

HISTORY AND RELATED DISCIPLINES

By

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INTRODUCTION

Historical methods and methodology have changed, and particularly responded to the influence from other disciplines. The way history is being studied, written and taught has changed especially with the influence from other disciplines. It is against this background that it is apposite to examine the relationship history as a discipline has with related disciplines. History being the record of the past and movements, their causes and inter-relations requires techniques, concepts and tools of analysis from related disciplines to meaningfully document the occurrences and events of society being investigated. History as a discipline is characterised by the different approaches of data collection for historical reconstruction as this help corroborate, correct and confirm existing historical data. It is therefore, imperative to examine the various sources and methodology (approach) of historical writing.

For the purpose of this study, four areas have been identified in categorising related disciplines to be examined. They include; Arts/Humanities with disciplines such as; Linguistics, Philosophy and Psychology etc, Social Sciences with disciplines such as; Economics, Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology etc, Biological Sciences with disciplines like Palaeontology and Physical Science with disciplines such as; Archaeology, Geography and Geology.

The roles of these disciplines to be examined are evident in their contributions to historical writing. In other words, a historian writing family or intellectual history takes a cue from Psychology, pre-historic writing was influenced by Archaeology, political history by Political Science, economic history by Economics, demography(ic) by Sociology, ethno-history/cultural history by Anthropology, genetics study by Palaeontology, while Ecology serves as inspiration for environmental history.

The scope of this work starts with a general overview of History (identifying what History is, its nature and values), and further delve into the discourse of the relationship between history and related disciplines, examining the benefits in tandem with the shortcomings.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF HISTORY

According to E. H. Carr, history is a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past¹. Prof. Renier laid stress on the social role of history and so defined history as ‘the memories of societies’². Hence, history is the narrative of the past events which have moulded the destiny of mankind. Geoffrey Barraclough sees history as ‘an attempt to discover, based on fragmentary evidence, the significant things of the past’³. Based on the foregoing, history does not only study the past but with significant things as it relates to man’s development. The nature of history is exemplified in its ability to deal with facts, human past, and the concept of been dynamic.

The values and relevance of history as illustrated in the definition of history are that; the story of a people or a society shall not be forgotten by posterity, history adds to man’s knowledge of man, history helps protect and preserve traditional and cultural values of a nation and most importantly history helps grasp relationship with the past⁴. Ademola-Ajayi opined that; the relevance of history lies in the fact that its knowledge helps and guides in the present circumstances not through prophecies but rather through reasonable projections⁵.

¹ E. H. Carr. 1964. *What is History?* Harmondsworth: Penguin. 16

² B. V. Rao. 2006. *World History from Early Times to A D 2000*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers. 1

³ S. Ademola Ajayi. 2015. *History and Historians: A Historical Guide*. Unpublished Manuscript. 8

⁴ . B. V. Rao. 2006. *World History from Early Times to A D 2000*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers. 3

⁵ S. Ademola Ajayi. *History and Historians: A Historical Guide*. Unpublished Manuscript. 15-16

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HISTORY AND RELATED DISCIPLINE

While adhering to focus of the work/a paper in historical writing, historians welcome ideas and methodology of analysing, structuring and interpreting events from other fields. The influence of these related disciplines such as: Archaeology, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, Linguistics, Psychology and Palaeontology will thus be examined.

HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeology forms a major source of historical research in the reconstruction and interpretation of past events and forms part of primary sources of data. Archaeology is the study of material remains of peoples themselves, dwellings i.e. caves, fortification used for protection etc. In a broader sense, archaeology is the scientific study of the remnants of the past, such as: ancient site, relics, monuments, coins, inscriptions and other artefacts which help in reconstructing history in a most plausible manner⁶.

Archaeology helps with the research into the pre-historic studies. The aim of this discipline is to reconstruct behavioural pattern and the material culture of the populations whose remains they were excavating. The main contribution of archaeology to historical study or writing is that it has assisted historians in tracing the origin and developmental stages of man especially in distinguishing man from other primates such as: Gorilla, Orang-utan etc. From the discoveries, remains of Dryopithecus to Ramapithecus to Australopithecus robustus and Africanus(found in Olduvai Gorge, Lae tooli, Koobifora etc, who were makers of the OLDOWAN stone) to Homo-Erectus until the discovery of modern man.

⁶ B. V. Rao. 2006. *World History from Early Times to A D 2000*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers. 5

The techniques employed by archaeologists especially in the identification of location of sites are the Aerial photography, Reconnaissance survey and Geophysical survey. Another benefit of the interaction of history and archaeology is the provision of sound chronological framework to fit the evidence from artefacts so as to be reliable in comparison. A reconstruction of the nature of palaeo-environment. Dating in historical reconstruction is to a large extent difficult as it was drawn from accounts of oral tradition which were generally not precise, the intervention of archaeology through the attempt to get closely actual dates of occurrence through the science of **Radio-Carbon dating** cannot be overlooked, even though these dates are indefinite, they have been instrumental to ascertaining years of occurrence within centuries (e.g. the use of ± 200 AD)

History tends to study economic, social and political aspects of man, while Archaeology studies more of economic and social aspects. Unlike history which draws facts from oral and written tradition, archaeological analysis is drawn from scientific observation. Archaeology has been the most useful discipline in interaction with history in determining the various stages of human civilization (Stone Age, Iron age and Neolithic age).

Archaeology, though a relatively young discipline in Africa, has aided the historian in reconstructing the past history of some African peoples and states. The culture of Benin, Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, Nok, Taruga, Daima, (Nigeria), Bigo in Uganda, Old Zimbabwe, Egypt and the Nile valley, etc. have deepened the historian's knowledge of the peoples' among whom the cultures developed⁷.

A major flaw of this source of historical writing is that information derived from it are often not uniform, this is because the information available are sometimes accidentally discovered either in the course of farming or in the course of digging, this in turn leads to generalisation and which doesn't reflect the event that had taken place in restricted areas.

⁷ S. Ademola Ajayi. 2015. History and Related Disciplines. Unpublished Manuscript. 59

HISTORY AND LINGUISTICS

Linguistics is the scientific study of language and its structure, and or the systematic study of human language. The use of glottochronology, a branch of lexicostatistics and a study of the rate which languages change or are replaced, have been useful in historical reconstruction as evident in its role of analyzing vocabulary, grammatical forms and social changes of a given language to understand its evolution and which in turn is beneficial to historical reconstruction done through the study of migration or movement of a group.

Linguistics became a historical source in Africa due to the overlap of languages. T. Obenga further opined that its influence is mainly a matter of comparative and historical linguistics. The method adopted is comparative and inductive: for the object of the comparison is to reconstruct, i.e. to find the point of convergence of all the languages being compared. This point of convergence will be called the ‘common predialectal language’⁸.

The point of historical linguistics lies not so much in finding a common predialectal language as in appreciating the overall linguistics spread of different, apparently unrelated languages. A language is seldom enclosed within a clearly defined space, but most commonly overflows its own area by making relationship being sometimes imperceptible at first⁹.

A common language does not necessarily go together with racial identity. But it does give relevant information about an essential, indeed the only real, unity, namely, the basic cultural unity of people united by a common language even though sometimes with very different origins and political systems¹⁰. There were inter-group relations forged by language. Linguists have classified the various African languages into groups according to how closely related they are to each other or to one another. It is believed that most of these languages come from a common parentage i.e. proto-language¹¹.

⁸ T. Obenga. 1981. Sources and Specific Techniques used in African history: General Outline. *General History of Africa. Methodology and African Prehistory*. Ki-Zerbo, Joseph. Ed. Vol 1. UNESCO. California: Heinemann. 81

⁹ T. Obenga. 1981. Sources and Specific Techniques used in African history: General Outline. 81

¹⁰ T. Obenga. 1981. Sources and Specific Techniques used in African history: General Outline. 81

¹¹ S. Ademola Ajayi. 2013. The 1914 Amalgamation and the Challenges of National Integration in Post-Colonial Nigeria. A lecture delivered at the 1st Prof. J. A. Atanda Memorial Lecture Series No. 1. 12.

Circa 500 B.C. – A.D.1, there exist groups of African language which are categorized into four. These groups spread over different regions, on the continent and in some instances extended to some area outside the regions in which they are particularly resident. The African language groups are;

Niger-Congo – Various West Africa States (Mande, Voltic, Kwa) and Proto-Bantu (who later migrated to and dominated Southern and Southeast Africa zone.

Nilo-Saharan – Saharan, Nilotic, and Songhaic (Songhay)

Khoisan – Koi and San of South & South East Africa

Afro-Asiatic – Ancient Egyptians, Berbers, Chadic and Cushitic¹².

There is increasing acceptance among scholars of a correlation between proto-Nilotic speakers and the herding- fishing Khartoum Neolithic peoples. At an earlier level, however, prior to the adoption of livestock herding by about 500 B.C., the ancestral Khartoum Mesolithic peoples, with a strong emphasis on fishing, had an even wider distribution within the general southeastern Sahara area. This correlates very closely with the modern distribution of the combined languages of the entire Nilo-Saharan family: that is, the Nilotic branch, the Saharan branch, and the Songhaic branch. Interestingly, the subsistence patterns of many of the modern speakers of this family still emphasizes herding and fishing. (Nuer), herding (Maasai, Teda), or fishing (Songhai)¹³.

Another technique is the study of loan words: which shows the relationship between the speakers of one language and another language from which they have borrowed¹⁴. The study of loan words among language groups has also helped to improve our knowledge of culture change and contact in the past. For example, there are several Kanuri loan words in the Hausa language.

¹² J. M. Patrick. Africa's Pre-Historic Past. *AFRICA* Second Edition Phyllis, M.M. & Patrick O'Meara Eds. London: Macmillan Publisher. 59-62

¹³ J. M Patrick. Africa's Pre-Historic Past. 60

¹⁴ O. A Adeboye. 2007. Interdisciplinary Approach to Scholarship in History. Olubohemin, O. O. Ed. *Issues in Historiography*. Ibadan: Print mark Ventures. 17

Similarly, many Arabic words which the Hausa people borrowed through their contact with the Arabs are today found in the Yoruba language e.g. *alaafia*, *wakati*, *wahala*, *anfaani*, *alubosa* among others¹⁵.

HISTORY AND PALAEOONTOLOGY

Palaeontology is the study of what fossils tell us about the past, about evolution, and our place, as humans in the world. This science through its human palaeontology (Palaeo-Anthropology) help in the study of pre-historic human and proto-human fossils, supported by genetic science a branch of biological science which help in genetic analysis, done through genetic and biological examination in tracing and ascertaining the trend of a family, group or society.

HISTORY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. Psychology just like history is a multifaceted discipline and includes many sub-fields of study such areas as human development, sports, health, clinical, social behaviour and cognitive process¹⁶. Some aspects study the influence of culture and society and the analysis of role of evolution complements historical studies.

Psychology is seen as one aspect of social situation explained in historical context. Psychology complements history in analysing the motives and actions of man and societies. The role of psychology in historical writing of biography and auto-biography is unequivocal. The impact of psychology on history is evident from the fact that in the past, historians inquired primarily into the origins of war and ignored the result of war, and as a result of the influence of

¹⁵ S. Ademola Ajayi.2013. The 1914 Amalgamation and the Challenges of National Integration in Post-Colonial Nigeria. A lecture delivered at the 1st Prof. J. A. Atanda Memorial Lecture Series No. 1. 14

¹⁶S. A. Mcloed. 2011. What is Psychology? Retrieved on 14/05//2015 from <http://www.simplypsychology.org/whatispsychology>

psychology, historians have undertaken the study of results and impacts of war and can further help determine the role of masses in such wars or revolution. Effects of events such as war and natural disaster on the citizens of a geographical space is best understood through the help of psycho-analysis of the inhabitants/residents of the affected and neighbouring community.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Geography is the study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and of human activity as it affects and is affected by these, including the distribution of populations and resources, and political and economic activities. It is believed that history and geography have very close ties. Some scholars have opined that geography answers questions spanning the local to the global, in the past, present and future¹⁷ The eminent geographer Donald Meinig views geography and history as complementary and necessarily connected in teaching and learning about the past and present, as exemplified in his work: *The Shaping Of America: A Geographical Perspective On 500 Years Of American History*¹⁸.

The importance of geographic knowledge to history are characterised by the abilities to; develop location skills and understandings, understand human and environmental interactions, understand human movement, and understand the region¹⁹.

Geographic concepts and tools are beneficial to enhancing a multicultural perspective, especially in the study of migration and movement by a group having examined and interpreted the economic and cultural space of the migrants and host community. The interaction of geography and history help understand historical events through the knowledge of physical and human characteristics of a specific space of occurrence. Physical characteristics includes:

¹⁷ What is Geography? by Institute of Australian Geographers Retrieved 14/05/2015 from <https://www.iag.org.au/about-geography/what-is-geography/> Par. 2

¹⁸ John J. Patrick. 1993 *Geography in History: A Necessary Connection in the School Curriculum*. Retrieved 13/05/2015 from <http://www.ericdigests.org/1993/history.htm> Par. 6

¹⁹ Al M. Rocca. *Integrating History and Geography*. Retrieved on 13/05/2015 from <http://www.socialstudies.org/system/files/publications/se/5802/580215.html>

landforms, water bodies, soils, natural vegetation and animal life, while human characteristics includes: population density and distribution, cultural traditions and political institutions, and social traits.

Without a rudimentary knowledge of geography, it would be difficult to understand or study certain branches of history such as: diplomatic history or military history as these cannot be fully grasp except with the understanding of location skills.

According to Kant:

Geography lies at the basis of History

Herder opined that:

History is Geography set in motion.

The physical formation of the country such as Britain, Japan and Greece with broken coastlines had a very powerful impact on its history; this facilitated their naval strength and empire building activities. The geographical discoveries of America and a new route to India determined the character of world history since the Renaissance²⁰. Hence, the knowledge of geography helped a lot in the age of discovery and is very essential for historical reconstruction.

HISTORY WITH ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY

Sociology and Anthropology are the nearest to historical pre-occupations just like Archaeology. Anthropology been the study of the origins and development of people and their society enables historian to understand the cultural pattern and behaviour of primitive peoples belonging to different races. In tracing the course of social and cultural revolutions of pre-historic and post-historic man, the knowledge of and the help of anthropology as a related discipline to history is cogent as it helps with precise assertions.

²⁰ Aggarwal, Mamta. Relationship of History with other Sciences: Study of History. Retrieved on 1/05/2015 from <http://www.historydiscussion.net/history/relationship-of-history-with-other-sciences-study-of-history/638>

Anthropology helped to provide insights into features of the past which were so strange that modern historians had found them difficult to comprehend or examine. Complex rituals, blood-feud, trance and ecstasy, millenarianism, oath-taking, the Divine Right of Kings, and particularly magical and witchcraft beliefs became legitimate and fruitful topics for study. In the last of these, for instance, models from African witchcraft provided a stimulus for many important works on English, French, Spanish, and North American and German witchcraft²¹.

Also, Anthropological works also had the effect of distancing the familiar, making historians aware that much of what they had regarded as normal in the past really required investigation because it was, cross-comparatively, unusual. A particularly striking example of this was in the field of family relationships. Much of anthropology is concerned with kinship and marriage. These works helped to stimulate many of the studies of sexuality, marriage, childhood, parental ties, domestic groups, women, love, incest and other topics. The anthropological inspiration joined up with interests from historical demography and women's studies, and thereby opened up the whole field of interpersonal relationships and sentiment²².

Historical research into many other topics was stimulated by anthropological enquiries: conflict, ceremony, work discipline, time, space, myths, folklore, style and fashion, oral and literate culture, birth, death, dreams, suicide, animals, and many other subjects were investigated. The formal historical documents usually conceal such topics, so that it was largely under the pressure of anthropology that a vigorous development of the study of past mentality and emotional structures took place, exemplified in the work of historians such as E. Hobsbawm, E. Le Roy Ladurie, E.P. Thompson and Keith Thomas²³.

Anthropology stresses the interdependence of spheres, the overlap of economics, politics, religion and kinship, which have superficially been separated in the modern industrial world. It proposes paradoxical and ingenious causes for unquestioned institutions. Anthropology has analysed the workings of three of the four major forms of human civilization, namely hunters and gatherers, tribal and peasant societies.

²¹ Alan Macfarlane. 1988. Anthropology and History. *The Blackwell Dictionary of Historians* ed. John Cannon et al. U. K.: Blackwell Publishing. 1.

²² Alan Macfarlane. 1988. Anthropology and History. 2

²³ Alan Macfarlane. 1988. Anthropology and History. 2

For the understanding of a past which may have features of these types of social organization, anthropology has proved an irreplaceable guide. The renewed association of the two disciplines of history and anthropology has been mutually enriching. Both seek to interpret the basic patterns in societies, to contrast and compare in order to separate the universal from the particular, to explain both the single event and the broad institution²⁴.

Sociology is the study of human social relationships and institutions with diverse subject matter ranging from family to state, from crime to religion, from divisions of race and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture, and from social stability to radical change in whole societies. Sociology offers a distinctive and enlightening way of seeing and understanding the social world²⁵. Sociology as a science of society tries to analyse human interactions and inter-relations with all their diversity and complexity, this concept to a large extent is sacrosanct to historical reconstruction even though they differ in regards to approach. Sociology provides social background for the study of history as well as help history to develop the narrow areas of human activity.

HISTORY AND ECONOMICS

Economics is the study of the production, distribution and consumption of goods.²⁶ Economics offer history theories to substantiate its facts, as well as using statistics and mathematics to support these facts. It is believed that in the evolution of man, economic sub-structure succeeds the cultural structure and precedes the political super structure. Thus,

²⁴ Alan Macfarlane. 1988. Anthropology and History. 3

²⁵ What is Sociology? Retrieved on 15/05/15 from <http://www.sociology.unc.edu/undergraduate-program/sociologymajor/what-is-sociology/>

²⁶ Joel. Hawbaker. Themes of History and Disciplines Related to History Retrieved 13/05/2015 from <https://prezi.com/9q2cobgzsvcb/themes-of-history-and-disciplines-related-to-history/>

activities of man in the society are closely related to economic matters, a rudimentary knowledge of this science is needed by the historian.

The role of economics in historical reconstruction has been so defined that, there is an aspect of history called '**Economic History**'. Economic history is an important branch of history, its understanding is absolutely essential for proper understanding of history of any period.

Due to the complexity of study of economics, especially as it involves mathematics and statistics (calculations of figures as facts), dedicating time to acquire basic knowledge of economic theories for a historian to analyze historical cum economic events will be at the detriment of the study and writing of history, hence, the need arose for a historian to employ the use of existing economic tools, statistics and facts to help solve relevant economic problems in historical reconstruction.

A major example of the benefits of economic analysis in historical reconstruction is evident in Paul E. Lovejoy's book: *Transformation in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, published in 2012, where he extensively employs the use of economic tools and word register to include statistics analysis in explaining how the Medieval slave trade and Atlantic slave trade from the 15th – early 20th centuries was carried out, indicating to a large extent figures that closely shows the number of victims of these trades and enslavement process.

HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

In the words of Paul Janet:

*Political science is the part of social science which treats the foundation of the state and principles of government. It studies the political activities of man especially in an organised society*²⁷.

²⁷ Punja, Mondal. The Relationship of Sociology with other Social Sciences. Retrieved on 14/05/2015 from <http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/sociology/the-relationship-of-sociology-with-other-social-sciences/6248/>

Based on the foregoing, history tends to learn the nature of fundamental political institutions from the knowledge of or expertise of political science. As political science is beneficial to history, so is history helpful to the study of science, because political aspect is a part of the whole range of activity recorded by historians. In fact, our knowledge of history is somewhat meaningless, if the political bearing of events and movements are not adequately evaluated. For instance, the history of the 19th century Europe is an incomplete narration of facts without putting into account full significance of the movements, like nationalism and socialism²⁸.

The history of the rise of major Yoruba towns of the South-western region of Nigeria in the early 19th century would be incomplete without the study of the evolution of new form of political organization in Yorubaland such as: Republicanism in Ibadan, Military Dictatorship in Ijaiye, and Military Federalism in Abeokuta, which was attributed to the fall of the Old Oyo Empire²⁹.

Undoubtedly, opinion polls taken today by those in the social science will form valuable source materials for the historian in the future, but of course, for the vast sectors of the past with which the historian is concerned, there can be no question of quizzing the opinions of the dead. Where history has been beneficially influenced is through the insight recent polls give into electoral behaviour in general, it is less easy now for historians to deliver those fatuous judgment about ‘ the people thought this’ or ‘ the electorate wanted that’, which were pure guesses and pretty shoddy ones at that³⁰.

²⁸ Susan Dhawan. Relationship between Political Science and History –Essay. Retrieved on 13/05/2015 from <http://www.shareyouressays.com/89023/relationship-between-political-science-and-history-essay>

²⁹ A. R. Adetoro. 2012. The Political Transition of Ibadanland From Bale to Olubadan, 1820-1936. B. A. Project. Dept. Of History and International Studies. University of Ilorin. 3-4

³⁰ S. Ademola Ajayi. 2015. History and Related Disciplines. Unpublished Manuscript. 63

CONCLUSION

The role of interdisciplinary approach to the interpretation and documentation of man's development is unequivocal. Social history has existed in close dialogue with economics, sociology and anthropology, intellectual history has ties with philosophy and psychology, political science and other disciplines. As these disciplines influence history, the study of history is of immense values particularly to social scientists that are engaged in research or seek rudimentary knowledge of man. It gives them an insight into the problem they are studying, provides the necessary data for enquiring into any sociological or economic phenomenon³¹.

The interaction between history and other disciplines has been so fruitful, that it culminates in the routine feature of history as a profession though this does not come without its perils. The challenges from other disciplines have forced inappropriate standards and methods on historians, weakening epistemological certainties and encouraging generalization.

³¹ B. V. Rao. 2006. *World History from Early Times to A D 2000*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers. 3

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