael Novick, while also placing their debates within broader philosophical and historiographical frameworks. The outcome of this discussion positions that objectivity and subjectivity are not mutually exclusive; that is, a disciplined acknowledgment of subjectivity, via reflexively engaging with sources, narrative decisions, and interpretative frameworks, enhances methodological rigor and provides a transparent history to the past. Thus, while the discussion is theoretical, examples of the reflexive subjectivity in action span from Ranke's work in the archives and diplomatic accounts to studies of Holocaust testimony and colonial memory. The study advances a model of disciplined subjectivity as a methodological bridge between objectivity and interpretation, enabling historians to produce coherent, transparent, and ethically responsible narratives*
Keywords: *Historical methodology, Objectivity in history, Subjectivity in historiography, Philosophy of history, Historical evidence, Leopold von Ranke, E. H. Carr, Hayden White.*

INTRODUCTION

The study of history has long argued with the problem of objectivity and subjectivity, a philosophical and methodological challenge that continues to excite discussion among historians and theorists. Historical inquiry involves interpreting past events and people based on available evidence. This raises the question: can we expect history to provide an objective account of what actually happened? Or is every historical narrative influenced by the historian's own perspectives, preferences, and the context in which they write? It's a complex issue to consider.

This question arises not just in historiographical discussions, but in moments in which philosophers of history consider the legitimate and epistemic status of historical sources or documents and artifacts. As one continues to work through these questions, the debate of fact

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versus interpretation becomes blurred—this blurring is not just an indication of a writer engaging in historiography, but also epistemology. This matter should matter because it _will sometimes_ inform the practice of writing history and the historian's ethics.

When we delve into the study of history, we quickly find a range of opinions about how to approach objectivity and subjectivity. Leopold von Ranke, often seen as the pioneer of modern historical methodology, firmly believed in looking at history "as it actually happened," which he discussed in 1884. He thought that being objective meant thoroughly examining sources and striving to avoid letting current viewpoints color our understanding of the past. On the other hand, E.H. Carr presented a different perspective. In 1961, he argued against the strict idea of objectivity, suggesting that historians inherently shape the facts through their own interpretations. Carr pointed out that subjectivity is a constant; historians make choices about what to emphasize, what to ignore, and how to organize their evidence. Building on this, Hayden White posited that histories are crafted through narrative techniques and storytelling; he believed that historical accounts should be viewed more as representations than as direct reflections of reality, which he highlighted in 1973.

Frank Ankersmit also contributed to this discussion by focusing on how historical meaning is constructed, particularly through the narratives we build and how we relate to our own history.While these scholars have provided valuable insights into the complexity of historical studies, there is a lingering tension. Few have addressed the idea that the strength of a narrative—along with the interpretive choices historians make—can justify any responsibility we have regarding subjectivity in our work.In this paper, it is argued that objectivity and subjectivity in history are not entirely opposed; instead, they depend on each other within the broader practice of knowledge creation. Rather than viewing historical objectivity as something unattainable, it is suggested that understanding subjectivity—through careful consideration of sources and narrative choices—can enhance our rigor as historians.

By acknowledging our subjectivity, we can develop a more rigorous approach to evidence, which is critical as we take collective responsibility for both our interpretations and the historical

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sources we use. This is not just an abstract idea; it has real implications for how we make and share historical claims. Given the current moment, where various conflicting narratives are competing for attention in both public and academic circles, it is crucial for historians to understand and engage with the balance of objectivity and subjectivity. Maintaining credibility and intellectual integrity means grappling with this relationship in our practices. To clarify this argument, my article is divided into four main sections. The first section discusses various theoretical responses to historical objectivity and subjectivity, placing these conversations within the wider context of history and philosophy. The second section applies these theoretical concepts to specific case studies, highlighting how interpretation plays a vital role in reconstructing history. The third section synthesizes the theorizing of subjectivity and the subjectivity of the cases, to propose a model for reflexive, epistemically responsible historical writing grounded in subjects. The conclusion summarizes broader implications for historians (and theorists) and discusses the continuing relevance of these sorts of issues in historical practice. The article thus shifts from the conceptualization of key issues related to subjectivity to the demonstration of the subjectivity of practice in specific historical episodes and to the blend of theorization on subjectivity in historical writing practice. This article aims to suggest and shed light on the contours of a historiography that is more fully developed, and in relation to historiography that is more critically engaged.

Literature review

In the past several historiographical and philosophical writings, the discussion surrounding objectivity and subjectivity is starting to come into the forefront: Historians and other scholars are increasingly not recognizing objectivity and subjectivity elements as strictly opposing, but rather as interrelated dimensions that require articulation and management. Adrian Lundberg, Fraschini, and Aliani's "What is subjectivity? Scholarly perspectives on the elephant in the room" (2023) utilized Q methodology above and across disciplinary boundaries and as the result of lack of shared definitions of meaning there was no consensus as to what "subjectivity" means, the authors highlight the differences is it used in terms, measuring, context and perspective. As such, the author

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recommended that historians provide a definition of how they organize and define "subjectivity" instead of assuming a shared meaning of that term.

Another area of contemporary inquiry explores the function of narrative and “fantasy” as a form of mediation between subjectivity and objectivity. Baniamer and Allendi’s “Fantasizing history between subjectivity and objectivity” (2024) explores how, similar to narrators, historians also perform imaginative synthesis to reconcile imperfect empirical claims with narrative imagination. This case study demonstrates that even attempts at neutrality are imbued with authorial choices in regard to structure, metaphor, and emphasis.

Besides those mentioned above, the writing on historiographical reflexivity offers the methodological tools to make explicit our interpretive decisions. Decker, Hassard, and Rowlinson (2021) introduced historiographical reflexivity within organization studies, making the case for scholars to conduct deliberate and systematic reflections on their decisions with archival and primary method selection, and also to reflect on, and with transparency, the inherent tensions between ‘institutional memory’ and ‘collective memory,’ situated in their own narrative frames. Their perspective is compelling for historians because they make explicit connections between methodological transparency and scholarly accountability. Simultaneously, Ahmed's Weberian approach in "What Can We Learn From History?" (2022) puts forward a reflexive understanding (verstehen) as he negotiates between informed narrative interpretations and evidence-based critique of required academic standards.

The phenomenological-hermeneutic tradition is receiving new attention in current work. In Ericka L. Tucker's "The Subject of History: Historical Subjectivity and Historical Science" (2013), Tucker argues that subjective consciousness is historically conditioned, and that historical writing must be mindful of this condition, though not to the exclusion of critical, document-based historiography. Her contention is that subjective experience and archival rigor are complementary rather than antithetical. Continuing in the same spirit, in Subjectivity and History: Approaches to Twentieth-Century Sources (Fulbrook, 2016), historians examine the interplay between a past actor's subjectivities, their own interpretive subjectivities, and the anticipated subjectivities of

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contemporary audiences or viewers, thus reaffirming the notion that any historical work, or "representation of the past," is a self-aware triadic negotiation of each of these positions.

Fulbrook also engages in questioning the use of subjective sources (testimonies, memoirs, oral history) for historical engagements, and remarks that a researcher cannot simply dismiss them as a low priority because of bias. A researcher or scholar navigates some of their particularity in building a subjective window into lived experience, similarly represented at the core of critical developments in memory studies and public history, where subjective voices are no longer unprivileged, but rather are now at the forefront of conflicted pasts.

Significant tensions and gaps remain. First, there is the transparency vs. credibility paradox: many historians nonetheless reflexively make interpretive choices in the preface or methodological note, but do not systematically trace how that interpretive choice informed each inference, rhetorical turn, or decision regarding narrative. Second, some critics remain concerned about epistemic relativism, because if subjectivity is so all-pervasive, on what basis is one claim better than the other? Third, the Eurocentric orientation of many historiographic theories remains under-criticized; comparative and non-Western traditions of historical knowledge (for example, in Islamic historiography, Chinese chronicles, or African oral histories) rarely get brought into these positions. Finally, with the rise of digital humanities and algorithmic tools, new forms of mediation (data cleaning, algorithmic bias, sampling decisions) would require a more deliberate model of subjectivity that can also tackle those problems; however, the literature has hardly emerged in this space.

So, although the field has transcended the old binary, there is no widely accepted and normative mechanism through which to manage subjectivity. While there is much literature on reflexivity and transparency, relatively little has outlined a systematic frame for documenting, assessing, and comparing interpretive moves, and it is precisely at this point of methodological gap (between recognition, and operationalization) that "disciplined subjectivity" offers a potential frame, and in looking to offer specific heuristics, or protocols, by which historians can make their moves visible, assessable, and credibly related to evidence.

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METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative, theoretical, and interpretive research design grounded in the traditions of historiography and the philosophy of history. Rather than employing empirical data collection in the conventional social-scientific sense, the research relies on systematic textual analysis, comparative theoretical examination, and conceptual synthesis to investigate the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity in historical methodology.

Research Approach

The methodological approach is analytical–philosophical, focusing on how key historiographical thinkers conceptualize objectivity, subjectivity, evidence, and interpretation. The study engages critically with seminal works by Leopold von Ranke, E. H. Carr, Hayden White, Frank Ankersmit, and Michael Novick. These figures were selected through purposive sampling due to their enduring influence on debates concerning historical knowledge, narrative construction, and epistemic authority.

Data Sources

Primary data consist of canonical historiographical and philosophical texts, including monographs, lectures, and peer-reviewed journal articles authored by the selected theorists. Secondary sources include contemporary scholarly analyses, review essays, and methodological discussions that contextualize and critique these thinkers. The literature was identified through targeted searches in academic databases and reference tracing to ensure conceptual relevance and theoretical rigor.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis proceeds in three stages. First, the study conducts a conceptual clarification of key terms—objectivity, subjectivity, evidence, and interpretation—drawing from both classical and contemporary scholarship. Second, a comparative analysis examines how different historiographical traditions negotiate the tension between empirical rigor and interpretive mediation. Third, the study undertakes an analytical synthesis, integrating theoretical insights with

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selected case illustrations (such as diplomatic archives, Holocaust testimony, and colonial memory) to demonstrate how subjectivity operates in historical practice.

Reflexivity and Validity

To ensure methodological credibility, the study employs historiographical reflexivity, explicitly acknowledging the researcher's interpretive position and theoretical commitments. Rather than aiming for neutrality in the positivist sense, validity is pursued through transparency of interpretation, coherence of argumentation, triangulation across theoretical perspectives, and consistency between claims and cited evidence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Philosophical Framework

To examine the association among objectivity, subjectivity, and the practice of history, we must first attempt to clarify the key conceptual terms used in this discussion. Simply put, objectivity means the objective effort to represent the past accurately, without the distorting influence of bias or present interests (Ranke, 1884). However, as many historians and philosophers of history recognize, objectivity cannot be merely thought of as mechanically applying empirical forms of inquiry (that is, evidence and methods) of the past; importantly, objectivity is a normative ideal that informs concepts such as evaluating sources, weighing evidence, or ordering a narrative (Carr, 1961). In opposition, subjectivity invokes the interpretive, editorial, and narrative decisions made as part of the process of writing diverse histories (White, 1973). All historical re-creation is inherently an act of selection (i.e., what events, actors, and causal components are relevant) and interpretive, which, at the same time, has, and likely will have limitations in its reflection of a historian's frameworks, theoretical commitments, and cultural and temporal stance. Evidence, on the other hand, is defined as documents, artifacts, oral/eyewitness testimony, and material traces of the past; the weight of the evidence of historical evidence is not self-evident; rather, evidence comes in part from a layering of authentication, contextualization, or problematic processes of critical evaluation (Ankersmit, 2001). In the end, interpretation involves revisiting evidence to

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create clear historical narratives that make sense, even when we have imperfect pieces from the past. With these concepts defined, we can explore how ideas about knowledge, representation, and truth affect what we can and can not do with historical methods.

Leopold von Ranke's notion of historical objectivity presents an important instance to grasp the philosophical stakes of historiography. In Ranke's view, historians should engage in an ultimately empirical and source-based project that would aim to narrate events "as they actually happened." For Ranke, scholars of historical objectivity would involve the cautious criticism of a source and the ability to construct facts chronologically (Ranke, 1884). However, Ranke's model was criticized because it underestimated the interpretive work even in the careful wielding of sources. E.H. Carr famously pointed out that historical facts do not exist outside of the historian; they take on meaning only when the historian selects, emphasizes, and arranges the information into a narrative. (Carr, 1961) Carr's argument challenges a completely objective history as it identifies that subjectivity is inevitable in the selection of evidence (what constitutes evidence), what facts make it into the narrative, and how a notion of causality emerges from the information. Hayden White expanded on this critique by examining the literary and rhetorical frameworks that constitute historical accounts. White showed that historical accounts are not a window to the past, but, instead, are constructed narratives that include tropes, emplotments, and argumentation that shape how readers come to understand these events (White, 1973).

Frank Ankersmit's argument complements this notion by emphasizing the experiential and representational dimensions of how we understand past events: history is not solely an assemblage of facts but a means of interpreting and experiencing the past (Ankersmit, 2001). Collectively, these theorists emphasize the twofold challenge confronting historians' epistemic fidelity and the unavoidable interpretive and narrative mediation that is foundational to the discipline.

Developing on these foundations, Micah Novick offers an especially valuable critique of the claims to historicity. Novick observes that claims to historicity are in fact constituted and understood, both generally and historically, by the norms, ideologies, and professional practices of the disciplinary communities in question (Novick, 1988). Novick writes, "If the professionalization

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of history embodies the ideal of historicity, it is nonetheless an ideal that has never been absolute, and that has never been recognized as an ideal among historiographers in all times and places" (Novick, 1988, p. 8). Novick's insight into the norms of historical writing shows us that ideas of objectivity and subjectivity change over time and within different scholarly groups. His perspective encourages historians to critically examine the quality of their sources and how they study the past. It is essential to recognize that even methods that seem neutral can reflect personal interpretations.

Philosophical discussions about objectivity and subjectivity also pose important methodological questions for contemporary historians. Is history ever wholly objective, or just an aspiration or regulative ideal? Although we will probably never be able to resolve the tension between ideal and practice, acknowledging that there is an interpretive dimension allows historical work to have a more transparent and responsible methodology. For example, reflexive historiography, in which historians look at their positionality, purpose in choosing sources, and the narrative they end up telling, relates to both sides of the objective/subjective continuum (Anwar, 2025). Historians can make rigor, triangulation of multiple sources, and continued judgment a standard expectation of any historian without denying the mediated process of the very nature of interpretations. Through this process of the historian examining what they mean by rigor, the practice becomes reinforcing rather than weakening to a historical claim - it provides the reader an opportunity to understand not only the evidence but also the basis of the evidence, and its interpretation, as the historian works to develop the narrative. Historians can address the ideas of Ranke, Carr, White, Ankersmit, and Novick by embracing subjectivity as a useful part of research rather than seeing it as a drawback. This approach shows that they maintain integrity in their methods.

By linking these theories to practical work, they demonstrate a commitment to understanding their significance in the field of history. Let me reiterate, we think of objectivity and subjectivity here not as abstract categorizations but as practical domains within which historians wrestle over how they collect, work through, and articulate evidence, even if such evidence is positioned in

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multiple circuits and interventionists reach to describe or elaborate on the evidence. Furthermore, when we open the inquiry, apply reflexivity and narrative awareness, and turn to a rigorous evaluation of sources, we are meaningfully shaped, not simply as historians but also as thoughtful, engaged educators who have no less testimonial evidence than historians, and who respect the evidence as well as our role as educators and the role of evidence in education. Although not designed exclusively for use in professional historiography, this framework for thinking as a historian has implications for how both history and educators use history in public, educational practice, and interdisciplinary research. We return, once again, to the possibilities that historiographical literacy has for both scholars and students; both can benefit from understanding how philosophical differences about evidence, interpretation, and objectivity, etc., shape both the making and meaning of historical knowledge. To summarize, attending to the philosophical underpinnings of practice in history increases methodological sophistication, promotes engagement with critical thinking, and perhaps more importantly, contributes to the epistemic credibility of the historical narrative.

Case Studies: Negotiating Objectivity and Subjectivity in Practice

To investigate the way theoretical arguments about objectivity and subjectivity manifest within the historian's art, it will be helpful to consider some specific examples that illustrate, in a practical way, the mediatory process of interpretation. First, Leopold von Ranke demonstrates both the potential and limitations of Ranke's empirical approach in History of the Latin and Teutonic Nations. Ranke's desire to set out the past objectively led him to source his work primarily from primary source material, to observe a chronological structure, and to attempt to avoid a moralizing stance (İplikçi, 2020). Ranke collected primary sources, such as state documents, correspondence of state actors and diplomats, and official papers, intending to represent the past with unprecedented accuracy; furthermore, this expectation developed into a standard of rigour for historians in reference to Ranke's work (Eskildsen, 2008). Although Ranke's method may seem to have fewer subjective interpretations than others, he certainly made subjective interpretive decisions, albeit perhaps unconsciously, once he started to write history that would analyse his

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primary materials (Backerra, 2017). For instance, Ranke's decision to select which events to consider in his History or which actors in those events to parse into analysis betrays a set of subjective considerations about what is historically significant. The very act of selecting which works from the vast repository of Ranke's archive to acknowledge in his endeavor revealed his subjective determination to intervene in Ranke's empiricism of distinction. This example affirms the claims of both methodological understanding of history in relation to the agency of interpretation in the production of scholarship and roundly suggests that objectivity, in relation to the candor of discipline, is best understood as a method of contained engagement with the discipline of interpretation in history.

E. H. Carr's analysis of 20th-century diplomatic history serves as a contrasting example of the primacy of subjectivity in historical inquiry, particularly in What Is History? Carr argues that historians are not merely neutral, oblivious fact-aggregators but agents of history rather than its passive observers (Evans, 2002). Carr's examination of international diplomacy illustrates historian's selection, weighting, and interpretation of evidence is influenced by the historian's conceptual framework and ideological commitments (Germain, 2000).

When we think about history, it is not just a straightforward collection of facts and events; it is more complex than that. Historians have to sift through various bits of evidence, which can sometimes be messy or incomplete, but this subjectivity does not make their work any less valuable. A great example of this is how historians analyze the causes of World War I. The historian Edward Carr highlighted that the way people understand the alliances, treaties, and decisions leading to the war is influenced by their personal viewpoints(Kubálková, 2015). This means that our interpretations of history are shaped by our perspectives on causality and context. Carr also pointed out that while some people cling to a purely objective view of history, this mindset can be limiting. He argued that a responsible historian recognizes their own biases and the meanings they assign to events. It's about being aware and reflective instead of pretending to be neutral (Babík, 2013).

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Another thinker, Hayden White, took a different angle by looking at historical narratives through a literary lens. He examined how the way historians tell stories can shape our understanding of history (Lavagnino, 2011). For instance, if someone chooses to depict the French Revolution as a tragedy or a romance, that choice affects how we perceive those events. White stressed that when constructing historical narratives, historians must be careful with their evidence while also understanding that how they frame that evidence can influence the audience's interpretation. In summary, both Carr and White remind us that history is as much about storytelling as it is about facts(Subramani, 2016).

Ankersmit extends White's argument by attending to the layers of experience that are entailed in the acts of representation in history. In his own writing on mementos and the imaginings of historia, Ankersmit argues that historians reflect wisely about not only empirical facts about the past, but the systems of interpretation the facts were subjected to, the ways they were experienced, and the means by which they were reported back to the audience (van der Dussen, 2016). Each case illustrates how subjectivity becomes a constant aspect of historical practice as readers make sense of and write about the epistemological significance of the evidence.

The last set of case studies accentuates the ways contemporary historians confront the issues of objectivity and subjectivity when the evaluation of evidence is complicated by archival silences, contested memories, and political pressures to produce history. Scholars working on the Holocaust, colonization, and postwar reconciliation, for example, face the tension of grounding their work in rigorous evidence while still being sensitive to aspects of interpretation. Similarly, historians who study the Holocaust must evaluate the reliability and truth of experienced history while being equally responsive to the felt, moral, and lived dimensions of memory (Friedländer, 1997). Colonization studies also tell a similar story. Historians explore encounters with coloniser and colonized histories and engage with both official sources and subaltern voices while addressing the subjectivity and bias of each (Stoler, 2002).

Together, they suggest historical research is a practical exercise of necessitating reflexivity among historians: they will need to be explicit and transparent about their methodological choices,

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the roles of interpretive mediation, and then justify how each piece of evidence is being weighed and considered. In effect, they embody a methodological subjectivity, whilst being epistemically credible, and recognising the role of interpretation inherent in all historiographic work. Bringing all these examples together implies that theory and practice are therefore inseparable: conceptual reasoning about objectivity and subjectivity provides indispensable 'ways' to study historical research in methodologically arduous contexts.

Analytical Synthesis: Integrating Objectivity and Subjectivity

The previous sections have shown that objectivity and subjectivity are not opposing features of historical practice, but rather interdependent features of a solid epistemic framework. Ranke's desire to portray the past "as it actually was" exemplifies the continuing appeal of empirical discipline and methods of inquiry, while Carr, White, and Ankersmit highlight the unavoidable interpretational mediation involved in producing any historical account (Jay, 2020). Case studies feature in diplomatic history, nineteenth-century historiography in Europe, and contemporary work on contested memory further illustrate how historians navigate the tension between objective and subjective forms of practice. Bringing these understandings together is demonstrative that reflexively recognizing and managing subjectivity in the historical inquiry helps not to undermine epistemic value, but contributes to the transparency of methodology, clarity of interpretation, and coherence of narrative. This serves as the central argument of the article; historical rigor is architected through subjectivity in a disciplined space - not diminished by it.

When thinking about how we understand history, it becomes clear that we can't simply divide the way we approach it into two parts: objective and subjective. Historians like Carr and Novick argue that true objectivity is unattainable because every historical account is shaped by choices made by the historian, including what sources to use and how to interpret them. This is not just about picking facts; it involves the historian’s theoretical beliefs and chosen methods. White pointed out that even historical narratives grounded in facts rely on theoretical frameworks and storytelling techniques that shape how readers interpret the information they're given(Thompson, 2004).

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Ankersmit emphasizes that it is the historian's job to help link past events to the present, turning raw evidence into meaningful narratives for today's audiences(van Veldhuizen, 2018). These ideas show us that subjectivity isn't something we should try to eliminate from historical research; instead, we need to recognize it as a crucial part of the discipline. Acknowledging our subjective perspectives can actually enhance the quality of our historical writing by making our interpretative choices clearer.Real-world examples support this viewpoint. Take Ranke, for instance. He believed his research methods provided an objective point of view, but he was still making interpretations about which sources to favor and how much weight to give them. Similarly, Carr, in his study of diplomatic history, shows that subjectivity can help historians sift through complex evidence and identify key factors in historical events. White's work on narrative structure reveals how authors can influence how readers understand history. Ankersmit highlights the importance of representation in historiography, showing that our understanding of history is shaped by the experiences conveyed through the narrative.

Recent scholarly work, including studies of Holocaust testimony and postwar reconciliation, indicates that some level of thoughtful subjectivity is necessary to make sense of complex and often contested historical evidence. Being aware of how we interpret evidence allows for greater transparency and trustworthiness, enhancing rather than hindering the educational value of historical studies. The takeaway here is significant: embracing subjectivity can solidify our historical arguments by clarifying methodologies and broadening the context of our evidence. This perspective carries substantial implications for how we approach historical research and teaching. First, educators should encourage reflexivity, prompting students and researchers to consider how their own backgrounds and beliefs shape their inquiries. Second, the scholarly community should prioritize peer review and constructive feedback, understanding that interpretation is not a weakness but a vital component of historical analysis. Third, historians need to be open about the sources they choose, the evidence they present, and the narratives they construct, enabling readers and fellow scholars to engage in the interpretive process meaningfully. These practices cultivate what some call "disciplined subjectivity," where being aware of our interpretive choices becomes

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part of ensuring rigor in historical studies. As we look ahead to the future of historical scholarship, it's important to develop a nuanced understanding of how we interpret the past. One key aspect of historical analysis is recognizing that no account is complete; our sources are often imperfect, and the past can only be accessed through fragments of evidence.

By engaging with thinkers like Ranke, Carr, White, Ankersmit, and Novick, historians can create knowledge claims that are ethically sound and mindful of the uncertainties inherent in historical research. Embracing subjective perspectives allows scholars to move away from the myth of delivering a singular or definitive account of history. Instead, it promotes the crafting of coherent, critical narratives that recognize and account for the interpretive choices involved in producing historical knowledge. In today's world, where debates over historical truth and public misinformation are rampant, understanding the interplay between objectivity and subjectivity offers a more grounded approach to maintaining credibility and enriching discussions about the past. By accepting that these two forces can work together, rather than against each other, historians can produce work that exemplifies rigor, ethical responsibility, and clear analysis. This understanding not only benefits historical inquiry but also supports a more informed public discourse about our shared history.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined the subtle relationship between objectivity and subjectivity in the field of history, suggesting that these orientations are not opposing frameworks, but rather, elements of new professional historiography that are co-dependent. Taking Ranke, Carr, White, Ankersmit, and Novick, and examples from more physical studies between the work of 19th-century diplomatic history, to testimony concerning the Holocaust, establishes that any reading of history has been mediated through scholars' frameworks of knowing, and decisions made in the moment, around how to draw narrative conclusions, or methodologically informed decisions. As such, acknowledging subjective situatedness is far from a concession for a professional historian, but rather establishes an opportunity for candidness about what choices of interpretivism are made,

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vigilance of evidence claims, and the would-be benefit of clear accounts that are also morally engaged. When we explore the balance between our personal perspectives and the evidence we gather, we arrive at what some call "disciplined subjectivity." This concept suggests that while we aim for objectivity in historical work, it is essential to acknowledge and incorporate our interpretations and insights. This perspective has important implications for discussions around how we study and understand history. It challenges the idea that being objective means remaining completely neutral or avoiding interpretation. Instead, it highlights that interpretation plays a valuable role in how historians make sense of the past. Embracing this interpretive process helps historians approach complex and often controversial sources more effectively. They need to be open about how they choose their evidence and consider various viewpoints to enrich their narratives. Careful examination of sources is vital throughout the historical analysis process. The article also sheds light on the need for both theoretical thought and practical suggestions for historians. It emphasizes the ongoing discussions about evidence, narrative-building, and the responsibilities of historians as they shape the stories of our past. Instead of ignoring subjective influences, historians are encouraged to recognize them, revealing a more intricate and responsible approach to history. Looking ahead, future studies could explore how “disciplined subjectivity” applies across different areas of historical research, such as digital history, public history, and comparative studies. With so many people now able to access a wealth of digital archives and global perspectives, historians face both challenges and exciting opportunities to maintain rigor in their analyses while utilizing their interpretive skills. Interdisciplinary approaches that draw from fields like sociology and anthropology can deepen our understanding of how subjectivity interacts with various historical contexts and forms. By critically examining the foundations of their work, historians can better navigate the delicate balance between objectivity and subjectivity—ultimately leading to richer and more responsible historical scholarship. The idea that reflexive subjectivity can be a productive tool could guide historians as they strive for both engagement and rigor in their research. In doing so, we can sustain the relevance of the discipline to an increasingly complicated and contested intellectual landscape.

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