

ISSUES IN THE MULTI-  
DISCIPLINARY AND  
METHODOLOGICAL  
APPROACH TO  
AFRICAN HISTORY  
AND INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES

Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu

THIS IS A PLACEHOLDER. IF YOU WANT TO HAVE AN ACTUAL STATEMENT HERE, YOU HAVE  
TO MAKE SOME CHOICES USING BOOK'S METADATA MODAL.

# Table of Contents

1. ACADEMIC PUBLISHING CENTER	5
2. TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND	7
3. DEDICATION	9
4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11
5. NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	13
6. FOREWARD	17
7. PREFACE	21
8. CHAPTER 1	27
9. CHAPTER 2	41
10. CHAPTER 4	65
11. CHAPTER 5	81
12. CHAPTER 6	89
13. CHAPTER 7	101
14. CHAPTER 8	113
15. CHAPTER 9	123
16. CHAPTER 10	131
17. CHAPTER 11	147
18. CHAPTER 12	157
19. CHAPTER 13	171
20. CHAPTER 14	181
21. CHAPTER 15	189
22. CHAPTER 16	199
23. CHAPTER 17	211
24. CHAPTER 18	241
25. CHAPTER 19	251

26.	CHAPTER 20	263
27.	CHAPTER 21	289
28.	CHAPTER 22	305
29.	Conclusion	321
30.	Reference	323
31.	INDEX	325
32.	ABOUT THE BOOK	333

# ACADEMIC PUBLISHING CENTER

ISBN: 978-978-59627-1-0

Copyright © 2022 Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu

In publishing this book, careful and practical steps were taken to avoid all forms of errors with the author's consent. All rights and copyright belong to the author. No part of this publication may be reproduced, used, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form – photocopy, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise whatsoever – without prior written permission from the author. This is with exception of brief quotations embodied, along with appropriate referencing.

Author(s) are responsible and liable to the content therein which is not limited to opinions, views expressed, presentations, representations, descriptions, statements, information, and references. The Content therein does not reflect the opinion or expression of the Publisher or Editor. The Publisher and Editors are not responsible whatsoever for any errors and omissions including without limitation, indirect or consequential loss or damage arising out of use, inability to use, or about the reliability, accuracy or sufficiency of the information contained in this book.

2

TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST  
FUND

## Book Development Project

The Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has the mandate to establish and nurture Higher Education Book Development Project in Nigeria. Book scarcity has reached a crisis proportion in the country as evident not only in the quantity of books available, but also in the quality of locally produced books. Given the seriousness of the paucity of reading and learning materials in Nigeria's higher educational institutions, TETFUND Book Development Project is designed to reactivate and nurture research and the publication of academic books and journals in hard and e-forms in Nigerian higher educational institutions, thereby empowering tertiary institutions in Nigeria to benefit from and contribute to knowledge production nationally and globally. Advancement in science and technology, especially ICT and the influence of globalization have profoundly transformed the context from, and the scope of knowledge production that Nigerian higher educational institutions should be assisted to fully participate in and contribute to the global system of generating and disseminating knowledge. The uniqueness of the present intervention lies in the fact that through it, TETFund will assist Nigerian higher educational institutions restore and sustain the capacity for academic publishing.

The promotion of indigenous authorship and the resuscitation of local publishing of books are critical instruments in addressing the dearth of textbooks, including basic text and specialized textbooks in various disciplines in Nigeria's higher educational institutions. Restoring the culture of indigenous authorship and the production of indigenous books would ensure the availability of books that address local need and reflect familiar realities and experiences.

The book production component is one of the three areas of intervention of the TETFund Book project. The others are the revitalization of academic publishing and the support of academic journals. This first phase of the book production intervention is directed at the production of peer-reviewed basic textbooks written by Nigerian academics for universities, polytechnics and colleges of education and specialized books in various subject areas as well as the publication of books of high-quality PhD theses from Nigerian Universities that have successfully gone through a rigorous assessment process. This would contribute to solving the problem of paucity of books in Nigeria's higher educational institutions.

Tertiary Education Trust Fund,  
6, Zambezi Crescent, Off Aguiyi Ironsi Street,  
Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria.



3

## DEDICATION

To generations of Dr. Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu's students around the world.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For the successful production of this book, we will like to first and foremost thank God Almighty for the gift of life, strength and knowledge, without which our efforts would have been in vain.

Our deep appreciation goes to the Executive Secretary, TETFund and the Acting Director, Education Support Services, for accepting to finance the publication of this edited work. It renewed our zeal to strive, to seek, to find and not to yield.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Saliba B. James, of the Department of History, University of Maiduguri, for his critical peer review of this book. His evaluation and recommendations in terms of correction and the perceptive insights of the reviewer helped to improve the quality and standard of the book.

In a significant way, we also appreciate the chapter contributors who responded promptly to our call for chapters in such a way that made it difficult for us not to jettison the book project.

It is my privilege to thank my academic colleagues in the Department of History and International Studies of Imo State University, Owerri to wit: Professor G.I. Nwaka, Prof. U.D. Anyanwu, Prof. J.C. Nwadike, Prof. U.M. Nwankwo (Dean Faculty of Humanities); Prof. Ndulife Njoku; Asso. Prof. Udechukwu Udeke (Head of Department). Others are Dr. Kelechi Ubaku, Dr. Jerry Nwoko, Barr. L.I. Okeke, Dr. Emmanuel Ezeifedi, Dr. Chinonyerem Njoku, Dr. Barr. Solomon Duru, Dr. Solomon Onuekwusi, Dr. C.P. Anene, Rev. Fr. Dr. Anthony Njoku, and Dr. Mrs. Cynthia Vitus Offor.

I am also thankful to the following Prof. D.C. Chima, Prof. Kennedy Okorie, Ven. Dr. Sunday Iheruo, Prof. Frances Nwanyizie Chukwukere, Dr. Gloria Ernest Samuel, Dr. Chris Nwaru, Dr. Mrs. Uwadiogwu, Dr. Emmanuel Kelechi Okafor and Dr. Augustine Emela.

My special appreciation goes to my loving and caring wife, Mrs. Oluchukwu Ann Nwosu and also to our children: Chukwuemeka, Oluebube, Somtoo, Nmesoma and Munachi.

**Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu PhD.**

Department of History and International Studies

Faculty of Humanities

Imo State University,

Owerri

## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

1. Nwosu Tony Chukwuemeka is an Associate Professor, in the Department of History and International Studies, Imo State University, Owerri. He is also a Solicitor and Advocate of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.
2. Johnson O. Ndubuisi bagged his PhD in Diplomatic and International Studies from the University of Port Harcourt and currently a lecturer in the Department of Political Science (International Relations and Strategic Studies), NOVENA University, Ogume, Delta State.
3. Chukwuemeka, Anthony Ebiriukwu PhD is a lecturer in the Department of Theatre Arts, Imo State University, Owerri.
4. Donald Uchenna Omenukor PhD is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Imo State University, Owerri.
5. George Ogbonna Mbara PhD is a lecturer at Federal University of Technology, Owerri.
6. E.J. Alagoa is a Professor Emeritus Department of History and Diplomatic Studies, University of Port Harcourt.
7. Francis Fayam is a Professor Department of History and International Studies, Plateau State University, Boko.
8. M.A. Chigbo is a lecturer at the Department of History and International Relations, Abia State University, Uturu.
9. Cyril Anele is a Professor at the Department of History and Diplomatic Studies and Dean College of Humanities, Salem University, Lokoja.
10. Anthonius Chukwudi Akukwe, PhD is a lecturer Department of Computer Education, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of education, Owerri.
11. Dan O. Chukwu, PhD is a Professor of History and International Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
12. Jame C. Chukwu, is a lecturer at the Department of History and International Studies, Nnamdi Azikiwe university, Awka.
13. Frank Amugo, PhD is a lecturer at Captain Elechi amadi Polytechnic, Port Harcourt.
14. Chikere Reginald Keke, PhD is lecturer at the Department of History and International Studies of the Admiralty University of Nigeria, Ibusa/Ogwashi Express way, Asaba.
15. Ejitu N. Ota, PhD is a Professor of History and International Relations, Abia State University, Uturu.
16. Charles Okeke Okoko, PhD is a lecturer at the Department of History and International Studies, Evangel University, Akaeze.
17. Ikechukwu Ahamofula is a lecturer in the Department of History and International Studies, Akwa Ibom State University, Obio Akpa Campus.
18. Okechi Dominic Azuwoke, PhD, is a lecturer in the Department of Geography and Environmental Management, Imo State University, Owerri.

19. Chris Ugwu, PhD is a lecturer in the Department of Sociology, Imo State University, Owerri.





6

## FOREWARD

History has been defined as the study of man through the evidence of his past actions. But, historians are not only concerned with the ordinary facts or evidence of man's past actions; they are also keenly interested in explaining 'how' 'why' and 'when' past events and situations came about.

The historian's main plan of action for solving his problem of explaining the past essentially involves issues about methodological cannons and approaches. If it is valid to define history, as we have done here, as the study of man through the evidence of his past actions, then the simple logic that follows is that, History as a discipline must of necessity embrace aspects of several other disciplines which are able to contribute to an understanding of man by means of what he has achieved (or attempted to achieve) in the past. This submission underscores the need for the multidisciplinary approach to the study of History. Yet, even though the traditional study of History in Nigeria (nay, Africa) has long been well established with its essential methods of research, the quintessential addition of "International Studies" to the traditional concerns of teaching and studying History in institutions of higher learning in Nigeria has, as it were, further deepened the necessity for embracing aspects of several other disciplines which are able to contribute to an understanding of man's past actions. But, why "International Studies"?

Briefly, when, in the mid 1990s, we, at what was then the Department of History, Imo State University, Owerri, blazed the trail by successfully making a case for the addition of "International Studies" to the traditional concerns of teaching and studying History, one of the major reasons for the name change was the felt need to better equip and enable the student of History to place the right methodological emphasis on the interactive nature of human society in a comprehensive way. Well, of course, there was also the desire for the revival of the dwindling fortunes of History among university students. But, the main idea, then, was to reemphasize the inter-relatedness of man's actions across national borders, especially in the post-Westphalian world order.

Much as it is valid to say that, today, History and International studies enjoy amazing popularity in majority of higher institutions in Nigeria, it is also necessary to continue to make clarion calls for the use of the right methodological approaches in conducting painstaking research in the novel twin discipline, if we are going to get it right and sustain the enthusiasm about the programme. It is in this connection that one welcomes, with a shout of 'Hosanna' and its anti-religious equivalents, the present work, *Issues in the Multi-disciplinary and Methodological Approach to African History and International Studies*, edited by Dr. Chukwuemeka Nwosu, Esq.

From chapters dwelling on issues of methodology, such as "The Interdisciplinary Approach: Avenue for Choice of Method in Historical Studies," "The Use of Quantitatives in Historical Research," "Guidelines for Embarking on a Research Work: A Historical Perspective," among others, to the ones revolving around historiography, the efforts of the contributors are commendable. Certainly, there are lacunas, as many areas in the field still beg for attention. But the fact is that, Dr. Nwosu's book is very much

welcome for undertaking the not-so-easy task of wading through aspects of the enormous tissue of methodology and historiography in our novel twin discipline. Kudos to him and his team of contributors!

Ndu Life Njoku, PhD

(Professor of African Development History &

Director of the Center for Igbo Studies,

Imo State University, Owerri)

Owerri, Nigeria,

March 12, 2020.



7

## PREFACE

In the last three decades, African historical studies have made tremendous progress. However, this development is as a result of the collective efforts of Africanist historians worldwide. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the view, now hardly, seriously contestable, that African history can be as fascinating as well as intellectually rewarding and enriching as any other history, would not have been taken seriously. Historians of Nigerian antecedent have played their role and have continued to play key role, in not only making the study of the African past a respectable and rewarding academic pursuit but also have contributed towards the expanding of the frontiers of historical knowledge. There is no gainsaying the fact that when the history of history in Africa is chronicled, the pioneering works of Professors Kenneth O. Dike, Saburi Biobaku, G.N. Uzoigwe, H.F.C Smith, J.C. Anene, J.F. Ade Ajayi, Emmanuel A. Anyanwale, Tekena N. Tamuno, and I.A. Akinjobin and others, will stand out as good spectrum of historical scholarship.

The African Historical Studies gained a vigorous momentum in the 1950's, and was, and has continued to be, a puissant contribution to the decolonization praxis. Quite early, the African historians, assumed the intellectual leadership of this process. With a view to achieving greater objectivity, depth and breadth, the critically re-examined various dimensions of the African past. Oftentimes, these historians agreed with the Whig historians, Croce, Thucydides, and Polybius that all history is contemporary history, and as such, historians study the past not for purely antiquarian reasons but essentially to enable us understand present challenges and, hopefully, prepare for the future.

From the conception to the birth of this book titled: *Issues in the Multi-disciplinary and Methodological Approach to African history and International Studies*, the editor, an Associate Professor, in Department of History and International Studies, Imo State University, Owerri, identified as one of its fundamental functions the dissemination of historical information to the wider community outside the precinct of the university. Usually, prominent scholar, mainly historians and a few academics in their own right, who are non-historians contributed their quota in a bid to reflect the interdependency of disciplines and interdisciplinary methodology for the benefit of undergraduate and post graduate students in history and international studies. The main objective of the History and International Studies Programme at the Imo State University, Owerri, and elsewhere by extension is to enable every student to acquire an excellent grasp of the content and methodology of Nigerian and African History in the context of World History. However, defined, this emphasis on "Methodology" is reflected in courses like introduction to History and International Studies, Field Research in History and International Studies, History of Political thought and Historiography.

The book is published as an aid to these activities in the Department. The book should, therefore, prove useful and support these activities. Infact, the contributors are drawn from several Universities in Nigeria and are recognized experts in the field they have written about.

In chapter 1, Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu, examines Historiography as the Writings of History by Historians. The chapter gives a historical account that History is a subject matter of historiography. The term historiography refers to the study of historians' methods and practices. He stated that a major aspect of the study of historiography had to do with defining the idea of evidence, rigors and standards of reasoning for historical inquiry. The chapter assessed philosophy of History as it relates to historiography and suggests that the 'facts of history are incontrovertible evidence which historians have selected for scrutiny. Thus, millions have crossed the Rubicon, but the historian tells us that only Caesar's crossing was significant. All historical facts come to us as a result of interpretative choices by historians.

In chapter 2, Johnson O. Ndubuisi deals with Historiography through the Ages. Thus, the chapter examines the meaning, importance, evolution, changes and continuity on the subject matter of historiography. The chapter discussed the important role historiography plays in the study of history which continues to resonate in time and space across regions of the world. Historiography aptly distinguishes the mere facts of history from historical knowledge and practice.

In chapter 3, in an engaging account, Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu, discusses the link between History and Philosophy. The chapter focuses on the value of History in providing lessons for progress and the future of society. With regards to methodology, it shows the scientific nature of history in historicism as a quest for general laws and the pursuit of common good and truth as the ultimate value of history and philosophy, which every student of history and international studies, at all levels need to know.

In chapter 4, Chukwuemeka, Anthony Ebiriukwu, methodologically shows the value of multi-disciplinarity in historical studies. Using Chinua Achebe's "There was a country", and the experience of the Biafran war, it demonstrates how semiotics can add value to historical research and interpretation of events. A study of Biafran War artifacts gave rise to differing interpretations of the war. It shows the advantage of synergy in inter-disciplinary approach in the humanities.

In chapter 5, Donald Uchenna Omenukor, using the Hegelian perspectives, did a better treatment of the relationship between history and philosophy. The chapter shows philosophy in historiography. The chapter will make for enlightening reading for both undergraduate and graduate programmes.

In chapter 6, George Ogbonna Mbara interrogates the historiography of the Postcolonial African historian with the intent to identifying the seemingly existing lacuna in the objectivity of the colonial and postcolonial African history. The chapter also critically examined the role of history and the historian in the reconstruction, interpretation and analysis of past events.

In chapter 7, in his own contribution E.J. Alagoa, a renowned professor emeritus of history, made a scholarly summation of the value and importance of inter-disciplinary approach to the study of Africam history generally and also linguistics. This chapter will

enable students to appreciate how these disciplines have contributed to history as historians have engaged their methods over time.

In chapter 8, Francis Fayam like E.J. Alagoa, seeks to reiterate the significance of inter-disciplinary approach to historical studies, that is, to establish the relationship between history and other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Historians, through inter-disciplinary approach can use findings, hypothesis, theories, postulations, insights and analytical tools of other disciplines in historical reconstruction.

In chapter 9, M.A. Chigbo, focuses on the “basics” of preliminary issues in historical research. The work is essentially devoted to highlighting guidelines for embarking on a fruitful field research work necessary for writing proposals, theses and dissertation from a historical perspective. The choice of topic, for instance, especially by the student ought to be a product of general background reading on the area of research interest. The subsequent literature review helps to affirm, the topic and narrow down the field of study. Students need to know this to reduce over dependence on supervisors for topic selection and the growing proclivity for reproducing existing studies.

In chapter 10, Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu, discusses a critical chapter in terms of content. The matter is summed up in the creative tensions between advocates of the Traditional method or qualitative method and the progressive school who believe in addition of quantitative method to the historians research tools. The chapter beautifully argues for the use of “Mixed Method”. Social and economic historians can no longer run away from the use of quantification. In fact, the growing prominence of International Studies requires addition of statistical know-how to the historian’s tool kit. The chapter is compulsory reading for both undergraduate and postgraduate students of history and international studies.

In chapter 11, Cyril Anaele, reinforces the argument about the use of quantitative method in the study of history and International Studies, which began in chapter ten. It argues with evidence that the use of quantitative approach is gaining ground among historians due to its leaning towards empiricism and weaning of history from impressionistic accounts. In simplified presentation the chapter outlines the features and advantages of quantification such as the use of tables, histograms, line charts, graphs, which require interpretation by the historian. The justification for quantification as provided in this book is apt because it adds great value to the study of history and international studies as a discipline.

In chapter 12, Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu and Anthonious Chukwudi Akukwe, strengthens the argument for the use of computer technology but supports further the case for inter-disciplinary approach. It traces the history of development of computer, functions and applicability of computer to the study of African history. It shows the relevance of computer to historical skills, preservation of oral traditions in Microsoft word, storage of archival and archaeological data. Given the rather slow migration of historical studies towards quantification and the growing popularity of International Studies among new generation historians, most of whom would have shied away from



history, the advocacy for the use of computer technique in historical research is critical for sustainability of the discipline. The case is strongly made in this chapter as being indispensable to historical research.

In chapter 13, Dan Chukwu and James C. Chukwu, competently recapitulates the relationship between history and archaeology and the academic value of the later to the former. It supports the case for continued support of history by archaeology with evidence of archaeological findings from around Nigeria, including NOK, Igbo-Ukwu, Dama, Iwo Eleru, and many others. The content and scope are all relevant, rich and adequate.

Chapters 14, 15, and 16, Frank Amugo, Nwosu Tony Chukwuemeka and Chikere Reginal Keke respectively, all focused on the Role and Significance of Oral Tradition and Archaeology in historical reconstruction. The chapters dwell on the familiar history of nationalist African historiography that challenged colonial historiography and its Eurocentric perspective on African history, particularly the denigration of black Africa as one without history. The pioneering work of Jan Vansina on the use of Oral tradition in reconstruction of African history and the application of archaeological evidence in support of African history are expertly discussed in the three chapters.

In chapter 17, Johnson O. Ndubuisi, addresses the fact that history and International Studies are siamese twins sharing an umbilical cord that cannot be separated because the root of international relations as the reductionists have tended to brand it, is in itself a product of history. A historical analysis of the origin, evolution and resurgence of international studies is completely presented and the justification for multi-disciplinary approach to the study of history and international studies.

In chapter 18, Ejitu Nnechi Ota et al, identifies six major traditional theories of history including, The Cyclical, The Linear, The Great Man, The Everyman, The Geographic and The Marxist theories of history. Positivist and advocates of historicism believe in the search for general laws that are applicable to history, especially international studies. The use of theories further underscores the essence of interdisciplinary approach. The content of the chapter is apt and very essential for demonstration of the scientific status of history.

In chapters, 19, 20, 21 and 22 deals with the relationship between history and literature, linguistic, Geography and Sociology and Anthropology respectively. These four chapters treat in greater detail the relationship between history and each of these disciplines. These four chapters were authored by Nwosu Tony Chukwuemeka, Charles Okeke Okoko, Okechi Dominic Azuwoke and Chris Ugwu, respectively.

Taken together, the chapters in this volume have occupied the attention of the editor, Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu, for close to two decades of research and teaching at Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria. The weighting and vast array of issues examined here by contributors of unprecedented intellectual sagacity are germane to deepening understanding in the Multidisciplinary and Methodological Approach to African

History and International Studies. It is therefore anticipated that the discussions and analyses in this work will stimulate greater interest in Multidisciplinary approach to the study of African history and International Studies where this anticipated hope is accomplished in the final analysis, then of course our objectives would have been monumentally achieved.

**Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu PhD**

Department of History and International Studies,  
Faculty of Humanities,  
Imo State University,  
Owerri.

8

## CHAPTER 1

# HISTORIOGRAPHY AS THE WRITINGS OF HISTORY BY HISTORIANS

Nwosu Tony Chukwuemeka PhD

## Introduction

History, it should be borne in mind is indeed a subject matter of historiography and its definition has remained controversial among historians. Different scholars of different background and persuasions and climatic opinion of the times have defined it in different ways. In the academy, history is used in the strictest sense to mean what those who are professionally trained to think and speak and write about the past on the basis of information culled from it actually do think and speak and write about the past.<sup>1</sup> This chapter does intend to discuss the history of historical writing and philosophy of history which are indeed indispensable. The need for historiography courses for the vocation of historians cannot be overemphasized as it marks the underlying proposition in postgraduate training of historians as well as undergraduates because it marks the idea of progress in history.

If there is an academic discipline that has ever received as many diverse and controversial definitions in its meaning as well as development, it has been history. More often than not, these controversies may have arisen out of curiosity on the part of observers or sometimes they may have arisen as a demonstration of sheer denigration of the subject. On the contrary, scholars of great and progressive dimension have however; remained consistent in asserting that the subject is a condition precedent for any human society that has assigned the task of progress and development to itself.

Put differently, in the academy history means the intellectual construct of those ivory-tower merchants of intellection found mainly in the departments designed to teach as well as supervise training in that discipline. In that context history is a snapshot of the past usually taken from as many vantage points as there are schools of thought (or warring intellectual gangs) or even from vantage points as there are individual historians.<sup>2</sup>

Arthur Marwick, for example, has defined history on three categories. Firstly that history connotes “the entire human past as it actually happened”, that history secondly, and more importantly “connotes man’s attempt to describe and interpret that past”, and thirdly, that history is a systematic study of the past.<sup>3</sup> Whereas Professor G. Barraclough defines history as “the attempt to discover on the basis of fragmentary evidence the significant things about the past, he however cautions that “the history we read, though based on facts, is, strictly speaking, not factual at all, but a series of accepted judgements.<sup>4</sup> Also E. H. Carr defined history as “a continuous process of interaction

between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past".<sup>5</sup> In fact, interpretation is the life-blood of history.

History has also been described as the study of all aspect of life in society in the past, in relation to present and future developments based on evidence.<sup>6</sup> History is an intellectual exercise engaged in an "inquiry into what happened in the past, when it happened, and how it happened. It is an inquiry into the inevitable changes in human affairs in the past and the ways these changes affect, influence or determine the patterns of life in the society".<sup>7</sup> In the academic clime, the purpose of history is to help students to understand the existing social, political, religious and economic conditions of the people. Thus, not being fully armed with the knowledge of history it is difficult to have the background of a people's religion, customs, institutions, administration etc. In essence:

The teaching of history helps the students to explain the present, to analyze it and to trace its course. Cause-and-effect relationship between the past and the present is lively presented in the history. History thus, helps us to understand the present day problems both at the national and international level accurately and objectively.<sup>8</sup>

In another genre, an informed appreciation of the practice of history down the ages would reveal that there are three modes in which the discipline is studied. First, it can be studied for no other purpose than to understand the past on its own terms, that is without relating the theme or matter studied to what went before or what came after. This mode of historical studies could be labeled antiquarianism.<sup>9</sup> Secondly, history can be studied for the purpose of enlightening the scholar and his contemporaries as well as for entertaining them and using it to improve their understanding of contemporary currents and events in society.<sup>10</sup> Although this mode does not necessarily compel the historian, or his contemporaries to take action in any particular direction. However, its end may just be the acquisition of the ability as well as disposition to respond with a knowing nod as well as smile to the problems which the individual encounters as he pursues his path across the corrugated terrain of his society and times.

This mode of historical study may be described as history for "enwisdomisation"<sup>11</sup> - that is, history for inculcating wisdom, which connotes knowledge, understanding, balance as well as serenity. It is against this backdrop that the vocation of most historians seems to be anchored. In any case, historians pursue their craft or science in societies and state-systems as they sail towards an ever-beckoning and widening horizon and frontiers of historical reconstruction. If these definitions are critically analysed, each of them has its merits as well as demerits. What is more, when completely interpreted and broken down, they point to the fact that history is fundamentally, a study of man and his various institutions over a period of time.

However, defined, the issue for consideration is the fact that the controversies as well as lack of consensus among historians with respect, to the exact definition of history obfuscate historiography, leading to diversity of definition of the concept by various scholars of history. The chambers 20<sup>th</sup> century dictionary defined historiography

as “the art or employment of writing history”.<sup>12</sup> Marwick argued that its definition can be gleaned from his second and third definitions of history given above whereas Lewis Gottschalk perceives historiography as constituting “in their entirety the writings of History, or historians”.<sup>13</sup> But even so, he acknowledges the important fact that historiography does not just relate to written history but also to spoken history.<sup>14</sup> The concept of historiography is associated with three dimensions such as history of historical writing, the challenges in the theories and methods as well as the philosophy of history. Furthermore, it is significant to reiterate that some historians do not appreciate the concept of historiography; neither do some understand the scope of the concept while some scholars avoid it completely due to not knowing what it is all about. Some have taught something that has no bearing with respect to the concept of historiography. The typology as has been elaborated above is not rigidly followed by scholars, to the extent that the common trend has been for many to dwell on the philosophy of history with problems in the theories as well as the methods of history. This chapter does intend to discuss the history of historical writing and philosophy of history which are indeed indispensable.

The idea of progress has been an issue of interest among scholars of different persuasions. E. H. Carr contends that “History is progress through the transmission of acquired skills from one generation to another”; that progress has no “finite beginning or end” and “does not and cannot mean an equal and simultaneous progress for all”; and “that the acquired assets which were transmitted include both material possessions and the capacity to master, transform and utilize one’s environment.”<sup>15</sup> The idea of progress is coterminous with historiography in the training of historians. What is more, Marwick contended that:

If history is worth studying at all, such study should be firmly integrated with teaching in the nature, methods and purposes of history, regarded not simply as a set of background assumptions, but as something fundamental to any intelligent discussion of history at any level.<sup>16</sup>

For this role, history was regarded as being specially suited. A visitation Panel to the University College, Ibadan, in 1952, which recommended the introduction of an Honours School in History based its argument on the perceived strength of history in the area of man power production for political, administrative and many other purposes. Said the Report of the Visitation Panel:

An Honours Course in History would be a good preparation not only for students who become specialist teachers in training colleges and schools, but also for students who will later enter political life, the administrative and government services, the churches, journalism and broadcasting, commercial and industrial work and many other fields of public life.<sup>17</sup>

History, better put, refers to an academic discipline, possessing its own rules of study and methodological approaches, studied anywhere in the academy. This is what we call

historiography and both history and historiography are interwoven and therefore they are inseparable.

## Historiography as the writing of history by historians

Historiography as the writing of history by historians is one in which, overtime, has attracted the attention of scholars who see it as a crucial aspect of the study and writing of history. Harry Elmer Barnes work titled "A History of historical Writing,"<sup>18</sup> is one of the *Locus classicus*. Yet it was Arthur Marwick, not Barnes who stressed on the need to study the history of historical writing when he contended that:

Seeing where our predecessors were entrapped by the fallacies, of their own age, we are that little better equipped to avert the fallacies of our own age. Only the ignorant or the very lazy among historians refuse to read the work of their illustrious predecessors...<sup>19</sup>

History as a modern intellectual activity dates back to antiquity. It reached an era of sophistication as well as crescendo during the period of classical antiquity and however, declined during the Roman era. It equally witnessed recrudescence during the period of Renaissance and by this period its methodology and rational perspicacity have advanced considerably. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, history as a scholarly discipline had emerged via the endeavour of Ranke as well as other German scholars from which it metamorphosed into the contemporary period. It is significant to note however, that each of these periods had its unique features and it was those characteristics that formed the body of knowledge of historiography as the writings of history by historians and from which history students and historians at the post-graduate levels learn. Against this backdrop, we shall endeavour here to assess the significance as well as the contributions of the various periods of historiographical writings by historians for the benefit of young emerging historians.

Thus, the Western historical tradition dates back to Herodotus (c.484 BC-c.425 B.C.), Thucydides (c.455 BC-c.400B.C.), Polybius (198B.C-117 B.C), all Greeks; as well as Livy (59B.C-A.D. 17), Tacitus (A.D. 55-120) and Plutarch (A.D. 50-120), all Romans. The interest of these historians in the main was the recording of important as well as memorable deeds about families, nations and communities. Thucydides main interest, for example, was the Peloponnesian war, while Livy on his own part engaged in the glorification of Rome. Although in the main, the essence of their writings was the same, the Greeks (especially Thucydides and Polybius) were, nevertheless, more sophisticated and original in their work than the Romans.<sup>20</sup>

Another epoch making period was that of Christian historical writing. Its hallmark as would have been anticipated was a rejection of paganism with a contemporaneous glorification of God as well as heavenly things. In the medieval times most, historians were monks as well as in most cases officials of monasteries. Their writings, in the main lacked analysis and reflection and there was always an inability to

distinguish between sacred and profane matter as events were easily explained or interpreted as judgments of God.<sup>21</sup> The above could be exemplified by the works of St. Augustine, particularly in his *City of God* in which he portrayed the history of the world as the long unfolding will of God. Medieval chroniclers were expert forgers, which explain why they were not quite critical in their treatment of documentary evidence. They accepted in full the sanctions of tradition, and since they believed in divine intervention they were inhibited in their analysis of historical causation.<sup>22</sup> It was with regards to this period that Heinrich Von Sybel said:

Possessed no idea of historical judgment, no sense of historical reality, no trace of critical reflections. The principle of authority, ruling without limitation in the religious domain, defended all tradition, as well as traditional dogma. Men were everywhere more inclined to believe than to examine, everywhere imagination had the upper hand of reason. No distinction was made between ideal and real, between poetical and historical truth. Heroic poems were considered a true and lofty form of history and history was everywhere displaced by epics, legends or poetical fiction of some kind. A course of slow historical development was traced back to a single great deed, a single personal cause...<sup>23</sup>

Some of the acclaimed and well known medieval historians were Gregory-Bishop of Tours (538-594) as well as Venerable Bede (672-735).

The Renaissance period also known as the Humanist era came after the medieval era. Indeed, the humanist era could be referred to as a revolution against medieval historiography as man instead of church became the main focus. While humanists extolled princes, medieval historians glorified martyrs. Thus, it was a revivalist endeavour to recapture classical literature. Scholars as well as writers of the period adopted a rational as well as secular approach to issues which were formerly explained away as divine. Historical studies during the period under review were majorly influenced by exploration as well as the invention of printing. Leonardo Bruni (1369-1444) is one of the best known humanist writers and who wrote the *Twelve Books of Florentine History*. He rejected the role of miracles but engaged in analysis of events.

However, it was during the enlightenment that the theological grounds of historical writing which had persisted although through the renaissance period were finally laid to rest. In this respect, French and Scottish historians contributed immensely to its development. Although up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the history that was written were still deficient in some respects. First, there seem not to be the notion of human development as well as change in these writings. Secondly, there was nowhere in the 18<sup>th</sup> century where history was being taught except in the palaces of princes as well as statesmen and there was a general lack of details. By the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, all these were to be abandoned mainly as a result of the works of people such as Leopold Von Ranke. Be that as it may, it was due to the concurrent attack on the above stated three defects, that modern history as an academic discipline evolved. Therefore, the 19<sup>th</sup> century revolution in historical scholarship provided the impetus for the modern day study of history. Besides, the 20<sup>th</sup> century also experienced new trends in historical scholarship and



advancement. Thus, such trends ushered in among others, a general advancement in the methods of historical research and efforts at using computers in historical explanations, as well as a shift of research emphasis from the hitherto political dimensions to such other aspects of human development as economic, social as well as cultural institutions.

Of greater value is the contributions made to history of historical writing in Africa. Arab geographers and historians such as Al-Masudi, Al-Bakri, Ibn Battuta and others left extensive records on Africa. This is very important because the tendency has been for western scholars to pretend that it does not exist,<sup>24</sup> even though as is well known, “the writing of African history is as old as the writing of history itself”.<sup>25</sup> Also, significant in this regard are the records of Africans who were Muslims and wrote within the Moslem tradition, among them Rahman Al-Sadi, author of *Tarikh-al-Sudan*, Muhmud Kati, author of *Tarikh-al-Fettach*, Usman Dan Fodio, Sultan Bello, to mention just a few.

More often than not, when historians discuss methodological approaches in their research, they usually refer to the term historiography. The appropriate question in the circumstance is: what is historiography? The term historiography refers to the study of historians’ methods and practices. It is basic to state that any intellectual pursuit must be guided by a set of standards as well as heuristics about how to proceed and historians evaluate the performances of practitioners based on their judgments of how well practitioners meet the laid down standards and rules of engagement. Invariably, one obvious task we always have in considering a historian’s activity is to attempt to identify these standards as well as criteria of good performance and this is true for historical writing. Historiography is an aspect of ethical standards and criteria for historical writing.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, a major aspect of the study of historiography has to do with defining the ideas of evidence, rigor as well as standards of reasoning for historical inquiry. In this context, we presume that historians want to discover empirically supported truths about the past, and we also presume that they want to offer inferences as well as interpretations that are somehow regulated by standards of scientific rationality. In other words, discovering these stylistic and aesthetic standards that guide the historians craft is itself a significant task for historiography. Put differently, this suggests that the historian of historiography will naturally be interested in the conventions of historical writing that are characteristic of a given period.<sup>27</sup>

Typical historiography is fully concerned with methods of writing and presenting historical accounts. In a nutshell, the concerns of historiographers include: the methods of discovery employed in historical research, models of explanation, the paradigm of presentation, standards of style and rhetoric, and what interpretive assumptions utilised in the course of historical writing.<sup>28</sup>

Besides, a historical school may be defined as a group of interrelated historians who share a significant number of specific assumptions about evidence, explanation and narrative.<sup>29</sup>

Thus, historiography becomes infact historical when we take cognizance that these frameworks of assumptions regarding historical knowledge and thinking change over time. Nevertheless, on this assumption, the history of historical thinking, knowledge and writing is in itself an interesting subject. The question that readily comes to mind is, how do historians of diverse background and diverse periods in history, conduct their study and presentation of historical knowledge? In this respect, we find books on the historiography of the ancient Greeks; Renaissance historiography, or the historiography of German romanticism. The writings of Arnaldo Momigliano on the ancient historians fall into this category. He surveyed the various traditions of ancient historical writing as a set of normative practices that can be examined and understood in their specificity as well as their cultural context or milieu.<sup>30</sup>

In another genre, the use of the term historiography “is more present-oriented” as well as methodological. It deals with the study and analysis of historical methods of research, inquiry, inference and presentation as predominantly used by historians of our contemporary period. In this context, we can think of the historiographical problems that face Phillip Huang as he investigated the Chinese peasant economy in the 1920s as well as the 1930s; or the historiographical challenges raised in Robert Darnton’s investigation of the Great Cat Massacre event perpetrated by printers’ apprentices in the 1730s Paris.<sup>31</sup> In some cases these questions are associated with the issue of scarcity or bias in the available records. An instance of this could be gleaned from Huang’s reference to the village economy of North China, which was gathered by the research teams of occupying Japanese army.<sup>32</sup> In some cases too, they are concerned with the challenges of interpreting historical sources, for instance, the unavoidable necessity Darnton had to face in attempt to providereasonable interpretation of a series of documented events that appear significantly irrational in the circumstance.<sup>33</sup>

Also, another dimension that arises in historiographical study is the position of the ideation of “global history”. In this regards, one significant reason for thinking globally as a historian stems from the fact that the history discipline since the early times in Greece and with the Europeanization of African history by European historians tended to be Eurocentric in its choice of topics, framing assumptions as well as methodological approaches. Economic as well as political history more often tended towards industrial revolution in Europe as well as the prevalence of the modern bureaucratic states in Germany, Britain and France, as reflecting development models in politics and in an economy. This development has relegated other countries development as less developed and certainly out of standard. The extension or diversification of historical research by practicing historians to other civilizations outside Europe or western civilizations as opposed to the character of the preceding period when the study and writing of history was confined to Eurocentric approach. Thus, this development expanded the scope of history by drawing attention to the study of the entire world history. Infact, this development indeed liberated other world civilizations from the superiority complex demonstrated by the western civilization over other forms of civilizations.<sup>34</sup>

Thus, the adoption of critical approach in the analysis of findings or works by historians through the corroboration of findings with existing facts or evidence for the sole aim of establishing the authenticity of the new information underscores the focus of historiography. Infact, this is a critical approach adopted to ensure that objectivity, or something close to it is achieved in the reconstruction of historical evidence. Thus, these methodological approaches have somewhat liberated historians of the age from being mere compilers of chronicles and documentary evidence. It has also liberated them from being mere palace recorders who paid attention only to dogmatically compiling the biographies of leaders as well as great men without critically scrutinizing their roles in taking society forward or backward. Put differently, there has been a dramatic shift of emphasis from narrative history to analytical history, that is, a shift from speculative philosophy of history to critical philosophy of history.

Apart from the various dimensions discussed in the foregoing, it is also significant to state that each nation of the world developed its historiography. This development was indeed shaped by the diverse views attached to history, the societal value system or ideology, the dominant socio-political as well as economic considerations, the climate opinion of the time, among others. Note however, while ancient Greek historiography focused on city states, ancient Roman historiography was contained in the works of Roman statesmen such as Julius Caesar (100BC-AD17). Whereas Livy is believed to have recorded the rise of Rome from city-state to an empire, the first two statesmen produced numerous political works covering warfare.

In conclusion therefore, and from the foregoing discussion, it has been laid bare for historians to know that the eventual emergence of the concept of historiography metamorphosed through a number of stages. Each stage carried along with its definite orientation based on its conception of the nature of historical evidence as well as how such data can be obtained or retrieved and the quantum for the purpose of reconstructing the historical past of any given society. Furthermore, and infact, we cannot lay claim to the fact that the process is conclusive in view of the way and extent of the body of knowledge of historiography is advancing because history as a discipline is progressive as earlier stated in this work as well as the ever increasing approaches being developed on a regular basis in historiography as the writings of history by historians in the pursuit of knowledge.

## Philosophy of history as it relates to historiography

What is history suggests that the 'facts of history are invariably those which historians have selected for scrutiny. Thus, millions have crossed the Rubicon, but the historian tells us that only Caesar's crossing was significant. All historical facts come to us as a result of interpretative choices by historians.<sup>35</sup>My main concern in this segment is to discuss philosophy of history in relation to historiography.

The concept of “philosophy of history” came into the limelight with Voltaire in the 1760’s, although it is most closely related with German philosophers of the Enlightenment as well as Post Enlightenment periods: Kant, Harder. F. Hegel as well as Karl Marx. “Historiosophy”, is the term coined in 1838 by August Cieszkowski to describe his understanding of history within the philosophical context.<sup>36</sup> Simply put, it means philosophy of history. Historiosophy is a philosophical reflection on the historical processes itself, or it can mean philosophical reflection on the knowledge we have about the historical process.<sup>37</sup>

Philosophy of history is an aspect of philosophy relating to the eventual significance of human history. However, defined, philosophy of history should not be confused with the History of philosophy which is the study of the development of philosophical ideas in their historical context while Philosophy of History is the theoretical aspect of history.

Philosophy of history is concerned with the theoretical foundations of the practice, application, and social consequences of history and historiography. Philosophy of history makes use of the relevant theories in the core areas of philosophy like metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics to unravel the puzzles surrounding:

the nature of the past and how we come to know it: whether the past proceeds in a random way or is guided by some principle of order, how best to explain or describe the events and objects of the past, how historical events can be considered causally efficacious on one another, and how to adjudicate testimony and evidence. Second, as is the case with the other area-studies, philosophy of history investigates problems that are unique to its subject matter.<sup>38</sup>

Philosophy of history is hinged on few basic assumptions. First, it seeks to determine in actual sense, what is the proper unit for the study of the human past; is it set to study the individual, the state, a civilization, culture or the entire human species. Second, it sets to inquire if there are broad patterns that can be discerned as we study history. Along this line of thought, philosophy of history seeks to unravel what factors if any, dictates the course of history, the propelling force of history, as well as its goal and destination.<sup>39</sup>

The connection between philosophy of history and historiography is rooted in the very philosophy from which other aspects of history emanated. The explanation of the University of California Digital Library expressed this view. Accordingly, philosophy of history comprises three areas of history. These include: historiography, speculative philosophy of history, and critical philosophy of history. Whereas historiography describes the history of the writing of history itself, speculative philosopher of history beams its searchlight on the general patterns or rhythms in the historical process (the speculative theories of history propounded by Hegel, Marx, and Toynbee are worthy examples in this direction), while critical philosophy of history denotes a philosophical reflection on how historical judgments are established.<sup>40</sup> Given the strong criticism against speculative philosophy by scholars such as Popper, Hayek, Mandelbaum etc, and strands of contentious debate questioning its very purpose and feasibility, speculative

philosophy of history has been pushed to its lower ebb. As a result, in the post-World War II period, emphasis has been placed on historiography and critical philosophy of history. Subsequently, there was a significant and striking rise of historiography over and above critical philosophy of history.<sup>41</sup>

By so doing, philosophical self-reflection on the writing of history no longer possess the nature of a philosophical analysis dealing with the origin and reliability of historical judgments, but tends to be a reflection on the past history of historical writing. The rising interest in historiography is a clear reflection of what can be described as the new type as opposed to the older or traditional form of historiography.<sup>42</sup> From the foregoing, it is not out of place to infer that historiography is an offshoot of growth, development and progress of philosophy of history.

Daniel Little has revealed that there is a level of overlap between philosophy of history and historiography because both fields of history are involved in identifying and evaluating the standards of reasoning being utilised in various historical traditions, though in different perspectives. Thus, while historiography possesses the ambience of being descriptive, less evaluative, saddled with the burden of detailed description of research and writing than philosophy of history;<sup>43</sup> philosophy of history on its part dwells on the theoretical foundations of the “practice, application, and social consequences of history and historiography”.<sup>44</sup>

Chris Lorenz identified the “border crossing” feature of history. Thus points to the fact that history is associated with disciplinary border crossings that link history with philosophy. Buttressing this salient argument, Lorenz further stated that “history is often characterised as a discipline of context, and historiography can ... only be understood by contextualising it, both in cross-disciplinary and in political ways”.<sup>45</sup> Above analogy explains why in the quivers of history there is a term referred to as “philosophy of historiography” which entails “the philosophical examination study, and theorising about historiography, about what historians write, and its relation to the evidence, the epistemology of historiography, the ontology of historiographic concepts, etc”.<sup>46</sup>

Whereas historiography refers to what historians write about past events on one hand, philosophy of history on the other hand, refers to philosophical examination and theorising about the past. This is inclusive of ‘substantial/speculative’ philosophy of history as well as issues of “contingency and necessity” in history.<sup>47</sup> In sum, philosophy of history and historiography are partners in the progress of history in that philosophy provides historiography the requisites tools with which historiography uses for its investigations and objective analysis as well as presentation of same in lucid and coherent writing of historical accounts.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Adiele E. Afigbo, *History As Statecraft* (Okigwe: Whytem Publishers, 1999) 2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Arthur Marwick, *The Nature of History*, (London, 1970), 15.

<sup>4</sup>G. Barraclough, *History in a Changing World*, 1955, 20-30.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup>Pallavi Talekau, Jyotrimayee Nayak S.Harichandan,Historypaper-v, Available at [https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA\\_Education/Education\\_Paper\\_5\\_history.pdf](https://ddceutkal.ac.in/Syllabus/MA_Education/Education_Paper_5_history.pdf) (Accessed10/11/21)

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, p.2

<sup>9</sup>E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (London, Penguin, 1916), 3.

<sup>10</sup>Adiele E. Afigbo, *History As...*, 3.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup>The Chambers 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dictionary, (n.d.) 595.

<sup>14</sup>Lewis Gottschalk, *Understanding History*, (New York, 1969), 205.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>Paul Njemanze, Major Historians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: An Assessment of the themes, Methodology, and Response to changing world Historiography in *Journal of the Academic World (JAW)*, 2 (2), 2014, p.3.

<sup>17</sup>Arthur Marwick, *the Nature...*, 10.

<sup>18</sup>Adiele E. Afigbo, *History As...*, 18.

<sup>19</sup>Harry E. Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing*, (New York, 1962); See also J. J. Jusserand et al., *The Writing of History*, (New York, n.d.)

<sup>20</sup>Arthur Marwick, *The Nature ...*,p. 21.

<sup>21</sup>Harry E. Barnes, *A history...*, 36

<sup>22</sup>K. Lowith, *Meaning in History*, (Chicago, n.d.), pp.160-173.

<sup>23</sup>Arthur Marwick, *The Nature...*, 27.

<sup>24</sup>Cited in Allen E. Anita, *Humanist Versus Medieval Historiography: A Departure or a Continuation Historian?* Vol. X April, 1987, 37.

<sup>25</sup>Western Scholars pretend that it does not exist but there is manifest writing of African history. The exception to this rule is North Africa, where European writers were often as interested in Southern Europe.

<sup>26</sup>J. D. Fage, *The Development of African Historiography* in J. Kio-Zerbo (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa 1: Methodology and African Prehistory* (California, 1981), 25.

<sup>27</sup>H. J. Blackham, *Six Existential Thinkers* (London, Routledge, 1983), p. 67.

<sup>28</sup>Cited in Everistus Chinenye Obioha, *Historiosophy: Understanding Philosophy of History* (Owerri: Uzopietro Publishing Co., 1918), p.11.

<sup>29</sup>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, November 24, 2020 Available at [plato.stanford.edu/entries/history](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/history/) (Accessed... 2020).

<sup>30</sup>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, November 24, 2020.

<sup>31</sup>Daniel Little, *Historiography and Philosophy of History*, October 16, 2021, Available at [understandingsociety.blogspot.com/historiography-and-the-philosophy-of-history](https://understandingsociety.blogspot.com/2021/10/historiography-and-the-philosophy-of-history.html)

history (Accessed 16/10/21)

<sup>29</sup>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, November 24, 2020.

<sup>30</sup>Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Classic Foundations of Modern Historiography* (Sather Classical Lectures), Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.

<sup>31</sup>Philip Huang, *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta, 1350-1088*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990; Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre and other Episodes in French Cultural History*, New York: Basic Books, 1984.

<sup>32</sup>Philip Huang, *The Peasant Family and Rural Development in the Yangzi Delta*, 1990.

<sup>33</sup>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, November 24, 2020.

<sup>34</sup>Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, November 24, 2020.

<sup>35</sup>Evaristus Chinenye Obioha, *Historiosophy: Understanding Philosophy of History*, (Owerri: Uzopietro Publishing Co., 1918) 11.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>38</sup>Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (IEP), Philosophy of History Available at <http://iep.utm.edu/history/> (Accessed 20/11/21), p.1

<sup>39</sup>New World Encyclopedia, Philosophy of History, Available at [www.newworldencyclopedia.org/philosophy-of-history](http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/philosophy-of-history) (accessed 22/11/21), p.1

<sup>40</sup>University of California Digital library (UCDL), History and Topology, University of California Press, E-Books Collection 1982-2004, Available at <https://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=kt9k4016d3&chunk.id=d0e5173&toc.id=d0e5173&brand=ucpress>

(Accessed 22/10/21), p.126

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid*, p.126.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid*, p.126.

<sup>43</sup>Daniel Little, *Historiography and Philosophy of History*, October 16, 2021, Available at [understandingsociety.blogspot.com/historiography-and-the-philosophy-of-history](http://understandingsociety.blogspot.com/historiography-and-the-philosophy-of-history) (Accessed 16/10/21)

<sup>44</sup>Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Philosophy of History, Available at [iep.utm.edu/history-philosophy-of-history](http://iep.utm.edu/history-philosophy-of-history) (Accessed 30/09/21).

<sup>45</sup>Chris Lorenz, *Exploration between Philosophy and History, Historein*, 14 (1), pp. 60-70, p.60.

<sup>46</sup>Aviezer Tucker (ed.), *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, Sussex, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., p.xii.

<sup>47</sup>Tucker, 2009, p.xii.





9

## CHAPTER 2

# HISTORIOGRAPHY THROUGH THE AGES

Johnson O. Ndubuisi (PhD)

## Introduction

Humans have always exhibited an acute interest in their past. It is therefore no surprise that Historiography as a formal field of study began to take shape from very early times, and many different approaches and techniques to reconstruct the past have been proposed over the past two millennia (Mandavilli, 2016). This chapter examines the meaning, importance, evolution, changes and continuity on the subject matter of historiography. The important role historiography plays in the study of history continues to resonate in time and space across regions of the world. Historiography as a concept is what aptly distinguishes the mere facts of history from historical knowledge and practice. Remove historiography, the study of history becomes flattened as all comes to be as much as one could regurgitate the memory of events in which he or she had either witnessed or received from ancestors and patriarchs alike.

There is no denying the fact that all human cultures tell stories about the past. Deeds of ancestors, heroes, gods, or animals sacred to particular peoples were chanted and memorized long before there was any writing with which to record them. Their truth was authenticated by the very fact of their continued repetition. History, which may be defined as an account that purports to be true of events and ways of thinking and feeling in some part of the human past, stems from this archetypal human narrative activity.

Merely sharing a common ancestry with *myth*, *legend*, *epic poetry*, and the *novel* can pass for story telling or narratives whose proof can be authenticated by the scrutiny of historiography methods of analysis. In historical parlance, the claim to truth of events of the past is based in part on the fact that all the persons or events it describes really existed or occurred at some time in the past, which must be backed up by available evidence, otherwise historians may have little to say about these events. Such evidence customarily takes the form of something written, such as a letter, a law, an administrative record, or the account of some previous historian. In addition, historians sometimes create their own evidence by interviewing people. In the 20th century the scope of historical evidence was greatly expanded to include, among many other things, aerial photographs, the rings of trees, old coins, clothes, motion pictures, and houses.

The field of Historiography took shape during the time of the Greeks, and Greek scholars such as Herodotus, Hecataeus of Miletus, Ephorus, Demophilus, Polybius and Diodorus greatly contributed to the field. Greek scholarship was of very high standard, and most of the basic principles of historiography were formulated during this

period. The next major period of growth came during the period of the Romans, and Quintus Fabius Pictor, Cato the Censor, Livy, Cornelius Tacitus and Antipater were the major Roman scholars of Historiography. Historiography also developed independently in China and Japan. In China, the oldest history was recorded in the Oracle bone script around the end of the second millennium BC. The earliest works of history in Japan were the Rikkokushi, a corpus of national histories of Japan from its early mythological beginnings until the 9th century AD.

Other schools of historiography included Church Historiography which was oriented towards religious needs, Arab Historiography (known through writers such as Ibn Khaldun, Waqidi and Al-Madaini) which made an attempt to reconcile ancient Greek methodologies in historiography with Church historiography, and the German School of Historiography and its dialectics (Karl Marx was also greatly influenced by this school).

Major changes have occurred in the field of historiography since the time of Karl Marx, and of late there has been a tendency to view history more as a science than an art. It is being increasingly interfaced with Geography, Economics, Sociology, Psychology, Archaeology, Anthropology, Philology and other sciences. Schools such as the Annales School have also helped incorporate social scientific methods into history. New trends in historiography also include Cliometrics, Comparative history, Cultural history, history of art, history of literature, subaltern history or history from below etc. Postmodernist thoughts and ideas have also been applied in History. This includes critical interpretations of several aspects of the Twenty-first century such as culture, literature, history, art, philosophy, linguistics, economics, and fiction (Mandavilli, 2016).

There also have been other schools of historiography in different parts of the world. The Indian Nationalist School of historiography arose from the desire to set right alleged biases and prejudices in Colonial historiography but was largely discredited due to its methodological flaws. One of the progenitors of this school was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Offshoots of this school of thought, are Hindutva interpretations of history, which do not constitute a school at all, and merely seek to propagate Hindu nationalist agendas (Mandavilli, 2016).

In the distant past, history appeared to be an exclusive preserve of the Western scholars whose narratives projected a dominant Europe as the centre of history and historical scholarship, while dismissing other regions as peripheral areas of history that can only be seen from the lens of European history. Besides, history was limited to narratives of facts without really subjecting them to rigorous intellectual scrutiny and analysis. These continued until the Rankean revolution took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which elicited other methods of looking at history. Thus, just as the methods at the disposal of historians have expanded, so have the subjects they have become interested in. For example, many of the *indigenous* peoples of Africa, the Americas, and Polynesia, that were long dismissed by Europeans as having no pre-colonial history, because they did not keep written records before the arrival of European explorers, have rigorously

provided corpus of historical narratives and evidence to show that they have rich pre-colonial history in deference to the assumptions of Hegel and Trevor Roper. Hence, sophisticated study of oral traditions, combined with advances in *archaeology*, has made it possible to discover a good deal about the civilizations and empires that flourished in these regions before European contact ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com), 2019).

Historians have also studied new *social classes*. The earliest histories were mostly stories of disasters such as floods, famines, and plagues, or of wars, including the statesmen and generals who figured in them. In the 20th century, however, historians shifted their focus from statesmen and generals to ordinary workers and soldiers. Until relatively recent times, however, most men and virtually all women were excluded from history because they were unable to write. Virtually all that was known about them passed through the filter of the attitudes of literate elites. The challenge of seeing through that filter has been met by historians in various ways. One way is to make use of nontraditional sources; for example, personal documents, such as wills or marriage contracts. Another is to look at the records of localities rather than of central governments ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com), 2019).

Through these means even the most oppressed peoples of African-American *slaves* or *medievalheretics*, for example, have had at least some of their history restored. Since the 20th century some historians have also become interested in psychological repression in attitudes and actions that require psychological insight and even *diagnosis* to recover and understand. For the first time, the claim of historians to deal with the feelings as well as the thoughts of people in any part of the human past has been made good. Nevertheless, in spite these advances, one cannot say that history writing has assumed a perfect or completed form. Be that as it may, 21st-century historians understand the pasts of more people more completely and more accurately than their predecessors did ([www.britannica.com](http://www.britannica.com), 2019).

This chapter demonstrates the scope of that accomplishment and how it came to be achieved. To this end, the study examines the concept of historiography, the importance/benefits of historiography, and stages in the development of historiography to the present.

## Conceptual Meaning of History and Historiography

History has been given various names by different people across the regions of the world. As the name differ, though meaning same history, so also historiography has been approached by people according to time and space. The English word *history*, as well as the French *histoire* and the Italian *storia*, stems from the Greek *historia*, which was used first to refer to a general inquiry into things and only later to refer to history as it is now understood. Germans speak of *Geschichte* (from *geschehen*, "to happen"); Chinese choose *shih* (meaning both "fact" and "history"); Hindus use terms such as *itihāsa* (tradition; literally, "verily thus it happened") and *purāṇa* (ancient lore); and Arabs alternate *tar'ikh*

(derived from the word for dating events), *khabar* ("report"), and *ibar* (derived from the verb meaning "to pass on, through, over, or beyond"). Because the meanings of these terms are bound to cultures and periods, etymological analysis does not provide a ready explanation for the universality of the writing of history (Mandavilli, 2016), though they serve the purpose of gathering facts as they occur for transmitting from one person to the other or generation to generation. However, this act of gathering facts is systematized in order to achieve meaning purpose, then historiography comes in handy.

When asked a seemingly simple question, what is historiography? It comes with a usual weighty answer as the art and the science of writing history which includes specialized techniques and tools for the study of history. It is also a structured study of the art and methods of writing history and research methodologies pertaining to various aspects of history. There is also specialization by region and period, examples being the "History of the French Revolution," the "History of South America" or the "History of Ancient China". Historiography has also broadened in scope, from traditional views of history as narratives of events to Marxist historiography emphasizing historical materialism and more recent post-modern schools of historiography (Mandavilli, 2016).

Historiography is the study of how history is written and how our historical understanding changes over time. Historiography considers the approaches used by historians and seeks to understand how and why their theories and interpretations differ. While the past itself never changes, history – in other words, our understanding of the past – is always evolving. New historians explore and interpret the past through their own methods, priorities and values. They develop new theories and conclusions that may change the way we understand the past. Historiography acknowledges and discusses this process of change (alphahistory.com., 2019).

Lending their own contribution, Zahoor and Bilal (2013, p. 29) defines historiography as 'the art of writing history', 'history of history', or 'history of historical writings'. It is the study of the history and methodology of the discipline of history. Furay and Salevouris cited in (Kipgen, 2019) supporting the above define historiography as "the study of the way history has been and is written — the history of historical writing...".

Buttressing the definition of historiography, Erim (2004) in his analysis of the two related concepts - history and historiography, argues that historiography itself is a discipline dealing with the methods of writing history and the techniques of the historical research and documentation. This makes it clear for the understanding of history as an organized and critical study of the past happenings as had produced sufficient effects on subsequent course of events or other human beings in the course of events. Similarly, Afigbo cited in Mohammed (2013) views historiography "*as the science of writing history*". More so, Dike and Ajayi gave a more elaborate view of historiography as the discovery and critical assessments of historical sources, next is the reconstruction and description of the past on the basis of facts available and to a large extent involved to allocate, conscientize, the society, or even assist in influencing aspects of contemporary

public opinion, action or policy and the reflection on trends and the patterns of historical writing (Mohammed, 2013). Given above attempts at defining historiography, it is pertinent to add that historiography is very holistic and critical in nature. Therefore, for a balanced treatment and analysis of the subject matter of historiography, a serious minded historian would readily encompass all the components contained in the definitions in order to produce a worthy historical study.

Historiography is a difficult and complex study. It is an important component of most college or university-level history courses, where students are expected to know about the past *and* how it has been interpreted over time. Many senior secondary and high school courses include some basic historiography, usually through the study of different historians and competing historical interpretations (alphahistory.com., 2019).

The earliest definitions of history were given by the Greeks and the Romans, and various scholars ancient and modern, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Aristotle, Henry Johnson, Thomas Carlyle, Lord Acton and Marquis de Condorcet have speculated on the nature of history (Mandavilli, 2016).

Historiography mediates between facts and interpretation of the facts. Thus, to understand historiography, one must first accept that history is never set in stone. Our understanding of the past is not immune to criticism, challenge or revision. One must also understand the critical difference between historical facts (things shown conclusively by evidence and accepted as true) and history (the human study and interpretation of these things). When left on their own, however, these facts can be 'dry', isolated or devoid of meaning. Therefore, the role of the historian is to make sense of these facts through research and analysis. To do this, they examine and interpret evidence, form conclusions, develop theories and articulate their findings in writing (alphahistory.com., 2019).

Historians do not write and interpret these facts in a vacuum; hence they strive to answer many questions, including:

- § How and why particular actions, events or ideas came to be (*causes*).
- § The outcomes of particular actions, events or ideas (*effects or consequences*).
- § The contributions made by different people, groups and ideas (*actions*).
- § The relative importance or impact of different people, groups or ideas (*significance*).
- § Things that altered and things that stayed the same over a period of time (*change and continuity*).

Unlike the physical sciences, history often churns out different answers to the same question. Historians frequently study the same sets of facts but end up reaching different explanations or conclusions (alphahistory.com., 2019). To this end, Gottschalk (1969, p. 48) affirms that "the imaginative reconstruction of the past from the data derived by that process is called historiography (the writing of history)".

# Importance of Historiography to the Study of History

Historiography is obviously very important to the study of history in the following ways:

First, written records make it possible for history to be studied, and interpretations of historical documentation by historians provide the opinion of an expert in the field on a given topic.

Second, history is arguably the hardest subject to define precisely because many other disciplines influence and contribute to it, therefore, historians dedicate their careers to collect historical evidence through primary and secondary resources. Thus, it is important that these views are studied to increase our knowledge of human nature and to help us answer important questions about human life (Concordia University, 2008).

Third, given the fact that piecing together parts of history for the purpose of study is not easy even as evidence is often biased, incomplete or inaccurate. This makes it difficult for researchers and historians to come to factual conclusions based on information from intermediary sources. Thus, with the aid of historiography, there is also much room for interpretation in the study of history, Historians endeavour to present coherent and specific records to prevent misunderstanding, misleading, bias and incomplete facts (Concordia University, 2008).

Fourth, historians often disagree over why events happen and the ways in which history happens, according to various schools of thought. These ventilations lead to a better understanding of the world's current affairs and how to respond to them.

Fifth, Historiography aids historians to be critical in their work to avoid errors while deciphering historical facts. Through this means, historians strive to discover new facts in their research (Concordia University, 2008).

Sixth, it is beneficial to anyone studying history to also study historiography and the works of several historical experts. An overwhelming amount of information is available on any given historical topic; therefore, it is imperative that the most reliable and informative sources are used to develop an understanding of the broad subject of history.

Seventh, the study of historiography will lead to a greater understanding of humanity, and the mistakes and misjudgments of mankind. Without history and historiography, we would be blindly venturing into the future without considering past mistakes or successes, having not studied how and why events occur. Mistakes in history can be very valuable. If we can learn from past mistakes it is less likely that we will make the same ones over again. This can only be done through the preservation and review of historical records written by historians devoted to providing the public with reliable and factual information (Riana, 2019).

Still on the importance of historiography, brainly.com (2019) in a nutshell aptly stated that it enables historians to:

- § understand how the study of history has changed over time;
- § apply their knowledge of history when making charts and graphs;

§ create historical narratives that are more interesting to readers; and

§ make sure none of their historical claims and arguments are biased

In similar vein though with a different lens, *Cheprasov (2016) outlined the importance of historiography for a wide number of reasons. These include:*

§ It helps us understand why historical events have been interpreted so differently over time. In other words, historiography helps us examine not only history itself, but also the broader, overlying characteristics that shape the recording of history itself.

§ Historiography lets us study history with a critical eye. It helps us understand what biases may have shaped the historical record. It ensures we do not blindly trust what we read from historians. Simultaneously, it ensures we do not fall victim to the same mistakes some previous historians may have made.

§ By extension, historiography lets us dig for, and get to, the factual history behind the historical myth, so to speak. It gives us a way to re-interpret the biases of a historian's perspective in a more equitable manner. So long as we remain unbiased in the process, of course.

§ Historiography also helps generalists and specialists alike. Think of socioeconomic history, for example. To a generalist, it's important to get an overall sense of how historians viewed the various social classes and why. Perhaps some historians thought the poor were poor because of their own doing. Why? Were those historians part of the privileged class, and did they have a clear bias? For specialists, the study of history is important for its details. How were socioeconomic factors such as income, census reports, and related numbers recorded and by whom? Do they give an accurate representation of one social group's poverty or not? Are the numbers, quite literally, fudged, or can they be trusted to reflect accurately the disparity between classes?

§ Ultimately, historiography gives us an appreciation of how factors that shape and alter the recording of history shape and alter our interpretation of it as a result.

To university students of history, historiography can serve three main purposes. Johnson (2005, p.528) explained that there are several advantages for using historiography in graduate education:

First, it serves as a continuum connecting past, present, and future that links all aspects of the discipline.

Second, historiography trains the student to think historically over broad spans of time; a tool that can then be applied in their other courses and in their own research.

Third, it challenges students to link themes, trends, methodological approaches over the breadth of time to see cause and effect within the spectrum of historical writing. We sum this segment with Fallace (2009, p. 206; Flowers and Hunt, 2019) position that historical knowledge includes not just an understanding of facts, but of how the facts were constructed; he suggested that "historiographical knowledge will allow teachers to provide a more accurate view of the epistemological value of history, and that teachers will pass this knowledge to their students"



## Stages in the Evolution of Historiography

History is coloured by the current ideas of a country or age. The Greek emphasized the rational interpretation of history, the Romans gave a political twist to it, the church historians made God live in history, the Germans made it more philosophical, the Marxists more materialistic, the French more socialistic and the British more imperialistic. The Arab view, the Chinese view and the Indian view of history are all different. The historiography of the Enlightenment era, Romanticist era, Positivist era and scientific era are all different. The nature of history varies according to the prevailing philosophy of the time, and even from historian to historian. A historian's outlook on society will have an impact on his writing (Kipgen, 2019). Though historiography and philosophy of history seem to be interlinked with each other, they noticeably differ in meaning and motif vis-à-vis writing and purpose of history (Kumar and Karunakaran, 2014).

## Ancient Historiography/Antiquity

This was the kind of historiography that existed before Herodotus, the acclaimed father of history wrote *Histories*. History then (based on understanding of the pre-historical documents) was considered an account of the events that were meticulously designed and exclusively delivered either by the gods or by their representative agents such as kings on the earth (they were identified with the incarnation of a god). In other words, those events recorded in ancient documents were not considered as human actions, but were deeds of the god directly or indirectly. This kind of history was not considered history proper, but a quasi-history by historiographers like R G Collingwood. Collingwood (1946) strongly argues that such history appears to be mere assertions of the knowledge that the writer of history possesses, but not the answer of the questions, nor the result of any researches. He referred to such quasi-history as both theocratic and form of myth which are not concerned with human actions at all. The human element was said to be completely purged away while the characters of the story were simply gods.

Such history was also accused of being uncertain due to the temporal nature of myth; undated and as such unacceptable for history proper. There is a contention that a mythical consciousness of the past is inescapably embedded in theogony and embodies a frame of narratives which incorporate gods and semi-gods as their characters. Genealogical records and commemorative archives of Egypt and Babylon are some more examples for further illustrations (Kumar and Karunakaran, 2014; Lemon, 2003). It is evidently clear that a mythical consciousness of the past is potentially incapable of producing a history that can be acceptable as a scientific history.

## Greek Historiography

In the fifth century BC the Greek historiography witnessed many historians who successfully jettisoned the divine, mythical and epic components from their writing and simultaneously made inroad into a new world of historical writing. Apparently, the history writing of this period underwent radical changes since the focus of the historian's attention shifted from the divine, semi-divine and supernatural to the humanity to a great extent. As a result, the methodology of writing was deliberately fashioned after systematic and scientific inquiry based on researches and thus, history was presented in the form of narrative of human actions (Kumar and Karunakaran, 2104).

Herodotus (484- 425 BC) is considered by many to be the father of historiography and also pioneered investigative techniques in the field of historiography. It is believed he largely drew his inspiration from another early Greek historian by the name of Hecataeus of Miletus who lived between 550 BC and 476 BC. Herodotus is chiefly remembered for his fast-paced style of writing, ability to engage readers, and his first-hand accounts of events (Mandavilli, 2016; Obiegbu, 1998). Herodotus was succeeded by other historians such as Thucydides, Xenophon, Demosthenes, Plato, and Aristotle. Poets like Homer and Hesiod also wrote many poems with historical content. Athenian historian Thucydides also contributed greatly to historiography. Although he was not as famous as Herodotus, he was known for his meticulousness of approach, his deep and very critical analysis of events, his accuracy and his ability to construct and derive general principles from an analysis of historical data. Posidonius and Polybius were other eminent Greek historians (Mandavilli, 2016).

Greek Historiography is also well-known for its rational and meticulous approach to issues. The historical period of Ancient Greece is unique in world history as this is the first period associated with a well-developed historiography noted for its comprehensiveness of analysis and depth of thought, while earlier ancient history or proto-history is only attested much more indirectly, and to the extent it existed, is considered to be of lower quality and caliber and did not encompass scientific methods to any degree. The Greeks, on the whole, set very high standards of scholarship in the nascent field of historiography, incubating several core and critical principles in the field, and eventually handing over the baton to the Romans (Bentley, 1997; Breisach, 1997).

## Roman Historiography

Roman historiography greatly owes its origins to Greek historiography, which critically influenced its development from very early times. This is why some scholars refer to it as Greco-Roman historiography. Polybius who is credited to continue the tradition of the Greek historiography was himself a Greek born Roman historian (Kumar and

Karunakaran, 2104). However, given the high standard of excellence set by the Greeks, Roman historians were therefore considered to be less innovative and more imitative, as they borrowed heavily from Greek sources and only modified them to suit their own needs. This was largely and chiefly because of the Greek influence on Rome during the Roman subjugation of Greece. Although the Romans had triumphed politically, they were heavily influenced by Greek culture and traditions. Roman historiographical forms began to change direction from those of Greek by focusing more on Roman concerns. The most well-known preceptor of Roman historiography was Quintus Fabius Pictor, also popularly known as the “Founder of Historiography”. Unlike the Greeks, Roman historiography did not start out with an oral historical tradition. The Roman style of history was based on the way the Annals of the Pontifex Maximus, or the *Annales Maximi*, were recorded. Before the second Punic war, there was no historiography in Rome, but after, it was needed to commemorate this important occasion (Mandavilli, 2016). Though Quintus Fabius Pictor mostly wrote in Greek, using Olympiad dating and a Hellenistic style, he differed from those of the Greeks in that his style of historiography tilted towards defending the Roman state and its actions, and making heavy use of propaganda, which eventually became a hallmark of Roman historiography. Cato the Censor was the greatest of the early Roman historians, who rose from a very humble background to become one of the greatest Historians of all times. Livy, Cornelius Tacitus and Antipater were other great historians of Rome. With the arrival of Cato, the Censor who lived between 234 and 149 BC, the character of Roman history began to change somewhat. Roman historiography borrowed heavily from the Greeks, but was less analytical in approach and often lacked in rigour and depth (Mandavilli, 2016).

Finley writes, Polybius wrote the history of the city of Rome which was at that time politically strong, adult and was brimming with zeal of conquest. Thus it was quite obvious that for Polybius history was an engagement with politics of the time (Finley, 1959). In Collingwood’s (1946) conception, Polybius’ motive of writing history was not to provide a scientifically true or demonstrative historical analysis, engaged in it as a school and training ground for political life. In this way, he apparently differs from Herodotus who thought history as science and from Thucydides who did not raise the question of the value of history.

## Christian Historiography

During the period the Roman Empire consolidated its power in Europe, Asia and Africa in the fourth century AD, Christianity became the dominant religion. Consequently, it gave a new impetus to the growth and development of Christian historiography which was influenced by Christian theology and the development of the Biblical canon. It is remarkable to notice that the Christian historians preferred the written sources such as *the Bible* for their history writing whereas the Classical historians relied mainly on the oral sources. Theirs was based on the idea of world history as the

result of divine intervention in the affairs of men and women. It resulted in the creation of a unified chronology that reconciled all history around the birth of Christ.

It propagated a universal history. These writings were in the defence of their religion against pagan world or against rival Christian groups (heretical groups), though they also included politically unimportant persons. History was in the form of religious apologetics. Interestingly, the Christian historiography may be credited mainly for shaping history in periodized form through the inclusion of comprehensive chronologies (Kumar and Karunakaran, 2104).

Eusebius, for example, narrated the church history in *Ecclesiastical History* in the fourth century AD by giving a chronological account of the development of Christianity from the first century to the fourth century. It follows that his full length historical narrative was written from the Christian point of view. Hence it can be argued that the Christian historiography embodies the core ideology of the existence and supremacy of God with such phrases as - there is a God, and God is in control of history, and history has a moral purpose (Eusebius, 1860). In all, Church historiography left an indelible mark on other fields of historiography as well. Noted church historiographers were St. Augustine and Salvian, and bishops and other religious leaders also played a critical role in the development of church historiography.

## Medieval Historiography

From the fifth century to the eleventh century, the monks served as annalists and chroniclers and produced a corpus of historical writings fused with ecclesiastical elements in it. Among the best known medieval historians were Gregory – Bishop of Tours (538-594) and Venerable Bede (672-735). Bede, for example, wrote *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (1870) that consists of an extraordinary combination of chronology and hagiography. In other words, the history was not often written in objective and rational manner, because those chronicles detail the intervention of God in human events and lives of holy men and women. It can be noticed that annals were the main product of medieval historiography and the annalist merely set down the most important events of the current year. But from the twelfth century to fourteenth century, Europe witnessed an intensified progress in culture and learning. As a result, many encyclopedic compilations were brought out. The historiography of this period can be viewed as the continuation of Greek learning and culture. There was a revival of the concept of critical theory and attention was paid to rational analysis, cause and effect. History was mainly written by statesmen, high officials, and prelates. There was a great historical corpus produced by the medieval chroniclers which was not fully exploited till recently (Kumar and Karunakaran, 2104).

Spiegel (1975, p.315) asserts, 'Medieval historiography offers an excellent subject for investigating the function of the past in medieval political life, for surely few complex societies have so clearly regulated their life in accordance with their vision of the past.'

In spite of the fact that the period did not provide any significant method of writing history, the medieval historiography contributed through the annals and chronicles in producing extensive historical records of the Medieval age and those writings in turn, continued to partially influence the Renaissance historiography that succeeded it.

## The Renaissance Historiography

The emergent Renaissance era also known as the Humanist period in Europe could be regarded as a revolution against medieval historiography as man instead of Church became the main focus of attention. Thus, the Humanist extolled princes in place of glorification of martyrs that was typical of medieval era. The period was a revivalist attempt to reinvent classical literature. Writers of this period adopted a rational and secular approach to matters which were formerly placed in the domain of the divine.

As expressed by Collingwood (1946, p. 57), ‘... a return was made to a humanistic view of history based on the ancients.’ Thus, historical writing changed for good in its approaches, methods and techniques. In other words, it was the man who was again in the centre of historical thought, not the predominance of God and its omnipotent machinery for that matter.

Obiegbu (1997) posited that during this time, historical studies were greatly influenced by exploration and the invention of printing. A well known Humanist writer of the time was Leonardo Bruni (13-1444) who wrote the Twelve Books of Florentine History. He proceeded to analyze events and rejected the role of miracles. It can be asserted that it was a clear departure from the fanciful and ill-founded medieval historiography, although the role of divinity was not absolutely eliminated.

## The Enlightenment Historiography

The historiography of the Enlightenment was inclined to transfer the objective and impartial methods of natural science to the analysis and improvement of human social structures.

It was inspired by natural science and based on formulating the general rules governing the development of human societies. In other words, it was a rationalistic historiography where reason dominated the historical thoughts of the major components of historiography such as Giambattista Vico, Montesquieu, Gibbon etc.

The strong points of Enlightenment historiography are embodied in its ‘... capacity to study particular societies as coherent units and to formulate the theory that the various aspects of each society’s life were closely interrelated’ (*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 20, 15 ed. 559-574). Apparently, there was a strong insistence on the relation of man to his environment in historical writings and in turn, they influenced the political and religious institutions of that period. It is quite evident that the historical thoughts of the Enlightenment era elicited the modern scientific spirit that was

responsible for the historical methodologies that tried to establish the universal laws of analysis and explanation of the entire body of human history. However, based on writing of historians like Montesquieu and Gibbon, which he deemed not satisfactory in inventing the theory of historical causation, Collingwood (1946, p.80) dismissed the Enlightenment as apocalyptic to an extreme degree. It is equally important to note that though the Enlightenment is commonly considered a monolithic project of the discovery of the modern scientific knowledge, the historiography of this period was primarily shaped to explain the human action in the light of the laws derived from the principles of natural science. Furthermore, it was during the Enlightenment era that the theological base of historical writing which had persisted even through the Renaissance was finally laid to rest. Giambattista Vico (1668-1744) for example is credited with the formulation of a 'new science' in the philosophy of history that challenged the then prevalent belief that only mathematics and science were the producers of certain knowledge.

## The Romantic Historiography

It is widely agreed that the nineteenth century's rejection of an allegedly ahistorical Enlightenment has often been taken as a founding moment of modern historical understanding.

The Enlightenment historiography deliberately eschewed to investigate certain things that were 'unenlightened' or barbaric. However, the Romantic school of historiography marked a departure from the historiography of the previous age, because it rejected the conception of uniform and unchanging human nature. In 'Romantic Historiography as a Political Force in France' for instance, Jacques Barzun tries to bring out essence of the Romantic historiography. He writes:

The Romantic interest in the diversity of customs and manners, in local color, in the middle ages, in new and remote scenes, is an essential part of the historical spirit. It marks the breaking down of the abstract Reason of the previous age, and the return to concrete and living detail. To see life as conflict and contradiction, as a process of growth and evolution, is to see life historically, and it is thus that the Romanticists saw it (Barzun, 1941, p.318).

It is on this premise that it can be asserted that the Romantic historiography challenged the existing abstract human reason of the Enlightenment in favour of the human will in order to

widen the scope of historical thought. In fact, it started treating 'the entire history of man as a single process of development from a beginning in savagery to an end in a perfectly rational and civilized society' (Collingwood, 1946, p. 88) It was directed to the discovery of the mute past that was, according to the Enlightenment historians, mere ages of unintelligible barbarism and dark superstitions.

## Nineteenth Century Historiography

During the late 19th Century, the field of history truly reflected the dominant themes of its time. Elements of the Enlightenment era served to influence both research procedures as well as methodologies for many university disciplines without exception of history. Whereas preceding historians relied heavily upon personal memoirs and oral traditions for the basis of their work, however, the 19th Century embodied a dramatic shift in the historical field that promoted both a scientific and empirically-based set of rules and laws to govern research. These new methods and rules established, primarily, by the German historian, Leopold von Ranke equated the field of history to a scientific discipline in which scholars made use of empirical observation to arrive at truthful and accurate interpretations of the past. Known as empiricists, they stoutly believed that the past was “both observable and verifiable,” and that a scientific analysis allowed for objective-based research to be conducted that was free of both bias and partiality. Thus, through “rigorous examination” of sources, “impartial research and an inductive method of reasoning,” the empiricist school of thought promulgated the idea that “truth rests upon its correspondence to the facts,” thus, limiting the power of opinion over historical renditions of the past (Slawson, 2019). In this sense, the contributions of Ranke and the empiricist school of thought served to shift the field of history in both an important and dramatic way.

While historians of the late 19th Century focused their energy toward the discovery of absolute truths, not all aspects of historical research during this era were positive. More often than not, historians of the nineteenth-century viewed the world in an elite-driven, Eurocentric, and male-focused manner that relegated the contributions of ordinary individuals and minority groups to the periphery of historical inquiry. Consequently, historical research of this time often portrayed white males and political elites as the primary conduits of historical change. This belief reflected a teleological approach to world affairs since historians from this era believed that history followed a linear progression towards a greater good; more specifically, scholars posited that history continually advanced towards a common end point for all. As a result of constructing interpretations that reflected this ideology, ordinary members of society (as well as minority groups) were largely ignored by historians since their contributions to society were seen as marginal, at best. In their eyes, the true forces behind historical progression were kings, statesmen, and military leaders. As a result of this belief, historians of the late nineteenth-century often limited their choice of sources to archival research that dealt primarily with government records and documents, while disregarding the personal effects of lesser-known individuals. As a result, a complete and truthful rendition of the past remained an unattainable reality for many decades (Slawson, 2019).

The leading historians of the nineteenth century that piloted the paradigm shift in the course of historiography include distinguished historiographers like Ranke, Hegel, Marx, Croce, Michelet, Tocqueville, Burckhardt, Nietzsche, etc. Historiography of this century was bound to be considerably influenced by the methodologies of science, since it was a science-dominating era. Thus, Leopold von Ranke rose to introduce a new kind of historiography referred to as scientific historiography. This feat spurred scholars like Felix Gilbert, J.D. Braw to assert that 'Modern historical scholarship begins with Leopold von Ranke, and ever since his time historians have appealed to his name and writings to justify their approach to the study of the past' (Gilbert, 1987, p.393; Braw, 2007, p.46). Thus Ranke can be held as the originator of scientific history.

Before Ranke, history had been mainly assigned two major functions in general - to judge the past and to instruct men for the profit of future years. But Ranke's aspiration was not to achieve the former but to check the distortion of the aims of history such as moral or political. 'Ranke implies that, whenever a historian uses the past to present his views about how people ought to behave and act, the picture of the past becomes distorted and false: the historian ought not to go beyond the limits of his task - to show how things were in fact' (Gilbert, 1987, p.394). For Ranke, 'the study of the past has a much greater aim than the teaching of morals or instruction in the conduct of politics (Gilbert, 1987, p.397).

However, Ranke's brand of scientific historiography has been accused of being potentially capable of denying any strong matrix of multiple interpretations by restricting it to mere facts and their causal connections in an indirect manner and as such was not realizable in complete sense which served a pivotal role in giving way to a different historiography.

For G.W.F. Hegel, one of the leading historiographers of the German school of historical thought, he proposed a new brand of history by distinguishing three different modes of historical writing: original history, reflective history and philosophical history in a chain of progression. Thus, through his dialectic progression of history, implies that history is the progression in which each successive movement emerges as a solution to the contradictions inherent in the preceding movement. This can be demonstrated in the endless circle of thesis, antithesis and synthesis (that serves new thesis afterwards) in which he believes that history does not repeat itself; "its movements travel not in circles but in spirals, and apparent repetitions are always differentiated by having acquired something new.' For him, all history is the history of thought and the force that is mainspring of the historical process is reason in a logical sequence (Hegel, 1975).

On the whole, the Hegel's theory of dialectic progression of history paved way to Karl's Marx's 'historical materialism' that is based on the economic conception of history.

Hegel's belief that history is rational permeated the nineteenth century and later continued in concrete sense by his successors like Baur, Marx and Ranke. Unlike idealist Hegel, Marx was particularly specialized in the history of economic activity and



provided a new dimension to historiography that was embodied in the concept of historical materialism (though Marx never used this term for that matter). According to Rader (1979, p. xiii), ‘... Marx employed three models in the interpretation of history: dialectical development, base and superstructure, and organic unity.’ For Marx, dialectical development suggests that development advances through the strife of the opposites that are interdependent and yet conflict each other. The model of base and superstructure is perhaps most famous since it is directly applied in understanding the nature of history. According to this model, the base always supports the superstructure. In other words, ‘the base, in Marx’s model, is the mode of production, and the superstructure is the political state with its law, and the culture with its science, philosophy, art, religion, morality, and customs. Because a superstructure rests on its foundations and not vice versa, the implication is that the base determines the superstructure (Rader, 1979, P.xix). Thus it may be said that by providing a concrete structure of economics, Marx has not only extensively influenced historiography for his period, but continues to attract contemporary historians and historiographers. In summary, the 19<sup>th</sup> century revolutions in historical scholarship provided the basis for the modern study of history.

## Historiography in the Twentieth Century

Whereas historical interpretations of the late 19th Century offered a narrow-minded view of the past that focused primarily on political elites and warfare as the defining elements of society, the 20th Century ushered in a new approach that sought to replace this traditional form of inquiry with methodologies that included the lower echelons of society. The result of this new focus was the creation of a “history from below” – as coined originally by Edward Thompson – in which lesser-known individuals were brought to the forefront of history and were given a proper place alongside elites as important historical figures (Sharpe, 1991, p.25). Such trends include, among other things, a general improvement in the methods of historical research through the use of computers in historical explanations, and a shift of research emphasis from the hitherto political domain to such other areas of human development as economic, social and cultural institutions (Obiegbu, 1997).

In the early and mid-twentieth century, revisionist historians such as Charles Beard and E.H. Carr sought to challenge old views by proposing a new approach to the study of history. These historians countered earlier methodologies by arguing that absolute truths were “unattainable, and... [that] all statements about history are connected or relative to the position of those who make them” (Slawson, 2019). By issuing this direct challenge, revisionist historians unknowingly set the stage for a dramatic shift towards “explicitly political and ideologically motivated” histories, as scholars began to overwhelmingly turn towards Marxism, gender, and race as a new basis for inquiry (Donnelly and Norton, 2011, p.151). This shift, coupled with an expanded interest in the

social sciences, resulted in radical new perspectives and approaches that focused predominantly on the creation of a "bottom-up history," in which lesser-known individuals and groups were given priority over the traditional elite-driven narratives of the past.

One of these shifts in the historical field involved post-colonial scholars and their reimagining of imperialism in the 19th Century. Whereas Eurocentric depictions of the past focused heavily upon the positive contributions of Western societies to the world at large, the shift towards a "history from below" quickly dismantled these beliefs as historians gave a newfound "voice" to colonized groups that suffered under imperial oppression (Sharpe, 1991, p.25). By focusing on the exploitative nature of the West in regard to indigenous peoples of the world, this new wave of scholars succeeded in demonstrating the negative aspects of imperial power; an aspect largely unheard of in decades prior. Marxist scholars, in a similar manner, also shifted their focus to forgotten individuals as they began to highlight the oppression of elites over working-class laborers of the world and aptly demonstrated the exploitative power of the bourgeoisie over the poor.

Interestingly enough, a bottom-up analysis was not strictly limited to Marxist and post-colonial scholars. Similar methods were also employed by women and gender historians who sought to break away from the traditional focus on white males with a broader analysis that accounted for the contributions and influence of women. This shift in focus demonstrated that not only were women active outside the domain of the private sphere, but that their roles had left deep and profound marks on history that were largely overlooked by scholars in years prior. With the advent of the Civil Rights and Feminist movements of the 1960s and 1970s, advances in the history of gender as well as the importance of minority groups (such as blacks, Latinos, and immigrants) came to dominate historical scholarship. Thus, the inclusion of a "history from below" proved to be a decisive turning point for historians in that it allowed for a more complete and thorough reconstruction of history that had not existed in decades' prior (Sharpe, 1991, p.25). This shift is still relevant and important for modern historians today as scholars continue to expand their research into groups once marginalized by the historical profession.

## African Historiography

Modern Western-style historical writing per se appears first in nineteenth-century colonial times. Initially, Western historical writing was largely the domain of the colonizers, especially missionaries, who were concerned with how to integrate African school children into a Christian and European past. Since the late 19th century, the study of African history has undergone radical

changes. From about 1885 to the end of the Second World War, most of Africa was under the yoke of colonialism; and hence colonial historiography held sway. According

to this imperial historiography, Africa had no history and therefore the Africans were a people without history. They propagated the image of Africa as a 'dark continent'. Any historical process or movement in the continent was explained as the work of outsiders, whether these be the mythical Hamites or the Caucasoids. Consequently, African history was for the most part seen as the history of Europeans in Africa - a part of the historical progress and development of Western Europe and an appendix of the national history of the metropolis. It was argued at the time that Africa had no history because history begins with writing and thus with the arrival of the Europeans. Their presence in Africa was therefore justified, among other things, by their ability to place Africa in the 'path of history'. Colonialism was celebrated as a 'civilizing mission' carried out by European traders, missionaries and administrators (Oliver, n.d)

There were some notable indigenous exceptions, such as Samuel Johnson (1846–1901), the Yoruba son of a Sierra Leone freedman who returned to his parents' home in Nigeria as a missionary. Johnson, strongly affected by classical historians such as Xenophon, authored a *History of the Yorubas from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the British Protectorate* (published posthumously in 1921). This was based largely on Yorubaland oral historical narratives (*itàn*) and eyewitness accounts, in addition to colonial documents; Johnson's purpose, as he announced at the start of his book, was to ensure "that the history of our fatherland might not be lost in oblivion, especially as our old sires are fast dying out." Carl Christian Reindorf (1834–1917), another African cleric, used both oral and written evidence for his 1895 *History of the Gold Coast and Asante*, and the Buganda (part of Uganda). Politician Sir Apolo Kagwa (c. 1869–1927) provided an orally based history of *The Kings of Buganda* (1901). In the West Central African territory of the Bamum (modern Cameroon), its local sultan, Njoya (c. 1880–1933), created his own ideographic script, modeled on European writing, and then commissioned the writing of a 548-page manuscript on the history and customs of his people (Wolf, 2019).

All of these works were ethnically based, that is devoted to recovering and telling the past of a particular tribe. Unsurprisingly, given the clerical careers of most authors except Kagwa, they were also Christian-influenced, and most were heavily reliant on European sources, as was the somewhat later work of the Xhosa missionary John H. Soga, *The Southeastern Bantu* (1930). In the areas colonized by Germans, such as Tanganyika (part of modern Tanzania), Swahili historical works in Roman script, as well as verse chronicles in *adjami* appeared in the early twentieth century, beginning with Abdallah bin Hemedi 'Ajemy's (c. 1835–1912) *Habari za Wakilindi* (Chronicles of the Kilindi, completed in 1906); this was an extensive record of the Kilindi dynasty that ruled the area in the nineteenth century, derived from oral traditions of the Shambala, a non-Swahili-speaking tribe. A reminder that the traffic between spoken tradition and written history can run in both directions is provided by Kenya's *Chronicle of the Kings of Pate*. The original manuscript of this work, which covers the town's history from the thirteenth to the late nineteenth century, was destroyed in 1890, but knowledge of its

contents was so vivid that several writers were able to produce new written versions in the decades thereafter (Wolf, 2019).

In South Africa, an indigenous black African oral tradition included Xhosa oral narratives, a subset of which, *amibali* (sing. *ibali*), dealt specifically with historical events and genealogical details. These were marginalized in the late nineteenth century by the “Settler School” of white historians and by white imperially focused historians (principally British though including the occasional Afrikaner like Henry Cloete. Both of these groups advanced a negative view of the subordinated black culture. The earliest examples of colonial historical writing, in English, Dutch, or Afrikaans, appeared in the first third of the nineteenth century, but the Settler School really only consolidated with the work of the Canadian-born George McCall Theal (1837–1919), who ironically, had compiled one of the earliest collections of Xhosa narratives. Although criticized for defects of scholarship such as a refusal to cite his sources and a reluctance to do more than recount events without analysis like many of his contemporaries, he was not a professional historian. Theal proved hugely influential on subsequent historiography. The racist theme of European supremacy in his eleven-volume *History of South Africa* would be accentuated in the distinctive Afrikaner nationalist tradition after 1910, albeit with the center of gravity provided by events such as the Great Trek (the 1830s migration northward of Afrikaners in search of freedom from British Cape colony rule) rather than British imperial expansion.

The almost total neglect or disparagement of the black population continued into the apartheid era. Liberal historians such as W. M. Macmillan and C. W. de Kiewiet, beginning in the 1920s, began to integrate black and white experience, and to attend to social and economic history; they evinced concern for the treatment of indigenous blacks while maintaining the assumption of European civilized superiority. The writing of missionary-trained black historians, such as Soga, of the first half of the century, was notably inclined to a favorable view of the British (Wolf, 2019).

In the 1970s, however, more radical scholars, many of them Marxists, advanced a more serious attack on past historiography, likening colonialism and its apartheid aftermath to the class system. The works of British Marxist historians such as Eric Hobsbawm and E. P. Thompson and of the American Eugene Genovese seemed transplantable to Africa. Social theories such as André Gunder-Frank’s “underdevelopment” thesis (originally developed with Latin America in mind) were similarly adapted by Africanists. European-American historiography on Africa began in the nineteenth century; the celebrated American historian and civil rights activist W. E. B. DuBois (1868–1963) had provided inspiration for an early generation of black American scholars. Most early efforts were devoted to countering racist assumptions about the inferiority of Africans. These in turn were often derived from the so-called “Hamitic hypothesis” (the Bible-derived view that Africans were descended from Ham, son of Noah, or alternatively that only the “civilized” cultures of Egypt and North Africa sprung from European peoples such as the Phoenicians).

It was not until after World War II, however, that the subject began to make its way, slowly, on to mainstream history curricula. Beginning in the late 1940s with the retreat of the European colonial powers and the establishment of independent nations in ensuing decades, a deeper interest in exploring their own past quickly emerged among African populations, stimulated by reaction to decades of education in an alien imperial historiography. With this came an urgent need to recast the historical record and to recover evidence of many lost pre-colonial civilizations. At the same time, European intellectuals' (especially British, Belgian, and French) own discomfort with the Eurocentrism of previous scholarship provided for the intensive academic study of African history, an innovation that had spread to North America by the 1960s.

As a result, foundational research was done at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London by scholars such as Roland Oliver (cofounder in 1960 of the *Journal of African History*), by the American economic historian Philip Curtin, and by the Belgian Jan Vansina (an authority on oral tradition) (Vansina, 1985).

On the part of the Francophone scholars, they have been as influential as Anglophones, in particular the Parisian social historian, Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch (b.1935). But African historiography has not been the sole creation of interested Europeans. African universities have, despite the instabilities of politics and civil war in many areas, trained their own scholars and sent many others overseas for doctoral training (South Africa has been rather exceptional in having a number of powerful research-intensive universities) (Woolf, 2019).

The pioneering Nigerian historian Kenneth Onwuka Dike (1917–1983) studied at Durham, Aberdeen, and London, and SOAS alone has produced several African-born scholars, including the Ghanaian Albert Adu Boahen (b. 1932). Boahen in turn participated in the important early summary work of postcolonial historical writing, the UNESCO *General History of Africa*, directed by a “scientific committee” two-thirds of whom were Africans and written by over three hundred authors including the Kenyans Ali Mazrui (b. 1933) and Bethwell Allan Ogot (b. 1933), Joseph Ki-Zerbo (b. 1922) of Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta), and the Nigerian J. F. A. Ajayi (b. 1929). Francophone African historians had until recently an especially close relationship with French universities, notes Matthias Middell, though African history generally is less prominent within France than in the English-speaking world (Woolf, 2019).

African historiography has also proved a fertile field for the application of various interdisciplinary approaches, including archaeology and linguistics. In particular, it has welcomed the application of social science theories such as “modernization,” “dependency,” and the above-mentioned “underdevelopment.” It has also provided a forum for Marxist concepts such as “modes of production” and “capital”; the work of Walter Rodney (a black radical historian assassinated in Guyana in 1980) has been especially significant in this regard. At the same time, the early focus on political history and the establishment of chronology has been displaced to a considerable degree by an interest in social, economic, and cultural issues, reflecting

historiographic trends elsewhere in the world. In recent decades, “Africa” has proved too unwieldy an umbrella term, and the field has segmented into thematic subfields such as slavery and gender; postmodernism has also begun to make itself felt as the colonial and early postcolonial periods are revisited by a fresh generation (Woolf, 2019). African history has remained firmly established as an area of robust research.

## Conclusion

The work ‘Historiography Through the Ages’ is an attempt to put together major historiographical strides from the ancient to the twenty-first century. Granted that there are other sub-historiography such as the subaltern historiography, national historiographies which were not given detailed treatment in this study, the writer’s main objective is to trail from recorded history, the origin of historiography till the present times in order to narrate issues of where historiography began, how and why as well as the context of the subject matter at different epochs of its existence. The study also made attempt to conceptualize historiography, its importance and the different turns it has taken over the centuries. It was also presented in this study that what came to be known as African historiography was an attempt by Africans to rewrite their own history contrary to the Western prejudices on African history. Hence, one of the greatest contributions of African historiography to the study of history is the effective use and popularization of oral method of enquiry in historical research. This method of historical writing has come to stay in spite of the initial contestations by Western scholars. The different kinds of historiographical approaches when put together make historiography robust and a minefield of historical writing. It is not an understatement that historiography is the heartbeat of historical scholarship without which history becomes a mere story telling. It is pertinent to conclude here by calling for a thorough, clinical and forensic teaching and learning of historiography in our institutions of higher learning if the study of history must continue to worth its onions. There is indeed urgent need for history teachers to be retrained and observe sustained scholarship by way of seminars, workshops, conferences and symposia through the TETFUND window on the current trend in the subfield of historiography, if scholarship in history must continue to acquire its due relevance as well as continue to retain its pride of place.

## References

- alphahistory.com (2019). What is Historiography, Available at <https://alphahistory.com/what-is-historiography/> (Accessed 20/20/19).
- Barzun, J. (1941). Romantic Historiography as a Political Force in France. *Journal of the*

- History of Ideas*, 2 (3), pp. 318-29.
- Bentley, M. (1997). *Companion to Historiography*: Routledge
- brainly.com (2019). Importance of Historiography to Historical Study, Available at <https://brainly.com/question/1549322> (Accessed 15/10/2019).
- Braw, J. D. (2007). Vision as Revision: Ranke and the Beginning of Modern Historiography. *History and Theory*, 46 (4), pp. 45-60.
- Breisach, E. (1997). *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, Third Edition, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cheprasov, A. (2016). History 301: Historiography & Historical Methods/History Courses, Available at <https://study.com/academy/lesson/historiography-definition-importance-examples.html> (Accessed 29/09/19).
- Collingwood, R. G. (1946). *The Idea of History*, Rev. ed. 2000, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Concordia University (2008). Historiography, 15 Jun 2008, Available <http://www.cuw.edu/Academics/programs/history/historiography.html> (Accessed 19/09/2019).
- Donnelly, M. and Norton, C. (2011). *Doing History*. New York: Routledge.
- Erim, E.O. (2004). *African Historiography: Trends, Paraxis and Democracy in Nigeria 25th Inaugural Lecture*, Nigeria, University Press, pp. 10-15
- Eusebius Pamphilus (1860). Bishop of Cesarea in Palestine, *Ecclesiastical History*, Trans. From the Original, with Introduction by C. F. Cruse and An Historical View of the Council of Nice by I. Boyle, Twelfth Edition, Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co.
- Fallace, T. (2009). Historiography and Teacher Education: Reflections on an Experimental Course. *The History Teacher*, 42(2), pp.205-222.
- Finely, M. I., ed. (1959). *The Greek Historians: The Essence of Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius*. London: Penguin Book Ltd.
- Flowers, J. and Hunt, B. (2019). Historiography in Graduate Technology Teacher Education in The Journal of Technology Studies, pp. 2-11. Available at <https://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JOTS/pdf/flowers> (Accessed 22/10/19).
- Gilbert, F. (1987). Historiography: What Ranke Meant, *The American Scholar*, 56 (3), pp. 393-97.
- Gottshalk, L. (1969). *Understanding history: A primer of historical method*. (2nd ed.). New York: Knopf.
- Hegel, G.W.F. (1975). *Lectures to the Philosophy of World History*. Trans. H. B. Nisbet. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- Johnson, C. (2005). Herodotus who and annals what? *Historiography and the history student. Rethinking History*, 9(4), pp.521-528.
- Kipgen, P. (2019). Historiography: Definitions, Nature and Scope of History, Available at <https://www.academia.edu> > [https://www.academia.edu/Historiography\\_Definitions\\_Nature\\_and\\_Scope\\_of-History](https://www.academia.edu/Historiography_Definitions_Nature_and_Scope_of-History) (Accessed 21/10/19).
- Kumar, B. and Karunakaran, D.T. (2104). A History of Historiography: A Review and Critique of Modes of Writing History from Antiquity to Contemporary, *Research*

*Scholar, An International Refereed e-Journal of Literary Explorations*, 2 (1), pp.203-218.

Lemon, M. C. (2003). *Philosophy of History: A Guide for Students*. London: Routledge

Mohammed, K. (2013). The Role of History, Historiography and Historian in Nation Building, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2 (7). PP.50-57

Obiegbu, J.N. (1997). Historiography in the Training of Historians, in Ejituwu, N.C. (Ed.) *The Multi-disciplinary Approach to African History: Essays in Honour of Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa*, Port Harcourt, University of Port Harcourt Press.

Oliver, R. (n.d) *Introdllction to The Cambridge History of Africa*, Vol. VI: 1870-1905., Cambridge.

Rader, M. (1979). Introduction. *Marx's Interpretation of History*. New York: Cambridge UP.

Riana, S.A. (2019). *Explain the term Historiography and how it is important to the study of history*. Available at [schools.yrdsb.ca > markville. ss > history > west > Riana\\_SA,](https://schools.yrdsb.ca/markville/ss/history/west/Riana_SA/)(Accessed 20/10/19).

Sharpe, J. (1991). History from Below, in Peter Burke (ed.) *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, <https://owlcation.com/humanities/Changes-in-Historiographical-Methodology>

Slawson, L. (2019). Changes in Historiographical Methodology, Available at <https://owlcation.com/humanities/Changes-in-Historiographical-Methodology> (Accessed 25/10/19)

Spiegel, G. M. (1975). Political Utility in Mediaeval Historiography: A Sketch. *History and Theory*, 14 (3), pp.314-25.

Sujay Rao Mandavilli, S.R. (2016). Enunciating the Core principles of Twenty-first Century Historiography: Some additional extrapolations and inferences from our studies and observations on Historiography, *ELK Asia Pacific Journal of Social Science* 2 (4).

*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2010). The Study of History. 15th ed. Vol. 20. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Vansina, J (1985). *Oral Tradition as History*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Woolf, D. (2019). Historiography, *New Dictionary of History of Ideas*, Available at [http://www.academia.edu/38372716/ Historiography\\_NDHI.pdf](http://www.academia.edu/38372716/Historiography_NDHI.pdf) (Accessed 15/10/19).

WWW.britannica.com (2019). Historiography, Available at <https://www.britannica.com/topic/historiography> (Accessed 15/10/19).

Zahoor, M. A. and Bilal, F. (2013). Marxist Historiography: An Analytical Exposition of Major Themes and Premises, *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, Vol. XXXIV/2



10

## CHAPTER 4

# HISTRIOGRAPHY AND SEMIOTICS: RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY BEYOND THE LIMITS OF THEORY AND PRACTICE

Chukwuemeka Anthony Ebiriukwu, PhD

## Introduction

The prevailing notion that sees history as dealing with a finite definite past has seemingly left research into historical events with no room for perceptual and factual expansion. Thus, presumably, historical matter was placed in the past, the historian in the present, and the reader in the future.<sup>1</sup> By this presupposition implies that any historical account of a given event comes to an end, that is, has been placed on a halt. Perhaps what may have sustained this continuum of reasoning is not far from Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's notion of philosophy of history. Hegel's conception of history is that it is teleological, further eventuating into what he and Karl Marx described as "dialectical materialism." Hegel, however, noted that history ends when one puts it down into writing. This idea of putting to halt historical events is undoubtedly the major problem faced by historians in the writing of history and, of written history today. The reason for this position is predicated on the fact that the suggestion of history being brought to a halt when put down into writing obviates the importance of the historian in the examination of the historical process. The implication of this to history as a discipline is that it places history as a subject at dead end since it does not confer relevance to the historian's perspective in the interpretation, evaluation and analysis of a historical event.

I am not an historian and therefore may not offer this piece from the perspective of a professional historian. However, my experience as a theatre artist and critic offers me the opportunity to encounter semiotics, and knowing its importance in the evaluation, criticism, analysis and interpretation of texts in virtually all sister disciplines in the humanities, but in history, I found encouragement to put up this contribution that may help in the consideration of semiotics as a sub-discipline of history in the humanities in Nigerian universities. This move is fore grounded upon the fact that being relatively new in the field of history in both Western and American scholarship, it is therefore not unlikely that semiotics as a phenomenon may not even have been thought for consideration in the curricula of the discipline of history in greater percentage of higher institutions and colleges worldover.

## Conceptualizing Semiotics and Historiography

As scholars in the humanities, we must understand that the fundamental business of the humanities is to write, rewrite, interpret, evaluate and analyze human relations and experiences in written texts - the text itself being semiotics, that is, an object embodied in signs, symbols, metaphors and significations subjectable to individual interpretations, evaluations and analyses. The reading, writing, interpretation and analysis of history in texts seem to present history as text, hence, the importance of an enquiry into the subject matter of semiotics in the discipline of history.

Semiotics is not a new phenomenon in scholarship, especially in the humanities. It has acquired a household name in majorly all spheres of the arts, including sociology, psychology, philosophy, fine arts, plastic arts, paintings, the sciences and more especially in the languages and drama and theatre. Semiotics also represents a major communication approach in cultural studies. In these academic spheres, semiotics occupies the main-stay of communication and meaning. In drama and theatre, for example, it is semiotics that makes up more than 85 percent of the communication model - what is referred to as the *mis-en-scene* of the theatre. These are the unspoken aspects of the theatrical performances, and they include the costume, make-up, scenery, lighting, props, sets, facial expressions, et cetera. These offer their own meaning to the performance through their signs, codes, symbols, metaphors as acceptable by the receiving population. In other disciplines, semiotics also occupies prominence as phenomenon for meaning and signification. In psychology, Sigmund Freud had mooted the idea and phenomenal importance of semiotics for the proper understanding of myth and their evolutionary processes. In the languages, Levi-Strauss and Ferdinand de Saussure were also precursors of semiotics having assigned meanings and significations to words. However, this is away from history as a discipline where semiotics is seen as a suspect word.

Both Berger and Solomon described semiotics as a general science of sign usage. Expatiating on this, Gary Shanks posited that the idea behind a general science of sign usage is that human culture can be understood as a series of codes, and that each of these codes is like a little language. Shank notes further that:

According to the doctrine of semiotics, signs are a type of events that are necessary for reality as we know it to exist. If this is the case, then we should expect semiotic ideas to be found in the earlier forms of human inquiry, this is indeed the case. Signs in terms of medical symptoms and hunting and in diagnoses of all forms, have been a key part of inquiry since the beginning of history.<sup>2</sup>

What to make from Shank's explanation is that semiotics has always been part of history. Thus, being the science of sign usage, semiotics can be said to be the study of sign process taken as "...any form of activity, conduct, or any process that involves signs

including the production of meaning.<sup>3</sup> In his study of the semiotician Umberto Eco, Caesar Michael noted the following about sign and semiotics:

A sign is anything that communicates a meaning that is not the sign itself, to the interpreter of the sign. The semiotic tradition explores the study of signs and symbols as a significant part of communications. Unlike linguistics, semiotics also studies non-linguistic sign systems.<sup>4</sup>

Caesar's explanation is very important in reassessing the place and notion of semiotics as perceived by historians. This perception, perhaps, is misguided especially given the crucial difference between the understanding of non-semiotic reality in the Peircean and the Saussurean approaches, the difference in understanding to which Lotman and Uspenij, in their editorial commentary, noted that:

If in the former it exists as the object of logical models, then in the latter it acquires features of empirical reality. For this reason, the first approach opens the way only to logical models, while the second affords the hope of reconstructing extra textual empirical reality by means of the text. At this point the aims of semiotics converge with traditional aims of historical research.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, there are fundamentally two recognized traditional systems of semiotics and which, according to Lotman, are categorized as **Atomistic** and **Holistic** Semiotics, and understanding the operational modes of semiotics implies that we must understand the relative differences between these traditional approaches. The **atomistic** semiotic tradition derives from Peirce and Morris which exists as objects of logical model while the **holistic** semiotics, which derives from Saussure, acquires features of empirical reality, and accordingly;

The researcher's attention is focused on the sign in isolation, that is, on the relationship of sign to meaning, to addressee, and so on, whereas in the case of the second tradition, the researchers concentrate their attention on a language, that is, a mechanism which uses a certain set of elementary signs for the communication of content. This fundamental difference brings along a different approach to non-semiotic reality and to the semiotic study of history.<sup>6</sup>

Dobie Ann explains that Saussure swept away the nineteenth-century correspondence model between words and things and gave us language that is connected only conventionally and arbitrarily to the world outside it.<sup>7</sup> In his approach to language as a communicative paradigm, Saussure conceptualized the language system in terms of signs. The concept of sign, according to Saussure, are composed of two parts - the signifier and the signified. The signifier is the written or sound construction, while the signified connotes the meaning. The problem the historian has with this conception of meaning in communication as espoused by Saussure is that it does not represent the methodology with which the historian approaches historical narratives. For the historian, this antithetical mode of viewing words as conceptualized by Saussure decries the historian's approach to history because he made it no longer possible to speak of a word as a symbol that represents a thing outside of it, as it has conventionally been

known. Because a **signifier** does not refer to some objects but to a concept in the mind, it is language, and not the world external to us, that mediates reality.<sup>8</sup> Conceived in this way therefore, the historian considers signifier as ahistorical because by it we see only what language allows us to see both outside and inside a context. It does not simply record our world or provide labels for what is in it. Instead, according to Saussure, language constitutes our world; it structures our experience. By this therefore it means that there is an arbitrary relationship existing between the signifier and the signified. This is an anathema to the historian's communicative paradigm in the narrative process of transmission of meanings, and which is why the historian sees as suspect the word semiology, as proposed by Saussure, and which the historian also confuses as meaning the same thing with semiotics. Saussure's semiology harps on the investigation of the meanings through signs that are observable in cultural phenomena. However, this investigation is only chiefly focused on language as the primary signifying system and that any research into any other operative system must follow this methodology through language study. This is against the historian's traditional model of historical narrative. Though related to it, but is different from the semiotic approach to sign studies and meaning in transmission of thoughts.

Working simultaneously, but in a separate environment with Saussure as he espouses his theory of semiology, was the American semiotician Peirce Charles Sanders. Peirce, it was, who founded semiotics. As defined above, Peirce conceives semiotics as a science of the study of signs, and for him:

A sign, or representamen, is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object.<sup>9</sup>

Away from Saussure's therefore, Peirce sees a sign as composed of a triadic relation among *representamen*, object and interpretant - a kind of an infinite show of definition. In his observation and critical inquiry into Umberto Eco's critical assessment of Saussure's view of signs as **signifier** and **signified** and, Peirce's conception of sign and its triadic relations, Jeffrey DiLeo observes that whereas Saussure's **sign** implies the existence of an actual antecedent object, e.g., a word or thing, Peirce's does not, for the "sign" as such is replaced by the "sign function" or "sign relation."<sup>10</sup> Commenting on this, Eco emphasizes that Peirce's very definition of "sign" implies a process of unlimited semiosis. What this means for the historiographer is that he is not limited in the interpretation of facts of history as captured in the source. This is so because according to DiLeo in his critical observation of the differentiating paradigms in Saussure's semiology and Peirce's semiotics as critiqued by Eco:

Instead of the recognition of meaning dependent upon the sign user's ability to isolate discrete semiotic units (**signifier** and **signified**), there is for Peirce and Eco a sequentially irreducible and theoretically limitless process of interpretation, in which a

sign includes the idea or interpretant to which it gives rise. In turn, this interpretant becomes a sign which is open to the same interpretive process of unlimited semiosis.<sup>11</sup>

For Peirce's semiotic principles therefore, is a vast degree of perceptual freedom for the historian since according to him:

The object of representation can be nothing but a representation of which the first representation is the interpretant. But an endless series of representations, each representing the one behind it, may be conceived to have an absolute object as its limit.<sup>12</sup>

The attention to semiotics as a veritable tool and approach to sign significations and meaning stems from semiotics conception as applying the structuralist principles not just to language but to the study of sign systems in general and the way meaning is derived from them. Therefore, while semiology pays more attention chiefly to the study of the signs of the language (linguistics) and relies on it in the interrogation of meaning into other aspects of social behaviour, semiotics goes beyond it to include the study of the external facts to examine the nature of the human experience. For these, Western and American scholars have, in the last few decades, found it imperative to include the study of the semiotics of history in the discipline of history in the humanities.

In her contribution to the development of the converging of history and semiotics, the American historian, Brook William in an article, gave reason why she made a shift from her discipline of history to semiotics. She captures this drift below:

I drifted outside my discipline, one fall day, on October 3, 1978, to register at the Third Annual meeting of the Semiotics Society of America (SSA), as the first historian who became a member of this society. In my discipline, 'semiotics' was a suspect word. Historians confused it with 'semiology' which they saw as an exclusively linguistic model of human experience, one which visited upon the discipline a theory accruing from modern philosophical idealism a theory that provided no form of reference for the mode of inquiry historians use.<sup>13</sup>

These confusing paradigms of meanings between semiotics and semiology, as observed by Williams, of her American historians, may present even more dangerously the conception and perception of semiotics by Nigerian, nay, African historians, who patterned their historiographical methodology in the way and manner of the West. This, perhaps, may account for why the idea of a semiotics of history has hardly been conceived in the educational curricula of the country's educational system. Because we are a consumptive society, our historians are perhaps waiting for Western and American historians to develop fully semiotics of history in their cultures before, perhaps, borrowing the fully developed ideas from them hook, line and sinker. What I am saying is that I have hardly encountered any article written by a Nigerian historian mooted the idea of semiotics of history. However, if the contrary be the case of my claim, (as may arguably be), then what perhaps may exist is a scratchy and sketchy suggestive appeal to include the phenomenon into the curricula of the discipline of history in Nigerian

educational system. At this juncture, it will do well we look at the subject matter of historiography so as to situate it properly in our discussion of the semiotics of history in this study.

We will start by stating that the main purpose of history, as we know it, is to look at events, look at happenings, look at periods, and look at people from the past. We look at all these from the perspective of things that existed and/or happened in real historical times. They are evidences with verifiable facts. What this means is that as a reality conceived in the past, history does not change, perhaps, because, it never changes. We would by this note here that as a thing known to have taken place in a pointable finite past, history contains hundreds and thousands and millions of facts and real truths; truths and facts that are verifiable in concrete terms. For instance, it is a concrete and verifiable truth that Lord Lugard amalgamated the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914. It is an obvious fact that Nigeria got her independence from the British in 1960. It is not in doubt that the Nigerian-Biafran civil war lasted between 1967 and 1970. These all took place in real finite pasts and the evidences of their facts leave no one in doubt. However, considered as historical events standing on their own, the possibility of distortions in their inherent and intrinsic facts remains palpable. Thus, different persons are likely to give differing accounts of their perceptions of the events. This, perhaps, is the point where the role of the historian and of semiotics becomes important and needed.

Historians look at the facts of history, examine them, analyze them, evaluate them, interpret the available evidences on them, articulate their findings and where possible, develop theories about them and finally draw their conclusion from the information gathered on such historical events. As the historian does these, he is engaging in the art of historiography. Historiography could thus be said to define the study and methodological approaches applied by the historian in the gathering, evaluating, examining, assessing, processing, articulating and interpreting of information needed in the writing and development of history. It is noted that when studying historiography, or the history of history, it is important to realize that every historian presents ideas in a different way. That is because they have perspectives that affect how they think.<sup>14</sup> The above source further informs us that historiography is the writing of history. Historiography is a meta-level analysis of descriptions of the past which usually focuses on the narrative interpretations. Generally, therefore, while history looks at people, periods and events from the past, historiography is concerned with how these events have been interpreted and understood over time. What is implied here is that despite existing facts of history, people interpret and give accounts of such events from their individual perspectives. Thus, as a study of how history is written and its applicable methodologies, and how our assessment and understanding of history changes over time, historiography considers the approaches used by historians and seeks to understand how and why their theories and interpretations differ. While the past itself never changes, history - in other words, our understanding of the past - is always

evolving, the source furthered. Accordingly, the joining of history and semiotics puts us on the threshold of revival of such fundamental concepts as causality, thus making the perception of history acquire semiotic emblem and semiotic thinking acquiring historical features.

## Reading and Writing as a Historian

We have already seen from the above review how our assessment and understanding of history change over time. The above also shows that the historian's writing of history presents our understanding of the past as always evolving. Historiography thus uses knowledge gathered from different sources about the facts of a past event to reach a newer understanding of the event in the present and consequently opening up for newer possibilities of interpretations in the future. What this implies is that history is never a closed entity. To understand the writing of history therefore is to be aware that history is ever confronted with newer facts aimed at the reconstruction of the historical past. The role of the historian in these ever-changing facts of history is to make a sense of these facts through research, interpretations and analysis. Many historians use information gathered from sources available to them to evaluate and interpret their understanding of a given historical event. Thus, when two or more historians are reviewing a given event found in a known text, it is very much possible that each of them will come out with different perspectives to the facts of that historical event. This possible lack of agreement about the facts of history makes it difficult to come to a conclusion of what constitutes the facts of history of particular events. More so, the fact that the analyzing historians may come from different cultures, backgrounds and divides of that history may even make it more difficult to come to a consensus conclusion of what constitutes the facts of the history in question. However, they share similar interests in the evolutionary processes of that history. A historiographical analysis of a given historical event therefore,

...must begin with the assumption that examining the relation between a text and its context will illuminate not only the given work but also the culture that produced and consumed it. In the end, you may not agree with everything you find in either of them, but you will emerge with a deeper understanding of how and why a text is meaningful.<sup>15</sup>

There are therefore always kinds of competing meanings in the presentation of the facts of historical events in written texts. What is implied here is that facts of history are usually reconstructed when interpreted, analyzed and retold and put down in written form. The reality of this is that for the mere fact that the truth of such historical event are coming from different sources but in variegated accuracies implies that the facts of history are always open-ended - facts of history are subject to review and new offerings. The fact that the event took place in a pointable concrete time means that its reporting is likely to be objective. But again, we know that such narratives are coming from different individuals with different perspectives to the facts of the event implies that there is the



possibility of subjective inclinations to the objective reporting of historical events. It is against this backdrop that DLeo points out that a principle considered very important by Eco was that the process of decoding signs is not entirely mechanical, for the interpretant not only draws from the semantic storehouse, but also adds to it.<sup>16</sup> Thus, as historical events considered as semiotic fields, historians are warned not to place as absolute facts obtained from such texts, because, as semiotics, a text is meant to be an experience of transformation for its reader and hence, serving as the structured model for an unstructured process of communicative interplay.<sup>17</sup> As for Eco, as observed by DLeo, the open text from which the historian sources his information of the facts of a given historical event is an expanded sign to be disambiguated by a reader whose cooperation is provoked by the manipulative strategy of a scheming author. This fact therefore denounces objectivity as tenable paradigm in history. It also denounces subjectivity as paradigm in narrative discourses in the transmission of information. It was in this vain that Emeka Nwabueze declared that:

Because meaning is always deferral and cannot be completely grasped because there is no fixed system of knowledge and therefore no finite, absolute meaning in a text, the deconstructionist believes that there is a multitude of competing meanings in a text each of which denies the primacy of the other.<sup>21</sup>

Following from this, Ebiriukwu Anthony avers that “meanings in texts are indeterminate, and journey through a transformational presence.”<sup>22</sup> Thus, to interpret and evaluate historical texts, the historian must first understand that there are no absolutes in the facts of history such that the internal dynamics of historical facts change with the constant revision of historical texts. This means that information in texts are saddled with ambiguities that need to be disambiguated or rather sustained. Therefore, in reading, writing and rewriting history, the historian must be able to not only just ask himself certain questions but to also see that he provides to himself answers to such basic questions. Such answers should also have the potentials of provoking further questions. For the historian therefore, pertinent questions that demand imperative answers in historiography are questions such as:

§ What were the issues in history from the perspectives of people outside the historical situation under consideration?

§ What do you think that history mean to these outsiders?

§ What do they understand about the actual events in that history?

§ What things would you confirm you feel certain did occur because everyone seems to agree in their statement it occurred?

§ What things are mentioned by some persons and omitted by others as did occur or did not occur?

§ Are there issues you think are left out in writing or rewriting of that history?

§ How do you think issues left out or omitted match up statements about the causes of the event?

Having considered all these, the historian would go a step further to interrogate the sources of the writings in the text from which he sources the facts of the history. Thus, if the history in the text is presented as a collaborative discourse, the historian, as a duty, would have to compare the principles and stories told by the different participants knowing their different backgrounds, cultural and sentimental affiliations so as to present an authentic and reliable narrative of the facts of the history. Aside from these, the historiographer needs also to look at some private individuals' statements regarding that history. It is important that the historian understands that each statement made by individuals regarding the facts of a given event has a question associated with it that the historian has to answer or make a few notes about that could help in the historiographical auditing. The historiographer also needs to look at the subjective dimensions to the causalities of the history. That is to say: is there human bias in terms of individual or group economic interests in the making of such history? The historian also needs to know how and why particular actions, or ideas came to be, the outcomes of particular actions, that is, the effects and consequences of known actions, things that altered or remained the same over a period of time, and the relative impact or importance of different people, idea that geared up in the historical process or narratives of such events. Considered in this manner, the historian now understands that his work in the narrative of historical events goes beyond the conception of the facts of the event. There is always the possibility of new facts or evidences supporting or challenging existing facts for purpose of collaboration.

## Why Semiotics of History?

One problem among historians is the issue of trust. Brook Williams noted that historians, by discipline and disposition, moreover, tend to take unkindly to theory in general, especially any theory that fails duly to weigh and consider the mode of reasoning they use in the practice of history.<sup>23</sup> Lending credence to William's observation, David Harlan decries this lack of faith towards theory by his fellow historians, thus:

Historians are a skeptical lot. They tend to feel that one should trust one's nose, like a hunting dog. They are afraid that if they once let themselves be distracted by theory they will spend their days wandering in a cognitive labyrinth from which they will find no way to depart.<sup>24</sup>

By this fundamental fear to theory arises the indifference historians hold to the discourses on such conceptual theories as deconstruction, hermeneutics, postmodernism and semiotics which they think hold no objective truths. However, as a critic of most fundamental phenomena that hold tenaciously to objectivism, reality has shown that there is nothing like objective truth. I will not in this study delve into the criticism and philosophical impasse underlying the subjectivity (idealist) and objectivity (realist)

arguments since they are now looked at as over-flogged issues. Williams sums up this closure when he posited that:

In traditional usage the terminology of “objectivity” as opposed to “subjectivity” fails in its explanatory power, simply because all human experience is an admixture of mind-independent relations and mind-dependent relations objectified within semiosis.<sup>25</sup>

This implies that there is no ultimate base in the truth to objective narrative to which the historian holds tenaciously to as constituting his basic approach to facts of historical discourses. This reality therefore calls for a shift in methodology and approach to historical research by the historian.

Because history deals with culture and human experiences, it deals with all of human nature in which all objects of human experience are evaluated, examined, interpreted, analyzed and read as codes replete in signs, and signs being semiotics and as such open to variegated interpretations, it becomes only reasonable that the historian turns to semiotics for rescue. The interface that exists in human nature, experience and culture has always presented itself as paradigm for historical narratives and authentication. Williams posits that:

This perspective situates human history within the semiotic inter-wave of relations between nature and culture. The resultant integral model of human experience is no longer predicted on language alone, however unique and important a place language holds within anthroposemiotics. Whereas the linguistic paradigm had compartmentalized culture and nature so as to treat intertextuality as a self-contained whole, the newer model situates human experience at the intersection of nature and culture.<sup>26</sup>

It therefore behooves on modern historians to understand that to give history an expanded outlook into the future, that the reading and writing of history and historical events must view history to precede subjectivity and, as well, supersede objectivity, and this must anchor on

The semiotic perspective” which “requires a terminology that overcomes at the outset the implied oppositions - so deeply embedded in historiographical discourse - of “objectivity” to “subjectivity” within experience... (that) is opened by the sign in a way that is proper to the greater simplicity of the newer paradigm.”<sup>27</sup>

Thus, relevant to the semiotics of history is the issue of sign in data collection and the analysis of history that presents historical facts as open ended accommodating a possible revision and inclusion of new facts wherein the fictive and the non-fictive interact upon one another in the historical transformation of either into the other in the forming of human opinion. Thus, moving away from the traditional approach to the narrative of history,

The semiotic approach considers the events of the past in the context of the history of culture, i.e., of the changing worldview. This approach involves the reconstruction of the system of representations that determine both the perception of certain events in a given society, as well as the reaction to these events, which is the

direct impulse of the historical process. In this case, the historian is interested in the cause-effect relationships at the level that is directly related to the event plan, directly and not indirectly. Thus, the historian tries to see the historical process through the eyes of its participants, deliberately distracting from the objectivist historiographical tradition retrospectively describing events from an external point of view.<sup>28</sup>

When one looks at the book, *There Was a Country*,<sup>29</sup> a historical personal account of Chinua Achebe's narrative of the Nigeria/Biafra war, one would see a narrative account of that war approached from a semiotic perspective by the writer. Achebe did not just give an account of that war considering only the three years that it lasted, he gave account of the factors that triggered it, what transpired within the three years, what happened thereafter, and why Nigeria has remained in its current state of developmental inertia. Achebe pointed at visible signs in the war to concretize the facts of his own version of the war and what it portends for the future of Nigeria and the African continent. Those semiotic signs include some of the technological inventions of the Biafran scientists and the many inroads they made in other science and technological areas. Though the text, as written by Achebe, has continued to generate heated argument both from those who see it as representing the realities of that war and those other Nigerians who think otherwise, the fact however remains that the semiotic artifacts of that war, as invented and manufactured by those Biafran scientists more than five decades ago, and still available for human reach and examination, have remained vitiating paradigms for those who have argued against Achebe's account of that war. What I am saying is that by Achebe's account, the intrinsic facts of that war have not changed; that is, that the Biafran scientists, by the necessities of that war, manufactured their own machine guns, bombs, rockets, pistols, weapons of mass destructions, built their own refineries, et cetera. These fundamental facts coupled with the many inroads the Igbo of Nigeria have continued to make in the areas of science and technology despite the harsh economic strangulations the successive Nigerian administrations have continued to place on the region since after the war lend credence to Achebe's positing that the Biafrans would have fared better in terms of technological development in particular and development of human happiness in general had the region been allowed to have its own sovereignty. Argued this way and supported, especially given the fact that the factors that led to that war are still in multiple feasibility within the Nigerian nation, people have since then aligned with Achebe in averring that Nigeria would fare better if all regions go their separate ways. Achebe achieved this feat in the text because, through a semiotic representative analysis of the events in the history of that war, he was able to explore the cause-effect of it directly to the people of Nigeria and the Biafrans - a negative effect that has no near solution. Such is the power of semiotics in the narrative of historical facts.

As a text therefore, Achebe's *There Was a Country*, just like any other text conceivable, is a **sign** that is open to an interminable examination, interpretation and analysis depending on the trajectory of the Nigerian socio-cultural and politico-

historical situation and the disposition of the analyzing historian. The book contains data from that war, and those data still exist today as semiotic emblems from the war such that one can physically access them in the museum. These are symbolic and concrete historical deposits of that war that constitutes realistic data source for the historian. Therefore, for the fact that the historian must continue to deal with facts and data, he has no option but confront semiotics.

## Conclusion

From all indication, it is very apt to conclude this study by positing that the idea of causative history can never be completely dialectical especially when under the narrative of one historian. There must be differences in the narrative as reported or written down by a couple of historians for the purpose of achieving some measure of objectivity. Thus, like journalists in a football match, the mob of historians who report same events of history from differing standpoints raise against reason the notion of objective facts as tenable approach to research in the discipline of history. This fact makes history not a closed entity but one always open to further examination, interrogation and revisioning. History deals with culture and human experiences that are replete with learnable signs. Signs or particular objects mean different things to different people. They may even mean different things to the same people depending on their psychological disposition or sentimental attachments at given times. But one thing remains, and which is, that the object of sign remains as it is, unchanging, but not subject to definite assigning of meaning. Therefore, the idea that history is put to a halt when written down in texts is a ruse. Itself being an open sign, a text being a semiotics makes the narrative of history in it only transitory couplings within the semiotic field of interpretive possibilities. 30. Therefore, facts of history in texts, as put down by any historian or group of historians, are not blocked at the end of written history, but rather are open to expansion as to accommodate the perspectives of future historians. Important to the historian, therefore, is that in writing or rewriting a historical account, appropriating the facts of such events from contributions from other historians as written down in texts automatically makes the historian engage in a semiotic activity. This is so because the lines of the texts or even the culture from which the historian draws his information requires and, as well, constitutes a notion of signs. Thus, the intertextualization of historical facts in the discipline of history can be, and are only, achieved through semiotic principles. Fundamentally, the historian, whether consciously or unconsciously engages in his evaluation of history by subjecting the sources of that history to semiotic manipulations. Since therefore the historian must deal with texts, he is unconditionally constrained to deal with semiotics.

For the Nigerian therefore, the current trend that requires an interdisciplinary approach to scholarship becomes the reason this chapter finds it imperative to call on our historians to find the use of semiotic approach in historical

studies as a noble endeavour geared towards the practical realization of the desire to reposition history as a discipline in contemporary scholarship. History cannot afford to remain aloof and passive in the desiring synergy currently making waves in modern scholarship in the interdisciplinary approach in the humanities. As the earlier semiotics of history is integrated in the curricula of the discipline the better for historians who have continued to seek a rationale for the inclusion of their own perspectives in the narrative processes of history such that with the emergence of new facts of a given history, such historians can have a strong foundation to base their argument as possessing the freedom as historians capable of integrating their own perspectives in the changing paradigms of the nature of historical reconstruction. To this end, it will do to advise historians to jettison the idea of seeing history only from the perspective of a phenomenal event but one capable of generating meaning and shaping human opinion both in the present and, as well, in the future. As is obvious in the narrative of Achebe in *There Was a Country*, historical events should be seen as “event-messages,” for it is their meaningfulness that allows the imposition of semiotic analysis. Viewed this way, this will make the historian not just a passive receptor and narrator of history, but an active critic and writer participating in the recreation of history through the ever-expanding facts in the semiotics of historical reconstruction.

## Endnotes

1. Juri, Lotman, Semiotics and the Historical Sciences. In Goranzo, BO; Florin, Magnus (eds.)
2. Shank, Gary, Psychology and the Semiotic Horizon. In. *Semiotics 1990* Karen, John and Terry. (New York: University Press), 1993.
3. Juri, Lotman and Uspensky, Boris. On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture. (Mihaychuk, Georgia: Trans.) *New Literary History* 9(2), 1978 (1971)
4. Juri, Lotman. Atomic Versus Holistic Semiology: *Signs System Studies* 30 (2), pp.513-527, 2002
5. Juri, Lotman and Uspensky, Boris. *The Semiotics of Russian Culture*. Shukman, Ann, Ann Arbor (eds.), Department of Slave Languages and Literatures, (Michigan: University Press), 1984.
6. Ann, Dobie. *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism*. (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning), 2012.
7. Ann, Dobie. *Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism*. (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning), 2012.
8. Pierce, Charles Sanders. “Unidentified Fragments.” in *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Charles Hartsborne and Paul Weiss (eds) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1931, pp. 2.228.
9. DLeo, Jeffrey. The Intertextualization of Theory in Foucault. In *Semiotics 1990*. Koren, John, and Terry (eds.), (New York: University Press), 1993.

10. DLeo, Jeffrey. The Intertextualization of Theory in Foucault. In *Semiotics 1990*. Koren, John, and Terry (eds.), (New York:University Press), 1993.
11. Pierce, Charles Sanders. "Unidentified Fragments." in *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Charles Hartsborne and Paul Weiss (eds) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press), 1931, 2.228.
12. Ann, Dobie, Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism. (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning), 2012.
13. 13. Brook, Williams. "Thomas A Seobok: On Semiotics of History." In *Semiotics Continues to Astonish Us*. John, Kull, Kaleri and Susan. (eds.) (Boston: Walter Dr Critter), 2011
14. alphahistory.com/what-is-histr
15. Ann, Dobie. Theory into Practice: An Introduction to Literary Criticism. (Wadsworth: Cengage Learning), 2012.
16. DLeo, Jeffrey, The Intertextualization of Theory in Foucault. In *Semiotics 1990*. Koren, John, and Terry (eds.), (New York:University Press), 1993.
17. Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University), 1976
18. Emeka, Nwabueze. Visions and Revisions. (Enugu: ABIC Books), 2011.
19. Anthony, Ebiriukwu, Seniority in Igbo Culture: An Existentialist Reading of Ogonna Agu's Cry of a Maiden, In *Metaphors and Climax*
20. Brook, Williams, Reposing the Objectivity Question, In *Semiotics 1990*. Karen, John and Terry, (eds). (New York. University), 1993.
21. David, Harlem, Intellectual History and the Return of Literature, In *American Historical Review* 93 (3), 1989.
22. Brook, Williams, Reposing the Objectivity Question, In *Semiotics 1990*. Karen, John and Terry, (eds). (New York. University), 1993.
23. Brook, Williams, Reposing the Objectivity Question, In *Semiotics 1990*. Karen, John and Terry, (eds). (New York: University), 1993.
24. Brook, Williams, Reposing the Objectivity Question, In *Semiotics 1990*. Karen, John and Terry, (eds). (New York. University), 1993.
25. Achebe, Chinua, There Was A Country: A Personal History of Biafra. (London: Penguin Press), 2012.
26. Eco, Umberto. *A Theory of Semiotics*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press), 1976.





11

## CHAPTER 5

## PHILOSOPHY IN HISTORIOGRAPHY: IMPLICATIONS FROM HEGEL'S THREE PERSPECTIVES

Donald Uchenna Omenukor, PhD

### Introduction

It was Evans (2001) who defined history as the discipline which examines and analyses a sequence of past events, using a narrative, with a view to objectively determining the patterns of cause and effect that determine the events. History could simply be defined as a documentation of the past. However, when one considers the Greek root of the term which translates to the *historia*, meaning “inquiry or knowledge acquired by investigation.” It becomes clearer that history is much more than a mere documentation of the past. Scholars have argued that historians sometimes Debate the nature of history and its usefulness by discussing the study of the discipline as an end in itself and as a way of providing “perspectives” on the problems of the present (Evans, 2001; Tosh, 2006; Stearns, 2000; and Nash, 2000).

When history is defined as inquiry or knowledge acquired through investigation, it shows how deep-rooted the discipline is and how closely related it is to the discipline of philosophy. Philosophy could be defined as the discipline which investigates the highest causes of all things as long as they are knowable by reason. Omenukor (2019b, p.565) states that all of man's effort in the quest for knowledge has remained an attempt to understand himself, his environment and his world better. Thus, all of what man had done in the quest for knowledge is philosophy. The crucial connection between philosophy and history is highlighted in the fact of both disciplines being concerned with investigating in order to reveal knowledge. Here, scholars have also been interested in how history has been investigated, documented and reported. This gave birth to the discipline of historiography.

Historiography could be seen from a number of different but related perspectives. However, it could simply be said to refer to how history has been produced. It can also be said to refer to what has been produced, that is, a specific body of historical writing. From a third perspective, it could also be said to mean why history is produced. In this sense, it is the philosophy of history. It is a meta-level analysis of the descriptions of the past. In this view and the others, historiography is fully embedded with philosophy as it focuses on an interrogation of the narratives, interpretations, worldview, and use of evidence or methods of the presentation of other historians. Several subject matters have provided different topics for historians, hence the sources, techniques and theoretical approaches have changed and shifted from time to time.

For Herodotus of Halicarnassus (484-425 BCE), who is widely regarded as the “father of history,” who attempted to distinguish between more or less reliable accounts by personally conducting researches through travelling extensively, the focus was on the actions and characters of men, with an important role attributed to divinities in the determination of historical events. Thucydides, to a large extent, eliminated divine causality in his account of the war between Athens and Sparta and introduced a

rationalistic element which was a precedent in subsequent Western historical writings. In the modern times, the German idealist, G.W. F. Hegel introduced three perspectives or modes from which history can be done, namely – original history, reflective history and philosophical history. This chapter is an attempt to show that drawing from Hegel's modes, it is easy to decipher that there is philosophy in historiography.

#### Philosophy as a Concept, Discipline and Method

Philosophy means different things to different people. To some it is dry, abstract and removed from the real; to others, it is mythical and mystical. To others still, it is a pseudo science, maybe an aspect of the occult. However, it has been argued that everyone is a philosopher one way or the other, oftentimes without knowing it. This is the Case when philosophy as a concept is defined from its etymological background as drawing from the Greek root – *philos* - *Sophia* – meaning love of wisdom.

Considering that in most traditional societies, wisdom is associated with the elderly, that is, associated with experience, then everybody in applying thoughtfulness in dealing with everyday life could be said to be a philosopher. However, philosophy is much more than a simple concept such as “love of wisdom” and also more than experience. Philosophy is a discipline. It is a discipline committed to investigating the highest cause of all things as long as they are knowable by reason. In this sense, philosophy is not simply a science, but probably, the mother of all sciences. Philosophy as a discipline is not just interested in causes and effects, but in the deepest causes; it is not just concerned with aspects of reality as the specific sciences are, it is concerned with all of reality. Onyeocha (2001, p.6) sees philosophy as a discipline which makes distinctions about reality, subdividing it, contrasting and distinguishing what is true from what is false about it.

Philosophy is much more than the experience that comes from practical wisdom. If philosophy is the love of wisdom, it is the love of wisdom that comes from the knowledge of principles. That is, it is not just the love of practical wisdom, but mainly the love of theoretical or philosophical wisdom; wisdom which is possible only with proper knowledge and the power of analysis. This wisdom is not innate in the one who possesses, neither does it come automatically. It is the wisdom that is carefully cultivated, gradually perfecting itself when one cultivates the habit of dedication to detail, depth and to getting to the very root of things (Omenukor, 2011, p.11).

Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems, such as those connected with existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, language, identity, among others. Philosophy by its nature is a discipline that can only be defined by itself. It is a discipline which interrogates anything and everything such that any understanding expressed on any of its problems represent a philosophical position. This may be why Tillich (1970: p.245) opined that philosophy is defined by itself because there is nothing beyond it to which any further reference can be made. Thus, there could be said to be no correct or incorrect response to a philosophical problem.

Philosophy as a method is one which is more interested in the process rather than in the conclusion or result. Philosophy in its method insists on beginning any and every interrogation from the beginning. In the philosophical methods, there is the rejection of any possibility of reference to anything outside of philosophy. Every attempt at resolving a philosophical problem must start from the scratch. Nothing is to be accepted without scrutiny and in this way, one is able to reach what Edmund Husserl called apodictic certainty – that is, clear, distinct and unprejudiced knowledge including history and its writing.

What is Historiography?

History is the study of the past as is documented. The description of history as studied in written documents is important here because there are other disciplines that study the past using other means, for instance archaeology. The term history is a generic one. The term could be said to relate to past events including the meaning, discovery, collection, organisation, presentation and interpretation of information about these events; it can also be said to refer to the academic discipline, which uses a narrative to examine and analyze a sequence of past events; and objectively determine the patterns of cause and effect that determine them (Evans, 2001). The writing of history is historiography.

The development of historical writing has witnessed transformations over the centuries. At one point, history was written based on religious events and crusades, at other times, military escapades have provided the landmarks. Yet at other times, the activities of iconic individuals or major political events have been emphasized. Several epochs have witnessed one anchor of historical narratives or the other. This concern about how history is documented gave birth to the discipline of historiography. Historiography is the study of the methods of historians in documenting a particular historical subject or in the methods used by historians in developing history as an academic discipline (Omenukor, 2019c).

According to the Online Encyclopedia Britannica, historiography is the writing of history, especially the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particular details from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those details into a narrative that stands the test of critical examination. Furay and Salevouris, (1988) state that historiography was more recently defined as "the study of the way history has been and is written – the history of historical writing." The term historiography also refers to the theory and history of historical writing. The Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia states that Beginning in the nineteenth century, with the ascent of academic history, there developed a body of historiographic literature. Ferro (2003) adds that the extent to which historians are influenced by their own groups and loyalties – such as to their nation state – is a debated question.

Omenukor (2019c) maintains that historians have always sought to reconstruct a record of human activities and to achieve a more profound understanding of them. This perspective of doing history is quite recent, dating from the development in the late 18th

and early 19th centuries of “scientific” history and the simultaneous rise of history as an academic profession. It springs from an outlook that is very new in human experience: the assumption that the study of history is a natural, inevitable human activity. Before the late 18th century, historiography did not stand at the centre of any civilization. History was almost never an important part of regular education, and it never claimed to provide an interpretation of human life as a whole. This larger ambition was more appropriate to religion, philosophy, and perhaps poetry and other imaginative literature.

The subjects of emphasis in the writing of history have changed from time to time. In this long development, there have been shifts away from traditional diplomatic, economic, and political history towards newer approaches like social and cultural studies. All human cultures tell stories about the past. These stories are composed in the myths which served as the original source of information and knowledge. Deeds of ancestors, heroes, gods, or animals sacred to particular peoples were chanted and memorized long before there was any writing with which to record them. The truth of these stories was authenticated by the very fact of their continued repetition. History, that is, an account of events and ways of thinking and feeling in some part of the human past, that is considered to be true, developed from this archetypal human narrative activity.

Omenukor (2019c) opines further that the different epochs and the different societies have had their own way of telling their stories. These ways of telling these stories have also changed tremendously from the earliest times. The Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia states that the earliest known systematic historical thought emerged in ancient Greece, a development which would be an important influence on the writing of history elsewhere around the Mediterranean region. Greek historians greatly contributed to the development of historical methodology. Myres agrees that the earliest known critical historical works were *The Histories*, composed by Herodotus of Halicarnassus (484 - 425 BCE) who became known as the “father of history” (1953).

Herodotus in his approach, attempted to distinguish between more and less reliable accounts, and personally conducted research by travelling extensively, giving written accounts of various Mediterranean cultures, Thucydides, a little later, largely eliminated divine causality in his account of the war between Athens and Sparta, establishing a rationalistic element which set a precedent for subsequent Western historical writings. Although Herodotus' overall emphasis lay on the actions and characters of men, he also attributed an important role to divinity in the determination of historical events. Thucydides was also the first to distinguish between cause and immediate origins of an event.

Today, a lot of historians have emerged with their own style and approach and historiography has become a more sophisticated discipline. G. W. F. Hegel, in series of lectures delivered at the University of Berlin, identified three different perspectives from which historians have and can do their work - original history, reflective history and philosophical history.

### Hegel's Three Perspectives

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was a German philosopher and an important figure of German idealism who attempted to show that history follows the dictates of reason. Hegel identified three methods or modes of doing history, namely – original history, reflective history and philosophical history. Original history represents almost contemporaneous writings on deeds, events and states or societies which these writers witnessed and shared. Reflective history on the other hand, is history written at some distance in time from the events or historical issues considered. And philosophical history which is the mode of history in which the historian has to bracket off his or her preconceptions in order to the ideas of the historical subject (Hegel, 1975, Lectures).

Original history, just like that done by Herodotus and Thucydides, represents almost contemporaneous writings on deeds, events and states or societies which these writers witnessed and shared. Reflective history on the other hand, is history written at some distance in time from the events or historical issues considered. This mode of doing history, as the name goes demands some form of recollection and reflection. According to Hegel, this form of history has a tendency to impose on the past, the cultural prejudices of the present. Then, there is philosophical history, which for Hegel is the true history (Lectures, 1975). This is the mode of history in which the historian has to bracket off his or her preconceptions and prejudices and move to discover the overall sense and the driving ideas out of the very matter of history under consideration. To be an original historian is to write on historical issues contemporaneous nature. That is, historical events and issues which happen during the historian's era and in cultures which he or she shared. Writing about historical events that happen during one's life demands a level of objectivity. The historian is required to a large extent, bracket off his or her emotions, presuppositions and prejudices so as to do justice to the issue for historical reasons.

Russell (1992, p.40) writes that a number of problems of great complexity arise from the impact of new techniques upon a society whose organisation and habits of thought are adapted to an older system. Russell in the same piece avers that every increase of skill demands, if it is to produce an increase and not a diminution of human happiness, a correlative increase in wisdom. Reflective history is that history that is written at some temporal distance from the events or historical issues considered. Hegel (1975) had observed that this form of history has a tendency to impose the cultural prejudices and ideas of the historian's era upon the past history over which the historian reflects.

### Conclusion

Historiography, to a large extent embodies philosophy. The philosophy of history is that branch of study that seeks to establish the eventual significance, if any, of human history. History is the study of man in time and space. Thus, history is a fundamental aspect of human existence, because it greatly contributes to man's effort in understanding who he is, who he was and who he expects to be. According to Lamberg-Karlovsky and Sabloff (1970), Herodotus regarded history as being the product of the

choices and actions of human beings and looked at cause and effect, rather than as the result of divine intervention. These are philosophical approaches.

From one perspective, historiography could be said to refer to why history is produced. This is the philosophy of history. As a meta-level analysis of descriptions of the past, historiography, in this sense, focuses on the analysis of the narratives, interpretations, worldviews, use of evidence, or method of presentation of other historians. Historiography has been more recently defined by Furay and Salevouris (1988) as "The study of the way history has been and is written – the history of historical writings." This means that, "When you study historiography, you do not study the events of the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the works of individual historians."

The ways and manners of documenting history have changed greatly and continue to change. This change is spurred by influences dating back to the ancient times. This change is such that the study and writing of modern history is now more wide-ranging, including such elements as the study of specific peoples, regions, events or other thematic elements of historical investigation. Another major dimension of this change is to see the writing of history from three different modes as articulated by G. W. F. Hegel. These modes are the original, reflective and philosophical histories. For Hegel, philosophical history is the true way, because, in this approach, the historian must put aside his personal presuppositions and preconceptions in order to find the overall sense and driving ideas of the historical issue under study (Lectures, 100).

#### References

Evans, Richard J. Professor "The Two Faces of E.H. Carr". History in Focus, Issue 2: What is History? University of London. Retrieved 10 November 2008.

Ferro, M. The Use and Abuse of History: Or How the Past Is Taught to Children London: Routledge. 2003.

Furay, C. and Salevouris, M. J. The methods and Skills of History: A Practical Guide Arlington Heights, Ill: Harlan Davidson Incorporated. 1988.

Hegel, G. W. F. Lectures on the Philosophy of World History New York: Cambridge University Press. 1975.

Lamber-Karlovsky, C. S and Sabloff, J. A. Ancient Civilizations: The Near east and Mesoamerica. New York: Benjamin Cummings Publishing. 1979.

Myres, John L. Herodotus, Father of History Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1953.

Onyeocha, I. M., (2001). Introphil: A First Encounter with Philosophy (2nd edn) Washington: DC: The Council for Research in Values in Philosophy.

Omenukor, D. U. (2011). A Brief Run-Down of Philosophy and Logic. Owerri: ApplauseB Press.

Omenukor, D. U. (2019a). "Philosophy as Critique of Language in Wittgenstein and the Spoken Word in Igbo Worldview: A Philosophical Rapprochement" In: Crisis and critique: Philosophical Analysis and Current Events. Contributions at the 42nd

International Wittgenstein Symposium. Siegetsleitner, A., et al (Eds), Kirchberg am Wechsel: Austrian Ludwig Wittgenstein Society. 2019. pp.191-193.

Omenukor, D. U. (2019b). "Philosophy as the Bedrock of the Society: Implications from Izu Marcel Onyeocha "In: Concrecence. A Book of Essays in Honour of Prof. Rev. Fr. Izu Marcel Onyeocha. Ekwuru, G. et al (Eds). Owerri: Imo State University press. 2019. pp565-575.

Omenukor, D. U. (2019c). "History for the Sake of History: Ukachukwu Damian Anyanwu's Impact on Historiography" Paper published in a Festschriftfor UD Anyanwu, vol. II. 2019.

Russell, Bertrand. Human Society in Ethics and Politics London: Routledge. 1992.

Tillich, Paul (1970). "The concept and Nature of Philosophy" In: Twentieth Century Theology in the Making Vol. II. Trans. R. A. Wilson.

Vann, R. T. "Historiography" Online Encyclopedia Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/historiography>. 1 May, 2018.

Wikipedia Online Encyclopedia, "Historiography"[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography#cite\\_note-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography#cite_note-1) 1 May, 2018.



12

## CHAPTER 6

## PHILOSOPHY AND THE POSTCOLONIAL AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

George Ogbonna Mbarah, PhD

### Introduction

This chapter examines the role of history and the historian in the interpretation and analysis of past events. History is the study of the past in all its forms. Philosophy of history examines the theoretical foundations of the practice, application, and social consequences of history and historiography".<sup>1</sup> Philosophy is the fountain of all reflections, no matter what language the human family speaks or the geo-political space inhabited by human beings, and it is from this that the other theoretical, practical and applied intellectual disciplines take their origins, ...<sup>2</sup> Philosophy, and for the sake of this chapter, is a systematic, critical, speculative, reflective, introspective, retrospective, conscious and intuitive(s) to explain experiences, events and issues confronted in the process of living. Since philosophy of history utilizes the best theories in the core areas of philosophy like metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics to address questions about the nature of the past and how we come to know it: whether the past proceeds in some objective principles, or how best to explain the events and objectives of the past with little prejudices.

This chapter interrogates the historiography of the postcolonial African historian with the view to identifying the seemingly existing gap in the objectivity of the colonial and postcolonial African historians.

### Eurocentrism at the Expense of those of Other Cultures

Eurocentrism is the practice, conscious or otherwise of placing emphasis on European (and, generally, Western) concerns, culture and values. Eurocentrism often involved claiming cultures that were not white or European as being such, or denying their existence at all. Here are some examples of Eurocentric views.

First of all, world history taught in European and American schools frequently teaches only the history of Europe and the United States in detail, with only a brief mention of events in Asia, Africa. The African pre-colonization period is usually not mentioned in the timeline until colonization by Europeans.

Secondly, the history of science and technology is often taught as having begun with the Greeks, then moving on with the Romans, then stopping during the Dark Ages, before continuing with the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution. Less mention is made in European and American schools of the various achievements of Ancient Egypt, Moorish or other Muslim thinkers"<sup>3</sup>.

Again, and most importantly is that the European and Western account of African history which is considered as being objective, do not acknowledge major contributions of pre-colonial and even, postcolonial African socio-political values. The situation of Eurocentrism has propelled historians of African origin to embark on historical reflection aimed at reconstructing its own history in the postcolonial period.

### Distortion of Historical Reality

Assumptions of European superiority arose during the period of European imperialism, which started slowly in the 16th century, accelerated in the 17th and 18th centuries and reached its zenith in the 19th century. After discussing some aspects of colonial structural constructs which had painful effects on the colonized peoples as seen by some post-colonial critics, I will touch upon the need of recovery of the colonized peoples. Such aspects of painful effects and experiences are largely treated from different perspectives by a range of intellectuals such as Fanon, Achebe, and Ekwuru. Both spoke about a distortion of reality made by the colonizing culture, a culture that used its military dominance accompanied by cultural knowledge to exert its hegemony over the colonized peoples.

Historical reality has been distorted to the benefit of the colonizing powers ever since imperialism existed. People who were colonized seem to be struggling with reality about who they are and of what identity they belonged. The natives were painted in a negative way by the settlers and their place was from the outset the target of the colonial grabbers. According to Fanon, this is why the native's dreams are of action and oppression. What he cannot do during the day he dreams of doing at night. These dreams start then to burst out in various forms. First of all, the native reacts violently against his fellow beings: The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor. The impulse to take the settler's place implies a tonicity to muscles the whole time. This muscular tension leads to bloodthirsty explosions of different forms-tribal wars, religious feuds, terrorist attacks, and fights between individuals"<sup>4</sup>. Similarly, Ekwuru, says that, the British colonial conquest took the Igbo by surprise, which was why, more than any other tribe in Nigeria, it destroyed the Igbo traditional socio-political set-up, and left the Igbo culture in a moribund state"<sup>5</sup>. Colonialism melted serious dehumanizing experience on the colonized, such that the colonized ways of life were forcefully replaced with western "civilization". According to Ekwuru, thus, being primarily motivated by a certain economic philosophy of progress, the West, with her new revolutionary discoveries in science and technology was poised for a notable aggressive territorial expansion. This was directed against the rear-guard of the so-called primitive societies"<sup>6</sup>. He further says, obviously, their primary intention was to conquer, dominate and exploit every bit of the available human and material resources of the technologically underdeveloped societies for the benefit of the so-called "developed" or civilized" nations. Thus, armed with this basic utilitarian philosophy of imperial domination, in their time and age the western world launched a world-wide search for territorial acquisition"<sup>7</sup>.

Here, we may differentiate two types of colonial dominance-a violent colonialism that dealt effectively with the physical conquest of territories and which took place chronologically, and a more insidious one, a cultural colonialism pioneered by rationalists, modernists and liberals who occupied the minds, selves and cultures of the colonizes"<sup>8</sup>. The former type of colonialism is supported by the amalgamation and the conquest of the Southern and Northern protectorates in Nigeria that has kept the

Nigerian political, social, and religious spheres in a commatic situation. No matter how good and praiseworthy we may consider the 1914 amalgamation by the colonial masters, the exercise has rested on a monistic vision, where all differences of race, value, culture, culture, religion and gender that have been eclipsed into one entity that has given undue advantaged to a particular ethnic people. The lesson here is that no vision of social order is absolute. The argument presented here is that ethical values, cultural practices and vision of the world are never to be imposed on any people by leadership even when they have the capacity to do so. The amalgamation of the different ethnic communities by the colonial people, to favor a particular ethnicity, has the Nigeria State underdeveloped and her authentic history and identity distorted.

The point here is that, the African writer, without doubts, better placed than anyone else, to discuss African issues from direct, lived experience, and to present African viewpoints authoritatively, comprehensively, and with the greatest understands. The African writer has it largely in his or her power to demonstrate the higher possibilities and capabilities of his or her people. Obviously, the African will not be properly known until he or she portrays himself or herself to the world. In his book *Black Priest: White, Church* Lawrence Lucas laments the fact that until fairly recently, the black man's understanding of himself was basically an echo of the white man's portrayal of him"<sup>9</sup>.

The later part of colonial conquest can be described as the rationalist or modernists approaches in occupying and enslave of the minds of the colonized. Colonialism, like any form of imperial political system, imposed and sustained itself largely through the propagation of false ideologies, which asserted the superiority of the colonizer and the inferiority of the colonized. This process was meant to foreground the falsehood of the colonial exploitative ideology under a justifiable framework of benevolent paternalism. For this to work according to their design and vision, says Ekwuru, the masters first of all applied the ideology of condemnation as a prelude to the process of disassemblage."<sup>10</sup>

The waging of colonial invasion and conquest and the consequent programme of forced acculturation needed an adequate ideological framework of moral justification. This was exactly what the colonialists achieved through the ideology of condemnation. There was that need to show that the traditional people in their utter state of primitivity needed the help of the "civil nations"<sup>11</sup> in order to develop. In this regard, a concerted campaign was mounted by the colonizing nations to justify the crass immorality of colonialism. Accordingly, in order to bolster the condemnation of the traditional man and his cultural features, the white man and the Western culture were projected as the standards for every cultural civilization. Anything therefore outside this ideal form of cultural development was calumnised as an extant form of primitivity. According to Ekwuru, from this perspective, the white man, identified as belonging to the Caucasian race, was represented as the possessor of a "high" and "superior" culture, while the black man, identified with the Negroid race, was represented as the victim of a "low" and "inferior" culture which has kept the virile human nature in a perpetual prison of deformity"<sup>12</sup>. The point is that every colonial ideology was framed with a dominant

racial overtone, which would always associate everything “good” to be white and anything bad” to be black. The idea is that since most Africans are dark in complexion, dark hair, and since black colour connotes not transparent, they seem to describe the natural make-up of an African personality from a superficial and condemnable perspective.

In effect, the mind of the traditional man was said to be characterized by a “dead” and “blank” uniformity, and his cultural features were said to be “invariable” and “expressionless”. Speaking about this colonial destructive condemnation for cultural dominion, Davidson cites the case of Dean Farrar, one of the British colonial officers, who depicted the traditional African condition as worse than any possible imagination of a primitive people without a culture. According to him:

Dean Farrar was quite sure that he understood what manner of creatures these Africans were. Their features, he was able to report in 1865, were invariable and expressionless, their minds characterized by a dead and blank uniformity ... not promulgated a single thought, not established a single institution ... not hit upon a single invention. Generation hands on no torch to generation, left to themselves, they were beyond salvation<sup>13</sup>.

Obviously, being the product of a different cultural civilization, the colonial masters had a different view of a cultural pattern of development and civilization, and naturally, their indictment of the traditional man and their cultural features would follow from this perspective. In this way, they posited their own Western culture as the ideal standard of cultural civilization. Thus, screening the traditional culture side by side with that of the West, they took the simplicity of the traditional African (Igbo) culture (s) as a clear sign of cultural inferiority.

Viewed critically, however, traditional African literature/philosophy could be seen as an attempt by African indigenes to show the differences between pre-colonial African identity and understanding of reality and post colonial African personality. According to George Ekwuru, “the post-colonial Igbo has been characterized by a lot of debilitating conditions that impede progress and development”<sup>14</sup>. It is a known historical fact that no nation colonized has ever had its colonial experience funny. Most African writers and scholars would agree to this fact. This is because what was introduced during the period of colony would drastically contradict what was on board. Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Arrowof God are clear evidence on the negative effects of a colonized nation.

What is very conspicuous in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is the confusion of values created between Okonkwo, Ikemefula, and the Western missionaries. What Achebe narrated was an experience that supposedly started the beginning of a turn-around point in the beliefs and understanding of the Igbo, which was also same in most African states where colonization took place. In fact, right from the first day of colonial invasion and conquest up to the present day, the history and contents of an African literature/philosophy wore the Western interpretations. This has affected every aspect of the traditional African man. For instance, the traditional African religion allows

parents to give to their children names that capture and describes their understanding of reality. Today, because of Western religion, naming of children do not depict reality if it has no Christian or western background. According to Abiola Irele, "to judge the language of Wole Soyinka or J.P. Clark in their plays without regard for the tradition of speech behind them, is to miss an original dimension of their work".<sup>15</sup>

While African literature discusses in critical terms the character of experience about how Africans understood, behaved, interpreted, and communicated to each other about what reality is, African philosophy moves to consistently interrogate these views in the bid of deciphering which ideas, identities, and beliefs are true of Africa.

At this point, there are critical questions that require answers. First and most importantly is, whether there is need for cultural comparison: And if there is, who has the parameter of measuring which is developmental, superior, and friendly with nature? Again, who has the capacity for assumptions about the authenticity of an African (Igbo, Yoruba, Asante) culture and who, objectively is a better position to tell and evaluate their story?

The challenge of the post-colonial African historian

The most fundamental feature of the pre-colonial African communities was the respect for human values and socio-cultural order which was sustained by the spirit of communalism and love for one another. An important consequence of this socio-political structure was a gradual growth in economy and tolerance among brothers and sisters, merchants, and those charged with the leadership of various clans.

However, the problem surrounding the true and authentic nature of the traditional African settings is not that of fashioning an authentic narration of who Africans are before colonialism, rather, the problem is that of the extent to which African scholars (historians) have been able to put their intellects in the service of the aspirations and struggles of African peoples. According to Ahumibe, "... that in the sense of philosophy being a guiding principle or thought or world-view, (the philosophy) of the African, European, Indian etc, and by this mean the different ways these peoples look at life, man, religion, their conception of man and his world"<sup>16</sup>. In other words, world-views change with peoples and environments, so the world-view of the Indian may be different from that of the Americans, and so on. It is unphilosophic to look down on a peoples' world-view because of ideological differences. According to Ahumibe,

every knowledge –claim we make in philosophy is the therefore speculative, so is disputable, and can only be arrived at through argument. Thus an argument is an essential part of philosophical activity. It is a major part of the task of the philosopher that he/she should be able to argue rationally. ... rationally because there are a number of other things an argument could be: emotional, persuasive, intimidating, eloquent, and so on, without being rational. And surely a number of people use these devices to bring an argument to their favour<sup>17</sup>.

Our argument is that the traditional African personality and values were forcefully acculturated with the European culture and by the European colonialists. Here, Ekwuru

says, the colonial programme of condemnation and disassemblage was designed to be followed concurrently by the process of reassemblage. Invariably, in the unified structure of forced acculturation, the process of reassemblage was nothing but the re-constitution of the Igbo cultural world in accordance with the colonial vision and design”<sup>18</sup>. Thus, the pattern of condemnation and divestment of cultural features prepared the European colonists for the reconstruction and imposition of their cultural values over the colonized. According to Elochukwu,

the colonial and missionary ideology had as their ultimate aim the changing of the identity of the “colonized” and “evangelized”. In those situations, where nationalistic and evangelical interests were consciously merged, the deep-seated exploitative colonial program along with the then European prejudice against Africans failed to be lucidly examined by the missionaries. Consequently, the African was treated as having neither culture nor religion nor social, economic, or political values worth preserving. The change of the identity of the African person meant, in practice, the abandonment of the indigenous culture, values, and religion in order to embrace those of the West<sup>19</sup>.

For instance, in pre-colonial Igbo socio-political arrangements, the famous adage of Igbo *enwe eze* expresses the Igbo spirit of republicanism. The Igbo dislike any form of cultural or political absolutism that could strangle the Igbo sense of freedom, since it would equally impede their spirit of self-achievement and self-actualization as well. In this regard, Ekwuru says,

it is clear that within the traditional Igbo cultural structure, the clan or the village group represented the centre of the universe. Everything outside the circle village or clan universe was shadowy and lacked an authentic existence. This formed the axial cosmological horizon within which the Igbo traditional world focused and operated. Consequently, the traditional Igbo socio-political, economic, religious and moral expressions were limited within the radius of this village or clan units. However, with the events of colonialism, the socio-cultural boundaries were gradually opened up. People were forced by the structure of colonial administration to overstep the bounds of their village or clan socio-political units. The emergent colonial political units, which gave the Igbo a partial expression of the sense of pan-Igboism, have not yet received a true spirit of acceptance<sup>20</sup>.

The quality and texture of the traditional Igbo socio-political structure can be likened with the idea of the Minial State as defined by Robert Nozick. An objective analysis of the texture of the relationship existed in traditional Igbo societies would agree with the fact that since colonial encounter, Things have fallen apart. The Minial State, according to Nozick,” is a state of justice, legal, distributive, communicative and above all vindictive justice: a form of government that is morally justifiable because it is a state that would not violate any one’s natural rights of life, liberty, and property”<sup>21</sup>. These features of the minial sate were the characteristics of the traditional Igbo republican form of government. However, what is found among the post-colonial Igbo people is a superficial and lukewarm relationship. The present sense of pan-Igboism still

pictures the atomized clan and village sovereign entities estranged from each other, but tied together by one language and common geographical area. This is why the new political thread of unity is characterized by the posture of conflict and opposition, triggered by selfish interests and desires. The same was the effect of the Yoruba culture and some other cultures where colonialism took place. With regard to the Yoruba experience with colonialism, Ayoade says, "the Yoruba in Dahomey were referred to by European writers variously as anago, Nago, Inago or Nagot while those of Togo were called Anan. ... the Yoruba-speakers in Dahomey or Togo never called themselves Anago or Anan respectively"<sup>22</sup>.

Just like other nations of the world, such as Brazil, India, Pakistan, and South Korea that underwent the same inhuman experience of colonial conquest and cultural destruction, but which today, through a healthy process of acculturation, are counted among the nations whose names have entered into the world economic record of the 20th century as possessing notably flourishing economics with a rapid rate of scientific and technological development, in a similar way, with one mind and one vision, certainly, the Igbo, like every other nation that experienced colonialism, can evolve a healthy process of acculturation with a steady progress.

However, one may ask, how and what do we need to get to this economic level where the Igbo nation and Nigeria at large belong? How do we reactivate and reinvigorate back into our world (Igbo culture) those values that saw the pre-colonial Igbo nation successful?

The most important thing to do is to return and reinvigorate our pre-colonial values. Values such as sincere love for one another, respect for natural ordinances and individual's right to live. Over and above all, is the promotion of Nigerian languages (Igbo language in perspective) above English language? The modern Igbo must therefore take stock of the great changes that have taken place in their cultural life since the colonial regime, and must equally recognize the fact that the sole solution to the enormous cultural problems created by these changes can only be corrected through mutual dialogue of synthesis rather than extreme acts of mutual exclusions. From this perspective of Kwame Nkrumah, as quoted by Ekwuru,

it is clear that any futile attempt to recapture the past is no longer there would be as stupid and unrealistic as that of trying to photocopy every aspect of the Western culture. It is now a fact that both the evils and blessings that came with the colonial conquest and subjugation of the Igbo are historical facts that cannot be denied<sup>23</sup>

Another important value and considerations we ought to make is to include and teach history of pre-colonial Nigeria (Igbo) to primary pupils, and secondary students. This is necessary because values are inculcated into peoples' ways of life, and so that the idea of the Igbo personality of today of total self-centered and individualistic spirit would not overshadow the Igbo pre-colonial personality of reciprocity, mutual love for one another, respect to elders and natural ordinances, and the spirit of communalism. According to Chinweizu,



we need to bear in mind that the authentic versions of the things that make us Igbo are to be found in pre-British, pre-19th century Igbo culture. We can't have a Renaissance of Ndigbo without utilizing the still valuable and potent traits of that authentic, pre-British-incursion Igbo culture, and without adapting and grafting onto that cultural tree trunk other cultural traits-some imported and some to be invented-that will give Igbo society the strength and resilience to survive in the world of the 21st century<sup>24</sup>.

### Conclusion

We need to start our journey of re-telling our story of Alaigbo by adhering to the principle of hard-work and reciprocity. In order to become relevant to the modern world, we must revisit our past to re-enact the valuable things that we left behind. That is, the revival of cultural wisdom and continuity. Our emphases should focus on the authentic characteristics of the true Igbo culture and history. With regard to teaching authentic history about Alaigbo, Omokri says, why does Nigeria still allow that colonial historical lie that Mungo Park discovered the source of the River Niger to be taught in schools? How can Nigeria continue to brainwash her own children with a colonial lie".<sup>25</sup> For him, therefore, the saying and teaching that Mungo Park discovered the source of River Niger is a historical lie and the continuous teaching of such knowledge in schools is a deliberate attempt to re-colonize our ideology.

However, both literary critics, philosophers of history, and historians have recognized cross-culturality as the possible ending point of an apparent endless human history of conquest and occupations. They recognize that the myth of purity or essence; the Eurocentric viewpoint must be challenged. They advocate for cultural syncretization that is, medium of negotiating cultural antagonisms, has to be created. Cultural difference has to be acknowledged. Culture does imply difference, but the differences now are no longer taronomical, they are interactive and refractive. Rorty's idea of Contingency supports our hope that reality has its root from people's understanding, usage of language, and which constitutes their perception of reality. The essence of contingency theory is that best practices depend on the contingencies of the situation. Contingency theory is often called the "it all depends" theory, because when you ask a contingency theorist for an answer, the typical response is that it all depends. The term Contingency of language is considered conditional since its meaning is dependent on the context applied.

Rorty insists that this view of his new philosophy is expected to show central elements in the vocabulary and remove the inconsistency in their own terms. And be ready or take up the willingness to face up to the contingency of the language one use. According to him,

I have no criterion of individuation for distinct language or vocabularies to offer, but I am not sure that we need one. Philosophers have used phrases like in the language 'L' for a long time without worrying much about how one can tell where one natural language ends and another begins, nor about when the scientific vocabulary of the

sixteenth century ends and the vocabulary of the new science begins. Roughly, a break of this sort occurs when we start using “translation” rather “explanation” in talking about geographical or chronological differences. This will happen whenever we find it handy to start mentioning words rather using them to highlight the difference between two sets of human practices by putting quotation marks around elements of those practices<sup>26</sup>.

We have advocated for cultural synthesis, that is, borrowing and sharing cultural values. To demonstrate how beyond fixed cultural values are, cultures should enable other positions to emerge. For instance, Ndigbo will remain at a severe disadvantage as they engage in the game of life without also bringing into play their communal brain-their intelligentsia. They have to give their intelligentsia their rightful place and support in Igbo society. This is a vital cultural value we need to learn from the Jews: The Jews in business or politics know that they could support their intelligentsia- from the beginning, and they have continued to do so by supporting their best minds that do their collective thinking. They have a system of identifying the brightest minds among their young people, growing and sponsoring their educational pursuit and enabling them to contribute to their development in all aspects of life. According to Gandhi, if you want to plan for a year, sow a seed, if you want to plan for a decade, plant a tree, if you want to plan for the future, develop the minds of citizens. Ndigbo, should as a matter of urgency imbibe this kind of cultural value where the future of our younger brothers and sisters are systematically guaranteed.

#### Endnotes

1. <https://www.iep.utm.edu.hit>
2. John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji (2016) African Philosophy and the Quest for Social Order in Africa, in, Ethics, Governance and Social Order in Africa. Essays in Honour of Godwin S. Sogolo (Eds) Olatunji Oyeshile& Francis Offor. Ibadan: Zenith BookHouse Ltd, p. 252
3. See, From Eurocentrism to Hibridity or From Singularity to Plurality, by Titus Pop of Partium Christian University, Oradea, Romania
4. Fanon Frantz (1967) Black Skin, White masks. New York: Grove, p, 22
5. George Ekwuru (1999) The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail (Uwa ndigbo Yaghara Ayagha) Owerri: Totan Publishers Limited, p, 14.
6. George Ekwuru. The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail, 12.
7. George Ekwuru. The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail, 12
8. See, From Eurocentrism to Hibridity or From Singularity To Plurality, by Titus Pop of Partium Christian University, Oradea, Romania
9. Lawrence Lucas (1970) Black Priest, White Church. New York: Random House, p,13
10. George Ekwuru. The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail, 32
11. George Ekwuru. The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail, 32
12. George Ekwuru. The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail, 34

13. Davidson Basil (1969) *The African Genius: An Introduction to Social and Cultural History*. Boston: An Atlantica Monthly Press Book, p,45
14. George Ekwuru. *The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail*, 34
15. Dipo Irele (1993) *The violated Universe: Fanon and Gandhi on Violence*. University of Ibadan: P, 11
16. Chukwuma Ahumibe (2015) *Talking About Philosophy*. Nigeria:” Kwikpros Resources Nig. Limited, p,19-20
17. Chukwuma Ahumibe *Talking About Philosophy*, 20.
18. George Ekwuru. *The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail*, 41-42
19. Uzochukwu Elochukwu (1996) *A Listening Church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*. New York: Orbis Books, p, 4
20. George Ekwuru. *The Pangs of an African Culture in Travail*, 137-138.
21. Robert Nozick
22. John Ayotunde Isola Bewaji. *African Philosophy and the Quest for Social Order in Africa*, in, *Ethics, Governance and Social Order in Africa. Essays in Honour of Godwin S. Sogolo*, p, 252
23. Nkrumah Kwame (1981) *The Struggle Continues*. London: Panaf Books, p, 82.
24. Chinewizu Chinewizu (2015) *Ikenga Run Amok- Towards a Diagnosis and Healing of the Ndigbo Crisi*, in, *Igbo Nation: History & Challenges of Rebirth and Development*. Vol One (Eds) Uzodinma Nwala, Nath Aniekwu, & Chinyere Ohiri-Aniche. Ibadan: Kraft Books Limited, p,47
25. //Tableshaker.Free Leahsharibu
26. Richard Rorty (1989) *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. Cambrigde: Cambridge University Press, p, 117



13

## CHAPTER 7

## THE INTER-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO AFRICAN HISTORY IN NIGERIA

E. J. Alagoa, PhD

### Introduction

The inter-disciplinary approach was one of the first orthodoxies established in the course of creating African history into an academic discipline. Indeed, it became so easily accepted as a truism that historians have rarely stopped to examine its implications, much less, to attempt to practice it. Rather, it was the practitioners of other disciplines in Africa, who have sometimes used it as a plea for their entry into African history. The first decade of the introduction of African history as an academic discipline was followed by the organisation of seminars, symposia, and international conferences at which various scholarly bodies sought to lay down rules of method and a theoretical framework for the practice of African history.<sup>1</sup> These meetings proved an ideal forum for the claims of various disciplines to a place in African historiography. The professional historians were at a relative disadvantage in these discussions since it was so easy to demonstrate the limitations of the archival approach in African history. The position improved only slightly after Vansina placed oral tradition on the agenda as a valid source for the academic historian. Eventually, however, oral tradition itself became a vehicle for the practice of the inter-disciplinary method, since its collection entails the use of field techniques thought to be characteristic of anthropology and sociology, rather than of history, and its interpretation requires cultural and linguistic insights not normally required of the historian. Further, some scholars continued to regard the conclusions and information derived from oral tradition as invalid, at best suspect, unless confirmed by the findings of some other source or discipline.

In Nigeria, the curtain was raised for the academic study of local history by the publication of the books by Kenneth O. Dike (*Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885*, Oxford, 1956) and Saburi O. Biobaku (*The Egba and their Neighbours, 1842-1872*, Oxford, 1957). And in the very first number of the *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, two research projects based on ideas of inter-disciplinary study directed by Dike and Biobaku were announced.<sup>3</sup> Thus, the pioneers of Nigerian academic history were believers in the inter-disciplinary approach. Indeed, the announcement for the Benin Scheme considered it "a new departure," a new technique of historical research, and described its operation as follows: "the principle underlying it is that scholars working on all possibly connected lines of research should actually work together in the field, in continual close contact with each other throughout the period of their research."<sup>4</sup> In spite of the more ambitious and comprehensive tone of the Benin announcement, the list of actual participating disciplines was of the same order in both projects: anthropology, archaeology, art history, history. The announcement for the Benin project mentioned linguistics as one of the "necessary disciplines" for the historian of Africa, but no linguist was included in the team of experts actually engaged.

The results of these first efforts at inter-disciplinary research do not appear to have fulfilled the high hopes placed in them. Some of the individual participants, expatriates

in most cases, have carried away the data collected, to be published on their own in separate unco-ordinated publications. In the Benin study, the historian would appear to have concentrated his efforts almost exclusively on archival sources in foreign lands, while the anthropologist paid some attention to oral tradition) and also carried out the normal cultural studies required by his discipline. 5The archaeological contribution, and especially the art historical contribution, are also now available in substantive publications.6But even so, it is clear that none of the projects achieved proper interaction between the various disciplines involved in research over the same area beyond, perhaps, occasional correspondence between individual participants, or Information from their journal articles. There is no evidence that participants ever came together for sessions of formal discussion and exchange of notes; or worked together in field research.

The Yoruba Historical Scheme has now published the "first in a three-volume series" constituting a report of the results achieved.7The list of subjects and disciplines covered by this first report is impressive, but there is no evidence that the authors formed a co-ordinated group of researchers, or that some of them were ever members of the scheme at any time. In fact, each contribution is an independent study, and there is little evidence of inter-disciplinary cross-fertilisation.

#### The Historian and Inter-Disciplinary Research

From the example of the Benin and Yoruba projects, we may consider three possible ways in which the historian can derive benefit from the insights of several disciplines in the study of African history. First, the historian could act as effective director of a project in which he assigns definite historical objectives to the participants. That is, each participant is required, in such a project, to seek answers to clearly formulated historical questions, in the light of, and by the methods of his own discipline. It is necessary for the directing historian to formulate questions to which each discipline contributes its part to a composite solution, since each discipline, left to its own researches, would propose different kinds of research questions and produce results that may not necessarily serve the purposes of historical interpretation or reconstruction. We must assume that the directors of the Benin and Yoruba projects formulated historical problems for the participants to solve. In the first report of the Yoruba project, the question posed to each contributor seems to have been: "In what ways can or has, your discipline, contribute or contributed, to the reconstruction or interpretation of Yoruba history?" Each contribution does make an effort to answer the question. What we do not have is a meeting of minds between the contributors, or any bringing together of the various contributions, or reconciliation of divergent interpretations. In addition, the contributions suggest that the question was not posed to the contributors at the beginning of a research programme but presented to experts in various disciplines to be considered as an academic problem. Accordingly, the report does not represent the results of research in various fields constituting the definitive solutions to be expected from the particular disciplines to a set of problems.

Similarly, the separate publications of the Benin study do not bear the marks of work produced, as the proposal had suggested, by men of different disciplines, "actually working together in the field." Such close collaboration in the field had obviously proved impossible to achieve in practice, and each member had clearly gone his own way and worked at his own pace purely within the canons of his own discipline. The Benin study has, indeed, been unable to attempt a joint publication of problems or results.

The second situation is one in which the historian is not director of a team, but merely one of several experts in various fields working in the same area or on the same problem. That is, each member studies the problem in as comprehensive a manner as his discipline and knowledge can take him, hoping thereby to contribute something of value to the overall understanding or solution of the problem. Thus the historian would need to study the independent work of the experts in other disciplines in order to obtain the answers to his historical questions. His own work would be similarly available to the other experts to be used or not as they wish. This second alternative is what all inter-disciplinary schemes of research in Nigeria have turned out to be in practice, although the majority of them have been presented initially as centrally directed and co-ordinated to solve prescribed problems.

The third way may be named the single-skull approach to inter-disciplinary research. By this approach, the historian himself is supposed to acquire enough expertise in the methods and principles of these other disciplines considered essential to be able to utilise them in his research. That is, the various disciplines represented in the research programme are not constituted by individual persons but are incorporated in the head of a single scholar. We must admit that the number of scholars so ideally equipped to be able to perform as specialist in several disciplines at the same time is very small indeed. The more practical situation would be a combination of the second and third alternatives. That is, that the historian works in a team with experts in other disciplines, or utilises the work of experts in other disciplines, through acquiring sufficient knowledge of those disciplines to be able to study and understand their technical publications. The historian then, is not required to be an expert in those other disciplines he believes relevant to his work but must learn enough of them to be able to hold a dialogue with them and to utilise the results of their work.

A number of advantages to historical scholarship may be expected from historians training in other disciplines. First, they would lose their suspicion of practitioners of those disciplines, and in other cases, cease to think of those disciplines as possessing answers to all their problems. Such training then, would enable historians to acquire a realistic understanding of the possibilities and limitations of other disciplines, and of the services they may be expected to render to history. Second, such training would give historians a broader view of their work, so that they may no longer leave any problem that may arise in the course of their research to be solved by scholars in other disciplines exclusively. Thus, historians of Africa no longer need to leave the detailed study of oral tradition and cultural history to the anthropologists, of language and oral literature to



the linguists, or of prehistory exclusively to the archaeologists. To take an example from the most technical of these disciplines, the African historian should be able to work in partnership with the archaeologists in many ways: in locating ancient settlement sites and in reconnaissance, in the cultural analysis of artifacts recovered from excavations, and in the final historical analysis and evaluation of the excavations and excavation reports.

#### History of the Niger Delta - multi-disciplinary contributions:

Here we may briefly note the contributions made by various schools in Niger Delta studies, and the light their various disciplines have shed on the problems of Niger Delta history.

First in the field was the historian, Dike, in his well-known *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta, 1830-1885*. It was essentially a study of the activities of European traders in parts of the Nigerian coast in the nineteenth century and the effect of those activities on local communities. The interpretation of the external documents related to the external relations of the delta states was masterly, but Dike's attempts to interpret internal history and developments did not prove so successful since a deep enough study could not yet be made of the internal oral traditional data. We may consider only two problems of internal history treated by Dike. First, his reconstruction of the settlement history of the Niger Delta. According to Dike, the Niger Delta was, "practically uninhabited by the tribes of the Nigerian interior before the Portuguese adventure to the Guinea coasts began."<sup>8</sup> And that the tribes of the hinterland "flocked to the coast to do trade" with the Portuguese. That is, that "the rise of Lagos, Accra, Dahomey, and the Delta states must be attributed to the development of maritime commerce." Dike suggested three waves of migration into the Delta. The earliest wave, "that of the Ijos, appears to have preceded the Portuguese advent." But the second and most important wave came, "between 1450 and 1800, and gradually converted the little Ijaw fishing villages into the city-states." Dike postulated this second wave of migration as involving all the hinterland tribes, but dominated by the Igbo, "being numerically superior." This second wave of migration "followed the development of the slave trade." Accordingly, the third wave of migrants into the delta consisted of the slaves incorporated into the Delta city-states as a result of the slave trade.

It may be stated simply that these reconstructions of the early history of the delta have been revised by recent studies based on the detailed comparative analysis of oral traditions,<sup>9</sup> combined with the insights of other disciplines. It would seem, in fact, that the communities of the Delta were fully established before the Portuguese advent, and also that they had already established internal trade routes and structures, upon which the overseas trade of the European visitors was engrafted.

Dike also attempted to interpret the causes of political upheavals in the Delta in the nineteenth century. He saw these problems as slave revolts or revolutions in which "the domestic slaves won their freedom entirely by their own struggles in which their power of combination was their strongest weapon."<sup>10A</sup> reconsideration of the problems of

internal political struggles in the Delta states on purely historical analysis of the evidence suggests contrary conclusions<sup>11</sup> but this subject, as well as that of the development of the institutions of the Delta states are ones on which sociologists and anthropologists have also made contributions.

#### The Contribution of Sociology and Anthropology

G. I. Jones, Lecturer in Social Anthropology at Cambridge, England, and a former colonial administrative officer made the first sociological analysis of the institutions of the Eastern Delta state in *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers*. The study is historical in nature but concentrates on the structure and development of political institutions. It deals with developments in the nineteenth century previously covered by Dike's study, as well as the eighteenth and the seventeenth centuries; and makes feeble attempts at reconstructions of earlier times. The focus is on internal historical development, but since the period covered was one of intensive overseas trade, and since greater reliance was placed on external documentary sources, the study tended to give primacy to external factors for change over the internal. Thus, Jones identified as "the principal disturbing factors of the political system, the sudden access of wealth provided by the overseas trade, the recognition by the European traders of their village heads as kings and the association of this office of king with the control and distribution of very large trading dues."<sup>13</sup>

Jones explained the nineteenth century political disturbances in the states of the Eastern Nigeria Delta on the basis of his classification of their structures as conforming to types of political system which "pass through successive stages of accretion, segmentation, and fission."<sup>14</sup> Thus, the principal socio-political institution of these states, the House (wan), developed by growth, and then segmentation, each new segment still retaining its political affiliations with the original principal segment. Jones noted that this tendency to grow by division existed also at the level of the central leadership so that a binary structure resulted on every occasion. Accordingly, he discounted the interpretation of slave motivation for the nineteenth century struggles but explained them as a manifestation of the general structural characteristics of the political system. Those of the Delta States which had achieved a balance in the process of binary fission before the nineteenth century, such as Nembe and Okrika, saw no major upheavals; but in Bonny and Elem Kalabari where a balance had not been reached, major cleavages occurred in the nineteenth century.

We may note that in this particular case, the sociological explanation agrees with the historical facts. A slave rising was not a feasible phenomenon in the political system of the Eastern Delta states since it was a central canon of the House organisation, of these states to integrate recruits completely and effectively into the system.

Another social anthropologist, Robin Horton, attempted to provide answers to questions concerning the origin of the peculiar institutions of the Delta states. The questions he posed were the following: (i) "What kind of a community was New Calabar before it embarked upon the Atlantic trade? and (ii) Why did New Calabar make the

particular response it did to the challenge of this trade?" Horton was addressing himself to questions raised by the work of Dike and Jones, and still working within the framework of the impact on the Delta states of the Atlantic trade. He, however, attempted to go beyond Jones by postulating a structure of the Delta communities prior to the Atlantic trade. He also postulated a structure different from the segmentary system of the Igbo and Efik-Ibibio which Jones had ascribed to the Delta communities as well. Horton was thus able to account for the difference between the responses of the Delta states and of the Efik state of Calabar to the similar challenge of the Atlantic trade.

Robin Horton chose the typical Eastern Delta fishing village of Soku as the model of a community containing the baseline institutions of the seventeenth to nineteenth century city-state of the Delta. Accordingly, he was able to demonstrate how, under the stimulus of the overseas trade, these fishing village institutions could have been transformed and developed into those of the Eastern Delta states, using those of Elem Kalabari or New Calabar as a model.

An effort has been made to interpret these contributions on a large historical perspective.<sup>16</sup>In this work of synthesis and reinterpretation; the fishing village of Robin Horton was accepted as a proper model of the baseline structure from which the city-states institutions developed. But the farming-fishing village of the fresh water ecological zone of the Central Delta was postulated the model of the structures from which those of the fishing village of the salt water Eastern Delta were derived. The extension of the time perspective into the past effectively brought into the discussion internal developments and factors completely outside the sphere of the Atlantic trade and of European activity. It was found necessary to consider the significance of oral traditions which derive the founders of the states from homes in the Central Delta: and, accordingly, the possible consequences of moving from the freshwater delta to the salt water delta. One possible consequence was the necessity to trade to the hinterland and other parts of the Delta for agricultural produce impossible to grow in sufficient quantity in the Eastern Delta environment. These considerations seemed to provide sufficient ground for the conclusion that there was prior long distance trade within the Delta and to the hinterland before the arrival of the Portuguese and the beginning of the Atlantic trade, and that profound changes in political and social structures were in progress before these external influences set in.

#### The Contribution of Linguistics

Most of the contribution in this field has been made by Professor Kay Williamson.<sup>17</sup>She has touched on several subjects of interest to the historian in her published work, and has, in addition, compiled a great deal of material on reconstructions of proto-Ijo to be published in due course.

Perhaps the most important single area in which Kay's linguistic work in the Delta has provided guidance is that of a tentative chronological perspective on origins, migrations and ethnic relationships. The linguistic evidence greatly extends our time perspective into the matter of Ijo migration and occupation of the Niger Delta. Glotto-

chronological determinations give a separation period of five thousand years of Ijo from the neighbouring language communities of Igbo, Edo, and Yoruba, an estimate that correlates with the observation that Ijo is not closely related to any other language" in the immediate geographical region. Similar glotto-chronological calculations in respect of the dialects of Ijo suggest that the first movements from the Central to the Eastern Niger Delta leading to the formation of the Eastern Delta states may have occurred up to a thousand years ago.<sup>19</sup>

Kay's classification of the languages of the Niger Delta has also assisted in the study of the traditions of origin, migrations, and inter relations of peoples. For example, the identification of Engenni, and Epie-Atissa of the North-eastern Delta as Delta Edo languages confirmed some previously uncertain traditions of their relationship with the Benin kingdom. Similarly, the classification of Ogbia, Abua, and Ogoni as belonging to the Benue-Congo language family along with Ibibio and Efik, suggests that entry into the northern delta from an easterly direction. And finally, the fact of the separation between the Ijo of the Lower Delta and the Igbo of the hinterland by a belt of these Delta Edo and Benue-Congo speakers suggests that these groups came in from west and east into a relatively empty no-man's land between the Igbo and Ijo.

Within the Ijo area, the comparative study of the oral traditions has suggested a pattern of migration over the Delta from dispersal centres in the Central Delta. The first proto-Ijo reconstructions would seem to identify this area also as the focal point and heartland, contributing a big proportion of ancient forms.

The study of language then, has contributed so far mainly in the interpretation of traditions of prehistoric relationships between peoples, and in providing tentative time perspectives. Following the recent synthesis of the oral traditional evidence and the indications of the linguistic patterns, it has become necessary to seek additional information from archaeology.

#### The Contribution of Archaeology

The archaeological survey planned under the general Rivers Research Scheme is conceived as a practical co-operative project by a number of scholars in different disciplines. The scheme has been conceived by a historian and planned to cover places indicated by the oral traditions collected and analysed by the historian. And the historian has been able so far, to take part in the excavations along with the archaeologists, and to study the finds and to attempt to interpret them. There has been a palynologist actively involved in the work as well, and it has been possible to keep in very close touch and even to try to make publications available for mutual discussion and comments. The first preliminary accounts of the first test excavations were, in fact, published together in the same journal, and a First Interim Report has been issued.<sup>22</sup>

Only five excavations have been done so far at Onyoma, Ke, Ogoloma, Saikiripagu, and Okochiri, the first two being only test excavations. But the finds have provided material for preliminary re-interpretations of the history of the Eastern Niger Delta. The most important gain so far must be the first radiocarbon dates from charcoal, giving

a range of AD 1330-1755 for Onyoma, and AD 715-1555 for Ke. 23 These dates give us a better basis than we have had up to now for discussions on the chronology of settlement in the Niger Delta. The thousand-year estimate from linguistic chronology for settlement in the Eastern Delta seems to be corroborated by the dates for Ke. The Onyoma dates fall short of a thousand years, but clearly refute the suggestion that settlement in this part of the Delta had resulted from the onset of the Atlantic slave trade.

Further excavations planned for the Central Delta, as well as the Eastern Delta and its fringes; should supply dates giving a broader view of the chronology of settlement and of contacts.

In the area of contacts and internal developments, we have recovered a wide range of artifacts whose proper analysis should yield historical information of great value. The material recovered varies from terracotta figurines<sup>24</sup> and pottery to bronzes, tuyeres and metal working equipment, clay smoking pipes, manillas and animal and fish shells and bones. At Onyoma, a very few items indeed resulting from possible European contact were found (such as two smoking pipes on the surfaces, and a blue bead associated with a burial dated 1545-1755). The manillas associated with the overseas trade were all found at Ogoloma and Ke, and all close to the surface; and accordingly, to be accounted a comparatively, recent phenomenon: <sup>25</sup>Ogoloma was spectacular for the large numbers of smoking pipes recovered, probably the largest yet from a single site in Nigeria.<sup>26</sup>

The five sites indicate affinities both in the physical conditions of the excavations and in the artifacts recovered. Onyoma and Ogoloma, especially, show obvious similarity in pottery types and in the smoking pipes. These similarities are meaningful in the light of special relationships related in the oral traditions at Ogoloma and Nembe.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, we must accept the validity of an inter- disciplinary approach to the study of African history. The problem is to keep within bounds our expectations of what the other disciplines can contribute, and to ensure that the historian does not abdicate his responsibilities.

That is, that the historian embarking on the inter- disciplinary path should possess expertise in one or several of these disciplines (the single-skull approach), or know enough of the methods and procedures of the other disciplines to be able to pose historical problems for solution and to interpret their results (the collaborative approach).

We can acknowledge the fact that some of these other disciplines pose questions in areas of human activity that most historians would not otherwise consider. The result of meeting the challenge of the models of the sociologists, the projections of the linguists, and the artifacts of the archaeologists, is to obtain a historical view and interpretation that is much richer and more sophisticated than would be expected from a study based solely on the insights of one discipline. We must acknowledge also that there are

questions that cannot yet be fully answered, even by the inter-disciplinary approach, but it is still important to raise such questions. Further, we still need to work out better ways of organising inter-disciplinary research and of co-coordinating the analysis and publication of the resulting data.

#### Endnotes

1. See History and Archaeology in Africa.' Report of a Conference held In July 1953 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1955; D. H. Jones (ed.), History and Archaeology in Africa: Second Conference held In July, 1957 at the S.O.A.S., R. A. Oliver and J. N. Faae (ed.), Third Conference on African History and Archaeology 1961, IAH Vol. III, No.2, 1962; J. C. Oabel and N. R. Bennet (eds.), Reconstructing African Cultural History, Boston 1967, paper presented at a Northwestern University Symposium of 1962; J. Vansina.. R. Mauny. L.V. Thomas (eds.), The Historian in Tropical Africa, London 1964, report of an international symposium at the University of Dakar, Senegal in 1961; J Dary U Forde, "Tropical African Studies: a report on the Conference organised by the International African Institute in conjunction with the University of Ibadan 5-11 April, 1964," Africa 36, No.1, 1965, 30-97; J. L. Brown and M. Crowder (eds.), The proceedings of the First International Congress in Africa, Accra, December 1962, London 1964; J. T. O. Ranaer (ed.), Emerging Themes on African History, Proceedings of the International Congress of African Historians, Dar-es- Salaam, October 1965, London, 1968.

2. Jan Vansina, Recording the Oral History of the Bakuba" JAHVol. 1 No. 1, 1960, 46-53; De 10 tradition orale, Annales du Musee Royal de VA/r/que Centrale, No. 36, Tournai, 1961; Oral tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology, translated by H.M. Wriah, Chicago, 1965.

3. S. O. Biobaku, The Yoruba Historical Research Scheme," JHSN, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1956, 59-60; H.F.C. Smith, The Benin Study," Northern History Research Project of the last decade directed by Professor Smith and Thurstan Shaw; and the Eastern Nigeria Historical Research Scheme aborted by the national crisis: the proposed Lagos Research Project and the current Rivers Research Scheme.

4. Smith, The Benin Study," p. 60. Emphasis on all in the original.

5. A.F.C. Ryder, Benin and the Europeans, 1485-1897, Ibadan History Series, Longman, 1969; J. R. E. Bradbury, Benin Studies, edited by Peter Morton-Williams, International African Institute, London, 1973. A collection of journal articles and papers, published posthumously.

6. A.J.H. Godwin (1) a contribution in History and Archaeology in Africa, School of Oriental and African Studies, London 1957, pp. 29-31; (2) Archaeology and Benin Architecture," JHSN, Vol. 1 No.2,1957,65-85. (3) "Walls, paving, water-paths and landmarks," Odu, vi, 1958,45-53; (4) "A bronze snake head and other recent finds in the old' palace at Benin," Man LX EH, 1963, 142-5 (published posthumously by I W. Fage). The later work of Graham Connah was apparently sponsored by the Federal Department of Antiquities, see G. Connah, •• Archaeology in Benin," JAH, XHI, 2, 1972,25-38; The archaeology of Benin. The only art historical work to be associated with the Benin

project is the work by Philip J.E. Dark, *An introduction to Benin Art and Technology*, OUP, 1973.

7. S. O. Biobaku (ed.), *Sources of Yoruba History*, Oxford, 1973. Chapters are contributed as follows: R.C.C. Law - (i) Contemporary Written Sources, (ii) Traditional History: W. Abimbola - The Literature of the Ifa Cult., Chief J. A. Ayorinde - Oriki, Chief I. O. Delano - Proverbs, Songs, and poems., O. Ogunba - Ceremonies., F. Willet - Archaeology., D. Williams. - Art in Metal, F. K. F. Carrol- Art in Wood., A. Adetugbo - The Yoruba Language in Yoruba History., P. C. Lloyd - Political and social Structure., R. S. Smith - Yoruba Warfare and Weapons.

8. K. O. Dike, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*, 1830- 1885, Oxford 1956, chapter 2, "The Delta and its people" especially pages 19-25.

9. E. J. Alagoa, "Ijo origins and migrations," *Nig. Mag.*, No. 91, 1966, 279-288, *Nig.Mag.*, No. 92, 1967, 47-55;"Long distance trade and states in the Niger Delta", *Journ. Afr. Hist.*, Vol. D, No.3, 1970, 319-329; *A History of the Niger Delta: an Historical interpretation of/yo oral tration*, Ibadan 1972.

10. Dike, *Trade and Politics*, chapter 8, "The slave revolts," p. 159.

11. E. J. Alagoa, "Nineteenth century revolutions in the states of the Eastern Niger Delta and Calabar," *Journ. Hist. Soc. Nig.*, Vol. 5, No.4, 1971, 565-573.

12. G. I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers: a study of Political development in Eastern Nigeria*, London, 1963. My references are mainly to chapter 12 pp. 188-205 "Structural Change," summing up the theoretical conclusions of the whole study.

13. Jones, *The Trading States*, pp. 204-205.

14. Jones, *The Trading States*, p. 204.

15. Robin Horton, "From fishing village to city-state; a social hlslnf New Calabar," in Mary Douglas and P. M. Kabarry, (eds.) *M(~ Africa*, London, 1969, pp. 37-58. Horton's "New Calabar" III 01 course, Elem Kalahari. He refers to the Efik state of Calabar as Old Calabar.

16. E. J. Alagoa, "Long distance trade and states in the Niger Delta," *Journ. Afr. HiSl.*, Vol. H, No.3, 1970, 319-329; "The development of institutions in the states of the Eastern Niger Delta," *Journ. Afri. Hist.*, Vol. 12, No.2, 1971, 269-278.

17. Her contributions include the following: Kay Williamson,

18. A grammar of the Kolokuma dialect of Tjo, CUP, 1965; (with E. Thomas), *Delta Edo Wordlists*. Ibadan 1967;"Languages of the Niger Delta," /liig. Mag., No. 97, 1968, 124-130; "History through linguistics," Ibadan, Nov. 1963, 10-11; "Some food plant names in the Niger Delta," *Int. Journ. Amer. Ling.*, Vo. 36, No.2, 1970, 156-167; "Ijo," in J. Berry and J. H. Greenberg, *Linguistics in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Mouton, 1971, pp. 245-306; "The Lower Niger Languages," *Oduma*, Vol. J, No. J, 1973, 32-35.

19. Williamson, 1971, 281.

20. Williamson, 1962, 3; E. J. Alagoa, "Dating Ijo Oral Tradition *Oduma* Vol. 3, No. I, 1976, pp. 19-22.

21. E. J. Alagoa, *A History of the Niger Delta*.

22. E. J. Alagoa, "Oral tradition and archaeology: the case of Onyoma", *Oduma*, Vol. I, No. 1, 1973, pp. 10-12., "Niger Delta archaeological survey" *Lagos Notes and Records*, "Archaeological Survey" in *Rivers Research Scheme: First Interim Report*, Ibadan, 1975, pp. 1-20.

23. *Oduma*, publication of the Rivers State Council for Arts and Culture, Vol. 1 No.1. 1973; Fred Anozie, "Archaeological research in the Rivers State", pp. 4-9; E. J. Alagoa, "Oral tradition and archaeology: the case of Onyoma," pp. 10-12; M. A. Sowunmi, "A preliminary palynological study in the Rivers State," pp. 13-14, *Rivers Research Scheme: First Interim Report*, Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, 1975.

24. Fred Anozie, "Onyoma and Ke: A preliminary report on archaeological excavations in the Niger Delta," *West African Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 6, 1976, pp. 89-99.

25. E. J. Alagoa, "Terracotta from the Niger Delta," *Black Orpheus*, Vol. 3, No. 2 & 3 1974/75, pp. 29-39.

26. E. J. Alagoa, "Ke: the history of an old delta community," *Oduma*, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1974, 4-10.

27. Fred Anozie, "Excavations in Ogoloma: a preliminary report," *Oduma* (forthcoming).



14

## CHAPTER 8

## INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH: AN AVENUE FOR CHOICE OF METHOD IN HISTORICAL STUDIES

Francis Fayam, PhD

### Introduction

History which is the subject matter of historiography has in the past been treated with the attitude of sanctity to avoid the discipline being adulterated by other disciplines. The old belief or thinking was that if adulteration was allowed, the discipline would lose its identity as an independent discipline; and it would become dependent and dumping ground for the theories and hypothesis of other related disciplines like the social sciences. However, modern developments in the intellectual world have proved the above old-fashioned way of thinking absolutely wrong. It is glaring today that there is a rapid shift towards seeking co-operation among related disciplines especially in the humanities and social science. Suffice it to say that conferences and research projects are packaged in such a way that scholars from different related disciplines contribute their various views on a given theme producing a comprehensive result which certainly history as a single discipline could not have been able to fathom. It is the objective of this chapter, to focus on the inter-relationship of history with other disciplines and highlighting the relevance of interdisciplinary approach to historical Studies.

Historical methods and methodology have changed and are responding to the influences of other related disciplines, simply put, the way history was taught, studied, and written in the past has

changed, Therefore, it is against this background that this chapter sets out to examine the relationship history as a discipline has with related disciplines. History by simple definition is the past records of events, movements, causes and inter-relations. It therefore requires some skills, concepts and tools of analysis from related disciplines to indeed make its research reports richer, more buoyant and comprehensive document that reflects

occurrences and events in a given society. History as a discipline is characterized by the different approaches of data collection for historical reconstruction which assist in corroborating, correcting and confirming existing data. <sup>1</sup>

This existing link between history and related disciplines has no doubt expanded the frontiers of knowledge. Thus, the interdisciplinary approach could be seen from two perspectives. One, there is a sense in which scholars from different but related disciplines could collaborate in a joint research effort.<sup>2</sup> The second sense in which one could talk of an interdisciplinary approach is when a historian uses the findings, insight, theories, postulations, hypothesis and other analytical tools generated by scholars from other disciplines to aid his own historical reconstruction and interpretation.<sup>3</sup>

### Significance of the Interdisciplinary Approach to History

It has become glaring, that for historians to seek collaboration with scholars of other related disciplines the importance and relevance of such approach cannot be over emphasized.

To build up frontiers of knowledge, there must be collaborative research between the history scholars and scholars of related disciplines, especially while writing on certain situations for example in African History. This approach becomes so significant especially in the area of collecting data, and sources, as a result of paucity of written sources on the early period of African history and has become imperative for the historians to rely on the contributions or other disciplines to research on the African past. The philosophy imbibed in the significance of this

approach is that no one single source can give a complete and clear picture of the African past. Therefore, for an articulated and in-depth knowledge, the historian must co-operate with other scholars of different but related discipline. The idea of African past in the early period of history would suggest that the scholars of history would seek for information from disciplines like Archaeology and Linguistics. These are disciplines encompassed in the popular history methodology called Oral Tradition as postulated by Vansina et, al.<sup>4</sup>

The interdisciplinary approach in historical studies has come to be appreciated in the area of interpretation and analysis of data. O. E Uya in his lectures on “Elements of Historical thinking” stated clearly that Analysis and Interpretation are very important tools of the historian and equally the life blood of history.<sup>5</sup> These are evidence of a history scholar with the expected historian skills among others, such of skill of inquiry, accommodation, inclusiveness, inquisitiveness (i.e investigative mind) and others. Therefore, the above two tools (skills) mentioned are vital part of the historian work (craft). Any historian who only stopped at the point of collation of data, his final product would not be history rather can only be counted as a chronicle of some sort. Many, historians today have discovered that some analytical tools, theories, concepts and hypothesis used by social scientists could also be used in their own analysis. The use made by historians of these theories, concepts and hypothesis according to Okon Edet Uya is simply an acknowledgement that social sciences adorn their works with much theorizing, from which history can draw to embellish its works.<sup>6</sup> However, the students have to be discriminating about what they adopt from the social sciences because not all such theories are relevant to particular historical sceneries, and in any case; the social scientist themselves do not always agree on the validity of certain laws evident in the sharp ideological differences among social science practitioners.

#### Relationship of other Disciplines with History

It is note-worthy to state here that interdisciplinary approach definition involves the combination of two or more academic disciplines into one activity as exemplified by research projects. In the case of history, it draws knowledge from several other fields like sociology, archaeology, anthropology, economics etc. It is about creating something by thinking across boundaries. There is also the difference between multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary. Multidisciplinary involves people from different disciplines working together, each drawing on that disciplinary knowledge while interdisciplinary is the integrating knowledge of real synthesis of approaches.<sup>7</sup>

In considering the disciplines from which history has immensely benefited and stands to benefit, they can be classified into three categories namely: the humanities, the social sciences and some natural sciences. Although it does not mean that these disciplines do not benefit from history, it is a mutually beneficial relationship which will continue to generate a cross-fertilization of ideas among the disciplines.<sup>8</sup> After all, it should be remembered that history is the mother of all academic disciplines from where all have their history or origin.

#### The Humanities

In the humanities, there are those disciplines that study mankind and seek to understand his strange nature such disciplines are concerned with creating beauty, preservation of ideas and cultural values. The disciplines in this category include religion, philosophy, linguistics, and fine arts which consist of the visual arts, the performing arts and creative writing. The latter, simply called literature, here involves the production of original literary works such as novels, plays and poems.<sup>9</sup> However, time and space are constraints and may not allow for detail circum navigation

of the details of the relationship between each of this discipline and history, but will give summary of the dialogue between history and philosophy, linguistics, and literature before moving on to examine other categories of discipline.

#### History and Philosophy

History's relationship and relevance with philosophy lies the fact that it is the philosophers who attempted to give a global meaning to history. Only very few of them have introduced perspectives that have proved to be of great value to historians over the years. Karl Marx in his "Theory of Historical Materialism" opened the eyes of scholars to the predominance of economic forces in historical development. It is now quite obvious that several variants of Marx's ideas were developed after him. One of such is the dependency theory and together with Marxism, it has been very popular in the historiography of under development in Africa. However, African historians have not contributed much in the area of formulating

speculative philosophies of history.<sup>10</sup> According to A.E Afigbo our African historiography is deficient because it is predominantly combative in spirit which has diverted it from the need to seek clearly the central meaning for us today of the African experiences so far constructed.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile in the Western World, the leading light in the field of speculative philosophy of history include Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee and recently Francis Fukuyama,

#### History and Linguistics

The relevance of linguistic to history is that the study of language and their relationships is important means of learning about change and contact in the past. Several techniques research have yielded vital information which has been of tremendous value to history, one of such techniques is historical linguistics which studies language change in time and space with a view of establishing the degree of divergence between two stages of a language whether temporal or spatial, and

accounting for the evolution of the divergent stages.<sup>12</sup> Another technique is the study of loan words. This shows the relationship between the speaker of one language and another language from borrowed vocabulary items.<sup>13</sup> For example, Joseph Greenberg the renowned linguist has demonstrated in his linguistic analysis of Kanuri loan words in Hausa language that Hausa obtained several of their political titles from the Kanuri. This would indicate

that the Bornu Empire exercised some influence on the Hausa state in the past.<sup>14</sup> Suffice it to say, there are other several linguistic techniques such as language classification, study of proto-languages, lexicostatistics and Glotto-Chronology have yielded vital information to the historian in the area of Chronology and understanding early culture contact. The latest attempts of collaboration between linguists, historians, anthropologist and other specialist have produced works such as the “Multi-Disciplinary Approach to African History” edited by N.C Ejituwu. By the effort of these scholars, the problem of chronology in history has to some extent been resolved.<sup>15</sup>

#### History and Literature

To a professional historian, one of the questions that readily come to his mind is how does history relate to literature; what kind of collaboration could probably exist between a literary artist and a historian? Literature; is here taken to be different forms of creative writing such as novels; plays and poems, within the lot is situated the non-fiction genre whether novels (historical novels or plays which are set within a particular historical contexts). Some of these creative literature present imaginary characters and events as though they were real thus creating genuine ethical problems for the historian. Again, some of these works do contain stereotypical characters and project a sensationalized view of the past. In the words of David Powell “their historical judgments can be naive or factually dubious while a novel rarely contains the space for the kind of extended social, economic or political analysis which is so comforting to the academic historical mind.”<sup>16</sup>

There is a warm relationship between the historian and the creative writer. Whether he is writing an historical novel or a play, once the creative writer chooses his subject and the format to be used, he turns to history to get available information which is like a framework into which he feeds his mind/imagination. Some of the hardworking creative writers go beyond the published historical text. They dig up documents and records in archives, and there is the possibility of uncovering materials that have eluded the professional historians. However, the attention of these creative writers to detail in exploring the lives of individual men and women could be said to have set the pace where later practitioners of history have striven to follow.<sup>17</sup> Historical literature has stimulated the interest of the populace in the past by recreating its texture, mood and atmosphere and even in generating debate about historical events. There are some of the creative works that are reminiscent of the past such as the trials of Dedan Kimathi by Ngugi Wa Thiong “O” and the Micere Mugo Githae which dramatizes the travails of the leaders of the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya, and Wole Soyinka’s play depicting real events

that took place in Oyo in 1946, when chief Elesun was required by native traditions to die and accompany the departed Alafin to the great beyond, and Elechi Amadi in which the author brings us to the memory of the Nigerian civil war of 1967-1970.<sup>18</sup>

#### History and the Social Sciences

The social sciences are disciplines which deal with the human society. They proffer systematic explanations of the social world by showing the empirical and logical relations of social events<sup>19</sup>. They focus on our relationship with people in groups. They are basically different from history in the bodies of theories they present, their peculiar techniques and methodology. They include anthropology, economics, political science, sociology, psychology and geography. No doubt, historians have borrowed concepts defined by social scientists. Such concepts are social change, social mobility, elite theory, social control, the search for ethnic identity and other determinants of human behavior in social psychology. However, little has been said on what history has to offer the social sciences. According to Clause Ake, the social sciences cannot accomplish the task of providing systematic explanations of the most social world without operating within the framework of historical analysis <sup>20</sup>.

The social scientist is thus confined to comparing men at different points in time and stages of evolution. This is what made social science to become dependent on historical and developmental analysis. This mode of thinking, according to Ake must have made Marx to insist on "obliterating the distinction traditionally made between the social sciences and history.

However, many social scientists may not readily identify with history but the truth of the matter is that when they study man in the society, they are indirectly studying history. It is worthy of note to state here that history is the laboratory against which social science must test and consolidate its knowledge about the social world. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that by neglecting history social science promises itself no future<sup>21</sup>. This line of argument above if carried to a logical conclusion shows the centrality of history, not only to the social sciences, but also to other branches of knowledge. After all, there is no phenomenon or object that has not gotten a history<sup>22</sup>

It can be said with all certainty that there is mutual benefit that history and social science stand to get from one another. This mutual relationship between history and social anthropology is reflected in A.E Afigbo's use of oral tradition as a historical methodology in the reconstruction of the Benin society of the pre-colonial era. The emphasis of his study was based on the myths and legends which produced a fantastic result especially in showing the dynamic nature of oral tradition, how they accommodate changes in people's perceptions of political power and social relations and illustrating the efforts of the populace to ensure a balance of power between the ruler and the ruled.

Robin Horton, an Anthropologist made a survey and review of present knowledge on origins, expansions and migration among the eastern Ijo through a thorough study of traditions together with valuable information provided by linguistics and archeology<sup>23</sup>.

The social scientists have criticized and attacked historians on what they called the hegemonic perspective of history in which African historians see history from the point of view of the rulers, the administrators, the politicians, policy makers etc. This has been referred to as history from the top or bourgeois historiography. Marxist scholars kicked against this approach and pointed attention to the plight of the masses and the working class. It is the general view of the social scientist that in Africa Marxism has remained a general tool of analysis; history is yet to start from below. However, with the recent changes in information technology especially in the last century (i.e., 20th century) historians are being introduced to statistical method, the use of computers and other developments in quantitative analysis and in this way economic history has benefitted immensely from this development.<sup>24</sup>

#### History and the Natural Sciences

The interdisciplinary relation between history and natural science has not been one of direct collaboration. But those sciences have been randomly called upon to throw light and bring out issues that are beyond the competence of a professional historian. It is in this light, a few of the physical and biological sciences have been of a great assistance to the historians. For example, studies in Physical Geography and Geomorphology in the Lake "Chad Basin<sup>25</sup> has thrown more light on the history of its people. This is because the present distribution of peoples. Their post migrations, their agricultural and pastoral activity and so on, are all closely connected and conditioned by the environment. Paleobot culture was practiced on the side where the pollens were recovered and also gives other useful information on the vegetation. Such studies have helped us to trace the domestication of food plants in Africa. Physics has been applied to the study of history. The use of radioactive isotopes gives us a chronological gauge to the earliest days of homosapiens in the case of the use of carbon 14 method and to periods more than a million years ago in the case of potassium-argon method. Parasitologists also have a lot to offer the historians by way of studying disease patterns and making their findings on them available. This could be used in determining the demographic growth of the peoples concerned. All these show that a rich and varied mass of documentary material is to be obtained through the sources and techniques derived from the physical and biological sciences.

#### Implication of Interdisciplinary Approach for Historians

The interdisciplinary approach in historical studies has some implications for historians. It is an approach that opens a world of new ideas, evidence and many opportunities, but is yet to be fully tapped. Historians are said to be more receptive to ideas from other disciplines and they readily collaborate with their colleagues across disciplinary borders. Such cooperation has yielded an abundance of knowledge well beyond the competence of a single discipline. Many academic conferences these days have multidisciplinary bias, the goal being a cross fertilization

of ideas.

This approach opens a wider platform for both historians and scholars or various persuasions to have a joint or engage in a project that will honour a retiring colleague or to mark the birthday of a discipline. Other scholars whose works have any bearing on the area of specialization of the colleague are invited to be part of the project. Thus, for example, Toyin Falola's *African Historiography*<sup>26</sup> which is a collection of essays in honour of Prof. Ade-Ajayi J.F has contributions from J.D Peel a professor of Anthropology and Sociology as well as from other notable historians. Again, the multi-disciplinary approach to African History<sup>27</sup> earlier mentioned is a collection of essays in honour of E.J Alagoa has contributions from M.G Anderson a professor of Art and Design, P.E Leis a professor of Anthropology, C.S Nwodo, a professor of philosophy as well as from distinguished historians. Such collaborations have provided a forum for the rapport between historians and scholars from other disciplines.

### Conclusion

It is known fact that history now is being pulled towards the social sciences more than the natural sciences but has continued to remain in the departments under the faculty of humanities and art. It is suggested that the discipline should move all out in rapport with the social sciences by shifting their base in terms of faculty affiliation. Finally, the rapport of history with other disciplines has opened up new vistas of knowledge as well as expanded the frontiers of research not only in the Arts and Humanities but also in the Social Sciences. It is a rapport that is mutually beneficial to all the parties concerned.

### Endnotes

1. J. Ki-zerbo (ed.) UNESCO: General History of Africa, Carlifornia: Heineman, 1981, page 48

2. Chambers Encyclopedia (London, 1967) Vol. 11 page 667

3. Boubou Hama and J. Ki-Zerbo "The Place of History in African Society" in UNESCO, General History of Africa Vol. 1 methodology and African pre-history. Carlifornia, Heinemann Press Ltd. 1981, Page43

4. Jan Vansina, Oral Traditions: "A study in Historical Study in Historical methodology" (Chicago Press Ltd) Page 1

5. OE Uya, "Elements of Historical Thinking" in lectures series delivered at Department of History and International Studies, University of Calabar, Calabar 1994

6. Okon Edet Uya, African History: Some problems in methodology and perspectives" (Cornell University. African studies and Research Center) 2004, pages 16-23

7. Kenneth O. Dike and J.F Ajayi, African Historiography in DL Shills (Ed) International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences. Vol. 6 (Macmillan, 1968), Page 394

8. E.J. Alagoa, "The Interdisciplinary Approach to African History in Nigeria Presence Africaine 94 1975p.175

9. NC Ejituwu (Ed) Multidisciplinary Approach to African History (Port Harcourt, University of Port Harcourt, 1988, pp. 195 - 255



10. Walter Rodney *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: Bogle – L.O-uverture Publications, 1972
11. A. E. Afigbo, *The Poverty of African, Historiography*, (Afrografika Press. 1976), page 110
12. J.A Ballard, “Historical Inferences from Linguistic Geography of the Middle Belt of Nigeria” in *Africa* Vol. 41, Pp294-305
13. Ballard, *Ibid*, page 287
14. Ballard *Ibid*, page 292
15. Ejituwu, *Ibid*, page 195-255
16. David Powell, “The Historical Novel: History as Fiction and Fiction as History” in *the Historian*, No 43 Autumn, 1994. P15
17. Ngugi Wa Thiong ‘O’ and Micese Mugu Githae, *The Trials of Dedan Kimathi*
18. N.C Ejituwu *Ibid*, page p195-255
19. Claude Ake. “History As the Future of Social Science in Tarikh-al-sudan
20. *Ibid*, page 20. Vol. 9, 1991 page 19.
21. *Ibid*, page 21
22. *Ibid* page 21-22
23. A.E. Afigbo, *The Poverty of Historiography*, pp.13-15
24. O.O. Olubomehin (ed.) *Issues in Historiography*, Ibadan, College Press, 2001, pp 21-22
25. *Ibid*, page 22
26. *Ibid* page 23
27. *Ibid*, page 23-24



15

## CHAPTER 9

## GUIDELINES FOR EMBARKING ON A RESEARCH WORK: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

M.A. Chigbo, PhD

### Introduction

This is an attempt to examine some of the methods/approaches in embarking on a research work. Research designs could be historical, exploratory or survey design. We are here concerned with historical design. To some extent historical research makes use of scientific method. For instance, in scientific field, the first step is to identify and define the topic/problem. Secondly there is the formulation of probable hypothesis and the collection of relevant data that will enable research to verify his/her problem. This will be followed by analyzing or interpreting the data collected and then reports the finding or conclusion. History follows these patterns but does not involve itself in predictions and experiments.

History as a body of knowledge has its own methodological approach. In other words, it offers a connected body of knowledge that can be methodologically arrived at. It is a study with its own recognized method which must be mastered by all professional historians. History tries to investigate the past while historians aim at an intelligent reconstruction of the past, and memory impressions often form an indispensable part of its raw materials. Again, the conclusions of historians are arrived at by close examination of a clearly defined subject matter.

This article is essentially devoted to highlighting guidelines for carrying out a fruitful research work necessary for writing proposals, theses and dissertation from a historical perspective. The approaches outlined and discussed will be mostly beneficial to students of history and those who are already skilled/professional historians. This brings us to the rationale for Historical research.

### Rationale for Research Work in History:

Like in other disciplines, research work is very necessary for students of history especially in higher institutions. This is because the history experts cannot be factual if an elaborate research is not carried out to determine its authenticity. Hence, many reasons have been adduced you such research activities namely;

1. Researches in the field of history enable students to examine critically some of the racist writings and views of the Europeans about Africa.
2. The researches enable students to examine available archival materials that exist in their places of academic work.
3. Research activities cultivate independence of thought and encourage students to develop the ability to find, interpret and present materials.
4. Researches in the field of history enable students to put into practice the principles and theories they have learnt in the class rooms.
5. Finally, research activities widen the researcher's academic horizon and understanding of event and afford them the experience of organizing materials on large scale.

### Phases of Historical Procedures

This article has identified three phases of historical procedure. With the cause that we do not jump to any conclusions about separating the historian's work into neat compartment we may still find it useful to consider these three steps namely;

#### a) Reconstruction of the Historical facts – “The Science of History”

In this respect reconstruction of the historical fact may be done by people who do not write history at all. These refer to the basic researchers who nose around in attics and cellars, in court houses and in records of business firms and who publish their materials in form of collected letters, papers, memories and journals. No one has monopoly of fact-collections, and many historians who write at a high level of generalization, science and anthropology often themselves contribute to knowledge of events.

#### b) Writing the historical Narrative– “The art of History”

Since the task is to assemble the fact as to form a significant written record, it goes without saying that historians must take a literary effort. Sometime this effort is so successful that the result is a high art form.

#### c) Interpretation – “The Philosophy of History”

After the facts have been gathered and narrative written, the record seems to require explanation in terms of general principles that govern human conduct. The older historians sought to explain the flow of events by some grand, central motivation. They had an essentially monistic philosophy as opposed to the pluralistic philosophy of modern writers. The most common and best known monistic theme was that history centred around political activity, around government such as wars, legislative acts and changes in rulers. Modern historians have come to believe that the vast sweep of history cannot be explained in terms of one aspect of human activity. They rather take the pluralistic view which stipulates that, in a physocial environment more and more events are shaped and dominated by man himself. From the tangled web of facts, the historian must select some and discard others. Foremost, historical scholars used to contend that the selection could be done on an “objective” basis. Yet, one man's objectivity is another man's bias. No individual historian, however, honourable, however magnificent his gift, can write outside the context of his own life and his own philosophy. He must include in his narrative those facts that he thinks are important in explaining changes that in his opinions, are worthy of explaining. In this case, history involves implicit theorizing. For detailed analysis and comprehension, the necessary procedures for a successful field work have been carefully identified below. In otherwords, the following discussions will be based on the necessary guidelines or steps for successful research work.

#### Necessary Steps for a Successful Field Work:

In any historical research, pre-field work is essential. In this respect the following procedures are inevitable steps required in a research work.

i. Choice of Topic: The first step is the choice of topic. There are two methods of selecting topics. For instance, the choice can be made by the students themselves or by

their supervisors. Each of these methods has its own merit. A choice made by a supervisor is likely to be more articulate and academic. On the other hand, it seems more advantageous for the student to make the choice because he is the author and knows more on what is to be written. The supervisor is merely guiding the researcher.

However, for the investigator to effectively narrow the area of interest to a specific topic there is need to read enough literature using college libraries that have standard reference works such as encyclopedia and dictionaries, as well as internet browsing. Reading through these available stocks of information will enable the scholar or student respectively to discover gaps in knowledge to be filled by the new research.

ii. Definition of Topic: The second step is the definition of topic. At this point the researcher first defines the problem to be investigated in what is referred to as the statement of the problem. The next step is followed by outlining the aims and objectives of the topic and why he has decided to write on the subject. Following the problem statement is the scope which covers space and time. This involves the geographical area to be covered as well as the period involved. The scope also shows whether the topic is pre-colonial or post-colonial or even all of them put together.

iii. The Determination of the subject matter is another step to be considered because the researcher has to explain whether he is dealing on the political, economic or social aspect of the people or whether he is writing a total history. He also takes into consideration whether there are people who are knowledgeable enough to supply the necessary information needed. The researcher considers the problems likely to be encountered and how to ensure that informants are carried along.

iv. Literature Review: Literature review involves preliminary readings to ascertain the availability of materials for the research. To be specific, literature review is an attempt to appraise the works of other scholars on the topic of the research. The aim is to identify the available gaps and be able to fill them. The researcher is therefore expected to make an input after reviewing the available literatures needed for his research work. This review involves making use of available textbooks, journals, articles and other related secondary sources.

Once the vital steps have been taken the researcher is expected to embark on the main task – the work itself.

#### Stages involved in the field Work

There are various theoretical and practical aspects of gathering and using sources especially the oral evidence. These involve collecting, recording, collating, dating preserving dates and interviewing techniques. Specifically, the following techniques are necessary: -

Firstly, it is important to make field recordings and this measure entails adequate preparation. The result should take into consideration the different personalities and the mental attitude of the interviewees/informants. Secondly, proper explanation of oneself is necessary and the academic intentions of the researcher should be clear to the informants that the researcher is interested in learning rather than teaching them.

Thirdly, the researcher should show amount of humility and any expression of gratitude has to conform to the societal pattern of the people the research is dealing with. Again, the personality of the researcher will determine the extent of his success. If the interviewees/informants do not have confidence in him, he may achieve little or, nothing, from them. He may be fed with false information.

Fourthly, the age and status of informants are necessary and if possible, the researcher should get the photographs of the informants. Information should be collected from both men and women aged and middle-aged people. The aim is to have a wide range of information. Above all, attempts should be made to record different types of tradition both fixed and free texts. These should include songs, proverbs, drum praise names and folk tales. Here, video tapes and photographs are necessary and these tapes and documents can be numbered while transmission must be faithful.

Finally, a researcher is free to ask questions but attempts should be made to avoid leading question while the informants' names must be properly cited. Information about wars should come from military men who are likely to be eye witnesses.

It has to be noted that these steps/methods of carrying out field work have their attendant obstacles and a researcher has to be mindful of them. Some of them can be briefly summarized here. Firstly, oral traditions appear to be created in the present because of their orality, hence these are said to be impermanent. Once spoken, they come to be at the time of their transmission or time of their creation. Secondly, there is the problem of distortion as a result of various transmissions. Certain facts are often embellished or deliberately exaggerated either by the informant or researcher. At times, oral traditions lose some of their contents because they may have been forgotten over the years. There is also the tendency to discredit areas that are not favourable to the researcher.

Thirdly, there is the problem of chronology and proper dating. Chronology is the planning of historical events in definite chronological pattern especially in terms of seasons, generations, genealogies and period festivals. In oral tradition, there is the existence of relative chronology but this does not give the exact date of events. In some cases, information collected is not completely verifiable. This is because some of the people who were informed in such episodes may have died when the research is being carried out. In most cases, the data rests on inference and logic. Historical data can be verifiable when they exist in the form of quotations and citation ascribed to existing sources.

Finally, sources are at time fragmented and the past cannot be reconstructed in its totality. New sources are discovered almost every day and this tends to multiply the researcher's perspective of the past. This in turn creates its own problem.

#### Purification of Sources/Information during Research Work:

Having briefly examined the different obstacles or deficiencies associated with field work during research, the following steps can be adopted in the purification of sources. These include careful comparison of sources, proper examination of the mode of

transmission, rejection of personal interpretation and careful subsection of documents to external criticism. Others include the use of court historians, careful examination of archival materials and determination of the status of informants. A few of these methods are hereby elaborated.

a) Comparison of Sources: Different oral information collected should be compared with each other. It is wrong for a research to rely on one evidence because the conclusion arrived at is bound to be faulty. A closer truth can be achieved by employing this method.

b) The Mode of Transmission: This is another method of verifying source. There are different ways of transmission. For instance, in Yoruba, each palace had a duty to translate and transmit its version of oral transmission. But in non-centralized societies such as in Igbo areas the traditions are not documented. It is wide open and everybody is expected to know it.

c) Use of Court Historians: Information from court historians is relatively more original and autochthonous. Traditions kept by them are freer from corrupting influence than those in non-centralized societies which were not cared for. In open society everybody can add his own version leading to deliberate suppression or distortion.

d) Careful Examination of Archival Materials:

It is necessary to subject available archival sources during field work to proper analysis. This approach is relevant because most of the so-called intelligent reports were not genuine. They were the handiwork of anthropologists and ethnographers of the 1920's and 1930 who tried to present the history of Africa from a racist point of view. Certain facts were deliberately misrepresented during the period. To verify these documents, efforts should be made to consult people who lived during the period under review. Oral evidence from such aged and knowledgeable people will help reconcile the areas of ambiguity. e)

e) Careful Examination of the status of the Informant:

The sound knowledge of the informant is very essential for a researcher to achieve a reasonable success. Factors to be taken into consideration include his age, his position in the society and his depth of knowledge in the research topic. These are crucial factors that can be of help in his version of oral tradition.

f) Rejection of oral Tradition

Interpretations that are extraneous to the account of oral tradition must be rejected. A distinction should be made between oral tradition and personal interpretation. Reconciliation between the two will help eliminate misleading accounts.

g) The Impact of External Criticisms:

Subsection of documents to external criticism is very essential. In determining the genuineness of the documents, the researcher examines the social aspects. For instance, from the book cover he tries to note when and where it was written and by whom. He also examines the language style prevalent at the time the book was written. If the documents are written in English Language, he notes the type bearing in mind that



there are different types of English. These include the Shakespearean, the Victorian, the Elizabethan and American variants. The next step is to determine whether the documents were written when they were said to have been written and by the author who claimed to have produced them. The status of the author and how he is seen in the society should be taken into consideration. Above all, the circumstances leading to the writing of the documents are equally of importance.

The final cross-checking and analysis will help to establish the reliability of the documents. The exercise will also reveal whether the documents are primary or secondary, whether there is first hand information or materials told or read from other sources.

### Conclusion

This work has dealt exclusively on the historical perspective of carrying out a research work. The different stages involved in historical research were carefully identified. It is clear that a research in the field of history is not an easy task; hence, the different obstacles arising from the identification, and interpretation of available sources were carefully examined. Furthermore, attempt was made to highlight the various methods of purifying sources to ascertain their authenticity.

### Endnotes

1. E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (London: Macmillian Press Ltd, 1961), 62
2. J.C. Malin "Essays on Historiography" in Roberston, E.M. *History of the American, Economy*, Third Edition, New York, Harcourt Bruce Jaranovied Inc. 1973, 25
3. L.M. Salmon. *Why is History Re-Written?* (New York: Oxford University press, 1929), 55
4. R.F.A Alkinson *Knowledge and Explanation in History* (London: Macmillan press Ltd, 1978), 36
5. J.C. Malin "Essays on Historiography" in Roberston E.M.
6. C.L. Becker; *Everyman His own Historian*, (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1935), 95
7. C.V. Langlois and C. Seignobos. *Introduction to the study of History*, (New York: Holt, 1909), 33-35
8. A. Johnson. *The Historian and Historical Evidence* (New York: Scribers, 1926), 175
9. E.J. Alajoa "The Present state of Oral traditional studies in E.O. Erim and Okon E. Uya (eds.). *Perspective and Methods of study in African History*, (Enugu: Forth Dimension) Publishers, 1984) 33-37. See also E.J. Alagoa "Oral Historical Traditions in African" *Tarnikel* vol.8. (Ikeja: Longmans 1987) 81-82.
10. S.O. Biobaku (ed.) *sources of Yoruba History* (London: Oxford Clarendon press, 1973) 50-55.
11. E.J. Alagoa. "Oral Sources of Nigeria" *Journal of the Society of Nigerian Archives*, Vol.1, No.1 July, 1987, 22-26
12. F.F. Teggart, *Theory and Processes of History*. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), 89



16

## CHAPTER 10

## THE DIMENSIONS OF QUANTIFICATION IN HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu, PhD

### Introduction

More than any other new approach the influence of quantitative history has been quite pervasive. In the case of economic and social history something approaching a transformation has taken place, there is almost no branch of historical research that has not been affected. Infact, there are two reasons that account for this development. First, the cardinal shift in emphasis from the individual to the majority which occurred earlier in this century has major quantitative implications. Thus, for as long as historians concentrated on the doings of the great, they hardly needed to account. However, once they became profoundly interested in economic growth, social change as well as the history of entire communities, questions of number as well as proportion assumed a critical significance. Infact, Economic and Social historians who turned for guidance to the social sciences had to face the fact that the quantitative element in both economics as well as sociology was noticeable. Although, if historians proposed to deal with the same sort of questions as economists and sociologists, they could hardly avoid using-or at least-testing-their methods. Secondly, the next reason is technological in nature. The computer came of age during the 1960s, it became cheaper as well as more accessible, while both the kind of data it could handle as well, the operations it could carry out were expeditiously diversified, in ways which were indeed suitable for the requirements of historical research. For the first time, a whole range of quantitative exercises which would have defined unaided human effort became practicable as a result.

The theme of this work is to offer a valid historical context that, quantitative history is founded on the persuasion that in making quantitative statements historians should take the burden to count rather than content themselves with impressionistic estimates. It seeks to bring into focus and address the various variables associated with quantification in history and that quantification has still shown itself, as a powerful addendum or augmentation to the historians' toolkit in historical analysis.

### Quantitative History

A good example of the difference which this can make is the Atlantic Slave Trade. Historians until recently had assumed that the number of Black Africans shipped to the New World between fifteenth and nineteen centuries totaled somewhere between fifteen and twenty million. It is important to note that this figure was based on little more than the guess work of nineteenth century writers, a lot of them prominent in the campaign to abolish the slave trade.

Phillip Curtin, in his quantitative study, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (1969), concluded that the number had been markedly exaggerated. He showed that the total was most unlikely to have been more than ten and a half million or less than eight million, by first critically evaluating and then adding together the figures for particular periods and areas of trade. Whatever the total, it still represents an appealing blot on the record of western civilization; however, this adjustment has no bearing on the moral outrage of

posterity. But Curtin's figures provide for the first time a solid basis for considering the effects of the trade on the societies of tropical Africa and those of the Americas.

For historians who do wish to generalize, however, quantitative methods offer certain merits. Infact generalizations are implicitly quantitative in character, although, this may not always be clearly brought. As Lee Benson says, historians who use words like "typical", representative", "significant", "widespread", "growing", or "intense" are making quantitative statements whether or not they present figures to justify their assertions. Benson contends in the same passage, of "the impressionistic approach long dominant in American historiography, and the present writer have intermittently been worried by this kind of thing as a historian. It seems fair to say, nonetheless, that these techniques have more often been applied to individual bits of information than to broader statements.

Historians make quantitative statements more frequently than might at first be supposed, in the course of their work. Certainly, questions like 'what was Charles I's revenue in 1642?' or 'how large was the liberal vote in the general election of 1906?' calls for an answer as numerically accurate as the sources can permit, and the reader of a reputable secondary work would expect nothing less. As earlier stated, many of the broader generalizations which historian incessantly make are by implication quantitative also-for instance, 'the British working class was literate by 1914' or 'women married late in early modern England,' Note however, a statement of this kind may reverberate the observation of a thoughtful contemporary, or it may arise from a comparison of a number of well authenticated instances. So how can we tell whether the contemporary was right, or that the examples cited are typical? It is only a quantitative analysis can put these statements beyond reasonable doubt, by revealing the incidence of literacy as well as the range and frequency of the ages at which women actually married. Most historians were indeed reluctant to accept this postulation. G.M. Trevelyan, in the 1940s explained the evidential base of his subject in these words:

The generalizations which are the stock-in-trade of the social historian must necessarily be based on a small number of particular instances, which are assumed to typical, but which cannot be the whole of the complicated truth.

The probable challenge associated with this method is that the particular instances can all too easily be selected to confirm what the historian expected to find, and conviction may be lent to unwarrantable presumptions. Nowadays the findings of the 'qualitative' historians like Trevelyan are being increasingly refined by the quantitative analysis of data systematically assembled to reflect an entire society. In this regard and for this purpose not only the main trend is revealed but also the variations as well as exceptions which highlight the distinctive experience of a particular group or locality. However, Curtin's work on the slave trade was significant not only for establishing a total, although for also quantifying the concentration of the trade in the eighteenth century and the exceptional losses sustained by Angola as well as the Niger Delta area as compared with the other catchment areas. Infact, at its most ambitious, quantitative

history seeks to illustrate an entire historical process by measuring as well as comparing all the relevant key factors: why did the population of England increase so dramatically during the eighteenth century? What effects did the construction of railways in the mid-nineteenth century have on the development of the American economy? At this juncture, quantitative history stakes its claim to be not simply an ancillary technique, however, to take over the centre stage of historical enquiry.

An immense scholarly effort has been invested in quantitative research, and increasingly sophisticated statistical techniques have been applied during the past thirty years. Furthermore, the findings are often presented in a highly technical and inaccessible manner, as will be clear from a glance at any recent volume of the *Economic History Review* or the *Journal of Economic History*. Without doubt, this poses a challenge for non-quantitative historians who are reluctant to take these findings on trust and yet are uncomfortably aware of the authority which is attached to quantitative statements of all kinds in the present era. Besides, it is pertinent to state that the clarion call which is periodically made that all historians should have some instruction in statistics is scarcely realistic. Though no specialized knowledge is required to understand where quantitative historians get their figures from or in broad specification or terms the uses to which they can be put. On what it can achieve and what it cannot a non-technical discussion of these issues is sufficient to indicate both the strengths and weaknesses of the quantitative approach.

#### Demographic History

Another dimension of quantitative approach has to do with what is referred to as demographic history. Thus, the field in which a quantitative approach is most significant and where arguably it has made its greatest contribution is demographic history. Obviously, demography without numbers is an absurdity, accordingly in this area the quantitative historian can fairly claim to be indispensable. In other words, demographic history involves a great deal more than merely working out the size of a given population in the past—difficult though even that can be in the absence of reliable census data. Also, germane than the total is the breakdown in terms of age, gender as well as household size. Undoubtedly, calculations of this kind may reveal the ratio of producers to dependants, the proportion of households with living-in servants, as well as other indicators of significance to the economic and social historian. On the contrary, the most challenging task facing the demographic historian is to determine the causes of population change over time—or the lack of it. The first step here is to reconstruct the birth rate, the marriage rate as well as the death rate. Furthermore, each of these ‘vital’ rates are in turn influenced by many different factors which lend themselves to quantification with greater or lesser ease—the incidence of contraception and abortion, the age of marriage, the illegitimacy rate, the impact of famines and epidemics etc. The attraction of this kind of enquiry for many is that it uncovers patterns which relate to the whole of society, rather than just that segment of it illuminated by literary sources or evidence. For instance, in the case of pre-industrial societies which lived so much closer

to the margin of subsistence than our own, it can be argued demography was the determinant of social as well as economic life. On these grounds demographic history, is central to the kind of 'total history' written by Annales School with its primary interest in the early modern periods.

However, defined, demographic history majorly depends on two types of sources. Thus, the first lists all the members of a country or community alive at any particular point in time. Although this is of course the basic function of the modern census, which was invented in the Scandinavian countries in the mid-eighteenth century. Since 1801, in Britain a census of the whole population has been taken at ten-yearly intervals and it is generally conceded that after 1841 (when the name of each individual was noted for the first time) errors in the totals are statistically infinitesimal. Also, other listings survive from earlier periods-tax returns, returns of church communicants, declarations of political loyalty etc. The margin of error is very uncertain and inconsistent, though comprehensive in intent, however, these were seldom so in practice. One obvious effect of the relatively recent origin of census-taking is that it has proved extraordinarily difficult to establish the relationship between demographic change as well as the onset of industrialization in late eighteenth century Britain. Basically, this is where the second type of source comes in-the recording in sequence of the 'vital' events in a given area. From 1538, for English history the most significant source is the parish registers kept by the Anglican incumbents who were required by law to record all baptism, marriages as well as burials in their parishes; the system persisted until the beginning of civil registration in 1837. E.A. Wrigley and R.S. Schofield from a sample of parish registers have calculated national rates of births, marriages and deaths and have used these to project the total population of England back from 1801 as far as the mid-sixteenth century. As a result, they are able to pinpoint small variations in the growth rate much more precisely than before, and to demonstrate the preponderant influence which changes in the marriage-rate had on the long-term rate of population growth.

#### Other Fields in which Quantitative Methods Apply

It is also worthwhile to say that the second field in which quantitative methods have proved significant is the history of social structure. At this juncture it is important to note that there is in fact a close connection between this field as well as demographic history, simply because the same sources loom large in both. Note however, that any source which list an entire population or records its 'vital' event offers, at least potentially, the possibility of classifying that population into social groups. Besides, this is most easily attained in the case of groups defined by age or gender. Though historians are becoming increasingly resourceful in abstracting other aspects of social structure from demographic data. A case in point is the changing size and structure of the household. The evidence of both pre-census listings and family reconstruction has effectively undermined the traditional notion that pre-industrial society in Western Europe was characterized by large, complex households of the extended family type. From the mid-nineteenth century the ever-increasing scope and precision of the

questions asked in the census means that a whole range of social issues is opened up to quantitative analysis-occupation, status, religious affiliation, rural migration to the towns, and so on. The 'new urban history' in the United States is largely based on the premise that the changing social structure of a city can be reconstructed by analyzing the manuscript schedules of the U.S. Census in conjunction with other nominative data (notably tax records, city directories and registers of births, marriages and deaths).

Probably, it may seem startling and astonishing that quantitative methods have much relevance to the third field to be considered here, that is, political history. Indeed, the customary concern of the political historian is, after all, with 'unique' events and with the actions and motives of individual statesmen. As soon as the field of enquiry is broadened to include the political system as a whole, quantitative history comes into effect. Thus, this is evident in the realm of electoral behaviour. The concept of psephology- the study of present-day elections-is largely a matter of juggling with numbers, so too the study of elections in the past demands a quantitative approach. Undoubtedly, for any period up to the development of opinion polls in the 1950s the quantification of political attitudes presents major challenges (and it can be argued that it still does). Nonetheless the historian has other advantages which are denied to the modern psephologist. Before the coming of the Ballot Act of 1872 parliamentary elections in Britain were conducted in the public and votes were individually recorded. Where registers of votes can be analyzed in conjunction with other nominative data on income, status or religion, the way is open to firmer conclusions about the basis of party affiliation in nineteenth century Britain.

Quantitative methods have also been usefully applied to economic history and have had a decisive impact. Economics -like demography -is a highly quantitative discipline. Therefore, the principal elements in an economic system-prices, incomes, production, investment, trade and credit-all lend themselves to precise measurement; indeed, they demand it if the workings of the system are to be clearly understood. Economic historians collected quantitative economic data, from the beginning of economic history as a distinct specialism in the late nineteenth century, usually as one aspect of whatever research they were engaged on. However, it is only in the last thirty years or so, that historians have tackled the challenge of constructing extended statistical sequences, often from varied as well as imperfect sources, as a means of illuminating long-term economic trends. R.B. Mitchell as well as Phyllis Deane's *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (1962) represents the most systematic attempt to do this for Britain so far. But it is some of the French quantitative historians who have pressed this approach furthest: the exponents of 'serial history' (*l'histoire serielle*) aim to build up extended sequences of prices, crop yields, rents and incomes which together will enable them to construct a model for France's development during the early modern period-and ultimately Europe's as well. If anything, the claims of the 'new economic history' (or 'cliometrics') in the United States are in the meantime greater.

Statistical Know-How: An Addition to the Historians Tool-Kit



At times, it is imagined that the application of quantitative methods on a large scale displaces the traditional skills of the historian and calls for an entirely new breed of scholar. Indeed, in all intent and purposes, nothing could be further from the truth. Note however, that statistical know-how can only be effective if it is treated as an addition to the historian's toolkit, and subject to the normal controls of historical method. The obligation to subject quantitative data to tests of reliability is at least as great as in the case of literary sources, given the special authority which figures carry in our numerate society. As soon as the figures have been verified, their interpretation as well as their application to the solution of specific historical challenges requires the same qualities of judgment as well as flair as any other kinds of evidence. It is significant to realize that each of these two stages presents its own challenges. To have any validity at all, conclusions about social movements must have a statistical basis.

Where a historian is lucky enough to find a set of readymade statistics-say a table of imports and exports or a sequence of census reports, in that case the historian is saved an immense amount of work. However, the reliability of such sources must never be taken for granted. The historian needs to exactly know how the figures were put together. Were the returns made by the man-on-the-spot distorted by his own self-interest-like the tax-collector who understated his takings and pocketed the difference? Were the figures conjured out of thin air by a desk-bound official, or totted up by a subordinate who was not competent in arithmetic? More importantly, both of these possibilities arise in the case of the impressive-looking statistics published by British Colonial administrations in Africa which were often based on returns made by poorly educated and underpaid chiefs. Also, how much scope was there for errors of copying as the figures were passed on from one level of the bureaucracy to the next? Could the same item have been counted twice by different officials? Where statistics were compiled from questionnaires, as in social surveys or the census, we need to know the form in which the questions were put in order to determine the scope for confusion on the part of the respondents, and we have to consider whether the questions on - income or age, for example-were likely to elicit frank answers. Against this backdrop, only an investigation of the circumstances of compilation, using the conventional skills of the historian, can provide the answer to these questions. Though it has proved extremely useful to classify, arrange, and summarize the available information, it may be even more rewarding-to judge from some of the ventures that have already been made-to attempt more complex methods of descriptive statistical analysis by the use, for example, of mathematical model or of scaling techniques.

Customarily, what interest historians in their calling and craft is less a single set of figures than a sequence overtime which enables them to plot a trend. For the historian the figures must accordingly be tested not only for their reliability but also for their comparability. No matter how accurate the individual totals in such a sequence may be, they can only be regarded as a statistical sequence if they are strictly comparable-if, that is, they are measuring the same variable. However, it needs only a slight discrepancy in

the basis of assessment to render comparisons null and void. Oftentimes a classification which seems clear and consistent enough on paper may be applied differently overtime, or between one place and another, which is one basic reason why comparative criminal statistics have to be treated so cautiously. With respect to English census, the increasing refinement of the occupational schedule in every count since 1841 means that it is difficult to quantify the growth as well as decline of specific occupations. Notwithstanding even the most seemingly straightforward statistical sequences may conceal pitfalls of this kind. Thus, comprehensive commercial statistics for England date back to 1696, when the post of Inspector- General of Imports and Exports was created. But because the official table of values drawn by the first Inspector-General was applied almost without modification until the end of the eighteenth century, during which time some prices rose while others fell, the figures as they stand cannot be used to calculate the changing balance of trade.

Quantitative procedures by no means preclude, nor indeed can they possibly eliminate, the use of value judgments, speculations, intelligent guesses, or "the imagination and intuitive feel which the historian, and for that matter the social scientist, should bring to his subject. For instance, consider the official cost - of - living index which measures the cost of a typical "shopping-bag" against the current wage rate. Infact in Britain the index, begun in 1914, ought to provide a reliable picture of the declining standard of living during the Depression of the 1930s. But during the Inter-war period the price side of the index continued to be based on the same 'shopping-bag', even though changing patterns of consumption meant that the weighing given to the various items (fresh vegetables, meat, clothing, etc) in 1914 no longer corresponded with the actual make-up of the average family budget.

Be that as it may, quantitative history is not based on ready-made statistics. The advantages of a statistical approach to public issues began to be canvassed only in the late seventeenth, century; and it was only during the nineteenth century that the state acquired the resources of manpower and money to undertake such work, and only in the present century that statistical information has been gathered in a really comprehensive way by both government and private bodies. Frank Knight once observed that Lord Kelvin contended that "if you cannot measure, your knowledge is meager and unsatisfactory." For most of the questions that interest historians, the likelihood is that the figures will have to be labouriously constructed from the relevant surviving materials. It is infact not easy to construct quantitative data in such a way that valid statistical inferences can be drawn from them. The historian seeks for data from varied and scattered source materials and the issues of reliability and comparability will be posed, not once, but many times over. In this regard, the classification of the data in tabular form now becomes the task of the historian; and the criteria on which that classification is based raise questions of historical judgment rather than statistical method.

The construction of statistics, above all, raises acute challenges of selection. In spite of the foregoing, it is true and incontrovertible, that quantitative enquires whose scope is so narrowly defined that all the relevant data can be assembled: W.O. Aydelotte's quantitative collective biography of all the members who sat in the parliament of 184-47 (the period of Sir Robert Peel's Premiership leading to the split in the Tory Party over the Corn Laws) is a case in point. Monographs on the composition of the British House of Commons, which are now fairly numerous and cover a time-span of six centuries, have brought to light significant continuities and changes in the social structure of the British political elite. Crane Brinton, in his well-known quantitative study of the members of the Jacobin Clubs, reached the conclusion that the Jacobins represented "a complete cross-section of their community" and that: "The Jacobins of 1794 were not a class, and their enemies the 'aristocrats' were not a class. The Terror was not chiefly then a phase of the class-struggle, but even more a civil war, a religious war. Donald Greer, on the basis of a quantitative analysis of the victims of the Terror, argued that the lower classes, by the definitions he used, supplied 70percent of the victims and the upper classes less than 30 percent and that: "The split in society was perpendicular, not horizontal. The Terror was an intra-class, not an inter-class war. Just as we have seen, one of the main attractions of the quantitative approach is the opportunity it offers for making statements not just about small elites, but about whole classes or societies over long period of time.

While the vast bureaucracy employed by most modern states can gather comprehensive national statistics with relative ease, no historian, however well endowed with research assistants and computer time, can hope to survey all the primary sources needed for a quantitative study of, say, farm-size in Tudor England or personal incomes in early Victorian Britain. Contemporary Statisticians have developed reliable methods for taking a random sample, that is, one in which every element making up the whole has an equal chance of being included in the sample. However, in a recently completed project the enumerators' returns for the 1851 Census were prepared for computer analysis in a bid to provide answers to a number of questions about social as well as economic structure which fell outside the scope of the report on the census published at the time; a 2 percent sample was chosen which comprised the total population of one in every fifteen enumeration districts and which were 945 as a whole. All the census information about these 415,000 individuals was fed into the computer, with the result that historians can now get a much clearer idea about variations in education, land tenure, household composition, the size of the labour force in different businesses, and many other issues.

#### The Historian and Statistical Inference: The Coefficient of Correlation

The historian can set about putting the data to work, once it is established that the figures are reliable, comparable as well as representative. The figures amount sometimes to an unequivocal answer to the question in hand, and all that remains is to devise the best way of presenting them clearly on the printed page-whether by table, graph,

histogram, 'cake' or pyramid as well. Besides, some elementary processing may be desirable, such as the calculation needed to work out percentages or averages. Accordingly, the findings of economic historians in matters such as exports or production often lend themselves to straightforward exposition, known in the trade as 'descriptive statistics'; an excellent instance is the forty-odd pages of tables and charts which appear at the end of E.J. Hobsbawm's economic history of Britain since 1750, *Industry and Empire* (1968). Meanwhile, as historians have extended the application of quantitative methods, they have increasingly found that what counts is not so much the explicit meaning of the figures as inferences that can be drawn from them.

Furthermore, it is important to state that the drawing of such inferences may be essentially a statistical operation. In the case of an extended series of export statistics, for example, the researcher may wish to abstract the long-term trend of growth or decline, the regular fluctuations of slump and boom, and the irregular fluctuations caused by war, plague and the vagaries of government policy; only the sophisticated techniques of time series analysis will make this feasible. Infact, more complex statistical techniques are employed by Wrigley and Schofield in their backward projection of the English population from the nineteenth to the sixteenth century: there must be few historians who can follow them through that labyrinth. More importantly, from the historians' point of view, a particularly useful kind of statistical inference is the coefficient of correlation, that is, the demonstration of a relationship between two variables. Note that, it is often important to know whether such a relationship exists and of what type—say between party affiliation and voting behaviour, or between the duration of marriage and the number of offspring. Moreso, if reliable quantitative data are available for each variable, the relationship can be worked out by statistical means. Although the computer can be of great assistance in this kind of project. Imagine that, for every one of the five hundred members of a legislature, the researcher has assembled information under twelve headings (which might include age, education, party, constituency, income, occupation, and voting record on six different issues) and wishes to test each of these twelve variables against all the others. The working out by hand of each of these correlations would be an almost impossible task; a correctly programmed computer, on the other hand, would print out the required tables in minutes. Thus, the outcome might be that a hitherto unsuspected correlation was revealed, suggesting a fruitful new line of research. It is significant, however not to exaggerate the importance of a statistically verified correlation: it does not take account of the possibility of coincidence, nor will it reveal which variable influenced the other; it may be, infact, that the two variables are determined by a third, as yet unidentified variable. Historians, on all these points, must fall back on a commonsensical way as well as their training, craft and their knowledge of the period as well as its challenges.

It is fundamental to state here that most historians who make inferences from quantitative data do not need to use statistics at all; instead, they treat the figure as an indicator or index' of some other, usually much less tangible phenomenon for which

direct quantitative evidence is not available. Invariably, it is tempting to infer political attitudes from statistics of voting behaviour, or the influence of a book from its sales, or the intensity of religious belief from the returns of Easter communicants, but none of these inferences can be taken for granted, nor does their validity depend on statistical principles. However, in each case it depends on a historical informed awareness of other factors which may have affected the figures. Were voters open to corruption, or responsive to personalities rather than policies? Was the book brought as an item of conspicuous consumption and put away unread? Can we assume that taking communion had the same significance for peasant congregations as it did for the clergy who compiled the returns. Importantly, the application of demographic data to family history has proved to be a minefield. To take just one example, it cannot be assumed without a great deal of supporting qualitative evidence that a narrow age-gap between husband and wife (as was already the case in early modern England) indicates a more affectionate and companionable marital relationship. Though at the point where numerical data touch on a major historical question, quantitative methods in themselves often resolve nothing. In this regards, three leading proponents of quantitative history have conceded:

Statistical manipulations merely rearrange the evidence; they do not, except on an elementary level, answer general questions; and the bearing of the findings upon the larger problems of interpretation in which historians are interested is a matter, not of arithmetic, but of logic and persuasion.

Indeed, statistics may serve to reveal or clarify a particular tendency; but how we interpret that tendency-the significance we attach to it and the causes we adduce for it-is a matter for seasoned historical judgement, in which the historian trained exclusively in quantitative methods would be woefully deficient.

However, there is one quantitative approach to history which claims to have transcended these limitations to some extent and which has as a result generated heated controversy. During the 1960s in the U.S., its first champions originated what is referred to as 'cliometrics' to distinguish their approach, and the term is not widely understood-although those who reserve judgement on its claims prefer to retain the inverted commas. 'Cliometrics' proceeds on the assumption that certain areas of human behaviour are best understood as a system in which both the variables and the relationship between can be quantified; when the value of one variable changes, the effect which this has on the system as a whole can be calculated. Therefore, the field of human behaviour which is most suited to this approach is economics. In other words, 'Cliometrics' is simply a fancy label for what is often called 'the new economic history'. It draws its inspiration from econometrics-that is, the techniques that statisticians have evolved to analyze economies of the present as well as to predict their future development. In proceeding from known to unknown variables the economist applies a theory of the relationship between the elements in an economic system (capital, wages, prices, etc); when an economic theory is expressed in mathematical terms, it is known as a model. Undoubtedly, econometrists are concerned to test and apply models by statistical means.

For instance, in input-output analysis a model is employed in order to calculate what inputs an economy (or one sector within it) requires to achieve a given production target.

Indeed, for those historians with the necessary training in statistics, it is easy to see the appeal of econometric methods. Howbeit, they hold out the prospect of filling in some of the gaps in our existing historical knowledge which are due to the patchiness of firm quantitative data about the past. Similarly, if carried to their logical limits, they allow historians to assess the economic effect of a given policy or innovation by measuring it against what would have happened if the policy had been implemented or the innovation had proved stillborn: the system can be reconstructed to accommodate a different value for one or more variables. That at least is what the most advanced 'cliometricians' would claim. In *Railroad and Economic Growth* (1964), to take the most celebrated case, R.W. Fogel sought to measure the contribution which nineteenth century railway construction made to the U.S. economy by constructing a hypothetical (or 'counterfactual') model of what the American economy would have been like in 1890 if no railways had been built. He concluded that, even supposing no additional canals or roads were built, Gross National Product would only have been 3.1 percent lower, and that 76 percent of the land actually farmed in 1890 would still have been farmed. Earlier on most historians-including Fogel himself-had believed that the railways had a much dynamic effect on the American economy. Fogel maintained that counterfactual propositions are implicit in many historical judgments, and that what he had done was to expose this particular assumption as false by subjecting it to rigorous statistical testing.

However, there are several reasons why the work of the 'cliometricians' should be used with caution. For want of time and space we shall not dwell on it now. Moreover, to those historians who maintain that research questions should emerge from immersion in the widest possible range of primary sources, 'cliometric' history is inadmissible because its point of departure is always a clearly defined problem formulated in theoretical terms. Although there is no reason in principle why historians should not turn to theory in order to expose fresh problems or bring a new perspective to bear on familiar ones. It is important to note that the 'cliometric' approach has made a real contribution to our understanding of a number of technical problems in economic history.

### Conclusion

Underlying the more modest aspirations of quantitative history is a growing recognition that its contribution to historical explanation-as distinct from the verification of historical facts-is marginal. Yet the generalizations yielded by analyses of numerical data tend to be descriptive rather than explanatory. Accordingly, to plot a trend, or to demonstrate a statistical correlation between this trend and another, does not explain it. Cause and significance remain matters for the interpretative skill of the

historian in command of the sources-not merely those which lend themselves to quantification.

During the 1960s quantitative history was a highly contentious issue. Some of the early proponents of the new approach got 'high' on figures, becoming 'statistical junkies' (to quote Lawrence Stone). The prospects that lies before historians, then, is not the solution of major questions by quantitative means, but new possibilities of synthesis, in which statistical inference is combined with the perceptions of traditional 'qualitative' history. Infact on these more restricted terms the place of quantitative methods of historical enquiry seems assured. For a time history's scientific status was affirmed more unequivocally than at any time since the turn of the century; in 1966 a leading American quantitative historian was rash enough to predict that by 1984 the scientific study of the past would have reached the point when historians could set their sights on the discovery of general laws of human behaviour. Comparable hostages to fortune were given by the 'cliometricians'. As a result, some of the traditionalists in the profession were provoked into making equally extreme rebuttals: in 1963 the President of the American Historical Association urged his colleagues not to 'worship at the shrine of that Bitch-goddess QUANTIFICATION' (sic).

In conclusion, therefore, nearly thirty years later the claims advanced for quantitative history are more modest, other historians fell less threatened, and a more dispassionate assessment led to its breakthrough in historical methods. When all reservations have been made, quantification has still shown itself, as a powerful addition to the historian's tool-kit in historical analysis.

#### Endnotes

1. Curtin's figures are the subject of continuing debate among quantitative historians. See Paul E. Lovejoy, "The Volume of the Atlantic Slave Trade: A Synthesis" *Journal of African History*, xxiii, 1982; and J. Inikori (ed), *Forced Migration*, (Hutchinson, 1982).

2. Lee Benson, "Research Problems in American Political Historiography", in *Common Frontiers of the Social Sciences*, (ed) Mirra Komarovsky (Glencoe, 111,1957).

3. G.M. Trevelyan, *English Social History*, (Longman, 1944), p. viii.

4. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Peasants of Languedoc*, University of Illinois Press, 1974.

5. E.A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871* Arnold, 1981.

6. Peter Laslett (ed), *Household and Family in Past Time*, (Cambridge University Press, 1972).

7. The Methodological Issues are fully in E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Nineteenth Century Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1972).

8. Leo F. Schnore (ed), *The New Urban History*, (Princeton University Press, 1975).

9. See for example J.R. Vincent, *Pollbooks: How Victorians Voted* (Cambridge University Press, 1967).

10. The Clearest Statement in English is Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *The Territory of the Historian* (Harvester, 1979), Ch.2.
11. Lawrence Stone, Letter to Editor, *Encounter*, XI (July 1958), p.73.
12. On the Use of Models, see the review of the work of Harold Hotelling and others and the further discussion of this problem in Donald E. Stokes, "Spatial Models of Party Competition," *American Political Science Review*, LVII (June 1963); on Scaling techniques; See Duncan MacRae, Jr., *Dimensions of Congressional Voting: A Statistical Study of the House of Representatives in the Eighty-first Congress* (Berkeley, Calif., 1958), and "Intraparty Divisions and Cabinet Coalitions in the Fourth French Republic," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, V (Jan. 1963); William O. Aydelotte, "Voting Patterns in the British House of Commons in the 1840s", pp.134-63.
13. G.N. Clark, *Guide to English Commercial Statistics, 1696-1782*, Royal Historical Society, 1938.
14. James Cornford, "The Transformation of Conservatism in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Victorian Studies*, VII (Sept. 1963).
15. B.R. Mitchell and Phyllis Deane, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics*, Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 466; for an account of the problems raised by cost-of-living indexes, see Roderick Floud, *An Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Historians*, 2 edn, Methuen, 1979, pp.125-9.
16. Thomas S. Kuhn, "The Function of Measurement in Modern Physical Science," in *Quantification: A History of the Meaning of Measurement in the Natural and Social Sciences*, pp.31,34; remarks by Frank H. Knight in *Eleven Twenty-six: A Decade of Social Science Research*, (ed). Louis Wirth (Chicago, 1940), p.169; M.B. Abasiattai, (ed), *Expanding the Frontiers of African History: The Inter-Disciplinary Methodology*, (Calabar: Wusen Press Ltd, 1988), p. 217.
17. W.O. Aydelotte, On the business interests of the gentry in the Parliament of 1841-47, in G. Kitson Clark, *The Making of Victorian England*, Methuen, 1962, and his *Quantification in History*, Ch.5.
18. Clarence Crane Brinton, *The Jacobins: An Essay in the New History* (New York, 1930), pp.70-72.
19. Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror During the French Revolution: A Statistical Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), pp.97-98.
20. Michael Anderson et al, "The National Sample from the 1851 Census of Great Britain". *Urban History Newsletter* 1977, pp.55-9.
21. Roderick Floud, *An Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Historians*, 2 edn, Methuen, 1979, pp.88-122.
22. Edward Shorter, *The Historian and the Computer*, (Prentice Hall, 1971), pp.5-8.
23. Peter Burke, *Sociology and History* (Allen &Unwin, 1980), p.40.
24. For a discussion on this and related issues, See Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the History of the Western Family, 1500-1914* (Macmillan, 1980), pp 33-38.



25. W.O. Aydelotte, A.G. Bogue and R.W. Fogel (eds.), *The Dimensions of Quantitative Research in History* (Princeton University Press, 1972), pp. 10-11.
26. Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), p.94.
27. Lawrence Stone, Letter to Editor, *Encounter*, XI (July 1958).
28. Lee Benson, *Toward the Scientific Study of History* (Lippincott, 1972), pp. 98-104.
29. Carl Bridgenbaugh, "The Great Mutation," *American Historical Review*, LXVIII, 1963, p.236; For a more extended attack, See Jacques Barzun, *Clio and the Doctors*, (Chicago University Press, 1974)



17

## CHAPTER 11

## THE USE OF QUALITATIVES IN

### HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Cyril Anaele, PhD

#### Introduction

As a process, the use of quantities entails series of activities such as method of data collection, testing of validity and reliability of data, formulation of research questions, hypothesis to be tested and theoretical frame-work on which to situate the problem under study. Quantitative approach for empirical historical research is fast becoming a fashion and as such can no longer be wished away. This chapter seeks to address the essence of quantification, the methods used for quantitative history, and presentation of data. In the final analysis, the study argues that the quantitative method enlivens history, reduces the bias usually associated with impressionistic history which in turns of course, a product of quantitative historian.

The whites hardly ever looked at the continent of Africa as a historical entity. For a long time, all kinds of myths and prejudices concealed the true history of Africa from the world at large (Amadou 1990). Africa has a history, but unfortunately, for far too long, little was known about it and the little known was misunderstood and distorted (Smit 1978, Erim and Uya 19884, Afigbo 1985, Davidson 1970).

In the view of Amadou (1990) the Europeans refused to see Africans as the creators of the original cultures which flowered and survived over the centuries in patterns of their own making. Europeans by not forgoing their prejudices and re-examining their methodology are unable to grasp that indeed Africa was and still is historical part of the World (Alagoa and Williamson 1983). the European adventures, travelers, slave dealers, merchants, Soldiers, Missionaries, Administrators, colonialist and scholars of different persuasions over thousands of years either by ignorance, self-interest or misconception tainted the image of Africa with spurious identification as a people without history until the coming of Europeans (Traver Ropper 1966).

In their ignorance of African past and history, the Europeans like Traver Ropper risked the conclusion on Africa without history, born of course, out of bias and racism. Basically, three main sources are available for the historiography of Africa as elsewhere. It has to be emphasized here that none of these sources, however, is automatically or everlastingly predominant (Amadou 1990).

The three main sources are namely

1. Written documents
2. Archaeology and
3. Oral Tradition.

All the three are supplemented with linguistics, anthropology, archives, art, the natural and the physical science (Nzewunwa 1990), and Technology (Lundberg 1951). Each has its limitations, but this need not detain us here. Historical Objectivity may be affected or reduced by these limitations.

Objectivity is defined by Nzewunwa (1990) as commitment to truth in historical writing. At times, it is equated with scientific method or the pursuit of facts usually uninfluenced by personal feelings or passing of moral judgment (Anaele 2008). Historiography is the art and technique of writing history (Anyanwu 1995).

Generally, the use of quantitative method in historiography minimizes bias and subjectivity by authentic verification of veracity of the information and its sources. Busha and Harter (1980) see quantitative history as useful in explaining the relationship between historical factors through collection and organization of evidence (data) for drawing of conclusions followed by a meaningful narrative to recount or re-enact past events. The selection, organisation and analysis of the evidence unarguably improve the quality of the history under survey.

This work addresses the role of Mathematics in quantitative, methods of quantitative historiography, interpretation of the data and criticism against its use.

#### Explanation of Key Words

##### I. History.

To the African, History is the embodiment and incorporation of everything he did, whether be it technology, medicine, religion, institutions etc. even as he did not establish special institutions for historical studies. In this work, history is taken to mean the sum total of human experience, an enquiry into the past, with the aim of understanding the present in order to predict the future and avoid repetition of past mistakes. After all, the present we know is the past. Essentially, history is about human achievements, failures, peoples, events worthy of preservation, and even ideas. There is no knowledge without historical origin. For the academic historian, it is the methodical study or record of the past which may be remote or immediate. History is the mirror of the society, for it puts in perspective not only the past, but also the present, and to a large extent the future. Put in another way, the past is important to the historian, because it is the parent of today, which in turn is the parent of tomorrow. This linkage and continuity give history its important role in any human society.

##### II. Historiography.

It is the art, method and technique of writing history guided by commitment in pursuit of facts unaffected by bias, personal feelings distortions or passing of moral judgments. It is writing of history with objectivity, uninfluenced by personal interest and political leanings or government.

##### III. Objectivity.

It is the commitment of the historian to write history with a good approximation of truth.

##### IV. Quantification.

The use of mathematical figures, numbers and statistics in historical research to represent or express findings on the topic under study. By using quantitative numbers, graphs scales measurement of variables, percentages etc. the quantitative historian rids

his writing of personal biases through empirical data that are verifiable with content validity.

Let us use the following table for illustration.

Table 1: Enrollment of students by Gender into Salem University, Lokoja-Nigeria 2010 – 2015

Year	No. of Males	% No. of Females	% Total Male and Female	% Differential
2010/11	200	36	360	64
2011/12	260	41	380	59
2012/13	250	40	372	58
2013/14	280	42	378	58
2014/15	285	42	390	58
2015/16	1,270	39	1,980	61

#### The Essence of Qualitative Method

Quantities are fast becoming a fashion in historical research for data presentation.

Historians as do other researchers in different academic fields are also expected to make use of quantities (Mc Dowell 2002) and Fritz (1956). Quantitative history is the use of data expressed in mathematical presentation for historical studies.

One may be tempted to ask, where does mathematics concerned largely with figures, numbers, quantities, angles, equation, and measurements meet with history, or archaeology which are about re-enacting and reconstructing the past from works of ancestors, or from broken pots of pieces of stone? Mathematics helps to add not only glamour to historical evidence, but also a measure of precision usually lacking in narrative history. A committed historian must endeavor to acquire some degrees of mathematical skill for understanding the dynamics of change within the society he studies, if he must be relevant in terms of evaluating and deciding policy, making inputs into it, in the analysis and implementation of such policies.

Many have shied away from the use of quantities even when their presentation earnestly needs it. Even some who have such quantities at their disposal simply refused to use them, as if they are non-essential elements of history. This accounts for the bulk of volumes in their analysis and interpretation, basically qualitative.

Quantities and numbers take different forms in historical research. They may be used to represent age, in-come and expenditure, birth, death, income disparity, family size, population, human development index, gender disparity, unemployment rate, budgets, pattern of voting during elections, poverty rate, number of school dropouts, crime rate, road accident rate, literacy and illiteracy rate, inflation rate, economic growth, policy evaluation and analysis, level of corruption, and social vices, census figures to mention just a few.

It is therefore as important as it is needful for the historian researcher to grasp how quantities and their presentation can assist in answering some of his questions and thus, enhance the quality of his argument and findings. Nzewunwa (1990) sees historians who

display blind eyes towards quantities as negligent as wasteful by their neglect of quantities as if they do not exist.

Above all, quantitative method has many advantages lacking in qualitative history. It uses sets out in advance and as early as possible the systems and methods of grouping/classification, the mathematical and hypothetical assumptions used and the pattern trend of the topic under research. By this process, it becomes possible with ease to cross-check the results produced, establish trend, continuity and change. It's another advantage is in bias. It reduces bias often seen in qualitative approach, usually arising from impressionist history. The quantitative historian searches for patterns into which to situate his study, outline similarities and comparison using mathematical data. The quantitative historian must not lose sight of the diversity of human historical experience but should instead try to reduce it into a compact, comprehensive and manageable degree. A warning must be sounded here on the use of figures.

Figures may be misused (Njoku 2017). This may result to poor quantitative history, particularly in a situation where there are pre-determined categories to which the evidence is forced to slant. Another caution is avoiding assumptions from being contrary to historical facts. These problems also could beset the qualitative history.

In his book, *Mathematics in Archaeology*, Clive Orton states in the preface that "Mathematics can be used as a tool for organizing one's thought, and data, and as such is of value to any archaeologist (historian) Whatever his philosophy, whether he works in the field, laboratory, study or armchair" p13.

#### Methods of Quantitative History.

The quantitative historian like other researchers according to (Lundberg 1951) Claire (2011), Obasi (1999), (Ezeifedi and Njoku, 2017), (Nzewunwa 1990) in his methodology is involved in collection of data, the classification and arrangement of data, the description of data and analysis/presentation.

#### Interpretation of Data

A historian is faced with a number of quantitative evidences which may be economic, political and social. The historian may collect data that bear relevance to the economy.

This may involve areas such as population, agriculture, distribution and consumption, import and export, budgets, transportation, income and expenditure among others.

Political data may be in form of demographic information such as age, or election and even administrative units and their performance. A historian involved in social history may be interested in collecting data about education in the form of schools, their locations, enrollment, sex and age of students and school examination results.

On religious matters, He may concern himself with denomination and attendance.

There are also other social matters which may be in the form of hospitals, number of beds, bed space, and patients in and out, ratio of doctors to patients, number of deaths, hospital facilities, budgetary allocation to health etc.

He may also like to know about the prisons in his study of crime and punishment or even about accidents on the roads. All of these require some quantification on the part of the historian. We may illustrate this further by taking a few examples.

Let us consider the political historian interested in elections. He will need quantitative evidence of various forms. Such evidence may be scattered in various places. It is only by asking the relevant questions that the historian may get answers to carry out fruitful research in the subject area.

The evidence available may be proved by the quality of the quantity obtained. For example, answers may be gotten from the following questions on elections

- i. What was the election for?
- ii. How many constituencies were involved?
- iii. How many parties contested?
- iv. How many candidates contested in each party?
- v. In each constituency?
- vi. What was the social and economic status of the candidate?
- vii. The historian may also have to ask questions on the voting pattern; for example, how many registered voters were on the voting register? How many actually voted?

He may break this further from booth to booth, constituency to constituency, state by state, before arriving at a national total. He may also be interested in the type of people who voted for each party such as their social status, ethnic composition, religion, age range or even their sex, and literacy level.

By doing this over a number of years of elections, he may be able to see the voting pattern from one area to the other, from one state to another, and therefore make conclusions on the pattern.

For a fairly stable literate society, the political historian may be in a position, using such information, the analysis and interpretation, to forecast the trend of future elections.

The economic historian on the other hand deals more with quantities. His evidence may be in the form of living standards which may be in the form of cost of living. He can study the trends and patterns for a number of years for which he can obtain information.

The method is to select a given number of years and the manner in which money is spent. For instance, in the family may be spent on food, clothing, house rent, education, health and other sundries.

For each year under study, he enters in the relevant column the total amount spent, he also notes in a column, the total income for the family. By doing this for a number of years, say ten years, he will be able to find the mean for the period under study, for a given size of family on a given income.

From such study, he can find out the pattern of income and expenditure, and from there make generalization on living standard. It is also from this that he makes recommendations on improvement on the standard of free government subsidy on social services, increase in wages or reduction in some rents and health bills.



### Presentation of Data

The quantitative historian like in other disciplines deals with quantities. He knows that his information is scattered in a number of places, and in most cases in a confused form that requires order and sanity.

There are certain methods of presenting such data to make them manageable and easy to understand. The simplest of such method is tabulation.

#### Table:

A table is a convenient method of producing an ordered pattern of numerical data. It facilitates the compilation of complex numerical information. Whatever the nature of the table, the presenter should always strive to make it simple, ensure that the columns and rows have headings with brief units of the quantity being measured.

Table 2: Showing the No. of Male/Female Admission into Salem University 2011-15.

Year	Males %	No. of Females %	Total Male and Female	Differential %
2011	392	43.01	493	56.99 865 13.98
2012	468	43,33	612	56.67 1080 13.34
2013	412	41.04	592	58.96 1004 17.94
2014	457	43.07	604	56.93 1061 13.86
2015	489	46.09	572	53.91 1061 13.82

#### Diagrams

Data can also be presented by diagrammatic forms. Diagrams represent quantitative information. The objective is to reduce space, create aesthetics and enhance the quality of historical study. For instance, when one is involved in social history or economic history that treats demography, one may accumulate so many quantities from year to year, decade to decade or even century to century.

Once the researcher is able to determine the mean of each of the subset being studied, it becomes easy to represent each quantity by diagrams. For example, the growth rate of a population of a given group of people for over a century may be represented by 10 different figures of the human being, each different from the other in heights.

This involves the use of scales which informs the reader about the population. The figures are ranked side by side to make them seen and understood in context. In discussing the population size and growth of a country, or even the density, such representation can be done by dots, each showing the size of the population in a given area or period.

It thus varies in size. Large dots for areas with large population, medium for areas with average population, and small where the area is low.

Diagrammatic representations eliminate the use of lots of words and even figures.

Diagram: 1 showing the number of male/female admission into Salem University Lokoja 2011-2015

Table 3: Showing the Number of Male/Female Admission into Salem University, Lokoja 2011 - 2015

Year	No. of Males	% No. of Females	% Total Male and Female	% Differential
2010/11	200	36	360	64
2011/12	260	41	380	59
2012/13	250	40	372	58
2013/14	280	42	378	58
2014/15	285	42	390	58
2015/16	1,270	39	1,980	61

#### Histogram

According to Wikipedia, A histogram is an accurate representation of the distribution of numerical data. It is an estimate of the probability distribution of a continuous variable and was first introduced by Karl Pearson. It differs from a bar graph, in the sense that a bar graph relates two variables, but a histogram relates only one.

A histogram chat showing the number of male and female admission into Salem University Lokoja 2011 – 2015

Figure 1: Histogram Chat Showing the Number of Male and Female Admission into Salem University Lokoja 2011 - 2015

#### Line Charts

The line chart is made up of line of different lengths, each length describing the size or number. For example, if the historian wishes to consider admission into an institution for a period of time, he must obtain a total score for each year. He represents each year of enrollment by line.

The method is to put at the extreme left side, different quantities scaled from zero upwards. On the horizontal axis, the years in question are written. It is then possible to project the enrollment of a given year on the straight line running from the horizontal line axis from the point where the year is indicated vertically upwards, until the required figure on the left column is met.

Line chart showing the number of male and female admission into Salem University, Lokoja 2011-2015.

Figure 2: Line Chart showing the Number of Male and Female Admission into Salem University, Lokoja 2011 - 2015

#### Graphs

We can by using the same process of vertical line and horizontal intersecting at some points use quantities to create a graph. Graphs are usually created by points. The procedure is to join the points. By joining the points, we are in better position to appreciate the difference in the quantities we study to enhance the quality of our work.

#### Interpretation

Collection, arrangements and presentation of data are of importance; their analysis and interpretation are of equal importance.

By using statistics of numbers and quantities, empirical evidence becomes possible and a hypothesis is created and tested. Deductions are also made from such information.

This may also be abused, particularly when the available data are misused by forcing them to skew towards pre-determined conclusions. The ability to describe and compare phenomenon proves very helpful not only to other scholars but also to government, policymakers, and policy implementers. They help and assist them in making fast decisions.

For an academic and professional historian to identify the ills and errors in his society, he must be able to appreciate the methods by which the facts in currency have been arrived at. Without this, he cannot criticize what is wrong in whatever situation he finds himself, be it education, industries or even government. Thus, a good committed historian requires knowledge of how policies are made and arrived at to be able to make an input in decision-making. Quantities, when professionally used in historical research save the historian time, reduce volume of words used in narrative and qualitative history, and spares him from the embarrassment of being charged of opportunism, bias and distortion of historical facts.

#### Summary and Conclusion

Every knowledge or academic discipline has a historical origin. Simply put there is history in all human achievement, be it science, technology, politics, economics, social sciences, art, strategic studies, crime, demography, gender, urban and transport studies, culture, inter-state religion, law, education, administration, war and peace studies, anthropology to mention just a few.

One can therefore and rightly too, see history as cutting across all human and societal activities; the bad, the valley, those advancement, as well as those to be discarded. This amorphous nature of history puts much demand on the historian if he is to remain relevant to his ever changing world.

The stark reality requires from the historian some degrees of flexibility in his methodology by not holding firmly on the orthodox traditional technique of narrative history sourced primarily from historical evidence(s). Since history now goes beyond the boundaries of its traditional role, it has therefore become imperative for the historian to incorporate quantities, social science and scientific approaches in his research.

#### Conclusions

This work has addressed the inescapable demand on historian to have a working knowledge of quantities for presentation of historical research. This becomes unavoidable going by the current trend to understand history through socio-political and economic trends in our society, their continuity and change, as well as how these have contributed to human and society development. He is the creator and the destroyer. In conclusion therefore, man as a social being cannot be fully studied without complementing such studies with social science and scientific approach.

#### References

Afigbo, A.E. (1985) "Oral Tradition and History of segmentary societies", History in Africa

Alagoa, E.J. and Williamson, K (1983) *Ancestral voices: Historical Texts Number*, Niger Delta, Jos: Department of History, University of Jos, Nigeria

Amadudou-Mahtar. M. (1990) *Preface of General History of Africa I Methodology and African Prehistory* .. Ed J.Kizerbopp vii - xi

Anaele Cyril "Objectivity in Historical Scholarship" in N.L. Njoku (2008) *Introduction to History and Int'l Studies: An Africanist perspective*, New Jersey: Gold Line Publishers

Anyanwu, U.D (2002) *Research in History and Intl studies*, Okigwe Nigeria: Solar press

Busha, C and Harter, S.P (1980) *Research Methodology in Librarianship: Technique and Interpretations*, New York: Academic Press

Dike, M.C and N.L Njoku "Research methods and Techniques in History and International studies" in N.L Njoku ed. (2008) *Introduction to History and Int'l studies: An Africanist perspective*.

Eboh, e. c. (1998) *Social and Economic Research: Principles and Methods*, Lagos: Academic Publications and Development Resources.

Fritz, S (1956) *The Varieties of History from Voltaire to present*, London: Macmillan

George, H.S. (2011) *Preface of Research Methodology in History*, New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation

Gottschalk, L (1967) *Understanding History: A primer of Historical Method*, New York: Alfred. A. Knopf

Kerlinger, F.N (1977) *Foundations of Behaviour Research*, New York: Holt Rinehart and Wiston

Lundberg, G.A. (1951) *Social Research: A study in methods of gathering Data*, New York: Longman

Mcdowell, W.H (2002) *Historical Research: A Guide*, New York: Longman

Njoku, N.L.(2017) *Research methodology in history and Intl studies*, Owerri: DEBBICHUKS Publishing

Nwana-Nzewunwa (1990) *Quantitative Methodology in History* unpublished.

Uya, Okon. E. "Trends and perspectives in African History" Erim. O. Erim ed. (1984) *perspectives and Methods of African History*, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publisher Ltd.

18

## CHAPTER 12

## THE APPLICABILITY OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY TO THE STUDY OF AFRICAN HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu, PhD

&

Anthonius Chukwudi Akukwe, PhD

### Introduction

There is no doubt that the use of computer technology will lead to the generation of evidence based data that will be critical to historical methodology geared towards the development of African history. Accordingly, computer technology is capable of storing, accepting, processing and communication information that will be relevant for the historian's challenges in the study of African history. Computer aided technology will constitute an innovative approach to historical source material to the historian's calling and craft. Thus, it will enhance the multidisciplinary approach methodology to the study of African history. Today, we are living in an age, where internet connectivity of computers in the world has made the world a global village. In African history, historians should employ the computer technology to upgrade their historical research and writing. By the mid-1990's, experts estimated that more than fifty million computers were linked to the information superhighway by way of a network called the internet (Net) and by the end of the 2010, more than three hundred million computers. The internet is a computer-based worldwide information network. Thus, this is understandable because historical sources of information influence the final product and its probative value and significance in historical writing. Computer-based technologies can assist scholars in history and international studies to develop sharp historical skills and capability easily and faster by integrating various technological pedagogical features and developments. Thus, the adoption and the applicability of computer-based technology to the study of African history and international studies cannot be over-emphasized.

Source material is a significant dimension of historical methodology that it is instructive to use it as a sine-qua-non in our assessment of the work of a historian. Thus, this is understandable because historical sources of information influence the final product as well as its probative value and significance in historical writing. Besides, one can distort historical knowledge by his selection of materials. Indeed, subjective selectivity of source materials has led some historians to commit intellectual quandary. Stanley M. Elkins, leaning heavily on slave masters' sources of information vis-à-vis neglecting the slave's sources claims that the black man emerged from the American slave plantation system an infantilized adult, a Sambo. In the same manner, Kenneth Stampff asserts that most black slaves were "Clowns". While Hugh Trevor-Roper believing that the only legitimate source of historical writing is written document, claims that to study African history before the coming of the Europeans was to "pry into unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant corners of the

globe. From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that the source of historical writing is a significant scope of historical methodology.

Aside from the above, African history has oral tradition as its high-powered and efficacious source for the writing of the history of segmentary societies. Writing on "Oral Tradition and the History of Segmentary Societies" A.E. Afigbo discussed the challenges he faced using oral tradition thus:

For one reason the scratches I had recently for having ventured into the field of Efik Traditions of origin and migration in more youthful days is enough to warn me that using oral tradition could be like stepping on a steep and slippery road whose end is also invisible. Though I must confess it is not yet quite clear to me whether my crime consisted in transgressing the rules for handling oral tradition or in having the temerity to cross ethnic boundaries in the pursuit of historical knowledge. Notwithstanding the challenges, this wide-ranging as well as laudable concern for the methodology of oral tradition has not only helped to point out the centrality of oral tradition as a source for the history of Africa particularly of Black Africa. The fact is that ever since the publication in 1961 of Professor Jan Vansina's epoch-making book, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, the study of the methodology of oral tradition has become a minor academic industry amongst historians, psycho-historians as well as anthropologists.

However, the Europeans as well as the Arabs have tried to distort African history either by deliberate falsehood or by deliberate denial of the existence of African history, although Afrocentric historians are to a large extent dismantling these Islamic and European prejudices to African history, particularly since the 1960s.

In reconstructing the history of the Bakuba, using almost exclusively oral traditions, Jan Vansina made a methodological breakthrough, showing that what written document is to literate society, is what oral tradition is to non-literate society. Accordingly, this development made a tremendous impact on African historiography. The African continent, like other continents in the world, has been a stage upon which the drama of human development as well as cultural differentiation has been acted since the beginning of history. However, until recently the history of the African continent, its cultural patterns, as well as the potential of its people, has been the subject of monumental distortions, ridicule as well as amusement among the intellectual community. From the foregoing it is obvious that the most pervasive perspective on Africa until recently was the Eurocentric perspective. In other words, the accepted explanations for African developments were the "Covering Law Theory", championed by Carl Hempel as well as Karl R. Popper, otherwise referred to as "Hempel-Popper Law". Therefore, the Covering Laws in this context were Social Determinism, the White Man's Burden and so on. Infact, Africans had developed systematic ways of preserving their history, the vast majority of them did not write down their history, hence advocates of the above Eurocentric view could justifiably assert that "Africa had in History". Although this Eurocentric approach to African history is fast becoming extinct,

particularly since the 1960s when the Afrocentric historians came into the limelight. The chapter is an attempt to demonstrate and reinforce the origin, functions and the applicability of the computer technology to the study of African history.

#### Computer: The Labyrinths of Origin

There is no doubt that the use of computer technology will lead to the generation of evidence based data that will be critical to historical methodology geared towards the development of African history. Thus, the origin of the computer, a machine indeed by design is capable to accept, store, process as well as communicate information and it is associated with man's desire to ease his challenges with numbers.

In the 16 century, it started with the mechanization process following the invention of the "Abacus" calculating devise. Thus, the 17 century as well as the industrial Age provided a lot of devices for automating mathematics. An inventive genius as well as the most prominent of these was perhaps those of Sir Charles Babbage, who is referred to as the father of the modern computer.

It was not until the 1900s that the actual electromagnetic system stated. In addition, these were colossus at Bletchley Park, England, as well as Eniac and Ferranti machine at Manchester. These early electronic or first electronic stored programme computers were designed during the 2 World War for the United States Department of Defence for listing the dead, the wounded as well as to calculate the fall of the shells.

In the world of computers, software developers keep producing application programmes that offer more user-friendly features. One such application is the Microsoft Word. This is a Word Processing application that offers a lot of easy-to-use facilities in document production. Such facilities are in the area of editing, spell checking, formatting, thesaurus, tables, merging, graphics etc. These processing application facilities are indeed relevant and beneficial to the African historian.

Thus, these initial machines mentioned above, were enormous and filled rooms with vacuum tubes. Note however, that time was severely limited because there were so many tubes. In the late 1940s, the transistor which was invented had the benefit of compactness, use of low voltages as well as the consumption of an infinitesimal amount of power.

Consistent enhancement and reform since then had resulted in the founding of the first "Integrated Circuit" in which a lot of transistors as well as other electronic devices in conjunction with the wiring that link them are manufactured in one piece.

Developments of this technology led to the "Silicon Chip" in which huge numbers of these devices are packed unto a sliver of silicon of only about one quarter of an inch square. In the 1950s, increased quality as well as expanded business opportunities gathered momentum and have gone through various generations in its application in business.

Note however, that in the mid-1940s, scholars like Howard Aiken at Harvard, John Von Neumann of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton; J. Presper Eckert as well as John Mauchley both of the University of Pennsylvania, and Konrad Zuse of



Germany were the pioneers in building calculating machines that could be classified as first-generation computers (1945-1955). Historically, some of the first-generation computers were named the E.N.I.A.C (Numerical Integrator and Calculator) EDVAC (Electronic Discrete Variable Automatic Computer), the EDSAC (Electronic Delay Storage Automatic Computer) the UNIVAC (Universal Automatic Computer) just to mention but a few. Obviously, the first-generation computers made use of vacuum tubes, were very bulky, and generated much heat as well as created air-conditioning challenges.

Following the introduction of the transistors in the mid1950s, there was great innovation. This was the era of the second-generation computers (1955-1965). The computers of this period became reliable. Also, there was a clear divide between the designers, builders, operators, programmers, and the maintenance experts.

The third-generation computers (1965-1980) made use of small-scale integrated circuits (ICs) which ushered in a major price and performance benefit over the second-generation computers which were built-up from individual transistors. This era led to the emergence of compatible computers with the purpose of making all software including the operating system to work on all models as well as to be efficient for all the divergent uses.

The fourth-generation computers (1980 upwards) made use of large-scale integration (LSI) circuits which were chips made up of thousands of transistors on a square centimeter of silicon. This ushered the era of personal computers (PCs) and led to the reduction of price of computer systems.

The fifth-generation computers are currently being designed and developed. They work using "Expert System" as well as "Artificial Intelligence". However, these computers have programmes that gave them the ability to infer, reason, solve problems, understand language, take decisions and imitate human intelligence.

However, the first generation of computers with vacuum tubes, the current trend has moved to transistors as well as semi-conductors and from the third generation to the fourth which embraced the integrated circuit and currently, to the fifth generation which used silicon chips. Computer nowadays fall into three categories namely, Mainframes, Mini computers as well as Microcomputers.

Computerization in historical perspective in Nigeria started in the 1960s with the installation of computers by the International Business Machines (I.B.M.) as well as International Computer Ltd (I.C.L.). For teaching, learning and research, computers were first installed at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria, specifically for courses like statistics, Mathematics as well as Agriculture. Consequent upon this development the demand for computers for learning increased tremendously in all areas of human pursuit that is associated with the acquisition of knowledge.

#### The Role of Computer

In terms of speed, the computer can work faster than any human being when it involves calculation of large and complex numbers. It accepts, stores, processes as well as communicates information. In other words, computer deals with basically data fed into

it and this is carried out in four ways namely accepting information, storing the information, processing the information, as well as communicating the information.

Also, computer can recall the information it stored when needed. If the correct programme instructions and data are properly fed into the computer, it can produce adequate result without mistakes. The computer can work for a longer hour without getting tired, that is, less fatigue. The computer is also versatile to the extent that it can carry out several tasks, such as calculation, typing stories, communication, playing music and games and watching films etc.

Eric Udogwu, analyzing the four functions mentioned above argued that “computer software’s are slotted into the hardware where they will move straight to the memory for storage, and thereafter to the processor for the selection of programmes which would be communicated to the operator.

Computer is a machine or apparatus, mechanical, electric or electronic, for carrying out especially complex calculations dealing with numerical data or with stored items of other information; also used for controlling manufacturing processes or coordinating parts of a large organizations.

In yet another genre, it is used for word processing, payroll, personal record-keeping, general accounting, inventory control, sales monitoring as well as client invoicing, and court case management. Besides, they are basic planning tools and not ends in themselves. Modern information technology systems, when used, ensure national development by playing a significant function in the decisions making process as well as national policy planning endeavour.

The application of computers takes away the boredomness associated with repetition as well as guaranteed accuracy of analytical operations. Thus, planning and predicting becomes veritable tool overtime and cost efficiency, productivity optimization well-timed information distribution. All the aforesaid ensure maximum utilization of both human as well as material resources.

At present, banking institutions in Nigeria adopted rapid computerization of their operations as against the former analogue to a more information technology-based approach. By and large, most banks operate the batch computer system by establishing a database in a central computer centre at their head offices. Data entry operators are keyed-in on daily undertaking. These data the computer uses in updating all accounts and it also produces print outs on which the branch will depend on for the reconciliation of accounts as well as the next day’s operations. Anthonious Chukwudi Akukwe of the Department of Computer Education, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri contended that

The banking institutions have indeed revolutionized their accounting and banking operations generally by ensuring that they have a computerized data base that aid them in achieving an efficient and expeditious service-oriented goal to their customers. Besides, for savings as well as current accounts respectively, the accounting computer has recourse to a ledger card, statement sheets; and with respect to withdrawal or

deposit account, the computer data base automatically computes the interest as well as balance of account as opposed to the analogue operations of the 70s in Nigeria. On a few tiny silicon computer chips no larger than a man's fingernail, the text of the entire Bible can be recorded for instant replay. The age of the computer-spewing out thousands of millions of pages of paper-adds to an already large paper pile. The swift advance of communication technology-computers, miniature radio transmitters...has contributed in making the world a nation of spies. By installing additional computer software on an already existing computer system, employers can now monitor practically every move a user of video display terminals makes-secretaries, airline reservation clerks, postal workers and those who work at grocery checkout counters.

#### The Applicability of the Computer Technology to the Study of African History

Computer may be defined as a calculator, a machine or apparatus, mechanical, electric or electronic, for carrying out, especially complex calculations, dealing with numerical data or with stored items of other information; also used for controlling manufacturing processes, or coordinating parts of a large organization. A computer is also defined as a machine which takes data, processes it, and gives out information as a result of that processing. We may store the answer in computer memories or process it as word and store it. The information the computer processes may be numbers, letters or even sounds.

In this chapter, the applicability of the computer technology to the study of African history is approached against the background of the sources of African history which is made up of variety of sources. In this study, we are going to start with oral traditions. In his study of the Bakuba, Jan Vansina, demonstrated that oral traditions as "testimonies of the past which are deliberately, transmitted from mouth to mouth" and from generation to generation and as oral literature are legitimate, sources of historical knowledge. They can be classified as formulas including titles and names; poetry; lists including genealogies; tales; commentaries, and precedents in law. The sources, he goes on to indicate, can yield "tribal history, village and family history, or royal history; with tribal history recounting the migrations and the formation of chiefdoms, village and family history telling how villages were formed and how clans spread through the country and split themselves into sections and royal history describing the evolution of the kingdom through time. In reconstructing the history of the Bakuba, using exclusively oral traditions, Jan Vnasina made a methodological break-through, showing that what written record is to literate society, is what oral tradition is to non-literate society. This development made enormous impact on African historiography.

Because the computer has the capacity to accept, stores processes as well as accommodates data, its applicability in oral history cannot be overemphasized. The best option in the circumstance is to supply it with the vital information for communication, storage as well as processing. The software of the computer, thus, shall be among others interviews of some elderly men, the translation of these interviews, and video tapes of cultural entertainments-singers, dancers and drummers. This approach will guarantee

accuracy, large storage capacity, consistency and speed. In a bid to ensure that unauthorized persons do not gain access to such stored information, a password is usually given to the user. In other words, the user can be given a coded number with which he can easily gain access.

What is more, programmes are stored in the "Mass Storage", the same way documents could be kept in a filing cache. At any particular point in time, one needs a specific reference; one can have recourse to the filing cabinet with a view to retrieve it. This data is linked to the computer especially the machines memory, so that it can be retrieved for computation. However, data reserved in the back-up or Mass Storage is indeed retained even if the storage medium is switched off. Although this information could be retrieved using a "floppy disc".

With regards to written documents, there are computer input devices which will accept handwriting, as someone pretyped on printed pages. Furthermore, there are graphic packages which allow one draw on the surface of the computer screen directly. Also, some floppy disc could store information as much as 250,000 as well as half a million characters. An 8-inch, hard disc can store up to eight million characters, a size equivalent to about 11-year non-stop typing, eight hours a day. As the written aspect of African history was, at the on-set made-up of the accounts of explorers, missionaries, traders and consuls, especially as contained in their diaries and memoirs-these too could be stored, processed and replayed instantly when required.

The applicability of computer technology to archaeological finds is significant, in that it will be fed on the photograph of the find, the site, the species as well as the chronology of the find and all the information can be informed the computer to process for future use in historical studies. This is indeed a necessity due to the insistence that African history had to be approached from the inter-disciplinary angle. Resort had to be made to the works of social anthropologists, historical linguists, archaeologists; ethno-botanists as well as zoologists had to be used in the reconstruction of African history.

In this study, we shall emphasis the relevance of geography (environmental sciences) to the study of History. Both historians and geographers have implicitly or explicitly recognized the significance of one another's subject and objects of study and the relevance of one subject to the understanding of the other, although in the past, change, continuity, stability, nation-building, orthodoxy and radicalism, these are the materials of which history and geography produce in their audience. Generally, they induce space-time conception of world and lead to the recognition of personality, epochs, era, regions, structures, patterns and states or processes which call for explanation or interpretation and constitute leading obstacles in the study of the two disciplines. A philosopher, Immanuel Kant, made a distinction, which infact demonstrated the unity of both history and geography when he contended that:

Description according to time is history, and that according to space is geography.... The former is a report of phenomena beside each other, and geography and history fill up the entire circumference of our perception. Since the early 1960's, a good number of

the Nigerian historians like A. E Afigbo, E.J. Alagoa, Ola Balogun, and J.V. Erivwo, just to mention a few have used geography in historical writing. Afigbo, raised issues which actually invited geographers to the study of migratory history, A.E. Afigbo raised the issue of

...whether any logical relationship has been established between say the direction of migration and geographical data...The computer in the present scenario could be used in videoing the direction of migration. The computer could be used for processes which call for explanation or interpretation which constitute major obstacles in the study of the two disciplines. Indeed, no, one will argue that history and geography are not the science of human communities if science means the pursuit of knowledge.

Here, we shall be exploring economics as an aid to history, the relationship between history and economics is not a matter of difference or how they are conceived rather the requirements of disciplines and their cross-fertilization is a function of how the tasks of both disciplines are perceived and conceived. In fact, the determination of "what happened and why it happened as and when it did" is an important matter, and that links history with economics, the other social sciences and sciences generally. The social structure of any society is indispensable to an understanding of its political and economic activity, and the importance of social and economic history for an understanding of the modern world... is self-evident. The computer with its storage devices, can accept and process information with regards to "what happened and why it happened as and when it did".

Sociology and Anthropology constitute an aid to the study of African history. In other words, the contribution of the social sciences is appreciable given the fact that they supply theories and generalizations in terms of the operation of the society and processes of change, which invariably constitute the theme of history. However, these generalizations supply significant data that are useful to the historians searching for explanations or complex events. Anthropologists, according to E.J. Alagoa, have built up a number of historical models in Africa, some of which have stimulated productive reconstructions by historians but not all of them have been generally accepted. G.I. Jones, lecturer in Social Anthropology at Cambridge, England and a former colonial administrative officer, made the first sociological analysis of the institutions of the Eastern Delta States in the Trading States of the oil rivers.

Although the study paid more attention on the structure and development of political institutions, however defined, it was historical in nature. It is significant to note the study was centered with developments in the nineteenth century, the eighteenth and the seventeenth centuries; and made debilitating effort at the reconstructions of earlier times. The focus was on internal historical development but since the period covered was one of intensive overseas trade, and since greater reliance was placed on external documenting sources, the study tended to give primacy to external factors for change over the internal. With respect to the above, permit me to say that the relevance of the

applicability of computer to this aspect of the technique for studying African history is indispensable.

It is somewhat difficult to appreciate the fact that the physical science disciplines could have connection with the study of history. In the study of African history, historians have used the medical sciences as a cornerstone to study relationships between peoples, through blood-groups as well as typology. Note that the study of epidemics as well as pathological patterns, have a connection on the fertility and virility and the growth of populations, in ancient Egypt, a sizeable proportion of diseases of the past were found in skeletons of mummies that were diagnosed. Furthermore, the mathematical sciences, nowadays, has been contributing immensely to historical studies with respect to the study of Economic-History. The study of the depopulation of Africa through the transatlantic slave trade, have also included among others statistical characteristics in a bid to quantify the total number of Africans shipped to the new world, as well as the impact of such population movement on the growth of population and the historical development of Africa.

By and large, it is a bit easy to realize the relevance of history with regards to the domestication of animals as well as crops. The contributions of the biological sciences are infact relevant to the historian in terms of the studies of the history of Agriculture. It is important to appreciate that the Ethiopian highlands as well as the Niger Delta region were indeed known as early centres of civilization and population density due to its crop domestication. Also, in the Nile Valley area of the horn of Africa, irrigation agriculture was significant to its early civilization. Where the use of computer technology is used for storage of statistical data of the Atlantic slave trade, it would have been easy to give exact figures of slaves that were taken from Africa as opposed to speculative quantification because speed and accuracy are very essential in computing. The appropriateness or suitability of the computer to the study of African history will lead to performing tasks effectively without wasting much time as well as lead to efficiency in the study and search for historical knowledge.

Today, the use of multimedia, internet (especially the World Wide Web (WWW), and various forms of distance learning (as obtainable today in many foreign universities offering undergraduate and postgraduate programmes online) cannot be overemphasized. Thus, interest in using them as tools to support historical studies is growing, both from the perspective of a historical educator and that of African historical learner. Therefore, African history cannot be left behind in this significant technological advancement.

Oral communication skills are very important in the use of oral tradition in the reconstruction of African history. In today's study of African history, considerable emphasis is given to oral activities between the historian and his informant, in which historians use their calling to go for information that is relevant to his study. These activities include simulations, role-plays and discussion. Computer simulations provide a stimulus for such a work, as they offer both a focus for oral activity and a continually

changing scenario for historians to talk about. Computers have a useful contribution to the development of oral skills if they are used wisely by historians in African historical reconstruction.

Experts estimated that by the mid-1990s, more than fifty million, computers were linked to the information superhighway by a way of a network called the internet (Net) and by the end of the 2010, more than three hundred million computers. The internet is a computer-based worldwide information network. It is composed of a large number of smaller interconnected network called internets. These internets may connect tens, hundreds or thousands of computers, enabling them to share information through a series of fibreoptic cables or other connectivity media, which is relevant to the African historian in recapturing the history of segmentary societies. A historian with a Personal Computer (PC), can get connected to the internet via a Modem (Modulator-Pemodulator) which is a small device and can be attached to the computer. It connects your computer to another or other computers over communication/telephone lines like GSM or CDMA as is the case here in our country. Nonetheless, in order to take advantage of the greatest internet software like the Microsoft Internet Explorer or Mozilla Fire Fox for exploring the Web Fast you will need a minimum of Pentium 4 computer system or at least a Pentium M laptop computer running Microsoft Windows XP Professional SP2/3, vista or the latest windows 7 operating system. Once a historian is connected to the Net, he will be able to get access to:

- Email: Electronic Mail which allows him to instantly send and receive messages from all over the world.

- WWW: World Wide Web

- Chat: A way to communicate in real time to others.

The significance of computer-based technology application to the African historians is indeed indispensable. According to Dunker, computer technology as a tool for the African historian can lead to significant improvement in historical scholarship. Among these are self-esteem, vocational preparedness, language proficiency and overall academic skills.

Notwithstanding the merits the historian finds in the importance of computer-based technology application to the study of African history, the historian should also be mindful of the shortcoming of computer technology viz-a-viz the challenge of garbage-in garbage-out; the problem of mistakes, the problem of cost, all manifest. Other handicaps is that there is the general conception that computers constitute threats to human jobs in that it has led to downsizing employees of most banking industry in Nigeria.

### Conclusion

The relevance of the applicability of computer technology to the study of African history and International Studies has been given an in-depth analysis in this work. Besides, approaches and roles of computers in the study of African history, learning and research, have changed tremendously worldwide in the last three decades. Nowadays,

the imperative of computer technologies have made multimedia and information gathering to advance; simple simulations and exercises, primarily gap-filling, and multiple-choice drills, now available. Computer-based technologies have now made African history, learning and research to be easy, exciting and result-oriented. Computer-based technologies can assist scholars in history and international studies to develop sharp historical skills and capability easily and faster by integrating various technological pedagogical features and developments.

Computer application can aid in these regards in the spheres of using such as concordance software with large historical corpora by providing students with the means to investigate historical data in authentic contexts; multimedia programmes incorporating historical data-recognition software can immerse students into rich environments for historical research and internet allows for a great number of opportunities to communicate in the target areas, access textual and multimedia information and publish for global audience and allow both students and teachers to conduct long-distance communication and collaboration in authentic research and multimedia publication.

In conclusion therefore, the adoption and the applicability of computer-based technology to the study of African history and International Studies cannot be over-emphasized. This is because it is long overdue in the teaching, learning and research in the Nigerian universities and institutions of higher-learning as is the case in the western world.

#### Endnotes

1. Stanley M. Elkins, *Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 8, 88-89.

2. Kenneth Stampp, "The Historian and Southern Negro Slavery", in *American Historical Review*, LVII, April 1953, 617.

3. Quoted in O.E. Uya, "Trends and Perspectives in African History", in Erim O. Erim and O.E. Uya, *Perspectives, and Methods of Studying African History*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1984), 2.

4. For these scratches, See E.A. Udo, "The Ibo Origin of Efik by A.E. Afigbo: Review". *The Calabar Historical Journal*, Vol.1. No.1. June 1976, 154-172.

5. Anthonius C. Akukwe, *Computer Programs: Theory and Practice*, (Owerri: Colon Concepts Ltd, 2013), 108.

6. Ibid

7. Ibid, 109

8. Ibid, 109-110

9. Ibid, 111

10. Ibid 112

11. Eric Udogwu, *Personal Interviews Conducted by M.C. Dike*, Centre for Computer Systems and Services, Wetheral Road, Owerri, 1990.



12. Anthonius Chukwudi Akukwe, Personal Interview, Department of Computer Education, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri on 10 July 2019.
13. Awake, "The Garbage Glut: Will it Bury Us and Disposal Products Become Indispensable Garbage". Editorial Articles, Vol. 71, No. 18, 3 and 6, September, 1990.
14. Awake, Electronic Eavesdropping its so Easy" Editorial Article, Vol. 69, No. 10, 6, May 22, 1988.
15. Awake, Electronic Eavesdropping...
16. Chambers 20 Century Dictionary, (Bungay, Suffolk: Richardclay (The Chauser Press Ltd, n.d.), 259.
17. E.N. Ekwonwune, Basic Information Systems: An Introduction (Owerri: Cel-Bez Publishing Co., 2010), 2.
18. Jan Vansina, "Recording the Oral History of the Bakuba-1, Methods", 45-46. He also analyzed in this article how oral traditions are preserved and the aims for doing so; how to tackle the problems inherent in oral traditions; and the fact that written documents is to the literate societies what oral tradition is to non-literate societies.
19. Anthonius Chukwudi Akukwe Personal Interview, Department of Computer Education..., 10 July 2019.
20. W.G.V. Balchin, Geography: An Outline for intending students, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 7.
21. A.E. Afigbo, "Efik Origin and Migrations Reconsidered" Nigeria Magazine, No. 89, 1955, 89, 267-80.
22. E.J. Alagoa, Ijo Origin and Migrations, Nigerian Magazine, No. 91, 1967 and No. 92, March 1967, 279-88.
23. Ola Balogun, Ibini Ukpabi of Arochukwu, Quoted in Chukwuemeka Nwosu, "The Inter-disciplinary Methodology to the Study of History", in THUCYDIDES: International Journal of Arts, History and International Studies, Dept of History and International Relations, Abia State University., Vol. 1. No. 1. December 2016.
24. J.V. Erivwo, "The Tradition of Origin of Urhobo of the Niger Delta", Quoted in Chukwuemeka Nwosu, The Inter-disciplinary...5.
25. A.E. Afigbo, "Ibibio Origin and Migrations: A Critique of Methodology", Nigerian Magazine, Nos. 107-109, 1971, 65-66.
26. Eskor Toyo, "Economics as An Aid to History," in Monday B. Abasiathai, Expanding Frontiers of African History: The Inter-Disciplinary Methodology, (Calabar: Wusen Press Ltd, 1988) 121.
27. Ibid
28. E.J. Alagoa, "The Relationship between History and Other Disciplines in Tarikh Historical Method, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1978, 20.
29. Ibid
30. E.J. Alagoa, "The Inter-disciplinary Approach to African History in Nigeria, Presence Africainé, No. 94, 1975, 171-83.

31. E.J. Alagoa, The Inter-disciplinary Approach to African History in Monday B. Abasiattai, *Expanding Frontiers...*520.
32. Fidelis C Obodoeze et al, Computer based Technology in Foreign Language Education in Nigeria for Sustainable Development, in A.B.C. Chiegboka et al (ed), *The Humanities and Sustainable Development*, (Nimo: Rex Charles & Patrick Ltd, 2011) 825.
33. Ibid, 830.
34. Ibid,831.

19

## CHAPTER 13

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE CHALLENGES OF RECONSTRUCTING AFRICAN HISTORY

Dan O. Chukwu, PhD

&

James C. Chukwu

### Introduction

Archaeology as an ancillary to historical studies, it seems, has contributed significantly to the growth of this branch of knowledge. Other ancillaries to historical writing include social anthropology, sociology, geography and linguistics. If, for anything, archaeological finds have undeniably helped in debunking the diffusionist idea held in the European circles about the development of organised states and the domestication of animals in Africa, south of Africa, prior to the age of European conquest of the continent. The diffusionist theory has maintained that the idea about statecraft came from places outside Africa, possibly Europe and Asia. In this chapter, we prove, through archaeological finds, the abundance of Nigerian, nay African indigenous history and culture. Nok, Igbo-Ukwu, Daima, Iwo Eleru, and other African areas, argues the paper, have seen excavations of human skeletons and other objects which, when radio-carbon dated, showed evidence of man's existence thousands of years ago. What is more, such finds have aided historical writing for, as the chapter has argued, in terms of extending historical times backward.

Since the mid-twentieth century, archaeological studies have constituted a veritable instrument for the study of African heritage. Ever since then, too, archaeological finds have in no doubt helped to debunk the diffusionist idea often held by Europeans to the effect that developments, including statecraft and domestication of animals in Africa, south of the Sahara, owed their origins to places outside the continent. Apart from archaeology, there are other academic disciplines that have aided the study of African history and culture during the past decades. They include social anthropology, sociology, linguistics and the like. Generally, we refer to them as ancillaries to historical studies.

In this chapter, however, attempts are made to show how, in concrete terms, archaeology has contributed in the reconstruction of African heritage. But why do we use the word "reconstruction"? It is apt because the earlier European and Arab writers of African history had tended to distort facts about the people's history and culture. Or, how does one reconcile the statement below with the facts on ground about Africans and their history?

Perhaps, in the future there will be some African history to teach. But at present, there is none, there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness.... And darkness is not a subject of history.

On his part, George Hegel, a German philosopher of history, has dismissed Africans as lacking in any ingenuity. In his words, "it is manifest that want of self-control distinguishes the character of the Negroes (Africans)". It was this lack of self-control, he maintained, that made it impossible for them to develop an early history and culture.

In the above and other fora, Eurocentric views were banded to portray Africans, south of the Sahara including Nigerians, as lacking in civilizations well worth beaming any academic searchlight on. Thus, when we write the histories of these societies, we do so in the hope of recasting, re-constructing, re-writing and correcting the earlier impressions about a non-existing history. In the chapter, the words “African heritage or culture” have been used to refer to the whole gamut of African history. The study is divided into a number of sections which include an attempt at the definition and development of the science of archaeology.

#### Conceptual Clarifications

It has been contended that the word “archaeology” traces its origin to the Greek. In its Greek etymology, “Archaïos” refers to Ancient; “Arche” means beginning; while “logos” connotes discourse. Over the years, the term has developed changing meanings and usage. At the beginning the meaning of archaeology was confined to the study of ancient terms. But progressively, the meaning has come to encompass the study of general political and cultural history; collection and administration of antiquities; cultural revival, as well as the study of the classical antiquities. In a sense, archaeological studies cannot be said to be a pastime employed to escape from the present, nor is it an exploration of the dead forgotten past. It is rather seen as a way of enlarging and expanding the understanding of ourselves.

Archaeology has also been defined as a scientific study of man’s past through the material remains of his activities. The operative words here are “material remains”. These “remains” act as a monument and link between the present and the past – and to a large extent form the basis of a discourse for the archaeologist.

As a social science, archaeology studies the corporate society rather than an individual member of it. It does this through the recovery (excavation) of artefacts, radio carbon-dating and the reconstruction of the society’s past. It has been pointed out that archaeology is an extension of historical studies or as some scholars have remarked, it is a supplementary or auxiliary arm of history, digging into the earliest parts of man’s past. Due to the fact that man’s history is reconstructed through a trace to far behind, as against far beyond, the relevance of archaeology is not found lacking. Thus, it has been established that the point at which oral tradition and written records stop in the study of history, archaeology normally takes over. The general thinking is that archaeology works in consonance with geology, botany, zoology, physics and chemistry as well as history, anthropology and sociology. According to Daniel F. McCall, before an archaeologist commences the study of an area, he is expected to have acquainted himself with the available written material or non-material evidence about the site. As a natural science of garbage, archaeology is saddled with the excavation of all manner of material remains, ranging from coins (numismatics), tools in the form of iron, stone (flint axe), metal work, pottery, ruins of building, agricultural works (canals), mine shafts to garbage heaps. Others are bricks, charcoal, broken bottles, mounds of various kinds and

shapes, relics, hearth, pits, graves, domestic utensils, among others. These material remains are generally referred to as artefacts.

#### Development of Man and Archaeological Sites

Over the years, man's development has been classified into a number of periods. These include the Stone Age, the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. In his book, pre-historic times, Sir John Lubbock introduces the words pre-historic and pre-history to express the idea about the Stone Age system. According to him, the Stone Age was the period when man's weapons were made of chipped flint implements, bone and wood in the stones. This was what G. O. Onibonjo calls the early or the so-called Palaeolithic Age.

Apart from being characterized by chipped flint implements, the soil conditions appeared to have militated against the survival of bone in parts of Nigeria during this period. The kind of stone tools of this period consisted of pebbles or slumps flaked by percussion to form crude chopping and cutting tools with edges anything from 3cm to 12cm long. Originally, they were called Olduvai type of pebble tools, so named after Olduvai George, in Tanzania. Olduvai tools are known to spread to parts of Africa, including Nigeria. For example, geological surveys have suggested the prevalence of such pebble tools in a river at Beli on the river Taraba in the south of north-east Nigeria.

Next to the Olduvai culture was the Acheulian culture named after the site of St. Acheul in France, where the culture was first sited. Characteristics of this culture included "hand-axes" of bifaces. Thurstan Shaw has argued that these tools are oval in shape with a cutting edge. There is a widespread of Acheulian sites in parts of Africa. In Nigeria, it seems they are distributed in parts of northern Nigeria, especially in the upland of the Jos tin mining area. In Mai Idon Toro, for instance, cleavers predominate, while at Nok hard wares are common.

It is said that the iron smelting sites of Taruga were originally associated with terracotta figurines of the distinctive artistic style named after a Nigerian village, Nok, where they were first discovered. Nok culture was originally known as a result of the recovery of archaeological remains from the tin-bearing gravels west of the Jos plateau in the course of mining activities. The remains comprised mainly ground stone axes and smaller stone tools, iron axes and other iron tools, the baked clay draught pipe used in iron smelting, quartz lip-plugs, other ornaments, and above all, the striking terracottas.

There is also the Sangoan culture. The Sangoan culture is said to have succeeded the Acheulian culture. Sangoan culture is named after the Sangoan Bay on Lake Victoria (in East Africa). The stone tools of the Sangoan culture are generally heavier and cruder in appearance, and typical of this is the pick- a core tool rounded at one end and pointed at the other.

In Nigeria, it is believed that the sites of the Sangoan culture are distributed in gravels. Among these sites as widely distributed in Nigeria include those around Jebba, Abuja, Keffi and the Jos plateau and along the Sokoto River. Also, along the Ibadan-Abeokuta Road, a number of Sangoan tools have been found extending into the forest region. Generally, it has been stated that the makers and users of the Sangoan tools were

the *Homo sapiens* of the Rhodesoid type. In a way, this suggests the presence of early hominids in Nigeria as was the case in East Africa, millions of years ago.

The distribution of the Acheulian culture on the plateau and the Sangoan culture in other areas of Nigeria is said to have confirmed the fact that the two cultures were contemporaneous in Nigeria in the distant past. It is speculated that the Sangoan culture occurred between 55,000 and 40,000 years ago.

Elsewhere in Nigeria, archaeological excavations have served (and are known to be serving) as a handmaid in the reconstruction of the people's past. For example, the excavation of human skeletons, believed to be some 10,000 years old at Iwo Eleru close to Akure, suggests the antiquity of man in that region of Nigeria. Also, through the interpretation of the artefacts dug up at the Ukpa rock near Afikpo, it has been established that by 3,000 B.C., stone implements and pottery were in use in the area. Other significant areas of archaeological discoveries in Nigeria include Daima, Ife and Lejja (a village located 14 kilometres south of Nsukka).

Besides the foregoing account, there are some other archaeological finds which tend to have strengthened the argument that relatively well-organised polities must have developed in the present territory where the Igbo live. Archaeological discoveries by Shaw in Igbo-ukwu and D. Hartle in Ezira tend to lend credence to this line of thinking. Shaw's excavation produced a preponderance of bronze, copper, and iron objects as well as pottery, beads, ivory, among others.

Through the use of the radio-carbon technique, these objects are known to date back to the ninth century A.D., and are of relatively considerable age and predate the Ife, Benin and Jebba bronzes. On his part, Hartle's finds at Ezira were bronze materials which included bells, anklets, and bracelets, which appeared to be in the likes of Igbo-Ukwu works. However, characteristic of the Ezira finds was that when tested through the use of radio-carbon method they dated fourteenth century A.D.

In view of the elaborate nature and quality of the artefacts in the foregoing accounts, what is obvious is that there would have lived human groups with rich political, economic and religious institutions in these areas, Shaw may have underscored this thinking in the following words:

A thousand years ago, in the part of Nigeria, there was a highly developed and sophisticated level of social organization which could also command a considerable accumulation of wealth- wealth in terms of ivory and imported beads and copper and bronze objects. We do not know very much about the nature of social institution or of the political structure associated but it is interesting that on the east side of the River Niger, we appear to have evidence of centralized authority of some kind, some hundreds of years before the earliest dynasty of Benin.

Also, ethnographic studies by renowned anthropologists and sociologists tend to support the spirit and letter of the foregoing statement. For instance, M.A Onwuejeogwu, an anthropologist of repute, reckons with the fact that the archaeological objects of Igbo-Ukwu and Ezira belong to Nri culture. While Onwuejeogwu dates the

rise of Nri civilization to about AD 900, Adiele Afigbo, a historian, suggests that Nri civilization might have begun about six centuries before the birth of Christ, and thus by the ninth century AD, it had attained maturity, while the Igbo-Ukwu finds with which it is associated are dated ninth century AD. Thus, given the richness and artistic sophistication of the Igbo-Ukwu bronze objects, it is possible to suggest a culture that probably attained maturity rather than one that was still evolving.

The Igbo-Ukwu archaeological finds have undeniably been given some interpretations-some of which are political, economic and religious. The chapter has already highlighted the political significance. Apart from the economic interpretation given to the finds at Igbo-Ukwu, a religious interpretation may complete the story. Accordingly, Thurstan Shaw has stated that, "the nature of the bronzes was strongly suggestive of sacred vessels used for some ceremonial or ritual purpose and ornaments and regalia for some important persons connected with this". He explains further that the positioning of the repository, sacred vessels and regalia was probably the result of some raid or disaster in warfare. For the accidental discovery, which led to the excavation of the burial chamber, Shaw argues that it was a shrine or an altar, consisting of a pile of various kinds of pottery vessels. This must have been the burial chamber of a king.

In a book chapter entitled "Pottery making in Nigeria" some years ago, O.K Oyeoku appeared to have alluded to the nature of the pot made in Igbo-Ukwu and other Nigerian centres. According to him, "it is not yet clear whether similarities exist between the spherical Afikpo storage pot called Mgbukwu, the spherical peculiar pot of the Adamawa Hausa and the globular pot excavated in Igbo Isaiah compound in Igbo-Ukwu in 1938 are due to a common origin of pottery traditions or not".

Shaw's remarkable discoveries at Igbo-Ukwu have contributed significantly in exposing the rich economic and cultural heritage of Nigeria. They show that judging from the radiocarbon date of the artefacts, Nigerian culture, at the time, possessed knowledge of iron working. This also suggests the fact that this wealth may have been the result of trade contacts with the north in iron and slaves. The Igbo-Ukwu people, from all indications, represent a developed Iron Age people already established in the south and who were successfully exploiting the forest environment in which they found themselves in about the 9 century A.D. In fact, the Igbo smiths of Awka and Nkwerre and the 9th century Igbo-Ukwu civilization show some highly decorated and ornamental metal objects indicating a high level of technology.

#### Uses of Archaeology in Historical Reconstruction

The scientific study of material remains of the past has not only been accepted as an academic discipline on its own, but it has also been accepted as a handmaid to the study of other academic disciplines. In this section of the chapter, we consider some of the uses of archaeology in historical studies.

**Validation of Oral Traditions:** Oral tradition has been defined as consisting in an important unwritten source in historical reconstruction. According to Jan Vansina, "Oral



traditions consist of all verbal testimonies which are reported statements concerning the past". Sometimes the nature of some oral tradition makes it impossible for the historian to establish a relative chronology. On the other hand, the archaeologist normally goes for archaeological artefacts according to the claims of oral tradition. Thus, if he (the archaeologist) is able to excavate some material remains of any past civilization at the mentioned site, it would have been possible to validate the original claims of oral tradition. Where, on the other hand, the excavation exercise is not able to discover any material remains of the past settlement/civilization, the claims by oral tradition would have been invalidated.

**Extension of Historical Time Backward:** Evidently the system has helped in filling in any historical gaps. It is also evident that where oral tradition and documentary record stop, archaeology normally takes over to recall man's past. Until the mid-20 century, for instance, when archaeological finds were made around the Omo River Valley and the Olduvai Gorge (in East Africa) on the existence of man, the thinking in the European circles was that Africa was of no historical significance to the human race. The finds have, however, shown that more than two million years earlier man had inhabited that part of Africa. It was from here that men migrated to other parts of the continent, while others migrated to the Asian world across the Indian Ocean. In other words, it is possible to establish that archaeology provides information for pre-history of man, that is, man's history before the advent of written records. Here, archaeological studies have been able to establish that beyond distorted written records by Arab and European scholars, man's beginning is traceable to Africa. "They (human beings) seem to have appeared first in Africa, then, beginning around 300, 000 years ago, in Europe and Asia".

**Stratigraphy:** Here the archaeologist uses the method referred to as carbon fourteen (c-14) to establish relative age of artefacts. This method assumes that artefacts found in deeper area of the earth are older than those in the upper layer. It is a system whereby organic remains are examined to determine the extent to which a certain radioactive isotope of the element may have disintegrated since the death of the plant or animal. This is normally possible because the half-life of the radioactive isotope has been determined. For a good example, it takes 5,570 years for half the substance to disintegrate in organic remains, then another 5,570 years for the rest half of the organic remains to disintegrate. Often this provides the needed information on the age of the organic substance which in turn permits a possible assumption that other material on the same site or layer are of the same age. It has, however, been pointed out that the method was only useful for dating sites not older than 50,000 years old.

**Archaeology and other Disciplines:** Archaeology relates with other disciplines in an inter-disciplinary way. It employs the services of geology, botany, zoology, physics, chemistry as well as history, anthropology and sociology. It is said that before an archaeologist embarks on the study of a site, he is expected to have acquainted himself with the available written or oral material or non- material evidence which is later

handed over to history for either synchronization or supplementation (or both) for the latter's evidence.

#### Conclusion

We have been able to establish that archaeology is not just a science of garbage but that which gives material and non – material evidence about the society's political, economic, and social existence in the past. Thus, through the scientific examination of artefacts, it has been able to be established that man, thousands of years ago, lived in the area now called Nigeria. Undeniably, these early men evolved their political culture, devised their own economic means of livelihood, as well as related with one another within the group and others outside. By extension, this monumental evidence has provided the historian with unassailable information to correct the false impression about the authenticity of African history.

#### Endnotes

1. Robin Horton, "Stateless Societies in the History of West Africa", in J. F. A. Ajayi and Michael Crowder (eds) *History of West Africa vol One* (London: Longman Group Ltd, 1976), 104.

2. Trevor-Roper Hugh, "The Rise of Christian Europe" in *The Listener*, as cited in Michael Crowder, *West Africa under Colonial Rule*, London: Hutchinson, 1968.

3. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, New York: Dove Publications, Inc., 1956; the reader may also see Mokwugo Okoye, *The Growth of Nations* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1978), 122.

4. Mary C. Ecoma, "Archaeology and Nigerian History". A Post-graduate Seminar paper, Department of History, University of Calabar. 1990, 2.

5. Kofi Darkwah, "Archaeology and Historical Reconstruction". A mimeograph, Department of History, University of Calabar, Calabar, 1988.

6. Daniel F. McCall, *Africa in Time – Perspective*, (New York: Oxford University Press) 1969 11.

7. Kofi Darkwah, "Archaeology and Historical Reconstruction..."

8. Thurstan Shaw, *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries in Eastern Nigeria*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1970) Chapter 1

9. G. O. Onibonoje, *Africa in the Ancient World*, (Ibandan: Onibonoje Press Publishers 1971) 8

10. Thurstan Shaw, "Prehistory" in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History* (Ibandan: Helnemann Educational Books, 1980) 24

11. Shaw, "Prehistory" in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History...* 26

12. Thurstan Shaw, "Archaeology in Nigeria" *Antiquity*, 1969 17; see also Owbo Ovuakporie, *Are Africans Black People?* (Lagos: Vinna Books Publishers Ltd, 2019), 49 – 54.

13. Shaw, "Prehistory" in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History...* 26

14. Shaw, "Prehistory" in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History...* 26

15. Shaw, "Prehistory" in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History...* 18

16. Mary C. Ecoma, "Archaeology and Nigerian History..." 11
17. Shaw, "Prehistory" in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*... 31
18. Shaw, "Prehistory" in Obaro Ikime (ed) *Groundwork of Nigerian History*... 37
19. Ecoma, "Archaeology and Nigerian History..." 11
20. Shaw, "Archaeology in Nigeria..." 45 - 49
21. Ecoma, "Archaeology and Nigerian History..." 12
22. Richard Olaniyan, (ed) *Nigerian History and Culture* (Ibadan: Longman Publishers 1985) 15.
23. Olaniyan, (ed) *Nigerian History and Culture*... 15.
24. T. O. Okoye, *The City in South-Eastern Nigeria* (Onitsha: Varsity Industrial Ltd.), 1996 25 Okoye, *The City in South-Eastern Nigeria*... 25.
25. Okoye, *The City in South-Eastern Nigeria*... 25
26. Shaw, *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries*... 3
27. M. A. Onwuejiegwu, *An Igbo Civilization: Nri Kingdom and Hegemony*, Benin: Ethiope Publishing Corporation. 1981.
28. Onwuejiegwu, "An Outline Account of the Dawn of Igbo Civilization in the Igbo Culture Area", *Odinani* Vol 1 No 1 1972 44-45
29. Adiele E. Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture* (Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press 1981) 47.
30. Okoye, *The City in South-Eastern Nigeria*... 25.
31. Afigbo, *Ropes of Sand: Studies in Igbo History and Culture*... 11
32. Shaw, *Igbo-Ukwu: An Account of Archaeological Discoveries*... 99 - 124.
33. O. K. Oyeoku, "Pottery Making in Nigeria" in A. Ikechukwu Okpoko (ed) *African Indigenous Technology* Ibadan: Wisdom Publishers Ltd 1999.
34. Ecoma, "Archaeology and Nigerian History..." 18
35. Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1965) 19
36. Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Vintage Books 1954) 27-28.
37. A. J. Davis, "A Review of Eike Haberland's *Treatise*, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* Vol v No 3 December 1988, 485
38. Dan Chukwu, "Validating the Value of African History: The Role of the Pioneers Considered" in Joy Eyisi, Ike Odimegwu and Alex Asigbo (eds) in *Paradise in the Arts Celebrating Prof C. C. Agbodike* (Awka: Fab Educational Books, 2008) 40
39. John D. Fage, *A History of Africa* (London: Hutchinson 1978) Chapters 1 and 2
40. Dan O. Chukwu, "Archaeology in the Reconstruction of Nigerian History" in Dan O Chukwu and Eugene I. Nnadi (eds) *Readings in the Humanities and Education* (Enugu: His Glory Publications 2011) 80.
41. Chukwu, "Archaeology in the Reconstruction of Nigerian History..." 80
42. Daniel F. McCall, *Africa in Time – Perspective*,... 11
43. Simon E. Majuk, "The Problem of Chronology in African History". A Postgraduate Seminar Paper at the University of Calabar, Calabar, 1990, 9.

44. R. J. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method* (Illinois: The Dorsey Press, Revised edn 1974) 138
45. Majuk, "The Problem of Chronology in African History..." 9.
46. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method*... 138.
47. Daniel F. McCall, *Africa in Time – Perspective*,... 11
48. Ecoma, "Archaeology and Nigerian History..." 12

20

## CHAPTER 14

## ORAL TRADITION: A VERITABLE TOOL IN HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Dr Frank Amugo, PhD

### Introduction

Oral tradition has been adjudged as a useful source for reconstructing the past, especially in societies where writing is recent and even among people who had written records. It is equally known that many historical works, including the most ancient ones, are based on oral sources.

Oral tradition, however has suffered much prejudices concerning its reliability as a source in historical writing, which is unjustifiable. This is so given the fact that, while historians from literate societies have made efforts to distill historical facts, so have many non-literate societies made efforts to preserve their own historical traditions by various means.

Some forms of oral tradition may be subject to high level of distortion, while there are others protected by regulations so strict as to keep possibilities of their alterations minimal. It is now the responsibility of the historian to identify which elements in oral tradition are reliable as sources of data or otherwise, and which ones can provide clues to the location of reliable sources elsewhere. These make realities the work of the historian or researcher working with oral tradition tedious and frustrating. However, caution must be taken not to underplay the usefulness of oral tradition as a veritable tool for historical reconstruction.

This chapter shall examine oral tradition as a source of historical writing, as well as, the various forms in which it exists and will go further to identify the pitfalls inherent in them.

### Oral Tradition: Theoretical Explications.

History scholars and practitioners involved in historical reconstruction, in recognition of the pivotal place of oral tradition have offered very useful insights and theoretical explications of oral traditions and its uses as a historical tool.

Jan Vansina was a foremost advocate and the first to provide a firm scholarly footing on the use of oral tradition in his seminal work, "Oral tradition: a study in historical methodology", published in French in 1961, and in English in 1965. He offered that; oral tradition comprises all oral testimonies concerning the past which are transmitted from one person to another. Vansina (1965) According to him, it equally relates to aspect of material and symbolic culture transmitted informally and unconsciously. In Africa, all aspects of culture and custom have to be considered part of historiography and not consigned to ethnography, anthropology or other disciplines.

Professor E.J. Alagoa one of the Frontline promoters of the use of oral tradition in hystonography, sees oral tradition as information about the past which is transmitted orally through a chain, from person to person, in which a transmitter cannot claim to be the originator or the sole/only custodian of the information, neither can claim to be, an eyewitness. Though not an eyewitness, he is a vehicle of an information or evidence which itself is history (Alagoa, 1968).

According to Enemugwem, who worked closely with E.J. Alagoa at the University of Port Harcourt, Oral sources transmit information about the distant past from one person to another. This is essentially applicable where festivals, language, ceremonies, poetry, folktales, proverbs, drumbeats, and music are recognized as the means of preserving the wisdom of the ancestors (Enemugwem, 2003).

The foregoing definitions and thoughts elicit the need for direction of inquiry objectively, into the philosophical and theoretical grounds on which the acceptance and use of oral traditions are based. The efforts of the great scholars cited strengthens the understanding and faith in the validity of oral tradition, as well as, its contribution to the general body of historical thought and practice. There is little doubt that oral tradition provides one route through which African historians can make an original contribution to international scholarship in the field of history. Therefore, oral tradition should be placed in a proper perspective in relations to other traditions of historiography. It is important to note that in African context, oral tradition has clear advantages over other sources in depth and scope regarding the information it can provide over many aspects of the past (Alagoa, 1981).

Oral tradition therefore seems to be the basic form of historical consciousness for societies in the period of their development prior to the development of written culture. At some point in the process of change, some societies were said to have created written records out of the traditions that appeared most significant for them. This would seem to be the case with the Iliad and Odyssey of the Greeks, Aeneid of the Romans, the Torah and Bible of the Jews, and the Koran and Hadith of the Arabs, as well as, the various sages and Legends of Europe (Alagoa, 1984).

It has been found that writing alone never succeeds in recording all events that may be significant to a society. Thus, the most sophisticated written cultures of modern world in Europe and North America are moving towards a respect for oral history and the systematic recording of the memories of individuals and groups about the recent past (Thompson, 1978). The concern for oral history as a valid and significant source of the recent past provides some grounds for an understanding of the central place of oral tradition of the more distant past. In most pre-literate societies, oral traditions of the people which were usually preserved in the courts of kings and rulers by special devices were committed into written records with the inception of writing and literacy. Thus, oral tradition serves as a veritable source of reconstruction of histories of pre-literate distant past of most societies.

#### Forms of Oral Traditions

Oral traditions come in diverse forms but some categorizations have been identified. On a broad sense, oral sources could be grouped in two forms: Oral tradition and Oral history. Oral tradition relates to the oral source in which the informant who gives the account is not the origin of the tradition but only a link in a chain for the process of transmission. The reality is that the oral document is a living historiographical document and not a dead one, like the archival document. Oral history on the other

hand, is usually related by the participant or eyewitness of the event concerning the past. In this case the person who participated in the event or activities or who saw them directly transmits and interprets the event or information.

Philips Stevens C. has distinguished four broad forms of oral tradition to enhance the reconstruction of history using oral sources. They are Myth, Popular history, legend, and song, which fall under the generic heading of 'Folklore', that in turn is a term so broadly applicable to all expressive aspects of culture:

#### Myth

A myth is agenerally "held but false belief or idea". It is a traditional story, especially one that dwells on the early history of a people or explaining a natural or social phenomenon, and typically involving supernaturalbeingsorevents. Put differently, it is a symbolic narrative of unknown origin which is traditional in nature, and is associated with religious or supernatural belief ([www.britannica.com>topic>myth](http://www.britannica.com/topic/myth)). Myth has also been described as a traditional or legendary story concerning some being or hero or event, with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation. Some myths may have factual origins and others are completely fictional. Interestingly, myths are more than just stories but serve a more profound purpose in both ancient and modern cultures. In this vein, they are sacred tales explaining the world and man's experience; they seek to answer timeless questions and play the role of a compass to each generation (Myths & Heroes, 2005). Many myths play instructive role while acting as a guide to social norms, taking on cultural taboos such as incest, fratricide, and greed (Myths & Heroes, 2005).

The myth has been found to be a veritable oral source because the form and constants of myths are carefully preserved and then serve as inbuilt safeguards against error or lapse of memory in a number of mnemonic (memory assisting devices). Myths have been found to be useful in different forms and nature in historical reconstruction by Psychologists, Anthropologists, folklorists and historians, particularly when carefully and skillfully applied.

Folklore is a literary genre that contains most of the elementfound in myth, especially as it set in the 'times of the beginnings', the same gods,and heroes may appear in which principals actors may be animals with similar events allied.

Generally, folklores often offer explanations of peculiarities in animaland human behavior and experience and may contain morals and express values worthy of emulation, and most times its recitations may appear to be controlled. Only special persons tell folktales and at appointed times. Inspite of the truths folktale bear, its primary purpose is entertainment. Thus, while myths are privileged information, folklores are public property. The essence of folklore is not in the historical veracity of its details, but in the episodes, strategies and moral lessons they teach. However, folklore is not easily a reliable source for use by the historian in Africa.

#### Popular History



This form of oral tradition is simply called "tradition" by historians and anthropologists, though inadequately applied as it fails to distinguish it from more structured and formalised traditions. It is a broad and rather "boundriless" or free realm of historical tradition.

Popular History stems in part, from selected elements in myth, legend, and song, and in part from common events. Most importantly, is the fact that it is lacking in restrictions on its use, which govern the other categories or forms, especially the fact that it lacks concrete referents. This makes it extremely malleable and subject to alteration through diffusion, selection, popular opinion, and the need to provide validating precedents for aspects of changing human experience. Given the fact that it reflects changing values, it is of great utility to the student of social process, but rather confounding to the historian.

However, popular History when subjected to comparative scrutiny could provide useful clues in historiographical research.

#### Legend

A legend refers to a story about an event that happened in the past, usually involving a heroic action. To qualify as a legend, the story cannot be proven although it might be true (greece.mrdonn.org., 2021). They are oral traditions associated with particular places and often involve culture heroes, witches, ghosts, or some other phenomenon related to that place. They can involve the recent or distant past, but are most important in linking people and the land (Milwaukee Public Museum, 2021).

Legend could serve as veritable source of data for historical reconstruction. Legend as an oral source has some basis in actual fact, either in terms of broad framework or by reference to specific names, events and plans. Legends are associated with personages, events, or places that could be found in other traditions which gives it some authenticity. Moreso, as it deals with real personages and real places like folklore; though it lacks definite proof and can be embellished or exaggerated by the source. However, when legend is compared with the other oral sources, it tends to assist the meticulous historian with his reconstruction work.

#### Song

Song as form of oral data, includes poetry, epic, chant and other verse forms, which are subject to restrictions of the sort, which govern myth. Songs are record of time whose composers are relatively free to include social criticisms, giving pictures of the actual social conditions of the times. So, a historian using song has the leverage to bring to the historical reconstruction a vitality, an aliveness, that is so often lacking in accounts deriving from conservative sources.

Song may be preserved as myth and usually recited by special persons assigned with that responsibility as to keep record of certain special events, such as, memorable battles, successful hunts, and the accomplishments of important individuals.

Most often, songs suffer mutations as a result of death of royal personages, warrior-heroes and other events that occur in society; they tend to respond to both traditional

and modern societal pressures to retain their relevance as sources of data. However, whether recent or old, song can be sources of oral data for the reconstruction of history of societies where writing is reluctant.

#### Possible Pitfalls in the Use of Oral Traditional

As much as oral traditional remains a veritable source for historical reconstruction, it has been found to be subject to distortions, which stand as pitfalls that unwary historians could fall into. Some of such pitfalls are:

##### Alterations for Political Purposes

Some traditions may have been tailored to validate the claim of an individual or group to a particular status or degree of social recognition. The recognition or position may have been based on the tradition and may not have been invented.

Oral traditions could be altered to perpetuate or give legitimacy to particular political or social position held by individual or families or dynasties in a society. There exists the suspicion that oral tradition could be used as propaganda, deliberately falsified or distorted to serve the interests of present rulers rather than record of the past. There are anxieties that oral traditions and genealogies could be used as charters for present rulers, to perpetuate their positions or stools.

##### Frailty of Human Memory

Frailty of human memory has been pointed out as possible pitfall in the use of oral traditions. This stems from the fact that primarily orally transmitted information gradually loses details as it goes down the generations from the original actor or witness to the informant or narrator in the present. Alogoa (1984) asserts that the reliability of the central element of oral tradition is, however, ensured by the commitment of the community to integrity and by sanctions imposed by tradition, custom and even by community law. As generations pass, the facts are stored in many people's memories, more often than not, with each person, perhaps adding fresh in accuracy; and after two or more generations, data become more difficult to determine.

##### Assertion of Social Equality

In certain instances, oral tradition could be altered to express socially desired feeling of equality with certain other peoples. Popular history especially may be adapted to express socially and politically convenient sentiments of superiority, equality, or even inferiority, and the historian must be aware of actors which can cause such distortions.

##### Collapsing of Chronology

This is what Smith calls 'Accordion Effect' in which old and initial precipitating events could be condensed and collapsed against one another to make older events seem more recent than they actually are. This problem illustrates a factor of distortion, which is common to oral tradition everywhere; the collapsing of chronology in an accordion manner. Generally speaking, earlier events are collapsed more than the recent ones; more so as it is said that history is accretionary while the human mind is selective. In most African societies, name and achievements of specific ancestors may be

remembered, but over succeeding generations, specific ancestral events tend to blend into the realm of ancestors.

#### Larger than Life Factor

Hero-stories which is mostly associated with legend, presents another factor of distortion in oral tradition, which is probably universal in making Heroes and events become larger than life. Heroes by definition, already somewhat larger than life but their remembrance tend to make them more so. More often than not, the infusion of Hero tales with magical elements, and the attribution of superhuman powers to the Heroes themselves who might be principal actors seem to be bogus than actual historical personages.

#### The Effect of Historical Writing

Written documents have been found to be possibly the strongest pitfall in the use of oral traditions for historical reconstruction. The major distortions of oral traditions arise from the tendency to reverence anything written, over and above oral traditions, with the dangerous inclination to regard any written record as authentic and sacrosanct. In this trend, oral traditions could easily be quickly and dramatically altered to conform to written history. In this guise, most modern informants often attest to the veracity of their oral accounts by saying 'is it not so written?' referring to any locally available document.

#### Conclusion

While oral traditions remain a veritable tool in historical reconstruction, the user must be patient and cautious to identify the inherent pitfalls discussed in this work. Furthermore, elements in traditions must be cross-checked by working in collaboration and corroborating with other sources such as, archaeological data, results of linguistic methods, such as glotto-chronology, anthropological studies, and written records. Oral traditions when carefully handled as suggested, stands as an indispensable tool for historical reconstruction in Africa and elsewhere.

#### References

- Alagoa, E.J. (1978). 'Oral Tradition and History in Africa' Port Harcourt, Kiabara vol. I No. I.
- Alagoa, E.J. (1981). "Oral Data as Archives in Africa" Kiabara Vol. 4. No. 2.
- Alagoa, E.J. (1981). The Python's Eye: The past in the present. Text of University of Port Harcourt Inaugural Lecture I.
- Alagoa, E.J. (1984). Towards a History of African Historiography. Text of the paper presented at the 30 Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria at University of Nigeria Nsuka, March 26-29, 1984.
- Amugo, O.F. (2008), 'Sources and Methods of Historical Writing' in Introduction to History and International Studies. An African (1) Perspective (ed) Ndu Life Njoku New Jersey, Goldline Publishing Services, USA.
- Enemugwem, J.H. (2003). "The Rhetoric of Oral Historiography" University of Port Harcourt, Kiabara Vol, 9 No.I.

Greece.mrdonn.org. (2021). What is a legend? Available at <https://greece.mrdonn.org/legends.html> (Accessed 28/11/21).

Milwaukee Public Museum (2021). The Role of Oral Tradition. Available at <https://www.mpm.edu/content/wirp/ICW-14> (Accessed 28/11/21).

Myths & Heroes. (2005). Myths, Available at [https://www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes/myths\\_what.html](https://www.pbs.org/mythsandheroes/myths_what.html) (Accessed 25/11/21).

Philips, S.Jr. (1978). 'The Uses of Oral Traditions in the Writing of African History' *TARIKH*, Vol. 6, No. 1.

Thompson, P. (1978). *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Vansina J. (1965). *Oral Tradition- A study in Historical Methodology*. Chicago: Adline publishing Company.

21

## CHAPTER 15

## AFRICAN HISTORIANS: THE SIGNIFICANCE AND THE POLEMICS OF THE APPLICATION OF ORAL TRADITIONS IN THE WRITING OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Nwosu Tony Chukwuemeka, PhD

As from the late 1950s as well as early 1960s when African countries achieved self-determination from colonial rule, the study of African history equally assumed a state of manumission. Over time, with respect to learned articles, textbooks, and a few popular works, African historians became life-active innovators of their own history. At all times, there from, writings by Europeans, viewed from Afro-Centric perspective, revealed unexpected information about African history. However archaeological finds became recognized as indeed the creation of ancient Africans, and not the Europeans or any outsider for that matter. Subsequently, African Historians realized that oral traditions transmitted from past generations and recounted by African Traditional Historians were valid as well as significant sources for historical reconstruction.

Writing on "Oral tradition and the History of Segmentary Societies, Afigbo contended as follows:

For one reason the scratches I had recently for having ventured into the field of Efik traditions of origin and migration in my more youthful days is enough to warn me that using oral tradition could be like stepping on a steep and slippery road whose end is also invisible. Though I must confess it is not yet quite clear to me whether my crimes consisted in transgressing the rules for handling oral tradition or in having the temerity to cross ethnic boundaries in the pursuit of historical knowledge.

From the contention of A. E. Afigbo above, it is clear and unquestionable that the field of the methodology of oral tradition has become incessantly and continuously specialized as well as technical. The crux of the matter is that ever since the publication in 1961 of Professor Jan Vansina's epoch making book, *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*, the study of the methodology of oral tradition has become a minor academic industry amongst historians, psycho-historians and anthropologists. Different aspects of the problems posed by the use of this family of historical evidence-dation and chronology, reliability, methods of collection and preservation, techniques of analysis (synchronic, diachronic and multi-disciplinary) continued to be probed in learned Journals, higher degree theses and printed monographs.

It is significant to note that the science of oral tradition may not be as exact and universal in its application as the methods of mathematics or physics. Each user of oral tradition, like each user of documentary or other sources of history, still has, and always will have, to decide for himself, and in the light of criteria and parameters acceptable to him, what use to make of each corpus of tradition and of each event or strand in the corpus. Similarly, in the utilization of oral tradition for historical reconstruction, as in the use of other sources of historical evidence, it is improbable and doubtful that there will be any supplantation for the very personal dialogue between the historian and his sources or for that personal resolution of this dialogue which is of the very import of the historians craft and vocation. In the meantime, the methodology of oral tradition

remains and shall always continue to remain an aspect of historical methodology. This requires that we bear in mind Jacob Burckhard's warning that "of all scholarly disciplines history is the most unscientific, because it possess or can possess least of all the assured, approved method of selection...Every historian will have a special selection, a different criterion for what is worth communicating, according to his nationality, subjectivity, training and period.

All historians of African descent today affirm and recognize the value of oral traditions for their work, as well as the necessity for the careful collection of such traditions during the present dynamic times. However, this wide-ranging as well as laudable concern for the methodology of oral tradition has not only aided to point out the centrality of oral tradition as a source for the history of segmentary societies in Africa in the pre-colonial era or even in the colonial era. Besides, it has equally made all would-be users of this source to be alert to its major challenges. Infant their collection demands a lengthy and rigorous stay in the area of study, thoughtful personal relations, and careful methods of identifying and recording traditional histories. As a recent survey of writings by those who have used oral traditions indicates, the process of analysis and interpretation can be complex and difficult. This is so even if persons come from the area whose history they are investigating and know it reasonably. Professor E. J. Alagoa, Ijo himself, spent considerable time in 1964, 1966-7 and following the civil war, collecting oral traditions in the Niger Delta for his work: *A History of the Niger Delta*, and worked with a linguist in developing the transcriptions of the tapes. There is no gainsaying the fact that E. J. Alagoa, himself is a great authority in this area of oral traditional study. Similarly, another instance that may be useful for explaining the problems involved in the task: Jan Vansina's study of Kuba history was one of the first to reveal the latent aspect of oral traditions for African historical reconstruction. Although it was not an easy exercise on the whole.

Several years were spent investigating, recording and studying traditions from over 1,400 sources. Twenty years after this research, and after the findings had been published, Vansina felt it necessary to re-examine the entire process. Other researches among neighbouring people had revealed that Kuba traditions of origin and migrations were unreliable historical indicators though valuable for a study of deeply held world views. On the other hand, he also found that a review of the traditions gave him more evidence than he had gained from his original analysis. In a speech at the University of Liberia in 1974, the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Calabar, Professor Anyandele commented that "... the problems posed by African studies are primarily African and, therefore, demand an African solution", and that "in historical appreciation and use of Oral Traditions, Oracles, myths, legends and works of art... African scholars have an advantage over others and are more likely to get at the truth than non- Africans.

In spite of the fineness and refinements in the applicability of oral traditions to African historical reconstruction there is still considerable opposition to any reliance upon them. Infact the prejudice is uncalled for as well as unjustified. Western historians,

just as conscientiously have made considerable effort to record historical information in the immutable form of the written record, so too have many segmentary societies or non-literate peoples carefully sought to preserve some aspects of their own historical traditions by other means. The status of scholarship in oral tradition may be weighed both from a study of the work done in the field as well as from an assessment of the attitudes to oral sources by insiders and outsiders. In this context, insiders refer to scholars working actively in the field while outsiders refer to those who can claim no specialist knowledge or interest, nevertheless, one who takes delight in reading the material that emerges. Put differently, the general reading public or consumers of the output of the scholars. On the whole, the interplay of these sorts takes the form of criticism of the work of the specialist workers in the field by other scholars in related fields, with the disposition of the consumers acting as a rough guide to the state of its acceptance or of the discipline.

Every study applying Oral tradition in the fifties as well as sixties, began with the apology relating to the dearth of written records which had resulted in the historian having a recourse to oral traditions. Invariably, the scholar was expected to state the degree of his skepticism of oral traditional sources for historical reconstruction and was also required to accept that he intended to treat them with extreme caution. If there were available written materials, however, even those who pride themselves as heavy-weights in the use of Oral traditions did not utilize them. If there were written materials at their disposal. Obviously, there was more boost than action in the practical work of collecting oral traditions on a systematic scale as well as using them as genuine and valid historical sources.

Furthermore, in the seventies, the critics of oral tradition have not given up, but have merely changed their techniques into being very crafty and of undermining the increasing confidence of the historian. The African historians have begun to realize greater commitment hence the confidence assured that their effort has acquired some degree of legitimacy among the generality of historians as well as consumers of historical writing based on oral traditional sources. Yet they cannot over-look new elements of skepticism and new problems of methodology that arise from the accomplishments that they have made from the work of the pioneers of the fifties as well as the sixties. Against this backdrop, it is settled that the practitioners of oral traditional history and the historical reconstruction of segmentary societies are no longer afraid that they will be ostracized from the councils of the historians, although they cannot shy away with or totally get rid of the feeling that they are regarded with some measure of skepticism. Whatever is the case, they still have to answer to severe attacks on their discipline from insiders in related disciplines. The deeper we get into the study of oral traditions, within the discipline itself, the broader the field of enquiry opens up new challenges that appear as quickly as old ones are taken care of. This is one demonstrable and incontrovertible evidence of its viability as well as the vitality of the field as a historical discipline.



A. E. Afigbo, in dismissing the spurious argument on the use of oral traditions and new assaults on its use contended as follows:

I make this observation not because consider the quest for sharper techniques for handling oral tradition futile or pointless, but because I believe that it is futile and pointless to insist on our waiting until the sharpest techniques possible have been evolved before we begin to face the actual process of using oral tradition to write our history.

A lot of people have written on the challenges of oral tradition and on how these should be grappled with than have actually used oral tradition as the major or only source in an extended historical recapturing. One feels like insisting, parodying Marx's phraseology, that the methodologists have written eruditely on the use of oral traditions; their point however is to actually use it in historical reconstruction. At this juncture, we shall turn to the polemics and the various controversies associated with the use of oral tradition in the reconstruction of the history of non-literate or segmentary societies.

If anybody thinks that oral tradition has become fully accepted and needs only to go on to sharpen its tools and do a better job, he should read a recent assault by Clarence-Smith of the University of Zambia. Clarence-Smith was of the view that certain new ideas in historiography developed in Europe by a growth referred to as the school of the *Annales* have made oral tradition obsolete in Africa. He went further to hold that the only reason why African historians continue to use oral tradition is the sentimental one of a source independent of European activity, that is, its being "truly African and uncontaminated by colonialism". In his view, oral traditions are invalidated by three defects. First, oral traditions are "essentially present signs and not past signs preserved by writing." Second, "oral traditions also lack absolute chronology". According to Clarence-Smith, this is not a minor secondary fault, but one sufficient "for rejecting oral sources from the methodological field of the historian." And third, "oral traditions are extremely selective in their content". However, an African historian desirous of reconstructing the history of non-literate societies should not be dissuaded by this or infact, the view of this critic because the whole argument from the foregoing is not only biased as a result of his personal idiosyncrasies and as well tainted with Euro-centric embellishments.

Moreover, there is the fact that it seems that the more techniques are refined as well as the rules tightened, the more the scales are presented as being weighted against the use of oral tradition in the writing of the history of segmentary societies. In the view of some critics, historians should leave oral traditions to the anthropologists and sociologists, and where a historian is himself trained in these disciplines, he should still use oral tradition only in conjunction with written European sources. In the view of academics in the field of anthropology and sociology, who feel that historical reconstruction solely on the basis of oral tradition is not possible, or in any case should not be attempted, particularly in non--literate societies except other kinds of evidence - archaeological, linguistic, documentary, democratic, geographical - are available as a check and supplement.

Thus, writing in 1953, Dr. Peter Lloyd, a social anthropologist, expressed the view that historians should make no move in the use of oral tradition, specifically in the use of myths and legends, until sociologists have shown them the way. Only after sociologists have outlined the functions of myths, he said, can the historian find his direction, especially when it comes to identifying distortions are likely to have taken place. Also, only with sociological guidance would the historian be able to “assess better their value as historical evidence.”

Similarly, G. I. Jones, himself a social-anthropologist, distinguishes between two main kinds of oral tradition - those which refer to the recent past (TRDP) and those which refers to the distant past (TRPP). In the view the TRDP “may provide valuable historical material when used in conjunction with other written European records”. This must mean that where “other written European records” are not available, the TRDP are without value as historical material. And indeed the effect of the word “may” in the formulation is that it is possible that even in the presence of “other European records” the TRDP may still not provide valuable historical evidence.

Coming to the TRDP, Mr. Jones is emphatic in his denial that these could be of any historical value. According to him the TRDP “cannot help us”. They are no substitute for history and are best regarded as systems in which a very limited number of items are manipulated to explain or justify existing institutions and social groups. “It is of course possible”, he concluded:

To construct a hypothetical history using such items as would appear to support one’s conjectures, but it would be quite impossible to prove it, unless corroborative archaeological or documentary evidence could be obtained.

Still much later in 1971, Professor Robin Horton writing in his very persuasive manner added the weight of his opinion in support of this point of view. Explaining the form taken by his contribution to *History of West Africa* edited by J. F. Ajayi and Michael Crowder he wrote:

It is not for nothing that I have entitled this chapter “Stateless Societies in the History of West Africa” rather than a “History of Stateless Societies in West Africa”. For in the present state of our techniques, the difficulty of writing a “history” of the same kind as you will find in the chapters of this book which deal with the great pre-colonial states are virtually insuperable.

Such a history, he said, would become a viable proposition only “when we are in a position to consider the indications of oral tradition along those of linguistic maps, culture trait maps and the results of archaeological work”.

Unfortunately, he pointed out, only in the area of the linguistic mapping of West Africa has reasonable progress been made. In the other two-fields progress remains at best rudimentary.

Thus, the critical question to put to these methodological clinicians relates to their conception of history - its meaning, its methods and its aims. Jones for example makes a distinction between “hypothetical history” and history that can be “proved”. What,

infact, is the meaning of “proof” in the social sciences and the humanities? Does it have the same meaning as “proof” in the exact sciences? Do historians, even when they are working in a literate culture whose history is closely documented, “prove” the perspectives of the past they construct or do they merely illustrate these by the judicious selection of examples? Have historians of the Allied powers proved that Germany was indeed the aggressor in the Second World War? Have German Historians proved that Hitler was personally responsible for the blood chilling genocide against the Jews? With all due respect, Mr. Jones’s distinction between “hypothetical history” and history that can be “proved” shows a basic misunderstanding of what historians try to do.

However, the right answer to put to these methodological clinicians is that the differentiations they make are irrelevant. We require in Africa work on centralized and a segmentary societies. Besides any contribution to one or the other should be given due credit and not castigated or pilloried. Once we recognise that history is not an exact science but a science of probabilities, and that we should put to the sources available to us questions consistent with their intent and concern, we shall be better able not only to exploit full the promise of oral traditions, but also to advance the reconstruction of the history of segmentary societies of pre-colonial Africa.

Jan Vansina has directed his theoretical work towards making an academic case for the validity of all types of oral traditions in all communities. The historical career of Jan Vansina, on the other hand presents a different depiction. Jan Vansina, in his reconstruction of African past understood the exigency of space. He was not unaware of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture of which he is a product. He knew that the best way to study a non-literate society (non-literate in the European sense) is not to enmesh oneself in speculation. It did not escape his intellectual mind that every society has its own way of recording events of her past. In his study of the Bakuba, Jan Vansina demonstrated that oral traditions as “testimonies of the past which are deliberately transmitted from mouth to mouth” and from generation to generation and as oral literature are legitimate sources of historical knowledge. They can be classified as formulas including titles and names, poetry; lists including genealogies; tales, commentaries, as well as precedents in law. These sources, he goes on to indicate, can yield “tribal history, village and family history, or royal history”; with tribal history recounting the migrations and the formation of chiefdoms, village and family history telling how villages were formed and how clans spread through the country and split themselves into sections and royal history describing the evolution of the Kingdom through time.

At this point in time, we shall discuss the prospect of oral tradition in the reconstruction of African history. The most viable option and direction in which oral traditional studies need to go is to strengthen their interdisciplinary base. The practitioners of oral tradition in African history have always stated a commitment to interdisciplinary research. It was, indeed a pleasure to read in the very first number of your Calabar Historical Journal, a call for the use of insights from Geography in the

interpretation of traditions of origin and migrations. In the study of Niger Delta history for example, we have attempted to account for the influence of the environment in the direction of development taken by communities of common origin settled in different ecological zones.

Further, we have begun to follow up the survey of the oral traditions with systematic archaeological survey. Excavations have already taken place at five sites in the Eastern Niger Delta following indications, at Onyoma, Ke, Ogoloma, Saikiripogu, and Okochiri. The team of workers has included a historian, archaeologists, and a palynologist. The indication is that the radiocarbon chronology will go a long way towards placing the relative chronology of the oral traditions in proper perspective. This in its turn will be correlated with the glottochronology and other proto-linguistic contributions from Professor Kay Williamson.

Finally, this chapter has attempted to critically highlight the significance of oral tradition in the reconstruction of the history of the segmentary societies in Africa and the polemics of the application of oral traditions in the writing of African history. As a historian, of African history, I am making a clarion call that all African historians working in whatever period of African history in whatever area to make the extra effort necessary to tap the special historical resources of oral tradition for the reconstruction of the segmentary societies. It is necessary to constantly remind ourselves that much as oral tradition could be enriched through cross-checking as well as supplementation with archaeological, linguistic and other sources, the value of oral tradition as a source of history is independent of these ancillary techniques.

I must conclude on the note that our goal in reconstructing the history of the segmentary societies, no matter our source, should not be to reconstruct for them the same heroic kind of history as we wrote for the great states rather the goal should be to write history that is as close an approximation to their own experience as is possible within the sources and techniques available to us. In the final analysis, this is the utmost ambition of history whether conceived as an art or as a science. Thus, in line with the ultimate goal of history, we must ensure that the questions which we put to the oral traditions of any society are consistent with the intent as well as the concern of the people's perception of their world. In other words, we do not have to succumb to the prejudices of scholars from societies in which the tradition and use of oral tradition has been so long replaced by writing that they can no longer appreciate its continued vitality and relevance in Africa.

#### Endnotes

1. The term "African Historians" is used throughout to mean professional historians who are Africans.

2. For these scratches, see E. A. Udo, 'The Ibo origin of Efik by A.E. Afigbo, The Calabar Historical Journal, Vol.I. No. 1, June, 1976, pp. 154-172.

3. Dr. D. P. Henige, the Chronology of Oral Tradition, (Clarendon, 1974).

4. J. Burkhardt, *Judgements on History and Historians*, (George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1958), p. 158.
5. Among the Journals surveyed were *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*; *History in Africa*; *A Journal of Method*; *International Journal of African Historical Studies*; *Journal of African History*, *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*.
6. Jan Vansina, "Recording the Oral History of the Bakuba, I. Methods", *Journal of African History*, I, I (1960), 47.
7. Jan Vansina, "Comment: Traditions' of Genesis", *Journal of African History*, XV, 2(1974), 320, *passim*.
8. Professor E. A. Anyanwile, "African Studies and Nation Building", in Final report of Seminar on African studies, July 18-19, held by the Institute of African Studies under the Directorship of Dr. Jabaru Carlin, University of Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia, Dec 27, 1974, 38-39.
9. A. E. Afigbo, "Oral Tradition and the History of Segmentary Societies, in Erim O Erim and Okon E. Uya (ed.), *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing, Co. Ltd, 1984), p.55.
10. Jan Vansina, *Comment*, 320, *passim*.
11. W. G. Clarence - Smith, F. Braudel, A note on the "Ecole Des Annales' and the historiography of Africa", *History in Africa, A Journal of Method*, vol. 4 1977, pp. 275-281; See also the reply given by Jan Vansina for oral tradition (But not against Braudel), *History of Africa*, vol.5, 1978, pp. 351- 356.
12. P. C. Lloyd, "Yoruba Myths: A Sociologist's Interpretation", *Odu* 11, 1955, pp.20-28.
13. G. I. Jones, *The Trading States of the Oil Rivers*, (O. U. P. 1963) p.24.
14. R. Horton, "Stateless Societies in the History of West Africa" in J. F. A. Ajayi and M Crowder, (ed), *History of West Africa*, vol. I, (Longman, 1971), pp.78-90.
15. See A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War*, (Penguin, 1971) and the debate generated by it. See in particular Taylor's "Second Thoughts", in this edition.
16. A. E. Afigbo, *Oral Tradition*, p.57.
17. Jan Vansina, *Recording the Oral History*, pp.45-46; He has also analysed in this article how Oral Traditions are preserved and the aims for doing so; how to tackle the problems inherent in oral traditions; and the fact that written document is to the literate societies.
18. E. J. Alagoa, "The Interdisciplinary Approach to African History in Nigeria, "Presence Africaine, No.94, 1975, pp.171- 183; See also E. J. Alagoa, "The Relationship between History and other Disciplines" *Tarikh*, vol.6, No. 1, 1978, *Historical Method*, pp. 12-20.
19. A. E. Ntukidem, "Geography and Historical Methodology with Reference to the Study of the Origin and Migration of Non-literate People", *The Calabar Historical Journal*, Vol.I, No.I , 1976, pp. 1-28.

20. Robin Horton, "From Fishing Village to City-State: A Social History of New Calabar", in Mary Douglas and P. M. Kaberry, (eds), *Man in Africa*, (London, 1969), pp.37-58.

21. Preliminary reports have appeared in *Oduma*, A Journal of the Rivers State Council for Arts and Culture, the *West African Journal of Archaeology*, Lagos, Notes and Records, and in special reports of the Ibadan Institute of African Studies.

22. E. J. Alagoa, *The Present State of Oral Traditional Studies*, in Erim and Uya, (ed) *Perspectives and Methods*, p.36.

23. Ibid.

22

## CHAPTER 16

## ORAL TRADITION AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Chikere Reginald, Keke, PhD, MHSN.

### Introduction

This chapter examined the importance of oral tradition and archaeology as history and source in historiographical reconstruction. European colonial administrators and their African apologists had in programmed ignorance argued that Africa had no history owing to the non-availability of writing. This work is aimed at showing convincingly that oral tradition and archaeology are viable non-written sources to reconstruct and authenticate the history of man about the past in any society. In other to explain how, why, when and where man lived, show continuities and changes in intra and inter-group relations while measuring the level of advancement made in society, oral tradition and archaeology will certainly be the guides. Archaeology is in the province of reconstructing man's past from his physical and cultural remains which have survived till date. History studies the past in the living present while oral traditions is the transmission through generations of oral account of man's past through word of mouth by either eye witnesses or non-participants in the event recounted. Oral tradition and archaeology are related as valid and invaluable sources of information about the past. Using the interdisciplinary approach, this work found that for a balanced reconstruction of the human past, oral traditional historians and archaeologists must compliment other disciplines to be able to have an objective and more realistic outcome of reconstruction without which reconstruction will be incomplete. Archaeology adds concreteness and a more secured chronological base to cultural reconstruction which if allowed to oral tradition solely may lead to a mere fabrication or half-truth. Both oral tradition and archaeology as indispensable sources of reconstructing the history of a people must integrate aspects of other disciplines to give concreteness to the study of the past. Their import remains very germane to any meaningful reconstruction of the past of African people, irrespective of the challenges of these historical sources.

According to Alagoa, "the past may be dead but cannot be buried. There are some people who are willing to act as undertakers and wish the past is disposed of for good. There are others who have made it their business to see that the past does not completely disappear from our consciousness", Alagoa, (1979:1-2) and these are the historians and archaeologists. History has shown that Africa is the home of man following the discoveries by the Leakeys in Olduvia Gorge in Tanzania. This means that Africa has been the bee-hive of human social, economic, political and cultural activities from time immemorial. However, African history in the colonial and the immediate post-colonial periods, has seen the continent's monumental historical achievements undergo tremendous ridicule and great distortions by Eurocentric scholars and some Africans sympathizers who think Africa was an irrelevant corner of the globe.

Herodotus was a master in the art of oral history and the study of oral testimonies of the recent past by eyewitnesses and participants brought down through chains of transmission over generations of informants. Herodotus discovered the African oral



tradition in combination with other sources of historical evidence, possess merits, representing past realities not present privileges, politics or today's social status alone. The Homeric epics were all Greek oral tradition preserving the history of the people.

Between the 16th centuries, Africa's historical dignity and personality was assaulted by uninvited colonial invaders who denied Africa ever had a historic past if not the past of European activities in Africa. Scottish philosopher David Hume said 'I am apt to suspect the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the white. There was never a civilized nation of neither any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers amongst them, no arts, no science' (cited in Uya, 1984:1., Alagoa, 1979:10-11). In the 19th century George Hegel, a philosopher of history opined that 'it is manifest that want of self-control distinguishes the character of the Negroes. This condition is capable of no development or culture and as we have seen them at this day, such they have always been. At this point we leave Africa, not even to mention it again. For it is no historical part of the world; it has no movement or development to exhibit' (Hegel, 1956, cited in Alagoa, 1979:11).

In the 20th century, specifically in 1963, an Oxford Regius Professor of modern history Hugh Redwald Trevor-Roper (1914-2003) was responding to his students, when they demanded to know why Africa history courses were not studied in Oxford. This renowned historian in a British Broadcasting (BBC) interview said 'Perhaps in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But as at present, there is none; there is only the history of Europeans in Africa. The rest is darkness... darkness is not a subject of history'. To him African societies come and go 'battles and conquests, dynasties and usurpations' but it is all meaningless because it has no direction, Appiah, (1998). How can these scholars be so hopelessly uninformed? Prejudice, bias, and programmed ignorance in these scholars' perspective of looking at Africa was nothing other than racial hatred, cultural superiority, idea of the 'white man's burden' and parochially alluding civilization with writing. If this is true about African in their own lenses, then there was a time when states in Europe had no history because writing was not invented with the creation of man. Man is over two million years and writing are five thousand years old. This shows quite a long period in the past written records cannot cover but can only be resuscitated through oral tradition and archaeology.

Africa was relegated in the back ground of civilization as an appendage of European societies and any study of it will as Trevor-Roper will say is 'prying into the unrewarding gyration of barbarous tribes in picturesque at irrelevant corners of the globe' thus using history as a tool to legitimize European authority and domination on the 'Dark Continent' waiting to be discovered by Europe. These views by European scholars were erroneous and hinged on basic perspectives and methods of studying and reconstructing the past based on written documents alone.

However, in the 1950s with the rise of African Studies and Black Power Movements in America came an explosion in the study and interest of African history and culture by Africans to really assert and prove that actually Africa has a glorious past (history of self-

assertion) and that great leaders and empires had risen in the continent before European advent in the 16 century. This led to the Ibadan, Legon, Makarere schools of history in which African students were taught a reasonable dose of history to further show that African societies were never static nor or incapable of positive change and leadership. African scholars were ready and did debunk A.P. Newton's opinion that 'history begins when men begin to write'. These Eurocentric prejudices toward African history tried to conceal the true history of Africa from the world at large. Think about the irony of this bias that; the Iliad and Odyssey were rightly regarded as essential sources for ancient Greek history but African oral tradition, the collective memory of peoples which holds the thread of many events marking their lives, was rejected as worthless.

African scholars started digging into the prehistory of Africa of which archaeology will supply a bulk of the information into the distant past writing cannot cover. In fact attempts made towards discrediting oral sources as useful tools for the reconstruction of the history of preliterate societies in Africa collapsed under the weight of this new Pan-Africanist consciousness and movement of historical renaissance. Dike had opined that, that subjecting oral history to systematic criticism and supplementing the resulting residue with evidence from written documents after the fashion of Western historiography, as well as with evidence derived from archaeology and other ancillary historical sciences, would put old-style African history through a process of rebirth (Afigbo, 1984: 3).

Africa had develop systematic ways of preserving her past not in written form but through word of mouth, pictures, arts, songs, signs, folklore, drumming, and other means which have been validated by archaeology and other disciplines and from the writings of Arab and Muslim scholars, geographers, and traders like, Al- Masudi, Al-Bakri, Ibn Battuta who visited and interacted with African empires, political leaders and societies and left records of those relations.

Records from *Tarikh-as-Sudan* authored by Rhaman Al-sadi and *Tavikh-al-Fettach* by Muhmud Kati had different perspectives on African societies through their records which were like mines of information for reconstructing the past of African based on writing. These Arab records had limitations as they recorded mostly Arab kings and their exploit in Africa and how it had aided the growth of Islam in African. No wonder Arab Muslim leaders like Mansa Kanka Musa of Mali, Askia Mohammed Toure of Songhay were praised but non-Muslim leaders like Sonni Ali of Songhay and Sundiata of Mali were not.

Arabs and Europeans perspectives of African history actually magnified discontinuities and devalued African historical experiences to glorify and exaggerate their own exploits and presence in Africa at the detriment of Africa. The consequence is that it led to pre-European African history to be discarded and written off, only to be saved by archaeology, ethno-botany, ethno-zoology and historical linguistics. This approach failed to capture African in totality and in the dead hours of colonialism, African scholars schooled in 'historical methods' fashioned by Ibn Kaldun started

interrogating these earlier thesis on African past and the role of Europeans and Arabs in African history. Dike and other African scholars pioneered the new African historiography or historiography of decolonization to effectively contain and combat the threat of colonial propagandists and racial jingoists to African identity, dignity, world view, values, image and self-definition. This led to the popular saying that, until the lions have historians to tell their own history in their own way, only the exploits of the hunters will always be told. Africans had to start telling their own story their own way thus, the rise of oral tradition and archeology as a valid method of reconstructing history and as history. This work will look at oral tradition and archaeology in historical reconstruction, problems and prospects of oral tradition and archaeology in historical reconstruction and then conclude.

#### Oral Tradition and Archaeology in Historical Reconstruction

According to Ian Vansina, oral tradition is all oral testimonies concerning the past which are transmitted from one person to another. His student E.J Alagoa, says oral tradition has three significant elements: the testimonies are oral, it deals with the past, delivered by word of mouth in song chanted, recited or rendered through talking drums, Alagoa, (2014:1-2) transmitted from person to person through time. This differentiates oral tradition from rumours. Oral tradition comes in the form of formulae, poetry, lists, tales and commentaries.

In the fifties and sixties as continental Africa started getting political independence from its colonizers, African history also assumed her independence as Africans can now tell their story by themselves. Africans started making their history as they were made by history. They started by collecting oral testimonies from eyewitness, those who participated in the event and from those in villages whose duty it was as custodians to keep and report village history (community historian). The people recounted the history of their migration and settlement, culture, genealogies rulers, family, wars, inter-group and economic relations with other groups and such matter of interest to the historian. Presently, Africa and the world now recognize the sterling importance of oral tradition in writing history, and it is used in almost all historical research works. Archeology deals with recovering ancient remain of human activity which are left behind and are used to give chronology to artifacts and what they were used for so as to determine man's past. Archeology validates oral tradition by providing real dates for artifacts. Oral traditions transmitted from past generations and recounted by traditional, or village historians are authentic sources for African historical reconstruction with a major shortcoming of weakness in human memory and dangers of distortion after several generations of transmission.

Oral tradition as a valid and respectable source of historical document gained prominence from the work of Jan Vansina whose seminal work was on Oral tradition as source of history in Wisconsin University in 1961. This Belgian historical anthropologist pioneered the study of precolonial historical linguistics. Vansina, tirelessly worked to develop a historical methodology that would enable researchers to listen closely and

critically to language (regional, etymological change), gossip, visions, creation mythologies, proverbs, and music—and with an ear to the distant past. Vansina had argued in 1965, “[a]ny message containing historical information tells us about events or sequences of events, describes a situation of the past or reports a trend”, Vansina, (1965:70).

Vansina's study of oral tradition helped pioneer the field of precolonial intellectual history writing and numerous studies on the importance of using oral traditions to reassess Africa's shifting vernacular, social, and cultural landscapes. Because oral tradition is one of the most important human aspects of African history, Vansina, trained Africans like E.J. Alagoa in Wisconsin and encourage Africans to, collect oral traditions, open museums, archives, and research institutes to reclaim the past. This led to the study of African past from all perspectives thus making African scholars in the immediate post independent era to insist that to understand the African past, an interdisciplinary approach was germane like the works of archaeologist, linguists, botanists, paleontologists, anthropologist et al. In all oral tradition and archaeology remained very useful tools in achieving the goal of a proper reconstruction and validation of African past. Archeological artifacts produced on African past, tell the story of African history not of Africa relations with Europe at the time.

Both oral tradition and archaeology are not easy to collect and examine as they are time consuming and need a great deal of patience. Alagoa spent a lot of time in 1964, 1966-7 to collect oral tradition of the Niger Delta from which he produce his book *A history of the Niger Delta*. Alagoa worked with linguist Kay Williamson to translate languages in tapes from oral traditions collected and also worked with Anozie in site in the Niger Delta to correlate oral information to authenticate his reconstruction. Before 1953, archaeology was a pastime activity for amateur archaeologists (treasure hunters) who all the same made Nigeria to be known as a mine for artefacts to the world. Donald Hartle had listed 400 archaeological sites in Eastern Nigeria and only 14 had been excavated as at 1967 and none in the Niger Delta. It took the effort of E.J. Alagoa of the Rivers State Research Scheme at the Institute of African Studies University of Ibadan in 1971 for archaeological research to start. Thus in 1972 and 1975, Onyoma, Ke, Saikiripogo, (Ewoama) and Ogoloma were excavated. In 1976, Okochiri and by 1985 other sites in the Central Niger Delta were excavated. Abi Derefaka, N. Nzewunwa and F. Anozie have also done great excavations in the Niger Delta with Radio Carbon Dates for artifacts recovered, documented and preserved. In those sites artifacts such as miniature ritual clay pots called Tamunobele, terracotta human head figurines, large Arc senelis shells, smoking pipes, Kuronama Aka (leopard teeth) were discovered interpreted, dated and preserved. From the Niger Delta excavations, a lot has been learnt the way the people lived, adapted and conquered their riverine environment in Nigeria.

Jeffrey has collected the oral tradition of the Nri people, Afigbo, used oral tradition to analyze legends and myths of origin among the Efiks and Aro. In Igbo Ukwu, findings

show that a dynamic Igbo culture and civilization (in Nri) based on a kinship system had flourished since about 800 AD, long before the Norman conquest of England. Onwuejogwu, used oral tradition to assign chronological dates to king succession in Nri and Shelton also used it to relate Nsukka Igbo –Igala relations. Work of literary professionals like Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ Wa Thiongo, CamaraLaye and Chimamanda Adiche are vested in oral tradition. Oral tradition is very vital in history and literature intelling the history of a people and it has acquired new dimension in Africa historiography. The main problems collecting oral tradition is for the scholar or historian to be able to know who to approach and for what knowledge, He must respect the traditions and customs of the people and pay attention on social groups, the positions of individuals and elders in the society, and when the collection begins all the town elders and the traditional historian should be present, and others for clarification of grey areas. There must be consensus and unanimity of all views accommodated and agreed on and recorded electronically.

Although the Process of collecting oral tradition is pains taking, burdensome, and time consuming, another serious problem with it is getting adequate and sequential chronology (dating) as references most often is done by correlating calendar dates. So, in most cases event is described as oral tradition is not very efficient in the reconstruction of time sequence. The historian collecting Oral tradition must realize is doing a humane work and must detach himself from the history of the people and be objective and careful not to flare conflict amongst the people or revive old wounds when reconstructing the past. He should reconstruct for development, peace and progress of society only then can the collection and usage of oral tradition play a role in national development. Oral tradition will definitely offer leads to the archaeologists in culture and sites for possible excavation.

Archaeologists study man and his ancestors by means of the material remains which have survived till date. It has three basic aims: to reconstruct the culture history of extinct people, to explicate processes of culture change, validate oral history Derefaka, (1997:111). For the archeological scientist, oral tradition is of a different value because of method of investigation used in obtaining information. While a historian, linguist or literalist will collect and start analyzing oral traditions, an archaeologist sees oral traditions as working hypothesis, speculative and learned guesses.

The archaeologist is very skeptical with non-archeological evidences as they feel those evidence rarely resolve contentiously controversial issues though he does not have to deal with challenges of subjectivity, ethnocentrism, which the oral historian has to contend with as measurement have overtaken subjectivity. Archeology often adopts the eclectic approach by relying on models from the historical and social sciences to interpret human finds. Thus, specialist evidence are provided and corroborated by pedologists, ethnographers, paleontologists, geomorphologists, metallurgists, geologist and potters.

The relationship between archaeology and oral traditions are evinced properly when one takes a look at reconnaissance/site location and oral tradition, actual excavation and oral tradition, laboratory analysis and oral tradition and results interpretation and oral tradition. Archaeological reconnaissance of sites or locations is known basically by oral traditional leads, a times by accidents, visual observation of soil texture and color, electro magnetometer, differentials in vegetation and others.

While the historians visit communities to investigate the history of what and how the people had lived, an archaeologist ask in terms of abandoned habitation, burial site, ritual sites, garbage dumps theatres and other such sites where artifacts can be found for reconstruction. Igbo-Ukwu was thrown to light when a cistern was dug from an acheulian site in Uguele was literarily discovered by a bulldozer of a quarry construction company and caterpillars of a road construction company found the Ogbodu-Aba site in Isi-Uzo local government on Nsukka. When the archaeologists get his artifacts like human and animal bones, pottery, shells of sea foods, stones, knives and others, he analyses to get the date and era they were used through Radio Carbon-14 Dating to get near accurate chronology better than oral tradition which has the shortcoming of human memory and distortion.

A times site designated to archaeologist oraltraditions yield nothing only for other sites to proof oral tradition wrong. Archaeological artifacts are not subject to propaganda, human enthusiasm, distortions and patriotic feeling like oral traditions. These are all weaknesses by oral tradition giving archaeologists leads to potential sites. Thus, archaeologist help authenticate oral history. Both disciplines complement each other as sites like Nwanker site, Etiti-Ulu Bende, Umundu site Nsukka, Umukete-Aguleri have yielded positive findsto archaeologists through leads from oral tradition. Having gotten his lead, he has to excavate.

With direction from oral tradition the archaeologists get himself well prepared for the journey of excavation especially in terms of getting the requisite equipment and tools to facilitate his job. If lead is given for a burial site or rock shelter, the archaeologist will prepare according by taking with him what will ease his findings, preservation, analysis and report efficiently. The archaeologists have to materially and mentally prepare for surprises, shocks and challenges as he excavates.

Excavation is the principal tool of the archaeologist. After excavation proper, comes laboratory testing. Report from oral tradition will inform the archaeologists the type of tools to expect and haven found his artifact resulting from excavation, he cleans them up and takes to a testing laboratory to ascertain the age or chronology of the artifacts through Radio Carbon dating. Being well versed in oral tradition will greatly help the archeologist to arrive at fairly accurate dates valid in archeological history. Once the laboratory testing has been done the results has to be interpreted. From the artifacts the archeologist will begin to infer from finds to make sense so as to know why both organic and inorganic resources were made, what a particular tool or site was used for and why, of what importance and how it has undergone changes over time. Archaeological

remains are studied by their geometry (shape), physics (weight and magnetic properties), chemistry (chemical composition, trace element), Biology (anthological, flora and fauna), mineralogy, petrology and others. The point of interpretation is very vital and often may lead to controversy on the part of the archeologists hence he has to be very sure, definite and objective in his interpretations, report and preservation for others to access, read, understand and research further.

It is glaringly; from the above that oral tradition and archaeology are vital in the reconstruction of the past as they complement each other.

#### Problems and Prospects of Oral Tradition and Archaeology in Reconstruction

The main factors that have severely made it increasingly difficult for African society to hold and retain oral traditional knowledge over long periods, has been attributed to the long period of the slave trade, European colonialism in different parts of the continent with different consequences like the case of white settlers in Southern Africa, wars causing violent and forceful movements, destruction of organized communities, displacements, and instability overwhelming the mental capacity to hold memory of oral tradition. Archaeological sites are forgotten and for some communities the owners never returned to them after conflicts to identify sites for historical reconstruction.

Generally oral tradition and archaeology are both history and invaluable sources of history. A lot of problems bisect both the collection oral tradition and archaeological research in Nigeria. For archaeology, the terrain is often an issue especially in water logged (creeks, rivers swamps) like the Niger Delta and some mountainous regions like the Jos Plateau. The cost entailments are always very high in terms of maintaining staff on site, transport of equipment, excessive stress locating site on foot over long distances, climbing slopes to access site is really hard work and it's a challenge. For oral tradition some communities are still attached to traditional beliefs not to tell their histories to academic historians, or show site that are shrines, grooves and burial sites used by their ancestors for archeological research. These hamper the efforts of historians to actually do their work and write the histories of communities. Lack of cultural awareness, failure of academic archaeologists to blend and share knowledge with amateur archaeologists creates a gap in research and site identification. The problem of honorarium for local historians and community heads is often very expensive. These lacunae must be bridged for archaeological results to be all inclusively fruitful.

To collect oral tradition the historian must know the structure of the community to locate centers of knowledge and repositories, after a systematic recoding of persons, specialists, groups, to obtain detailed records and variants of oral accounts including, poetry, folklore, proverbs, songs and others. The age, names, relevant biography of the informants must be taken. Such data remain paramount in accessing the useful authenticity of particular texts. Oral traditional texts recorded must be reproduced as original as they were collected free from distortions. High quality recorders, note taking, and recorders could be played back to obtain good repetition of words and expressions.

At times the informants hate to be recorded on tapes, especially in land disputes and chieftaincy disputed communities.

Another challenge is the limited or complete absence of technical equipment and facilities within Nigeria which obviously hinder fieldwork, analysis and publication of research results. In case in point is the lack of radio carbon dating equipment and laboratories for testing and dating artifacts in Nigeria. Nigeria lacks a proper repository to where data from field works can be properly stored, conserved, restored and exhibited for people to access and study and appreciate cultures and history of ethnic groups in the country. High cost of publishing oral traditions and archaeological researches at times cannot be borne by the scholars and aid are often scares to come by to assist in this type of academic endeavors, and are often abandoned by scholars who cannot afford the cost. Most of the journals where results from oral traditions and archeological findings and reports are published in are foreign which makes it difficult for Nigerians and local historians to access, read and carry further research. Thus, these research reports should be put in local archaeological report guides (source book) in small volumes in abridge form for further research.

Irrespective of these challenges, the prospect for collection, analyzing and publishing and exhibiting results of researches on archeology and oral tradition remain still very promising. Government should come in and sponsor these researches as way to educate the people to know their history. The government can acquire equipment, set up testing labs and setup and institute for archaeological and oral traditional researches with the mandate to collect the history of all communities in the country. The results of which will help foster inter-group relations in the country. Private academic investors, multi-national companies and other Non-Governmental Organizations(NGOs) the United Nations Organization (UNO) should be interested and assist researches in the history of communities they live and operate for a better social corporate responsibility relationship. Society will be better off.

#### Conclusion

This chapter examined the importance of archaeology and Oral tradition as undisputable sources of historical reconstruction as any meaningful research on African historiography must start with these two complimentary sources. A lot still has to be done in the collection of oral history and archaeological excavation from communities in Nigeria. This will help to effectively tell the true story of the African past to show areas of intergroup relations and peaceful coexistence making for unity and tolerance. Both archaeology and oral tradition face the problem of difficulty in the collection, interpretation, documentation, preservation and publication of the oral traditions and artifacts for reconstruction and further research for future generations. The most problematic issue is they both do not effectively periodize Africa's past before the fifteenth century based on African timelines. Prospectively, these challenges must be surmounted by intensifying archaeological oral traditional researches and probing of the remote areas of African societies, to recover the hidden past for more communities to be



able to write their history and know how they are related to other communities or ethnic groups for mutual co-existence. Government must also come in to assist the historians financially, provision of equipment for research in their bid to uncover the past of communities. The historian must be wise to use archaeology, oral tradition, personal observations and make his own evaluations and deductions from the total evidence before him before he commits it to writing as authentic account of his historical reconstruction.

## References

Afigbo, A. E. (1984), *K. O. Dike and the African Historical Renaissance*, (Nigeria: Rada Publishers, Owerri).

Alagoa, E. J. (1973). *Oral Tradition and Archaeology: The case of Onyoma.Oduma*, (Port Harcourt), Vol.1, pp.10-12.

Alagoa, E. J. (1979). *The Present State of Oral Traditional studies*, In *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History* by Erin, O. Erim & Okon Uya. Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Alagoa, E. J. (1979). *The python's eye: The past in the living present. An Inaugural Lecture*. Port Harcourt. UPPL Ltd.

Alagoa, E.J. (1972). *A History of the Niger Delta: An Interpretation of Ijo Oral Tradition*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press. *Oral Tradition and Oral History in Africa in African Historiography, Essay in honor of Jacob Ade Ajayi*, edited by Toyin Falola, London: Longman, 1993.

Alagoa, E. J. (2014). *Oral Tradition*. Onyoma Research Publication, Standard printing & publishing. Nigeria.

Appiah, K.A. (1998). *The Hidden History: The New York Review of Books*; Retrieved 26/11/19 from [www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1998/dec/17/Africa-the-hidden-history/?pignation=false](http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1998/dec/17/Africa-the-hidden-history/?pignation=false).

Archaeological Research in the Niger Delta: Results, Problems and Prospects, In *The Multi-disciplinary Approach to African History*. (Essay in honor of E.J.Alagoa), Edited by Nkparon, Ejutuwu. (1997). The Hisis Press, Port Harcourt.

Deetz, J. (1967). *Invitation to Archaeology*. New York.

Derefaka, A. (1991). *Archaeology in the Central Niger Delta: Aspects of the Central Ijo Culture History*. (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Port Harcourt).

Dike, Kenneth, (1956), *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*. (Oxford University Press)

Erin, O. Erim & Okon, Uya. (1979). *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History*. Fourth Dimension Publishers.

Hartle, D.D.(1980). *Archaeology East of the Niger: A Review of Cultural-Historical Developments*. In *West Africa Culture Dynamics* (ed.) B.K.Swartz, J, Mouton, The Hague.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, *The Philosophy of History*, (1956), trans. by J. Jibree, (New York: Dover): Africa is "no historical part of the World; it has no

movement or development to exhibit”.

Jan Vansina. (1965). *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*. H.M.Wright, Chicago. First published in 1961 as *De la Tradition Orale: Essai de method Historique*.

Mirrick, Posnansky. (1969). *Myth and Methodology-The Archaeological Contribution to African History*. An Inaugural lecture. Ghana University Press, Accra.

Nkparon, Ejutuwu. (1997). *The Multi-disciplinary Approach to African History*. (Essay in honor of E.J.Alagoa). The Hisis Press, Portharcourt.

Nwanna, Nzewunwa. (1983). *A Source Book for Nigerian Archaeology*

Obaro, Ikime. (1979). *Through Changing scenes:Nigerian History Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. University of Ibadan Press.

Tekena, Tamuno. (1973). *History and history-makers in modern Nigeria*. An inaugural lecture University of Ibadan.

Toyin, Falola .(1993). *African Historiography: Essay in honor of J. F. Ade Ajayi*. Longman,United Kingdom.

Trevor-Roper, Hugh (1963). *Rise of Christian Europe*. *The Listener*, (28 November 1963), p. 871.

23

## CHAPTER 17

## HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES: THE DIMENSIONS OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Johnson O. Ndubuisi, PhD

### Introduction

History and international studies are siamese twins sharing an umbilical cord that cannot be separated because the root of international relations as the reductionists have tended to brand it, is in itself a product of history. Several attempts were made to sidetrack history from the domain of international relations by the positivist political scientists after the World War I while inheriting the field of international relations. Without recourse to history, some international relations scholars and practitioners alike attempted to fashion out a discipline that they perceive could be distinct from history which happens to be the progenitor of any international discourse probably because it was not essentially coined or code-named international studies *ab initio*. This is a question of a progeny wishing away its forebearer as aptly captured by Thompson (1999) who stated thus:

Perhaps because it is a child of history, international relations, as it has developed, has tried to distance itself from historical discourse, through methodological and theoretical innovations seeking general knowledge about international and global politics. In this flight from the old ways of history, researchers have tended to down-play the historical content of their own work, and, at times, to embrace an easy historical empiricism. This uncritical view of the past has contributed to an often licentious historical method, with history serving less as an independent body of evidence than as a trove to be plundered ...

However, in spite of this onslaught of ignominy by the overzealous positivist scholars, it remained impossible to wish away history as their reference point for even the theories they tinkered out from the ash heap of history. Though this could be termed a weakness on the part of history, however, the temporary loss of grip of the discipline of international relations to the 'prison yard' of political science and the eventual come back of history to assume its responsibility and pride of place in the discourse of international phenomena as a distinct and specialized area of study within its domain, also add to the dimensions in the growth and development of the discipline of history and international studies, which began in the remote past, prior to the origin of international relations in the twentieth century. International relations were instituted by the quest to usher in a new world order without wars through what was termed a proper study of international events following the publication of Paul Reinsch's book 'World Politics' (1900) and 'Carnegie Endowment of Peace' (1910). Efforts were then directed at acquiring systematic knowledge of the behavior of states in international system so that areas of conflict could be located and ways to resolve them could be found. This led to the introduction of various approaches for the attainment of peace. Thus, between the periods after the World War I and 1950's alone as surveyed by Thompson, the discipline had undergone four stages which were classical in nature,

while the fifth approach underpinning the scientific era came in the sixties. These were practically when history was relegated. However, the latest and the present stage, which is the sixth stage of development representing a reconciliation between the classical and scientific approaches has witnessed the full return of history in the realm of international studies discourse ([www.preservearticles.com](http://www.preservearticles.com), 2019) as a result of various changes and recent occurrence in this age of globalization which could not be effectively explained by mere theories, hence the need for a blend of history and other approaches to strike holistic balance in the study of the global phenomena.

Be that as it may, the immediate objective of this study is not to engage in unwieldy contestations regarding whose domain international studies belong, but to trace the dimensional trajectory and tortuous route which history has rode on to come to grapple with international studies as this will contribute in deepening our understanding and evolution of the discipline - history and international studies.

To this end, the study presents this treatise in the following dimensions: conceptual clarifications of international studies and international politics/ relations; the era of diplomatic history; the period of international relations in the 'prison yard of political science; the struggle to problematize international studies; the era of history and international studies.

#### Conceptual Clarifications

Scholars have made conscious attempts to define conceptually, international studies, international relations and international politics. While some see these concepts as distinct from each other, some others conceive them as virtually the same and a matter of semantics and coinage. However, from the descriptions, we can decipher where there are differences and areas of convergence.

#### International Studies

Generally, the term international studies refer to a specialized university degree and programme concerned with the study of 'the major political, economic, social, and cultural issues that dominate the international agenda' (The British International Studies Association, 2016). In specific terms, it refers to 'the contemporary and historical understanding of global societies, cultures, languages and systems of government and of the complex relationships between them that shapes the world we live in' (Flinders University, 2010). International Studies is sometimes also referred to as global studies. The terms can be used interchangeably depending on the perceptual inclination of the user.

#### Difference and Relationship between International Studies and International Relations

The terms and concepts of international studies and international relations are strongly related; however, international relations focus more directly on the relationship between countries, whereas international studies typically encompass all phenomena which are globally oriented.

#### Origin of the Discipline of International Studies

The origin of the discipline of international studies is strongly associated with the history of the study of international relations, as described in the International Relations entry. However, the study of international studies as a specialized area of study that is distinct from international relations is a product of the 20th century, as the world became increasingly complex due to emergent globalization phenomenon whereby there is a high degree of proliferation of non-state issues and actors alike rather than only inter-country relations. Specifically, the discipline was greatly influenced by the establishment of the International Studies Association, which was established in 1959 by a 'group of academics and practitioners' with the aim of 'seeking to pursue mutual interests in world affairs through the organization of a professional association' (International Studies Association, 2010a; International Studies Association, 2010b).

The establishment of the association reflected the increasing interest in global issues and reflected the need for international academic dialogue. Throughout the later stages of the 20th century and into the 21st century, many education institutions worldwide developed International Studies degrees (both undergraduate and postgraduate) in different forms. Some schools domiciled it within the arts while others domiciled it in the social sciences. Also, in some climes, international studies have been designated as a standalone discipline. However, whether stand alone or not, it is a discipline that is mostly embedded in History and is the reason for the name – history and international studies.

As mentioned earlier, the increasingly globalization (increasing interconnectedness) process and the toll it has brought to bear on nation states has continued to generate even greater interest in, and increasing popularity, relevance and necessity of the discipline of international studies, much more in the context of the twenty-first century. The discipline has become increasingly popular in various universities across regions of the globe – Europe, North America, Australia, South America, Asia and Africa.

For instance, the increasing popularity of the discipline in Australia prompted the International Studies Association (ISA) therein to establish an Asia-Pacific Regional Section of the ISA at the University of Queensland in 2009, which has been viewed as an indication of the growth of this area of specialization in Australia (International Graduate, Australia, 2010).

Sequel to domiciliary issues and the development of the course content for the discipline, many educational institutions have developed International Studies degrees and courses in order to engage students with the increasing number of issues and phenomena which have arisen in an increasingly globalized world. As such, most education providers justify the need for the degrees by relating the increasing importance of the discipline with real-world situations and employment opportunities. For example, the University of Technology Sydney states that the purpose of their International Studies degree is to 'prepare graduates for careers and contributions in a world of social and cultural diversity being transformed by globalization, allowing students to draw connections between global phenomena and local practices in work

and life' (University of Technology Sydney, 2010). On the flip side, some universities try to relate international studies with other industries. Monash University for instance, describes the relevance for International Studies thus:

as the world globalizes and nations and economies become more integrated, it is important to understand our world and the ideas and beliefs of our neighbors and trading partners. In order to compete in the international marketplaces of products, ideas and knowledge we need to understand and respect the cultures and beliefs of other (Monash University, 2010).

Furthermore, international studies is offered in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at many universities either as part of an arts degree or as a specialist arts degree across universities in all regions of the globe. However, generally international studies encapsulate the following areas of study in multidisciplinary dimension:

- the political, social, economic and cultural relationships within the international system
- foreign policy, diplomacy and other modes of interaction between the countries of the world
- the significance of foreign societies, cultures, and systems of government
- the international movement of people as immigrants, refugees, workers, students, tourists and investors
- the role of international organizations
- the globalization of the world economy
- foreign languages
- history (Flinders University, 2010).

The approach adopted in the teaching of international studies differs across countries. For example, in Australia, the course is mounted mostly within universities and as a holistic study of international affairs and phenomena (Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 2010).

There are also, several International Studies programs in Canada, Chile, that offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Whereas in the United Kingdom (UK), the British International Studies Association (BSI) develops and promotes the study of International Studies, Global Politics and related subjects through teaching, research and the facilitation of contact between scholars. However, International Studies is often related to or attached to the study in International Relations (University of Oxford, 2012) and not as separate entities. In the United States, it is situated as an admixture of foreign relations think tanks and institutional based research study. For instance, The Centre for Strategic and International Studies is a foreign policy think tank which aims to 'provide strategic insights and policy solutions to decision makers in government, international institutions, the private sector, and civil society' (Center for Strategic & International Studies, 2010) ; The Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies is a research center based at Stanford University which is a 'primary center for innovative

research on major international issues and challenges' (Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University, 2010). While both institutions focus primarily on the study of international affairs and relations in relation to US foreign policy, the undergraduate International Studies program at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York is a holistic program that more closely follows the Australian model. There is also Center for International Studies at the University of Pittsburgh in United States (Brustein and King, 2004).

In Netherlands, international studies are domiciled in the History Department and is named History and International Studies. For instance, at VU Amsterdam History and International Studies is a unique programme combining approaches from history and the social sciences to understand how societies have been connected throughout history. The programme offers a combination of history courses, modern language units and research skills from the fields of global history and international relations. The students are introduced to the field and approaches of global history and taught to reflect on the relationship between history and contemporary debates on issues such as democracy and authoritarianism, global inequality, or climate change. Courses discuss the history of Europe and the world from antiquity to the present, electives organized around different themes such as politics and economy; migration and ethnicity; culture and religion or heritage and memory etc.

In the case of Nigeria, the sub-discipline of History and International Studies arose as a child of circumstance. The initial post-colonial Nigerian history scholars were immersed in nationalist history without much reference and attention to that of international. It was when it faced the crisis of relevance and dwindling student enrolment that Dr. Ndulife Njoku (then head of History Unit) in 1995 approached Professor Uzoigwe (then Dean of College of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Imo State University, Owerri) to consider a name change as a possible solution to the above challenge that confronted dwindling student enrollment in History programme at Imo State University. Upon using the university administrative apparatus to secure the Senate approval of the name change, other universities in Nigeria joined in this revolutionary approach to the study of history by copying the Imo State University initiative. This brought about tremendous revival of history in Nigerian universities (Uzoigwe, 2008). "It is perhaps, in other to avoid any further problems with the obviously irked political scientists that Nigerian historians delineated theirs as International Studies instead of Relations" (Aja, 2016, cited in Ugwujah, 2018, p.164).

#### Dimensions of International Studies

The evolution of international studies right from the Greek era to the era of the state system, the world wars and the post world war events through the era of what is perceived as post positivist/post-international period culminate dimensions of international studies, in other words – different ways in which international studies is represented in each era till the present period that we have the designation – history and



international studies. The scope, content and course of history make the discipline a pivot and as well a key resource base of international studies.

As a field of enquiry, History is concerned with the 'how', 'why' and 'when' of events and situations. Historians are not only concerned with what happened in the past; they are also interested in explaining how it happened and why it was so. In this vein, Marwick (1970) posits that there are three levels of meaning of history: first, history connotes the entire human past as it actually happened. Second, history connotes man's attempt to describe and interpret the past. Third, history denotes a field of study/discipline. There are many subgenres of history, these include political, economic, social, military/strategic, diplomatic/international

history/relations, among others.

#### The Golden Era of History and World Affairs

The Greek Dimension: Evidence abound that suggest that international studies or international history was phenomenon could be traced back to the ancient times though it was not yet specifically addressed as international studies. For example, the ancient Greeks under the auspices of Peloponnesian League related with each in the Greek city-state system. There were Greek history scholars who wrote and taught how best the Greek international system could be preserved. Kalijarvi (1961), for instance, writes that ancient Greece was a torchbearer in the evolution of international studies. According to him, disputes were arbitrated, criminals extradited, ambassadors, messengers, heralds, diplomatic officers, and secretaries exchanged; temples accorded immunity from attack or violation; and cooperation among states fostered. International law then was very much observed. It covered items already mentioned and in addition such subjects as asylum, naturalization, immunity of monuments from destruction, diplomatic privileges, consular regularization and the pacific settlement of international dispute. So numerous were the subjects of interstate relations that classical scholars often assert that every international institution in the present time had its antecedent in ancient Greece.

As mentioned, Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War is both a seminal historical work and the founding text of international relations. Thucydides' celebrated explanation of the cause of the Peloponnesian War is that "what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta" (Thucydides, 1972: I 23). This emphasis on power distribution and uneven development was a quantum leap in the study of international relations, quite unlike Herodotus who was content to explain the Greek-Persian conflict solely on the basis of mythical incidents and human passions.

Furthermore, the theme of Polybius's History (122–127) is the rise of Rome to "universal" dominance within little more than a century (264–146 bce). The major contribution of Polybius to international relations was his "world systemic" approach. Echoing modern calls for systemic as opposed to "reductionist" approaches to international relations, he insisted that only universal history was meaningful history; local histories were bound to distort the picture by unduly magnifying relatively minor

factors and events. Granted that the Roman state did not cover the whole known world or even the whole civilized known world (to the east of the Roman domains the Persians remained independent), but in Polybius's time the Mediterranean basin was basically a self-contained international system. Polybius consciously aimed at providing political guidance to his readership. Among others, he set out to demonstrate the dynamics of security dilemma and imperialism, that is, how the Romans' quest for security insensibly led them on the path to empire. In addition, Polybius (1922–1927:VI) delved into the domestic structures of Rome and pointed out their profound impact on its international relations.

Ibn Khaldūn (1967) wrote a history centered on the Arab and Berber dynasties, mentioning also the non-Arab states of the Mediterranean basin and the Middle East. This was the laboratory that enabled him to work out a pattern of what many centuries later would be called “power transition” (Organski, 1968:338–376). His account of the rise and decline of states under the influence of their domestic structures still retains its intellectual power.

The Roman Dimension: The Romans on their part, made some invaluable contributions to the evolution of international studies. For example, while the Greeks established their empire by the might of sword, the Roman public intellectuals contrived a strategic formula – the power of persuasion and where this failed, the sword (Johari, 2014). This does not yet suggest that there was a distinct discipline assigned as International Studies. More so, scholarship as it is presently, was not departmentalized in Greco-Roman civilizations. Renaissance Italy was a political minefield, where backstabbing dukes, ambitious republics, and disloyal mercenaries created a laboratory for political innovation. This environment produced professional armies, the roots of state finance, and modern diplomacy, a legacy Italy left for the rest of Europe (Play.acast.com., 2019).

It was at this juncture that Niccolò Machiavelli, the first great Italian historian, and one of the most eminent political writers of any age or country (Machiavelli, 2013), wrote on the strategy for the conduct of diplomacy and foreign affairs by statesmen.

For instance, Machiavelli in *The Prince*, actively encourages imperialism. He stated that this tutorial (*The Prince*) would not only be useful to the Italian Prince, but also to other kings of France. According to Machiavelli,

the basic challenge facing all conquerors is twofold. The people one has conquered and seeks to rule are offended by and therefore resist the rule of the conqueror. At the same time, the inhabitants who supported the conqueror initially will almost certainly have their hopes disappointed by the new regime and are therefore likely to turn against the new prince. These challenges are less grave when the conquered territory shares a language and customs with the conquering principality. In such cases, it suffices to eliminate the bloodline of the native prince without antagonizing the conquered people by changing their taxes or laws. Before long, the conquered territory will be absorbed

into the conqueror's state. (On the other hand) The challenge of conquering lands with alien languages and customs is greater (Bennett, 2015, p.3).

Machiavelli gave recipe for overcoming the above challenges of kings and principalities going imperial. Thus, in order to succeed, one needs "great fortune and great industry". But as is typical, Machiavelli does not counsel resignation or moderation but rather offers five general guidelines for meeting the challenge, the spirit of which is to assure that one is and remains the most powerful force in the territory. First, one must prevent foreign powers from getting involved. Second, one must either live in or, what is even better, colonize the conquered territory. Third, one must put down the powerful there. Fourth, one must ally with neighboring lesser powers. And finally, one must always look to the future and emerging threats (Bennett, 2015).

Thus, Machiavelli indicates that the challenge of conquering and holding territories will vary according to the character of the regimes in those territories. Empires, such as Persia and Turkey, while difficult to acquire, are relatively easy to maintain. Once one has eliminated the emperor, the people are easy to rule as they are accustomed to submission. Kingdoms with intermediate aristocratic powers, such as France, and republics, while easier to acquire than empires, are more difficult to maintain, as the nobles in the former and the people in the latter, are not so submissive. One must be much harsher in such regimes than in empires, eliminating the aristocratic bloodlines in the former and destroying the tradition of freedom and dispersing the people in the latter (Bennett, 2015).

Machiavelli does not insist upon any moral restrictions in maintaining conquered territory. At the same time, he counsels against unnecessary cruelty. Indeed, it is in this context that he offers the famous or infamous dictum "that men should either be caressed or eliminated, because they avenge themselves for slight offenses but cannot do so for grave ones" (Bennett, 2015). Thus, Machiavelli urges an imperialism that is as harsh or as gentle toward one's new subjects as well as to other countries as is necessary in order to maintain one's conquests. On the whole, the only key consideration for the prince is the acquisition and maintenance of power. It is within this framework that Machiavelli being the reigning historian of the Renaissance age adumbrated the present internal studies.

#### The Modern European State Dimension

The concepts of the European state system and the balance of power played a prominent role in the works of several 19th-century political historians. Among them, Arnold Heeren (1834) elaborated on the idea that the European states constituted an international system; however, he insisted on excluding the Ottoman Empire from that system. The works of Leopold von Ranke, the exemplar of the 19th-century political historian, are also permeated by the concepts of great powers and the balance of power (Von Laue, 1950; Gilbert, 1990:26, 29–30). Ranke found it natural to focus on the great powers, because great powers are the most influential international actors; in this focus,

Ranke echoes many a present-day political realist such as Waltz (1979) and Mearsheimer (2001).

As posited by Koloipoulos (2017), during the very long period prior to the post World War era, insights on international relations were embedded in historical texts. Still, even within this older historical literature it is not out of place to find variations along the lines of International Relations and History. Some of the works are closer to modern international relations than others. On the whole, the emergent discipline of international relations inherited the bulk of the intellectual baggage from the earlier historical literature.

#### The Era of International Relations in the Domain of Political Science:

In the post-Westphalian order, the origins of the study of international relations as a distinct field of enquiry began in the years following the First World War. Johari (2014: 39) further explains that “chairs were created in leading American and English Universities so as to understand international political developments”. Among the earliest practitioners of the new discipline were historians, international jurists and scholars of politics. However, the outbreak of another disastrous global war in 1939 was taken by a new generation of younger scholars to signal, among other things, the failure of the idealism of International Relations the faultiness of the historical approach to the study of International Relations. Taking inspirations from the earlier writings of social theorists like Talcott Parsons and Almond, post-World II scholars of International Relations subscribed strictly to the course of empiricism. Johari (2014: 58) notes that, Karl Deutsch, David J. Singer, Richard Snyder, H.W Bruck, B. Sapin and a very large number of new scholars devised new methods, tools, strategies, paradigms and the like, in attempt to understand and explain international political reality in exclusively empirical terms. They discarded every consideration of normativism and instead sought to convert the study of international politics into a science.

We need not over flog the fact of history that international history has a longstanding pedigree. To this extent, diplomatic history was one of the components and drivers of the modern codification of the historical method. In the 19 century reflections of Leopold Von Ranke, one sees how charting the actions of State leaders, governments and foreign ministries (*Grosse Politik*) formed a crucial field in the codification of a discipline that aimed to reconstruct past events with absolute precision, using solid documentary sources; and in doing so, to make full use of the vast accumulated depository of materials produced by the bureaucracies in charge of State diplomacy ever since the structure of the modern

State consolidated, and there formed in parallel a European system of states (Di Nolfo, 2006, p.26).

This tradition of historical research in what has come to be known as international studies has survived through the ages until the post-World War I. Great historians have always used foreign policy to offer a broad and pervasive representation of the spirit of an age. In a few instances, the broad horizon of problems and choices that were

discussed took on a meaning that was much deeper and broader than the simple discussion of viewpoints espoused by a limited circle of statesmen and bureaucrats. To mention one classic Italian case, Federico Chabod's investigation into the history of Italy's post-unitary foreign policy opened with a volume of premises that actually provided a great fresco of cultures and mentalities, passions and material dimensions – in addition to the intentions and thoughts of the country's individual protagonists. In its comprehensive complexity, this made an important contribution to the broader history of Italy (Chabod, 1951).

This era is equally a period characterized as the period of 'Lessons of History'.

The English School approach he pioneered sought instead to use the historical record to demonstrate that theorizing about relations between states is dependent on recognizing fundamental lessons about the actual historical practices undertaken by actors within International Relations. History thus provides the empirical material for understanding the function and evolution of what Bull saw as the fundamental institutions constituting an international society: the balance of power, international law, diplomacy, war, and the concert of great powers (Bull, 1977). The English School's treatment of history allows for an understanding of how to extend the element of international society that provides the basis for order between sovereign states (Bull, 1977).

The Era of Thrusting International Studies into the 'Prison Yard of Political Science' (Rosenberg, 2016):

It was the rise of the behaviouralists, especially among political scientists that seemed to have pushed history to the fringes, seeking, as it were, to claim for political science, the new discipline of International Relations. However, this did not come without some reactions by leading Diplomatic historians. For instance, Fry (1987: 5) a leading American historian contends that, Diplomatic historians stood among the founders of international relations but have been elbowed aside, and some of the fault lies with them. They allowed history to become a mere preface to current events, their empiricism to become little more than a source of data for social scientists, and their intellectual preferences to be used as a bulwark against science itself. They all too frequently dismissed international relations or mistook it for journalism (Fry, 1987, p.5).

The above contention does not only describe the attitude of some American historians to International Relations but applies to Nigerian historians as well. Even with advent of the post-behavioural paradigm, which American scholars refer to as 'the return of history', the empiricists continue to berate those who employ the historical approach in the study of international relations (IR). In the Nigerian situation, political scientists often argue that historians are not methodologically equipped to make any meaningful contributions to IR. Nigerian historians who have an interest in IR have since countered this claim by producing studies on varying aspects of the discipline of International Relations. In fact, the founding Director-General of Nigerian Institute of

International Affairs (NIIA), Dr. Lawrence Apalara Fubunmi, was a historian who had studied the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium in the Sudan for a PhD (Ujah, 2018).

Prior to the era of ostracization of history from international studies, put differently, emasculation of international studies via occupation and domination of international relations by scholars and practitioners of political science, the discipline of International Relations passed through two distinct phases. The first phase was characterized by a high degree of historical accuracy and strict adherence to the principles of historical research and documentation. In this phase, the accounts of history were presented in a descriptive and chronological manner without what the opponents referred to as much reference to how specific and situations fitted into the general pattern of international conduct (Thompson, 1952).

The second phase featured a rejection of the methodology and orientation of the diplomatic historians which appeared to have had a free course in the first phase. To that extent, Thompson (1952) expressed those two general approaches emerged in the second phase of the evolution of the discipline. First, the diplomatic historians of the period continued to present their study in the strictest historical methodology and regarded less of the current events approach emphasized by those who had rejected the approach of the first phase. Second, the new methodology championed by the scholars of the second phase placed the teacher of international relations in the position of an expositor and interpreter of the immediate significance of "current events" (Maliniak, et al, 2007). In addition, little or no attempt was made by these writers of the second phase to relate history to the contemporary problems of the international system. The approach of the second phase, therefore, was accused of not developing firm methodological foundations by which the events of the present could be related to the long run of history.

The third phase was characterized by the disenchantment of scholars of International Relations with the normative traditions of the discipline. Thus, they were moved to adopt a new approach which stressed the institutionalization of international relations through international law and organization (Thompson, 1952). It was not a surprise then that the idealism of the founders of the League of Nations marked a significant to rub off on the academic persuasions of the writers of the third phase. In effect, they all subscribed to the assumption that the peace of the international system would be best preserved by international cooperation and thus, devoted their energies to promoting international cooperation via international law and organizations.

The next phase, which was the fourth phase, marked the complete rejection of history in the evolution of International Relations. This is a phase which Thompson referred to as a behavioral revolution. This phase emerged because the idealism of the inter-war scholars was unable to forestall another global war and, considering that power politics continued to subsist as the basic element of international relations. Therefore, scholars and practitioners of International Relations began to emphasize on political power, rather than law and institutions as the essential dynamic in international relations (Thompson, 1952).

This period can also be described as the era of 'escape from history' (Glencross, 2010). Here escape from history connotes a period in which scholars of international relations theorizes from history in order to identify a 'fundamental caesura' in the history of international relations that makes the present very much unlike the past. In this way of thinking, what separates the past from the present or future is the ability to transcend violent inter-state conflict at least within a subset of certain states. From this perspective, the history of international relations is there to reveal the presence of this caesura and explain its causes. In this new political context, the old lessons are no longer applicable precisely because of a new ability to establish an order that can triumph over the imperfections caused by the division of the globe into sovereign states – an order from which the possibility of backsliding is also discounted (Glencross, 2010).

Here two International Relation theories fit into this category: democratic peace theory and neo-functionalism. The first proclaims the inherent potential for a global escape from history, whilst the original globalist ambitions of the second have (in the face of the paucity of regional integration worldwide) have been reduced to explaining the seemingly *sui generis* phenomenon of European political integration. Democratic peace theory is a highly contested paradigm which contends that liberal democratic states have a unique ability to construct enduringly peaceful relations amongst one another (Doyle, 1983; Lipson, 2003; Levy and Razin, 2004). In the perception of Kenneth Waltz, this is a "second image" theory that identifies various features of the domestic political system to explain the nature of the resulting peaceful international relations between democratic states. These features include constitutional checks on executive power, electoral checks on aggressive politicians, political transparency and openness that enable credible commitments to be made to other states as well as the shared value of resolving disputes through dialogue and negotiation. Moreover, given their transparency and checking mechanisms, domestic democratic systems are more amenable to the creation of institutions for pacific inter-state cooperation that become a mutually reinforcing mechanism for international peace (Lipson, 2003).

However, all these explanatory elements have been subject to criticism based on the empirical record of state belligerence in the post-Westphalian era, which is a minefield of coding and assorted interpretative choices for defining democracy and war (Davis, 2005: 77). In addition, the record of peace between democratic dyads over time is statistically questionable when tested against the null hypothesis (Spiro, 1994), whilst democratizing countries have statistically been shown to be more belligerent than authoritarian ones (Mansfield and Snyder, 2005). However, the purpose here is only to explain the specific genre of historical consciousness present in democratic peace theory. This becomes apparent in the extent to which this theory of IR suggests that democratic states have succeeded in making an irreversible escape from a seeming intractable cyclical history of violent conflict. This claim could readily be found in Kant, who is traditionally taken as the intellectual progenitor of this theory. Already the title of his famous essay offering a rival international order to balance of power, *Perpetual Peace*

[1795], indicates the possibility of effecting a move beyond the pernicious history of inter-state war. Peace in perpetuity, to be accomplished by a treaty between well-ordered republics, thus marks a caesura with flawed balancing and dynastic rivalries between European monarchs. Escape from history means overturning the state of nature between sovereign states by domestic regime changes, rather than submission to a new sovereign authority. Moreover, relations between republics – re-conceptualized as democracies today – are essentially a “separate peace” (Doyle, 1983: 226; Lipson, 2003) that leaves untouched relations with non-democracies as well as those between non-democracies.

In this way the escape from history is exclusive to a particular set of sovereign states based on their domestic regimes. At the same time, the promise of democratization across the globe carries with it the prediction that eventually the entire international arena could escape from the shared history of inter-state war thereby becoming a global state (Archibugi, 1995). Neo-functionalism, on its own part, equally posits a dramatic historical rupture but only in the specific case of European international relations – although potentially the new model could spread elsewhere. This rupture is based less upon democratic homogeneity (albeit a necessary but not sufficient condition) than on the post-war establishment of supranational institutions, starting with the European Coal and Steel Community. This institutional rupture, the theory claims, fundamentally changed the incentive structure of socio-political actors, thereby rendering the historical lessons of realism, international institutions as well as federal union, inapplicable. Instead, the process of European integration is read as a radical new departure that transcends power politics but without recreating a federal sovereign state writ large (Glencross, 2010).

The intellectual background to neo-functionalism was functionalism tout court: a radical attempt to rethink the conditions for world peace after the envisaged defeat of totalitarianism (Mitrany, 1943). The essential tenet of this theory was a critique of the shibboleth of sovereignty. According to this interpretation of international politics, pre-1939 collective security failed because the legal restrictions placed on state sovereignty – self-help, in effect – could not change the essential political reality of sovereignty, understood as the bundle of powers exercised by states. Hence, the functionalist blueprint for a “working peace system” was intended to undermine the sovereign capacities or capabilities of states by redistributing these powers to executive agencies rather than to rely on a straitjacket of legality to curb sovereign states. Furthermore, the theory assumed that individual loyalty to the state was a product of government performance and hence that a shift in the locus of executive decision-making would inevitably correspond with a transformation in political loyalties (Glencross, 2010).

Subsequently, Ernest Haas’ “neo” variant of functionalism retained many of the key elements of Mitrany’s thought but applied the theoretical framework to an empirical study of the course of European integration as well as to the integrative potential of other regional and international organizations. As defined by Haas (1968, p.16), political integration is ‘the process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings



are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the preexisting national states'. As compared with the rest of the world, Western Europe was in a privileged position to be able to escape from its history since this kind of integration 'fares best in situations controlled by social groupings representing the rational interests of urban-industrial society; groups seeking to maximize their economic benefits and dividing along regionally homogeneous ideological-political lines' (Haas, 1961: 378). In these propitious circumstances, the creation of supranational institutions pooling states' decisionmaking and executive capacities provided the impetus for an alternative to the nation-state, federalism and also collective security. Moreover, this mechanism did not require a conscious devotion to a particular political project; history could be escaped by default rather than by design.

"Spillover" was the hypothesis supposed to distinguish the new theory of functionalism, derived from the European experience, from its empirically ungrounded predecessor (Rosamond, 2005). The central claim of spillover is that actors who have created an institutional order for integration but who are unequally pleased with the results will 'attempt to resolve their dissatisfaction either by resorting to collaboration in another, related sector or by intensifying their commitment to the original sector, or both' (Schmitter, 1969, p. 162). This means task expansion will take place 'without necessarily implying any ideological commitment to the European idea' (Haas, 1958, p. 297). Thus, supranationalism, once adopted in a specific policy sector, creates an inherent pressure for further integration, thanks simply to institutional design predicated on 'upgrading of the parties' common interests' (Haas, 1961: 368) through an institutionalized mediator – in the case of the European Coal and Steel Community, the High Authority (the predecessor to today's European Commission). In this way, neo-functionalism claims there is an 'impetus toward extension [of sectoral integration] to the entire economy even in the absence of specific group demands and their attendant ideologies' (Haas, 1958, p. 297).

However, Haas' explanation of the dynamics of European integration has been the subject of important criticism in the wake of the empirical reality of EU consolidation (Moravcsik, 1998; Parsons, 2003). Nevertheless, it remains a salient theoretical paradigm in EU studies (Schmitter, 2003) precisely because of the inherent failure of supranational integration to materialize elsewhere, including amongst the global subset of democratic countries. This therefore requires an explanation for the specific peculiarity of the EU's assumed escape from history. The inherent failures of the theories aimed at relegating history from the study of the international system, coupled with the recent global events in which the parameters of government are broken by other non-state actors and trans-regional nature of human security and insecurity, international practitioners began to make a detour to the once discarded history leading to the reawakening of historical consciousness in international studies.

The Era of Resonance of History – History and International Studies in Perspective

This is the critical stage in the dimensions of history and international studies. It serves as a melting point in the evolution of international studies as domiciled in the domain of historical scholarship. This revolution began with campaigns made by historians from the time the discipline of international relations emerged and domesticated in the realm of political science. It is a stage termed post – Behaviouralism or ‘the return of history’. This approach or dimension was championed by David Easton, who in his inaugural address at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association called for an abandonment of the crazed quest of ‘scientifizing’ international relations (Thompson, 1952).

The supporters of Easton describe the Eastonian Approach as a new revolution in the study of international relations; and it is argued that, this Eastonian Approach signifies abandonment of the ‘hard-nosed empiricism’ and instead, reaffirmation of norms and values in political analysis. The scholars of this latest phase are exhorted to give up the ‘mad craze for scientism’ and instead, make their research socially relevant (Thompson, 1952, pp. 433-34). In this new phase, attention has been made to return to history in the study of international phenomenon in another dimension. After all, Mackay and Laroche, (2017) quoting Ricoeur, 1965, pp. 26 & 27) averred that ‘International Relations (IR) theory in the last two decades, has made more and better use of history. In so doing, IR scholars have turned – or, more accurately, returned – to theories of history. This theoretical work has been intellectually productive, but to date has gone under-documented’.

Hedley Bull, a leading English School scholar chastised positivist scholars for their ‘lack of any sense of inquiry into international politics as a continuing tradition to which they are the latest recruits’ (Bull, 1966, pp. 375-6). This kind of a-historical modelling, whose causal mechanisms explicitly fail to cover particular periods of international politics, contravened the historical consciousness present in the work of Bull and other English School scholars: the notion that their method for analyzing history can provide certain lessons for the future. In essence, such knowledge is by definition historically situated as notably the product of the transition from a European to a global international order based on the spread of the sovereign state, a form of political organization once restricted to Europe alone (Bull, 2000; Watson, 2009). In this way, the lessons of history genre of historical consciousness in International Relations theory accepts that the future evolution of international politics – as suggested by the English School’s analytical category of world society – ‘is not beholden’ to current conditions.

This era comes with the realization that the awareness of the historicity behind the ideal-type of “international society” is only possible through a lessons-based engagement with the historical record. The lessons of history provided by English School theory are not only positive in the sense of appeals, for the sake of international order, to strengthen the institution of diplomacy or extend membership of the concert of great powers to new states. In addition, this form of historical consciousness allowed Bull to mount a powerful critique of those who claimed the sovereign state’s dominant role was

deleterious to international order. There the lesson of history was 'the positive functions that the state and the states-system have fulfilled in relation to world order' (Bull, 1979: 115), which makes possible the fundamental claim that without these two 'there would be no world order at all' (Bull., 1979, p. 123).

This resonance of history and international studies is a period in which scholars, realizing the immutability of historical consciousness from international relations began to question how realistic is the so-called trans-Atlantic divide. According to Hobson and Lawson (2008), to some extent, history has always been a core feature of the international imagination. On both sides of the Atlantic, leading figures in the discipline such as E. H. Carr, Hans Morgenthau, Martin Wight, Hedley Bull and Stanley Hoffman have all employed history as a means of illuminating their research. Indeed, Wight (1966) made searching the key prerequisite (*desiderata*) of international history and the *sine qua non* of international theory.

Hobson and Lawson (2008) argue that although often considered to have been banished by the scientific turn in International Relations (IR) during the Cold War, at least in the United States, history never really went away as a tool of International Relations theory. And in recent years the (re)turn of history has been one of the most striking features of the various openings in International Relations theory ushered in by the end of the Cold War; questioning the relationship between history and International Relations, and the status of International Relations's recent historical (re)turn.

Hobson and Lawson (2008) assert that Fred Northedge's original goal in setting up Millennium was to provide a (British) counterweight to the 'ahistorical positivist project' that had engulfed mainstream American International Relations. Thus by bringing history back in, albeit in a critical way, Northedge's thinking reflected a now commonly held assumption that there is a transatlantic divide that separates a historically informed British International Relations from (what he described as) a 'historyless' US mainstream.

But in certain key respects, Hobson and Lawson (2008) Lawson argue that these perceptions no matter how common they seem are misrepresentations, reflecting a series of widely held antinomies that are falsely assumed to underpin the discipline. They contend that the juxtaposition of history-less/ahistorical US International Relations versus British historical International Relations is misleading because history is important to mainstream US International Relations. Moreover, Hobson and Lawson also find problematic the type of binary engendered by Robert Cox's distinction between critical (historical) theory and history-less/ahistorical problem-solving theory. Even the apparently archetypal version of ahistoricist International Relations such as Waltzian neorealism who claim to have laid history aside from international relations has been historically 'filled in' by theorists such as Robert Gilpin, John Mearsheimer, and Colin and Miriam Elman (Gilpin, 2001; 1981; Mearsheimer, 2003; Elman and Elman, 2001). Also, Robert Keohane, Lisa Martin and others have applied historical analysis to a

rational choice neoliberal (Keohane and Martin, 1995). Indeed, this point is becoming increasingly accepted.

This era has also been referred to as the period of 'revenge of history' which shares the notion that state sovereignty, which is fundamentally self-centred and ultimately autonomous in executing its own preferences, can always eventually trump institutional cooperation, historical norms, democratic peace or even supranational political integration. Classical realism presents this element of revenge in an axiomatic form whereas structural realism couches it in the idiom of positivist social science (Glencross, 2010). Indeed, Stanley Hoffmann, a critic of both neo-functionalisms as well the liberal institutionalist perspective on European integration, is a clear example of the classical realist form of this genre of historical consciousness. Instead of believing in the immanent supranational logic of neo-functionalism or the appeal of a well-designed federation based on appropriate institutional lessons, he discounted Europe's ability to build a successful alternative form of political authority that could successfully transcend sovereignty and balance of power considerations in international politics. Instead, he argued that history – in the shape of the nation-state – would have its revenge on the attempt to reconfigure drastically the political organization of Europe.

This was because either integration would lead to a federation, thereby recreating the nation-state, or else existing nation-states would refuse to continue down the path of ever closer union. Hence hierarchy or anarchy was the binary choice facing the continent; history could neither provide useful lessons for overcoming this dilemma nor could this historical straitjacket be overcome through novel institutional means (Hoffmann, 1966).

The classical realist notion of the revenge of history provided for a critique of the deliberate strategy of ambiguous integration devoid of political finality. On this reading, the functionalist integration of matters of low politics created an institutional project amenable to states and leaders divided on fundamental questions of high politics (Hoffmann, 1966). Chief amongst these were the future international role of the consolidated European polity – whether it would be a security community – but also other vexing questions such as membership and the politics of welfare. Consequently, the functionalist logic was viewed by Hoffmann as a fundamental gamble. The wager was one of 'substituting motion as an end in itself, for agreement on ends' (Hoffmann, 1966, p. 883).

Revenge of history thus does not place history or historical methods on a pedestal to explain why realist theorists have shown such little interest in the contemporary revival of the English School. Rather, the historical record is used to demonstrate the futility of imagining either an escape from history (with the partial exception provided for by the invention of nuclear deterrence) or perfectibility based on lessons from the conduct of states or the institutions they have designed together. In this way, history is treated as proof of the continuity of units' intractable self-interest and fickleness in an anarchic

world even though changes in the nature of those units and the systems they form is mysteriously inexplicable (Buzan and Little, 1996).

A shared concern with world order, particularly in the form of inter-state cooperation that confounds neo-realism's obsession with relative gains and the security dilemma, permeates liberal institutionalism. This branch of International Relations theory similarly evinces the lessons of history genre of historical consciousness because of its use of history to theorize possibilities for inter-state cooperation. According to this theoretical perspective, the history of institutions (supranational such as the UN, EU or WTO as well as transnational, such as NGOs or MNCs) reveals examples of why and under what conditions states cooperate. Liberal institutionalism thus uses the historical record to provide positive lessons about successful cooperation yielding absolute or joint gains (Ikenberry, 2001; Keohane and Martin, 1995) or, conversely, negative lessons of failed or flawed institutional cooperation resulting in defection or, more likely, policy blockage based on states' entrenched preference for relative gains (Mastanduno, 1991; Snidal, 1991).

Successful cooperation in a stable world order, according to Ikenberry (2000), is based on the creation, after major inter-state conflict, of institutions to provide for the strategic restraint of the most powerful state. Although these institutions are attempts to regulate world order in a way that favours the victor, the historical record suggests institutions' ability to deliver a stable order is based on the credibility of strategic restraint, namely by preventing the arbitrary exercise of power by dominant actors. Here the historical record invoked by Ikenberry suggests these institutions, especially post-1945 ones created under the leadership of a democracy, the US, such as the UN, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), are singularly better able to deliver order as compared with earlier balance of power provisions (Ikenberry, 2000). These institutions have been successful because they achieve quasi-constitutional restraints on the dominant state in the international system, which in turn is a transparent democratic state that thereby provides other countries with 'some measure of assurance that American policy [will] be steady and predictable' (Ikenberry, 2000, p.46). Consequently, participants in this web of US-led institutional arrangements are severely constrained from pursuing an alternative order such as balancing or the establishment of competing institutions (Ikenberry, 2000, p.253). In this way, the liberal institutionalist lesson of history is clear for today: incorporating new actors into a stable global order is dependent on the US adhering to its self-binding commitments or even creating novel institutions in this same vein.

Liberal institutionalism also provides an historical account of when international institutions fail to have the desired effect of (sufficiently) taming state selfishness and enabling stable cooperation. Here the lesson of history is that international institutions are most successful when they act as autonomous agents capable of changing state preferences, as in the EU example, rather than as merely oversight mechanisms for binding rules, for instance the UN (Jervis, 1999). Moreover, institutionalist theory also

suggests that states' encounter with today's multiplicity of international institutions gives rise to problems of selection and creation that establishes a status quo bias (Jupille and Snidal, 2005). This bias entrenches imperfect cooperation in the absence of high stakes and long time horizons as well as hegemonic leadership (Jupille and Snidal, 2005). In this way, liberal institutionalism adopts a genre of historical consciousness that does not necessarily offer positive lessons for rational institutional design. Consequently, this branch of IR theory also identifies negative lessons from history that reveal historical shortcomings in institutionalized cooperation. As with the English School, therefore, the lessons of history are both positive and negative. Overall, theoretical work across this genre assumes continuity in the nature of the modern international system as defined by state sovereignty – this is what makes historical lessons still applicable today and in the future. Similarly, history will not have its revenge by laying waste to the attempt to use these lessons for instruction about improving the conduct of international relations. This is because the historical consciousness underlying both the English School and liberal institutionalism presupposes that adopting historical lessons enables the taming of certain egregious aberrations of the sovereign state system as well as cautioning against unwise radical new reforms (Glencross, 2010). At this juncture history came back powerfully to contest and reclaim what used to be in its domain, though in its own dimension – international studies given the series of events that has strongly debunked much of the behavioural assumptions thereby setting the stage for a return to history for explanation and interpretation of these post-behavioural puzzles in a post-international milieu. This return of history to international studies has been variously christened – History and International Studies, International History, History and Diplomatic Studies, History and Strategic Studies, History and International Relations, Global History, among others in various Nigerian universities and beyond, all in the domain of history Departments; a departure from the immediate past when history allowed itself to be given a remote back seat in the study of the international system.

#### Concluding Remarks

The study has been able to trace the dimensions of international study from the ancient Greek era to the present. Though there was no special study prior to the post-World War I designated as international study, however, a deeper insight into the nature, context, content and practice of inter-state and cross-national relations over the years show that history was the leading discipline that chronicled inter-national relations before the receding of history after the behavioural revolution of the 1950s. However, some scholars of history remained resolute, particularly some of those with realist inclination until the period well into the post-Cold War, when the post-international events culminated to the rearing up of, appreciation and renewed interest of history in the realm of international studies. However, some scholars have cautioned and advocated for a more polycentric approach to the study of international affairs, a

little more than the traditional approach to international studies by practitioners of history.

Among these advocates for a polycentric approach is Glencross (2010), that explores the disciplinary dialogue between history and International Relations theory, which remains a lively dialogue as shown by the recent “historical turn” and the continuing use of historically rich case studies to construct and test IR theory. Glencross’s work takes a novel approach for studying this dialogue by examining the importance of historical consciousness to theory-building and knowledge production in International Relations. Historical consciousness here is defined as the understanding of the temporality of historical experience, that is how past, present and future are thought to be connected for the sake of producing historical knowledge. Glencross maintains that existing methodological and epistemological discussions of the relationship between history and International Relations overlook this dimension of the study of history by focusing instead on how to do history in International Relations and criticizing the (frequent) misuse of the historical record.

In this vein, David Reynolds calls for a mestized form of new international History. According to him, this history should retrieve its transnational characteristics, which are central to the history of the last forty years (i.e. from international capital markets to global corporations, from peace movements to terrorist networks, from movies and popular music to the internet and the world-wide web). Such a history should be capable of broadening both its methods of research and its objects of inquiry, while preserving some of its foundational elements, especially its attention to the nature, use, projection and effects of Power, the analysis of which remains central to the study of international relations (Reynolds, 2016). This is partly due to the fact that after decades of philosophical, historical and political debates on the decadence and crisis of the modern State, we are still very far from any real dissolution of it when it comes to forms of control of everyday life or the machinery of world governance. The State and its actions definitely need placing within a more complex frame, including a greater plurality of actors and subjects than in the past. Reynolds however, warned that excessively de-centering the meaning and weight of statehood, can lead to an impasse, where many contemporary dynamics would become almost incomprehensible.

It behoves us, nevertheless, to be wary of ‘fashion and certain caricatures’ of the new methods and approaches that this global turn seems to be imposing. Thus, it is relatively easy to avoid the totalizing misunderstanding that lurks beneath the label ‘global history’ manifestly it is impossible for one author or group of researchers to assemble in their analysis a comprehensive plurality of cultural, linguistic, social, ethnic and political phenomena. Even leaving aside the monumental erudition needed to produce such global history, historians have to reckon with the immense problem of the huge archival asymmetries that exist today. “The great risk is of gradually eclipsing that distinctive mark of historical research: which is careful philological assessment of primary sources (Pomeranz, 201).

Another seeming elusive temptation in this realm is to study local and global links through a monographic perspective. Distinctions here are crucial: such an approach can be very fruitful where the interplay between the two dimensions – the micro and the macro; the local and the global helps to better understand complex historical processes, by highlighting important turning-points, which can symbolize and represent a season or an era (Trivellato, 2000; Andrade, 2009). After all, even though most practitioners of history and international relations believe that the differences between the disciplines are real and important enough (Schroeder, 2001), on the other hand, there is no absolute consensus as to what exactly these differences are. Opinions seem to cluster around three possible lines of demarcation: (1) past versus present, (2) idiographic versus nomothetic, and (3) description versus analysis. These lines are better viewed as continuum rather than rigid categories, given that both history and international relations are quite heterogeneous (Levy, 2001, pp. 40, 42–45); thus, although some historians have explicitly rejected the aforementioned lines and offered convincing counterexamples (Ingram, 1997, pp. 53–54), it does seem that this demarcation captures the difference between international relations and history.

The past versus present continuum is arguably the most obvious difference between the two disciplines. In this vein, history deals with the past and international relations deals with the present; even in the numerous instances when international relations deals with historical cases, it does so with an eye to the present, whereas history tends to deal with the past for its own sake (Lebow, 2001, p. 111). In the same vein, international relations often aim consciously at policy relevance, a tendency relatively absent from history. Nevertheless, the past–present distinction is not as neat as one might think. To start with, the present is not so self-intelligible: historical context may matter a lot, and past influences may persist for long (Bloch, 1992, pp. 29–39). Moreover, historians often do have an eye for the present, or even for the future (Gaddis, 2004, p. 10); indeed, they use the pejorative term “antiquarian” for those among them who are considered bound to the past (Burrow, 2008, p. 468). Finally, salient past events still command widespread interest for their own sake, and international relations scholars who analyze them in the course of their theoretical quests cannot help improving the general understanding of those particular events (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994, p. 35).

On account of the idiographic versus nomothetic distinction, International relations scholars explicitly aim to arrive at general propositions of wider applicability (Kaplan, 1961, pp. 8–10, 14; Waltz, 1979, pp. 1–17). On the contrary, although there are a few historians that, after Carl Hempel, search for “covering laws” in history (Trachtenberg, 2006, pp. 1–4), historians can be happy with pure idiography (Samuel Eliot Morison, quoted in McClelland, 1961, p. 34) or at least be reluctant to generalize from particular cases, because they place a high value on contingency (Wright, 1965). Moreover, even historians who castigate political scientists/international relations scholars for their own brand of generalizations declare that historians “generalize for particular purposes; hence [they] practice particular generalization” (Gaddis, 2004, p. 62).



For the description versus analysis distinction between history and international relations (Aron, 1966, p.2; Wohlforth, 2001, p.356), both can be conceived as ends of a continuum that history should deal with what happened and how, leaving aside the question of why it happened, which is be purely descriptive, that is. Overall, historians have a greater taste for detail than International Relation scholars; in fact, the very use of the word detail is problematic, given that historians may argue that the so-called details are actually essential for highlighting the unique aspects of the case under examination. In the end, it all comes down to a different mix of what, how (what often subsumes how), and why. As was pointed out, historians do use theories; in fact, some of them have protested their depiction as mere fact-mongers by political scientists/international relations scholars (Ingram, 1997, pp.53–54). However, the problem is that more often than not their theories are unarticulated (Kaplan, 1961, p.6; Elman & Elman, 2001, p.7), hence difficult to put to test and check for internal consistency (Koliopoulos, 2017).

There is therefore need to bridge the gap by sustaining the strength of each of the disciplinary divide so as to have the robust treatment, description, explanation and analysis of the nuanced phenomena of the international system, which none of the disciplinary divide can exhaust on its own. It should, however, be noted that there are no known-clear cut differences between International Relations, International Studies, or International Affairs. Most European and American Universities use these terms interchangeably – the subject-matter essentially remains the same. It is nothing other than the methodological differences that cause a rift between historians and political scientists (Ugwujah, 2018). Sequel to the above, Maliniak, et al, (2007, p.2), quipped that “International Relations scholars teach and think that paradigms divide the discipline when they do not”. Historians were initially preoccupied with analyzing international relations deductively and are given to view history as providing the needed raw materials for any meaningful analyses of international behaviour. Whereas, most historical scholars of International Relations believe that all they needed to do is to interpret their historical data accurately to be able to explain the general and specific patterns of international interactions; political scientists, on the other hand, reject the deductive approach and insist on the study of international relations based on scientific methodologies. On this premise Kaplan (1966) admonishes political scientists to regard history merely as a source for raw material and go beyond mere interpretation. “The scholar of International relations”, in his viewpoint, “should be interested – in all systems – past, present, future, and hypothetical (Kaplan, 1966).

In spite of the seeming disciplinary divide, Lawson (2007) counsels that history and social science should not be considered as autonomous enterprises separated by virtue of distinct orientations, approaches and subject matters, but as a common enterprise. Therefore, by focusing on events, by ordering and sequencing these events into intelligible narratives, recognizing how people act within certain contexts that can only be discerned from the vantage points of researchers’ historically situated positions, history does not abhor social science; rather, it requires it. As such, the choice is not one

between a historical enterprise which can do with or without theory, but acceptance of the fact that history is a social science of a kind. It is an approach that employs, narrates and analyzes causal stories. In this way, history takes its place as an indispensable part of the panoply of social sciences just as social science appears as one among many story telling enterprises. Both are necessarily implicated in each other, something made clear by a focus on context, eventfulness, narrative and ideal typification. Every researcher of international relations ought to follow at least two mutually reinforcing steps in arriving at plausible conclusion: first, awareness of the way in which diverse theoretical schools interpret, assess and adjudicate a particular historical subject matter; and second, maintaining an eye for variance, conflict and heterogeneous opinion at least as much as convergence, clusters and patterns of received wisdom (Lustick, 1996). On the whole, researchers should look to history in order to be wrong, to look for interpretations, surprises and contradictions which do not fit with prevailing theoretical explanations (Trachtenberg, 2006). This can be successfully achieved by the use of counterfactuals. As Lebow (2010) points out, counterfactual work is useful in its capacity for researchers to go 'beyond themselves', breaking the spell of tendencies to see history as closed rather than open, and in linear rather than nonlinear terms.

Counterfactual readings serve as powerful forms of demystification, helping to remove forms of cognitive bias which tend to see history as post factum determinant rather than as context-bound narrative. This in itself serves to empower researchers to realize the limits of their claims about the social world, which requires a degree of humility about what we can know; an understanding that theoretical explanations are always partial, provisional and contained within tightly bound historical domains (Lebow, 2010). It follows that historians being what they are, are on some level, we are differentiated not simply by our choice of theory but also by our selection of a particular historical mode of explanation. As such in developing this selection, it should become clear that both social science and history form part of a single intellectual journey, one in which 'both are permanently in view and in which neither serves as the under-labourer — or colonizer — of the other' (Lawson, 2007).

From the foregoing, it is crystal clear that a mutual co-existence and complementarity of history and political science is by no means intractable since in practical terms, they are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the methodologies championed by both sides reinforce rather than obstruct each other. The narratives and deductionist approach of the historian may have one or two things to contribute to the inductionist approach of the political scientist. Interestingly, historians are beginning to utilize theories and some useful social science models in the explanation and analyses of historical events. The political scientist on their own part has to depend on the facts of history for testing and validating his hypotheses. Besides the penchant to decipher patterns from the past, students of history can begin to explain the relationships among various events (Mingst, 1999). Thus, the synergy of the historical traditional approach

and the political scientist's inductive paradigm would most likely propel and promote the overall interest of International Studies.

## References

Andrade, T. (2010). A Chinese Farmer, Two African Boys, and a Warlord: Towards a Global Microhistory, in *Journal of World History*, 21, pp. 573-591.

Archibugi, D. (1995) Immanuel Kant, Cosmopolitan Law and Peace, *European Journal of International Relations*, 1 (4), pp.429-456.

Aron, R. (1966). *Peace and war: A theory of international relations* (R. Howard & A. B. Fox, Trans.). Malabar, FL: Krieger. (Originally published in 1962.).

Bachelors.vu.amsterdam(2019). History: History and International Studies <https://bachelors.vu.amsterdam/en/degree-programmes/history-international-studies/index.aspx> (Accessed 20/10/19).

Bennett, Z. (2015). Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince (1532), Available at <https://www.classicsofstrategy.com/2015/06/the-prince-by-niccolo-machiavelli-1532.html> (Accessed 20/11/19).

Bloch, M. (1992). *The historian's craft* (P. Burke, Trans.). Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press. (Originally published in 1949.)

Brustein, W.I. and King, R. D. (2004). Anti-Semitism in Europe Before the Holocaust *International Political Science Review*, 25, (1), pp.35-53

Bull, H. (1966) *International Relations Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach*, *World Politics* 18 (April), pp. 361-77.

Bull, H. (1977) *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, London: Macmillan.

Bull, H. (1979). The State's Positive Role in International Affairs, *Daedalus*, 108 (4), pp.111-123.

Bull, H. (2000). The European International order, in K. Alderson and A. Hurrell (eds.) *Hedley Bull on International Society*, New York: Macmillan.

Burrow, J. (2008). *A history of histories*. New York, NY: Knopf.

Buzan, B. and Little, R. (1996). Reconceptualizing Anarchy: Structural Realism Meets World History, *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (4): 403-438.

Carr, E. H. (1945). *Nationalism and after*, London: Macmillan.

Center for Strategic and International Studies (2010). About Us, Available at <http://csis.org/about-us> (Accessed 22/10/19).

Chabod, F. (1951). *Storia della politica estera italiana (1870-1896)*, vol. I, Le premesse, Bari, Laterza.

Davis, J.W. (2005). *Terms of Inquiry: On the Theory and Practice of Political Science*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Di Nolfo, E. (2006). *Prima lezione di storia delle relazioni internazionali*, Bari-Roma, Laterza.

- Doyle, M. (1983). Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Affairs, *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, 12 (1and 2), pp. 205–235, 323–353.
- Elman, C. and Elman, M. (2001). eds, *Bridges and Boundaries*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Flinders University. (2010). Bachelor of International Studies, Available at <http://www.flinders.edu.au/courses/undergrad/bis/> (Accessed 25/09/19).
- Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies at Stanford University (2010). Introduction, Available at [http://fsi.stanford.edu/docs/about\\_fsi](http://fsi.stanford.edu/docs/about_fsi) (Accessed 22/10/19).
- Fry, M.G., (1987). *History and international studies*. Washington DC: American Historical Association Institutional Services Publications.
- Gaddis, J. L. (2004). *The landscape of history*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Gilbert, F. (1990). *History: Politics or culture? Reflections on Ranke and Burckhardt*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gilpin, R. (2001). *Global Political Economy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gilpin, R. (1981). *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Glencross, A. (2010). *Historical Consciousness in International Relations Theory: A Hidden Disciplinary Dialogue*, Paper prepared for Millennium Conference 16-17 October, 2010.
- Haas, E. (1968). *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Heeren, A. H. L. (1834). *A manual of the history of the political systems of Europe and its colonies*. Oxford, UK: Talboys.
- Hobson, J. M and George Lawson, G. (2008). What is History in International Relations? *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, 37 (2), pp. 415–435
- Hoffmann, S. (1966). Obsolete or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe, *Daedalus*, 95 (3), pp. 862-915.
- Ibn Khaldūn (1967). *The Muqaddimah: An introduction to history* (F. Rosenthal, Trans., N. J. Dawood, Ed.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. (Originally written in 1377.)
- Ikenberry, G. J. (2000). *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Ingram, E. (1997). The wonderland of the political scientist. *International Security*, 22(1), pp.53–63.
- International Graduate, Australia. (2010). *International Studies in Australia*. Available at <http://www.internationalgraduate.net/country/australia/international-studies-australia.htm> (Accessed 20/10/19).
- International Studies Association. (2010a). Welcome to ISA, Available at <http://www.isanet.org/> (Accessed 25/09/19).

International Studies Association. (2010b). History and Purpose, Available at [http://www.isanet.org/history\\_purpose/2007/12/history-of-isa.html](http://www.isanet.org/history_purpose/2007/12/history-of-isa.html) (Accessed 25/09/19).

Jervis, R. (1999). Realism, Neoliberalism and Cooperation: Understanding the Debate, *International Security*, 24 (1), pp. 42-63.

Johari, J.C. (2014). *International relations and politics: theoretical perspectives in the post- Cold War era*, NewDelhi: Sterling publishers.

Jupille, J. and Snidal, D. (2005). *The Choice of International Institutions: Cooperation, Alternatives and Strategies*, Working Paper.

Kalijarvi, T.V., (1961). "The rise and development of contemporary international relations" T.V. Kalijarvi, (ed), *ModernWorld Politics*. New York: T.Y. Crowell Co.

Kaplan, M.A., (1966). "The new great debate: traditionalism vs science in international relations", *World Politics*, XIX.

Kaplan, M. A. (1961). Problems of theory building and theory confirmation in international politics. In K. Knorr & S. Verba (Eds.), *The international system: Theoretical essays* (pp. 6-24). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Keohane, R. and Martin, L. (1995). The Promise of Institutional Theory, *International Security*, 20 (1), pp.39-51.

King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social enquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Koliopoulos, C. (2017). *International Relations and the Study of History*, International Studies Association and Oxford University Press. Also Available at [https://oxfordre.com/international studies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.242/version/o](https://oxfordre.com/international-studies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.242/version/o) (Accessed 10/10/19).

Lawson, G. (2010). The eternal divide? History and International Relations, *European Journal of International Relations*, 18 (2), pp.203-226.

Lebow R.N. (2010). *Forbidden Fruit*. New Haven, CT: Princeton University Press.

Lebow, R. N. (2001). Social science and history: Ranchers versus farmers? In C. Elman & M. F. Elman (Eds.), *Bridges and boundaries: Historians, political scientists, and the study of international relations* (pp. 111-135). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Levy, R. and Razin, R. (2004). It takes two: an explanation for the democratic peace. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 2 (1), pp. 1-29.

Levy, J. S. (2001). Explaining events and developing theories: History, political science, and the analysis of international relations. In C. Elman & M. F. Elman (Eds.), *Bridges and boundaries: Historians, political scientists, and the study of international relations* (pp. 39-83). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Lipson, C. (2003). *Reliable Partners: How Democracies Have Made a Separate Peace*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lustick I. (1996). History, historiography and political science. *American Political Science Review* 90(3), pp. 605-618.

Machiavelli, N. (2013). *History Of Florence and of the Affairs Of Italy from the Earliest Times to the Death Of Lorenzo the Magnificent*, with Commentary by Hugo Albert Rennert, John Bickers, Dagny; David Widger, Available at <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2464/2464-h/2464-h.htm> (Accessed 20/10/19).

Mackay, J. I. and Laroche, C.D. (2017). *The conduct of history in International Relations: rethinking philosophy of history in IR theory*, Cambridge University Press.

Maliniak, D., Oakes, A., Peterson, S., Michael J. Tierney, M.J. (2007).

The international relations discipline, 1980-2006, Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago Illinois. Retrieved from <http://www.apsa.org>. (Accessed 20/11/19).

Marwick, A. (1970). *The nature of history*. London, Penguin.

Mastanduno, M (1991). Do Relative Gains Matter? America's Response to Japanese Industrial Policy, *International Security* 16(1), pp.73-113.

McClelland, C. A. (1961). The social sciences, history, and international relations. In J. N. Rosenau (Ed.), *International politics and foreign policy: A reader in research and theory* (pp. 24–35). New York, NY: Free Press of Glencoe.

Mearsheimer, J. (2003). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, New York: W. W. Norton.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton.

Mearsheimer, J. (1990). Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War, *Atlantic Monthly*, 266 (2), pp.35-50.

Mingst, K., (1999). *Essentials of international relations*. New York: WW Norton and Company.

Mitrany, D. (1943). *A Working Peace System: An Argument for the Functional Development of International Organization* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs).

Monash University (2010). *International Studies Program*, Arts Department, Available at <http://arts.monash.edu.au/historical-studies/international/> (Accessed 20/10/19).

Moravcsik, A. (1998). *The Choice for Europe: Social Purpose and State Power from Messina to Maastricht*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Parsons, C. (2003). *A Certain Idea of Europe*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Play.acast.com. (2019). *Tides of History: Machiavelli's Laboratory, the Politics of Renaissance*, Available at <https://play.acast.com/s/tides-of-history/machiavellis-laboratory-the-politics-of-renaissanc> (Accessed 22/09/19).

Polybius. (1922–1927). *Histories* (6 vols.) (W. R. Paton, Trans.). Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Originally written in the 2nd century bce.).

Pomeranz, K. (2014). Histories for a LessNational Age, in *American Historical Review*, 118, pp. 1-22.

Preservearticles.com (2019). Complete information on the different stages in the Development of International Relations, <http://www.preservearticles.com/international-trade/complete-information-on-the-different-stages-in-the-development-of-international-relations/6650> (Accessed 20/08/19).

Reynolds, D. (2016). Turn, turn, turn..., in *Ricerche di storia politica*, 18. pp. 265-268.

Rosenberg, J. (2016). International relations in the prison of political science. *International Relations*, 30 (2). pp. 127-153.

Schmitter, P. (1969). Three Neo-Functionalist Hypotheses about International Organization, *International Organization*, 23 (1), pp.161-166.

Schroeder, P. W. (2001). International history: Why historians do it differently than political scientists. In C. Elman & M. F. Elman (Eds.), *Bridges and boundaries: Historians, political scientists, and the study of international relations* (pp. 403–416). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Snidal, D. (1991). Relative Gains and the Pattern of International Cooperation, *American Political Science Review* 85(3), pp. 701-726.

Smith, T. W. (1999). *History and International Relations*, London and New York, Routledge.

Spiro, D. (1994). The Insignificance of the Liberal Peace, *International Security*, 19 (2), pp.50-86.

The British International Studies Association (2016). About International Studies, Available at <https://www.bisa.ac.uk/index.php/119-about-international-studies/420-about-international-studies> (Accessed 25/09/19).

Thompson, K.W. (1952). The study of international politics: a survey of trends and developments", *Review of Politics*, Vol. Xiv

Thucydides. (1972). *History of the Peloponnesian War* (R. Warner, Trans.). London, UK: Penguin. (Originally written ca. 431–399 bce.)

Trachtenberg M (2006). *The Craft of International History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Trivellato, F. (2000). *Fondamenta dei vetrai: lavoro, tecnologia e mercato a Venezia tra Sei e Settecento*, Roma, Donzelli.

Ugwujah, A.A. (2018). At Daggers Drawn: History, Political Science and the 'Soul of International Relations Discuss in Nigeria, *UJAH: Unizik Journal of Arts and Humanities*, 19 (1), pp.149-167.

University of Oxford (2012). About Us, Centre for International Studies, (Accessed 22/10/19).

University of Technology Sydney: Arts and Social Sciences. (2010). *Global Studies, Arts and Social Science*, Archived copy" (Accessed 22/10/19).

Uzoigwe, G.N., (2008). "Forward" Ndu-Life, N. (ed), introduction

to history and international studies: an Africanist perspective. Glassboro, NJ: Goldline Publishers.

Vaughan-Williams, N. (2005). International Relations and 'The Problem of History', *Millennium Journal of International Studies*, Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/03058298050340011301>; <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/03058298050340011301> (Accessed 20/11/2019).

Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority. (2010). International Studies, Available at <http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/vce/studies/intstudies/internationalindex.html> (Accessed 23/10/19).

Von Laue, T. H. (1950). *Leopold Ranke: The formative years*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Watson, A. (1992). *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Waltz, K. N. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Wight, M. (1966). 'Why is there no International Theory?' in H. Butterfield and M. Wight (eds.) *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays in the Theory of International Politics*, London: Allen & Unwin, pp. 17–34.

Wohlforth, W. C. (2001). Postscript: Historical science and Cold War scholarship. In C. Elman & M. F. Elman (Eds.), *Bridges and boundaries: Historians, political scientists, and the study of international relations* (pp. 351–358). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Wright, Q. (1965). *A study of war* (2nd ed., with a commentary on war since 1942). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. (Originally published in 1942.)



24

## CHAPTER 18

## THEORIES, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS, AND THEORISING IN NIGERIAN HISTORICAL STUDIES

Ejitu Nnechi Ota, PhD

Charles Okeke Okoko, PhD

Ikechukwu Ahamefula

### Introduction

History studies the past of man in dynamic interaction with his society and environment. It is the duty of the Historian, therefore, to enquire into the past, bringing into focus, the relationship between the events of the past. In doing so, he does not discriminate against any section of the society or against any of the principal actors whose actions contributed to the events which he (the Historian) is studying. The series of events to be studied are arranged according to how they happened, and such a chronological approach is meant to ensure that the occurrence of the events are not muddled up and thus rendered ambiguous and invalid. It is also to show the relationship and subsequent ones, that is how one thing helps to lead to another.

In the words of E.H. Carr:

The past which a historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living... the reconstitution of the past in the historian's mind is dependent on empirical evidence. But it is not in itself an empirical process, and can't consist in a mere recital of facts. On the contrary, the process of reconstruction governs the selection and interpretation of the facts: this indeed, is what makes them historical facts.

Quoting Johan Huizinga, Nail Ferguson believes that: "The historian must... constantly put himself at a point in the past at which the known factors will seem to permit different outcomes". What this means is that two seemingly similar events may not produce the same results because of the circumstances and personalities involved. The observation of Huizinga is, however, not in agreement with Henry Thomas Buckle's position that:

Every generation demonstrates some events to be regular and predictable, which the preceding generation had declared to be irregular and unpredictable; so that the marked tendency of the advance of civilization is to strengthen our belief in the universality of order of method and of law.

Buckle appears to be deterministic in his observation on the role of causation in history. In other words, he assumes that given the same circumstances, the actions of men will yield the same outcome. But this has not always been the case, because human behavior is unpredictable and the same circumstances may not always produce the same results even when the actions of men are the same. For instance, in Nigeria, there was an embarrassing scarcity of bread in 1985 due to the country's inability to produce enough wheat in spite of heavy investments by the government on large-scale irrigation projects. At that time, Nigeria was ruled by the military under Ibrahim Babangida. Scarcity of bread in both, France and Russia were partly responsible for the revolutions in both countries in 1789 and 1917, respectively. This was because bread in both

countries was considered the cheapest food for the ordinary French and Russians. Yet, when a scarcity of bread occurred in Nigeria in 1985, there were no food riots. That was because bread has never been a staple food for ordinary Nigerians. Thus, Buckle's deterministic thesis did not apply to Nigeria because in as much as the circumstances in 18 century France and 20 century Russia shared similarities with Nigeria in 185, the role of bread was not the same in Nigeria vis-à-vis France and Russia.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the relevance or otherwise of adopting conventional Social Sciences theories in the explanation and analysis of historical events. In other words, it seeks to look at how and why theories and theoretical frameworks could fit into historical reconstruction. That is why the work has been divided into four substantive sections. First, there is the section that looks at the traditional theories of history, followed by an attempt at distinguishing between theories and theoretical frameworks. This is followed by the section on theoretical frameworks and theorizing in history. Then there is the question on whether theories are really relevant in history. Finally, there is the conclusion.

#### Theories of History

In the pure sciences, education and social sciences, a theory refers to a hypothetical deductive system, consisting of a group of hypotheses whose terms are strictly defined and whose relationships between terms or variables are most often given mathematical forms. Usually, an elaboration of a theory in these disciplines starts with a conceptualization of a perceived or observed reality: action or highly abstract relationships govern the system and allow the researcher to rediscover, by deduction, either appearances that are thereby fully explained, or facts that are perceptible through devices, if not through the sense, and which temporarily either confirm the theory or invalidate it. A study, therefore, is theoretical when it is less practical and when it less permits or suggests the handling of its object.

Conversely, theories of history are attempts at explaining why things happened the way they did and the possible or likely implications or consequences these have for the future. Thus, in reconstructing the past, it is important to understand the nature of a certain phenomenon and the causal relationship that exists in it. Unlike what obtains in the pure and social sciences and education where theories seek to create new knowledge through the use of experiments, observations and the variety of scientific methods in order to logically build up a theory, the theories of history do not involve testing and re-testing in order to create a new theory or a new knowledge. Rather, they are concerned with finding explanations for why certain events occurred and the relationship cause and effect.

There are six major traditional theories of history, namely:

- i. The Cyclical theory
- ii. The Linear theory,
- iii. The Great Man theory,
- iv. The Everyman theory,

- v. The Geographic theory,
- vi. The Marxist theory.

While the Cyclical theory posits that history often repeats itself in different forms, patterns and trends, the Linear theory argues that history studies progress and the relationship between cause and effect, and explanations such as “This happened, and then that happened; that happened because this happened first”. On the other hand, while the Great Man theory believes that the course of history is determined by the activities, position and role of a small group and the powerful elite in a given society, Every Man theory takes the position that history is shaped by social groups and everyday or ordinary people, and not by the efforts of small elite groups or individual. There is also the Geographic theory whose argument is that to a very large extent, the destiny of a people’s success is based on their geographic location and access to resources. Finally, the Marxist theory sees history as being characterized by and preoccupied with the struggle between different social classes, especially between the bourgeoisie who are powerful and control both wealth and resources, and the powerless proletariat who struggle to survive under the oppression of the powerful groups.

These then are the major traditional theories of history. Most histories have been written using these theoretical constructs. All of them agree with the major task of every historical enterprise, that is, to seek the truth. In studying the past, history looks for evidences that are historical, and these could be sourced for and interpreted in documents and even artifacts, such as buildings, ornaments, and other physical things. For any historical statement to be acceptable, therefore, it must match the available evidence. It is such interconnectedness, when established, that can make history socially relevant. This does not in any way obfuscate the fact that historical evidences can be refuted. The truth is that the historian cannot and must not seek to invent the truth by a strait-jacket adoption and scientification of any theory.

#### Distinguishing between a Theory and a Theoretical framework

A theory, according to Wikipedia, is a contemplative and rational abstract or generalized thinking about a phenomenon, or the results of such thinking. The American Museum of Natural History defines a theory as, “... a well-substantiated explanation of an aspect of the natural world that can incorporate laws, hypotheses and facts”. Put differently, a theory provides the researcher with a generalized picture, and is usually subjected to a series of tests and re-tests. It is only when such tests and re-tests give the same result that the truth could be guaranteed. This means, therefore, that the essence of formulating a theory is to understand the nature of a certain phenomenon and the causal relationships that exist therein. In this case, an existing knowledge could be challenged and extended, using a given theory. While a theory helps the researcher to understand and explain a phenomenon (or phenomena), the theoretical framework serves to connect such a researcher to existing knowledge. This addresses questions of why and how. It, therefore, helps the researcher to explain and understand an otherwise unexplained phenomenon by looking at its meaning, nature, and challenges.

## Theories, theoretical frameworks, and theorizing in History

To theorize means to formulate a theory about a given subject, or to speculate. Such an exercise naturally involves the adoption of one theory or the other as the basis of analysis. In other words, while a theory provides the platform for normative and speculative thinking, the theoretical framework, in the words Gabriel Abend, is "... the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study. The theoretical framework introduces and describes the theory that explains why the research problem under study exists" In historical studies and reconstruction, a theoretical framework is, more or less synonymous with a hypothetical construct because its properties and implications have never been proven by any empirical research. This is so because as an explanatory variable, such a construct is not directly observable. Rather, it is an ideal or desirable object which exists only in the mind of the researcher. The situation in the pure or natural sciences is, therefore, different in the sense that a construct does not necessarily depend on the subjects mind but is real and observable.

Furthermore, by focusing on specific variables and limiting the researcher's specific viewpoint in the task of analyzing and interpreting available data, the use of a theoretical framework serves to not only respond to problems that have no previously identified solutions, but also to prescribe solutions to the research problems identified by the researcher.

With particular references to the social sciences, it lays the physiological foundation for executing researchers by first of all, identifying the methodologies adopted, and secondly, justifying the choice of a particular theoretical framework, vis-à-vis others. It seeks to introduce and describe the theory chosen by the researcher as well as exposing the reader as to why the researcher, opted for a particular research problem and the hypotheses provided for the purpose of achieving the identified problems,

However, History does not belong, strictly speaking, to the social sciences. But in recent times, the study of History as an academic discipline in Nigeria's tertiary institutions became endangered. Many prospective students found the course unattractive due to its concern with the past, a factor which questioned its utility in the ever-expanding employment market. It was basically for this reason that History began to interface more intimately with disciplines in the Social Sciences. In the course of time, it began to merge with such other disciplines as Diplomatic Studies, Strategic Studies and International Relations, among others an important outcome of this development is the adoption of terminologies hitherto unknown to historical studies. It has also come to imply the adoption of research methodologies that were hitherto alien to the discipline of History. Among these is the adoption (or incorporation) of theories and theoretical frameworks by some "Fugitive or Re-visionist" Historians, that is, those whose first degrees are not in pure History, but in History/International Studies; History/Diplomatic Studies; History/Strategic Studies; or History/International Relations, et cetera, and who ultimately earned their Masters and Doctorate degrees in Peace Studies; Strategic Studies, or Diplomatic Studies, et cetera. Some of the, did not

even earn their first degrees in History but in other disciplines with no links whatsoever to History.

The interdisciplinary approach which History has always applied in the reconstruction of the past has, somehow, become its albatross in the area of the requirements for conducting and writing Masters Dissertations and Doctoral Theses. The “feud” between “Conventional Historians” and the other group has not yet resulted in any known exchange of virulent academic diatribes. But it is, indeed, simmering. While Conventional Historians are not averse to the relevance and sustenance of the interdisciplinary approach to the study of History, they do not believe that History should lose its research methodological garths to those of the Social Sciences. Revisionist Historians, on their part, appear rather impatient in their drive to sublimate both conventional historical method and historiography to the new multidisciplinary perspectives of the 21 century. In no other way are these in perspective more manifest than in some of the History departments of Nigerian universities. At the University of Port Harcourt and the University of Uyo, the Schools of Postgraduate Studies have imposed the quantitative research methods of the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Education on their History Departments even when such methods and concepts have no relevance in the qualitative analytical method of History.

Do we really need Theories and Theoretical Frameworks in the study of Nigerian History?

An attempt was made in the introductory part of this essay to define History as both a discipline and as an activity. The finding is that History is tripartite: it is about people, about change (events, trends, et cetera); and it is about time (period). Put differently, History is concerned not only about things, but more importantly, it is an activity which is concerned with the past activities of groups and individuals; some kind of a process of interaction between the people concerned and involved, and the historical material. History is, therefore, a truth-seeking and not a truth-creating activity. As has been observed “A response can only be historical if we are satisfied with the truth of the material”.

Objectivity is a major issue in any historical reconstruction. Is it really possible for a historian to be and remain neutral in the course of interrogating the past? According to Charles Beard, this is not possible for three reasons, namely:

- i. The Historian invites ethical and aesthetic considerations in his subject-matter;
- ii. His mind is not neutral and cannot be neutral; and
- iii. He cannot, unlike the chemist, ‘observe’ his subject-matter and cannot also re-observe.

It is not to be dealt with at will. To add to the problematic nature of objectivity in History, G.M. Trevelyan has argued that, “Whatever acts of purification the historian man perform, he yet remains human, a creature of time, place, circumstances, interests and predilections, culture”. This does not in any way diminish the fact, as has been rightly observed, that History seeks to understand both human development and human

reality, as well as the universe of value in which this or that group of men or the past lived, how and why people have lived and worked together in society, or have failed to do so.

Against this background, is it not possible that the adoption of the methodological preoccupations of the Social Sciences by some Historians (the “Fugitives” or Revisionists”) will ultimately work enormous hardship on the truth-seeking assignment of the Historian? Must History be compelled to employ the quantitative techniques of the Social Scientists in reconstructing the past? In other words, can History as a discipline, be analyzed, understood, and controlled through the adoption of theories and theoretical frameworks? Must History be “scientificized” just to make the discipline remain relevant? Is it possible to subject the experience and consciousness of historical processes by individuals, societies, and communities to theories and theoretical frameworks?

In finding an answer to these questions, one must note that all sciences (both Physical, Biological, and Social Sciences) are fundamentally speculative. But History is not. Scientists, despite their many internal crises on methodological and research approaches, seem to insist that scientific knowledge is the only means of knowing and interpreting reality. This, unfortunately, is what some Nigerian Historians appear to be accepting without question because they want to “belong”. They forget that as a matter of historical fact, it was the drive to achieve a technological-managerial society in the United States that led to the adoption of the assumptions and methodologies of the Sciences in the Social Sciences after the Second World War.

In as much as the use of theories may aid interdisciplinary studies/researches, the fact remains that some of the questions whose answers History seeks to find, cannot be given any sort of objective answer based on any theoretical approach. In other words, the subject-matter of History is not amenable to any strict theoretical construct. This is so because quantification and measurement are not part of historical reconstruction. Adopting theories and theoretical frameworks can only lead to shifting emphasis to mere trivialities. Moreover, the “scientification” of History will negate the essence of historical craftsmanship, that is, historiography whose domain, according to E. J. Alagoa:

... Is concerned as coextensive with the methodology of history, as well as with philosophies of history, formal folk or otherwise and eventually, with the practice of history in the context of philosophy and methodology. The evaluation of historical sources for their reliability should not, in any way, be predicated on the methodologies of the social sciences which, as earlier pointed are speculative. On the contrary, the reliability of such sources could be determined through a number of ways. For instance, human sources, such as relics, are more reliable than narratives. Similarly, an eyewitness account is more reliable than testimony at second hand, which is equally more reliable than hearsay.

Conclusion

One of the electrifying consequences of the addition of adjunct and cognate academic disciplines to mainstream historical scholarship is the adoption of research approaches and methodologies hitherto alien to History Department in some Nigerian universities. At the University of Port Harcourt, University of Uyo, and the University of Calabar, among others, postgraduate students of History are subjected by their Schools of Post Graduate Studies, to compulsorily adopt the research methodologies of the Natural and Social Sciences, in writing and presenting their Dissertations and Theses. Thus, there are to be found in such projects ridiculous chapter headings and subheadings like, "Research Design", "Study Area", "Sampling Design and Procedures", "Data Collection Instrument", "Data Analysis", "Data Interpretation", "Theories", "Theoretical Framework", et cetera.

For History and Historians, the gradual elimination of the descriptive and narrative aspects of historical reconstruction and indeed the sublimation of social science methodology over Historiography, is analogous to removing the nectar from a flower: it loses its essence. Admittedly, theories could be formulated to extend the relevance of some courses and topics in the History Departments of Nigerian Universities. For instance, in Peace Studies, Military and Strategic Studies, and other cognate disciplines which are now adjuncts to mainstream History, the use of theories and theoretical frameworks is permissible. This will help in highlighting the problems which topics in such Sub-disciplines seek to investigate. Such an approach is good for both inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary scholarship. The same can also be said of the use of hypotheses.

But the traditional methodological approaches of the discipline of History should not be abandoned. The relevance of History to social reality is in no way to be ignore or abuse, for , after all is said and done, in addressing contemporary social, economic, and political problems, the Historian must have a recourse to the past. This is in order to find out what used to be and its relationship with the present. In other words, the Historian looks at the reality of the present as an offspring of the past and a parent for the future.

It does not help historical scholarship to impose the research approaches of the Social Sciences on studies that are purely historical. This is most likely going to lead to already assumed research findings which, in the end, will result in distorted and unreliable knowledge. In the Social Sciences, for instance, there is a nexus between research design, data collection, data analysis, and the implications of the research findings. But students working on conventional topics in History do not have to be burdened with these methodological approaches. As has been rightly observed:

Some topics, by their nature, lend themselves to theoretical explorations and reflections...not all works have to be theoretically informed or make theoretical contributions. In historical scholarship, for instance, a good narrative is what we're looking for, not forced theoretical discussions.

Endnotes



1. E. H. Carr, *What is History?* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd), 1984 edition, 22.
2. Niall Ferguson, "Introduction", In Niall Ferguson (ed.), *Virtual History: Alternatives and Counterfactuals*. (London: Pan Macmillian Ltd, 1998), 1.
3. Henry Thomas Buckle, "History and the Operation of Universal Laws", In Patrick Gardiner (ed.), *Theories of History*. (Gleneco, Illinois, 1959), 114.
4. See Gunilla Andrae and Bjorn Beckman, *The Wheat Trap: Bread and Underdevelopment in Nigeria*. (London: Zed Books, 1986).
5. [Rishlibrary.newton.kiz.ma.us/cassell Theories](http://rishlibrary.newton.kiz.ma.us/cassell/Theories).
6. [En.m.wikipedia.org "Theory"](http://en.m.wikipedia.org/Theory). Accessed on 9-12-19.
7. [https://www.amnh.org. "What is a Theory"](https://www.amnh.org/What%20is%20a%20Theory). Accessed on 9-12-19
8. See Richard A. Swanson, *Theory Building in Applied Disciplines* (San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2013).
9. Gabriel Abend, "The meaning of Theory". *Sociological Theory*, 26, June 2008, 173-199.
10. [Libguides.usc.edu, "Research Guides"](http://libguides.usc.edu/Research%20Guides). Accessed on Friday, January 10, 2020.
11. Ikechukwu Nwakaeze Ogugua and Ifunanya Ogugua, "History: Facts, Truth or Lies?". *Uzu: Journal of History and International Studies*, vol.4, No.1, October 2014, 35.
12. Ogugua and Ogugua, "History: Facts, Truth or Lies". *Uzu*, 35
13. D. G. Watts, *The Learning of History*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 51.
14. Charles Beard, "That Noble Dream", In Fritz Stern (ed), *Varieties of History* (Cleveland, Ohio World Publishing Coy, 1956), 323-325.
15. G. M. Trevelyan, "Bias in History". *History XXXII*, No 115, March 1947, 1-15.
16. L. A. Thompson, "The Menace of Bogus History". *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, vol. 1, 1981, 57.
17. Ebegberi Joe Alagoa, *The Practice of History in Africa: A History of African Historiography* (Port Harcourt: Onyoma Research publications, 2007), 1-2.
18. Alagoa, *The Practice of History in Africa ...*
19. For a detailed discussion on the core principles of determining reliability in History, See [en. Wikipedia.org/wiki/ Historical methods](http://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_methods). See also the following books: (a). R. J. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical method*. (Illinois: The Dorsey Press, 1974); (b). C. Ben McCullagh, *Justifying Historical Descriptions*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and (c). Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001).
20. Moses Ochonu, "The Academic Nonsense called "Theoretical Framework" in Nigerian Universities. [www.educeleb.com](http://www.educeleb.com). Accessed on 10-12-19.



25

## CHAPTER 19

## EXPANDING FRONTIERS OF INTER-DISCIPLINARY METHODOLOGY: LITERATURE AS A SOURCE OF AFRICAN HISTORY

Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu, PhD

### The Relationship between Literature and History

Scholars of literature have often recognized the fact that the understanding of the literature of a people at a given period is tremendously enhanced by a thorough grip of the historical dynamics of the era as well as society. Literary scholars can thus be excuplated if they also tend to believe that historical verisimilitude may be given some weight through a careful sifting of the historical evidence immutably present in literary works. Put differently, there may be some validity in the reconnaissance that certain aspects of literature may be inherently relevant to the verification as well as interpretation of historical data. The chapter in the succeeding paragraphs, intends to draw attention of scholars to these sections of relevance as well as highlight how literary evidence can support, enhance as well as broaden the very base of historical evidence and therefore contribute to other areas of profitable academic enquiry.

In another genre, there seems to be three main areas in which the study of literature becomes enormously invaluable to the full understanding as well as accurate interpretation of historical evidence. These are oral literature, folktales, and indeed, the written form itself. Linguistic evidence is indispensable to the historian where he is confronted with oral traditions and language change in a region where he is doing a field work. Although it is not the concern of this chapter, however, it helps to illustrate the fact that no discipline can be adequately pursued independently of other related disciplines. With respect to oral literature, we are referring to literary compositions of pre-literate societies. Indeed, such compositions reverberate the evidence of an imaginative mind creatively engaged in the interpretation of political as well as social phenomena. On the contrary, it is different from oral traditions in a historical sense in that oral literature does not pretend to record a historical truth. A case in point is the Homeric poems. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are the prominent ones, primarily as literary compositions, and through the ages, they have remained valuable infact. Indeed, Homer's world is actually imaginary, although, the imaginary world of the literary artist does not grow out of oblivion. In other words, imagination is fed on observable phenomena. At the basis of every form of imaginary world, thus, there is, the essential realism of the author's universe. It is an over-simplification to say that Homer in his two poems presents the Greek view of life. However, viewed, what finally emerges from the character of Achilleus, for example, is the portrait of a Greek gentleman, a great fighter with a respectable place "in the gallery of Homeric Virtues"

Furthermore, it is significant to note that beyond the literary achievement of the *Iliad* lies an intrinsic historical source. Accordingly, it is exactly at this point that oral literature suggests areas of historical inquiry. For example, in the case of Troy, there is every evidence that the historical fact at a certain point of its development merged with the legendary imagination of the Greeks. Thus, the heroes are therefore, a cross between

the divine as well as the human heroes in this non-literary sense, suggesting something close to the idea of the immortal. Despite the fabulous element in the details of the Trojan War, there is the basic historical component out of which grew the legend. Archaeological evidence has in fact thrown some light on some aspects of the legend of Troy to the extent that the editors of the Oxford Classical Dictionary contended that:

The situation of Hissarlik ("in north-western Asia Minor, 4 miles from the Aegean Sea") fits reasonably well with the account of Troy in Homer, Greek tradition and folk memory. Searching exploration has discovered no rival capital site in North-West Troad. The destruction of Troy Vila in the mid-thirteenth century (BC) coincides with flourishing period of the Great Royal Palaces in Mycenaean Greek. Leadership, man power, and wealth were there abundantly sufficient to organize a coalition... Archaeological and linguistic discoveries during the past twenty years have convinced many scholars that there is a residue of historical truth in many Greek traditions and legends, and Schliemann's identification of Troy has surely been confirmed.

Editors of the Oxford Classical Dictionary (p. 1098).

It has long been accepted that imaginative literature, may be a valuable secondary source for historians trying to recapture the significant characteristics of the past. The philosopher of history, R.G. Collingwood argued that there are many similarities between the methods as well as objectives of the historian and the novelist. Writing on the idea of History, R.G. Collingwood asserted that:

Each of them makes it his business to construct a picture which is partly a narrative of events partly a description of situations, exhibition of motives, analysis of characters... Both the novel and the history are...the product of the autonomous or self-authorizing activity...the a priori imagination.

According to R.G Collingwood, the basic difference between the two is that while the novelist's concern is to construct a coherent illustration that makes sense "the historian has a double task: he has both to do this and to construct a picture of things as they really were and of events as they really happened." In this respect, towards this objective imaginative literature may have its challenges, because the writer may not know or project the real facts. However, what imaginative literature can provide the historian is an understanding into the mores of the period being studied, the social attitudes of the people, as well as their basic world view. Besides, it can also bring the period as well as the people to life in a palpable and compelling way which few histories can accomplish.

Basically, not only imaginative literature in all its forms like fiction, drama as well as poetry but also art and music in all their forms are products of a particular age and a particular society. Where the historian fails to pay attention to these, will fail to understand that age in all its aspects, particularly its intellectual climatic opinion of the times. Also, significant and necessary for the literary scholar to pay attention to the historical conditions in which the literature or work of art was made.

So far, the discussion has centred on imaginative literature written during the period under study by the historian. In addition, there is literature written at a later time yet set in a particular past period. Nonetheless, this kind of historical fiction may in fact be of a great value to the historian as a source material for both the time in which it was written as well as for the time in which it is set. In all despite the intrinsic problems of historical literature it is fair to argue that:

Yet undoubtedly the penetrative insights, the deep sense of social awareness of the gifted novelists can enable him firmly to grasp at least one segment of the age about which he is writing. The historians and laymen, who ignores the imaginative literature of the period he is studying is as foolish and incomplete in comprehension as the historian or layman who relies exclusively on such materials.

Aside from the foregoing, Schliemann's archaeological work was influenced by the Homeric poems and his finds lend weight to the historical probability of Homer's literary world. Even where there are other claims, like Samuel Butler's female authorship theory of the *Odyssey*, there is a consensus agreement on the basic historical probability of the Homeric Saga. Against this backdrop, if we take the Homeric poems as purely imaginative production of an unknown artist whom tradition had christened Homer, the fact remains that the historian of classical antiquity can hardly ignore the wealth of information contained in these poems. In these volumes, information about the state of military development and military practice is readily available. Invariably, we have an idea of the type of weapons known to the Greeks of the thirteenth century B.C. Also, the state of economic development and the very pattern of social organization may be reasonably deduced from the society that emerges from these poems. If these deductions are corroborated by evidence from archaeology as well as folk tradition, the historian will have reasonable basis for a guarded reliance on the authenticity of Homer's poems and their usefulness as probable historical sources.

The Homeric poems, as example may be extended to include oral literature in Africa or more appropriately, the oral literature of pre-literate societies. In almost all cases of this character, the evidence tends to support the validity, even if somewhat limited, of oral literature as repositories of probable historical sources. Although Ruth Finnegan will draw a line between the Homeric tradition and African oral literature, she nevertheless admits that "praise poems are a fruitful source currently authorized interpretations of certain historical events and genealogies. However, praise songs, for instance, the *Oriki* of the Yoruba people, do more than merely confer authenticity on oral evidence. Preferably, the function as well as are set within a clear-cut world view. In his *Myth, literature and the African World View*, Deity, Wole Soyinka in plain man's language, is historically created and therefore shows man's understanding of and relation to his universe at a particular point in time. Alluding to Sango, the Yoruba God of lightning and thunder, Soyinka stated *inter-alia*:

I have stressed that Sango's history is not the history of primal becoming, but of racial origin, which is historically dated. Yet, he leaps straight after his suicide for non-

suicide, to be liturgically correct, into an identification (by implication) with the source of lightning. This seeming cosmic anachronism is in fact a very handy clue to temporal concepts in the Yoruba world-view. Traditional thought operates, not a linear conception of time but a cyclic reality.

Soyinka later suggested that the God, Sango, was created out of historical necessity and said: "Economics and power have always played a large part in the championing of new duties throughout human history. In an earlier work, Soyinka had already developed this idea, and also interpreted the rise of the Dionysiac cults in Greece in respect of poetical, economic and social developments.

Also, in his introduction to *Bacchae* of Euripides, he argued:

The definitive attachment to a suitable deity –in this case Dionysos–was nothing more than the natural, historic process by which populist movements (religious or political) identify themselves with mythical heroes at critical movement of social upheavals.

Against this backdrop, we may therefore safely adopt that there is, in the origins of religious institutions, an element of historical as well as social reality. And that in non-literate societies the study of the rise, development and growth of these religions will in turn throw some light on the history of the society. In the circumstance, the form of ritual, the songs as well as traditions of the religion will, indeed, form the main source of useful information to the historian.

A large proportion of the total corpus of African oral literature quite often is made of the praise poems and which infact reflect the social and economic setting of a given society. Certainly, an economically developed state will have a thoroughly developed bardic tradition. An affluent and a more powerful, chief is more probable to control a large proportion of high quality professional praise-singers than the wretched chief.

The basic function of the praise-singer is that of the historian as well as the chronicler, even it history here tend to be too close to sheer, propaganda. In fact the problem which oral literature particularly the praise-poem, therefore, poses for the historian lies specifically in the very content of the poem. The first line of action of the historian confronted with the praise poem is to relate the poem to folk traditions as well as-sift the obvious propaganda from what actually happened. Infact, the historian need not be interested in the elaborate hyperbole of the praise singer although he must be interested in relating the historical event around which the hyperbole was developed to the historical context of the given community.

Schapera and Babalola, have argued that praise poem contains much of local and national history. Consistently, Schapera found that the praise poem proceeded from historical reality, yet much of the history appears embedded in metaphorical and elaborately high-flown language. There his annotation of each poem in the praise poems of Tswana Chiefs is historical rather than literary, a fact already foreseen in his introductory analysis of the poems. He concluded on the basis that "the poems deal mainly with events in which the chief was personally involved" and went ahead to

emphasis the historical context of these poems, however, was of the view at the same place that the poem may be about what is expected of the chief, a kind of wishful fulfillment. More importantly, Schapera said:

In modern times...the events commemorated include troubles with unruly tribesmen or subject communities, inter-tribal boundary disputes, dealing with the British Administration and an occasional hunting expedition.

Similar pattern in the Oriki chants were found by Babalola and therefore he concluded that "Although no two minstrels would give the Oriki of a particular progenitor in exactly the same words, yet there is a hard core of constantly recurring information in such Oriki, no matter by what expert minstrel they are performed." The consistency in the instant case points to a historical base that should reinforce the historian's reliance on such recurring details.

Folktales, unlike praise poems, are indeed stories that have no pretence to historical evidence and include proverbs as well as riddles. Generally they are concerned with man, and environment; or more appropriately, with man's attempt at understanding the world around him. In other words, most creative stories belong to the category. It is significant to state that the world of folktale is constructed on a system of metaphors and characters and situations are frequently conceived of as performing dual function. Little wonder how, on a close analysis, tales which obviously deal with the animal as well as plant world have a serious moral context, and become an indirect way of instilling a group morality. Perhaps more important from the point of view of our present subject is the recognition of the social responsibility. In folktale, most characters, be they animal or human, represent desirable or undesirable social types as well as we can infer from their fate the moral and social ideals of these societies. It was against this backdrop that Richard M. Dorson, summarizing Ebiegberi Alagoa's paper, contended that "proverbs are compact and cryptic and require considerable exegesis, but when this is available they yield fruit for the historian." As can be gleaned from the above, much of folk tradition that may be of historical interest is equally present in the Orikis. However, we do not suggest that these traditions are necessarily true. What is more, the point, of course, is that they do contain likely germs of historical truth. The historian, it is left for to sift the evidence and test them against other evidence.

Thus, this is especially valuable in the issue of migrations. Traditions of origin is common with almost every group. In most cases some of them quite often may appear legendary as well as apocryphal or spurious. But even so, a historian may investigate with some profit, the evidence presented by these Orikis, particularly those of particular individual historical figures and lineages.

There is also the issue of mood apart from the issue of facts. Thus, poetry is indeed partisan as well as subjective, and quite often betrays the emotional as well as psychological and in some cases, the intellectual state of a given society at a point in time and therefore, adds important dimensions to bare historical truth. Infact, at periods of excruciating debate, or social and political upheaval, poetry assumes a political and thus



historical relevance. The situation in England during the Restoration through the end of the 17 Century is in fact an enlightening instance. It should be noted that the intensely passionate heat generated by the great political debates of the period, particularly the succession, was reflected in the poetry of the period which indeed became partisan as well as often poignant. Some of the best known poems of John Dryden contain not only the royalist view of the political situation but present a gallery of historical events. Significantly, we read not only the history of Restoration in the poems of Dryden as well as the Whig poet Thomas Stoddard yet feel the heat as well as enter into the very temper of the great political controversies and historical events of the Restoration. It is this kind of evidence that Jan Vansina has in mind when he observes that "poetry can be used as a historical source, mainly because it gives indications of the psychological attitude adopted by certain people towards certain historical events."

#### Background to Inter-Disciplinary Approach

The question that readily comes to mind of an African historian exploring the relevance of inter-disciplinary approach as a source of recapturing the history of segmentary societies is a hard one. This is against the backdrop that until recently, the most widely accepted methodological approach was through written evidence. The historian's hardware, it was maintained had to be written records. From the foregoing it is obvious that the most pervasive perspective on African history until recently was Eurocentric. And this development, led to the Europeanization of African history and the subsequent claim by European historians that "Africa had no history". Though Africans had developed systematic ways of preserving their history, the vast majority of them did not write down this history.

The African continent, like other continents in the world, has been a stage upon which the drama of human development and cultural differentiation has been acted since the beginning of history. However, until very recently this history of the continent, its cultural patterns, as well as the potential of its people, has been the subject of monumental distortions, ridicule and amusement among the intellectual community. The quotations of the renowned Scottish Philosopher, David Hume, the great German philosopher, George Hegel, and the renowned Regius Professor of History at Oxford University England Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper, from three different historical periods might serve to dramatize the above observation.

Thus, the image of Africa as the "Dark Continent" waiting to be "discovered" by Europeans was thus consistent with the power relations between Africa and Europe. The over-dependence upon European written records could also lead to an approximation of the above statement by the European historians. Indeed, a renowned English writer, A.P. Newton, had earlier declared that "History begins when men begin to write", this assertion was equally Eurocentric based on power relation between Africans and Europeans.

This European derogatory image on Africans, its history and its continent were expected to change. The struggle for independence was soon accompanied by the fact of

independence and this development however, a new atmosphere was created. Thus, the African university colleges, hitherto attached to European universities, would soon become independent as well as fully-fledged universities with young and vigorous departments in the humanities and the social sciences dedicated to reclaiming the past of their countries. As earlier noted, the power relation between Africa and Europe, that of the colonized and the colonizers respectively also played a significant role in the conceptualization of this historical image of Africa. Accordingly, the new Africa nations now independent demanded new historical images consistent with the power relations between Africa and Europe. Invariably, there was now greater insistence upon indigenous African sources for the reconstruction of African history.

The emphasis on oral tradition as valid historical documents gained respectability and validation from the works of Professor Jan Vansina as well as the young Africans he trained at the University of Wisconsin. Also, new nations made tremendous investments in the reclaiming of their past by supporting the opening of national archives, research institutes, national museums and the like. In other words, the insistence on African nationalism and consequent search for the roots of that important phenomenon became major themes in African historical reconstructions. The major concern of African historians both Africans and non-Africans, in these years was to create a historical tradition consistent with the dictates of African nationalism, Pan Africanism as well as African independence.

In the light of the above analysis, the study of African history and culture, have reached three stages in its development. African history in the colonial period was written as well as interpreted by interested European amateurs who infact made contributions consistent with the political realities, philosophical assumptions as well as methodical approaches of the times. African scholars, during the few years of the agitation for independence, got involved in the conceptualization of the image of their continent with consequent shifts in perspectives, if not in methodologies. Marked significant changes emerged in the years of independence both in methodological approaches as well as perspectives which have continued into the present period. In the last two periods, American writers and some European scholars, although most significantly, young African writers, have played a role. It can be safely said, if nothing else, "that it will no longer be possible for anyone, except the hopelessly uniformed, to say that "Africa has no history and culture".

#### African History and Literature

From the foregoing, if nothing else, as earlier stated above, it can now be said without fear of contradiction that African history has developed tremendously. The relevance of literature as aid to African history, though, it has not been given the attention it deserves either by historians or literary scholars but this particular one was designed to break the lacuna or jinx. It is settled, and well known that oral traditions-Folklore, genealogies, praise songs as well as drama-constitute an oral literature on which African historians rely extensively for reconstruction of periods for which there

are no written records especially in the segmentary societies. Also, there is also a tradition of literature written in Arabic in the northern part of the country which is useful for historians examining the Moslem impact.

Colonial literature written by British authors, whether in the colonial service or independent, shows the classical colonial attitude of paternalism or racism. Colonial literature is either concerned with the heroic activities of the British in Nigeria, or with Nigerians concerned merely and providing a scenic backdrop or when it concentrates on Nigerian characters, presents them in a very negative light. The most often quoted example here is *Mr. Johnson* by Joyce Cary, which Chinua Achebe described as an “appalling novel.” It was from reading such colonialist literature that Achebe decided “that the story we had to tell could not be told for us by anyone else no matter how gifted or well-intentioned.”

Chinua Achebe as a master storyteller, has a very sharp, witty as well as rich historical consciousness which is not only reflected in his novel but constitute a driving force for his writing. In the 1920's, his novel *Arrow of God* was set in Igboland and indeed, was a penetrating study of the clash of ideology as well as morality between the Igbo traditional priest, Ezeulu, and the British D.O., Captain Winterboltom. Thus, many things you no understand by *Adaora Uluasi* is set in Eastern Nigeria in 1935 as well as provides perceptive insight into the thinking of the British colonial servants and the traditional leaders of Igboland. These two novels were published in 1964 and 1970 respectively. Both of them are historically based, were-illustrated and reflected the feeling, thinking and climatic opinion of the time. The social and political conditions of Nigeria in the 1950's and in the First Republic are well drawn by several novelists who highlight the pressures of parochialism, ethnic conflicts, the corroding force of bribery and corruption in all areas of life and the materialistic orientation of society. Note however, that substantial body of imaginative literature were generated in terms of the Nigeria-Biafra civil war period.

In another genre, modern African literature, like that of Chinua Achebe, demonstrates that imaginative literature can both derive from history and influence the representation and reinterpretation of historical evidence. Therefore, there is a sense in which Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* can be seen as a reassessment of the nature as well as the pattern of the historical contact between Blacks and Whites. Furthermore, in the same way a sound historical account of Nigeria between 1960 and 1966 will benefit immensely from Achebe's *A Man of the People*. In fact, similar claims can be made for Soyinka's plays and poems. Put differently, however, the study of these literary works cannot replace the history of the period, it will definitely enhance the interpretation of the historical perspective. By and large, the emotional dimension which is too often lacking in historical narrative becomes accessible through literary rendition. In *Sunset at Dawn*, there are aspects of the Nigeria-Biafra war which Chukwuemeka Ike captured and preserved in his work which is relevant to the historian recapturing the Civil War.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has consistently created his fictional world out of the historical realities of Kenya as well as has left for future generations very insightful observations on the political evolution of modern Kenya. In the present case, we may not have recourse to *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) or *Petal of Blood* (1977) as historical documents. Although, no historian who wants to enter into the mind of the Kenyan people as well as understand the process of their political and social development can afford to ignore these titles. Also, the ideas that lay behind the Uhuru struggle as well as the consequent betrayal of these ideas, and thus, of Uhuru itself are dealt with in the novels of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o.

Invariably, we may therefore say of Ngugi, as infact, we can say of Soyinka in certain contexts, that contemporary history is recorded on the pages of his fiction. Besides, for example, *Petals of Blood*, is not a historical novel, like the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott, but a fictional interpretation of contemporary history and in this sense is similar to Charles Dickens novels. In fact, that is why these novels cannot fail to enrich the historian's understanding of Kenya during the period they covered.

Whatever is the case, we can develop out subject further as well as include in our survey of memoirs of literary men. However, the result will not be different. And because literary men tend to feel more intensely about many issues and they are unusually articulate, they tend to leave on record and in the most memorable phrases, their reaction to momentous historical events. There is no doubt that such reaction may greatly enlighten the historian confronted with the cryptic official records preserved in the archives. Actually, it is at times like this that the historian may find in literature, oral or written, a useful instrument in his attempt to present and represent truth within the limits of available data.

#### Conclusion

Along with these developments went the increasing recognition among history scholars that traditional African segmentary societies though different from so-called modern ones, were not static. Moreover, indices of change were identified to be wars of expansion and conquest, state formations as well as consequent bureaucratization of African life, religious wars, long distance trade as well as migrations of peoples.

Besides, as earlier stated above, there was also the recognition that given the functionality of the past in the African perception of reality, Africans had developed appropriate ways of preserving their past-oral traditions. Social anthropologists contributed to the changing atmosphere by their insistence on the fundamental harmony which characterized Africa life as well as its cosmological orientation. Also, according to the view, African life demonstrated a "Coherence or compatibility among all disciplines-philosophy, theology, medicine, politics, social theory, as well as land law." All these, it was maintained by the Nigerian writer, Adebayo Adesanya, "find themselves logically concatenated in a system so tight that to subtract one item from the whole is to destroy the structure of the whole." The probable consequence of this by African historians was the insistence that African history had to be approached from the inter-disciplinary

perspective. Against this backdrop, works of social anthropologists, historical linguists archaeologists, ethno-botanists as well as zoologists had to be used in the reconstruction of African history.

In conclusion and from the foregoing analysis, it has long been acknowledged that literature is an aid to the historian and constitutes a valuable secondary source for historians trying to recreate the significant features of the past. The focus here is on the historical value of the novel, the way in which it illuminates the lives of a given people and conveys their thoughts and feelings.

#### Endnotes

1. Richmond Lattimore, *The Iliad of Homer*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 48.
2. R.G. Collingwood, *The idea of History*, (Oxford University Press, 1948) 245.
3. *Ibid.*, 246
4. *Ibid.*, 49
5. Samuel Butler, *The Authoress of the Odyssey*, 1987.
6. Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature in Africa* (Oxford, 1970) 83.
7. Wole Soyinka, *Myth, Literature and the African World View* (Cambridge, 1976), 9-10.
8. *Ibid* p. 12 of Soyinka's *Bacchae of Euripides*, pp. vi-ix.
9. *Ibid* pp. vii-viii
10. I. Schapera, *Praise Poems of Tswana Chiefs*, (Oxford, 1965)
11. S.A. Babalola, *The form and Content of Yoruba Ijala* (Oxford, 1966).
12. For example, see Schapera pp 176-177; pp 200-201.
13. *Ibid* p. 10
14. *Ibid*
15. Babalola, p 25
16. Rose N. Gecan, *Kikuyu Folktales* (East African Lit. Bureau, 1970) p. 6.
17. R.M. Dorson, *African Folklore* (Double day, 1972), p. 58. See Alagoa's paper, cited by Dorson entitled "Use of Oral Literary Data for History: Example from Niger-Delta Proverbs" In *Journal of American Folklore*, 81 (1968), pp. 235-42.
18. Babalola, p 118ff.
19. For example, "Annus Mirabilis...An historical poem", 1666, "Astrea Redux" 1660, "Absalom and Achoris", 1681, and "The Medal", 1682.
20. Jan Vansina, *Oral-Tradition* (Penguin Books, 1973), p. 148.
21. Okon E. Uya, *Trends and Perspectives in African History* in Erim O. Erim et al, *Perspectives and Methods of Studying African History* (Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd, 1984) p.1
22. *Ibid*
23. *Ibid*
24. *Ibid*, p.3

25. Nina Mba, Literature as a Source of Nigerian History: Case Study of the Water House and the Brazilians in Lagos, in Ade Adefuyi et al (ed), History of the Peoples of Lagos State (Lagos: Laptern Books Literanmed Ltd, 1987), p 353.

26. Ibid

27. Ibid

26

## CHAPTER 20

# GENETIC RELATIONS, HISTORY AND LINGUISTICS A RECONSTRUCTIVE HISTORICIZATION

Charles Okeke Okoko, PhD

## Introduction

“As truthful as the genes” underscored the assertion that languages shared, and still share, a common ancestorship from a proto language. That languages were formed and spoken by people meant that their origins vis-a-vis their present locations or settlements could be traced through linguistic comparisons. Premised on the “Family Tree” model, the assumption was that languages and their speakers dispersed from an original homeland where the proto-language was spoken. As fissures and dispersals went on, speakers of the original language picked up and adopted certain characteristics not common to the other offshoots from the same proto-language area. Referred to as innovations, these were in the forms of changes in sound (phonology), grammar and vocabulary, especially in the non-basic. Invoking the principle that nothing originated in a vacuum or in isolation, the thesis concluded that linguistics was, and still is, a veritable tool in interdisciplinary research for the historian; and that the study of historical linguistics was to be pursued with vehemence and vigour and taught in all history departments, in association with departments of linguistics, of Nigeria’s tertiary institutions, where it was, and is, not done.

This thesis seeks to re-emphasize the need to fully grasp the contents, perspectives, philosophy and methodology of African history. This re-emphasis is based on its importance since Africa has been a stage upon which the “drama of human development and cultural differentiation has been acted since the beginning of history”.

As mentioned earlier, from the times of David Hume, Hegel through to Hugh Trevor-Roper, representing different historical epochs, African history has faced distortions and presented as unworthy of any kind of academic study. It was rather premised on Eurocentrism, which labelled Africa as the “Dark continent” waiting to be discovered by the Europeans. While these theories have been motivated by the need to justify the continued domination and exploitation of Africa by the Europeans, it was nonetheless necessary to evolve the best methods that would be used in the writing of African history. Although Africa had some written forms, even as signages, colonialism marked an important watershed during which the Europeans introduced innovations, such as Christianity and Western education that played significant but certainly not an overwhelming part. Basil Davidson once asked, “Can We Write African History?”



Kenneth Dike, E. J. Alagoa, Ade Ajayi and Ali Mazrui, to mention a few, as mentioned in the previous chapter, seemingly answered in the affirmative with titles, such as “The African History and Cultures in the Process of Nation Building in Africa” and “Africa Discovers Her Past.”

The students of African history became faced with the challenge of writing the history of the non-centralized states that were regarded as insignificant parts of the historical world, in all its complexities. By this time, African studies had become a subject of academic interest in African tertiary institutions. Departments for its study were started in many of her universities, and even overseas. The ‘Africanists’, as the first crop of anti-colonial historians were referred to, undertook the writing of African history with zeal. But they were immediately challenged with obstacles regarding the methodologies to be used, in their attempts at writing the histories of non-centralized societies. There were no written materials to be used in the process. Moreover, the Africans trained in Western historiography regarded the study of non-centralized societies as a waste of time. It was a considered opinion then that it would be unimaginative to attempt the writing of the histories of communities not yet in print. They argued that such a work, if ever produced, would amount to a bundle of guess works. Yet, there remained so much in the past that are unknown. Should the heavy work envisaged in this task depreciate their importance? Robin Hallet has pointed out that: “To brood too long on these limitations is simply to discourage action” and court lethargy in the historians.

A certain degree of certainty could be attained through the application of the interdisciplinary research approach. This method became necessary in order to curtail the dilemma faced by African historians in the writing of their history in the post-colonial period. This was even made more problematic by the paucity of materials available for research. The interdisciplinary research approach has entailed using other disciplines, such as archaeology, anthropology, ethnography, ethno-botany (to determine probable origin of crops), sociology, linguistics, paleobotany, paleozoology, and physics (through radiocarbon dating) in reconstructing the past histories of communities without writing culture.

Before the adoption of the interdisciplinary re-search method, the only fodder for research was the peoples’ folklores which were referred to as oral literature or ‘orature’. With time, a compendium of oral histories, some lacking in conviction was compiled. Thus, there arose the need to subject oral literature to critical analysis and look for other measures to be adopted in writing the histories of acephalous communities.

## Linguistic Analysis Using the Family Tree Model

Referred to as the Geography of Linguistics this technique is used to delineate spatial relationships of languages and the dispersal of their speakers from a probable homeland;

and how they have spread out. Put in another form, it is directed at charting the spatial courses of their subsequent expansions and dispersals.

Fissures, dispersals and migrations from one point to the other are underpinned by natural and man-made disasters. In the process of the shifts, the speakers of a proto-language picked up innovations into their sound (phonology) and grammar, and adapted them into their language, from other languages. Although man is conservative in adding new 'things' to his natural system, innovations introduced from outside or impinging on them have, however, been added, although often imperceptibly. But in terms of culture words, for instance, these have found themselves in the non- basic category.

Regarding linguistic theories and methodologies, the basics are assumptions and deductions based on the "family tree" model. The linguist simply decides through comparative analysis of languages which area is the old territory of a language-family and the new. The "family tree" model asserts that, the longer two daughter-languages are separated, the greater the differences between them in terms of differences and similarities in their basic vocabulary. The changes that take place in their sound (phonology) and grammar are called innovations. Some innovations spread widely within a language, others re-main confined to a few villages. The spread of an innovation is sometimes compared to the dropping of a stone in a pool; a little wave from the point of droppage will spread out in all directions. If two stones are dropped at different places, the two waves may meet or not and exist independently with increasing distinctness.

## Identifying Homelands, Changes in Sound and New Areas of Settlement

This section attempts reconstructing the possible changes that would have occurred in new languages that dispersed from a proto-language area. From Figure I, the area covered by ABC has acquired a change having dispersed from X. It has added an innovation in sound from [di] to [dzi]. The whole area formerly pronounced the sound as [di] but now as [dzi]. Thus, the other part of the entity not covered by ABC still retained [di] in their pronunciation and, therefore, remains the original homeland.

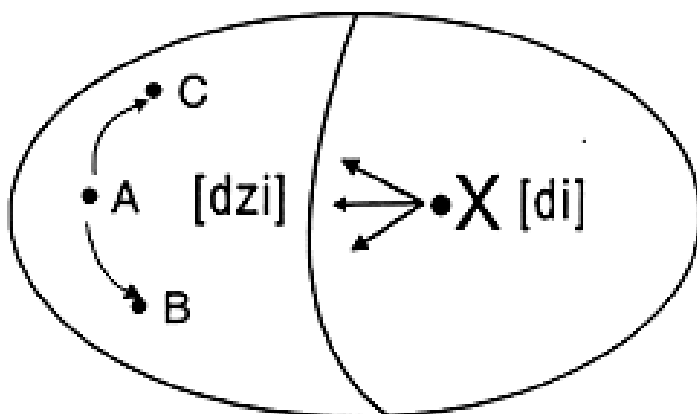


Figure I: Change in Sound/Phonology

The line separating the two areas: ABC and X is called an ISOGLOSS. A bundle of ISOGLOSSES results to dialects or dialectical differentiations. As the new dialects that have been formed or originated as a result of fissures and dispersals encounter and adopt further innovations they develop into distinct languages. It must be pointed out that languages, although evidentially distinct, that have been in constant communication and contact by their speakers are, often, not affected by the encroachment of innovations or the effects of intervening variables.

Moreover, a dialect must belong to a larger language unit in a particular place or area. For instance, Onicha is a dialect of Igbo language, while Ijebu is a dialect of Yoruba language. But for intelligibility to persist in the dialects of a language, there must exist avenues, no matter how slight, through which the speakers of the dialects continually interact and understand each other. This situation results to a dialect chain. For instance:

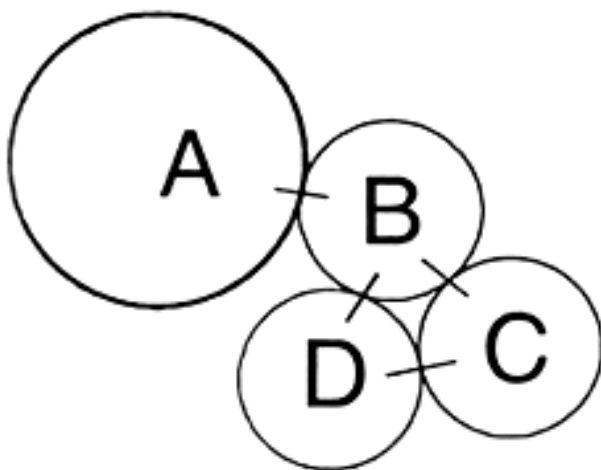


Figure II: A Dialect Chain

It is important to point out that the size or population of the speakers of a particular language, if small, cannot make it a dialect and must be regarded as a distinct language from other contiguous languages with larger populations of speakers, even so, when there is no dialect chain as shown in Figure n. There have been discovered cases or regions where dialects were mistaken for languages especially when there was, and still is, no name for that group of dialects. For instance, unlike the Igbo, Hausa, Edo and Yoruba languages, the dialects spoken by the Agwa'gwuna, Adim, Erei and Abini in the Cross River valley do not have a group name. Yet, the speakers understand each. This development has been referred to as a 'Dialect cluster'. Presently (2016), these dialects have remained as clusters with none evolving into a distinct language that could be described as unintelligible to the speakers of the other dialects in the cluster.

Another situation is where members of a group in a particular region do not understand the various languages spoken within it clearly. At times, claims are made regarding who borrowed aspects of vocabulary (basic and non-basic) of a language from the other. This is referred to as a 'Language cluster'. For instance, although the Nembe and Kalagbari are ancient contiguous neighbours, a comparison of the two languages showed a relationship that is highly distinct, implying that they separated from each other from a homeland in the remote past: But who separated from the other? Further examples of language clusters are the Yoruba and Igala; the Kana and Eleme in Rivers State; and the English and German who belong to the proto-Indo-European phylum (sub-branched under the Germanic).

Summarizing this section, some dialects after having been impinged upon or unconsciously acquired visible and distinguishing innovations; and after many years of separate existence, are known to have developed into languages. Ad infinitum, these languages in turn developed into language groups which also formed language branches and then to language families. These stages of language formations and disintegrations have been traceable, eventually, to a proto-language and to a geographical area.

This way, too, the historical origins of the languages and speakers of the languages have been traced to specific regions or proto-sites where semblances of the original language or languages are spoken. But to arrive at meaningful deductions in the reconstruction of the origins of speakers of particular languages and/or dialects, analyses have always been premised on some factors by the linguists, namely:

The relationship between, and the fissures within, and dispersals by, the languages in the past or remote past; and

The positioning of the languages.

For instance, if the languages are found positioned adjacent to each other, it is inferred that they are likely to have derived from the same proto language.

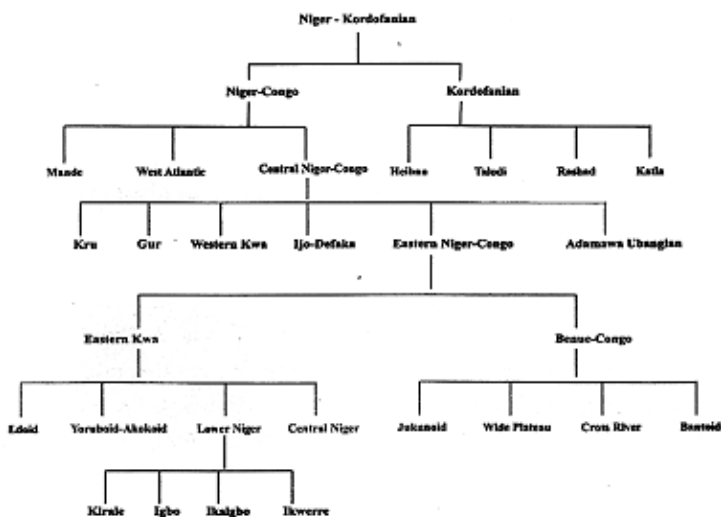


Figure III: A Combination of Greenberg's, Bennett and Sterk and Kay Williamson's Classifications and Modifications

As indicated in Figure IV, ABC are sister languages and have X as their proto-language. Supposing C migrated to another locality as shown in Figure V, the evidence to show that it dispersed away from A and B is that it is simple and natural for a single group to move/migrate than it is for two groups to move/migrate at the same time. The general principle is that the area that has the most distantly related languages, after a comparison of their basic vocabulary, is likely to be the area of origin or the homeland of variants or dialects of a proto-language.

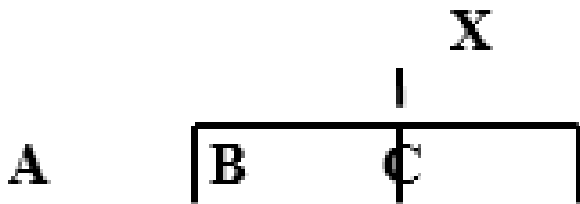


Figure IV: Development of Sister-Languages from a proto-language

Consequently, evidence in Figure VI portrays AB as the original homeland because the territories have the largest numbers of distantly related languages when compared to C and D. Therefore, in comparing linguistic diversities and similarities in order to determine neo-locality and the original homeland, it can be inferred that A and B are most distantly related while the same comparison in C and D show that they are closely related which is indicative of a recent break off. A and B have high language diversities while C and D have low language diversities.

Similarly, further inferences could be drawn from Figures VH and Figure VUE (below), which are the same and propose that C migrated alongside AB from the original homeland. The assumption is that A and B have lesser number of diversities/-dissimilarities, and are distantly related languages, while C has more recently separated languages and, therefore, has lower diversities and are more closely related than are the languages in A and B.

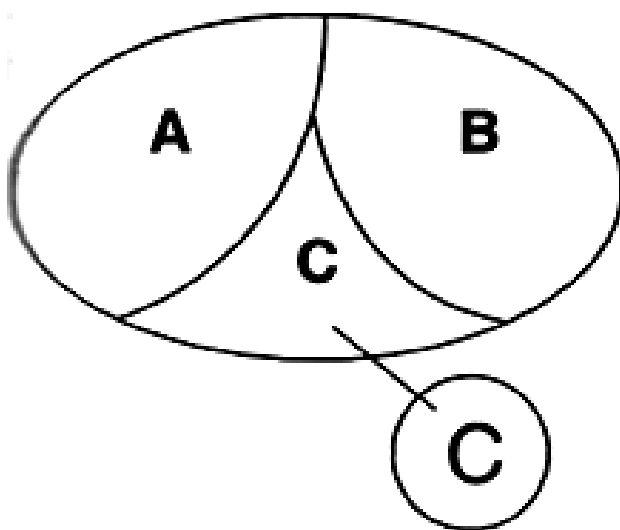


Figure V: Identifying Similarities and Diversities

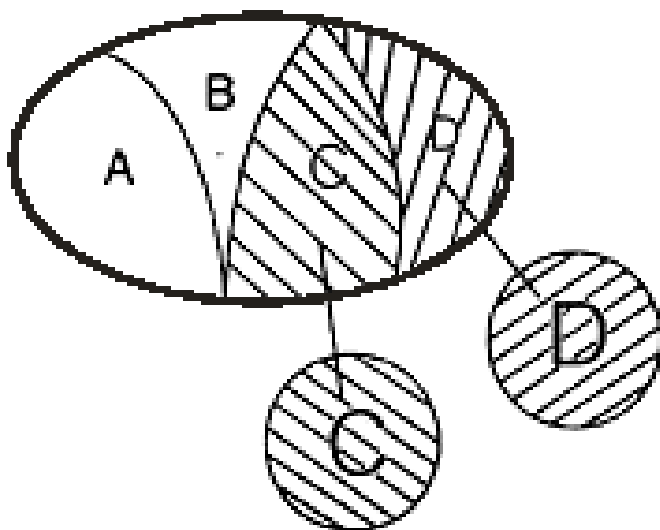


Figure VI: Intrusive languages

It is also possible to identify an intrusive community or language through linguistic comparison of the language groups in an area. For instance, in Figure IX (a): A, B and C are related languages, whereas X is a new or intrusive language that its speakers settled among ABC. The following assumptions are made in order to deduce that X is a recent or intrusive language, namely, first, through the relationship it has with the other languages. From Figure IX (b), although C1 and C2 might have developed different dialects and acquired differing innovations, they are still part of the proto-C, therefore, are of the same language while X is a homogenous language that has not diverged, broken into or begotten other languages; and second, while ABC are seen as distantly related languages and C1 and C2 are seen as closely related to C of ABC, X remains a homogenous language.

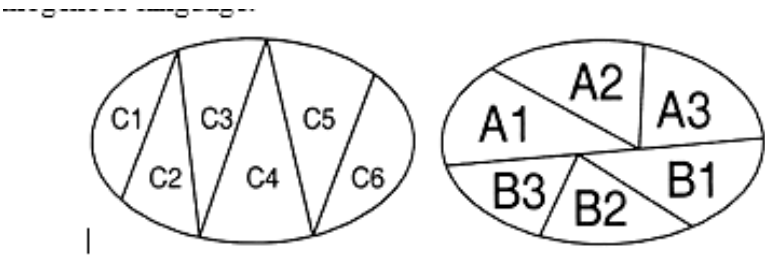


Figure VII: Identifying Original Homeland

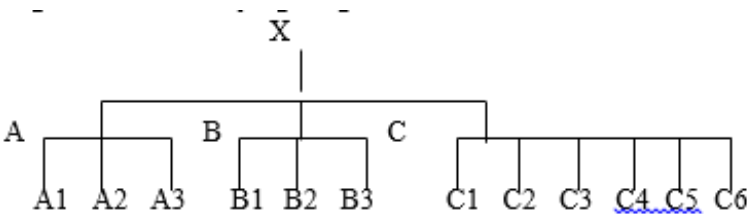


Figure VIII: Family Tree Model

The assumptions and inferences made from Figures I to IX, are based on the family tree model, which after classifications by +J. H. Greenberg, Bennett and Sterk and Kay Williamson, show that languages always originated from a proto-language and a homeland. From the family tree below, certain assumptions and deductions have been made to include:



- ABCDE are daughter languages that originated from X which loci is the homeland;
- ABCDE are sister languages because they share an immediate proto-language X; and
- ABCDE are, in turn, the proto-languages of A1 A2; B1 B2;

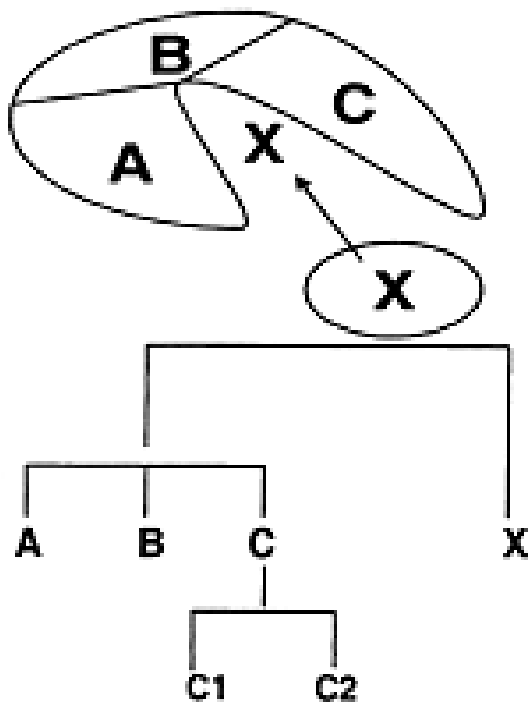


Figure IX: Identifying Original Homeland

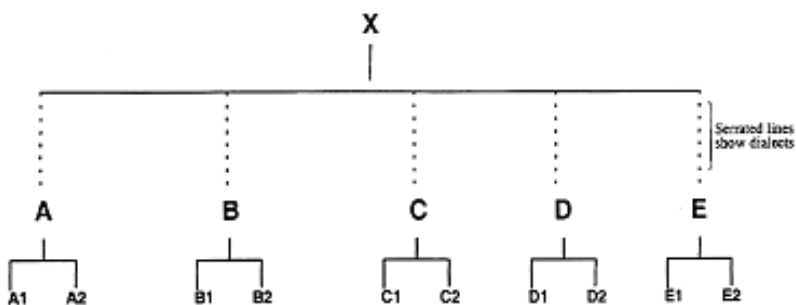


Figure X: Identifying Original Homeland

## Related Models of Linguistic Comparison and Analysis

Although several models of linguistic analyses geared towards historical reconstruction have been mentioned and studied, there are other related models that, often, cannot be employed in isolation of others. However, emanating from, and based on, the “Family Tree” model are **Lexicostatistics** and **Glottochronology** processes.

### Lexicostatistics

Lexicostatistics entails the systematic comparison of the basic vocabulary (that is in respect of that portion of the vocabulary referring to universal and unchangeable aspects of human experience in communities) of sets of languages whose speakers are believed to have a common origin. It is equally premised on the fact that since resemblances in basic vocabulary of different communities are not due either to coincidence/impingement or to borrowing, it follows by elimination that they are most likely to have occurred due to common origins. Given the “Family Tree Model” assumptions, it follows that a relatively high percentage of similarities between semantically equivalent items of basic vocabulary in any two languages indicates a relatively recent separation and a common origin, while a relatively low percentage of similarities indicates a relatively ancient period of separation of languages and their speakers and, definitely had a common origin in the very recent or remote past. This way, successive differentiations in the original proto-language area that gave rise to the set and of the successive dispersals of populations underlying the successive differentiations can be reconstructed.

## Glottochronology

Glottochronology attempts to replace the relative dating method of language differentiations and population dispersals offered by lexicostatistics with a form of absolute chronology. But this method, while it has been applicable to the study of Igbo origin through linguistic data, is essentially applicable to languages whose pasts have been preserved in writing for over some two thousand years. It is assumed in this process that in any language, items of basic vocabulary are dropped and replaced at a constant rate. This rate is roughly the same with all languages. When sections of a human population undergo physical and social separation, the incipient daughter languages continue to undergo lexical changes at the same rate. But the sets of items dropped or replaced are not the same in the various cases.

There is always a progressive divergence of the basic vocabulary of the various daughter languages, and this -divergence, too, develop at a constant rate. It follows that, for every period of time since the beginning of differentiations within a pair of daughter languages, there is a corresponding percentage of similarities in basic vocabulary. So, working backwards from the percentages supplied to us by the lexicostatisticians, approximate absolute dates from the beginning of differentiations in pairs of daughter languages, and from the time of human separations underlying these beginnings, could be arrived at. But this method is fraught with uncertainties and misgivings since there is, yet no definite consensus on the rates of change and divergence.

## Linguistic Classification of African Languages and Original Homelands

1. J. H. Greenberg classified African languages into four major phylums, namely:
2. The Niger-Kordofanian which has the Niger-Congo and Kordofanian as major sub-phylums;
3. The Nilo-Saharan that extends from the Nile to the Sahara through to East and Central Africa;
4. The Afro-Asiatic which are spoken in parts of Africa and the Near East, and inclusive of Arabic and Hebrew; and
5. The Khoisan which are spoken in the North, Central and Southern Africa, and inclusive of Sandawe and Hatsa.

## The Niger-Kordofanian/Niger-Congo

Of particular interest to this thesis are the Niger- Kordofanian and its sub-phylums, families and groups. Greenberg's classification was modified in a presentation by Bennett and Sterk during the 19 Language Congress at the University of Ibadan in 1977 to three (3) sub-families instead of six (6), namely, the West Atlantic, Mande, Voltaic, Kwa Benue-Congo and Adamawa- Eastem (see Figure XI). Also Kwa was split into two (2) sub-families and which Bennett and Sterk classified as Western Kwa. In the revised classification, Eastern Kwa was merged with Benue- Congo to form Eastern Niger- Congo. Thus, the Eastern Niger- Congo comprises the Eastern Kwa and Benue-Congo.

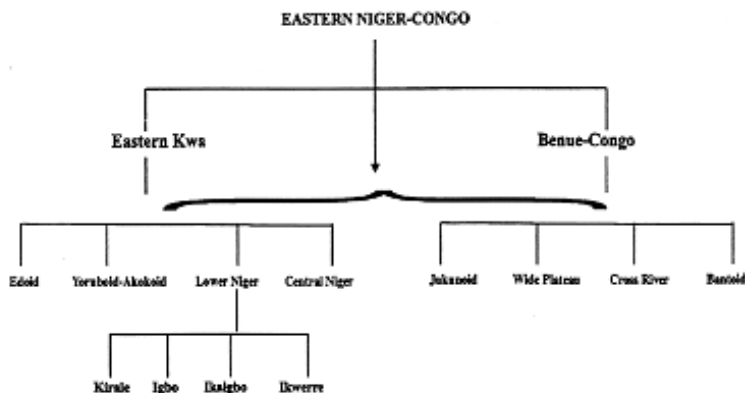


Figure XI:

Further contextualized to this chapter is the Lower Niger sub-family which comprises Kirale, Igbo, Ika Igbo and Ikwerre. While it appears the historian apes the linguist in the usage of linguistic data, it broadens his scope for research and authority. The tracing of homelands of languages and the origins of the speakers of the languages would also be known. This has been predicated on the reconcilable fact that every community has a language, even when it is a sign language.

As mentioned earlier, most communities dispersed from somewhere that could have been their original homelands to other places as a result of natural and man-made factors. These shifts are underpinned by the encroachment of innovations some of which are adopted and adapted into their original milieu. The shifts affect human conditions generally, inclusive of their languages. Regarding natural disasters, speakers of languages have tended to migrate in response to changes in their environment. Described as another 'Aquatic Saga' by Robin Horton, linguists, anthropologists and ethno-historians agree that the climatic condition and eventual desiccation of the Sahara contributed immensely to the movements of language groups away from the region.

Before the desiccation of the Sahara region, it is assumed that the homeland of African languages was to the North during the 'wet' period (pre-desiccation), then the speakers of the languages separated during the dry period. While Greenberg had surmised eastwards and southwestwards movements which implied that two (2) groups were involved, Bennett and Sterk suggested three (3) movements during the dry period. The first was to the east by the phylum referred to as the Niger-Kordofanian; second, to the west, by the phylum referred to as the Mande; and the third, by the phylum referred to as the Niger-Congo. But Greenberg insisted that the Mande separated from the Niger-Congo homeland in West Africa and not as a distinct language family as implied by Bennett and Sterk's classification. Methodically, both schools of thought used the lexicostatistics and glottochronological comparative methods that are in turn based on the Family Tree Model to arrive at the conclusion that the homeland of the Niger-Kordofanian proto-languages' phylums was in the Sahara region before the desiccation period started.

Rigorous comparative studies have been conducted in attempts at tracing the origins of the languages that are spoken in the West African sub-region and the evidences that have been inferred informed the, or gave credence to the, conclusion that they all originated from the Niger-Congo which have proliferated/dispersed as the Mande, to the West Atlantic and then to the Central Niger-Congo (CNC); and subsequently into all the languages spoken across and beyond the Economic Communities of West African States (ECOWAS). From Greenberg and Bennett and Sterk's classifications, is found the Lower Niger which is a sub-family of the Eastern Niger-Congo and to which Igbo language is a sub-division. This introduces the next section of the chapter that surveys the origin of the Abam of the Cross River Igbo area through linguistic comparison of culture words.

## The Origin of the Igbo: The Abam Example

Abam is one of the matrilineal Cross River Igbo martial communities alongside the Ohafia, Edda, Ihe-chiowa and Ututu, among others. Abam itself is situated to the east of Umuahia and Bende, to the northwest of Arochukwu and to the southwest of Ohafia and the Edda respectively. The Abam occupy the territory further west of all the Cross River Igbo. It has an estimated area of 80 square kilometers, bounded approximately by latitudes 5°20' and 5°30' north and longitudes 7°40' and 7°45' east.

The method used in determining the origin of the Abam is the comparative analogy of languages, dialects and phonology which was aimed at delineating patterns of similarities and differences; and the analysis was based on a consideration of a number of generalizations concerning the ways languages were affected by the splitting and dispersal of human populations. Notably were the changes in vocabulary, especially in the non-basic vocabulary, pronunciation and in grammar. The languages of the dispersed population first divided into dialects and after about a thousand years became two distinct languages. In the comparative study, emphasis was laid on the basic vocabulary of the communities since people tended to stick more to it than to their non-basic vocabulary into which were continually added new experiences/innovations in preference to non-current culture words. The Igbo language belongs to the Lower-Niger language family. Following the principle of homeland location which states that the area maintains the most distinctly related languages is likely to be the proto-homeland. After the comparative analysis of culture words from the languages of the Lower Niger group, it was inferred that the probable homeland of the Igbo speakers was around Ekpeye community in the Ahoada Local Government Area of Rivers State. The agricultural products, foods and preparatory implements and yam cultivation among the Igbo (Abam), Ekpeye (Ahoada) and Ikwerre (Ogbakiri and Emohua) were compared and analysed.



innovations. In such changes we see [kw] as in okwuru in both Igbo and Ikwerre having changed to [hu] in Ekpeye. However, these are still cognate but have contributed to changes in phonology. Since the speakers dispersed from a common homeland, they have simple words, which cannot be reduced further. Such words are for yams, cocoyams, banana, okra, oil, pepper, fluted pumpkin and beans. There are, however, compound words, which still maintain their simple words, for instance, we have edein both Igbo and Ikwerre, but - nwuji - has been added to it in Ekpeye.

ENGLISH	IGBO	IKWERRE	EKPEYE
Yam	ji	iji	iyi
Coco-yam	ede	ede	ede-nwuji
Banana	une	unenne	anyibo
Plantain	une	ekninima	ideni
Okra	okwuru	okwuru	uhulu
Oil	manu	mono	mono
Pepper	oso	ise	ese-bo
Fluted Pumpkin	ugu	ognu	uyi
Broad Leaf Pumpkin	ugbogo	mgbognumu	okpokolo
Beans	akidi	Akidi	akidi
Grinder	ngwe	rugwe	iyegwewere
Grind	gwe	gwu	gwe
Grinding	ogwigwe	ogwugwu	ugwepia
Pounding	Osusu	Ofufu	Usupia-usupia
Mortar	Ikwo	Worikne	Nweka
Pestle	Ikwo	Worikne	nweka
To Grind	Igwe	Ogwu	ugwe

*Data collected by Charles Okoko from Gloria Worukwu (Ogbakiri) and Akpaka (Ahoada-Ekpeye) in 1982, HUM 312: Language and History.*

Figure XIII: Agricultural Products, Foods and Preparatory Implements

Figure XIX shows, again, a common origin since only phonological and grammatical changes have occurred. It is thus possible to, through linguistic comparison of culture words, establish the homeland of different communities/peoples with different languages. But the com-pared languages do not seem to have diverged enough to merit the status of languages but could be described as distinctly related dialects. Although the glottochronology method has been effective with written languages, the method can be applied to equally old languages spoken in areas that did not have writing culture. This method is the ‘Reconstruction (comparative) method that is applied to a number of languages which are known to be related, and of whose sub-classification are reasonably known.



ENGLISH	IGBO (ABAM)	IKWERRE (EMOHUA)
Yam	ji	iji
Mound	okwu	rukpohnu
Yam seedling	isiji	risiji
(Yam) tendril	omo-ji	ume-ji
Stemming	igba-omo	ogbakwnu-ume
Barn	oba	ofa
Yellow yam	oku	oko
God of yams	Nfijioku	Ajoknuji
(Yam) harvesting	igwu ji	ogwugwu iji

*Charles Okoko collected Emohua list from Wichendu Akpe (1982)*

Figure XIX: Yam Cultivation and Species

“Reconstruction consists of examining systematically sets of words in the language under study which have similar meanings and enough similarity in form to suggest that they probably descend from the same word in the proto-language”. Such words have been referred to as look-alikes and must be proven whether or not they are cognates presently, that is that the words definitely were the same words in the proto-language or not in the past, and if so, to reconstruct the probable form of that word in the proto-language. Reconstruction rests essentially upon the principles that sound change is regular. That is, if a certain sound in a particular language [dzi] changes to a different sound [di] under certain conditions, that sound will change under the same conditions in all the other words in the language.

In Figure XX (below), ‘fly v’ differs only in its first consonant in the various languages/dialects given. Izi shows ph- corresponding to f- in Ika, Onitsha and Owerri, to wh- in Emohua, and to w- in Ekpeye. Comparing this set of sounds with those in words 2-4, we find that exactly the same consonants are found in each speech-form. Since the correspondence is found not just once but four times, we say there is a regular sound correspondence:

Izi ph = Ika f = Onitsha f = Owerri f = Emohua wh = Ekpeye w  
Coming to item 5, we find a difference: Owerri shows h- instead of f- as in 1-4. We therefore look for any condition, which are different from those for 1-4, and immediately observe nasalization is present in Ika (indicated by the final -n), in Owerri (indicated by a tilde), and in Emohua (indicated by -n-between consonant and vowel). We therefore suspect that the different reflex (result) in Owerri may be due to the presence of nasalization. This is confirmed by item 6 ‘cow’, which also shows nasalization in the same speech-forms, and again has lv in Owerri. Item 6, however, brings some new problems. Izi shows sw-

instead of ph-, Emowhua shows h- instead of wh-, and Ekpeye shows y- instead of w-. These cannot be explained by the presence of nasa-lization, for they were not found in 5, which is nasalized. We therefore look for a different conditioning factor (condition which causes the difference), and observe that the vowel following the consonant here is i, which did not occur in the earlier items (they have e, o, u, and a). The same happens in item 7, which again has i, and items 8 and 9, which have i. Finally; we note that 7-9, although not nasalized, show h and not f in Owerri. Here the conditioning factor also seems to be the vowel i/i. Thus, our formula for the regular sound correspondences now has to be more complex:

English	Izi	Ika	Onitsha	Owerri	Emowhua	Ekpeye	Proto Lower Niger
1. fly	-phe	-fe	-fe	-f	-whe	-we	x-fe
2. belly	e-pho	e-fo	a-fo	a-fo	ru-who	u-vo	xri-fo
3. wind	pherephere	u-fere	u-fele	u-fere	ru-where	u-wele	x ru-fe e
4. miss/loss	-phu	-fu	-fu	-whu	-wu(huma)		x-fu
5. name	e-pha	e-fan	a-fa	a-ha	ru-whna	e-wa	x re-fna
	cowe-swi	e-fin	e-fi			e-hi	e-hni
	e-yi		x e-fni				
6. camwood	u-swe	u-fie	u-hieu	-hie	x	u-hie	
7. twist/plait	swi	-fi	-hi	-hi	x-f		
8. bush	o-swa	o-fia	o-fia	o-hia	o-hia	u-ya x	o-fia
9. plate	a-fele	e-fere	e-fere	e-pele			

Figure XX: Reconstruction of Words from the Lower Niger Languages/ Dialects

The next step (in Figure XXI) is the actual reconstruction that is to decide what the original sound was. It is not always possible to come to a final decision on this, but the type of reasoning applied is shown for this particular case. We can rule out fr as the original sound;/often changes to fr or wh, but not vice versa. Again, wh can easily change to w (as it has done for those English speakers who pronounce while the same as wile), but not vice versa. Similarly, f can easily change to fry before a close front vowel like i or i, and fry can then become y. f can easily become ph (voiceless bilabial fricative), especially before a back vowel. In fact, all of the sounds can develop easily from f except sw, and even here a little experimentation suggests it could perhaps have come from ph. Thus, we reconstruct f as the most likely proto-sound from which others developed. To show it is reconstruction and not actually a recorded sound, we prefix it with an asterisk or star: f.

Izi	Ika	Onitsha	Owerri	Emohua		Ekpeye
<u>sw</u>	f	f	h	h	y	before i/i
<u>ph</u>	f	f	h	wh	w	nasalized
<u>ph</u>	f	f	f	wh	w	elsewhere

Figure XXI: Sound Correspondences

Reconstructed proto-Lower Niger forms of the culture words in Figure XXI have been given in the last column. The complete words, like the single sounds, are asterisked to indicate that they are reconstructions and not attested (actually recorded) forms. Through reconstruction we thus determine the true cognates in a set of languages. This enables us to check again the judgments of cognation made in lexicostatistics. First, because of sound changes there may be some words, which are cognates but not look-alikes. For example, without having worked out sound correspondences one might doubt whether Ekpeye 'uya' was cognate with Izi 'oswa'. However, because of their regular correspondence, they are cognates.

Secondly, some look-alikes may prove not to be cognates. An example is '(breakable) plate', item 10 in Figure XX because of their similarity; they could be taken for cognates. By comparison with items 1-4, we see that f in Onitsha and Owerri should correspond to wh in Emohua and w in Ekpeye; instead we see f in Emohua and p in Ekpeye. This means that, although they are descended from the proto-Lower Niger, they are not cognates. Rather, the Emohua and Ekpeye forms are likely to have borrowed from Igbo or Ijo. This is because Ekpeye has no f, all cases of f in loanwords are changed to p. It is, in fact, very unlikely that proto-Lower Niger, which was probably spoken some two thousand years ago, should have a word for 'breakable plate', since this item of material culture was probably introduced from the time of European trade. It was perhaps introduced through Ijo, which has efere in many dialects, for example Epie in Yenegoa. When a standard list is completed for the languages being compared. Then for each item on the list, each pair of languages is compared and a judgment of 'cognate' (i.e. related), 'not cognate', or 'doubtful' is made. An example is the comparison made in Figure XX. When all items on the list have been compared, the total of cognate items for each pair of languages/dialects is counted and worked out as a percentage following the formula:

$$\text{Cognate}/(\text{Cognate}+\text{non-cognates}) \times 100$$

A percentage is then obtained for each pair of languages/dialects compared. These percentages can then be arranged in a tabular form. If the percentage is high it shows that the period of separation of speakers of the languages is recent, but if low shows a remote relationship but related. Having been involved in a marathon analysis of

previously contiguous and presently non-contiguous languages and peoples; it has become necessary for the reappraisal of the historic affinities of particular West African peoples. This is as it concerned their points of origin, possible linguistic and cultural affinities; and the probable time that have elapsed since their separation and degree of divergence. The thesis would at this juncture consider some examples to prove that we have not all along embarked on a wild goose chase; and in the process attempt at proving probable relationship with the Igbo speakers.

English: Igbo Dialect: Lower Niger %Similarity

Language Abam Ndoni/Ekpeye % Disimilarity

one olu ofu +

two abuo abuo +

three ato ato +

four ano ano +

five ise ise +

I mu me +

You (thou) gi yu -

We anyi anyi +

You (ye) unu unu +

Head isi ishi +

Hair agbisi agirishi +

Eye anya anya +

Ear nchi nti +

Nose imi imi +

Mouth onu onu +

Tooth eze eze +

Tongue ire ire +

Neck olu onu +

Breast(s) era ara +

Heart mkpuruobi obi +

Belly avo afo +

Navel otubo otubo +

Hand aka aka +

(finger) nail mbo mbo +

Leg okpa ukwu/okpa +

Knee ikpere ikpere +

Skin apkukpo ahu asu +

Bone okpukpu okpukpu +

Blood ngbei obara -

Saliva onumini onummiri +

Fat abibia abuba +

Meat anu anu +

Horn mpi mpi +  
 Tail odu odu +  
 Feather abuba abuba +  
 Egg akwaa akwa +  
 Bird nnunnu nnunu +  
 Fowl okuko okuukwu +  
 Fish azu azu +  
 Dog nkita nkita +  
 Goat ewu ewu +  
 Housefly iji agizi +  
 Tree osisi osisi +  
 Seed mkpuru mkpuru +  
 Leaf akwukwo-osisi akwukwo-osisi +  
 Root mgborogwu mgborogwu +  
 Fire oku okwu +  
 Ashes ntu ntu +  
 Smoke anwuru-oku anwuru-oku +  
 Sand aja nbom -  
 Stone nkuma nkume +  
 Ground ali ani +  
 Road uzo ezuku +  
 Mountain ugwu ugwu +  
 Sun anwu anwu +  
 Moon onwa onwa +  
 Star kpakpando kpakpando +  
 Night abali uchichi -  
 Water mmini mmiri +  
 Person madu madu +  
 Man ikom onyeke -  
 Woman iyom onyenye -  
 Child nwanta nwanta +  
 Name afa afa +  
 Big ukuu ebu +  
 Small ntii ntikiri +  
 Long akaa ogonogo -  
 Red ufie-ufie ufie +  
 Black ojiri oji +  
 White ocha ocha +  
 Hot di-okwu oku +  
 Cold oyi oyi +  
 Full juru-eju juni-eju +

New ohuru ofu +  
 Good di-nma di-nma +  
 Dry kporo-nku kponi-nku +  
 Eat ria ri +  
 Drink nua nu/ra +  
 Bite taa ta +  
 Swallow lua noru +  
 Roast mia suma -  
 Bathe hua wu +  
 Walk jea jea +  
 Jump fea wu +  
 Come bia bia +  
 Sit down duru-odi nodi-ani -  
 Lie down jinanga diari-ani -  
 Sleep ura/rahu rasu +  
 Give birth mua mu +  
 Die nwua nwusu +  
 Bury lia ni +  
 Say kpai kwu +  
 Kill gbua gbufu +  
 Steal zua zuru +  
 Give nye ye +  
 See fu fu +  
 Hear nu nu +  
 Know mara mari +  
 Blow ku gbe -

Figure XXII: REVISED MORRIS SWADESH 100 WORD LIST

Percentage:

$\text{Cognate}/(\text{Cognate}+\text{non-cognate}) \times 100/1$

$10/(10+90) \times 100/1=1\%$  (High %)

The comparison in Figure XXII shows that the Abam and Ndoni (where their oral traditions and those from contiguous communities recount they migrated from) share a high degree of similarity in their basic vocabulary and, therefore, highly suggests a separation of the communities in the recent past tentatively to about 1000 years ago. Therefore, the Igbo speakers who are of the Lower-Niger language division which belongs to the proto-Niger-Kordofanian phylum, can rightly be said to have migrated from the west of present day Nigeria, in the not too remote past, where they existed alongside the speakers of the Edoid division of the Eastern Kwa of the Eastern-Niger Congo. But an attempt at pinpointing the actual homeland of the Igbo places it at Ekpeye (see figure XII below). If we should follow the principle of point of origin of speakers of a particular language or groups of languages, it would appear the Lower Niger homeland

would be around the area of Ekpeye in the south as a result of its distinctiveness from the other languages which show a language cluster sharing high degrees of linguistic and cultural affinity. This is even, further, substantiated by ethnography.

#### LOWER NIGER

EKPEYE IKWERRE OGBA IGBO UKWUANI IKA IZI EZAA IKWO MGBO

(Language Clusters since culture word similarities are high)

#### FIGURE XXIII: PINPOINTING IGBO HOMELAND

#### Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has painstakingly surveyed the possibilities of using linguistic data as a veritable tool for reconstructing past histories, especially the origins of motley acephalous African communities that have not been documented because there was no writing culture. Before now, historians depended on the scanty results of archaeology in their reconstructions; and in addition to the tendency to being selective in researches. Historians have been heard saying: this belongs to the linguist, anthropologist or sociologist, whereas, a well-conceived interdisciplinary research approach would be encompassing. Where archaeological excavations, analyses and interpretations have not been carried out, lexicostatistics comes in handy as tool since it goes further into the remote past. The thesis discerned and, in fact, portrayed the qualities of linguistics as fodder worthy of usage by the historian.

Definitely, linguistic data goes far back into the remote past than oral traditions, and as much as does archaeology. It is an invaluable source/fodder for historical reconstruction because the determination of the origin of a language is equally the determination of the origin of the people who speak it.

#### References

O. E. Uya, "Trends and Perspectives in African History" in E. O. Erim and O. E. Uya, Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Company, 1984, p. 1.

Uya, p. 8.

Uya, pp. 8-9.

Robin Hallet, *Africa to 1875*, London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1970, p. 13.

J. O. Ijoma, "Igbo Origins and Migrations", National Symposium on Igbo Origins and Culture, Benin City, May 21, 1983, p. 1; C. Wrigley, "Linguistic Clues to African History", *Journal of African History*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1962, p. 269; E. J. Alagoa, 1975, "The Interdisciplinary Approach to African History in Nigeria", *Presence Africaine*, No. 94; Kay Williamson, "Principles and Techniques of Language Classification", Paper presented at the 27 Annual Historical Congress, University of Port Harcourt, 13 - 17, April 1982.

Kay Williamson, 1962, "A Glottochronological Study of Six Niger-Congo Languages", Unpublished Term Paper, Yale University.

Kay Williamson, "Principles and Techniques of Language Classification", Paper presented at the 27 Annual Historical Congress, University of Port Harcourt, 13 - 17, April 1982.

Kay Williamson, "Linguistic Classification", Unpublished Handout, School of Humanities, University of Port Harcourt, 1981.

Williamson.

Williamson.

Williamson.

Williamson, 1982.

Williamson, 1962.

Williamson, 1981.

Chidi Ejikeme Osuagwu and Charles Okeke Okoko, "Igbo Origins: A Linguistic Perspective to a Persistent Controversy", [www.osuagwu/okoko/igboorigins](http://www.osuagwu/okoko/igboorigins).

J. H. Greenberg, "Classification of African Languages", 1963; J. H. Greenberg, *Languages of Africa*, Bloomington, 1966, pp. 7 - 15.

Eastern Niger-Con go is a term that was proposed by J. T. Bendor-Samuel as simpler than Bennett and Sterk's 1977 'Eastern South-Central Niger-Congo'. In Greenberg's classification, it was the equivalent to Eastern Kwa (minus Ijo- Defaka) plus Benue-Congo.

Robin Horton, "The Niger-Kordofanian Diaspora: Another Aquatic Saga?" Paper at the 27 Annual Congress of the Historical Society of Nigeria, University of Port Harcourt, 13 - 17 April 1982.

Lower Niger is a term introduced by Kay Williamson in 1973.

O. U. Kalu, "The Battle of Gods: Christianization of the Cross River Igboland, 1903 -1950", *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 10, No.1, December, 1979, p.1.

Williamson.

Williamson.

Williamson.

Williamson.

Williamson.

Williamson.

Kay Williamson, "History Through Linguistics", *Journal of African History*, Ibadan, Vol. 17, 1963.



27

## CHAPTER 21

## GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY: A STUDY IN SYSTEMATIC CO-EVOLUTION

Okechi Dominic Azuwoke, PhD

### Introduction

Contrary to popular notions, Geography is not an inventory of place names, measurements and absolute values of physical and human phenomena. It is rather an effort to account for the variable character of distributions (of any phenomenon) on the earth's surface. Geography therefore studies variability, of particularly spatial phenomena. It is not strange therefore that it would cross paths with history.

Its unarguable nexus with history is also seen in history's preoccupation with tracking change. It would appear to be the case that spatial change; an essentially geographical fort is very much tied to temporal change which is the hallmark of history. In this chapter, this geography-history nexus is comprehensively explored to show that:

- i. Geographical features are of cultural essence and the cultural productions become markers of history;
- ii. Time continuum or otherwise is often expressed as spatial continuum or discontinuity;
- iii. Historical moments are of geographical importance;
- iv. Trajectories of history are tied to evolution of geographies;
- v. Succession is as much a historical cum ecological phenomenon as it is a force in spatial change;
- vi. Parallel and similarities abound between history and geography; and
- vii. Nigeria's settlement history is a walk in geography.

In quite a vivid expression of dialectical materialism, Geography expresses the fact that structures are created and destroyed regularly through processes in operation and these structures develop patterns and generate processes that build more structures in a never ending circle. Uniformitarianism is a concept that captures this situation. Rivers change and history changes in resonance; minerals change (run out) and history changes with it; climate changes and history changes with it; technology changes (industries may get footloose and migrate from the stranglehold of water environments of their earlier location and history changes with it as new areas (towns), new industrial zones develop. Technological change such as occasioned agricultural shifts from labour intensive to capital intensive orientation helped to signal the demise of ancient slavery. Hence history has tended to regiment time along the lines of key geographical events. There was the ice age, the machine age etc. Papal bull of demarcation might have become a historical relic in present global geopolitics but at its time at the beginning of the 15 century, it marked the making of geography of maritime powers (Spain and Portugal) and their dominions. Geography's link with history is ancient, dating back to the time when earliest geographical treatises came from travel writings documented as histories. This piece will identify aspects of this relationship from those early years to the present.

Geographical Features: Cultural Essence, Markers of History

Geographical features are of cultural essence and in time these cultural products become markers of history. This is what is illustrated in this section in diverse settings and time periods.

1. Material Culture: Material culture highlights the way man's philosophies (non material) are translated to practicalities for the advancement of his objectives. The struggle of man is almost always against the rigidities and constraints imposed by nature. Culture therefore becomes a sustainable reaction to nature considered so highly important that it has to be systematically transferred through generations to ensure continuity of human communities in some form of encoding of the nature of a social DNA. Apart from natural features such as mountains and rivers to which cultures are adjusted, anthropogenic forms such as the built environment are no less compelling geographical forms that espouse cultures in their own right. Hence Dutch wind mills are evocative of poetry as they capture the imagination of artists such as Vincent Van Gogh, Edward Wesson, Anton Pieck, Piet Mondrian and Rob Van Assen. They have also become a factor in the aesthetics of the landscape; a factor in the production of a distinct sense of place for the Dutch in their land. The Dutch windmill became a major genre in the world of landscape paintings. These windmills were first and foremost mere geographical artifacts of man's survival against physical constraints. They have become part of the cultural history of domestic water sourcing and energy production for diverse use – one that in the present deserves the attention it is getting as part of the world's UNESCO heritage that ought to be protected. Where dated geographical features acquire an ideographic existence, their iconographic appeal seems guaranteed and they may become the subject of protective efforts as historical properties or monuments. Their destruction will then therefore assume the nature of a cultural genocide. The Doors-of-No-Return in Goree Island, Senegal, in Badagry, Nigeria, in Cape Coast, Ghana and others in Benin, for their role in the slave market have become iconic for human misery and are now more than just doorways. China's Great Wall is no longer a mere barrier against barbaric invaders, but a testament to Chinese ingenuity and extensive capabilities of the human spirit.

2. History in the Landfill: Modern man has created a situation in which he is virtually swamped by the waste of his own production much like Daedalus of TheGreek Legend of Icarus and Daedalus was imprisoned in the Labyrinths that were his own creation. Until lately, landfills were seen as a way out of the waste challenges. Dumpsites are currently used by much of the world. On the dumpsites modern archaeology (if we can take the liberty of widening the reach of archaeology) can piece social foibles and nuances of the existence of the modern man together. Even as a vulgar form of philately, engaging artifacts in modern waste piles can yield a chronicle of modern social history. Is the dumpsite a mere geographical happenstance devoid of historical materials then or is it also a place to meet history? In the dumpsite the two subjects of geography and history meet.

3. Symbolic Places: In Mythical Geography, symbolic places mark history and create a fusion between geography and history. Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Pearl Harbour, Goree Island, Badagry, Abagana, Wailing Wall and Sambisa are all important historico-geographical spaces. Places of memory are constructed and contested. There, 'symbolic imaginings of the past interweave with the materialities of the present'. The Wailing Wall, the twin towers; Ground zero, and Pearl Harbour are examples. Places carry loads of history. While places are geographical, the feelings associated with them are tied to their histories.

4. Geographical Phenomena in Making of History: There is a strict involvement of geographical phenomena in the making of history. History has it that first use of irrigation in Tigris and Euphrates Valleys and in the Nile Valley was before 2000BC; Dravidians established first city communities in Indus Valley before 2000BC; Ancient China, before 2000BC, had established a thriving civilization in Yellow River; in the Shang Dynasty around 1600BC, Yellow River Civilization had expanded to territories North and South of the Yellow River; and Chou Dynasty, around 700BC established their rule as far as the Yangtze River. Why is there this profuse mention of geographical phenomena (of Valleys and Rivers) in production of history?

Taking a look at the expression, 'as far as the Yangtze River', one can decipher that a river is major impedance on cultural diffusion and is therefore effective in marking off the limits of a culture area. Culture spreads out in space from a geographical core area and tends to be contained in all directions by the existence of some physical obstacle that inhibits further interaction. Hence Nigeria's three broad culture areas North, East and West are clearly defined by the Niger/Benue Rivers system. Geographical boundaries, understandably, even those that define villages are marked by physical barriers such as mountains, valleys, rivers and lakes. Whether it is Hannibal and his men trying to scale the Alps exploiting a pass or Jihadists from the North trying to overcome the treacherous environment of the Benue Valley on a southward campaign, physical features have shaped the course of history through checking interaction and confining cultural expressions to specific locales.

#### Time Continuum as Spatial Continuum

Where time acts on a mosaic of cultural spaces, it might produce a uniformity coalescing diverse geographies into a singular cultural unit. This is the success that has been arrived at by civilizations that have achieved a cultural melting pot such as the United States of America. This is also the situation countries grappling with challenges of diversity such as Nigeria claim to be aiming at. It is in modern literature referred to as integration and in social studies and civics, studied under the term Nation-Building. The term stands for a social form of alchemy in which by association diverse nations unlearn or drop much of their debilitating differences and embrace and in fact highlight commonalities to the extent that they are able to fashion a nation out of several nations and 'live happily ever after'. Time and space convergence manifests in diverse ways.

#### a. Nation Building and Integration

A temporal continuum of integration (for nation-building) finds expression in a continuum of spaces of integration. Integration which has historical markers and can be calibrated along the lines of several milestones on a timeline finds expression in a continuum of spaces in integration. Beyond being historical, it finds physical expression in the spatial configuration of neighbourhoods, schools, markets, political processes etc. African people have witnessed forms of integration forced upon them by European fiat as mere historical events without care that it produces geographical consequences. Hence irredentism has become the lot of modern African peoples. For Nigeria, while the elements that make up the state did not get into destructive bickering that could distract them before 1914, the amalgamation of that year changed the geography of power and precipitated agitations ever since. Historical pronouncements truly bear geographical consequences.

#### b. Modernity

Modernity is a historical milestone involving ethos and knowledge systems that evolved in 17 century Europe. It however finds spatial expression in the large city seen as an expression of 19/20 century modernity or in bringing cities under the control of modern states. Hence the 'modern' is both a historical phenomenon as well as a geographical one in literature, architecture, urban design, fashion etc. The modern urban structure for instance climaxes as megacities with multiple Central Business Districts never seen in history.

#### c. Spatial Decision Making

History is abused or created in the way spatial decisions are taken. For instance on district maps, credit dispensing agencies may redline entire areas deemed to be poor and a credit risk, marking them out for credit denial. Where this happens, such areas are locked into a vicious circle. Self-fulfilling prophecies reinforce stereotypes. There is an argument that geographies are constructed through assessments, by investment houses and bankers, of emerging markets and their potential before they are engaged.

Linear extrapolations counting on historical data are all too common in administration. It proves critical to development of geographical forms and in fact spatial ascendancy or stagnation of regions. It is referred to as path-dependency (outcome depends on history). The only challenge to this paradigm comes from Radical Geography which analyses and factors processes by which inequalities are produced and maintained.

#### d. City Structure and Morphology

City morphology is defined in historical moments:

Pre-colonial - primarily concentric urban form, where the entire city is anchored on one central hub, the Central Business District (CBD) with landuse concentrically arranged from that core to the peripheries.

Colonial: Emergent transport systems impose on the city a disorientation of what would have remained entirely concentric form, creating sectors or wedge shaped landuse typologies.

Post-Colonial: Emergence of diverse growth poles or CBDs specializing on diverse themes generally referred to as multiple nuclei form.

Development of a city structure is evidently organic and time bound in historical leaps.

The city also goes through cycle of decline and rejuvenation in historical time with a cycle of growth, decay, near-death experience and rejuvenation. The city in this way may be looked at as a geographical realization of history or history rendered in spatial terms. Time and space inexorably converge in diverse ways in producing the livingspace and all its trappings.

#### Historical Moments are of Geographical Importance

Every passing day history is made – Angela Merkel opening Germany to waves of refugees; Donald Trump deciding on walling off the United States from Mexican migrants; the pulling down of the Berlin Wall; 19 century partitioning of Africa by European powers etc. These have reverberations that border on the geographical. The dust bowl was as much a geographical phenomenon relating to drought and dust storms as it was a historical moment in the ecological life of the United States' Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma of the 1930s. It was an appendage to the preceding Great Depression that pushed agriculture into overdrive producing ecological nightmare. In other ways historical moments prove geographical points. A number of them will further illustrate.

a. Time periods as distinct geographical identities: There was the year 1965; the decade 1970 to 1980; and the century 1800 to 1900. These periods represent milestones in history. They represent discontinuities – a break from what preceded and a distinction from what followed. As they represent individual historical milestones, they also represent distinct geographical identities. They represent a certain turnout of a conspiracy of geographical elements in producing a distinct social and physical setting. Hence, where M.J.C. Echeruo identifies a Victorian Lagos, he engages a point in historical time, a range of historical time as well as a spatial product – Lagos rendered in all its Victorian glory or vainglory. The reference is to a sense of place.

b. History in the Creation of Geography: Depopulation of a place from historical events of raiding, diseases or physical constraints may lead to spatial stigmatization and a vicious circle of avoidance leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy of underdevelopment. Hence extant configurations of settlements and populations conform to prototypes set in history. A major development challenge is therefore usually about overcoming the stigma in public consciousness about an area's ugly past. At times great investments are involved. Muammar Gaddafi had to create the Great Man Made River to reconfigure the settlement pattern that had favoured the Mediterranean Coast against vast swaths of unlocked Libyan arid territories. Nigeria's Middle Belt, heavily raided by slave dealers and punished by diseases did not get this kind of a makeover and has largely remained under-populated and underdeveloped.

c. Climate History: Events such as climatic cooling or warming trends readily become historical milestones for a definition of epochs. Hence there was the Little Ice Age. Ice Ages, 150 million years apart have duration in tens of millions of years. Little climate optimum – c AD 750-1200 was a period when Europe and North America were much warmer. In the Little Ice Age, between AD 1550 and 1850, temperatures were globally lower than at present. Interestingly most other geographies are derived from climate as physical and social systems are largely climate-dependent. What people wear, how they farm, their housing architecture and other attributes are all climate responses. Climate history derivatives such as fashion history are therefore reflective of a changing geography.

#### Trajectories of History – Evolution of Geographies

History is in the business of spawning new geographies as the following show.

a. New Geographies are produced by the Convergence of Histories. There are examples that can be found in the North American landscape of the United States on historical production of geographies. Here, there is an agglomeration of histories as diverse peoples from diverse backgrounds are brought into one cultural space. The implication is a crossing of paths and complexity of the emergent histories – history losing its simplistic foundations. A person like Madeline Albright, former American Secretary of State and her people finding integration in the United States from the backgrounds of their Czech nationality bring into an otherwise simple history of national life, added historical complexity. This makes the history of the people of the United States one of the most complex national histories. The making of Geography is the making of history. The scramble for Africa, for instance, changed the political geography of States and waxed new histories of irredentism, nationalism, conflicts and ethnic strife.

b. History and Geography in Co-operation: History strives to solve puzzles such as Ghengis Khan's sudden withdrawal from imperialist campaign against Hungary and indeed Europe, Sparta's inclination to a military state and Athens' sophisticated Elitism. Geography is often mobilized in this effort with particular reference to Behavioural Geography. The subject engages cultural cum psychological interpretations of space that may promote or suspend the usual human relation to space, distance and place part of which subject has been covered under the term proxemics by the anthropologist Edward T. Hall. Modern discourse emphasizes human ecology. Did formal colonization end as a result of rise of multinational corporations that could rival state powers? Did technology hasten the abolition of slavery? Did industrial revolution change social organization? Answers will always factor geographical elements.

c. History and Geography in Correlation: History is almost always in embrace of the familiar much like spatial conditioning of humans and animals for 'the road well travelled'. A sense of dejavu and comfort therefrom pervades both subjects. Both subjects are in the business of cognitive dissonance – the theory that individuals strive to minimize cognitive discomfort through fostering behavioural consistency. In both

subjects any development that detracts from the well known stereotypes are marked out as special interest.

Also, geography in the era of full manifestation of state territorial powers is distinct from Geography in the historical era of de-territorialization. Non-state actors are in the present serious agenda setters and some corporations acting within states are financially stronger than those states. It is an invitation to change the course of documenting history from state-based, state-focused perspectives to stateless narratives. History in the era of statelessness is to an extent a new historical paradigm – history under a decayed, decaying geography; or history under spatial decomposition. It cannot be the same old history. History has to be reinvented in a de-territorialized global arena.

d. Construction of Geography from History: Geography has often been articulated from disparate histories. Was John Snow's early forays in epidemiology, tracking cholera cases as they occurred and affixing them to their addresses on a map to find spatial patterns, medical geography or history keeping? His identified geographical pattern of affliction around a river traced cholera to water when germ theory of disease had yet to take root. In any other way, it can be argued that John Snow waxed together pieces of histories to solve the riddle of origin of cholera. Doctors keep keeping medical histories to this day. Converting their medical histories to spatial format or from spatial form in several layers of map overlays (imageries) to longitudinal histories are the stuff of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and are increasingly deployed. Desertification for instance can be tracked by taking imageries of one particular vegetated area at various time periods and drawing comparisons. Historical changes in size of Lake Chad, Population of Abuja, housing market growth or decline in Port Harcourt can be tracked in this way.

e. Nationalism in the Midst of Globalism: There is a new found nationalistic fervor in this age of globalism. More nations wish to play at the global arena in the colours of their long forgotten nationalistic expressions swamped by modern states. By the reinvention of the local, the tribal and the ethnic, history is being reinvented as global diminution of the significance of boundaries increasingly lead to the erosion of distinct identities. More impetus has therefore materialized for the protection of these identities. There is an awakening on language protection with particular reference to endangered languages and a cultural revolution remaking obsolete cultures.

f. Expanding History as Expanding Geography: Expanding history is tied to expanding geography. With journeys of discovery opening up new lands and leading to discovery of the New World, interactions have grown. With the new linkages, new relationships are formed and new events develop to shape history. Adiele Afigbo's conceptualization of the world of the Igbo was one of expanding array of concentric rings with the Igbo at the centre. There is elasticity to such a world in resonance to the geographical range of the Igbo person's experience field. There was a time history in Igboland was about relationship with the next contiguous community. Then the Ezza warriors of today's Ebonyi had only the Izzi warriors to contend with in the time leading



up to what has been described as Pax Britannica. The experiential field has expanded to far removed lands heard of only in passing with the most cursory of attention – the period of *akuko iduu n’oba*, interpreted as the Edo and their Obas. It is remarkable that there was a time possibility of engaging the Edo was considered by the Igbo, too remote and outlandish.

A number of developments have followed expansions and outreaches. Food history following changing geography of movements of Africans to Europe and the Americas has changed a great deal. Along the same line of massive movements, return of liberated slaves set the tone for a new geography of demographics in Africa waxing new histories of Afro-American interactions.

g. Shrinking Geography as Shrinking History: Shrinking world of geography implies shrinking latitude of history and historiography. Imperial world required that the history of vassal states mixed up with those of imperial powers. A more liberated world without geographic concentration of powers implies a more fragmented history – history offered at a less than global template. European Union being the realization of supra-nationalism implies the creation of a Pan European holistic history. Dismantling it to recover individual states will also entail emergence of particularistic histories where this was not the case. Trajectories of history are indeed tied to evolution of geographies.

#### Succession – A Historical Cum Spatial Phenomenon

Succession observed in diverse forms of change is as much a historical phenomenon as it is a spatial change phenomenon. Succession is noticed in landscapes and the emergence of biogeographical biomes. It defines historical epochs. Society disarticulated and analyzed becomes layers of epochs of experiences and the surviving remnants of each era become a component of the realized complexity. Present distributions betray past experiences. A look at human ecology and the histories they precipitate - what the Chicago School of Sociology realizes through social areas analysis is instructive here. In Western countries, the LGBT movement and their spatial enclaves spoke of a history of rejection and seclusion. The later day history of their acceptance and integration into mainstream society came with spatial redistribution that saw an end to enclave settlement orientation and their assimilation into the spatial motif. The same ecological orientation goes for black populations in the United States. Their history of racial acceptance has tended to agree with a more footloose settlement not essentially tied to the old black settlement strongholds but characterized by forays into new areas some of which were purely white spaces. Hence, blockbusting has become (for ethnocentric whites) a way of stimulating white departure from social areas under the threat of a possible black takeover of such space. Succession is historical as well as geographical.

#### Parallels and Similarities

A lot is shared between the disciplines of Geography and History. These include:

a. Conflict: History is conflicted. It is so conflicted that it dares not introduce itself in the definite article, ‘The’ as in, for instance, ‘The History of the Latin American Slave Economy’. History authors, aware of diverse vistas dare not arrogate such magisterial

authority to themselves. It is always 'A history of...', indicating accommodation of diversity of perspectives. Geography is equally conflicted on the meaning of place and or in fact space. The true significance of Jerusalem for instance has been in contention. Governments contend that urban spaces have to maintain an ambience that panders to elite interests and sense of aesthetics. The poor insist on a place within that milieu giving rise to conflict of interests and class wars for the soul of the city in draconian development control mechanisms. Spaces are not fixed but highly dynamic. Political maps are only of fleeting integrity because of history's unending construction and reconstruction of political power. For maps of utilities and infrastructure, the case is the same. As history is subject to diverse vistas, so does appreciation of geographical space yield to revisionism. If meaning changes in history, geographical meaning will also change.

b. Innovation Diffusion: History of innovation diffusion is to a large extent reflective of the geography of contiguity in which case nearer places receive an experience before farther places. This is for instance seen in spread of cropping innovation across a farming region. While some issues have become history in some place, they are only dawning in other places establishing particularly reinforcement or manifesting a core – periphery relationship where the periphery relives the history played out by the core. This functions at a global context as well as regional urban – hinterland context of national regional geographies. History therefore mimics wave action cascading in spatial fits and starts following principles of expansion diffusion across space.

c. Natural History and Cultural History: The natural history of the world, measured in geologic time scales, which museums such as those of Natural history pursue, is very keenly tied to cultural history of the world. Agriculture, migration, hunting, devegetation and extinctions are captured. Man's emergence and the natural details of his present distribution follow historical epochs of his adjustments and industry. The history of nature is also the history of culture.

d. Strategic Places; Unique Histories: Halford Mackinder hypothesized about the strategic geographical significance of certain spaces reflecting a sense of history. The geographical significance is not in any way divorced from a historical significance. Geographical strategic advantages are created by the existence of historical strategic advantages.

e. Fusion of Natural and Social Worlds: Historical documentations of tragic interventions in other peoples' lives chronicles the disruption of geographies and patterns of spatial relationships that have developed. Hence, history is a documentation not essentially of cultural icons but natural ones. In documenting social worlds, it lends credence to the natural world that produced it.

#### Nigeria's Settlement History as a Walk in Geography

History of most Nigerian towns, their rise and decline, is tied to geographical designs or accidents. Some of the earliest towns were of a continental orientation following the first wave of trade and association with the Arab world. Kano developed this way from

the Trans-Saharan trade by providing an exchange point on the route. Coastal towns came later with maritime outreach from Western powers. Thus Lagos, Calabar, Warri and Port Harcourt took over. Both coastal maritime effects and the continental effects declined towards the central parts of the country which ordinarily could not develop major towns at these early periods.

The next set of towns developed from colonial interventions. The colonial governments developed territories according to colonial needs for materials: cash crops and minerals. Areas replete with some of the much sought after materials developed, leveraging on dormitory functions they are also able to provide. Railway towns developed on a North-south alignment with nodal points providing interchanges that stimulate spatial growth. With too few opportunities for East-West complementarity, the rail lines retained a colonial North-south alignment that has not been undone ever since.

In some way, settlements' emergence is determined by physical controls as humans in their rationality avoid specific areas that are not promising and gravitate towards areas of physical provisions. Most Nigerian towns have one major geographical element or the other as shown on Table 1.

Table 1: Geographical factors indicated for selected Nigerian settlements.

Settlement Geographical Factor

Zungeru Kaduna River, lowland amidst mountains Rail lines

Lokoja Confluence

Kano Nodal location

Jos

Minerals, Plateau

Ibadan

Defensive Hills

Port Harcourt Coastal location, natural harbours

Lagos Coastal location, natural harbours

Warri Access to the sea

Abuja Central location

Abeokuta

Ogun River, Lagos effect

Onitsha River Niger

Enugu Mineral deposits

Many issues of distribution and redistribution of population through forced and voluntary migrations, andsettlement development expansion or decline that are of historical appeal are products of geographical elements. The geography of Jos – its growth and decline – has been tied to the history of decline of the non renewable tin ores.

Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing, Geography and History have actually manifested a systematic co-evolution in which they are shown to be mutually reinforcing; each yielding materials and setting agenda for the development of the other. Hence there is an interdisciplinary appeal in which each can benefit from understudying the methods and curricular of the other for its own enrichment. Neglect of the interrelationship manifests too often in everyday life with particular reference to the developing countries. There is, for instance, a penchant in Governments in Nigeria for entire undocumented landscapes to be obliterated; bulldozed away in a bid to effect urban or rural upgrade or renewal. The idea is usually lost on these Governments in such circumstances that what is obliterated is the entire cultural history of such victimized spaces. Best practice demands that environments to benefit from such 'improvements' are fully documented and documentations, photographs and other materials emanating from these become museum artifacts. Nihilistic approaches to landscape management betray ignorance of the history-geography interface and are at best, expressions of a dominant philistine attitude of governance institutions in particularly developing countries.

#### Endnotes

1. R. Hartshore, *Perspectives on the nature of Geography* (Chicago: Published for AAG by Rand McNally, 1959) 21.

2. "Dialectical Materialism", *New World Encyclopaedia*. [https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Dialectical\\_materialism](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Dialectical_materialism). Retrieved Oct. 10, 2018. It follows Hegel's principle of the Philosophy of history that has the dimensions of thesis, antithesis and synthesis.

3. Alan M. Hay and R.J. Johnson, "The study of process in quantitative human geography", *L'Espace géographique*, 1983, 12-1 pp. 69-76.

4. Matt Rosenberg, "Uniformitarianism, The present is the key to the Past". Thought Co. <https://www.thoughtco.com/whatis-uniformitarianism-1435>. Retrieved Nov. 30, 2019.

5. A concept supported by geological insights of James Hutton and W.M. Davis' cycle of erosion – the idea that a river's major work is the elusive achievement of a base level for its channel.

6. Anna Khomina, "The Doctrine of Discovery: On This Day 1493" 05/04/2017. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History [www.gilderlehrman.org](http://www.gilderlehrman.org). Relying on the Doctrine of Discovery, May 4, 1493, Pope Alexander VI issued a papal bull, 'inter Lactera', assigning Spain (of his origin) dominion over land on the West side of the Atlantic. Portugal's protestations earned her through the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 recovery of previous bulls issued in its favour.

7. The idea is common in the world of science that cultural elements get etched or encoded on the genetic structures (DNA). See Joshua M. Galanter et al, "Differential methylation between ethnic sub-groups reflects the effect of genetic ancestry and environmental exposures", *elife*, 2017, 6 DOI:107554/elife.20532. See also, M. Kay martin *Social DNA. Rethinking our Evolutionary Past*, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books) Oct. 2018.

8. There are millions of designs of spectacular Dutch wind mill paintings available presently. Many paintings such as *The Windmill of Wijk bij Duurstede* date back to c.1670 and an army of artists have followed tradition painting replicas of vintage Dutch Windmill masterpieces for a hungry market.

9. Nineteen Windmills of Kinderdijk built c. 1740 were in 1997 declared UNESCO world heritage to celebrate over 700 years of Dutch water management history. The heavy tourist traffic clearly indicates the evocative power of the windmills.

10. Raphael Lemkin had in 1944 established understanding of a unique form of genocide - cultural genocide. Raphael Lemkin, "Acts Constituting a General (Transnational) Danger considered as Offences against the Law of Nations". (J. Fusseltrans, 2000) (1933), Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, p. 91 (1944).

11. Maria Isabel Carraseo Cara Chards, "Why "The Door of No Return" Is a Must for Any Serious Traveller", March 15, 2019. <https://cultura colectiva.com/travel/houseofslavesdoorofnoreturnafrica>. Whether it is Barack Obama in Senegal in June 2013 or Melania Trump in Ghana in October 2018, visits to Doors of No Return on the West Africa coast highlight reality of institutional inhumanity even beyond slavery.

12. With a history of about 2700 years, the wall stretching about 21,196km from east to west of China was in 1987 declared a UNESCO World Heritage.

13. According to the Greek Legend, Daedalus was imprisoned in his Labyrinth by King Minos and had to develop wings attached to the body with wax for his son Icarus and himself to beat their escape. Icarus was to go to his death for being too ambitious in soaring too close to the Sun oblivious of his vulnerable waxy wings.

14. Landfills have been discredited for their extensive application of land in unsustainable waste storage. Much of what went into landfills are increasingly recycled or reused.

15. Society for American Archaeology had defined Archaeology in a broader, more inclusive manner as the study of the ancient and recent human past through material remains, a clearly instructive departure from the preoccupation with the ancient in most definitions. See society for American Archaeology "About Archaeology" Nov. 24, 2018, <https://www.saa.org/aaboutarchaeology/whatisarchaeology>.

16. R. Rose-Redwood and M. Azaryahu, "Collective Memory and the politics of urban space: An introduction", *Geojournal*, Vol. 73, No.3, 2008 pp. 161-164.

17. It highlighted the deployment of memories to create identities for groups within the context of contemporary information overload.

18. From Melville J. Herskovits' 1930 article in the *Journal of the International African Institute* 'The culture areas of Africa and that of C. Wissler of 1922 before it, to more recent contributions such as from J.L. Newman, the idea of cultural delimitation of each geographical region has secured validation.

19. Philip Ball, "The truth about Hannibal's route across the Alps". *The Guardian*, 3 April 2016. Retrieved 6 Aug. 2018. <https://www.theguardian.com>>apr.

20. David E. Kromm, "Irredentism in Africa: The Somali-Kenya Boundary Dispute", *Transactions of the Kansas Academy of Science* (1903) Aut 1967, 70:3, 359-365.
21. P. Claval, "The nature of cities and the Analysis of their cultural problems". *Tijdschrift*, 2007, 98:2.
22. Rhee, cited in Susan Mayhew, *A Dictionary of Geography*, (Oxford University Press, 2015) 331.
23. In 2015 Germanys' Angela Merkel took in about a million refugees in a surprising move that rattled her political base.
24. A major promise of Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign was the walling off of the about 3000km length southern border of the United States.
25. The Berlin wall that was both a physical and ideological barrier separating East Germany and West Berlin was brought down in 1989 following 28 years of distorting or rather creating geography. The wall at about 44km was of maximum security inhibiting any form of interaction.
26. German Chancellor Bismark had called for Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 to work out an amicable formalization of European countries' claims over colonial lands of Africa and by 1914, 90 percent of Africa had been divided between seven European countries in gross disregard for existing boundaries.
27. M.J. Echeruo, *Victorian Lagos: Aspects of Nineteenth Century Lagos Life*. (Ibadan: Macmillan, 1977) 119.
28. It harps on *European Civilization and its Role in the Life of the 19 Century Native in Lagos*.
29. From the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer system water is pumped through 2820km of underground pipes from 1300 wells of mostly 500m depth to daily supply 6,500,000m of fresh water across a distance of up to 1,600km to the cities of Tripoli Benghazi and Sirte.
30. Mindless partitioning of Africa, not along existential divides but along the lines of administrative convenience of European powers alienated brothers in emergent state formation. State failure and conflict is driven by tribal loyalty of a trans-boundary nature.
31. Jason Thomson, "Did weather defeat the Mongol Empire", *C.S. Monitor*, May 27, 2016.
32. C S Monitor reported the research of Morris Rossabi on Climate issues in Hungary that might have led to the behaviour change. Note: sudden withdrawal of the Mongol hordes from Hungary in 1242 following their blistering advance through Eastern Europe appears inexplicable.
33. Tristan Erwin, "Sparta and Athens: A Tale of Two City – States". 4 Sept. 2019 <https://medium.com/@tristanerwin/spartaandathensataleoftwocitystates-56267a8836d>. Retrieved 5 Oct. 2019.
34. Edward T. Hall, *The Hidden Dimension* (New York: Double Day, 1966) 101.
35. Farida Lakhamy, "How important are Non-State Actors", *Pakistan Horizon*, 2006, 59:3, 37-46.

36. Parag Khanna, "These 25 companies are more powerful than many countries", 15 March, 2016. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/03/15>.

37. The 25 companies and their annual revenues include Walmart, \$486b; Exxon Mobil, \$269b; Royal Dutchshell, \$265b; Apple, \$234b; Glencore, \$221b; Samsung, \$163b; Amazon, \$107b; Microsoft, \$94b; Nestle, \$93b; Alphabet, \$75b; Uber, \$62.5b; Huawei, \$60b; Vodafone, \$60b; Anheuser-Busch Inbev, \$47b; Maersk, \$40b; Goldman Sachs, \$34b; Halliburton, \$33b; Accenture, \$31b; McDonalds, \$25b; Emirates, \$24b; Facebook, \$18b; Alibaba, \$12b; Blackrock, \$11b; McKinsey & Co. \$8b; and Twitter, \$2.2b. While Alibaba made \$14.3b in sales on a day in November 2015, Chad's annual GDP is \$14b.

38. Diseases were very much of a puzzle in the time of John Snow. Science, in offering explanation later via the germ theory saved humanity from excessive fetish and superstition.

39. Tien-Hui Chiang, "Can cultural localization protect national identity in the era of globalization? Educational Philosophy and Theory, 2019, 51;541-545.

40. Adiele Afigbo, *Igbo Experience: A Prolegomenon*, (Okigwe, Whytem Publishers for CEDESC, nd).

41. Adiele Afigbo, *The Age of Innocence, The Igbos and their Neighbours in Precolonial Times*, Ahiajoku lecture, Owerri Cultural Division, Ministry of Information, Culture, Youth and Sports, 1981.

42. The conceptualization of Iduu n'oba is about the faraway remote, outlandish nature and therefore questionable integrity of news or story in assessment situations.

43. Amin Ghaziani, "Gay Enclaves Face Prospect of being passé": How Assimilation affects the Spatial Expressions of Sexuality in the United States", *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 2015 756-777, DOI:10.111/1468-2427-12209.

44. The property market in the United States for long has suffered distortions from convincing white property owners to sell on the cheap under the threat that minorities are moving in as a result and a crash in property value is imminent.

45. Note how meaning of Cathedrals have changed and new forms of usage bordering on the profane have been found, all closely following the historical decline in traditional religious faiths and institutionalizing trend of private, rather than shared faith.

46. . Sir Halford Mackinder aptly captured his article submitted to the Royal Geog Society in 1904 which argued for his Heartland Theory. "The Geographical Pivot of History". In it he held that the core of global influence is to be found in an area that has considerable size, a wealth of resources and a high population and Eurasia fits the bill. Whichever nation controls the Heartland commands the world. Germany's World War II Invasion of Russia, is believed, and has roots in this theory.





28

## CHAPTER 22

## SOCIOLOGY/ANTHROPOLOGY AND HISTORICAL RECONSTRUCTION

Chris Ugwu, PhD

### Introduction

One of the challenges of History, which concerns itself with the past events, is that of reconciliation (reconstruction) - using its varied affiliate disciplines. The need for well-reconstructed historical facts and figures needs not much emphasis, as it has helped to rebuild societies, enshrine peace and unity, among other good things in human ecosystem. A reconstructed History gives credence to how a group of people lived in the past and what helped them to live inharmony and peaceful co-existence. To achieve the ideal of reconstruction, many disciplines are used. In this study, Sociology and anthropology were examined as veritable means of Historical reconstruction.

Furthermore, Forber and Griffith (2011) believe that in reconstructing the deep past provides the resources to successfully explain puzzling traces, from fossils toradiation signatures, often in the absence of extensive and repeatable observations; which are hallmarks of good historical reconstruction.

This study considers the fields of Sociology and Anthropology as tools for an historical reconstruction. It reviews the impacts of the afore-mentioned fields of study, (which are seemingly parts of history) towardsa successful historical reconstruction. Forber and Griffith (2011) argue that the convergence of independent evidential inferences would be a kind of consilience (Whewell 1858), that provides the primary source of support for such historical reconstructions. However, due to individualized way of looking at issues, different kinds of approaches arise as one considers reconstructing the historical past.

Forber and Griffith argue that the task of historical reconstruction involves crafting a causal etiology for a specific event or set of events, adding that historical reconstructions involve both chronology and history, referred to as chronologyhistory. While the chronology identifies the temporal sequence of events, history identifies the causal links and processes connecting events across time. Again, historical events are often unique, and the causal reconstruction can vary in scope from vast (the evolution of the vertebrate eye) to minute (the exact cause of a mechanical failure). So, reconstructing history using Sociology and Anthropology faces the problem of getting a unified methodology. To solve this problem, proponents and opponents in this area agree on integrated approach.

### Definition of Sociology

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica, Sociology, a social science that studies human societies, their interactions, and the processes that preserves and changes them. It does this by examining the dynamics of constituent parts of societies such as institutions, communities, populations, and gender, racial, or age groups. Sociology also studies social status or stratification, social movements, and social change, as well as societal disorder in the form of crime, deviance, and revolution.

American Sociological Association (ASA, 2019) defines sociology as the study of society; a social science involving the study of the social lives of people, groups, and societies; the study of our behavior as social beings, covering everything from the analysis of short contacts between anonymous individuals on the street to the study of global social processes; the scientific study of social aggregations, the entities through which humans move throughout their lives' or an overarching unification of all studies of humankind, including history, psychology, and economics.

ASA summarizes the definition of Sociology as:

- The study of society;
- A social science involving the study of the social lives of people, groups, and societies
- The study of our behavior as social beings, covering everything from the analysis of short contacts between anonymous individuals on the street to the study of global social processes
- The scientific study of social aggregations, the entities through which humans move throughout their lives'
- An overarching unification of all studies of humankind, including history, psychology, and economics

The above appears to agree with that of Arizona University (2017), which defines Sociology as the study of human society, its origins, functions, and problems, and focuses on relations among people, groups, classes, organizations, and cultures. The undergraduate major provides a foundation for careers in many professional fields, and for graduate training as a sociologist in academia, government, business, or community agencies. It further sees the subject as one that explores and analyzes issues vital to our personal lives, our communities, our nation, and the world. The curriculum in sociology is designed to show students the social character of human life and the impact of varying forms of social organization on human affairs.

The sociologist Dorothy Smith (1999) defines the social as the “ongoing concerting and coordinating of individuals’ activities.” Sociology is the systematic study of all those aspects of life designated by the adjective “social.” These aspects of social life never simply occur; they are organized processes. They can be the briefest of everyday interactions—moving to the right to let someone pass on a busy sidewalk, for example—or the largest and most enduring interactions—such as the billions of daily exchanges that constitute the circuits of global capitalism. If there are at least two people involved, even in the seclusion of one’s mind, then there is a social interaction that entails the “ongoing concerting and coordinating of activities.”

Thus, a key insight of sociology is that the simple fact of being in a group changes your behaviour. The group is a phenomenon that is more than the sum of its parts. Why do we feel and act differently in different types of social situations? Why might people of a single group exhibit different behaviours in the same situation? Why might people acting similarly not feel connected to others exhibiting the same behaviour? These are

some of the many questions sociologists ask as they study people and societies (opentextbc.ca).

### Subfields of Sociology

According to World Heritage Encyclopedia (licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0), Sociology studies society using various methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to understand human social activity, from the micro level of individual agency and interaction to the macro level of systems and social structure (see [www.self.gutenberg.org/articles](http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles)).

### Nature of Sociology

World Heritage Encyclopedia describes Sociology consists of :

- The study of society.
- Academic discipline – body of knowledge given to - or received by - a disciple (student); a branch or sphere of knowledge, or field of study, that an individual has chosen to specialize in.
- Field of science – widely-recognized category of specialized expertise within science, and typically embodies its own terminology and nomenclature. Such a field will usually be represented by one or more scientific journals, where peer reviewed research is published. There are many sociology-related scientific journals.
- Social science – field of academic scholarship that explores aspects of human society.

To it, the essence of sociology includes:

- Positivism
- Antipositivism
- Structural functionalism
- Conflict theory
- Public sociology
- Social research
- Social theory
- Feminism

### Branches

It lists the following as branches of sociology:

- Analytical sociology
- Applied sociology
- Architectural sociology
- Behavioral sociology
- Chinese sociology
- Collective behavior
- Comparative sociology
- Computational sociology
- Critical sociology
- Cultural sociology

- Dramaturgical sociology
- Economic sociology
- Educational sociology
- Empirical sociology
- Environmental sociology
- Evolutionary sociology
- Feminist sociology
- Figurational sociology
- Historical sociology
- Humanistic sociology
- Industrial sociology
- Internet sociology
- Interpretive sociology
- Jealousy sociology
- Macrosociology
- Marxist sociology
- Mathematical sociology
- Medical sociology
- Mesosociology
- Microsociology
- Military sociology
- Phenomenological sociology
- Policy sociology
- Polish sociology
- Political sociology
- Psychoanalytic sociology
- Public sociology
- Pure sociology
- Rural sociology
- Social inequality
- Social psychology (sociology)
- Sociology of aging
- Sociology of agriculture
- Sociology of architecture
- Sociology of art
- Sociology of autism
- Sociology of childhood
- Sociology of conflict
- Sociology of culture
- Sociology of cyberspace
- Sociology of deviance

- ▣ Sociology of development
- ▣ Sociology of disaster
- ▣ Sociology of education
- ▣ Sociology of emotions
- ▣ Sociology of the family
- ▣ Sociology of fatherhood
- ▣ Sociology of film
- ▣ Sociology of finance
- ▣ Sociology of food
- ▣ Sociology of gender
- ▣ Sociology of generations
- ▣ Sociology of globalization
- ▣ Sociology of government
- ▣ Sociology of health and illness
- ▣ Sociology of human consciousness
- ▣ Sociology of immigration
- ▣ Sociology of knowledge
- ▣ Sociology of language
- ▣ Sociology of law
- ▣ Sociology of leisure
- ▣ Sociology of literature
- ▣ Sociology of markets
- ▣ Sociology of marriage
- ▣ Sociology of motherhood
- ▣ Sociology of music
- ▣ Sociology of natural resources
- ▣ Sociology of organizations
- ▣ Sociology of peace, war, and social conflict
- ▣ Sociology of punishment
- ▣ Sociology of race and ethnic relations
- ▣ Sociology of religion
- ▣ Sociology of risk
- ▣ Sociology of science
- ▣ Sociology of scientific knowledge
- ▣ Sociology of social change
- ▣ Sociology of social movements
- ▣ Sociology of space
- ▣ Sociology of sport
- ▣ Sociology of technology
- ▣ Sociology of terrorism
- ▣ Sociology of the body

- ▣ Sociology of the family
- ▣ Sociology of the history of science
- ▣ Sociology of the Internet
- ▣ Sociology of work
- ▣ Sociography
- ▣ Structural sociology
- ▣ Theoretical sociology
- ▣ Urban sociology
- ▣ Visual sociology
- Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary fields involving sociology
- ▣ Agnotology
- ▣ Agrarian studies
- ▣ Anthrozoology
- ▣ Area studies
- ▣ Behavioral economics
- ▣ Cass Identity Model
- ▣ Communication studies
- ▣ Community informatics
- ▣ Criminology
- ▣ Cultural studies
- ▣ Demography
- ▣ Development studies
- ▣ Disability studies
- ▣ Environmental studies
- ▣ Food studies
- ▣ Gender studies
- ▣ Geodemography
- ▣ Global studies
- ▣ Gerontology
- ▣ Human ecology
- ▣ Political ecology
- ▣ Science studies
- ▣ Science, technology and society
- ▣ Social architecture
- ▣ Social epistemology
- ▣ Social geography
- ▣ Social informatics
- ▣ Social philosophy
- ▣ Social studies of finance
- ▣ Social theory
- ▣ Sociobiology

- Sociomapping
- Sociometry
- Sociomusicology
- Systems theory
- Urban studies
- Victimology
- World-systems theory

Two of the above subfields are discussed below.

#### Anthrozoology

Wikipedia (2019) posits that Anthrozoology (also known as human–non-human-animal studies, or HAS) is the subset of ethnobiology that deals with interactions between humans and other animals. It is an interdisciplinary field that overlaps with other disciplines including anthropology, ethnology, medicine, psychology, veterinary medicine and zoology. A major focus of anthrozoologic research is the quantifying of the positive effects of human–animal relationships on either party and the study of their interactions. It includes scholars from fields such as anthropology, sociology, biology, history and philosophy([www.self.gutenberg.org/articles](http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles)).

Anthrozoology scholars, such as Pauleen Bennett recognize the lack of scholarly attention given to non-human animals in the past, and to the relationships between human and non-human animals, especially in the light of the magnitude of animal representations, symbols, stories and their actual physical presence in human societies. Rather than a unified approach, the field currently consists of several methods adapted from the several participating disciplines to encompass human–nonhuman animal relationships and occasional efforts to develop sui generis methods

#### Agnotology

Wikipedia (2019) notes that Agnotology (formerly Agnotology) is the study of culturally induced ignorance or doubt, particularly the publication of inaccurate or misleading scientific data. More generally, the term also highlights the increasingly common condition where more knowledge of a subject leaves one more uncertain than before. David Dunning of Cornell University is another academic who studies the spread of ignorance. "Dunning warns that the internet is helping propagate ignorance – it is a place where everyone has a chance to be their own expert, he says, which makes them prey for powerful interests wishing to deliberately spread ignorance"(Wikipedia).

In his 1999 book *The Erotic Margin*, Irvin C. Schick referred to unknowledge "to distinguish it from ignorance, and to denote socially constructed lack of knowledge, that is, a conscious absence of socially pertinent knowledge". As an example, he offered the labeling "terra incognita" in early maps, noting that "The reconstruction of parts of the globe as uncharted territory is ... the production of unknowledge, the transformation of those parts into potential objects of Western political and economic attention. It is the enabling of colonialism."



There are many causes of culturally induced ignorance. These include the influence of the media, either through neglect or as a result of deliberate misrepresentation and manipulation. Corporations and governmental agencies can contribute to the subject matter studied by agnotology through secrecy and suppression of information, document destruction, and myriad forms of inherent or avoidable culturopolitical selectivity, inattention, and forgetfulness.

Proctor cites as a prime example of the deliberate production of ignorance the tobacco industry's advertising campaign to manufacture doubt about the cancerous and other health effects of tobacco use. Under the banner of science, the industry produced research about everything except tobacco hazards to exploit public uncertainty.

Another example is climate denial, as illustrated in the 2012 PBS Frontline documentary *Climate of Doubt*, which argues that oil companies have for at least the last decade, paid teams of scientists to downplay the effects of climate change.

Tribal resistance to science that contradicts medical or dental dogma heavily biases decision making, prompting vitriolic attacks that contributes the suppression of scientific knowledge in service of protecting a sanctioned narrative.

Agnotology also focuses on how and why diverse forms of knowledge do not "come to be", or are ignored or delayed. For example, knowledge about plate tectonics was censored and delayed for at least a decade because some evidence remained classified military information related to undersea warfare.

#### Definition of Anthropology

According to American Anthropology Association (AAA, 2019), anthropology is the study of what makes us human. Anthropologists take a broad approach to understanding the many different aspects of the human experience, which we call holism. They consider the past, through archaeology, to see how human groups lived hundreds or thousands of years ago and what was important to them. They consider what makes up our biological bodies and genetics, as well as our bones, diet, and health.

Anthropologists also compare humans with other animals (most often, other primates like monkeys and chimpanzees) to see what we have in common with them and what makes us unique. Even though nearly all humans need the same things to survive, like food, water, and companionship, the ways people meet these needs can be very different. For example, everyone needs to eat, but people eat different foods and get food in different ways. So anthropologists look at how different groups of people get food, prepare it, and share it. World hunger is not a problem of production but social barriers to distribution, and that Amartya Sen won a Nobel Prize for showing this was the case for all of the 20th century's famines.

Anthropologists also try to understand how people interact in social relationships (for example with families and friends). They look at the different ways people dress and communicate in different societies. Anthropologists sometimes use these comparisons to understand their own society. Many anthropologists work in their own societies looking at economics, health, education, law, and policy (to name just a few topics). When trying

to understand these complex issues, they keep in mind what they know about biology, culture, types of communication, and how humans lived in the past (AAA, 2019).

#### Subfields of Anthropology

AAA (2019) posits that American anthropology is generally divided into four subfields. Each of the subfields teaches distinctive skills. However, the subfields also have a number of similarities. For example, each subfield applies theories, employs systematic research methodologies, formulates and tests hypotheses, and develops extensive sets of data.

#### Archaeology

Archaeologists study human culture by analyzing the objects people have made. They carefully remove from the ground such things as pottery and tools, and they map the locations of houses, trash pits, and burials in order to learn about the daily lives of a people. They also analyze human bones and teeth to gain information on a people's diet and the diseases they suffered. Archaeologists collect the remains of plants, animals, and soils from the places where people have lived in order to understand how people used and changed their natural environments. The time range for archaeological research begins with the earliest human ancestors millions of years ago and extends all the way up to the present day. Like other areas of anthropology, archaeologists are concerned with explaining differences and similarities in human societies across space and time.

#### Biological Anthropology

Biological anthropologists seek to understand how humans adapt to different environments, what causes disease and early death, and how humans evolved from other animals. To do this, they study humans (living and dead), other primates such as monkeys and apes, and human ancestors (fossils). They are also interested in how biology and culture work together to shape our lives. They are interested in explaining the similarities and differences that are found among humans across the world. Through this work, biological anthropologists have shown that, while humans do vary in their biology and behavior, they are more similar to one another than different.

#### Cultural Anthropology

Socio-cultural anthropologists explore how people in different places live and understand the world around them. They want to know what people think is important and the rules they make about how they should interact with one another. Even within one country or society, people may disagree about how they should speak, dress, eat, or treat others. Anthropologists want to listen to all voices and viewpoints in order to understand how societies vary and what they have in common. Socio-cultural anthropologists often find that the best way to learn about diverse peoples and cultures is to spend time living among them. They try to understand the perspectives, practices, and social organization of other groups whose values and life ways may be very different from their own. The knowledge they gain can enrich human understanding on a broader level.

#### Linguistic Anthropology

Linguistic anthropologists study the many ways people communicate across the globe. They are interested in how language is linked to how we see the world and how we relate to each other. This can mean looking at how language works in all its different forms, and how it changes over time. It also means looking at what we believe about language and communication, and how we use language in our lives. This includes the ways we use language to build and share meaning, to form or change identities, and to make or change relations of power. For linguistic anthropologists, language and communication are keys to how we make society and culture.

#### Relationship Between Anthropology and History

Kwosek (2017) believes that history and anthropology are cognate disciplines and are also "frenemies" at many universities. She opined that neither of them is objective in describing phenomena, pointing out that though history appears to be objective, but any review of historiography will always reveal historian bias and also becomes the general trends in writing history at any given time, adding that anthropology is also subjective.

The main difference often comes down to research methods. Historians tend to privilege written records. Anthropologists tend to privilege participant observation or archaeological and biological artifacts. The subjectivity in both disciplines comes from the researcher's interpretation of issues under review.

Kilman (2019) in Quara.com said that anthropology includes a kind of contextual cultural history of every group being studied and that history was needed to explore anthropology because one needs to understand the context of the current cultural climate, adding that anthropology was unique among other humanities and sciences via different elements like Cultural Relativism in which one tries to judge a culture by its own rules and standards as opposed to applying own prejudices and ideas. This of course does not mean that anything goes, but it does mean that what one thinks are weird, strange and the product of one's own cultural upbringing.

Saha (2019) in also quara.com opined that the two subjects or areas of knowledge are quite similar in some ways, and yet different in so many other ways. He argued that while history is the study of events which had occurred in the past, places where it occurred, and based on written records of the events and people involved, anthropology, on the other hand, is the study of the people who lived at a particular time and place and how they interacted among themselves and also with their surroundings. Anthropology is often based on biological evidence like skeletons, or artifacts discovered in the particular location, rather than widely spread.

Speaking also on the above sub-title, Dey (2019) posits that whereas some anthropologists regard anthropology as a branch of history. Human being is born in a natural way, but social life is not the production of nature, and that social level is different from biological level, adding that culture of a particular society is not the production of human nature. He argued that the structure of any society has no natural order like that of the structure of solar system or atom. "Society is a web of social relations supplied by history and united among them by moral values. The forces of

nature have no hand in keeping them united. In this way, society is a social and moral order and sociology, which studies it, is a social science.” He enthused.

Dey believed that history and anthropology are both related to human actions. Social anthropology discusses human actions which cause social events. According to him, history presents a description of these events. Social anthropology studies the origin of civilization and culture and reactions of evolution, etc. On the other hand, history studies particular civilization or culture on the basis of a particular period.

#### Differences Between Anthropology And History

Dey (2019) compares and contrasts the two phenomena as follows:

##### SIMILARITIES

- Both Study the past and ancient things
- Anthropology makes history, which describes human actions.

##### DIFFERENCES

##### ANTHROPOLOGY HISTORY

1. Anthropology also studies the physical aspects of man along with social aspect.
2. The viewpoint of anthropology is anthropological
3. 3. Anthropology is mainly related to human culture 1. History has no interest in the physical aspect of man.
2. The viewpoint of history is historical.
3. History is mainly related to Political events.

#### The Relationship between Sociology and History

Lukass (1987) noted that social science was a relatively recent subject though, as it originated around 1850 but that ‘a philosophical and analytical interest in human society existed from the beginning of history.’ He quoted Aristotle as saying: “that human society was, by its nature, different from all other groupings, wherefore its analysis and study called for a different kind of realism.”

Nevertheless, Wen (2016) observed that there was a direct relationship between sociology and history, but quickly noted that both could not be separate as sociology deals with the present while history deals with the past, and that anyone writing history of the past must know the social condition of that society.

According to him, history is the study of past events and movements found in the written records and establishes the causes of past events of a particular nation at a given time, which might include the likes of economic, social, political and public administration. “The historian also study wars, accommodation, assimilation, acculturation and other such activities including the behaviour of those past people at a given time,” he said.

Wen opined that conversely, sociology studies the origin and growth of all the social institutions which give idea of past events with the help of historical data as he wouldn’t be able to find such information through observations. To him, Sociology differs from History, as it covers the past, present, and the future events with regards to human behaviour, whereas History restricts itself to the past events only.

Again, through the analysis of historical data, Sociological generalization is made regarding present social institutions, as historical information might provide the basis for tracing past trends of social movements, including socio-cultural changes.

Wen (2016) therefore listed the differences between sociology and history thus:

#### Differences between Sociology and History

##### Sociology

- i. It is interested in the study of the present social phenomena
- ii. It is a young social science
- iii. It is based on analytics
- iv. It is absorbed in nature. It studies mostly regular, the recurrent and the universal
- v. Sociology is generalized and seeks to establish generalizations after a careful study of the social phenomena.
- vi. Sociology follows the sociological approach. It studies human events from the sociological point of view.

##### History

- i. It deals with past events of humans. It is silent about present.
- ii. It is an age-old social science. It has a long story of more than 2000 years.
- iii. It is a descriptive science.
- iv. History is concrete. The historians are interested in the unique, the particular and the individual.
- v. History is individualized and rarely makes generalization. It establishes the sequence in which events occur.
- vi. History studies human events in accordance with the time order with historical approach.

#### Sociology as a Corollary of History

The study affirms that much as sociology studies human behaviour of individuals and groups with respect to social structures and institutions, it draws its data from historical findings of the objects of study at any point in time. This is because over time man's interaction with his environment gives rise to historical facts and so constitute a substrate upon which sociology is consummated.

Furthermore, the quantitative and qualitative research methods from historical findings have been used by sociologists to do their work. These include the verbal facts of history as well as those with quantitative approaches. Sociology tends to fix social problems arising from human and cultural diversities. This would have been a mirage, if there were no historical documentations of these differences.

From the above submissions, it makes sense to say that sociology is as a matter of fact, a corollary of history.

#### Sociology/Anthropology – Elements of Historical Reconstructions

At this point of discourse, this chapter looks into how sociology/Anthropology has influenced the course of history.

Barnes (1998) in an article titled: "Some Contributions of Anthropology to History," noted that anthropology has an objective consideration of events in sequence – regardless of upon the course of civilization and doesn't dwell only in man's past civilization unlike history. This singular contribution encourages historical reconstruction.

Barnes also affirmed that anthropology in reconstructing History considers the vastness of an unwritten History of past ages, where people merge themselves entirely in social units that later gave rise to new forms of civilization; thus, leading to historical reconstruction. However, Kroeber (1931) in a Book titled: "Historical Reconstruction of Cultural Growth and Organic Evolution," opined that sociological/Anthropological evolution and growth emanated from certain historical discourse with respect to similitude, aims and methods.

Kroeber reiterated the fact that culture in its cyclic nature sometimes compares organisms with regard to origin, ancient and recent, where they became similar to what is seen in fauna and flora that has similar characteristics. Here, neo-political cultures are compared with biota, which are of concern to historical and biological anthropologists.

Adjepong (2017), in an article: "The politics of Theorising in Historical Reconstruction – An Examination of the views of the Protagonists and Antagonists," noted that both the protagonists (pro-theorists) and antagonists (anti-theorists) have divergent opinions about historical reconstruction, but the duo agreed that that formulating and applying theories in the study and reconstruction of the past events was important.

Rose (1985) in a book: "Physical Anthropology and Reconstruction of Recent Pre-Colonial History in Africa," was of the view that physical Anthropology was thought to offer some potential in new genetic approaches in comparing blood group distributions at a time when the use of non-documentary sources of evidence to reconstruct history held sway.

Zilberman (1982) noted that Paul Radin was able to solve contemporary problems in History using anthropological and Sociological theories, when he analyzed the society and its culture using combined functional and historical approaches that could have critical methodological and theoretical meanings, adding that it was both significant and informative. He also suggested non-verbal behaviours for Anthropologists, who do not consider language behaviour sufficient for describing cultural phenomena.

#### Anthropology as a Corollary of History

Anthropology as the Science Of History: Natural history deals with the characteristics of organisms past and present and social history comprises the characteristics of society past and present, which includes both pre- and documented history but slantly moves toward institutional development rather than particular non-repeatable historical events. By this, anthropology influences it. According to Marvin Harris (2001 P.1 = Harris 2001, p. 1), anthropology is a science of history.

Anthropology helps to reassert the methodological priority of the search for the laws of history in the science of man (Harris 2001, P.2) as it provide laws (being nomothetic) that help to shape the course of history. This appears to seek for “a general theory of history” in cultural materialism. Harris believes that people’s behaviour in any society is according to the law of history. This is the course anthropology pursues.

Anthropology as a corollary of history helps to define a deterministic relationship among cultural phenomena as similar variables under similar variables appear to give rise to similar consequences (Harris 1991, pp. xii-xiii). So, determinism believes that given certain causes, the result and only that result must occur.

Anthropological evolutions over time from prototype through classical one to the modern age anthropology has influenced historical perspectives as the system of evolution has helped to re-write history of events happening within and without societies. In some cases, it has given rise to institutions of history, among others. some medieval scholars of 11 century anthropology like Akbar s. Ahmed (1984) made cross-cultural comparisons of historical events This way anthropology influenced history.

Anthropology as a corollary of history, provides some enlightenment roots of discipline to history, as many scholars consider modern anthropology as an outgrowth of the age of enlightenment (1784-1789, [www.sup.org/books](http://www.sup.org/books)). This was a time when there was a systematic study of human behaviour, which has persisted till date. Jurisprudence history, Philosophy and sociology had came up as a result.

As a modern discipline, Marxist anthropologist, Eric Wolf characterised anthropology as “the most scientific of the humanities, and the most humanistic of the social sciences” that afore said saw the evolution of sociology and jurisprudence, among others. By this singular fit, anthropology has made historical phenomenon a thing of the present and not only something that exists in the past.





29

## Conclusion

Both sociology and Anthropology are parts of History. Developments witnessed in these seemingly similar disciplines have helped to shape the history of man. The study attempted to explain the meaning of sociology as the study of human behaviour either in individual or group perspective. It also examined how living as a group, cultures, socio-economic status and organismic differences associated with both fauna and flora had helped to shape the contents of Sociology and Anthropology. The study also examined how history has been reconstructed by Sociological and Anthropological interventions and came to a conclusion that Sociology and Anthropology are important ingredients in establishing historical perspectives and facts. It therefore recommends further research in this area of study.

30

## Reference

Ahmed, Akbar S. (1984). "Al-Beruni: The First Anthropologist". RAIN. 60 60):9–10. doi:10.2307/3033407

American Anthropological Association (2019) : 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 1301, Arlington, VA 22201 | TEL 703.528.1902 | FAX 703.528.

American Sociological Association - ASA, 2019 :[www.asa.net.org](http://www.asa.net.org)

Encyclopædia Britannica : Demystified

<https://www.britannica.com/Topic/Sociology>

Kroeber A. I. (1931): American Anthropologist: Historical Reconstruction of Culture growths and organic evolution; Vol. 33, No. 2; April – June, 1931.

Kumar Bharat (2013): Relationship between Anthropology and History.

Lukacs John (1987): "The Evolving Relationship of History and Sociology."; International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society Vol. 1, No. 1 (Autumn, 1987), pp. 79-88 >[www.jstor.org/stable/20006836](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20006836)

Michael Kilman; William Form and Robert E.L Faris, (2016): [www.britanica.com/Contributor](http://www.britanica.com/Contributor)

Patrick Forber, and Eric Griffith, (2011): Historical Reconstruction: Gaining Epistemic Access to the Deep Past; Department of Neurobiology, Harvard Medical School, 220 Longwood Ave., Boston, MA 02115

Rose Peter (2016): Physical anthropology and Reconstruction of recent pre-colonial in Africa; University of Stirling Sarbojoy Saha (2016), [www.quara.com](http://www.quara.com)

Segal Daniel A. et al (2005): Unwrapping the Sacred Bundle, Durham and London, Duke University Press. PP.Back cover. ISBN 978-0-8223-8684-1.

Smith, Dorothy (1999): Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, and Investigations; Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Sukesh Dey (2019) "What is the Relationship of Anthropology and History?" in [PreserveArticle.com](http://PreserveArticle.com)

Susan Kwosek (2016), Northern Illinois University; [www.quara.com](http://www.quara.com)

The University of Arizona (2017); School of Sociology • Social Sciences Building, Room 400 • Tucson, AZ 85721 • TEL (520) 621-3531 • FAX (520) 621-9875

Wen (2016):[www.wenthemes.com](http://www.wenthemes.com)

Whewell, W. 1858. Novum Organon Renovatum. London: John W. Parker.

World Heritage Encyclopedia (licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0),[http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Subfields\\_of\\_sociology?View=embedded](http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/eng/Subfields_of_sociology?View=embedded)  
[www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthrozoology](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthrozoology)

[www.self.gutenberg.org/articles](http://www.self.gutenberg.org/articles)

[www.sup.org/books/title?id=8407](http://www.sup.org/books/title?id=8407)

Zilberman D.B. (1982): Dialectical Anthropology; Elservics Scientific Publishing Company, 0304-4092/82/0000/102.75.

31

INDEX

## A

Abeokuta, 199, 348

Abuja, ii

administrative, 4, 18, 114, 168, 187, 251, 351

aesthetics, 59, 171, 337, 346

Africa, vii, ix, xii, 8, 15, 19, 30, 39, 41, 42, 43, 47, 96, 100, 107, 108, 109, 110, 113, 120, 121, 126, 130, 132, 136, 141, 146, 152, 163, 164, 176, 178, 179, 187, 188, 195, 196, 198, 199, 202, 203, 204, 205, 208, 211, 215, 218, 221, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 236, 238, 241, 242, 248, 293, 298, 302, 303, 304, 307, 308, 309, 310, 320, 332, 341, 342, 344, 350, 351, 368, 370

African historiography, 44, 126

age, 5, 10, 26, 31, 33, 34, 54, 56, 58, 97, 139, 141, 145, 148, 150, 152, 156, 157, 167, 168, 169, 177, 184, 195, 200, 202, 238, 239, 246, 254, 255, 257, 297, 298, 336, 344, 354, 366, 369

ancestors, 17, 89, 166, 208, 214, 236, 239, 362, 363

anthropologist, 110, 115, 127, 200, 222, 234, 235, 331, 343, 369

anthropologists, 113, 114, 141, 179, 186, 200, 211, 218, 222, 307, 321, 362, 363, 364, 368

anthropology, 109, 110, 125, 128, 129, 136, 164, 174, 195, 197, 203, 208, 222, 311, 353, 360, 361, 362, 364, 365, 367, 368, 369, 370

Anthropology, xiii, xvi, xxi, 18, 114, 131, 187, 353, 354, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 367, 368, 369, 370

antiquarianism, 3, 51

Arab geographers, 8

Arab Historiography, 18

Arab view, 26

archaeological, xii, xiii, 110, 118, 122, 186, 195, 196, 198, 199, 200, 202, 214, 217, 222, 223, 225, 226, 235, 239, 240, 298, 331, 362, 364

archaeology, xii, 19, 43, 88, 110, 118, 121, 122, 125, 166, 195, 196, 197, 201, 202, 203, 229, 231, 232, 233, 235, 237, 238, 239, 240, 298, 311, 331, 332, 337, 361

Archaeology, xii, xvi, xviii, xix, 18, 118, 120, 121, 124, 164, 168, 195, 197, 201, 203, 204, 205, 227, 229, 233, 238, 242, 350, 362

Atomistic, 68

## B

Biafran scientists, 79

Bible, 30, 42, 184, 209

Britain, 10, 149, 151, 153, 155, 156, 162

British, 26, 40, 41, 42, 53, 72, 97, 99, 105, 147, 151, 152, 154, 161, 231, 247, 250, 266, 281, 300, 305

Bronze Age, 197

## C

Census

disseminating, ii  
 China, 9, 18, 21, 337, 338, 350  
 Chinese, 9, 20, 26, 277, 337, 357  
 Chinese view, 26  
 chronology, 30, 31, 43, 118, 127, 140, 186, 202, 214, 218, 222, 225, 234, 236, 237, 238, 319, 354  
 classical antiquity, 5, 53, 298  
 Cliometrics, 18, 158  
 Cliometrics, 158  
 Colonialism, 39, 97, 98  
 colonialists, 98, 102  
 communalism, 101, 105  
 communication, 66, 68, 177, 182, 184, 185, 189, 191, 312, 362, 363  
 Comparative history, 18  
 computer, xii, 145, 155, 156, 177, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191  
 computer technology, xii, 177, 179, 184, 186, 188, 190  
 Computerization, 182  
 Cultural history, 18  
 D  
 demographic history, 148, 150  
 E  
 education, ii, v, 26, 42, 89, 155, 156, 168, 170, 174, 248, 249, 285, 310, 357, 362  
 Enlightenment era, 26, 33, 34  
 epistemology, 12, 14, 58, 59, 95, 359  
 Eurocentrism, xv, 42, 95, 96, 107, 310  
 Europe, 10, 15, 19, 30, 31, 32, 39, 96, 132, 150, 151, 195, 202, 203, 209, 221, 231, 235, 243, 248, 251, 254, 262, 265, 267, 277, 278, 280, 303, 339, 342, 344, 349, 351  
 Europeanization, 10, 302  
 existentialism, 59  
 F  
 fifth-generation computers, 182  
 first-generation computers, 181  
 fourth-generation computers, 181  
 Frailty, xviii, 213  
 France, 10, 33, 43, 45, 151, 198, 254, 255, 284  
 Francophone scholars, 42  
 French, 7, 15, 20, 21, 26, 42, 43, 151, 161, 162, 208, 284  
 French Revolution, 21, 162  
 G  
 Geomorphology, 130

German idealism, 90  
 Germans, 20, 26, 40  
 Germany, 10, 181, 224, 341, 350, 352  
 global, ii  
 Greece, 10, 28, 29, 89, 215, 252, 299  
 Greco-Roman, 29  
 Greek, xiv, 11, 18, 20, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 46, 55, 57, 85, 86, 89, 196, 230, 232, 251, 252, 253, 270, 296, 350  
 Greek etymology, 196  
 Greek historiography, 11, 29  
 H  
 hagiography, 31  
 histogram, 156, 172  
 historian, vii, x, xi, xii, xv, 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 18, 22, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 34, 36, 41, 42, 43, 50, 51, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 65, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 90, 91, 92, 95, 101, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 117, 118, 119, 124, 125, 127, 128, 130, 136, 137, 146, 147, 148, 150, 152, 153, 154, 155, 158, 160, 163, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 173, 174, 175, 177, 178, 180, 188, 189, 190, 200, 202, 203, 207, 211, 212, 213, 218, 220, 222, 225, 231, 234, 236, 237, 239, 241, 254, 255, 256, 258, 276, 277, 283, 286, 289, 295, 297, 298, 300, 301, 302, 306, 307, 309, 321, 331, 364, 366  
 historians, vii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiv, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 43, 50, 51, 52, 53, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 67, 71, 73, 74, 76, 77, 80, 81, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 95, 96, 101, 105, 109, 112, 119, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 135, 136, 137, 140, 141, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 167, 177, 178, 179, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 224, 225, 226, 229, 230, 233, 234, 237, 239, 240, 241, 251, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 264, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 280, 297, 298, 302, 303, 304, 307, 310, 321, 331, 366  
 Historical Methodology, 120, 178, 205, 215, 218, 227, 242  
 historical research, x, xi, xii, 7, 9, 10, 22, 35, 37, 44, 68, 77, 110, 135, 137, 142, 145, 163, 165, 166, 167, 174, 175, 177, 191, 257, 259, 272  
 Historical studies, 7  
 historical writing, 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 22, 26, 27, 32, 33, 36, 39, 41, 43, 44, 58, 86, 88, 164, 177, 178, 186, 195, 207, 220  
 Historicism, 56, 62, 63  
 historiography, viii, x, xi, xii, xiv, 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 45, 48, 62, 72, 75, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 95, 109, 123, 126, 130, 146, 164, 179, 185, 208, 221, 227, 232, 233, 236, 240, 279, 289, 291, 310, 344, 364  
 Historiography, x, xiv, xv, 5, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 39, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 66, 72, 73, 86, 88, 91, 92, 93, 132, 133, 142, 161,



164, 165, 215, 242, 243, 291, 293

Historiosophy, 11, 15

history, vii, ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 95, 96, 98, 100, 104, 105, 109, 111, 113, 114, 118, 119, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 135, 136, 137, 138, 141, 142, 145, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 154, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 171, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 195, 196, 197, 202, 203, 208, 209, 210, 212, 213, 214, 217, 218, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 242, 243, 245, 246, 247, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 284, 285, 286, 291, 297, 299, 300, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 309, 310, 311, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 348, 349, 350, 353, 354, 355, 358, 360, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369

History, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix, xx, xxi, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 27, 30, 31, 32, 40, 41, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 52, 55, 56, 59, 60, 62, 63, 76, 80, 81, 82, 83, 85, 88, 89, 91, 92, 93, 95, 107, 108, 113, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 130, 131, 132, 135, 136, 137, 142, 143, 146, 148, 160, 161, 162, 165, 168, 176, 178, 179, 184, 186, 188, 191, 192, 193, 203, 204, 205, 207, 211, 215, 217, 219, 223, 226, 227, 229, 230, 242, 243, 245, 248, 250, 251, 252, 253, 256, 257, 264, 270, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 283, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 295, 297, 303, 304, 307, 308, 310, 324, 332, 333, 336, 337, 338, 339, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 352, 353, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370

history of art, 18

history of literature, 18

Holistic, 68, 81

human cultures, 17, 89

Humans, 17

I

Ibadan, 4, 107, 108, 120, 121, 122, 133, 199, 204, 205, 227, 231, 235, 242, 243, 293, 320, 333, 347, 351

imperialism, 38, 96, 253, 254, 255

Indian view, 26

interdisciplinary, ix, 43, 81, 112, 120, 123, 124, 125, 130, 131, 225, 229, 288, 290, 309, 310, 311, 331, 348, 358, 360

international relations, xiii, 49, 245, 246, 247, 248, 251, 253, 256, 258, 259, 260, 261, 264, 265, 266, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 277, 279, 280, 281, 282

international studies, ix, x, xii, xiii, 177, 191, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 257, 258, 264, 265, 270, 278, 279, 281

Iron Age, 197, 201

ivory-tower, 1, 50

## J

Japan, 18

Jebba, 199, 200

Jos, 176, 198, 199, 239, 347, 348

## K

Keffi, 199

Kierkegaard, 57, 61

## L

legend, 17, 210, 211, 212, 214, 215, 296

linguistic, xiii, 67, 71, 77, 109, 117, 118, 127, 214, 222, 223, 225, 226, 272, 296, 309, 311, 315, 316, 318, 319, 321, 322, 324, 328, 331, 332, 363

literature, xi, xiii, 7, 19, 32, 89, 100, 113, 126, 127, 128, 138, 185, 224, 236, 256, 295, 296, 297, 298, 300, 304, 305, 306, 307, 311, 338, 339, 358

## M

Marxist, xiii, 21, 38, 41, 43, 48, 130, 285, 286, 357, 369

Marxists, 26, 41

medievalheretics, 20

metaphysics, 12, 60, 95

methodological approaches, vii, 5, 8, 10, 26, 72, 292, 304

Multidisciplinary, xiii, 125, 132, 358

Muslims, 8

myth, 17, 25, 27, 50, 66, 105, 210, 211, 212

mythology, 55

## N

Nigeria, i, ii

Nigerian, ii

## O

Oral tradition, xii, 120, 122, 202, 207, 208, 209, 217, 220, 229, 233, 234, 236, 240

Original history, 90

orthodoxies, 109

## P

Palaeolithic Age, 198

paradoxical, 57

phenomenology, 59

Philology, 18

philosophical history, 36, 86, 90, 91, 92

philosophy, x, xi, 1, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 26, 33, 37, 50, 54, 55, 57, 59, 60, 61, 65, 66, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 91, 92, 95, 97, 100, 101, 106, 124, 126, 131, 137, 168, 279, 291, 307, 309, 359, 360

plateau, 198, 199

political, 2, 4, 7, 10, 11, 14, 26, 30, 31, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 43, 49, 88, 89, 95, 96, 97, 98, 101, 102, 103, 114, 115, 116, 127, 128, 129, 137, 138, 149, 150, 154, 157, 165, 168, 169, 175, 187, 188, 196, 200, 203, 213, 230, 232, 233, 245, 246, 247, 249, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 258, 260, 262, 264, 265, 267, 271, 272, 273, 274, 276, 278, 279, 280, 282, 292, 295, 299, 302, 304, 305, 306, 339, 342, 346, 350, 361, 366, 368

Positivist era, 26

pre-colonial, 19, 42, 96, 100, 101, 102, 104, 129, 138, 218, 223, 224, 370

psychology, 59, 66, 128, 354, 355, 357, 360

Psychology, 18, 81

purification of sources, 140

Q

Quantification, 161, 162, 165

Quantitative, xvii, 146, 150, 151, 153, 161, 162, 163, 166, 168, 176

quantitative historian, 167

quasi-history, 27

R

Reflective history, 90

Renaissance, xiv, 5, 7, 9, 31, 32, 33, 96, 105, 254, 255, 280

Renaissance era, 32

Roman Empire, 30

Roman historiography, 11, 29

Romans, 6, 18, 22, 26, 28, 29, 96, 209, 253

Romanticist era, 26

S

second-generation computers, 181

semiology, 69, 70, 71

Semiotics, xv, 66, 68, 71, 76, 81, 82, 83

society, vii, x, 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 22, 26, 33, 34, 35, 37, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 71, 78, 91, 105, 106, 124, 128, 129, 141, 142, 147, 149, 150, 152, 155, 165, 166, 169, 174, 175, 179, 185, 187, 197, 203, 209, 212, 213, 224, 226, 229, 236, 238, 250, 257, 263, 265, 283, 286, 290, 295, 297, 298, 299, 300, 302, 305, 345, 350, 354, 355, 356, 359, 362, 363, 364, 365, 368, 369

Sociology, vi, xiii, xvi, xxi, 18, 114, 131, 162, 187, 345, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 365, 366, 367, 369, 370

software, 180, 181, 183, 184, 185, 190, 191

Sokoto, 199

Song, xviii, 212

South Africa, 41

South America, 21, 248

Stone Age, 197

subaltern history, 18

subject, ii

T

technology, ii

third-generation computers, 181

transport, 174, 239, 340

U

urban, 150, 174, 263, 339, 340, 346, 348, 350

utilitarian philosophy, 97

W

World War, 13, 39, 42, 180, 224, 227, 245, 246, 256, 257, 270, 290, 352

World Wide Web, 189, 190

Y

Yoruba, 39, 101, 103, 110, 111, 117, 120, 121, 141, 143, 227, 299, 308, 313, 314

Yoruba history, 111

32

## ABOUT THE BOOK

## ABOUT THE BOOK



From the conception to the birth of this book titled: "Issues in the Multi-disciplinary and Methodological Approach to African History and International Studies", is an indispensable component in the study of History and International Studies, in Nigerian Universities. The main objective of the History and International Studies Programme is to equip historians with the craft and the calling of the historian. And by extension to enable history students to acquire an excellent grasp of the content and methodology of Nigerian and African History in the context of World History. However defined, this emphasis on interdisciplinary approach to the study of history and international studies is reflected in courses like introduction to History and International Studies, Field Research in History and International Studies, History of Political thought and Historiography, just to mention but a few. The book is published as an aid to the understanding of historiography as a course of study which is usually not properly grasped by some historians. Infact, the contributors are drawn from several Universities in Nigeria and are recognized experts in the field they have written about. I hereby strongly recommend the book for undergraduate and postgraduate students in History and International Studies.

## ABOUT THE EDITOR



Chukwuemeka Tony Nwosu hails from Umuchukwu Eziani, Mgbidi, in Oru West L.G.A. of Imo State, Nigeria. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of History and International Studies, Faculty of Humanities, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.

He is the author of Blacks in Diaspora: The African Experience, Polemics and Black Response in African-American Studies; Introduction to Diplomacy and the Chair in Multilateral Negotiations Quandary; and the Editor of Issues in the Multi-disciplinary and Methodological Approach to African History and International Studies. He bagged his B.A (Hons) University of Calabar; M.A. (Afro-American History), University of Calabar; PhD (Afro-American History), Imo State University, Owerri; LL.B University of Calabar; B.L., Nigerian Law School, Abuja; Solicitor and Advocate of Supreme Court of Nigeria. He is a Member of the Historical Society of Nigeria; He also a Member of Nigerian Bar Association. He published a plethora of articles in both local and international journals. To the Glory of God, he is married to Mrs. Oluchukwu Emeka Nwosu, and they are blessed with five lovely children- Chukwuemeka, Oluebubechukwu, Somtochukwu, Mmesomachukwu and Munachimso.



ISBN 978-978-50627-1-3

