



"HISTORY IS PHILOSOPHY TEACHING
BY EXAMPLES" Thucydides

*Development of
Philosophy of History
Since 1900*

John Koskey Chang'ach

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John Koskey Chang'ach

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First Edition

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I dedicated this book to my late dear mother Susan Kobilo Chang'ach who passed on, on 18th September, 2013 for being the pillar of our family and her love of education.



Saisere Kogo - Rest in Eternal Peace

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Preface

For a long time now, the exercise of Teacher Education, there has been and still is a marked shortage of the supply of relevant text books in many areas which deal with the preparation and production of history teachers. It is in pursuit for the satisfaction of the supply in this area which makes the advent of this book a very welcome issue in Kenya's and international academic fields. Hence, the arrival of this book "*Development of Philosophy of History Since 1900*" makes a great academic and professional contribution in this area.

The contents of the book, as well as the order of presentation are derived from the stock of knowledge and experience inherent in the courses of the Department of History, Political Science and Public Administration; which by nature of its position in education is a base factor for creation and development of effective standards and professionalism in history teachers.

The book is the first of its kind with sample questions in each chapter and for setting out and establishing a systematic study in the field of progressive changes which take place in human societies throughout human history with regard to developmental changes in history throughout all generations.

Since it is a detailed study of progress of history, from the 1900 to present, this book becomes a must material for studies in history, teachers of history, history students and educational professionals. Therefore, the book is appropriate for every form of academic pursuit.

Revision questions have been included in each chapter and at the end of the book to help the history student evaluate his/her understanding of all the topics in the course. The questions will also come in handy while revising for end of semester examinations. At the end of the book, a bibliography is provided to

enable the students of history and their lecturers to make reference and undertake further research to enrich their knowledge.

Preamble

Purpose of the Course

To enable learners understand and appreciate the historical and philosophical underpinnings in the development of philosophy of history, since the 1900 to the present.

Objectives of the Course

The objectives of this course are to:

- State the meaning and purpose of History.
- Outline the contribution of causation, explanation, objectivity and truth to the development of Historical thought.
- Outline the ideas of various thinkers from different parts of the world on philosophy of History.
- Describe post modernism and deconstruction in the development of Historical thought since 1900.
- Demonstrate the view of Francis Fukuyama on the future/end of History.

Expected Learning Outcomes of the Course

By the end of the course, a learner should be able to:

- Discuss the meaning and purpose of History.
- Explain the contribution of causation, explanation, objectivity and truth to the development of Historical thought.

- Analyze the ideas of various thinkers from different parts of the world on philosophy of History.
- Explain post modernism and deconstruction in the development of Historical thought since 1900.
- Assess the view of Francis Fukuyama on the future/end of History.

Course Content

Meaning and purpose of history; causation, explanation; objectivity and truth; the ideas of R. G Collingwood, Benedetto Croce, Arnold Toynbee, Carl G. Hempel, William Dray, Karl Popper, the role of individuals in history, the ideas of Plekhanov; African contributions to historical thought, Cheikh ante Diop, John Mbiti, Father Placide Tempels, Kwasi Wiredu, Odera Oruka, Ali Mazrui, Mudimbe; Post modernism and deconstruction; the future/end of history; the view of Francis Fukuyama.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Lecture, Discussion, Question and Answer

Instructional Materials/Equipment

Whiteboard, Text Books, LCD Projectors, Hand-outs

Course Assessment

Type	Weighting (%)
Continuous Assessment	30%
End of Semester Examination	70%
Total	100%

Course Outline

1. Introduction

- Definition of Philosophy of History

- Definition of the term History
- What is the Concern of the historian?
- Necessity of History
- Justification for Philosophy of History

2. Causation in History

- The Principle of Causality
- Responsibility
- Regularity
- Determine
- Indeterminism
- Chance
- The Great Man Theory versus the Role of the Masses
- Free Will

3. Historical Fact and Truth

- The Concept of Historical Fact
- Interpretation of Historical Fact
- Theories of Truth in History

4. Interpretation of Historical Process

- Marxist-Leninist Interpretation of History
- Benedetto Croce and Contemporary History
- R. G Collingwood and the Theory of Re-enactment

- Arnold Toynbee and the Cyclical Theory of History

5. Historical Explanation

- Carl G. Hempel and the Function of General Laws in History
- Karl Popper's Critique
- William Dray and Explanation of "What" in History
- Similarities and Differences between Explanation in History, Social and Natural Science

6. Objectivity in History

- Definition of Objectivity
- Objectivity versus Subjectivity in History
- Hayden White and the Question of Historical Objectivity and Bias

7. Positivism and Neo-positivism

- Joseph Arnold Toynbee

8. African Philosophy of History

- Father Placide Tempels and Bantu Philosophy
- John S. Mbiti and Ontological Theory of African History
- Ali Mazrui and Africa's Triple Heritage
- African Proverbs as Philosophies of History

9. Post – structuralism, Deconstruction and Post Modernism

- Michael Foucault

1



Introduction



1.1 Questions

1. Discuss the importance of historical knowledge to the Kenyan society.
2. What is the meaning of history and meaning in history?
3. Discuss the value of historical knowledge to society?
4. Discuss as precisely as possible the purpose of history and the value of historical study.

1.2 Definition of Philosophy of History

According to Voltaire, philosophy of history is critical or scientific history, a type of historical thinking in which the historian made up his mind for himself instead of repeating whatever stories he found in old books. Voltaire – meant independent and critical thinking. To Hegel it means simply universal world history. Hegel meant thinking about the world as a whole. Nineteenth century festivals – was the discovery of general laws governing the cause of events which was history's business to recount. 19th century positivism – it meant the discovery of universal laws.

Philosophy is reflective – the philosophizing mind whole thinking about any object, thinks also about its own thought about the object (thought about thought). Philosophy is concerned with thought itself, and it is also concerned with its relation to the object (object and thought). The philosopher asks – how do historians know? How do they come to apprehend the past? The philosopher is concerned with the events not as things in themselves but as things known to the historian and to ask, what it is about them that makes it possible for

historians to know them. The subject matter of philosophy is the organized and scientific development of self consciousness.

1.3 Definition of the Term History

History is a special form of thought. History is a kind of research or inquiry trying to discover what man does not know. Science begins from knowledge of out ignorance (definite thing).

Science is finding things out and in the sense history is science. How does history proceed? History proceeds by interpretation of evidence. Where evidence is documents and historians use them to get answers to questions. Historical procedure or method is interpreting evidence.

History is critical for human self knowledge, it is important for man to know himself/herself as human being. Knowing oneself means knowing what one can do based on what man has done in the past. The value of history is that it teaches man what man has done and thus what man is able to perform.

The term history is not only complex but quite encompassing to elicit an agreed definition. It is also a dynamic discipline making it difficult for historians to agree upon one definition; however, it is generally agreed that history is a Greek word “historia” meaning information or an enquiry designed to elicit the truth. To some, history is “man-his-story” hence, the story of man’s efforts to satisfy his/her craving for an orderly social life to satisfy his/her hope for beauty and knowledge.

A number of scholars have defined the term history as follows:

- Burkhart says “history is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another.”

- Miller says “the course of life is like the sea, men come and go, tides rise and fall and that is all history.”
- Marc Bloch thinks that “history is the science of men in time.”
- H. G. Wells argues that “history is in essence a history of ideas.”
- E. H Carr proposes that history is an unending dialogue between the present and past.
- Johnson history as “everything that happened... history is the unusual acceptance of man. The materials to be studied are the traces left by his existence in the world, the present ideals, the present social, customs, institutions, language, literature, material products of human industry, physical man himself, remains of man, his thoughts, feelings and actions.”
- Meyerhof defined history as “an account of human activities that move societal significance not everything is recorded. History is defined as the memory of society.
- Arthur Marwick says that “a society without memory or self-knowledge is a society adrift.”
- Levi Strauss argues that “those who ignore history condemn themselves to not knowing the present because historical development done permits us to weigh and to evaluate their respective rotations to the elements of the present, he calls us to imagine how a society would be or would look like of their minds deadened to every recollection by paralytic stroke and the whole world look new” (present founded on the past).
- Cicero argues that “if you do not know what took place before you were born you will remain a child forever”.

1.4 What is the Concern of the Historian?

1. History is the study of man. In this sense history dealt with knowledge only when it is associated with mans endeavors and development or achievements.
2. History is concerned with man in time; therefore time factor is the essence of history. Each event in history occurs at a given point on the time scale. Human history is therefore a process of man's development in time. Man has developed from the Stone Age to age of the internet, all this has been in a series of steps relating the story of man in development. Even of one had to study man through theories; the element of chronology cannot be escaped.
3. History is concerned with space, individual, nations, institutions, and groups as studied in their physical and geographical environments.
4. Man is a dynamic way interacts with the environment, out of which arise trends in politics, economics, social and cultural spheres.
5. History explains the present which has gradually evolved from the past, the task of the historian is to study and unfold this evolution.
6. History is a dialogue between events of the past and progressively the future events. Historians study and interpret the past by selecting significant and relevant events as they evolve with the progressive emergence of new goals.
7. History is the study of the story of the growth of human consciousness both in the individual and collectives aspects. Over time man is in the process of self discovery man continues to identify what is suitable to

him in terms of rights and privileges. This important mental consciousness grows and evolves with time. Continuity and coherence are necessary requisite of history; events in history are interlinked in terms of cause, course and effect. No event in history grows out of a vacuum. Events in history arise out of the foundations of previous events. It is probably in mind that S.K. Kocher (1991) concluded that “history is the story of what men and women have done or what they have left for others to enjoy and suffer. People have made fantastic blunders, noble contributions, but regardless of quality of human activity it has given us a legacy of civilization, not always fine and noble but on the whole, it has led us to progress both material and moral.” Therefore, it can be safely concluded that history is about people and not documents of statistics.

1.5 Necessity of History

1. Everybody and every society need history. It is an indispensable discipline. Each subject taught has its own history. Its development stating its origin. All need history.
2. Primitive societies need to know their traditions heroic deeds of their ancestors and the way the society has been dealing with various problems.
3. Complex societies (developed societies) need to know their history that is, how did the society manage to develop and their relationship between themselves and their neighbours as well as what other societies do.
4. The central factor in history is man and history assumes that unlike all other animals, man is intelligent and human activities are influenced by motives that persuade people to act. Historians examine what forces were

at play especially social economic and political, forces that precipitated man to act? What made the person act the way he did?

5. The study of history also considers the fact that no human action leaves history in the same way. Every human action generates a motion that changes history that is continuity in history, it is not static, and it develops due to human activity.
6. Historians are very particular on the place that the activity took place and time when that activity took place and who was involved?

1.6 Justification for Philosophy of History

History assists in the cultivation of tolerance with different kind of faiths, loyalty and cultures, ideals and ideas. Historical knowledge is practical knowledge; it is philosophy teaching by example.

Histories describe vice and unmask false virtue, exposes error and prejudices. It is more persuasive than all arguments that there is nothing great and laudable than humor and uprightness. History should display episodes of how great men and women for the honor of their country have sacrificed everything of their own for the food of man and society. This would enable society to appreciate the lofty qualities of mind and heart.

It is through the study and by the study of great saints, heroism, reforms legends that people can be made courageous, truthful and moral principled. History fosters national unity, national integration, cohesion and patriotism. The special aim of history is to perpetuate the principles of justice and humanity. These principles control the rise of as nation. History instills patriotism which makes one to love his/her county, its achievement and aspirations. History is

citizenship training. It is through history that we can inculcate history on ones country, pride in it respect for the best national environment and traditions and aspirations. History holds a country (nation) together as a single compact and individual entity. In summary society through philosophy of history does the following:

- Appreciate the value of other people and contribution to civilization.
- Trains the mind to be critical.
- Improves quality of writing.
- History provides pleasure and interest.
- Essential part of our cultural heritage.
- Develops educational skills for example comprehension analysis, synthesis and extrapolation.
- Element in education for world citizenship.
- Makes students into good citizens and loyal supports.
- Learn different cultures for mutual responsibility.
- Foster empathy.
- Contains great literature.

2



Historical Explanation



2.1 Questions

1. What is explanation in history? How does it differ from explanation in science?
2. Explanation is the same for all subjects. Discuss.
3. Compare and contrast explanation in history and in natural science.
4. Using examples explain the following aspects of explanation in history:
 - Descriptive
 - Genetic
 - Structural
 - Definitional
 - Causal

2.2 Explanation in History

The question here is whether there are any peculiarities about the way the historian explains or attempts to explain the events he/she studies.

2.3 What Steps Does an Historian Take When They Set Out to Elucidate an Historical Event or Set of Events?

1. They will begin by tracing connections between that event and others with which it stands in inner relationship (in the case in question, certain previous events in history of industrial relations in Great Britain).

2. The underlying assumption here is that different historical events can be regarded as going together to constitute a single process, a whole of which they are all parts and in which they belong together in an especially intimate way.
3. The aim of the historian here is, to see it as part of such a process, to locate it in its context by mentioning other events with which it is bound up. This process is known as “colligation.”
4. The historian, just like the scientist, does make appeal to general propositions in the course of his study, though he does not make these explicit in the same way as the scientist does.
5. History differs from natural science in that it is not the aim of the historian to formulate a system of general laws, but this does not mean that no such laws are presupposed in historical thinking.
6. Historians do make constant use of generalizations, in particular generalizations about the different ways in which human beings react to different kinds of situation.
7. History thus presupposes general propositions about human nature, and no account of historical thinking would be complete without proper appreciation of that fact.

2.4 An Example: British General Strike 1926

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together to constitute a single process, a whole of which they are all parts and in which they belongs together in a specially intimate way.

The aim of the historian here is to see it as part of such a process, to locate it in its context by mentioning other events with which it is bound up. This process is known as “colligation,” The historian just like the scientist, does make appeal to general propositions in the course of his study, through he does not make these explicit in the same way as the scientists does.

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Historians do make constant use of generalization in particular generalizations about the different ways in which human being react to different kinds of situation.

History thus presupposes general propositions about human nature, and be account of historical thinking would be complete without proper appreciation of that fact.

2.5 Historical Explanation

It is a device that enables one to follow the sequence of events or an act of giving reasons where an act occurred. Narratives are descriptive in nature while the explanations are analytical in nature. Narratives deals with what happened, but explanations deals with both what happened and why it happened.

Explanation shows the significance of the events by showing the connections. Explanations begin by showing the conditions and result of those conditions.

Dealing with actions of people explanations seek to show the motive of actors to show whether they were honest in what they left behind, intentions are expressed by their actions.

Historical explanation therefore examines the motives of subconscious motives, mental outlook, and common to people of his age or time, the influence by nationality, class, association and external factors which determine what alternative was open to the actors.

Explanations of historical events depend upon how they are conceived, which means precisely whether they are regarded as determined at random. Historical explanations deal with cause and effect in history.

2.6 Effect or Result of the Cause in History

The consequences help to understand the meaning in an event. It's by explanation what a wider lesson can be perceived than by a mere narration. It should be based on common knowledge when describing a society, we should examine it in relation to the wider society because some of the happenings were widespread over a large area e.g. feudalism in medieval Europe or plantation slavery in new world or colonization of the Third world. Each element has some general factors that prevail in a continent for example Africa, Latin America have common factors.

Comparisons between regions of countries involved enable us to separate the essential from particular and weigh our explanation accordingly. Know its wider implications to be able to utilize and explain the issue in a broader manner and to make sense. When explaining, we use a theory (hypotheses). This is important in explanation because it raises important questions and alerts scholars to fresh source material.

From the 18th century, theory has played a major role in historical discourses. Theory also helps us to understand how political, social and economic components are arranged together to form a whole society. Theories can be used to show historical change or the direction in which change is moving. Such theories explain the destiny of mankind by ascribing a meaning to history.

In medieval Europe, the writers were concerned with a linear progression of creation to the last judgment as controlled by providence. In the 18th century, the linear pattern was secularized through the theory of progress to enlighten historians. History therefore, became a story of a material and intellectual improvement whose outcome in the future was to lead to victory of reason and human happiness.

At present the theory has been developed into modernization theory to explain why some countries developed while others became underdeveloped. Theory forces historians to move away from particular to general in an effort to make sense of the subject as a whole. It helps us to reflect on certain reflections about the nature of historical process.

2.7 Quantitative Method of Explanation in History

This came up in response to scientific method and the realization that historians cannot do away with the use of numbers. The use of numbers has helped to explain some trends in the world. Computerization has made it easy for historians to compute numbers, although numbers by themselves are not history, they can be interpreted to give historical facts. Numbers are vital in giving actual evidence as opposed to assumptions. Numbers can tell the behavior of people e.g. results of an election can be interpreted to give people's attitudes towards certain parties.

In economic history, numbers are vital especially when we compute the taxes, salaries, wealth, output, trade data, population and therefore numerical data can only be explained but not narrated so we are suggesting that numerical data can be used to support certain social theories that historians can use to interpret the past. Thus historical explanation is wider.

2.8 Types of Explanations

2.8.1 Descriptive Explanation

This is narration or simple description without indication causes it may as well cover causes of any event or occurrence.

2.8.2 Genetic Explanation

This is explanation by pointing to an origin of a given phenomenon, indicating the successive stages of development of a given historical event what were the factors that led to this? It addresses the causes and the origins or genesis of an event.

2.8.3 Structural Explanation

This points to the role of a specific element in a given whole, placing certain processes within a larger setting. It examines historical processes from different perspectives; it deals with the nature or role of specific elements.

2.8.4 Definitional Explanation

Explanations by offering meaning of phenomenon and questions like What? Why? How? Where?

2.8.5 Causal Explanation

This is concerned with providing explanation by indicating the causes. This takes the historian above simple descriptions of events and links historical writing to scientific theories theoretical contexts or the role of theory. Explanation should focus on human actions as being goal oriented.

Explain the actions by addressing what were the mental characteristics of the agent, conditions under which they acted, which were the means they had at their disposal? What are the goals they had in view? What knowledge did they have at their disposal? Explanations are done on the following premises:

- Explanation gets complicated when causation assumes that human beings are rational, for example, explanation of unintended consequences of an action.
- An explanation is also by reference to dispositions that is, conditions in which people were.
- Another type of explanation is by factors external to the system.
- Explanations by reference to laws which laid down the sufficient and necessary conditions or both.
- Explanations by reference to favorable conditions.
- Explanation ties well with causation.

2.9 Scientific Explanation in History

Science refers to exact disciplines whose results are obtained through experimentation. This involves observation and testing of facts. This is done in laboratory for example biology, chemistry and physics.

2.10 Carl Gustav Hempel

2.10.1 General Laws and Explanation in History

He was born in 1905 in Orianenberg, Germany. He studied at the University of Gottingen, Heidergberg, Berlin and Vienna. He left Germany for United States of America in 1934. He became a research associate in philosophy at the University of Chicago 1937-1938. He had teaching positions at City College, New York, and Queen's college, Pittsburgh, Yale and Princeton University. He taught as a visitor at Columbia and Harvard. His publications deal with deductive and inductive logic, epistemology, methodology and philosophy of math's and of empirical science.

His work on the nature of explanation and the structure of scientific theory has been the focus of all subsequent investigation into those subjects. His major book is *Aspect of Scientific Explanation* (1970). His studies of the logic of scientific explanations are attempts to formulate general explanations to formulate general modes of explanation that will reveal some of these similarities. The models to answer certain disputed questions about methods of explanation in social science constitute Hempel's main contribution to philosophy of social science.

The concept of explanation outside science is vague. Broadly speaking, to explain something to someone is to make it plain or understandable to that

person. So explanations are persona relative in the sense that what counts as a satisfactory explanation for one person will not do so for another. A satisfactory explanation for a given person will depend up those antecedent beliefs, intelligence, and other personal factors (idiosyncrasies). But scientific explanation is supposed to be independent of such personal factors. In Hempel's view, a condition of adequacy events is that it provides information which shows objectively that the event was to be expected.

He wrote to refute idealists' view that history cannot be interpreted using general laws. He argued "general laws have quite analogous functions in history and the natural sciences and that they form an indispensable instrument of historical research and that they even constitute the common basis of various procedure, which are often considered characteristic of social sciences in contradiction to the general sciences."

By a general law, we shall here understand a statement of universal conditions from which is capable of being confirmed or disconfirmed by suitable empirical findings. The term law suggests the idea that the statement in question is actually well confirmed by the relevant evidence available.

A universal hypothesis or general laws may be assumed to assert a regularity of the following type for example in every case where an event of specified kind occurs at a certain place and time.

An event of a specified kind e will occur at a certain place and time, which is related to in a specified manner to the place and time of the occurrence of the first event. The symbols c and e have been used to suggest the terms cause and effect which are often, through by no means, always applied to events related by a law of the above kind.

The main function of general laws in the natural sciences is to connect events in patterns which are usually referred to as explanation and prediction. The event in question consists of the following:

1. A set of statements asserting the occurrence of certain events.
2. A set of universal hypotheses such as the statement of both groups are reasonable and well confirmed by empirical evidence.
3. From the two groups of statements the sentence asserting the occurrence of the event can be logically deduced.
4. Describe the initial and boundary conditions for the occurrence of the final event, hence group one – states the determining conditions for the event to be explained while group two – contains the general laws on which the explanation is based. They imply the statement that whenever events of the kind described in the first group occur, an event of the kind to be explained will take place.

2.10.2 Illustration

Explanation on the cracking of an automobile radiator during a cold night;

The sentence of group one may state the following:

1. The car was left in the street at night.
2. Its radiator which is made of iron was completely filled with water and the lid was screwed on lightly.
3. Temperature fell from 390⁰F to 250⁰F in the morning. The air pressure was normal.

Group two, sentence would have empirically laws such as the following:

1. Below 32⁰F under normal atmospheric pressure water freezes.
2. Below 39.2⁰F the pressure of a mass of water increases with decreasing temperatures, if the dome remains constant or decreases when the heater freezes, the pressure age in increases.

The examples given above, deal with types of events and not individual events. Hempel argues that both history and science can give an account of their subject matter only in terms of general concepts and history can grasp the unique individuality of its objects of study more and no less than can physics or chemistry.

A set of events can be said to have caused the events to be explained only if general laws can be indicated which connect cause and effect in the manner characterized above. “Historical explanation too aims at showing that the events in question were not a matter of chance, but was to be expected in view of certain antecedent of simultaneous conditions.”

For instance people who have jobs do not like to lose them, those who are habituated to certain skilled but not welcome change, those who have become accustomed to the exercise of a certain kind of power do not like to relinquish their control, if anything they want to develop greater power and correspondingly greater prestige.

This government offices and bears once created, in turn, institute drives, not only to fortify themselves, against assault but to enlarge the scope of their operations. Historians use reconstruction of universal hypotheses on which the words use hence therefore because, consequently naturally, obviously etc. are often indicative of the tacit presupposition of some general laws.

They are used to tie up the initial conditions with the event to be explained, but that the latter was naturally expected as a consequence of the stated conditions follow only if the suitable general laws are presupposed, for example the statement that the dust bowl farmers migrate to California because continued drought and sandstorms render their existence increasingly precarious and because California seems to them to offer much better conditions.

Universal hypothesis populations will tend to migrate to regions which offer better conditions. However, the explanations in history may be called explanation sketch because it consists of more or less vague indications of the laws and initial conditions considered as relevant and it needs filling out in order to turn into a full pledge explanation.

Hempel challenges the Collingwood's view of re-enacting the experience of the agents, for it does not constitute an explanation but its functions suggest certain psychological hypotheses which might serve as explanatory principles.

The methodology does not guarantee the soundness of historical explanation to which it leads this is because the historian tries to realize how himself would act under given conditions and under particular motivations of his erodes, then the tentatively generate his findings into a general rule and uses the latter as an explanatory principle in accounting for the actions of the persons involved.

An historian may be incapable of feeling himself into the role of a paranoiac historic personality, yet he may be well be able to explain certain of his actions by reference to the principles of abnormal psychology.

Thus the explanation in history is done by subsuming it under general empirical laws and the criterion of its soundness is not whether it appears to our imagination, whether it is presented in suggestive analogies or is otherwise

made appear plausible... but exclusively whether it rests on empirically well confirmed assumptions concerning initial conditions and general laws.

Explanations on bursting of car radiators on cold nights and migration of dust bowl farmers to California. The character of the general laws might be different in the two cases the former might be universal in scope and well attested, the latter a statistical law with an uncertain probability value, but explanation in both examples is achieved by deducing the phenomenon in question from statements comprising a set of general laws and specific antecedent conditions. Thus according to Hempel historians offer explanation sketches and not explanation. Thus, this becomes explanation sketches and not explanations. Thus requires “filling out” that is the sketches would have to be expanded before Hempel would regard them as full pledge explanations.

Carl Hempel on the functions of general laws in history argues that “historical explanation too, aims at showing that the event in question was not a matter of chance, but was expected in view of creating antecedent or simultaneous conditions. The expectation referred to is not properly or divination but rational scientific anticipation which rests on the assumption of general laws.” There are no accidents in history such as war and revolution.

History becomes a consumer, but not a producer of general laws that is it applies laws borrowed from elsewhere. History aims at giving sufficient conditions or necessity conditions that participate or prompt the actor to act.

Law explanations, according to Hempel it does explanation by representing the event to be explained as an instance of a generalization to the effect that events of that sort usually occur in situations of a certain kind for example the defeat of Finland in 1940 is explained by the greater size of the Russian army. There are however uncertainties about them. Are they to be interpreted as a tiny

sufficient or necessary condition? On the one hand, it is difficult for impossible to include enough to make an explanation literally sufficient larger armies have been sometimes defeated.

2.10.3 Use of General Laws in Explaining History

General Law can be confirmed or discarded by use of suitable empirical findings. The term law suggests the idea that the statement is confirmed by relevant evidence available. According to Hempel “historical explanation aims at showing that the event in question was not a matter of chance, but was to be expected in view of certain antecedent or simultaneous conditions.” Some words such as hence, therefore, because, consequently, naturally, obviously support use of general laws.

History aims at giving sufficient conditions or necessary. Conditions that precipitate propel or prompt the actor to act no prophecy antecedent and simultaneous conditions. History as a science positivist’s explanation is supposed to use universal empirical laws that should apply certain social laws that are applicable everywhere in the world. According to Hempel history observes the rules of accuracy and therefore it aims at giving the truth. Hempel gives the following reasons why history should use general laws?

1. History deals with human beings who operate in certain environment, so it deals with conditions of masses of mankind living in a social state whose it seeks to discover the laws that given these conditions. History is dynamic. Mass action possible to use general laws.
2. Historians are accurate in their conclusions i.e. stating the truth personal bias is not part of history all possible options.

3. Historians find several causes that lead to the occurrence of an event sequence like in science repeating the experiment.
4. Selection in history is not a weakness all disciplines do selection. History selects from many sources add up to giving evidence.
5. History is objective it is a representation of what happened according to available evidence exactness and dependable truth.
6. History is a well organized discipline historical events did not happen as accidents they have origin antecedent and simultaneous condition necessary and sufficient condition to speak of oral occurrence.
7. History deals with cause, course and effects that is, the events are a buildup of causes (sequence – one affair leads to another).
8. Possible to predict what is likely to happen for example inflation; prices going up, workers demanding more money, employers refusing, strike, go-slow, demonstrations.
9. Man is susceptible scientific analysis that is a product of society behaves according to his/her socialization can predict his behavior.
10. Historians use hypotheses (theoretical framework) and the hypotheses are modified according to data collected.
11. Historical research is a product of inter-disciplinary approach the researcher borrows heavily from other disciplines. Other disciplines cannot stand on their own without history.

2.11 Use of Theory/Hypothesis in Explanation

It is important since it raises important questions and alerts scholars to fresh source materials. Since 18th century, theory has played a regular role in historical discourses. It also helps historians to understand how political social and economic components are arranged together to form a whole society. According to Left Gordon theories can be used to show historical change or the direction in which change is moving. Such theories explain the destiny of mankind by ascribing a meaning to history.

Theory forces historians to move away from particular to general in an effort to make sense of the subject as a whole. It helps historians to reflect on certain reflections about the nature of historical process. Historical explanation aims at showing that the event in question was not a “matter of chance” accidental.

Historical explanation is to describe how in order to know why, to break down a term into its constituents in order to explain how it became when it was. History explanation has its own features since it is concerned with complexes; it explains the whole thus explaining parts and answers questions who? Where? When? How? Norwell Smith historical explanation “consist in a series of steps each of which mentions a particular fact.”

2.12 Explanation According to Positivists

They believe that explanation is the same for all subjects, historical and natural sciences explanations are the same. Explanation is supposed to use universal empirical laws i.e. they should apply certain social laws that are applicable everywhere in the world.

Such laws subsume or exhibit a deductive pattern i.e. the method used should be logical.

An important person here is Carl Hempel in his book, *Functions of General Laws in History*, argues that “Historical explanation, too aims at showing the event in question was not a matter of chance, but was to be expected in view of certain antecedent or simultaneous conditions. The expectation referred to is not prophesy or divination but rational scientific anticipation which rests on the assumption of general laws.”

There are no accidents in history, what happens is a product of something, what causes it – due to these then we are explaining events. They classify historical events to general events that deal with kinds of events for example revolutions, wars, overthrow of governments Thus according to historians; one should ask oneself, why do the revolutions occur? The moment you ask this, it is possible to have general issues that lead to this revolution for example political issues such as oppression, dictatorship among others, there is a limit, before people react.

2.12.1 Why Do Wars Occur?

Positivists argue that it is possible to relate the points. History becomes a consumer, but not a producer of general laws. The discipline applies laws borrowed from elsewhere thus history becomes consumer of general laws. History aims at giving sufficient/necessary conditions and or necessary conditions that promotes the actor to act.

2.13 Explanation According to Relativists

History deals with non-repeatable events (unique) events which have unique causes and therefore, do not expect a similar event occurring elsewhere in

different places. A philosopher by the name Michael Qakeshott in his book, *Experience and its Modes* says or comments “the moment history enquiry is regarded as instance of general laws; history is dismissed because science which utilizes general laws deals with general features of the world that history is interested in individual things and not general events.” History deals with specific events for example in Kenya, Mau Mau rebellion led by Kikuyu at particular place Mt Kenya and in a particular time, 1952.

R. G. Collingwood in his book, *An Idea of History* argues that human actions are different from actions by objects. Human action is a product of thoughts that is reason. Natural events that the scientists deal with can be seen while historical events have both the inside and outside, for they are not mere events. By inside it is the thought side. Therefore historical events requires discovery of the thought of the agent in this case a historical action is an expression of the thought. R. G. Collingwood says “in science the event is discovered by perceiving it, and the search for its cause is conducted by assigning its class and determining the relation between that class and others, for history, the object to be discovered is not a mere event, but the thought expressed in it to discover that thought is already to understanding it.”

To understand an action, historians must re-think or re-enact the agent thought in his/her mind he/she must engage the situation in his mind, the same way an actor does. He must see the possible alternatives and the reasons that forced the agent to choose one rather than the other. It is very difficult for two people in different environments to have similar thoughts like another.

Therefore re-thinking is the limited evidence available. A few actions of the historical agent had a thought in the sense of being done consciously. It is also argued that historical actors act without reasoning (acting through emotions). Some of the actions are out of irrationality of unconscious thought hence

somebody acted foolishly – is historian also forced to act as a fool? To understand what had happened? There are situations where the agent has rational understanding and the action is done contrary to his/her good reasons (person being confused).

2.14 Explanation in Natural Sciences

2.14.1 Dualism of Explanation

The nature of human beings is not like that of purely physical or even mindless biological entities. Mans nature is not fixed once and for all but is essentially modified by the culture in what he lives.

Man has no nature, he has only a history – but of those is so, there can be no universal laws about human acts, they cannot be based on causal laws analogous to those of the natural sciences.

When we seek an explanation of a purely physical event, it can be explained in terms of antecedent causal conditions – this can mess the point when a human act is under consideration.

Men have purposes when they act, they have motives and intentions, they make plans, and thus their actions are in part determined by some goals they seek to achieve in the future.

If a human act is to be explained satisfactorily, we must above all understand that act, by seeing the motives and purposes which entered into performance, as well as the particular character of eth man whose motives and purposes they are. In history it is explanation by the method of emphatic understanding that is

sought. Historians are interested, not in a nature which repeats itself, but in happenings that occur only once.

Historians are concerned not with revolutions in general, but with particular revolutions and their particular circumstances and personalities and because historical events are unique they cannot be explained in terms of general laws.

Historical explanation is radically different from explanation in natural science. It requires reconstruction in the historian's mind of the character of those who acted in the past and of the circumstances under which they acted, the explanation is said to be successful when the historian gets the sense of relieving the past he seeks to explain.

2.14.2 Explanation by Scientists/Natural Science

- Scientists no longer attempt to explain the phenomena with which they deal in any ultimate sense. They do not propose to tell us why things are what they are to the extent of revealing the purpose behind nature.
- Scientists are content with the for more modest task of building up a system of observed uniformities in terms of which they hope to elucidate any situation which falls to be examined.
- Given such situation, their procedure is to show that it exemplifies one or more general laws, which can themselves be seen to follow from, or connect with, other laws of a wider character.
- The main features of these process are, first, that it consists in the resolution of particular events into cases of general laws and secondly, that it involves nothing more than an external view of phenomena under

consideration (since the scientist is not professing to reveal the purpose behind them).

- It can thus be said to result in an understanding which is properly described as “abstract” (existing in thought or an idea but not having a physical or practical existence (vague, impractical) thus historical understanding is not this abstract, but is concrete. Do historians explain the facts in the same way as natural scientists?

2.15 Max Weber (1864-1920) and Scientific Explanation in History

2.15.1 Historical Sociology

He was a German sociologist, historian and philosopher. He argued that the scientific investigators methods were peculiarly well adapted to discovering the probable results of policies, he was likely to think that a policy value must also be settled y reference to results.

Weber, argued policies could be rational, not merely in the sense of adapting means to ends, but in the sense that they consistently and genuinely express the attachment to certain values of an agent who is indifferent to the achievement or non achievement of further ends.

Weber denied that any form of social activity could be purely economic. All activities have an economic aspect in as far as they face scarcity of resources and thus involve planning, cooperation and competition.

But economic considerations alone cannot explain the particular direction taken by any social activity or movement, for these other values have to be taken into consideration.

Further, the sociologists own culturally conditioned values are already involved in the way in which he has isolated an intelligible field of study from the infinite complexity of social life.

Hence, there is certain subjectivity, of value at the very foundations of social scientific inquiry, but this needs not damage the objectivity of the results of such inquiry. Social phenomena involve the action of agents who themselves attach a sense to what they are doing. Correspondingly, sociology requires an outstanding of the sense of what is being studied.

Without it, Weber argued the sociologist would not even be in a position to describe the events he wants to explain. According to Weber understanding is particularly susceptible to the investigator's subjective bias, and the sense of unfamiliar forms of activity is likely to be interpreted by reference to what is familiar, but perhaps only superficially similar.

Weber therefore thought that understanding must be supplemented by what he sometimes seemed to regard as a distinct method of inquiry, causal explanation. Weber argued that causal explanations in sociology are, as much, completely naturalistic and that the social sciences are distinguished by the addition of understanding.

This point can be illustrated by Weber's treatment of authority. As a prelude to a causal treatment, he tried to define authority as "the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons." The presence of expressions like "command" and "obeyed" in this definition shows that it already presupposes understanding.

2.16 Karl Popper Raymund and Scientific Explanation in History

He was an Australian philosopher of natural and social science. Popper is notable for having offered a systematic interpretation, culminating in a purported formal refutation of all historicism, that is, any views to the effect that there can be a large scale, long-term predictions about the course of human society.

The interpretation, through inevitable yoking together very desperate views, is valuable, not least for its distinction between historicist prophecies and the conditional, short-term predictions about human affairs that can be genuinely scientific, and so form basis for reformatory ‘social engineering’ as opposed to “utopian” transformations, implementable if at all only by grossly cohesive methods.

He makes much too of a distinction between laws of gravitation, and trends, for example the course of biological evolution and the patterns of development allegedly discerned by subtractive philosophers of history.

In the universality of law, its application to all cases, past, present and future lays the only basis for scientific prediction. Trends are essentially observed or inferred facts, calling for explanation in terms of laws, and not in themselves the basis for satisfied predictions.

Popper argues that the course of history is strongly influenced by the growth of human knowledge and that we cannot rationally predict the future growth of knowledge – thus it follows that man cannot predict the course of history.

Popper has argued that no theory has been established as more than an interesting, perhaps dangerous, speculation. The burden of proof falls on the upholders, not the critics of such theories.

Popper applies his theory of knowledge to man and society in the form of an attack on historicism, the doctrine that there are general laws of historical development that render the course of history inevitable and predictable. Popper asserts that scientific method applies both to nature and to society. Social science can discover laws that make clear the unintended consequences of human action, but there can be no laws of the whole system. It follows that social reform must proceed by piecemeal social engineering, not by total revolutionary reconstructions of social order.

For Popper the growth of knowledge begins with the imaginative proposal of hypothesis, a matter of individual and unpredictable insight that cannot be reduced to rule. Such a hypothesis in science talks than myth if it excludes some observable possibilities. To test a hypothesis, we apply ordinary observation statements whose falsehood would refute it. A serious and scientific test consists in a preserving search for negative, falsifying instances.

The proper method of science is to formulate the most falsifiable hypotheses and consequently those that are simplest, have the greatest empirical content, and are logically the least probable.

3



Causation in History



3.1 Questions

1. Why is the concept of causation problematic in history and how has it been resolved?
2. “The study of history is the study of courses” E. H. Carr. Discuss causation in the light of this statement.
3. Explain two of the following aspects of causation in history.
 - Determinism
 - Chance
 - Free Will
 - Indeterminism
 - Great Man Theory
4. Giving a historical example, show the problems of historical causation.

3.2 Causation

The principle of causality is an integral part of the dynamic interpretation of matter; even random events (accidental) have their causes manifestations for example regularities that govern facts. For historians dealing with causality, true premises in those facts are guided by regularity in them.

3.3 Historical Causation

This diagnoses the causes of a happening. Asks questions such as how? Why? When? Whom? Where? Attributes blame or responsibility of the event in

question. Historians act like a judge in trying to discover whose action was the cause of the event before attributing blame. It has underlying, immediate, actual, ultimate causes and consequences. Historians ask the questions why? The study of history is the study of causes. It assigns several causes to the same event.

Historians deal with a multiplicity of causes to the same event e.g. possible reasons that made the Bantu to migrate from their cradle land (civil war, adventure, famine population pressure, famine, drought, fertile land, external attacks, adventure). An occurrence is described as being inevitable, unavoidable, incapable (one aspect leading to it is overwhelmingly strong). The historian distills from the experience of the past which he recognizes as an enable to rational explanation and interpretation and from it draws conclusions which may serve as a guide to actions.

History is a process of selection in terms of historical significance i.e. a selective system not only on cognitive but of causal orientations to reality. Historians select from facts that are significant for his purpose, so from the multiplicity of sequences of cause and effect, he extracts those and only those which are historically significant and the standard of historical significance is his ability to fit them into his pattern of rational explanation and interpretation.

Some causes are a rational and real while others are rational and accidental. Rational causes lead to fruitful generalizations and lessons can be learned from them, they serve the end of broadening and deepening out understanding. Accidental causes cannot be generalized teach no lessons and lead to no conclusions. Causality is bound up with interpretation.

Functions of history is to promote our understanding of the past in the light of the present and of the present in the lightly of the past. Cause is a compelling effect that produces and effects. According to positivists, causality denotes the

sum of necessary and sufficient conditions for the occurrence of any event, is a necessary antecedent to it.

Historians examine, the underlying, immediate causes, or even actual cause to the event. The actual cause to the historical event is that which completes a sufficient set of conditions. The historical agent is induced, compelled or persuaded so as to act. Causation is concerned with the following:

1. The nature of historical facts.
2. The nature of historical events (sequential way explanation of events).
3. Facts which are random, some based on chance, events (facts).
4. Events with regularity – meaning highly predictable – eating, rising of sun, setting of sun, seasons, drought etc.
5. To give meaning to phenomena, one has to distil and sequence
6. Causation therefore is concerned with change from situation A-B. what causes the change
7. Change implies conditions that exist in a place together in a particular year.
8. Change implies direction – this involves the observation of some historical facts at successive moments.
9. Change implies-mechanisms of transformation in society
10. Causation also is concerned with development (change) mechanisms in which they occur in the sense that the situation improves i.e. qualitative improvement.

11. Causation is also concerned with conditioning the elements of a given developing system, which are linked to events (facts) that are one conditioning the other.

3.4 Cause and Effect

This involves different types of conditions such as; condition other changes, serial conditioning, causal conditioning, direct causal conditioning and indirect causal conditioning. Causation must include change, development and conditioning.

3.5 Types of Causes

There are several types of causes in history such as, long term causes, short term causes, immediate causes, principal causes, essential causes, sufficient causes, real/actual causes, general causes, secondary causes, advantageous causes, necessary causes and efficient causes.

3.6 Concepts of Causation

3.6.1 Determinism

Determinism is a principle which states that all fragments of the universe have their conditioning of cause. Determining is a concept that links the problem of laws. In history determinism is the theses that for every set of human actions, there is the same system which is deterministic with respect to this items i.e. no accidents in history. There are four views about determinism and indeterminism each has two elements; radical indeterminism, moderate indeterminism, moderate determinism and radical determinism.

3.6.2 Indeterminism

Radical indeterminism – this is a principle that holds that there are no regular events. All events are chance events. Even thought is evoked by causes whatever happens is accidental. Moderate indeterminism according to this view, there are both regular events which are unambiguously determined and chance events that is non-determined. Radical determinism holds that all events are regular no chance events. Moderate determinism (dialectical determinism) view holds that both regular and chance events occur, but chance events are such that only apparently, being also determined i.e. every event is both regular and chance events. Regular because it is linked with specified regularities. Chance because it may not appear at the surface of the events, they manifest itself in disguised form.

For a historical fact or event to occur there should be both necessary and sufficient conditions that is both the principal causes exist and that advantageous or chance (side cause) which work on behalf of principle cause also exists.

3.6.3 What Makes an Event both Sufficient and Necessary?

Karl Marx (moderate determinism) says “world history would have a very mystical character if there were no room in it for chance this chance itself becomes part and parcel of the general trend of development and is compensated by other forms of chance.”

Trotsky argues “the entire historical process is a refraction of historical laws through the accidental. In the language of biology historical laws are revealed through the natural selection of accidents.” Radical determinism is extreme and the closer to truth is moderate indeterminism. Dialectical or moderate

indeterminism is closer to the truth for it allows for both of them (regular/chance). Therefore the history researchers need to penetrate the chance event.

According to H.L.A Hart and A.M. Honore they argue that causes are abnormalities, they argue that causes are deviations from the events. Then a customary norm breaks down, it is due to a form of deviation from the protective customary produces. In this case a cause becomes an omission which coincides with what is reprehensible by established standards of conduct.

William Dray, talks of a gardener who is to take care of flowers, the job is to water flowers if the flowers dry up then investigate the cause what you need is to question the gardener. If he forgot – deviated from the norm – forgetting is an omission and deviation from the norm and thus the cause of drying is because of lack of watering by the gardener.

Voluntary action can be both cause and non-causal in nature for example a thief snatches bag or purse handing over another. Where do historians lay the cause, the lady for being careless or the thief? A problem of cause emerges because there is value judgment in historian in attributing the causes. In this case the historian is required to judge the cause before attributing the blame. Why do people volunteer to assist? Find out what the person volunteering is expected to get. Are there hidden causes to the action? Does charity work have hidden motives? What is the motive behind the assistance?

3.7 Historical Causation: Why is it Problematic?

Historians ought to be able to say what brought things about as well as what in fact occurred and yet there is evidently for more disagreements among them in diagnosing causes than in delineating the precise course of events.

Causes of the First World War; what really caused the war? Was it the personality of with German emperor the fundamental factor, or was it the economic rivalry of the great powers? Was it nationalism in Europe; was it the destruction the balance of power?

The fact that there are no clear and agreed answers to questions of this sort certainly troubles some students of history. Different historians have different answers to the same question. The difficulties in identifying causes in history are due what an historical cause is? What caused the relations between the main European powers to deteriorate sharply in the 19th century? Causes cannot operate in isolation cause is only one of a number of necessary conditions to compel, forces, prompt the gear to act. Several or a variety of affairs or factors were in operation to led to necessary and sufficient conditions. For an event to occur it is prompted by all the events which preceded it (antecedent factors).

4



Historical Fact and Truth



4.1 Questions

1. What is truth in history? To that extent do correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories of truth explain the problem of truth in history?
2. Explain the following theories of truth and how they apply to history
 - Correspondence theory
 - Coherence theory
 - Pragmatic theory
3. What is truth in history? To what extent do the three theories of truth explain the problem of truth in history?
4. Explain the following theories of truth and how they apply to history?
5. Outline and evaluate any three theories of truth in history.
6. Discuss the validity of the view that in history facts do not speak for themselves it is the historian who must make the facts to speak.

4.2 The Concept of Historical Fact

Although the past is not accessible to direct inspection, it has left ample traces of itself in the present in form of document. It is upon these that the historian builds his reconstruction that is historical evidence (direct or indirect). Historical facts have to be established, they are never simply given. Facts are the material about which statements are made. It is the degree of reliability, centered examination of historical evidence and reconstruction of the past.

4.3 The Concept of Historical Truth

Is obtaining what is reliable knowledge in any given phenomenon. It is the criteria for measuring truth. Do historians report truly? Or they imprisoned by the illusion of the epoch and of class? Until a valid reconstruction and synthesis of perspectives have been concluded, history “itself” is beyond our knowledge. Truth is obtaining what is reliable knowledge in human intellectual development nothing appears more elusive than the attainment of widely accepted falsity and truth.

Correct methods of research guarantee arrival at true statements about the past. The plane of reference is facts and not the authors trustworthiness the ideas commonly accepted by historians (truths). Austin posits that a statement is said to be true when the historical state of affairs to which it is correlated by the demonstrative conventions (the one to which it refers) is of a type with the sentences used in making it, is correlated by the descriptive conventions.

4.4 Truth in History

What is an historical fact? How does one determine a historical statement whether it is false or true?

- The most striking thing about history is that the fact it purports to describe are past facts; and past facts are no longer accessible to direct inspection.
- Historians cannot test the accuracy of historical statements by simply seeing whether they correspond to a reality which is independently known.

- How can we test them?
- The answer which any practicing historian would give to this question would be that we do so by referring to historical evidence.
- Although the past is not accessible to direct inspection it has left ample traces of itself in the present, in the shape of documents, buildings, coins, institutions, procedures and so forth.
- And it is upon these that any self-respecting historian builds his reconstruction of it; every assertion the historian makes, he would say, must be supported by some sort of evidence, direct or indirect.
- So called historical statements which rest on any other basis (for example, on the historian's unaided imagination) should be given no credence. At their best they are inspired guesses, at their worst mere fiction.
- This certainly gives us an intelligible working theory of historical truth; the traces of the past which are available bear neither their meaning nor their authenticity on their face.
- Thus when an historian reads a statement in one or other of the 'original sources' for a period he is studying, he does not automatically accept it.
- His attitude to it, if he knows his job, is always critical; he has to decide whether or not to believe it, or again how much of it to believe.
- History proper, according to R. G. Collingwood cannot be looked on as a scissors and paste affair; it is not made up by the historian's taking bits of whole series of authorities that is the historian merely repeats what his

“authorities” tell him, where he forces his “authorities” to answer the questions he puts in to them, is not always quite clear.

- Historical facts have in every case to be established they are never simply given.
- And this applies not merely to the finished products of the historical thinking, but to the statements from which he starts as well the historical refers some of the statements as having a far higher degree of reliability than others.
- It can summoned of that if is the duty of the historian to base all his statements on the available evidence and to further decide what evidence is available.
- Historical evidence in other words is not an ultimate datum to which we can refer to test truth of historical judgments.
- To what may any judgments, or proposition, or statement express the nature of reality or states facts?
- This is concerned with skepticism about whether human beings can ever reach truth or state fact.
- It is necessary to enquire into certain general difficulties about the historian’s abilities to do what he says he is doing, namely reconstructing the past, and this enquiry will involve us in a critical examination both of what it is to be an historical fact and of the nature of historical evidence.

4.5 Theories of Truth in History

There are three types of theories that could be applicable in history namely; correspondence coherence and pragmatic theories. Correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories of truth fit quite nicely to different areas of inquiry that is to be near to the truth in their reconstruction. They balance objectivity and subjectivity and try being near to the truth.

4.6 Correspondence Theory

- A statement is true if it corresponds to the facts, and conversely, if it corresponds to the facts it is true.
- Truth and correspondence with fact thus seem to be interchangeable terms, and the theory simply consists in stressing their equivalence.
- Truth this means correspondence with fact, so that no statement which does not so correspond can be true.
- Question-what is fact?
- They exist whether or not anybody thinks about them.
- They are described as “hard”, “stubborn”, or again, as “given”, “well grounded”, “securely based”.
- The work of theory is to “explain”, “do justice to” or “cover” the fact.
- Therefore theories take the form of judgments, or propositions asserted or denied or spoken, written, or implied statements.

- Facts are the material about which statements are made or judgments formulated.
- It follows that the destruction between fact and theory in correspondence theory cannot be absolute.
- Hence an account of truth in terms of correspondence with fact can it best be a partial one.

4.6.1 Correspondence Theory of Truth

States that the “truth consists the agreement of a proposition with a fact there has been much debate about the meaning of terms agreement and fact in this context.” Prof. Mandelbann says in correspondence theory of truth view, objectivity is seen as a one to one correlation between the account and the actual event in this view, the confrontation and with history this is out of the question.

4.6.2 Correspondence Theory

Proponents are Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Russell, Austin and Wittgenstein. The theory holds that truth consists in the following if the object referred to by the names of an elementary proposition have the same configurative as those names have in the proposition – if in other words, there is a state of affairs corresponding in components and structure with that proposition then the proposition is true. Elementary propositions are in fact attempts to picture reality; they say how things are by picturing or modeling reality.

A picture represents a possible situation in logical space. A picture agrees with reality or fails to agree, it’s correct or incorrect, true or false. The agreement or disagreement of its sense with reality constitutes its truth or falsity.

Corresponding to one-to-one correlation between two sets of things as for example, when we say that the rank of general in the army corresponds to that of admiral in the navy.

Correspond with is the kind of correspondence which involves the matching or mirroring relationship for example when we say that one form edge of a piece of paper corresponds with the form edge of another Wittgenstein.

Austin's position seems the better version of the correspondence theory in requiring only that true propositions have facts which they corresponds to rather than with.

4.6.3 Correspondence Theory of Truth

The theory state that truth consist the agreement of a proposition with fact objectivity is seen as a one to one correlation between the account and the actual event. Practices reality that is a picture argues with reality of fails to agree. Correspond to one-to-one two sets; corresponds with: matching or mirroring relationship; correspondence theory – assumes that discovery the truth or falsity of a proposition simply involves company it directly with the facts with reality. Truth thus is correspondence with facts. History can utilize the theory. Facts which bear no relation to present evidence must be unknown. Historians should reconstruct the past in correspondence with evidence available.

4.6.4 History and Correspondence

History as a record of past events must correspond to history presently. If it does not then it is not history. Although the historian thinks he is talking about a past which is over and done with, everything he actually believes about the past is a function of the evidence at present available to him and of his own skills in

interpreting it. The facts do present conclusions arrived at after processes of thinking. Facts which bear no relation to present evidence must be unknown and whether then have any significance for the historian is irrelevant. The correspondence theory stakes everything on the notion of a past which is at once over and done with and capable of being reconstructed in some degree at least.

The past, consisted of a series of separate events and it is the historians job to reconstruct the series, or part of it, as fully as he can how is the job done? Some events were recorded as they occurred, and that all we have to do is read the records (truly divided) whose records can accordingly be taken as providing a basis of hard fact round which the historian can build the rest of his narrative.

Consequently, historical truth on this account depends on our accepting certain primary authorities as wholly authentic authorities. To suggest that historian who knows his job would be ready to accept a statement as true just because it is recorded by such an authority is absurd. Therefore an historian must submit all his evidence to some skeptical scrutiny, building his facts out of it, rather than taking it for fact with question.

4.7 Coherence Theory

- Truth as a relation between one statement and another.
- A statement, it is maintained, is true if it can be shown to cohere, or fit in with, all other statements we are prepared to accept.
- No statement is made entirely in isolation; they all depend on certain presuppositions or conditions and are made against a background of these. E.g. every belief we have is bound up with other beliefs in the sense thus it is part or the whole of or ground for accepting them.

4.7.1 Examples: Tomorrow will be Wet and Stormy

- Science of meteorology.
- High cirrus cloud in the sky.
- The sunset today has a certain appearance.
- According to coherence theory, fact is rather the cohesion of process of thinking.
- Here facts here must be established and not apprehended as in correspondence theory.
- A fact is simply a theory which has established itself, a theory about whose reliability serious doubts no longer exists.
- Supports of coherence theory argue that truth is attained only so far as I suppress my private self and allow my thinking to be guided by objective principle, universally valid.

4.7.2 Coherence Theory of Truth

Proponents are Hempel, Neurath, Hegel and Bradley. This states that truth cannot be asserted of one proposition in isolation from others; truth belongs to a system of proposition that is a set of propositions which cohere with each other.

Coherence theories claim that truth simply is coherence with the system. Coherence means logical consistency. There are two theories that have brought coherence theory to disrepute. The doctrine of internal relations which holds that the relationships in which things stand to one another are part of the very nature of those things, so that to change any one of those relations is to change

the very things themselves. If anything changes, then all other things change with it. For example its change must change some of their relations to it and so their relational qualities.

A relation must at both ends affect and pass into the being of its terms. The model for this thesis is the nature of numbers. For its change must change some of their relations to it, for example numbers such as, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. The number 7 for example is what it is because of its relation with the number 6 and the number 8, indeed with all other numbers. The doctrine is closely associated with the notion of reality's intelligibility and the very nature of coherence itself. Degree of truth doctrine – maintains that all individuals' propositions are partly false, that they involve misrepresentations of the facts. Only the whole system of propositions expresses the truth as such and anything less must therefore express falsehood. It has often been pointed at that this involves on the face of it, confusion between the notion of expressing all the truth and expressing only the truth. Clearly the doctrine would express less than the whole truth. But then the doctrine would be unexciting too.

4.7.3 History and Coherence

According to coherence theory all truth is essentially relative it depends upon the presuppositions and conceptual scheme with which we set out and on the rest of our belief in the field in question. If this theory is applied effectively, it will prevent a buildup of historical truth.

In coherence theory, it leaves the structure in the air, with the result that we have no effective criterion for distinguishing between real and imaginary. Coherent theory is not enough as an account of historical truth. It compare an historians procedure with that of a detective – a detective investigating a case begins by deciding what he can regard as undisputed fact, in order to build his

theories around that as a framework. If the theories work out the framework will be declared to have been well founded. But if results are not forthcoming, a stage may be reached at which it is necessary to go back to the beginning and doubt some of the initial “facts” of the case.

The historian should also be prepared to doubt even his foremost beliefs. Coherence theory of historical truth believes that as Croce – all history is contemporary history (no historian can accept this) i.e. nonsense to an historian. Historian – out knowledge of the past must rest on evidence which is present. Coherence the past is the present. The present evidence used by historians does not refer to the present, but to the past. We may conclude that the coherence theory, at least in its normal form, will not apply to history. Thus a synthesis of the two theories is necessary.

4.8 Pragmatic Theory of Truth

According to this, as belief is true if it ‘works’ in practice if it has a practical utility or usefulness. It was developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by the American philosophers Charles Pierce, William James and John Dewey. The theory equals truth with success; a proposition is true if it comes in practice, if it has a practical utility of usefulness. Success is equated with successfully conforming to the facts. If the proposition satisfies the needs or wants of the individual it is true. (God exists) practical usefulness in satisfying the need of the behavior.

4.8.1 Objections to the Theory

If belief in god satisfy you but not me, then this is true for you but not for me. Truth however is the objective matter par excellence. That is true is true for

everyone (universal assent). If god exists, then it is true independently god exists, and then it is true just as much for the atheist and the behavior. The thesis makes truth a time – dependent attribute, since it is clearly possible for a behavior to become dissatisfied with his belief. If john becomes filled with remorse about his past sins, and fears to meet his maker, the belief in god becomes false for him where it had been true before. On the pragmatic theory, of course, John needs no longer reef the consequences of his sin.

The correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories of truth – can be recognized by a simple expedient. If they are treated as theories concerning the criteria we use for deciding whether a proposition is true, rather than theories about the nature of truth itself, they fit quite nicely to different areas of inquiry. Logic and mathematics offer a good home for the coherence theory, since truth the rare judged in terms of their consistency with other propositions. The sciences in general use pragmatic tests for truth. And ordinary empirical judgments are judged true by their correspondence to fact.

5



Idealism in History



5.1 Questions

1. Explain the main features of either Wilhelm Dilthey's or R. G. Collingwood's historical idealism.
2. Evaluating Collingwood's view that "All history is History of thought."
3. "History is re-enhancement of past events." Discuss.

5.2 R. G. Collingwood

5.2.1 Historical Imagination and Re-enactment

Analytical of critical philosophers of historical study history in the sense of the study of the past, that is, they interest themselves in what historians count as evidence or explanations in whether or not their conclusions are capable of objective truth, in whether or not it belongs to the historians role to pass moral judgments on historical figures.

Analytical philosophers of history include: Benedetto Croce, R. G. Collingwood, Karl Popper and William Dray. Croce and Collingwood were idealists in their philosophical orientation. Collingwood is unstable for stressing that historical statements, report past actions, which have to be understood in terms of their agents motive and social conventions of their day.

According to Collingwood, the concern of history is the actions of man that affords it can advantage to natural science. Historians, being themselves people, can imaginatively identify with past people, sharing their thoughts (including motives and intentions) even it not their feelings.

Collingwood was mainly concerned to insist that history involve “thought”, the framing and treating of imaginative hypotheses, and history was not simply the compilation of chronicles (scissors and paste).

According to Collingwood, the historical thought is the re enhancement of past thought is the re enactment of past thoughts in historians own mind. The historian not only re enact past thoughts but he reenacted it in the contest of his own knowledge. When re enacting thoughts of the agent, he criticizes it, forms his own judgment or its values and corrects whatever errors he can discern in it.

Historical process according to Collingwood is a process of thought and that’s why man is regarded as the only subject of historical process for man is the only animal that thinks enough to render his actions the expressions of thought.

Collingwood argues that history is concerned with what man had done in the light of their conception of the nature and their world. The historians’ task was to re enact the thought of the agent. Faced with a puzzling piece of evidence, he had to establish what man in particular circumstances would logically be up to. His solution to the dilemma would be an inference from the documents at his disposal. And historical knowledge would be demonstrable because the historian could shower each stage of his argument how he would lead to relate questions to answers as intentions to actions.

The historian investigating any event in the past according to Collinwood makes a distinction between what may be called the outside and the inside of an event.

The outside is simply a description of behavioral particulars while the inside is the thought that finds expression in just those bodily movements. When the

historian asks himself why an event occurred, it is the “inside” view which he seeks to reconstruct.

5.2.2 Collingwood’s Contribution to History

Collingwood’s contributions to history can be meaningfully discussed by gleaning from his works which include: the philosophy of History. An Autobiography, the principles of Art and the idea of History, the answers he gives to the following questions: what is knowledge? What is history and what constitutes knowledge in history? How do we arrive at historical knowledge?

5.2.3 What is Knowledge?

Collingwood’s conception of knowledge is holistic and ideational. He sees knowledge as divided into art, religion, science and philosophy. All these branches of knowledge exist in a dialectical relationship. One points towards the essential character of the rest, for each, at the same time, possess its own internal dynamics. All possess an inextricable unity with the mind. All knowledge is intellectual knowledge. Hence, we can speak about the idea of art, the idea of religion, the idea of science, the idea of history and philosophy. To grasp the real nature of phenomena – artistic, religious, scientific, historical and philosophical it is necessary to penetrate the inside of what constitutes it, its internal essence and characteristics.

5.2.4 What is History?

This conception about knowledge forms Collingwood’s idea of history. Collingwood defines history as “the knowledge of the infinite world of facts”, as essentially universal, as a “whole in which every fact is included.” The word

history is used both in reference to what is supposed to have happened in the course of human existence and experience and to the written accounts of these. History is a unique type of knowledge for, unlike science, its subject matter is man's conscious/rational actions, which are motivated by ideas. All history is therefore a history of ideas.

5.2.5 What Constitutes Knowledge in History?

The following points emerge from Collingwood's definition of history. First, the centrality of man's action in historical process. Collingwood's idea of history is therefore humanist. This makes him different from some of positivists whose eruditions/ genetic reflections led them to attribute historical events to divine and or natural process. But this was not an original idea. Before Collingwood various philosophers had developed the humanistic conception of history. What Collingwood did was to add a rationalist dimension to the humanism, which already existed.

Second, Collingwood's view that history is an infinite while in which the knowledge of every fact is included differs from earlier thought which confined history to the actions of national, leaders and heroes which were divinely inspired. But Collingwood's view that history is infinite imposes limitation in its sheer extensiveness. The positivists believed that it was possible to write as it really happened. By denying the validity of this positivist stance Collingwood stands out as a relativist.

Collingwood rationalism overstretched the limits accepted by modern psychology. Collingwood believes that human actions that are the motor of historical processes are a product of conscious or rational ideas. Modern psychology attributes to the subconscious irrationality/emotions a higher percentage of the human mind than reason, consciousness and rationality.

Collingwood's idea of history does not even consider the role of accidents in historical causation. It does not even have a place for what modern historians call "covering laws" his argument that the techniques of the historian are completely different from those of a natural scientist is belied by modern techniques of historical inquiry. But this takes us to the third part of our discussion, namely how historians arrive at historical knowledge.

5.2.6 Methodology

Collingwood confined history to thought proper. Thought is seen not only as the force behind the action of individuals in history, but also as the fundamental concept of historical inquiry. Since history is a product of thoughtful human action, grasp the real nature of particular historical happenings it is necessary to penetrate the inside of events and to discern the thoughts of the historical agents concerned. According to Collingwood, the historian has to re think these thoughts in his own mind. This entails reconstructing for himself the situation in which the agents were placed and the way in which they envisage it. Hence, Collingwood's re enactment doctrine variously called re-thinking, re-creation, reconstruction, had been termed a methodology in historical inquiry.

What does this methodology constitute? According to Collingwood, the past events which the historian brings to light are only revealed by his thought in his attempt to understand the present in his sense, a past which has left no trace on the perceptible world.

In his own words he says "Historical thinking means nothing else than interpreting all the available evidence with the maximum degree of critical skill. It does not mean discovering what really happened, or what really happened is anything rather than what the evidence indicates. If there once happened, an event which no shred of evidence now, survives, the event is not part of

historical evidence. It is no historians business to discover it, since it is no gap in any historian's knowledge that he does know it"

In the above citation it is obvious Collingwood emphasizes the role of evidence in confirming historical facts. This is done mainly through thought, about which Collingwood has the following to say "ideally, historical thought is the apprehension of a word of fact. Actually, if the presentation of thought to itself of a world of half ascertained facts, a world in which truth and error are at any given moment inextricably are confused together." Thus the actual object of historical thinking is an object which is not 'given' but perpetually in a process of being given.

Like E, H Carr after him, Collingwood was arguing that historical knowledge is inquired by a constant dialogue between the historian and his facts. According to Collinwood the know ability of past events is only relative. It depends on perception, memory and authority of the historical agent or actor and the historian inquiry interpreter facts/events by re enacting the thought if the people who produced the events. This is re-enactment or inquiring into the past. The historian thought of imagination.

The historian understands what transpires when he is able to re think, re live the thought and action of the historical actor he is dealing with. The actors and the historians thought should become identical this, according to Collingwood is important since.

For history, the object to be discovered is not the mere event but the thought expressed in it. After the historian has ascertained the facts there is not further process of inquiring into their causes. When he knows is what happened, he already knows why it happened.

It is not, however, possible to know the past as it really happened. Here, Collingwood argues “if we hope we can come to know the past exactly as it happened, our hope is in vain... We cannot know the past, because it is not there to be known. There are no past facts except so far as we reconstruct them in historical thought. The past, which we reconstruct in historical thought, is not the real past; it is the past that can be disentangled from the present objective world by the present act of thinking. The re-enactment of the past on the present is the past itself so far as that is knowable to the historian.”

Like Croce who was his mentor and whose ideas he elaborated in his work Collingwood believes that “all history is contemporary history” it constitutes what the historian thinks in the present.

A number of points emerge from Collingwood’s methodology of historical inquiry. First there is a strong link between the historian historical events and thought about them according to Collingwood, historical facts/events in themselves in themselves do not constitute historical knowledge. Inferences based on imaginative thought must be drawn from them. Collingwood’s re-enactment methodology can be constructed thus the historian, question, evidence, answers, reconstruction and the historical past without the historians there are no questions. Without questions, there is no evidence without evidence there are not answers. Without answers we have no reconstructions and without reconstructions we have no historical past, no history.

Second, Collingwood’s re enactment methodology is based in the historian’s intuition. The historian, according to him, cannot re enact the thoughts of historical actors unless he has direct intuitive access to mental workings of the people whose actions he tries to understand and explain. He must intuitively ask relevant questions to get good evidence and answers on which to base his reconstruction or re enactment of the past. Critics have argued that this is not

really possible and that if anything, it relegates historical inquiry to empathy/telepathy which is a mystical and unscientific mental process. But those whose views tend to support Collingwood have argued that historical writings is based not only on source based knowledge but also on knowledge which is non source based, that is knowledge which is dependent on his personal experiences.

Third, it is apparent from Collingwood's views that it is now possible to arrive at objectivity in historical writing. For the result of the historians work will be tampered by the historians won psychological frame of mind, his fields of inquiry, the answers he gleans from the questions he poses and the evidence he gets to validate his findings.

From the foregoing it can be concluded that Collingwood has contributed to our knowledge of what history is and how we can arrive at historical cognition. His idea of history may not be quite original but it is obvious that through his amplification of pre existing ideas he opened up new vistas which have interested and influenced both his critics and admirers in the second half of this century and will continue to do so well into the future.

5.3 Collingwood's Critics

Question: is it possible, to perform an act of thought resembling the agent's thought? The answer is:

1. Few actions of historical agents had a thought side in the sense of being done for reasons consciously entertained.
2. Some actions are a product of irrationality or unconscious thought for examples are might act for foolish goals.

3. There are situations whereby the agent has a rational understanding of an action, but the action is done contrary to good reasons known to the agents, of one in which the agent who is so confused that it is impossible to follow the connection between what he believed and what he did.
4. The notion that the historian re-enacts the thought of the agent is fallacious. He mistakes a psychological fact for a methodological principle. Is it possible for one to put himself at the standpoint of a Roman emperor?
5. Does it possible to perform an act that thought resemble the agent's thoughts? The historians would then be dealing with copies of past thoughts and not past thoughts themselves.
6. No person can rethink a past thought. In each act of thinking represents an individual experience and not two experiences can literally be identical.
7. One has to re-argue the agent's arguments in his mind and therefore it is thought in its mediation.
8. Experience is not the object of historical knowledge but particular details or general characteristics can be satisfied by thought in as far as we are remembering experiences of our own or entering with sympathy and imagination of others but in such cases we do so in which we sympathize we are merely contemplating them as objects of external to our present.
9. If I see someone showing all the signs of pain, I am immediately pained myself. I know what is like to be the main in question because my mental state corresponds exactly to his. It is true it is possible to misread people's thoughts and feelings could not be demanded. If we can get of the actual

experience which gave rise to a certain expression – how do we know that our experience is precisely like it?

10. To say that all history of thought is to suggest at least men make their own history, free of determination by nature forces.
11. Its assumption that an action is a production of thought assumes that human action is deliberate when so many of them are not deliberate clear. Most actions studied by historians were down on the spur of the moment in respect to a sudden impulse.
12. This type of history that Collingwood suggest deals with biography, political history and military but cannot fit in economic history, e.g. history of prices can we rethink the thought of the agent who fixed them.
13. His approach will work only if the thoughts spoken of are embodied in deliberate acts of thinking occurring in the deliberate acts of thinking occurring in minds of single agent. The actions which the economic historian deal with is a completed series of actions carried on by different persons over a long time stretches of time, if any of whom are aware of the directions of the whole movement.
14. There is difference between what a person has in turned with what he was before his mind. When we say that historians have to penetrate to the thoughts behind men's own actions, we imply that every action has his parts, fresh thinking and then historical doing. The historian has certainty to do more than re-thinking the thoughts which explicably before the minds of those whose actions were deliberate. This is because as illegal pointed out human action offer accomplish more than they know, and this must be allowed for as any tenable account of historical thinking.

15. To some extent it might be possible to grasp the thoughts of Julia's Caesar or Napoleon I but it might be difficult to understand the actions of a witchdoctor, the understand him we need something more than sympathetic understanding of ways in which they find themselves.
16. To suggest that a historian can do his job by putting himself in the place of the person he studies while appearing to answer to the facts is not ultimately illuminating for the process of putting oneself on another's place is itself susceptible of frills analysis.

5.4 Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911)

5.4.1 Human and Scientific Explanation in History

In 1882, Wilhelm Dilthey in his main book introduction to human studies argues that the historian no less than the physicist, employs precise and rigorous methods in his enquiries, but the way in which inferences are drawn and theories tested, the assumptions that inform observation, measurement and production in the natural science, precede the wholesale adoption of such methods in the human studies.

Dilthey was aware from his experience in history of ideas, that the organizing criteria employed in historical research had no foundation in the standard empiricist theory of knowledge.

According to Dilthey human actions were not simply occurrence but manifestations of attitudes of mind or a life expressions, the meaning of actions for agents became an organizing concept embracing, in addition to the deliberate attempt to say or do something, the manifold gestures and facial

expressions which through they are not intended to signify anything betray an attitude of mind.

Dilthey contention was that the historian could understand actions performed in the past because, like actions performed in the present they could be subsumed under categories like purport, violation and feeling.

He argues that the historian, in other words, could re experience the attitudes of historical agent because his experience as a practical agent had provided him with categories which might by imaginative extension be used to interpret evidence of human conduct.

Dilthey argues that his sort of emphatic understanding was only deemed possible because of a basic identity btw the historian and his subject matter which did not obtain in the world of natural science.

Dilthey argues that both human and systematic studies are interdependent, for history provides the systematic disciplines with evidence in such form as case histories and records of economic developments.

The systematic disciplines, together with common sense generalizations and the findings to physical science, provide the law in terms of which the connections btw individual events in history can be explained.

He formulated three principles that form an important aspect of what has come to be known as historicism.

1. All human manifestations are part of a historical process and should be explained in historical terms. The state, the family, even man himself cannot be adequately defined abstractly because they have different characteristics in different ages.

2. Different ages and different individuals can only be understood by entering imaginatively into their specific point of view what the age or the individual thought relevant must be taken into account by the historian.
3. The historian himself is bound by the horizons of his own age. How the past present itself to him in the perspectives of his own concerns becomes a legitimate aspect of the meaning of the past.

Dilthey further argues that in all human studies, general intellectual procedures and methods shared with all the sciences or borrowed from particular ones are employed. These include observation, description, generalization comparison the use of models and the framing and testing of hypotheses achieve the knowledge they are seeking.

Dilthey had three conditions that make understanding something possible.

1. He argued we must be familiar with the mental processes through which meaning is experienced and conveyed: if we do not know who it was to love or abhor something, to have an intention or to express something we could not begin to understand anything.
2. An action could be understood, in the situation gave rise to it for this condition Dilthey derived the methodological principle that to understand an expression, we must systematically explore the context in which it stands.
3. To understand a sentence we must know the language to understand chess move the rules of the game.

Thus according to Dilthey, understanding and interpretation, used systematically in the human studies disclose to historians the feature of life.

5.5 Benedetto Croce (1866-1952)

5.5.1 The Theory of Expression and Contemporary History

In 1892 when Croce was 26yrs old, he says “I soon wearied of filling my mind with lifeless and disconnected facts at the expense of much trial and with no constructive result... in trying to find my way out of the difficulties which beset me as to the best method of; pursuing... historical studies at large, I found myself unconsciously brought by degrees face to face with the problem of the nature of history and knowledge.”

Every true history is contemporary history in the sense that the historian must vivify the documents and artifacts from which he fashions his accounts. The historian is distinguished from the anti quarian in terms of “the capacity for living again” (rather than merely classifying) the remnants of the past. Consequently, the relics of the past “do not answer to a past interest but to a present interest, in so far as it is unified with an interest of the present life.”

For Croce, then, the past (as we know it) consists of the individual judgments which historians make on the basis of the evidence at their disposal. There can be no criterion outside historical thought to serve as independent standard in the appraisal of a particular historical thesis. Nor are there any general lessons to be learnt beyond the detailed narrative which the historian is enabled to construct.

Croce emphasizes were the contention that an interest in the past would always (and should always) reflect historian’s contemporary concerns. Croce argued in his philosophical works what all history is “contemporary history” that we could only understand past acts by imaginatively re enacting them in order to recover the intentions and meaning they had for the persons concerned.

History which lacked this understanding was “chronicle” the historian was not fallen upon to criticize the past “historical judgment” entailed simply recording the role played by individuals in determinate circumstances and learning moral appraisal to the turn of events.

This argument seemed to countenance passive acquiescence and the belief that might is right, and indeed Croce had an almost religious faith in the ultimate benevolence of history, an attitude forcefully expressed during the First World War.

However, fascism led him to revise this thesis by stressing the distinction between ethical actions, which aim to increase the liberty of human action through the transformation of nature and society and economic actions, this have largely a utilitarian character.

Croce’s historical writing inspired a large following in Italy, although perhaps only his British follower R. G. Collingwood could emulate his command of both philosophy and history.

6



Historical Objectivity



6.1 Questions

1. “Every history is written from a certain point of view and makes sense only from that point of view” W. H Walsh. Discuss the problem of objectivity in history in the light of this statement.
2. Why is the concept of historical objectivity so controversial?
3. “History is radically and viciously subjective” react to this statement.
4. To what extent is history objective?
5. Discuss the problem of objectivity in history in the light of this statement.

6.2 What is Objectivity?

- It means not biased or not subjective (one persons opinion).
- What everybody agrees on correct opinion.
- What people accept as historical truth at any given time?
- Objective judgment is made by testing in all ways possible ones subjective impressions, so as to arrive at objectivity.

Therefore, objectivity is balanced assessment of the evidence. This is professional work of in collecting, identifying, weighing evidence and analyzing evidence.

According to Christopher Blake in his article *can history be objective* has argued that historians try to discover what happened how it happened why it happened and what it meant. It has been argued that written history can never be

objective, even if the personal bias of the historian can be overcome (which many doubt), it is still inevitable that what is written must be relative to the tastes, customs, and prejudices of the creative moment. No two historians can agree on what really happened, an agreement in one generation fails to survive the next.

6.3 Historical Objectivity

Every reputable historian acknowledges the need for some sort of objectivity and impartiality in his work. He distinguishes history from propaganda, and condemns those writers who allow their reconstruction of the past as bad workmen who do not know their job. Most historians agree that their work is primarily a cognitive activity, concerned with an independent object, the past whose nature they had to investigate for its own sake, though they would doubtless add that their knowledge of that object is always fragmentary and incomplete.

However the fact remains that disagreements amongst historians is common, instead of an agreed interpretation of any period emerging, a plurality of views emerge e.g. Marxist, liberal, conservative, catholic protestant, rationalists, royalist, republican etc.

These theories are held in such a way that their supporters think each of them to be, if not the find truth about the period under study, at any rate correct in essentials a conviction that make them think all others are erroneous.

There is history objective? Historians have failed to develop an historical “consciousness in general”, a set of agreed canons of interpretation which all who work at the subject would be ready to acknowledge. What are we to say about this situation?

We might attempt to maintain not only that historians are influenced by subjective factors. Others argue that impartial history, so far from being an ideal is a downright impossibility in support of this, it can be argued that every historian books at the past from a certain point of view, which he can no more around i.e. than he can jump out of his own skin it can also be maintained that the disagreements of historians, when carefully analyzed, seem to turn on points which are not matter for argument but depend on the interest and desires of the contending parties, whether in a personal or in a group capacity.

Historical disputes, according to this way of thinking, are at bottom concerned not with what is true or false, but with what is and what is not desirable and fundamentals historical judgments are in consequence not strictly cognitive but “emotive” This would be far to about the distinction between history and propaganda, and therefore to undermine the claim that history is (or can become) a truly scientific study.

It is also argued that the past failure off historians to reach objective truth is no evidence that it will always elude them and attempt to show that the development of a common historical consciousness it’s not out of the question.

A German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey who is a positivist, argued that objective history ought to rest on an objective study of human nature, for general judgments about human nature have an important part to play in historical interpretation and explanation.

The concept of historical objectivity is radically different from that of scientific objectivity, the difference coming out in the fact that while all reputable historians condemn biased and tendentious words, they do not so clearly endorse the scientific ideal o wholly impersonal thinking.

The work of the historian, like that of the artist, may be thought to be in some sense of an expression of his personality, and is plausible to argue that this is of vital account for the subject we are considering.

It is argued that the artist is not content only to have and express his emotions, he wants to communicate what he takes to be a certain vision or insight into the nature of things and the artistry would claim truth and objectivity for his work for that very reason.

It might be maintained that the best way of dealing with the problem of historical objectivity is to assimilate historical thinking in this respect to the thinking of the artist.

History might be said to give us a series of different but not incompatible portraits of the past, each reflecting it from a different point of view. Can historians hope to attain objective knowledge? Do historians aim at objectivity like the scientific?

Certainly it is true that reputable historians are united in demanding a species of impartiality and impersonality in historical work. Historical writing in which arguments and conclusions are twisted to suit the personal prejudice of propagandist aim of the writer is universally condemned as bad. Genuine history according to historians is distinguishable from propaganda because of objective validity. Are there pluralities of divergent accounts of the same subject in history? Does each generation find it necessary to rewrite the histories written by its predecessors? At any given point of time and place there is available differing and apparently inconsistent versions of the same set of essentialism, each of them claiming to give the whole truth.

The interpretation of one historian is repudiated by another. It appears from this that historical thinking is a subjective element, different from that which is

to be found in scientific thinking, and that this factor limits or alters the character of the objectivity which historians can hope to attain.

Is it possible for historians to free themselves from all particular preconceptions and approach their facts in a wholly impersonal way? Can history achieve objectivity as in science, say physics? Product would not be history historians argue that every history is written from a certain point of view and makes sense from that point of view. A concept which is important in historical thinking is that of selection – history is selective in two ways.

Every actual piece of historical writing is departmental since it is only on an aspect or limited set of aspects of the past that a particular historian can concentrate his attention – historian makes a limited contribution to ideal history.

No historian can narrate everything that happened in the past even within the field he chooses for study. All must select some facts for special emphases and ignore others altogether. I.e. those ideas that find their way into books of history are those that have some degree of importance.

What is important again is relative; relates to what happened independently of anyone's thinking now to the person making the judgment of importance. It can be seen clearly from this consideration that each historian obviously does bring to his studies a set of interests, beliefs, and values which is clearly going to have some influence on what he takes to be important.

The conclusion is that history is radically and viciously subjective and in the light of this, writes off its pretensions to be scientific in any sense of the term.

6.4 Why is Historical Objectivity Problematic?

Every historian acknowledges the need for objectivity and impartiality in their work. Historians argue that they should distinguish history from propaganda and condemn those writers who allow their feelings and personal preconceptions to influence or affect their reconstruction of the past as bad workmen, who do not know their work. Most historians agree that their work is primarily a cognitive activity and are concerned with independent object, the past. Historians need to investigate that past for its own sake.

6.5 What is the Problem Then?

However, the fact remains that disagreements amongst historians is common, instead of an agreed interpretation of any period emerging, a brutality of views emerge for example Marxist, liberal, conservative, catholic, protestant, republican, royalist and rationalist. The supporters of each of these theories think their position or view is the final truth and they think that all others are erroneous.

Historians have failed to develop an historical “consciousness is general” a set of agreed canons of interpretation which all historians would be ready to acknowledge. It is argued that no two historians can agree on what really happened. An agreement in one generation fails to survive the next (historical skepticism) i.e. with new information history is rewritten. History can have same evidence, but different interpretation.

6.6 Factors Contributing to Disagreements amongst Historians

6.6.1 Personal Bias

There is plenty of evidence of the influence of personal likes and dislikes in historian's presentation of facts. Is it an obstacle to the attainment of objective truth in history? Historians ought to be free from personal prejudice by recognizing them and guarding against them. Historians should also condemn those historians who they think are biased based history.

6.6.2 Group Prejudice

A man's religion s opinions ought to influence this history to the extent of making him incapable to the actions of men who did not share them. The assumptions which historians make as class conscious members of the proletariat or staunch Protestants must be such as they can justify on rational grounds or they must be extruded from their history.

6.6.3 Conflicting Theories of Historical Interpretation

This is based on a theory of the relative importance of different kinds of causal factor in history. Historians must use theory to make any sense of his facts. A theory of historical interpretation if it is to claim any justification must be a well established empirical hypotheses, based on a case study of the actual facts of historical change (historical materialism). Disagreements are many each supporting their theory.

6.6.4 Underlying Philosophical Conflicts

Historians approach the past each with his/her own philosophical ideas, and that this has a decisive effect on the way they interpret it – ethical, religious, metaphysical, outlook etc. Thus it necessary that historian should become aware of their own moral and metaphysical preconception and to be on their guard against reading them naively into their history. The contention would be that objectivity in history is achieved if the facts depicted accurately and that histories should not contradict each other but complement one another.

To attain objectivity the historian needs not merely standard knowledge of how people do behave in a variety of situations, but for further a standard conception of how they ought to behave. He needs to get state not merely his factual knowledge but also his metaphysical ideas. Why?

1. Are those pluralities of divergent accounts of the same subject in history?
2. Does each generation find it necessary to rewrite the histories written by its predecessors?
3. At any given point of time and place there are available differing and apparently inconsistent versions of the same set of events, each of them claiming to give, if not in the whole truth about it?
4. The interpretations of one historian indignantly repudiated by another?
5. It appears from this that historical thinking is a subjective element, different from that which is to be or alters the character of, the objectivity which historians can hope to attain.
6. Is it possible for historians to free themselves from all particular preconceptions and approach their facts in a wholly impersonal way?

7. Can history achieve objectivity as in science, say physics?
8. Product would not be history. Historians argue that every history is written from a certain point of view and makes sense from that point of view.
9. A concept which is important in historical thinking is that of selection. History is selective in two ways:
 - Every actual piece of historical writing is departmental, since it is only on an aspect or limited set of aspects of the past that a particular historian can concentrate his attention – historian makes a limited contribution to ideal history.
 - No historian can narrate everything that happened in the past even within the field he chooses for study all must select some facts for special emphasis and ignore others altogether. i.e. those ideas that find the way into books of history are those that have some degree of importance.

6.7 Can History be Objective?

Can historians obtain or attain objectivity? Is it possible for historians to free themselves from all particular preconceptions and approach their facts in a wholly impersonal way? Can history achieve objectivity as in science? Can historians hope to attain objective knowledge? Do historians aim at objectivity like scientists? Objectivity is obtainable simply as a result of discounting those aspects of historical writing which lack the requisite “indifference to persons and places” the methodology used in history enquiry can yield objective knowledge of the past.

6.7.1 Arguments for Objectivity in History

1. It is argued that the past failure of historians to reach objective truth is not evidence that will always elude them. It is an attempt to show that the development of a common historical consequence is not out of the question. A German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey argued that objective history ought to rest on an objective study of human nature for it plays an important role in the historical interpretation and explanation.
2. The concept of historical objectivity is radically different from that of scientific objectivity, the difference coming out in the fact that while all reputable historians condemn biased and tendentious work, they do not so clearly endorse the scientific ideal of wholly impersonal thinking.
3. It might be maintained that the best way of dealing with the problem of historical objectivity is to assimilate historical thinking in respect to the thinking of the artist (art practical cognitive) e.g. the work of an artist and historian may be thought to be an expression of his personality it is argued that the artist is not content to have and express his emotions, he wants to communicate what he takes to be ascertain vision or insight into the nature of things – the artist would claim truth and objectivity same to historian.
4. History gives a series of different but not incompatible portraits of the past, each reflecting it from a different point of view i.e. the contention would be that objectivity in history is achieved if the facts are depicted accurately and that disagreements in history would not contradict each other but complement one another to attain objectivity.

5. The fact that historians give many causes to the same event shows objectivity.
6. According to Christopher Blake in his article can history be objective? Has argued that historians try to discover what happened, how it happened, why it happened and what it meant objective.
7. Be intellectually objective is to discount and eliminate personal (bias) Factors in the operation by which a conclusion is reached.
8. Among the working canons of historians are standards for determining the accuracy or reliability of sources the standards are corporately applied thus leading to objectivity.
9. A considerable part of history is acceptable to the community of professional historians beyond all questions by these standards objective.
10. Objectivity is obtainable and achievable simply as a result of discounting those aspects of historical writing which lack the requisite “indifference to persona and places.”
11. The methodology used in historical inquiry can yield objective knowledge of the past.
12. it has been propounded that being objective entails reporting accurately together with some neutrality in the idioms, words and languages can determine whether history is objective or not.
13. Some writers argue that history can be objective if reasonable people would accept it and provide it is not asked is a philosophical sense – can anything be known?

14. History like science is objective for history aims at discovery facts of the past as they really were and interpret them objectively like natural science, it uses various methods of enquiry such as observation, classification, formulation of hypotheses and analysis of evidence before interpreting and reconstructing the past i.e. history seeks to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth (absolute truth).
15. Euro-centric vs. Afro-centric views today there are efforts by the African generation of historic analysis, equipped with modern tools of investigation and informed modern technologies of science are partly directed at correcting the distortions perpetuated by earlier generations of non African historians or directed at filling the gaps which were left y those earlier scholars.

The historian can at least for the purposes of research and writing divest himself/herself of all taint of religious, political, philosophical, social, sex, economic, class, moral, aesthetic, nationality, race, ethnicity, prejudices, personal likes/dislikes, personal bias, group prejudice, underlying philosophical conflicts, conflicting theories of historical interpretation etc and view events with strict impartiality and come up with factual knowledge, first as a mirror reflects any objects to which it is held upon.

6.8 Relativists or Subjectivists

The historian is forced to select from the total information present to him in records of all kinds and however he may explain his choice, there must be a personal factor involved (subjectivity). Through the historian may claim that his final products must by the conventions of professional probity, contain a factual and therefore indisputable foundation, this is discounted as a naïve suppression

of the possibility of willfully slanting ones statements of fact, or of accidental equivocation through the vagueness of ordinary words.

Levy argues that “even to employ the term “fact” or “went” is to make a selection, therefore subjective terms/words the historian uses subjective. Prof. Qakeshott in his book, *Experience and its Modes* asserts that “we know nothing of a course of historical events apart from some systems of postulates... what is known is always in terms of what is presupposed (historians begin from an interpretative which he reinterprets.”

Walsh attacks historical writing is not entirely creative and therefore individual element is a bar to objectivity and removal of the bar is seen as a problem of practice rather than of principle. History is not objective because historians do not agree completely. Everyone has his/her own view. To be intellectually objective is to discount and eliminate personal (bias) factors in the operations by which a conclusion is reached.

Prof. Knox argues that if Hegel’s philosophy is due to his own psychological makeup or is a function of conditions, economic or other, prevailing in his own time, the same is true of the historians own methodology and of any possible standards of criticism (the question of falsity or truth cannot arise).

Max Nordau the interpretation of history argues that objective truth is as inaccessible to the writers of history. If it has been propounded that being objective entails reporting accurately together with some vague notion of neutrality in the idioms used and in the choice and arrangement of what is said that is use of language/words can determine whether history is objective or subjective.

It is argued that science (has a paradigm of impartiality and indifference to time and place) is said to be objective. Why? Because it deals with objects,

while history is seen to be subjective since it deals with feelings, values, norms, customs, traditions and emotions of human beings.

These writers who argue that history is a science (because to them history aims at discovering facts of the past as they really were) interpret them objectively. Like other natural science it uses various methods of enquiry such as observation, classification, and formulation of hypotheses and analysis of evidence before interpreting and reconstructing the past. They argue that history seeks to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth (absolute truth).

Other argues that history is subjective, why? Scientists generally deal with facts which can be observed directly and can be tested by experiment, but historical facts cannot be observed directly and can be arrived only indirectly through inference.

History deals with events that have posed and cannot be repeated, therefore intentions behind human actions cannot be directly observed but can be reached through inference and imaginative powers of the mind, therefore history is subjective. Historians cannot write without any point of view.

Absolute impartiality is not possible in history because the historian is a narrator and he looks at the past from a certain point of view. He/she cannot write any point of view. It is argued that the historian is expressing his personality in his work. The scientist on the other hand is impersonal, impartial and capable of experimental action; therefore, it is argued scientists are objective.

Some writers argue that history is subjective because of its inability of historical narratives to portray the past correctly. The writing of history using one's own perspective on one's age or time e.g. causes of the 1st world war there could be today's perspective, different from those of the past. The historian's inability to engage in narrative that portrays the present correctly shows that it is

subjective. The historian's impossibility of verifying statements in a satisfactory manner when compared to science shows that it is subjective.

6.8.1 The Factors that Contribute to Subjectivity

- Historian's social position determines his/her research topic that the topic is already subjective undertaking start from a biased position.
- Different people write with reference to some values e.g. Christian writing about prostitution start from a biased position, even the hypotheses starts from a biased position.
- The historian cannot be detached from the subjects (feelings, emotions, values, norms).
- It is argued that history is not objective because the historians work is conditioned by his personality, politics class, nationality and the mental climate of his times.
- Historians have generally accepted that the historical research procedure is objective; therefore, it is necessary to strike a balance btw objectivity and subjectivity. Historians should try to overcome extreme subjectivity biases, prejudice, mental climate and politics they should not be carried away. Therefore objectivity subjectivity is an unresolved issue.
- Historical interpretation of a given phenomenon the reasons he gives for favouring multiplicity are that evidence underdetermines historical interpretations and that there are no universally accepted criteria on the basis of which the relative acceptability of competing interpretations can always be assessed.

According to relativists, they argue that all history accounts are equally biased and worthless, they propound that;

1. There is no single cause which determines the course of historical events. The historian must adopt a tentative and empirical attitude towards historical causation and accept a pluralistic outlook.
2. That, historical events are so complex and elusive that not later historian however well trained, honest and industrious can ever fulfill Leopold von Ranke's dream of reconstructing the past exactly as it was.
3. That what the public, including the historians accepted as historical truth at any time will depend as much upon the mental climate of the period as on the validity of facts themselves.
4. That what is accepted as objective (truth) by historians and the public will shift markedly from time to time due to emotional factors.
5. That the main value of such facts as can be discovered and tentatively stated lies in the extent to which they can help us to understand the past and present and plan for the future.
6. Ali Mazrui says the problem of subjectivism argues that current issues are sometimes those in which people are still emotionally involved. They may have taken positions on behalf of this or that partly in a dispute or in favor of a controversial interpretation of a particular event, or in defense of a political leader or political ideology. Such partisan position could interfere with a scholar's capacity to be objective on a given issue. It can be argued that special emotional attachments strongly condition academic opinions on a particular subject.

7. An English adage posits that “distance lends enchantment to the views” the adage seems less objective is ones perception of it, for it becomes more attractive but historiography sometimes, nearness rather than distance that lends enchantment to the view. It is the nearness that continues to cast a spell of enchantment detrimental to historical objectivity.
8. Historians can be very partisan when looking at episodes far away from their own times e.g. war different versions depending on the nationality of the historian (do not want to concede defeat).
9. Another example Europeans vs. Africans. Today there are efforts by the generation of historical analysts, equipped with modern tools of investigation and informed modern technologies of science, are partly directed at correcting the distortions. Perpetrate by earlier generation of non African historians, or directed at filling the gaps which were left by those earlier scholars.
10. The historian can at least for the purposes of research and writing divest himself of all taint of religions, political, philosophical, social, sex, economic, moral and aesthetic interests and view events with strict impartiality somewhat as a mirror reflects any objects to which it is held upon.
11. The historian is destroyed by internal contradictions and therefore his powers are limited, he may search for but cannot find objective truth of history or write it as it actually was.

6.8.2 Arguments for Subjectivity in History

1. Some argue that impartial history is an ideal and is a downright impossibility.
2. Historians are influenced by subjective factors in their work.
3. Others have argued that every historian looks at the past from a certain point of view, which the historian jumps out of his own skin.
4. Historians are not concerned with what is true or false but with what is and what is not desirable; therefore, historical judgments are not strictly cognitive but “emotive.”
5. No historian can narrate everything that happened in the past even within the field he chooses for study. They select some facts for special emphases and ignore others altogether, therefore the historian makes a limited contribution to ideal history.
6. Every historian obviously brings to his studies a set of interests, beliefs, and values which clearly are going to have some influence on their work.
7. It has been argued that written history can never be objective, even if the personal biases of the historian can be overcome (which many doubt) it is still inevitable that what is written must be relative to the fashions, customs, and prejudices of the creative moment thus no two historians will agree on what really happened.
8. The historian selects from the total information available to him, and however, he explains his choice, there must be a personal factor involved (subjective).

9. Through the historian may claim that his final product must, by the conventions of professional probity contain a factual and therefore indisputable knowledge – this is discounted as a naive suppression of the possibilities of willfully slanting ones statements of facts, or accidental equivocation through the vagueness of ordinary words i.e. the terms /words historian uses eng “fact”, “events” is selection, therefore subjective.
10. Max Nordau in his book, *the Interpretation of History* argues that objective truth is inaccessible to writers of history.
11. Science deals with objects while historians deal. With human actions which has feelings, values, norms, customs, traditions, emotions est. subjective.
12. Scientists generally deal with facts which can be observed directly and can be tested by experiment, but historical facts cannot be observed directly since the events have passed and cannot be repeated. Therefore intentions behind human actions cannot be directly observed but can be reached. Through inference and imaginative powers of the mind, thus history is subjective.
13. Absolute impartiality is not possible in history because the historian is a narrator and he looks at the past from a certain point of view i.e. the historian is expressing his personality in his work scientist arte objective because they are impersonal, impartial and capable of experimentation.
14. Some writers argue that history is subjective because of its inability of historical narratives to portray the past correctly.

15. The writing of histories using one's own perspective in one's age or time, means that there could be today's or current perspective, different from those of the past. That is every generation writes its own history.
16. The historians impossibility of verify statements in a satisfactory manner when compared to science shows that it is subjective.
17. Historians' social position determines his/her research topic that is the topic is already subjective undertaking therefore the historian starts from a biased positivism.
18. Different people write with reference to some values that are Marxist historical materialism, while Christians legalizing abortion, prostitution; their hypotheses start from biased positions.
19. The historian cannot be detached from his subjects, because his work is conditioned y his personality, politics, class, ethnicity, tribe, nationality and the mental climate of the time.
20. Relativists argue that all history is biased and worthless because there is no single cause which determines the course of historical events. The historian must adopt a tentative and empirical attitude towards historical causation and accept pluralistic outlook.
21. That historical events are so complex and elusive that no later historian, however well trained, honest and industrious can ever fulfill Leopold Von Ranke's dream of reconstructing the past exactly as it was.
22. That what the public, including the historians accept as historical truth at any given time will depend as much upon the mental climate of the

period as on the validity of facts themselves – i.e. what is accepted as truth will shift markedly from time to time due to emotional factors (Moi).

23. Ali A Mazrui, on the problem of subjectivism argues that current issues are sometimes those in which people are still emotionally attached or involved. They may have taken positional such pattern positions could interfere with a scholars capacity to be objective on a given issue. It can be argued that special emotional attachments strongly condition academic opinions on a particular subject.
24. The historian is destroyed by internal contradictions and therefore his powers are limited he may search for the truth but cannot find objective truth of history or write it as it actually was.
25. Individual element in writing history is a bar to objectivity.
26. History is radically and viciously subjective and in this light write off its pretentions to be scientific in any sense of the term.

7



Positivism and Neo-Positivism



7.1 Questions

1. To what extent does Toynbee' challenge and response theory explain the rise and fall of pre colonial African states.
2. Discuss the applicability of Challenge and response schema in historical thought.

7.2 The Challenge and Response Theory of the Rise and Fall of World Civilizations

7.2.1 Civilizations

Civilizations are not held to have a fixed life cycle, though they do go through similar phases for example times of trouble, the succession of internal proletariats and loss of creativity rites.

Civilizations are distinguished by their dynamism, having arisen from pro existing society when a sufficiently threatening challenge evoked a creative response. Thus Egyptian civilization originated when the challenge of drought provoked response the development of irrigation and water management procedures and the Minoan role to the opportunity presented by the challenge of its island situation.

The optimum civilization producing challenge has to be great enough to call forth a qualitatively new response, but not so great to be entirely crushing the challenge – response scheme is supposed to explain not only origins but subsequent growth, through the later challenges may be more external, for instance the need for unified political institutions to match the cultural and economic unity of ancient Greece.

Through there is no necessary limit to the number of challenges that can be successfully met, in fact in all civilization except possibly our own creativity has failed and breakdown or ossification occurred.

Toynbee was perhaps initially motivated by a desire to predict the future of western civilization, but developed a reluctance to draw pessimistic conclusions, and turned his attention to quasi religious questions about the final purpose of mankind. Toynbee theory is a species of imaginative literature, expressing and evoking reflections about human destiny and ultimate values.

7.3 Joseph Arnold Toynbee 1889

He was educated at Balliol College, Oxford between 1912 and 1915; he was fellow tutor at the same college. In 1919, he participated in the Peace Treaty of Versailles, which ended the First World War. From 1924 he became a Professor of Byzantine and modern Greek language, and literature at the Berlin University of London.

From 1925 to 1955, he acted as director of studies in the royal institute of international affairs and research at the same university. He authored many books; the most important is “*A Study of History*.” In the book Toynbee discusses civilization, he claimed, he could discern study. He came up with the idea that all civilization exhibit common features. Therefore, he argues that “only at the level of a whole civilization, can the events of national histories become really intelligible, thus the history of Great Britain cannot be written without constant reference to what was going on in the continent of Europe.”

Toynbee then went ahead to invent universal history of civilization. He argues that the history of any fully developed civilization goes through five

phase's such as; rise Growth, breakdown, disintegration and rise of universal state.

He argues that civilization is a constant process of development, and therefore for a civilization to arise, it has to meet the challenges posed by human and environmental challenges. He came up with the theory of challenge and response. Primitive societies are static; they do not develop because they do not face challenges. This is opposed to the new that civilization arises naturally out of favorable conditions.

The Egyptian civilization “originated in the lower Nile valley, when faced by the progressive desertification of the African grassland, a primitive society instead of moving south and keeping its way of life intact, set to work to drain the valley marshes”

The desire to conquer the harsh environment is what helped the growth of Egyptian civilization. This is also what led to their civilizations for example Minoan and Sumerian civilizations.

If a challenge is too weak to provoke a response, no civilization will arise. Alternatively if the challenge is too severe it will lead to an abortive civilization e.g. the Viking civilization collapsed because of server natural ice (occur in Iceland and Greenland). He argues “civilizations are responses to mean or optimum challenges which means civilizations occur where there is moderate challenges, not too server or too weak.”

Civilizations grow (rise) in response to a series of challenges in a dialectic manner. He argues that after a challenge is met with optimum response, the societal equilibrium is altered to raise further complaints. This encourages the development to continue. The continuity of development is guided by certain prepared groups in the community which is usually the minority. If the society

by the help of the minority leads is able to progress past this stage, it will then be in a position to advance to the next stage. If the leaders are unable to meet the tempo of the challenge the civilization will be arrested.

The minority groups are prepared by withdrawal and return to the society, and return with the challenge to the society. In the arrest state, the leaders who are the minority lack creativity and exhaust their spiritual resources, this forces their members who are the majority to withdraw their alliance. This ushers in the third phase of the development.

If the leaders have failed to maintain the tempo of development, their society is not prepared to meet the challenges. This leads to chaos for the challenges become too severe for the society to meet and this leads to the breakdown of civilization. This period is usually long, since people do not drive you easily and they continue to perpetually try to overcome the challenges.

Some communities have been able to overcome this breakdown, while others have been unable to offer positive response to the positive civilization, Toynbee argues that this breakdown happens because the leaders impose their rule on the citizens who do not have confidence in them.

Some citizens thus withdraw from the state leading to its final disintegration. He says the remnants may continue to exist as fossils in the bodies of successors for example Parsees in India and the Jewish community. It goes through a rhythm of rout rally rout, which means, she faces reoccurring challenges that she is unable to meet. The final phase is the rise of universal state.

Through the experiences of the internal proletariats that higher religions arise due to responses, through the suffering and breakdown or disintegration of civilizations. This makes man to progress in the knowledge of god, thus leading to the rise of universal relation. The religion is a major unifying factor when

people are faced with chaos. Toynbee says Christianity which is universal religion gave birth to Western civilization. Islam as a universal religion gave birth to Asiatic civilization. He says “civilizations evolve like branches of a tree, branching and shaped by spiritual forces”

Examples pre-colonial African states are Bunyoro Kitara kingdom, Buganda kingdom, the Maasai, the Nandi, empire of Songhai, Mali and Ghana.

7.4 Factors that Contributed to the Rise of Empires

1. Competent, determined and able leaders – Koitalel Samoei, Samouri Toure, Mirambo among others.
2. Trade – revenue – arm soldiers-motivate, equip feed and maintain.
3. Political organization; centralized/heredity Buganda (Kabaka) Asante (Asantehene).
4. Military organizations – proscription into the army military treaties – cow horn-short stabling spear – guerilla tarsus – Scorched earth policy.
5. Modern arms – expansion.
6. Iron – working – superior weapons.
7. Religious – unity – Muslim Jihads.
8. Decline of other empire – Bunyoro Kitara, Buganda.
9. Symbols of unity reach – golden stool, festivities Asante.
10. Hereditary political stability.
11. Taxation levies revenue.

7.4.1 Optimum Challenges

1. Good climate – Buganda – fertile soils – enough food sustain military.
2. Trade – neighbors – arable/Swahili.
3. Acquisition of guns – Buganda/Asante/ Madera.
4. Weapons to expand.
5. Political stability – hereditary kingship no successive dispute.
6. Geographical position – hilly over deviance purposes.
7. Weak neighbors no challenge.
8. Ambitious leaders.
9. Loyalty of the king – divine leadership.

7.4.2 Factors that Contributed Fall of States

1. Collaboration with colonialist's coastal kingdom French Dahomey.
2. Lack of revenue arms ammunition.
3. Asante did not resist incoming forces.
4. Too weak no response.
5. Occupation of other kingdoms superior arms.
6. Treaties Africans not literate Jaja of Opobo, Lenana.
7. Expedition by European powers.
8. Natural calamities drought, famine, lethal epidemics, scramble/position of Africa Berlin conference.
9. Maasai-series of civil wars weakening them.

10. Slave trade-under populated.

11. Colonialism.

8



African Philosophy of History



8.1 Ali A. Mazrui

8.1.1 A Triple Heritage

Can African survive the ravages of Westernization? European colonial rule in Africa was more effective in destroying indigenous African structures than in destroying African culture. The tension between new imported structure and old resilient cultures is part of the post colonial war of culture in African continent.

The imported economic and political institutions from the West were due to culture gap btw new structures and ancient values, between alien institutions and ancestral traditions. African can never go back completely to its pre colonial starting point but there is a case for restarting the journey of modernization under indigenous forces question can affair survives the ravage of westernization?

Since the world is becoming a village, Africa cannot just look inwards to its own past. It has to be sensitive to the wider world of the human race as a whole. Africans triple heritage indigenous, Islamic and western forces. Islam and western have been Africa's response to looking outwards to the wider world. Is the seed of Africa decaying to germinate out of the two processes?

Where is Africa? Europe developed the concept of the world in the wake of its voyages of discovery in the 15th/16th centuries, but f even imposed its form of that concept on the outlook of peoples in other continents, including Africa. Why should Europe be above Africa? This is Ethnocentrism.

Africa has been a continent of abundant life by speedy death. Africa has been the first habitat of man but the last to become truly habitable. Africa is referred

as a cradle of civilization but a war cemetery of cultures. African geography is the mother of Africa's history to a large extent for better or for worse.

In Africa, the most endured cultures are precisely those of pastoralist and nomads threatened both by ecology and modernity. Drought is more devastating when it hits pastoralists than when it disrupts cultivators. When rain come it cannot replace dead animals but plants can quickly begin to flow again.

The impact of the west upon Africa has been towards Africanizing the identity of the people of the African continents while the impact of the west upon the African Diaspora has been towards dies Africanizing the identity of the expected sons and daughters of the ancestral continent. The Africanisation of Africans was accomplished through cartography, European racism, and racial classification, impact of colonisation and imperialism and fragmentation of Africa.

Indigenous religions, Islam and Christianity compete with each other for converts. All over Africa, the processes of both syntheses and dissonance continue. Africa has helped built Western industrial civilization while the West has hampered the evolution of Africa's own industrial culture through Africa to West – slave trade plantations, factories, African labour, and minerals. Africans and Arabs need to develop the birth a more effective alliance to deal with industrial states. Third World countries need to exploit its own areas of a producer power, consumer power, debtor power and emerging skill power.

Artificiality and shallowness which Western colonisation created in Africa and the political decay is a consequence of colonialism created in Africa colonial institution without cultural roofs in Africa. In midst of death and devastation enough babies survive to outnumber the dead. Africa may be sick,

but she seems to be still capable of giving birth Africa may be sick, but she seems to be still capable of giving birth.

8.2 John Samuel Mbiti

8.2.1 African Ontology of History

Mbiti believed that religion and philosophy, in traditional Africa are interrelated, that if one wants to understand the philosophy of traditional Africans; he/she must study their religion as well. He wrote a book titled *African Religious and Philosophy* (1969-1990). He portrays African philosophy as a product of African religions. According to him Africans are notoriously religion, which means Africans carry their religion whenever they go. He arrives at this position by arguing that according to the African, to be human is to belong to the whole community which involves in participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of community.

The African cannot detach himself/herself from the religion of his/her group. Africans do not exist without religion. For Africans, religion is an enological phenomenon. It pertains to the question of existence or being means that man lives in a religious universe everything has a religious connotation. African ontology is divided into 5 categories:

1. God as the ultimate explanation of the geneses and sustenance of both man and all things.
2. Spirits consist of extra human beings and the spirits of men who died a long time ago.
3. Man including human beings who are alive and those about to be born.
4. Animal and plants, or the remainder of biological life.

5. Phenomena and objects without biological life.

He expressed anthropology centrally as:

1. God is the originator and sustainer of man.
2. The spirits explain the destiny of man.
3. Man is the centre of this ontology.
4. The animals, plants and natural phenomena and objects constitute the environment, in which man lives, provide a means of existence (man est. a mystical relationship with them).
5. In addition to the five categories, there seems to be a force, the spirits have access to some of it. A few human beings (medicine men, witches priests, rainmakers) have the knowledge and access to top manipulate and use it some for the food and others for the ill of their communities.

8.2.2 African Concept of Time

According to Mbiti, the concept is central and crucial in understanding Africans religions and philosophy. He believed that:

- The traditional concept of time is intimately bound up with the entire life of the people, and our understanding of it may help pave way for understanding the thinking, attitude and actions of the people. It is against this background that I shall attempt to introduce and examine their religious system and philosophy.
- His conception of time is the most important and interesting part of his work. For the traditional Africa's... time is simply a composition of

events which have occurred, those which are taking place now and those which are immediately to occur. What has not taken place or has no likelihood of an immediate occurrence falls in the category of “no time”, what is certain to occur, or what falls within the rhythm of natural phenomena, is the category of inevitable or potential time.

- According to Mbiti, the traditional African concept of time is a two dimensional phenomena with a long past (zamani), a present (sasa) and virtually no future.
- The linear concept of time in western thought, with an indefinite past, present and infinite future is practically foreign to African thinking.
- The future is virtually absent cause events which lie in it have not taken place, they have not been realized and cannot, therefore constitute time.
- If, however, future events are certain to occur, or if they fall within the inevitable rhythm of nature, they at best constitute only potential time, not actual time.
- What is taking place now no doubt unfolds the future but in the present and the past.
- Actual time is therefore what is present and what is past.
- It moves “backwards” rather than “forward” and Africans set their not on future things but clearly on what has taken place.
- To the African therefore the important element in the concept of time is the past (tene).

- Tene period is technically of Mituki, but in the “backward” direction. Both of these overlap and when something disappears from Mituki period it enters the tene dimension of time before anything has been absorbed into the tene period, it must go through Mituki dimension. Tene becomes the final storehouse, the point beyond which phenomena cannot go the ultimate destiny of all things maybe caught up in the rhythm of motion.
- According to Mbiti history in Africa is a movement in a backward direction, a movement from Mituki dimension, from the now period to the tene period.
- This time orientation, governed as it is by the two dimensions of the present and the past, dominates African understanding of the individual, the community and the universe which constitutes the 5 ontological categories.
- Time has to be experienced in order to make sense or to become real.
- A person experienced in order to make sense or to become real.
- A person experiences time partly in his own individual life and partly through the society which goes back many generations before his own birth.

Since what is in the future has not been experienced, it does not make sense, it cannot know how to think about it, unless of course it is something which falls within the rhythm of natural phenomena.

According to Mbiti Africa’s people understanding of time and history are biased on analysis of myths and language. Myths there are not myths about future, as far as I have been able to gather from all available sources that record

African myths and stories. This is because the future dimension of time has not been formulated and assimilated into the mythology of African thinking and concept of the universe.

On language, Mbiti reckons that African verb tenses which refer to the future cover up to 6 months or 2 years at most... there are no concrete words or expressions to convey the idea of distant future ... people have little or no active beyond, at most 2years from now and the languages concerned lack words by which such events can be conceived or expressed.

African conception of time, the teachings of the church do not make sense and are meaningless if not absurd, to the African mental disposition. African people have no belief in progress, the idea that the development of human activities and achievements move from low to higher degree. The people neither plans for the distant future not “build castles in the air”. The centre of gravity for human thought and activities is the zamani period, towards which the *sasa* moves. Pole set their eyes on the zamani, since for them there is no “world to come” such as is found in Christianity.

How true is the conception/to what extent is it meaningful.

1. Through there may be some elements of truth in Mbitis African conception of time, it should nevertheless not be taken to be the gospel truth.
2. Whereas it may be true that some African languages do not have one word for the future, this does not necessarily mean that they do not have a clear conception of the future.
3. The future was not of much concern to Africans not to have a word for it.

4. There are several individuals who led their lives as if there is no future but this does not mean that such individuals do not have a future dimension of time.

8.3 Criticism

Some have accused Mbiti of generalizing the concept of time for the various traditional African communities as a whole. He largely researched among the Akamba and kikuyu poles of Kenya, yet he boldly went ahead and made a sweeping claim covering Africa in it's entirety. Mbiti's African conception of time can only be undertook is implying that the future was not much of a pre occupation for the African and no more.

It should be noted according to Mbiti, African philosophy is to be analyzed and understood by observing the Africans in their chores, by shaving in their everyday experiences and by studying their languages. Implicit in Mbiti's works is that African philosophy is unusual. When the concept "philosophy" is attributed to the African, there is a shift in its meaning, a meaning not ordinary attributed to western philosophy.

8.4 Placide Temples

8.4.1 Bantu Philosophy

Father Placide Temples was a Belgian catholic priest who did missionary work from the 1930s through the 1960s among Cuba people, a Bantu group with Democratic Republic Congo, formerly Zaire. According to him Africans have a philosophy unlike the majority of his contemporary Europeans expatriates in Africa who denied African abstract thought.

His book *Bantu Philosophy* marks the starting point of the debate about the nature of African philosophy. Temple's book is a pioneer work in the study of African philosophy. He contends that to any ontology and logic to the African is unrealistic and untenable position.

He believes that empirical evidence points to the existence of metaphysics and ontology in Bantu culture. This philosophy evolved as African Christians returned to the trade. Ways of behavior whenever they encountered problems in the church without any problem why their forefathers and ancestors had them with practical solutions of the great problems of humanity, the problems of life and death, of salvation or destruction.

The aim of writing the book was to equip colonials of food will with a useful instrument to carry out their colonial and Christian "civilizing mission" more efficiently. He called for a process of understanding the African and self adaptation on the part of the colonizer and missionary. In understanding Africans, it was important that one understood their way of life, and their philosophy otherwise the mission would suffer rejection from Africans.

Africans day to day lives were governed by beliefs and customs. African live revolve around Bantu behavior; Bantu ontology, Bantu wisdom, Bantu psychology, Bantu ethics and restoration of life are all centered upon vital force. The Bantu actions are all explainable in terms of force. The purpose is all explainable in terms of force. The purpose of their actions and practices is to acquire life, strength or vital force, to live strongly, to make life stronger and to assure that force shall remain in ones posterity. Temples infer that Bantu knowledge in both scientific and philosophical forms is not supernatural but natural, since it is within the natural capacities of either the ancestors or living humans.

9



Post Structuralism, Deconstruction and Post Modernism



9.1 Post Modernism

This relates to a complex set of reactions to modern philosophy and its presuppositions, as opposed to the kind of agreement on substantive doctrines or philosophical questions that often characterizes a philosophical movement. Postmodern philosophy typically opposes fundamentalism, essentialism, and realism. Examples are Foucault, Derrida, Heidegger, Nietzsche, Lyotard argue that the presuppositions of philosophical modernism emerge out of a disposition whose antecedent, unarticulated beliefs are already postmodern.

Postmodern philosophy is therefore usefully regarded as a complex cluster concept that includes the following elements.

- Anti (or post) epistemological standpoint.
- Anti essentialism.
- Anti realism.
- Anti fundamentalism.
- Opposition to transcendental arguments.
- Transcendental standpoints.
- Rejection of the picture of knowledge as accurate representation.
- Rejection of truth as correspondence to reality.
- Rejection of the very idea of canonical descriptions rejection of final vocabularies that is rejection of principles, distinctions, and descriptions

that are thought to be unconditionally building for all times, persons, and places.

- And a suspicion of grand narratives, meta narratives of sort perhaps best issues treated by dialectical materialism.
- Post modern philosophy is “against” it opposes characterizing this means of opinion as relativism, skepticism, or ritualism and it rejects as “the metaphysics of presence” the transitional putatively impossible dream of a complete unique, and closed explanatory system, an explanatory system typically fueled by binary oppositions.

On the positive side of post modernism are the following themes:

- Its critique of the notion of the neutrality and sovereignty of reason including instance on its pervasively gendered, historical and ethnocentric character.
- Its concept of the social construction of word world mappings.
- Its tendency to embrace historicism.
- Its critique of the ultimate status of a contrast btw epistemology on the one hand, and the sociology of knowledge on the other.
- Its dissolution of the notion of the antonymous, rational subject.
- Its instance on the antifactual status of divisions of labor in knowledge acquisition and production.
- Its ambivalence about enlightenment and its ideology.

- In every other respect, post modernism is a post structuralist discourse. It gives us fragments where there was wholeness, change fragments where there was stasis, open-endedness and pastiche where we once had formal closure and underlying rations of depth.
- Post misdeterminism gives us the ineluctability of difference rather than the search for sameness in a structured world.
- Post modernism is a hydra dreaded monster and a chameleon, impossible to characterize without entering into life threatening contradictions.
- It crops up everywhere in every kind of discourse and practice.
- According to Richard Osborne (1987) the unifying project of post modernism is contrasting the dominant definition of things, the consensus whether political or academic and interrupting the flow of apparent relatives.
- Post modernism could be summed up as a belief that large scale ideas and political philosophers are intermittently dangerous (the terror of totality).
- F. R. Ankersmit recommended that historians should adopt postmodernism perspective as the new superior form of understanding of their discipline.

Factors featured associated with the theory or idea of post modernism according to F. R. Ankersmit.

1. It is an inevitable stage of present day culture and a break with the past that owing to the conditions of contemporary society cannot be withstood. Thus, a strong sense of fatality and the irresistible hovers over the notion.

2. It carries with it strong connotation of decline, exhaustion, and of being at the end rather than the commencement of an era.
3. Its hostility to humanism, it rejects humanism as an outmoded relic and illusion of bourgeois ideology the illusion of individuals creating their history through their free activity, which it sees as merely a cover for bourgeois societies oppression of when the working class non whites sexual deviants and colonized natives.

In the cultural domain as a whole, it implies a total erasure of the distinction and elite culture and mass popular culture largely shaped and dominated by advertising and the commercial media, a distinction that both modernism and humanism accepted as axiomatic.

There has never been a single and widely accepted definition of post-modernization whereas Lyotard 1995 defines it as a critique of metanarratives, Rorty as quoted in Sangren 1988:419 sees it as a disavowal of epistemology. While Seidman 1995:2 conceives postmodernism as hybridization of knowledge fictions and words 1994:482 call it skepticism anti philosophy.

These definitions imply postmodernism as methodology, which has sometimes been equated with deconstruction. The post colonial is another theory that has epistemological and methodological affinity to postmodernism. Indeed the world of knowledge and its productions has become a world of post and isms.

The end of the Second World War spanned crisis in western culture and civilization that led to the questioning of enlightenment as the foundation of western knowledge. The crisis included the collapse of western global hegemony, the fragmentation of the world system, the shift and or est. of new centers of capital accumulation. These entire crisis led westerner's disillusionment with modernism.

Since 1970s some western scholars sought new ways of explaining the new reality, the post modern reality.

1. Postmodernism possesses methodological value because of its advocacy of linguistic and textual analysis of texts and instance that many meanings can be derived from the different interpretation of texts.
2. Post modernist methodology is usefulness inheres in opening up new ways of interpreting the world around us.
3. Research in Africa and particularly Kenya should use postmodernist methodology in combination.
4. Postmodernism is being virtue eclectic and multi and inter disciplinary.
5. In the case of Africa and particularly Kenya, postmodernism calls for more oral, archeological and archival and other research for purposes of providing more published texts.

9.2 Michael Foucault (1926-1984)

9.2.1 The Archaeology and Power Knowledge

He was born in Poitiers, France. He studied philosophy at the école normale supérieure and subsequently undertook research in psychology. He was appointed in 1964 to a professorship in philosophy at university of Clermont Ferrand. In 1970, he became professor of the history systems of thought, at the college de France a title of his own contrivance designed to distinguish his work from conventional history of ideas. Foucault was a controversial and deliberately provocative thinker, sometimes abrasive and arrogant; whose ideas offered a fundamental challenge to prevailing intellectual activity.

It is not altogether surprising therefore that his work has met with exasperation and even ridicule as well as acclaim and sometimes reverence. His writing cannot be placed within conventional disciplinary categories indeed to attempt to do so would be contrary to the fundamental nature of occult projects.

In so far as he wrote histories, they were histories of the present attempts to chart the emergence and character of modern forms of rationality, to explore the ways received truths in the human sciences have become established historically. As Foucault's work developed the key to this undertaking became increasingly the relationship between knowledge and power.

9.2.2 Power of Knowledge

Foucault's conception of power is not that conventionally encountered in historical or sociological writings. He conceived power not as something exerted from above by a sovereign, a state, or a dominant class, but rather as something that permeates society through the linguistic conventions and the conceptual categories which shape and constrain our existence.

His most persuasive and accessible presentation of these ideas was in his studies of therapeutic and coercive institutions such as the asylum and the prison. But institutions of this sort demand for Foucault, an epiphenomenon of a wider conceptual and semantic coercion.

All knowledge all assertions of truth, however they might be embodied institutionally represented, for Foucault, claims, to power and routes to power. His project was not to establish the truth or otherwise of particular forms of knowledge but to consider them as strategies to ask what they did. Foucault's histories are therefore, histories without linear development, evolution or progress. He acknowledges that the definitions and discourses through which

phenomena such as criminality or madness or sexuality are constituted have undergone radical and important historical shifts but however they have been transformed, they remain stratified of power and coercion.

His histories are also histories without agency the coercive power he explores is certainly not in any straight forward sense exercised by a ruling individual group or class. Indeed, Foucault offers no general theory of power or of historical change at all. There are no overarching conclusions.

Rather he offers a method and set of questions, both of which are worked out in the context of particular studies. Inevitably Foucault's work evoked enormous hostility he was attacked for the manifest empirical shortcomings of his histories, for their moral relativism (particularly their questioning of humanistic values) for their attacks on scientific objectivity and for their failures to grapple with economic power and the nature of the modern state. He is a difficult and at times impenetrable writer. But his insights into the relationship between knowledge and power are challenging and important.

Whether they can be successfully incorporated into the conventional practice of history is more doubtful.

Revision Questions

Sample One

Section A

1. Discuss two of the following concepts in relation to causation in history
 - Determinism
 - Chance
 - Great man theory
 - Free will
2. Outline and evaluate any four theories of truth in history.
3. Discuss the validity of the view that in history facts do not speak for themselves; it is the historian who must make the facts to speak.
4. How does either Benedetto Croce or R. G. Collingwood advise us to study history?

Section B

1. Discuss the major issue involved in explanation in history.
2. Why is it impossible to be objective in history?
3. Explain John S. Mbiti's ontological theory of African historical thought. To what extent do you agree with his argument that Africans had the sense of only a long past (zamani) and the present (sasa) but no idea of the future?

4. How and to what extent is the Marxist Leninist interpretation of history as class struggles relevant to the situation in Kenya today?

Sample Two

1. Discuss the importance of historical knowledge to the Kenyan society.
2. What do you understand by the term historical causation?
3. Explain the following aspects of causation in history
 - Determinism
 - Chance
4. What is the truth in history? To what extent does correspondence theory of truth explain the problem of truth in history?
5. To what extent does Toynbee's challenge and response theory explain the rise and fall of the pre-colonial African state?
6. Using examples explain the following aspects of explanation in history
 - Descriptive explanation
 - Genetic explanation
 - Structural explanation
 - Definitional explanation
 - Causal explanation
7. What is explanation in history? Discuss Carl G. Hempel contribution to explanation in history.

8. To what extent is history objective?
9. “Historians are subjective in their work.” React to this statement.
10. What is explanation in history? How does it differ from explanation in science?
11. Compare and contrast explanation in history and natural science.
12. Why is the concept of causation problematic in history and how does it been resolved.
13. What is truth in history? To what extent do correspondence, coherence and pragmatic theories of truth explain the problem of truth in history?
14. Every history is written from a certain point of view and makes sense only from that point of view W.H. Walsh.
15. Discuss the problem of objectivity in history in the light of this statement.
16. What is the meaning of history and meaning in history.
17. The study of history is the study of causes (E. H. Carr). Discuss causation in the light of this statement.
18. Why is the concept of historical objectivity so controversial?
19. Explain the following theories of truth and how they apply the history
 - Correspondence theory
 - Coherence theory
 - Pragmatic theory
20. Explain two of the following aspects of causation in history

- Determinism
- Chance
- Free will

21. To what extent in history objective?

22. Giving a historical example, show the problems of historical causation.

23. Discuss this precisely as possible the purpose of history and the value of historical study.

24. Discuss the value of historical knowledge to society.

Sample Three

1. Asses the contribution of either Carl G. Hempel or Witham dray on explanation in history.
2. Asses the contribution of any one of the following to historical materialism
 - V. I. Lenin
 - George Lukas
 - Georg Plekhanov
3. Explain the main feature of either Wilhelm Dilthey or R. G. Collinwood historical idealism.
4. To what extent does Toynbee's challenge and response theory explain the rise and fall of pre colonial African states?
5. Discuss the major characteristics of the African philosophy of history.

6. Analyze the contributions of any one of the following to African historical thought.
 - Cheikh anta Diop
 - John Mbiti
 - Odera Oruka
 - Moloti Kete Asante
 - Ali A. Mazrui

Sample Four

1. Discuss the value of historical knowledge to society.
2. Giving a historical example, show the problems of historical causation.
3. Explain the following theories of truth and how they apply to history.
 - Correspondence theory
 - Coherence theory
 - Pragmatic theory
4. Explain the main features of R. G. Collingwood's historical idealism.
5. Assess the contributions of Carl G. Hempel on explanation in history.
6. Compare and contrast explanation in history and in natural science.
7. "History is radically and variously subjective". React to this statement.
8. Analyze the contributions of any of the following to African historical thought

- Father Placide Tempels b). John S. Mbithi c).Ali Mazrui.

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John Koskey Chang'ach (Ph.D) is a senior lecturer and Head of Department of Educational Foundations, School of Education, Moi University. His career spans both history and history of education. He has published many articles in refereed journals in both history and history of education, among which are several devoted to exploring and articulating issues that affect society. He is author of several books in the same field of study.

The book *Development of Philosophy of History Since 1900* is the definitive companion to the study of the philosophy of history. It provides an accessible and comprehensive explanation to all the major philosophical concepts, issues and debates raised by history. The book offers a lucid treatment of existing approaches to the philosophy of history and also breaks new ground by providing revision questions. The text clearly presents and criticizes the arguments of the major philosophers and historians who have contributed to our understanding of the philosophy of history. Chang'ach's rigorous analysis is supplemented by useful pedagogical features, including key examples from historical and philosophical writing; summaries of core debates; study questions; and guides to further reading. Ideal for undergraduate and postgraduate students in philosophy and history, the structure and content closely reflect the way the philosophy of history is studied and taught.

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