

**DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL**

**MASTER OF ARTS-HISTORY**

**SEMESTER -III**

**HISTORIOGRAPHY: CONCEPTS, METHODS  
AND TOOLS**

**CORE 301**

**BLOCK-1**

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## UNIVERSITY OF NORTH BENGAL

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## **FOREWORD**

The Self Learning Material (SLM) is written with the aim of providing simple and organized study content to all the learners. The SLMs are prepared on the framework of being mutually cohesive, internally consistent and structured as per the university's syllabi. It is a humble attempt to give glimpses of the various approaches and dimensions to the topic of study and to kindle the learner's interest to the subject

We have tried to put together information from various sources into this book that has been written in an engaging style with interesting and relevant examples. It introduces you to the insights of subject concepts and theories and presents them in a way that is easy to understand and comprehend.

We always believe in continuous improvement and would periodically update the content in the very interest of the learners. It may be added that despite enormous efforts and coordination, there is every possibility for some omission or inadequacy in few areas or topics, which would definitely be rectified in future.

We hope you enjoy learning from this book and the experience truly enrich your learning and help you to advance in your career and future endeavours.

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# **HISTORIOGRAPHY: CONCEPTS , METHODS AND TOOLS**

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# **BLOCK-1**

## **HISTORIOGRAPHY: CONCEPTS ,METHODS AND TOOLS**

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### **Introduction to Block**

UNIT 1 – WHAT IS HISTORY Explaining The Definition, Nature And Scope Of History

UNIT 2 – DATA COLLECTION, CAUSATION, SOURCE DETERMINATION Discussing What Is Data Collection In Historiography, What Causation Is And Source Determination Of Historical Materials.

UNIT 3 – SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY-Discussing About The Subjectivity And Objectivity Of Historiography.

UNIT 4 – INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN HISTORY Studying The Relation And Influence Of Different Disciplines On Indian History

UNIT 5 RELATIONSHIP OF HISTORY WITH – ARCHAEOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, ANTHROPOLOGY Discussing The Relationship Of Archaeology With History, With Geography And Anthropology Individually.

UNIT 6 RELATIONSHIP WITH HISTORY – LINGUISTICS, SOCIOLOGY, ECONOMICS, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY Discussing The Relationship Of History With Linguistics, Sociology, Economics, Politics.

UNIT 7 RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURAL SCIENCES, LITERATURE with History and Impact Of Natural Sciences And Literature On History

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# UNIT 1 – WHAT IS HISTORY

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## STRUCTURE

- 1.0 Objective
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 What Is History
- 1.3 Let's Sum Up
- 1.4 Keywords
- 1.5 Questions For Review
- 1.6 Suggested Readings
- 1.7 Answers to check your progress

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## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

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After completing this unit, the student will be able to:

- Define History
- Explain the nature of History
- Describe the scope of History
- Explain the aims and objectives of teaching History at Secondary level
- Describe the values of teaching History

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## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

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History is the study of life in society in the past, in all its aspect, in relation to present developments and future hopes. It is the story of man in time, an inquiry into the past based on evidence. Indeed, evidence is the raw material of history teaching and learning. It is an Inquiry into what happened in the past, when it happened, and how it happened. It is an inquiry into the inevitable changes in human affairs in the past and the ways these changes affect, influence or determine the patterns of life in the society. History is, or should be an attempt to re-think the past. Collingwood (1945) is particularly interested in this concept of history. History aims at helping students to understand the present existing social, political,

religious and economic conditions of the people. Without the knowledge of history we cannot have the background of our religion, customs institutions, administration and so on. The teaching of history helps the students to explain the present, to analyse it and to trace its course. Cause-and-effect relationship between the past and the present is lively presented in the history. History thus helps us to understand the present day problems both at the national and international level accurately and objectively. In this unit we will be dealing with meaning, nature and scope of history, aims and objectives of teaching history at secondary level and values of teaching history.

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## **1.2 WHAT IS HISTORY**

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### **Defining history**

The origin of the word History is associated with the Greek word 'Historia' which means 'information' or 'an enquiry designed to elicit truth'. History has been defined differently by different scholars. Following definitions indicate the meaning and scope of History.

Burckhardt: "History is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another." Henry Johnson: "History, in its broadest sense, is everything that ever happened."

Smith, V.S: "The value and interest of history depend largely on the degree in which the present is illuminated by the past."

Rapson: "History is a connected account of the course of events or progress of ideas."

NCERT: "History is the scientific study of past happenings in all their aspects, in the life of a social group, in the light of present happenings."

Jawaharlal Nehru: "History is the story of Man's struggle through the ages against Nature and the elements; against wild beasts and the jungle and some of his own kind who have tried to keep him down and to exploit him for their own benefit."

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The above definitions explain History as a significant records of events of the past, a meaningful story of mankind depicting the details of what happened to man and why it happened. Mainly it deals with the human world.

### **Nature of History**

1. A study of the present in the light of the past: The present has evolved out of the past. Modern history enables us to understand how society has come to its present form so that one may intelligently interpret the sequence of events. The causal relationships between the selected happenings are unearthed that help in revealing the nature of happenings and framing of general laws.
2. History is the study of man: History deals with man's struggle through the ages. History is not static. By selecting "innumerable biographies" and presenting their lives in the appropriate social context and the ideas in the human context, we understand the sweep of events. It traces the fascinating story of how man has developed through the ages, how man has studied to use and control his environment and how the present institutions have grown out of the past.
3. History is concerned with man in time: It deals with a series of events and each event occurs at a given point in time. Human history, in fact, is the process of human development in time. It is time which affords a perspective to events and lends a charm that brightens up the past.
4. History is concerned with man in space:  
The interaction of man on environment and vice versa is a dynamic one. History describes about nations and human activities in the context of their physical and geographical environment. Out of this arise the varied trends in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of man's activities and achievements.
5. Objective record of happenings: Every precaution is taken to base the data on original sources and make them free from subjective interpretation. It helps in clear understanding of the past and enables us to take well informed decisions.



6. Multisided: All aspects of the life of a social group are closely interrelated and historical happenings cover all these aspects of life, not limited only to the political aspect that had so long dominated history.<sup>7</sup>

.History is a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends. The historian's interpretation of the past, his selection of the significant and the relevant events, evolves with the progressive emergence of new goals. The general laws regulating historical happenings may not be considered enough; attempts have to be made to predict future happenings on the basis of the laws.

8. Not only narration but also analysis: The selected happenings are not merely narrated; the causal relationships between them are properly unearthed. The tracing of these relationships lead to the development of general laws that are also compared and contrasted with similar happenings in other social groups to improve the reliability and validity of these laws.

9. Continuity and coherence are the necessary requisites of history: History carries the burden of human progress as it is passed down from generation to generation, from society to society, justifying the essence of continuity.

10. Relevant: In the study of history only those events are included which are relevant to the understanding of the present life.

11. Comprehensiveness:

According to modern concept, history is not confined to one period or country or nation. It also deals with all aspects of human life-political, social, economic, religious, literary, aesthetic and physical, giving a clear sense of world unity and world citizenship.

### **The modern concept of history**

Modern history has gone beyond the traditional status of an antiquarian and leisure time pursuit to a very useful and indispensable part of a man's education. It is more scientific and more comprehensive. It has expanded in all directions both vertically and horizontally. It has become broad-based and attractive. According to modern concept, history does not contain only the history of kings and queens, battles and generals, but the history of the common man-his house and clothing, his fields and their cultivation, his continued efforts to protect his home and hearth, and to obtain a just government, his

aspirations, achievements, disappointments, defeats and failures' not only the individual but the communities and the societies are the subject of study of history. Study of history deepens our understanding of the potentialities and limitations of the present. It has thus become a future-oriented study related to contemporary problems. For all these reasons, history has assumed the role of a human science.

### **History-a Science or an Art**

Opinions are very much divided on the question whether history is a science or an art. History is a science in the sense that it pursues its own techniques to establish and interpret facts. Like other natural sciences such as the Physics and Chemistry uses various methods of enquiry such as observation, classification, experiment and formulation of hypothesis and analysis of evidence before interpreting and reconstructing the past.

History also follows the scientific method of enquiry to find out the truth. Though historian uses scientific techniques, experiment is impossible since history deals with events that have already happened and cannot be repeated.

### **Arguments against History as a science**

1.No forecasting:

Rickman has rightly said, "History deals with sequence of events, each of them unique while Science is concerned with the routine appearance of things and aims at generalizations and the establishment of regularities, governed by laws."A historian cannot arrive at general principles or laws which may enable him to predict with certainty the occurrence of like events, under given conditions. A scientist on the other hand, looks at knowledge from a universal angle and arrives at certain generalizations that help him to control the present and predict the future.

2.Complex:The facts of history are very complicated and seldom repeat in the real sense of the term.3.Varied:The underlying facts of history have wide scope. They are so varied that they can seldom be uniform.4.No observation and experimentation: Historical data are not available for observation and experimentation.5.No dependable data:Historical data are the products of human thoughts and action which

are constantly changing. They therefore cannot provide dependable data for the formation of general principles and laws.

History is both a Science and an Art. History is a unique subject possessing the potentialities of both a science and an art. It does the enquiry after truth, thus history is a science and is on scientific basis. It is also based on the narrative account of the past; thus it is an art or a piece of literature. Physical and natural sciences are impersonal, impartial and capable of experimentation. Whereas 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. History cannot remain at the level of knowing only. The construction and reconstruction of the past are inevitable parts of history. Like the work of art, its wholeness, harmony and truth are inseparable from a concrete and vivid appreciation of its parts. History, in fact, is a social science and an art. In that lies its flexibility, its variety and excitement.

### **Scope of History**

The scope of History is vast; it is the story of man in relation to totality of his behavior. The scope of history means the breadth, comprehensiveness, variety and extent of learning experiences, provided by the study. History which was only limited to a local saga, has during the course of century become universal history of mankind, depicting man's achievements in every field of life-political, economic, social, cultural, scientific, technological, religious and artistic etc., and at various levels-local, regional, national, and international. It starts with the past; makes present its sheet-anchor and points to the future. Events like wars, revolutions, rise and fall of empires, fortunes and misfortunes of great empire builders as well as the masses in general are all the subject matter of history. History is a comprehensive subject and includes-History of Geography, History of Art, History of Culture, History of Literature, History of Civilization, History of Religion, History of Mathematics, History of Physics, History of Chemistry, History of Education, History of Biology, History of Atom, History of Philosophy-in fact history of any and every social, physical and natural science we are

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interested in. History today has become an all-embracing, comprehensive subject with almost limitless.

The modern method of history writing has basically been formulated by the West. In this new method 'history' came to be defined within the framework of 'positivism' that had its genesis in the discourse of Enlightenment and the rise of nation states in Europe. Positivism has been defined as a philosophy that emphasized on a strict presentation of facts<sup>1</sup>, which according to Ranke formed the 'supreme law of historical writing'.<sup>2</sup> The concern for facts in historical writing can further be gauged when E. H. Carr pertinently points out that history must necessarily consist of a 'corpus of ascertained facts'.<sup>3</sup> The influence of Enlightenment on the Positivists had two significant effects. First, it took history closer to natural sciences by applying scientific analysis to the study of facts in the human sciences, just as it had come to be done in the natural sciences.

This necessarily gave rise to a new scientific method of writing history primarily based on empiricism. Second, the process of salvaging the facts in a scientific way and presenting them in a sequential order with reference to linear time became the central issue in presenting the historical narrative. The popularity of the positivist method of writing history in Europe may be noticed significantly in the Indological discourse on Indian history.

The purpose for which history writing was taken up by the Indologists and Orientalist writers was to define the past of the colonized. They, however, in the process developed and defined the parameters within which the discipline of History came to be understood in the country ever since. An important implication of this was the colonial projection of Indians lacking in historical sense and this finds its acceptance in several of the historical writings of modern Indians as well. In this Unit, however, we propose to survey the various historiographical trends as they emerged at the regional level with Deccan as the focus.

This is then followed by the writings of those scholars who have written regional history within the framework of linguistic regions like Andhra and Karnataka, but not necessarily within the present-day linguistic divisions of these States, which were demarcated only after independence. We next look at post-Independent writings by narrowing down particularly, to those works that focused on the history of the Chajukyias, before probing into the writings of the social and Marxist historians on the region.

Finally, we look at the most recent type of historical writings that have provided a conceptual shift in the way historians should look at the past especially, by highlighting the indigenous perceptions of history writing. Importantly, one has attempted here to investigate these various approaches to comprehend how scholars have dealt with genealogical traditions of ruling elites as explicated in the epigraphical and literary sources. This particular focus has been to understand the efforts made by historians hitherto, to capture how the ruling elites fabricated and maintained historical knowledge that had enabled them to establish identities. This last aspect constitutes the most vital issue we need to analyze in our research and therefore, forms a critical part of our review in this Unit.

Initially, an interest to write about India and its past among the European shad generated from the need to understand the so-called 'native' laws, customs and traditions that were considered essential in carrying out an efficient administration of the subject colony. As a result many European scholars like William Jones, Charles Wilkins, H. T. Colebroke and H. H. Wilson explored into the classical literature of India and found significant philological similarities between Sanskrit and European languages. An important consequence of the strenuous research of these scholars primarily led to the exposition and publication of massive literary source material that spoke about the ancient Indian past. However, the interpretations of the Indian philosophical and literary texts by them aroused two schools of thought within the Oriental discourse. One was led by the cynical Utilitarians. The other was directed by the sympathetic Romanticists led by William Jones, Max Muller and

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others who advocated both critical as well as a sympathetic view of India's past.

In both efforts the aim was to exercise their power over the subject people. In the category of the many Imperialist historians, the prominent were James Mill and Vincent Smith. In his monumental hegemonic account on *The History of British India* (1817), Mill paints the picture of Indian society as caste-centric and dominated by Hindu religious ideology, which in his opinion, was unable to transcend the false knowledge and inferior practices of 'primitivism'. In this characterization, therefore, Indian society came to be represented as sort of retrograde that did not encourage any progress and remained 'static' and 'unchanging'. An obsession with explaining ills of the Indian society to caste in order to explain India's low political and economic 'development' became a theme of analysis adopted by subsequent scholarship on India. It was his firm opinion that due to cultural inferiority the Indians lacked a sense of history. It may be noted here that Mill's interpretations on the Indian past were largely based on the theoretical norms of Indian society as laid out in the Dharmasastric or ancient legal texts.

Secondly, he tried to judge the Indian past by certain utilitarian standards with which he was familiar and therefore, when he failed to notice western values in Indian civilization, he condemned it severely. Lastly, and most importantly, Mill's hegemonic account was intended to prove the cultural superiority of the West over the Orient by representing the 'Other' (the Indian civilization) as radically different from the 'Self that is the West. Despite all this, Mill's *History* became the standard work on India and remained so for decades.

His assertions about the Indian past as a changeless and a stagnant society where despotic rulers dominated appeared as a standard model in various philosophies of history current in the nineteenth century Europe. For instance, the concept of Oriental Despotism and its characterization of the pre-modern Indian State and society

as found in Marx's model of the Asiatic Mode of Production was indeed the product of the Imperialist interpretations of Indian history, State and society. In this model, Marx conceptualized pre-modern India as being constituted of an unchanging State that was dominated by self-sufficient village economies, communal ownership of land and internal exploitation of the village communities. Such a characterization of the pre-modern Indian State, by Marx clearly reflects the strong prejudice held by the Occidentals towards the Orient.

Another important hegemonic account on early Indian history comes several decades after James Mill's seminal work, in the writings of another Administrator writer Vincent Smith, of the early twentieth century. By the time Smith wrote his hegemonic text, enormous source material in the form of inscriptions, archaeology, numismatics, and monuments had been made accessible. Smith understood the immense progress that had been made in this regard for connected systematic history of early India to be now written. With his great fascination towards classical Greek and Roman civilization, he took their achievements to be the yardstick to write about Indian history. Hence, he used such concepts like the 'age of heroes' and the 'age of empires' that became the subject matter of his history. Thus, in this interpretation of Indian history, it was the age of Asoka and Chandra Gupta II that became glorious periods for ancient India.

The intervening periods that witnessed the rise of small kingdoms were considered by Smith as "dark ages" as these periods represented chaos and lawlessness and failed to produce emperors. Further, Smith's long narrative of Indian political history was largely organized around the trope of invasion and empire -- beginning with Alexander the Great and ending with the British. In such an account of history based on wars and battles, there was naturally an over-emphasis on political and administrative matters than on other aspects like social, cultural or economic history. From the present perspective, he viewed the genealogies of kings as given in the prasastis sections of inscription to merely fill-up

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details on political history. Secondly, the political narrative thus constructed was largely north-centric with peninsular India, particularly the Deccan, being only marginally represented. Though much had been written on the theory of the State, kingship and administration, by this time due to the discovery of the Arthashastra in 1905, little analytical study was devoted to the actual structure of State during the ancient and early medieval period.

With regard to the periodization, we find that these scholars took into account the major shifts in the dynasties and religion as the criteria to demarcate Indian history. Thus, we find Mill's periodization of Indian history was categorized into Hindu, Muslim and British. However, in the 150 years since Mill's History, the definitive chronologies of India before the Muslim conquests have been constructed largely on the basis of the interpretation of stone and copper-plate inscriptions. Hence, we find in Smith's writings a periodization of Ancient, Medieval and Modern.

However, even in his writings Ancient came to be equated with the Hindu period and Medieval with the Muslim period. The early medieval was regarded by him as a period of darkness, as there was an absence of empire based kingdoms during this period. Therefore, it only drew marginal attention. In this schema of periodization dynasties ruling in south of India and the Deccan region and their chronological spans never defined the periodization of the country as a whole.

An explanation for such gross negligence of the region has been explained by some scholars to the changing topography of South India, which provided a more complex structure permitting less political uniformity than the less complex structure of the northern plains. The beginnings of history writing in South India may be attributed to the interest taken by some of the Christian missionaries and some of the enthusiastic British administrators who were posted in the South with the onset of British rule in India. Initiative in this direction had been taken up by the missionaries who, unlike the Utilitarians, did not focus on the State, but carried on a crusade



against the inherent backwardness of Indian society that according to them, was rooted in its religion.

Through their writings, they attempted to expose the weakness of Indian religion. Further, the missionaries justified the British rule in India by considering it as divinely conceived that had come to rescue a condemned humanity through proselytization and education, which they thought, could bring a radical change in the nature and quality life of Hindustan. The most important writings of the missionaries in the Deccan and Madras Presidency were those of Abbe Dubois, Caldwell, among many others.

Though there is controversy with regard to the authorship of Abbe Dubois work on Hindu Manners Customs and Ceremonies, however, the work may be considered as one of the earliest accounts on South India that attempts to give a vivid description of the various Hindu customs and ceremonies. Thus, the writings of missionaries evinced their inherent motive of spreading Christianity and in this process only produced distorted versions on the Indian past without actually attempting to make an analytical study of the indigenous society. They (the missionaries) also studied languages and thus played an important role in the "construction" of both literary and inscriptional sources of information. Hence, irrespective of their ideological commitments, the accounts of the missionaries came to be written within a certain perception of 'History, which most Europeans were familiar with since the Enlightenment. They were encumbered by the concern of contrasting the civilized West with the backward and irrational India. They consistently projected that History as a discipline was absent in the traditional society's vision of its past.

This then became a motivating factor for them to consciously create new images within a scientific paradigm, so that it became a justification and provided useful tools for the more contemporary interpretations of Indian society. An important contribution with regard to the South Indian history was made by administrators like Col. Mackenzie, C. P. Brown and others who worked indifferent

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parts of South India and the Deccan. It may be stated that the appointment of Mackenzie as the Surveyor General of South India in 1796, by the British Government, ushered in a new phase in the writing of the Deccan history.

Mackenzie's strenuous endeavors aided by the local clerks, especially the Kavalibrothers, resulted in the accumulation of vast source material in the form of stone and copper plate inscriptions, local records and Telugu classics. Another significant outcome of Mackenzie's efforts was that for the first time many young Indian scholars were trained in the scientific method of sifting "facts" and collecting source material. As a result, enormous data from the villages pertaining to details on peasants, revenue, rent, caste, customs, tribes, popular religious practices, family genealogies of various ruling families belonging to different Samsthanas and Zamindaris were systematically collected. These new sources acquired authenticity due to the fact that they have been generated under the supervision of state power.

A large majority of these collections have been preserved in the form of village Kaifiyats popularly known as the Mackenzie Manuscripts. Since these sources were being identified, collected, edited and translated for the first time, not much analytical study could be done by them to understand the nature of the source material and its relevance in writing the history of the ancient Deccan. The body or data of knowledge thus produced came to be the foundational knowledge base on which later histories were written. This has been significantly discussed in Inden's recent studies on the Indological discourse, which according to him was either 'descriptive', 'commentative' or 'hegemonic'.

The 'descriptive accounts of the Indological discourse were described by him as simply describing the sources collected apparently letting them speak for themselves. Therefore, in these accounts the thoughts and acts of objects of study were presented as they were. In this category, we have Mackenzie's Kaifiyats that simply note the facts or describe them without any analysis. The second type of accounts

are what Inden calls as 'commentative' in nature that provide comments on the thoughts and actions of the people being studied and therefore, consciously bring to the forefront a certain point of view or criticism and bias.

The aim of both these types of accounts was quite simple, namely, to provide a true picture of India with certain rational explanations. Most of the writings of the Romanticists may be grouped under latter type. However, in Inden's view it was the 'hegemonic' accounts of the Indological discourse that provided the most critical view about India. According to him, these texts often depicted the thoughts and institutions of the Indians as distortions of normal and natural thoughts that were considered universal but, actually reflected only the Western values and ideas. Thus, these accounts aimed at hegemonizing the Indian thoughts, by putting the data within a consciously formulated theoretical framework, as can be noticed in the accounts of both Mill and Smith. These early explanations thus laid the ideological foundations for the later interpretations of Indian history. Historical writings on South India and the Deccan received further impetus from 1837 onwards, when James Princep achieved a breakthrough in the decipherment of the Brahmi script that was used for writing many of the early inscriptions. This provided a new scientific outlook for the study of history as a whole.

In South India, the study of epigraphical sources began with the initiative taken by the Madras Government to publish inscriptions in journals like the Annual Report on South Indian Epigraphy, *Epigraphia Indica* and *South Indian Inscriptions* that were started solely for this purpose. Many eminent epigraphists like J. Fleet, Lewis Rice, E. Hultzsch, F. Keilhorn, H. Krishna Sastri, V. Venkayya and others endeavored hard to translate, edit and transcribe a good number of inscriptions and interpreted the data thus obtained to construct primarily apolitical history of South India. The inscriptions, the virtue of their recording specific events and dates came to be treated by most scholars as "hardcore" evidence as opposed to less reliable literary sources that provided authentic

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information and therefore, came to be used largely in constructing the political and dynastic histories of the region within the scientific method of writing history.

In fact Fleet, one of the most prolific epigraphists, was so excited about this 'authentic' historical information found in the Indian inscriptions that he wrote: "for our knowledge of ancient political history we are indebted only to inscriptions and not to any history works bequeathed to us by the Hindus". The intensive study of inscriptions on a region-wise basis not only yielded insights into the early political institutions and ideas, but it gave a new focus to the study of regional and local histories. In the present context of the study, eminent epigraphists like J. F. Fleet and E. Hultzsch and others unearthed a large number of inscriptions belonging to various Chalukyan families of the Deccan region.

These scholars read and used the genealogies of the ruling elites to mainly address the problem of solving the chronological and succession of the kings belonging to different Chalukyan families that was done in a linear fashion. Indeed, this provided a new dimension to "dynasticize" political history within a positivistic framework. As a result, the most crucial issues relating to the notions of time, memory, history embedded in genealogies and their uses in seeking specific identities have been evaded in their writings. Our study that focuses mainly on inscriptional sources aims at re-looking the genealogies of ruling elite and other dominant social groups in the early medieval Deccan to give fresh insights into the study of social history by taking up the study of the abovementioned issues.

It is pertinent at this juncture to underscore that the Indian response to history writing that emerged during the late 19th and early 20th centuries posed a significant challenge to the earlier interpretations of Indian history in Indological discourses. The Indian scholars writing during this period came to be known as the Nationalist historians.<sup>26</sup> They vehemently opposed the Imperialist interpretations on Indian history by terming

these as deliberate misrepresentations and distortions. Further, they contested the colonial hegemony, by taking up the writing of ancient history of India that was meant to provide in the first place, an opposition to the colonial version of ancient Indian history, and secondly, to revamp the image of India by providing an idyllic picture of ancient India society.

Another significant feature of the Nationalist writings was the prolific usage of concepts like the "Golden Ages" and the great "Imperial Ages" that have been used in denoting some powerful ruling classes of ancient India. Despite their strong opposition to the Imperialist writings on ancient Indian history, they nonetheless, followed the Positivist method and approach advocated by the West. Naturally, therefore, in their interpretations, one can notice that the writing of history was done merely as a process of accumulating "facts" from different source material that was used to write history. The writings of Nationalist historians nevertheless, had strong ramifications on the regional historians writing on specific regions. Thus, the study of regional histories during this period emerged as a valuable offshoot of nationalist school of historical writing.

A further fillip to regional history has been provided with the availability of the abundance of source material in the form of archaeological, epigraphic, historical literature, religious literature, archival records and family Papers at the regional level. Significantly, the emergence of regional histories averted major breaks in historical interpretation found in the writings of the nationalist historians. Firstly, generalizations about the sub-continent from the perspective of the Ganges-Valley has been avoided. Secondly, the supposed "dark ages" emphasized in the nationalist historiography could be eliminated by using local source material.

Studies on regional histories of small geographical areas and States such as, the histories of Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra, Karnataka and parts of the peninsula became common towards the mid-twentieth century. In the next few pages, we shall endeavor to

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survey the historical works pertaining to the Deccan, in particular. In the conventional works on the Deccan written within the positivistic methodological framework, we primarily begin with those works that deal with the composite history of the Deccan as a whole without necessarily identifying separate historical trends for the Andhra or Karnataka regions. Some of the writings that fall in this category are those of R. G. Bhandarkar, G. J. Dubreuil and G. Yazdani.

One finds that all these writings begin with a detailed description on the geography of the Deccan. This is so because, geographically, the peninsular region appeared as a more complex structure to be studied. With its diverse topographical variations, it emerged as a complicated phenomenon for the historians to define the land south of Vindhya. Until almost the middle of the century, some historians identified the peninsula into two distinct units of study

(1) the "Deccan" and (2) "South India". Bhandarkar and Yazdani among others have identified the Deccan with the upper unit of the peninsula. According to them, Deccan is a land lying between the Vindhya and the Krishna-Tungabhadra deltas. On the other hand, South India was identified with the land south of the Krishna-Tungabhadra region and was broadly confined within the territorial boundaries of the present-day linguistic States of Tamilnadu and Kerala.

Bhandarkar was the first Indian historian to write on the peninsular India with "Dekkan" as its title, in the late 19th century. In his study on Early History of the Dekkan (1895), he identified Deccan as a land mainly confined to the present day Maharashtra region. In his text, the definition of the early historical phase of the Deccan was concerned, prior to the coming of the Aryans. Since his book concentrated mainly on Maharashtra region, the development of historical phase in other parts of the Deccan was given a corner place of study. He was also the first among modern Indian historians to write on ancient Indian history using genealogies of different ruling families for constructing historical narratives on the

political and dynastic history of the Deccan, which was done within the positivist methodology.

Thus, while using both the literary and inscriptional sources of his time, he emphasized on providing "congeries of facts" pertaining to the dates and genealogies of kings in sequential order. In such works therefore, there is a clear reflection of the failure to understand how the ruling elites in the pre-modern times perceived and memorized their past especially, through genealogies that provided them with a sense of the past and identity. Next important study on the "Deccan" emerged in the writings of G. J. Dubreuil.

In his study on the Ancient History of the Deccan (1920), he has understood the definition of region as "a larger track of country which was bounded on the north by the Nerbada and Mahanandi, on the east by the Bay of Bengal, on the west by the Arabian Sea, on the south by the Nilgiri Hills and the Southern Pennar". The reason for writing this book, he explains is to "rescue history before it is lost in obscurity". Hence, he used the hitherto, untapped sources in archaeology and epigraphy to write brief accounts of the political histories of the dynasties of the Deccan that ruled from the post-Satavahana times till the reign of Pulakesi II.

Thus, one can note that he did not even attempt to give a full dynastic account of the Chalukyas of Badami. Further, his book remains largely a description of political events of the region without any major shift in the foci of historical analysis. Several years later, there emerged another important work on the Deccan in the form of Yazdani's edited work entitled, Early History of the Deccan (1982).

In this book 'Deccan' was defined by the scholar keeping in view, its relatively specific and political boundaries that coincided with the erstwhile Nizam's dominions of Hyderabad State comprising major parts of the present-day States of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Thus, in this description historical Deccan came to be defined as "a land stretching from the

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Sahyadri• parvat and Mahendragiri ranges and the Mahanadi and the Godavari rivers in the South. Towards the West and East of the Deccan comprised the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal" respectively. However, being an edited work with contributions of several well-known scholars, the individual perceptions on the historical identity of the Deccan often varied, with the scholars taking into cognizance the account the political boundaries of the various dynasties that ruled over the Deccan, as an important criteria to define the region.

In this respect, therefore, the Chajukyan dynasties that ruled the Andhra-Karnataka region were also focussed. Being an edited work, there are several contributions of well-known scholars. In this book, the Units on the Badami Chalukyas, the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the Western Chalukyas of Kalyani were contributed by scholars like K. A. N. Sastri and N. Venkataramanayya.

However, in this endeavour Aryan presence had been perceived as an important catalyst, which according to the scholars of this volume had resulted in a cultural change. Thus in this work there is no attempt to understand the role of local elements in socio-cultural transformations. Though genealogies of kings were used, these were discussed mainly to comprehend the political and military history of the dynasties.

As a result, there is little analytical study to comprehend the perceptions of the kings of the various Chajukyan families about their past revealed from their genealogies, which according to us is significant to understand the genealogical relationships between the various Chajukyan families, as this is crucial to establish an identity, as they move away from their parent branch. On the other hand, we have scholars like Nilakanta Sastry, who while writing on South Indian history, considered the history of all regions south of the Vindhyas to be under its sphere and therefore, in these writings one may find Deccan as imprecisely considered a part of South India.



He therefore, sees Deccan as one of those oldest inhabited regions of the world, which with its pre-historic archaeology and contacts with the neighboring lands, so far as they are traceable, constitute an important Unit in the history of world civilization. However, it may be pointed out that though he wrote much after Bhandarkar's seminal work, but he too continued with the earlier stereotype of emphasizing the role of Aryan influence in colonizing and civilizing the South and the Deccan. Further his work on South Indian history though accommodated Deccan dynasties, however, focused more on the dynasties that ruled extreme South and thus remained largely Tamil-centric.

Undoubtedly, these definitions on the Deccan are determined either from the point of view of source material, or for ideological reasons of providing a vantage point to study the region as a whole. It has been observed by us that in the process, for the northern parts of South India, namely, the Deccan region, it is often ignored that it had its own historical personality which had undergone transformations in various periods of historical time. From the survey on some of these works on the region of study, it is apparent to us that hitherto the historical transformations in the Deccan have been encapsulated primarily in terms of political history.

Further, one also discovers that these have been partially treated as a segment of either, the history of India as a whole or, that of South India in particular. Thus, in our opinion, not only are rigid boundaries of historical definitions have been imposed on the region but its 'centrality' in these histories also came to be understood primarily in terms of the rise to political prominence of dynasties that ruled in these parts.

Therefore, naturally we find importance being given to the Satavahanas as the first major dynasty followed by such early medieval dynasties as the Chajukyas of Badami, Rashtrakutas, Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi etc., as they were discerned to be nearest to have reached the 'empire' concept. The historical

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centrality of the Deccan was thus essentially conceptualized in terms of political monumentality. Another important aspect noticeable in majority of the historical writings of this school was that the descriptions on the social, economic and cultural history have been simply added as important fringes to political and dynastic histories for understanding the totality of the historical past. Further, they also declined to look at the past as it was from those objects in use and those people in action, and what the people in the past believed, thought and said about the events and ideas current in those times. In their fascination to write such dynastic histories, they have invariably followed the model of the positivist method that was popular at that time and therefore, the aim of most of these historians was to clear the ground for having systematic political histories for the region in clear outline.

Lack of proper representation of the Deccan in these early interpretations on South India and the arbitrary administrative policies of the British Government ignited a feeling of regionalism among various States of the Deccan, during the early part of the 20th century. Thus for instance, the British Government's proposal in 1905 to merge the Telugu speaking Ganjam and Visakhapatnam areas with the proposed Oriya territory and separate the Kannada speaking territory from the then Bombay, Hyderabad and Madras provinces provoked the Andhra-Karnataka sentiments.

As a result an attempt has been made by the elite in these two regions to resuscitate their identity by extricating histories of various local ruling families, in their respective regions. Hence, for this period, we come across regional histories written by scholars within the framework of linguistic regions like Andhra and Karnataka. However, it may be pointed at the outset that these works were written not necessarily within the present linguistic boundaries of these States, as they were demarcated only after Independence. Some of the prominent writings that we have for this period are those of Chilukuri Virabhadra Rao, George M. Moraes and B. A. Saletore among others. Chilukuri Virabhadra Rao's,

Andhrula Charitramu (1912)<sup>40</sup> in Telugu was the first comprehensive history on the Andhras.

He used Mackenzie Manuscripts, Local Records and inscriptions for reconstructing the history and culture of the Andhra dynasties. He was the first historian among the Andhras to have realized the importance of writing the living history of the people as opposed to the mere accumulation of facts and dates. According to him, 'biographies of kings and nobles are no more than barest framework of history'. He therefore, emphasizes to focus on aspects like institutional progress and development of administration through the ages with people's achievement in time and space, as an evolutionary process to fill the skeleton of dynastic chronology. He used genealogies to understand the chronological and dynastic history of the ruling families in Andhra. A discussion on the caste of various ruling families of Andhra also finds place, as caste had become one of the major issues in writing social history during the early decades of the 20th century. In this context, he dared to describe the Kakatiyas as Sudras. Despite his strong inclinations towards writing a social history, Chilukuri could not extricate himself from the web of the positivistic method and therefore he narration of social aspects were provided within the framework of the political and dynastic history of the kings.

Chilukuri's work created great commotion among the Andhra elites. He was severely criticized for his audacity to describe the Kakatiyas as Sudras and the Ksatriyas or Rachavaru as belonging to a separate caste originated from the baniza, khamma, velama and Reddi castes. In contradiction to his views, Buddharaju Varahalaraju wrote the 'Sri Andhra Ksatriya Vamsa Ratnakaram' in which he stated that the Andhra Ksatriyas were the descendants of Northern ksatriyas who were the original migrants to Andhra. It also states that the Satavahanas, the Chojas, the Chajukyias, the Kotas, the Kakatiyas and Parichchedins are ksatriyas. In 1935, Duvvuri Jagannada Sarma edited and published a small book-let entitled the 'Vasistha Gotra Kshatreeyulu', written by

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Mahamandaleswara Rachiraju. Duvvuri also wrote Sri Pusapati Vamsanucharitam.

This was followed by a series of works written on the important families of Andhra ksatriyas. In this regard, we have Reddikula Nirnaya Chandrika by Seshagiri Ramana Kavulu, Reddi Sanchika, Reddy Rani (Magazines) edited by Vaddadi Appa Rao, Kasi Bhatta Brahmayya Sastry's Andhra Kshatriyulu and so on. The latter was a replication to the feelings among the Sudras that the Brahmins were the main cause for their low economic, academic and social status.

Thus, in these works one finds that there is a conscious attempt to resurrect caste-based histories by retrieving the memories of their glorious past from the epics, Puranas and inscriptions of the ancient ruling families of the region. Urgency for such claims was felt when their identity was questioned. Hence, in an urge to prove their superior social identity and economic status in the society, these scholars chose to write 'history' of castes, based on traditional narratives that explicated the migration of the ksatriyas of the north to Andhra. Besides they also asserted ksatriya status of the Satavahanas, the Chajukyas, the Kakatiyas and all other ruling families of ancient Andhra.

There was a further increase in writing caste-based histories when powerful caste movements were led in different parts of the region. In Karnataka too caste and family based histories appeared around this time.

In this regard, we have George M. Moraes's Kadamba Kula- A History of Ancient and Medieval Karnataka (1931) a voluminous book that dealt in detail with the history of the various Kadamba lineages that were proliferated in different parts of the Karnataka-Maharashtra regions. This may be considered as the first work in the modern times, which has been written with 'kula' (family) as a theme. Hence, one finds in this work a detailed study of genealogies of various ruling chiefs of the Kadamba families, but these were done

to understand the political history of the families than to comprehend the social implication of genealogies.

Further, Moraes attempt in this work appears merely to fill up the vacuum created in the political history of the Karnataka by presenting a comprehensive and complete history of the region. Hence, one finds that the administrative and social aspects under the Kadambas were dealt only in the penultimate Unit of the book. Thus, like any other historical writings in modern period, this work too could not escape from the influence of positivist methodology in its treatment of the subject.

**Check your progress –**

1. What is orientalism?

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2. What is Mckenzie manuscripts?

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### **1.3 LETS SUM UP**

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This approach is designed to avoid the perils and pitfalls of ideologically-driven approaches to historiography such as those adopted by religious fundamentalists and to quantify and eliminate biases and prejudices of all kinds. It also seeks to generate robust methods for historical research and make the role of the historian more rewarding and fulfilling, and to ensure that the expectation of a historian from all stakeholders are met, and to ensure that the historian acts in the interests of society and the education system. It also consists of checks and balances at every level, and is designed to augment the pace of research in the Twenty-first century.

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## 1.4 KEYWORDS

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History, historiography, philosophy of history, narrative historiography, Herodotus, Hegel, Marx, Foucault, Hayden White

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## 1.5 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. Define history.
2. What is the scope of history?
- 3.

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## 1.6 SUGGESTED READINGS

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## 1.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Hint – 1.2
2. Hint 1.2

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# **UNIT 2 – DATA COLLECTION, CAUSATION, SOURCE DETERMINATION**

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## **STRUCTURE**

- 2.0 Objective
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Data And Sources
- 2.3 Causation
- 2.4 Let's Sum Up
- 2.5 Keywords
- 2.6 Questions For Review
- 2.7 Suggested Readings
- 2.8 Answers to check your progress

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## **2.0 OBJECTIVE**

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To learn about collection of data and source determination in history

To learn about causation

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## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Enquiry of past events with the help of written or unwritten oral records is known as historical research. Historical events are collective, chronologically narrated and interpreted by the historians. Writing history is a strenuous process because it should be done perfectly. Mistakes done by the historian will seriously affect the credibility of the event happened and will give a false picture to the one who reads it later. So, the solution for all these problems would be to do the data collection with high level of alertness. The research design based on the problem taken for research is the main criterion which decides the sources of data needed for the later stages of research work. Therefore it is essential for the research to

collect relevant data. In this research paper it is intended to discuss about the crucial sources of data needed for the research related to history.

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## 2.2 DATA AND SOURCES

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Sources of data are considered as the raw materials of the historian. There would be an evidence left behind knowingly or unknowingly related to the events happened in the past. It is the duty of the historian to find the related sources to write the perfect history of the past events. Those evidences survive the test of time to remind people about the past happenings of the world. Some sources are left behind by men unintentionally. But some of them are intentionally done to preserve the posterity of their own identity. Such evidences are collected by the historians and will give a clear picture about the rulers as they thought how they should be remembered. The relics and traces left behind for the future enquiry is known as sources. Historical events are written based on the historical sources. The sources are examined for the purpose of writing history. Sources can be classified into historical and non-historical sources. Historical sources are which can be traced with timeline. On the other hand, non-historical sources are found even before the historic period or prehistoric period which does not have a definite time frame. The nature of sources can be material, immaterial and written sources. The objects used by the prehistoric and historic people can be considered as material sources. The material remains may be the structural remains, that is, temples built of stone in south India, monasteries built with bricks in eastern India, and Painted Grey Ware indicates the iron age of northern India. These material remains can be found in mounds built up in course of time. Mounds are those formed due to the land covering by the remains of the successive habitations in a particular place. Mounds can be excavated horizontally or vertically to find the history of that place. Vertical excavation will reveal the time frame, sequence of time period, and the successive habitations of that exact site. Horizontal excavation will uncover the entire culture of the site in a specific phase



of history. The social life of the people can be traced with the help of immaterial sources. It includes the languages, faiths, customs, religious practices, ethical values, traditions followed by a group of people and stories about them. The seals, coins and the potteries used in the Harappan culture are considered as immaterial sources. Print sources of history are considered as written sources which can be replicated in print. These written sources can be trusted upon as master source for writing history. The chronicles of Kings and annals are considered as written sources of history.

### **Types of Sources used in Historical Research**

There are two types of sources that can be classified under sources used to write history. They are primary and secondary sources of history. Primary sources are those which exhibit the occurrence of an historical event. Secondary sources are those which written by a person with the help of primary sources. It can be considered as a finished product produced from a raw material. It is considered better to study the secondary source first before attempting to collect primary source to understand the topic or a problem chosen for the research work. Primary sources can further be classified into archaeological, numismatical, epigraphical, literary sources, ancient monuments, ruins, seals, sculpture, paintings, confidential records of an institution, government orders, fortnightly reports, census, gazetteers, etc. Most of the primary sources used in historical research are published by the government itself. Those resources can be accessed from the National or State archives functioning under the respective governments. Archaeological sources are considered as pure form of historical sources. There is no way it can get polluted. No one can interpret those evidences found from the archaeological site. It serves as a direct source of information regarding the particular place or particular time period.

Archaeological sources are considered important for writing prehistory and history of historic period. Most of the civilisations of the world are exposed only because of the excavations done in the archaeological sites of the respective civilisations. In India,

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Mohenjo-daro and Harappan sites were excavated to find out the existence of Indus Valley civilisation.

Epigraphical sources are mostly exaggerated accounts but are considered very important. Study of inscriptions or literary works carved on the walls of caves, stones, plates, seals, rocks and pillars are known as epigraphical sources. Most of the inscriptions are found in the languages such as Sanskrit or Prakrit. Script is important for the expression of information in inscriptions. Kharoshti and Brahmi scripts are used in the Indian inscriptions.

Inscriptions provide us the information about the lifestyle, ethical values, and achievements of a ruler, economic condition, and territorial extent of a dynasty or kingdom. Pillar and rock inscriptions of Ashoka were considered most important to write the history of Ashokan Empire, Samudragupta's conquests were known from the famous Allahabad pillar inscription. Study of historical information from the coins issued by the rulers of various ages is known as numismatics. It helps in the construction of rich history with definite information. Political, social, administrative, religious, cultural and economic condition of kingdoms, dynasties and their rulers were known from the study of coins. Earlier coins were punch marked and later minted. Gold, silver, copper, lead are some of the metals used for minting coins. These metals disclose the economic condition of the particular dynasty. Images marked in the coins will tell us about the appearance of the rulers. Coins were also issued to commemorate some important achievements of the rulers. Roman coins found in the site of Arikamedu throw light on the Indo-Roman commercial transactions in the ancient times. Numerous ancient monuments are found in India. Stupas, Rock-cut caves, temples, Viharas, Pillars are some of the examples for ancient monuments. Study of ancient monuments gives us a clear picture about the cultural and religious life of the people. The style of architecture and engineering are revealed. Pillars of Ashokan Empire, Ajnata and Ellora caves, Sanchi stupa are some of the examples of ancient monuments. Ruins are also considered important in writing history. The mounds found in the Indus valley site contain not only the

structural remains but also non-monumental relics like utensils, tools, pottery, monolithic stone tools, terracotta figurines, weights and measures, etc. Seals are considered as very source of information for writing ancient history of India. Copper, soap-stone, clay and stone are some of the materials used for making seals. The sculptures and paintings found in the old temples informs us about the dressing style, ornaments, hair style, transport, taming of animals, etc.

Literary sources are often considered to know about the social and cultural conditions of the people and place. Literary sources are mostly exaggerated and written by the court poets due to the influence of rulers. Birch bark, palm leaves, sheep leather, wooden tablets, clay tablets were the materials used for writing. Religious literatures of Hinduism includes Vedas, Upanishads, Aryankas, Brahmanas, Epics namely Mahabarata and Ramayana, Jataka folktales of Buddha, Jaina texts, Holy Bible of Christianity, Holy Quran of Islam, Kautilya's Arthasashtra, Abhijnanashakuntalam of Kalidasa,

Sangam literature of South India, Ettuthogai, Pattupattu, Purnanuru, Patinenkil Kanakku discloses the history of India from time to time. Confidential records are mostly related to the government comprising of military despatches, secret communications, serves as definite evidence and considered as primary source of data. Personal diaries, letters, Public reports, annual administration reports, gazetteers, annals, records of debates held in Parliament, Legislative Assembly, etc, editorials, regional newspaper reports, fortnightly reports, etc. comes under the category of primary sources. These sources are considered authentic. The official orders or documents issued by the government every day will be recorded and preserved in the archival section for future reference. These records can be analysed to know the decisions taken by the government on particular issue or event. Government orders are maintained department-wise for well maintenance. National and state archives play a crucial role in preserving government orders and official records. Secondary sources are supplementary records of history. They are called so because they are written based on the primary sources.

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Mostly historians start their research work by referring secondary sources. Secondary sources are not original sources of information. So, the historian must be cautious while obtaining information from secondary sources. There is an indirect connection between the past and the secondary sources. Secondary sources are mostly published written materials such as books both authored and edited, journals, periodicals, articles, encyclopaedias, etc. The historian must refer secondary sources which will automatically lead him to refer the right kind of primary source. The merit of referring secondary sources is that it will give a clear picture about the topic chosen for research, the usage of sources can be understood, methodology adapted can be referred, a frame work can be read, the degree of research work done on the topic can be evaluated which help in further study of the unexplored areas, bibliographical data can be collected, the idea of interpretation can be derived. A background study can be made with the help of the secondary sources. The primary sources can be understood better. This will give a lead and motivation for further research work.

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### 2.3 CAUSATION

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Even though the event is taken to be a unique particular, historians nevertheless endeavours explain its occurrence. The analysis of an event as a particular does not undermine either the effectiveness of the offered explanation or its claim to represent the truth. Like other social scientists, historians offer a complete explanation of the phenomenon under consideration, and they do this by determining what caused that event to occur. Search for causes is thus central to historical analysis. Up until the eighteenth century philosophers and historians commonly believed that the cause must be an antecedent event - one that occurred prior to the event that is being explained; and that the antecedent event must be regularly associated with the effect. However, following upon the work of John S. Mill, the cause is no longer identified as an event that occurs before. Rather it is conceived as a condition or a set of conditions that are always present when the event E occurs, and always absent when E does

not occur. The cause, in other words, is a condition that is both necessary and sufficient for bringing about the given event E. It is said to be necessary because its absence implies the absence of the effect E, and it is sufficient because its presence yields the given result E.

If a study shows that individuals with Vitamin A deficiency suffered from night-blindness, and in all those individuals where Vitamin A was present in sufficient measure, night-blindness did not occur, then all else being the same, we can say that deficiency of Vitamin A is the cause of night-blindness. We can designate Vitamin A as the cause because its absence meant night-blindness and its presence meant the absence of the effect – namely, night-blindness. Three points need to be emphasised here. First, the relationship of necessity is significantly different from that of sufficiency. Second, the cause is considered to be a condition that is both necessary and sufficient; and third, constant conjunction is not an adequate indicator of a causal relationship. If in a given instance cardiac arrest leads to the death of a person, we may say that heart failure was a condition that was sufficient for producing the effect – namely, the death of a person. However to assert that cardiac arrest was a necessary condition for the death of the individual we need to show that the absence of cardiac arrest would have meant absence of the effect - death. If death could have occurred due to some other condition – for example, liver failure or hemorrhage, then cardiac arrest may have been a sufficient condition but it cannot be designated as a necessary condition for the occurrence of the event - death of the individual. Since the person could have died due to the presence of other conditions the absence of cardiac arrest would not have prevented the effect. Hence, it cannot be a condition that is necessary for the event under consideration. What is being suggested here is that the relationship of necessity is different from that of sufficiency, and in philosophies of science the cause has been conceived as being both a necessary and a sufficient condition.

In the natural sciences researchers conduct controlled experiments to determine what is the necessary and sufficient condition. By controlling and manipulating one condition while all others remain exactly the same they determine the impact that the condition has on the effect. If the elimination of condition C results in the absence of E while all else is the

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same, then C is said to be the cause of E. In the social sciences it is not always possible, or even desirable, to conduct experiments under controlled conditions. For example, if we are analysing the cause of communal violence that occurred in a given region, it is not possible to set up a controlled experiment. Since the event that is being explained has already occurred, the experiment cannot be conducted in its natural setting.

The experiment can only be re-created in an artificial or laboratory condition and it is indeed questionable whether we should produce conditions in which individuals inflict physical harm upon each other. In addition to it, there is the difficulty of finding exactly similar groups of individuals whose behaviour is replicable. Given all these considerations, conducting controlled experiments poses innumerable problems in the social sciences, and researchers in these disciplines do not rely on this technique for arriving at causal explanations. Social scientists identify causes by using what John Stuart Mill called the Method of Agreement and the Method of Disagreement or Difference. The Method of Agreement draws an inventory of all those circumstances/conditions that are present whenever the event E occurs. It identifies a condition that is invariably present in all instances where has occurred. The method of Difference, on the other hand, searches for that conditioning terms of which the antecedent circumstances and the phenomenon differ. That is, a condition whose absence translates into the absence of that event. Social scientists combine these two methods to determine what caused E to occur. They pinpoint the cause by studying a number of positive and negative instances: instances where event of the type E occurred and situations where E did not occur.

If in all cases where E occurred condition C was always present and in all cases where E did not occur condition C alone was absent, then C is regarded as the cause of E. To take an example: if the analysis shows that in all instances where factionalism existed Congress lost elections and in all those states where the party was free of factional politics, it won the support of the voters, then it can be said that factionalism was the cause of party losing elections. The causal condition is identified here by studying contrast cases – contexts where Congress won elections and

states where it lost. It is of course assumed that the states compared differed only in this one aspect and that all other prevailing conditions were more or less the same. If, for instance, factionalism is found in states where Congress has been losing successive elections or where opposition parties have been increasing their vote percentage over the years, then factionalism cannot be identified as the cause. Alternately, if the states in which Congress won elections were marked by a high concentration of rural population and there is previously some evidence that these are sections that have supported the Congress in the past, then again one cannot easily conclude that factionalism is the cause of winning elections.

And, if the states in which it lost elections were also those that had witnessed a spate of communal violence, then again, the disparity in initial conditions existing in the two kinds

Causation of states would prevent one from inferring that factionalism is the causal condition. The existence of one common condition – namely, factionalism within the party - in states where it lost elections and the absence of that one condition in states where it won is not in itself sufficient for claiming that factionalism is the cause of lost electoral support. The election may have been won and lost due to completely different causal conditions. Hence, the crucial factor is that all other conditions in the compared situations must be “at par”. If the compared units differ in significant respects then it is not possible to infer with any degree of certainty what the causal condition is. It follows from the above discussion that in social sciences a cause is identified by studying a number of situations that are similar in terms of their antecedent conditions but different with regard to the outcome or phenomenon that occur. However, what happens when comparable contexts are not available? What happens when we study and try to explain events are unique? How do we then identify a cause?

One option is to say that in all such cases there is no satisfactory way of identifying the causal condition. Indeed several philosophers have, on account of the distinctiveness of the object and purpose of inquiry in history, argued that we abandon the search for causes. The natural

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sciences, they maintain, are generalising sciences. They aim to discover law-like generalisations. History, by comparison, focuses on that which is unique to the case being analysed. Further, natural sciences seek to gain knowledge with a view to enhancing technological control. Causes are sought not only to explain why something happened but also to predict circumstances in which we might expect similar events to occur and what might be controlled – manipulated or altered – to ensure that the said event does not occur.

History, on the other hand, seeks to understand why the event occurred. It tries to make sense of a phenomenon by identifying the meaning that it had in a given historically defined context. Since its aim is to enhance communication and interaction, it is permeated by a different knowledge interest and therefore relies on a different methodological orientation. In place of identifying a condition that causes or produces given effect it makes sense of the event by treating it as an expression of a specific world-view. It, in other words, explores the link between life, expression and a historical *welt Anschauung* and understands rather than explains a given event. Here it needs to be emphasised that determining the cause of an event that is unique, or a one-time occurrence, poses a serious challenge. Historians, who affirm the relevance and importance of causal form of inquiry, have met this challenge by redefining the idea of cause. In particular they have attempted to dissociate explanation from prediction and argued that the cause refers to a condition that made the crucial difference in a given situation. While the cause was previously associated with the assertion, ‘whenever C also E’, they claim that the identified cause C only explains a given event E rather than all events of the type E.

In saying that the cause explains fully why a specific event occurred at a given time and place, they suggest that historians search for a condition that was necessary under the circumstances. They make, what might be called, singular causal assertions.

## **HISTORIANS AND CAUSATION**



In offering singular causal assertions historians separate explanations from predictions. They argue that a complete explanation does not entail accurate predictions. In fact several philosophers of history maintain that explanation and prediction are two different kinds of activities, involving different kinds of evidence and justifications. Prediction assumes regularity and recurrence of sequence. We can say that the sun will rise in the East tomorrow and the day after that only because we believe that the structure of the universe and the laws by which it is governed will continue to operate unchanged. It is the assumption that patterns and regularities observed today will recur and repeat themselves that allows us to predict the future course of events. However, this assumption is irrelevant for stipulating causal connections. We can determine with reasonable accuracy what caused E to occur even when E is a one-time occurrence, or a unique particular. In the absence of the presupposition that social reality will remain unaltered and existing patterns will recur we cannot claim that whenever C occurs, E will follow. A distinction is here made between explanation and prediction.

In empiricist theories of science, explanation and prediction are inextricably linked together. Indeed one is considered to be a condition of the other. When it is said that C is the cause (necessary and sufficient condition) of the event E, it is simultaneously suggested that whenever C is present E will necessarily follow. And, vice-versa a successful prediction is considered to be an indicator of the accuracy of the explanation. Thus, explanation and prediction are taken as two sides of the same coin. In history, particularly, this proposed link between explanation and prediction is questioned. Instead it is argued that causal inquiry and explanation is distinct from the act of prediction. Complete explanation does not entail a successful prediction and vice-versa a successful prediction is no indication of the accuracy or the truth of the offered explanation. We may, on seeing dark clouds in the sky, predict accurately that there will be rainfall in the next twelve hours. But making a successful prediction here does not give us any explanation of why this event occurs. Similarly, on seeing red spots on the face of a child we may accurately predict that he is coming down with measles. But once again

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making the correct prediction is no indication of the fact that we have an adequate explanation of this occurrence.

The act of prediction is thus different from that of explanation, and historians may not offer predictions but they nevertheless can, and do, provide complete explanation of why a particular event occurred. By de-linking explanation from prediction, historians not only challenge the 'general law model' of explanation used by positivists, they redefine the concept of causation. In place of conceiving the cause as a necessary and sufficient condition they see it as a condition that is necessary under the circumstances. The need to visualise the causal condition as one that is necessary under the circumstances is further reinforced by the realisation that most historical events are over-determined. That is, they are characterised by the presence of more than one causal condition. Since each of these conditions could have independently yielded the same result, the analyst cannot specify a condition that was necessary in absolute terms. All that can be said is that it was necessary under the circumstances.

Let me elucidate this further with the help of an illustration. If we know that rioting mobs are headed towards an assembly hall with the intention of burning the place, and around the same time lightning could strike the building, thereby burning down the hall, then we cannot say which was the necessary and sufficient condition for the burning of the hall. The assembly hall could have been burnt by the violent crowd as well as by lightning. If the crowds had not planned on this action, the lightning would have burnt the hall and, vice-versa, even if lightning had not struck the building the marauding crowds would have yielded the same result. Thus the absence of one condition would not have meant the absence of the effect – namely, burning down of the hall. In situations of this kind, which are marked by the presence of two or more conditions each of which could have produced the same result, we cannot identify the necessary moment.

All we can do is to say which condition intervened first. If lightning struck before the crowds could embark on their action we can say that it was the condition that was necessary under the circumstances.

Situations that historians analyse are, it is said, of a similar kind. Being unique and most often over-determined, the researcher can at best identify a condition that was necessary Causation under the circumstances. For example, based on existing understanding of the processes of de-colonization and a survey of available documents, the historian may conclude that popular assertions against the Raj as well as adverse balance of payments were making it extremely difficult for the colonizing power to continue ruling over India.

A calculation of the British military and strategic interests in the region also favoured the transfer of power to India. Since each of these conditions pushed in the same direction what might we identify as the cause of British leaving India, and more specifically, of British leaving India in August 1947? The historian seeks to answer this question by pinpointing a condition that made the crucial difference in the given conjuncture. Available documentary evidence is drawn upon to assess which of these conditions was perceived by the British as being most significant, and which generated pressures of a kind that made the administration of the colony extremely difficult, if not also unviable at that point. In identifying the causal condition that was necessary under the circumstances evidence is drawn from within the case. Comparisons are made with analogous situations beforehand perceptions and actions of different agents are used to assess the relative significance of different existing conditions. Objective conditions and subjective reasons are thus woven together to determine what made the crucial difference. Since most historical analysis draws upon purposes and actions of agents as well as operating external conditions it is sometimes said that historians explain a given event /phenomenon by describing how it happened.

That is, they answer the 'Why' interrogative by analysing happened and how it happened. Two points need to be made in this regard. First, as was mentioned earlier, merely placing events in a sequence does not provide an explanation of an event. Telling a story with a beginning, middle and end is therefore never enough. At the very least the historian needs to identify the configuration of external material structures within which particular actions are conceived and performed, and within which they yield a specific result.

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Second, and this is of the utmost importance, an exhaustive description of all possible conditions and range of actions does not constitute a causal explanation. The latter requires that we determine a condition that was necessary at least under the circumstances. The difference then between simple story telling and causal analysis of a historical event is that the latter, unlike the former, focuses upon what made the crucial difference. It does not merely link the different moments together in a way that makes sense but goes a step further. It identifies a condition in the absence of which the event may not have occurred at the precise time that it did. In other words, it locates a necessary moment. The necessary moment may be a single condition or a part of a complex of conditions

Analysing the issue of transfer of power to India in 1947, a historian may argue that mutiny in the naval ratings made the crucial difference. That is, it was the causal condition– the necessary moment in the absence of which transfer of power may not have taken place at that time. Alternately, the historian may argue that mutiny in the naval ranks was the necessary moment of a set of popular mobilisations and these collectively yielded the result – namely, transfer of power. When historians endorse the latter path they define the cause as an INUS condition. That is, the cause is considered to be a condition that is an insufficient but necessary moment of a complex of conditions that is unnecessary but sufficient for producing the given event. Let me explain it further. In identifying mutiny in naval ratings as the cause all that the historian is saying is that this condition made the crucial difference.

Had it not been for this mutiny transfer of power may not have occurred in August 1947. Further, the mutiny in naval ratings yielded this effect in association with other popular assertions, such as, the Quit India movement and peasant rebellions. Collectively these constituted a complex of minimal sufficient condition and in this complex the mutiny in navy was the necessary moment. However, this complex of conditions cannot be regarded as necessary for the event (transfer of power). Had this condition not prevailed, adverse balance of payments or calculation of strategic interests may still have led to the British leaving India, albeit not in August of 1947. Consequently, popular mobilisations cannot be regarded to be a complex that is necessary in absolute terms. All we can

say with confidence is that under the given circumstances it was sufficient to bring about that result. The mutiny was, in this way, a necessary moment of a complex of conditions that are collectively unnecessary.

The same event could have been produced by another set of conditions but at this time the mutiny along with other popular mobilisations was sufficient for producing the result – namely, transfer of power to India. What bears some repetition here is that historians redefine the idea of causality. Instead of treating the cause as a necessary and sufficient condition they regard it as an INUS condition or a condition that is necessary under the circumstances. The idea of causality is conceptualised in this form because the events that they deal with are taken to be unique occurrences, constituted by a conjuncture that is specific to that context. And the context itself is characterised by the presence of several conditions each of which could produce the same result though not in the same way or at the same time. Their definition of cause does not however affect the explanatory potential of the inquiry. To put it in another way, even though the causal condition is seen as being necessary only under the circumstances, or in conjunction with other conditions, nevertheless it explains fully what happened and why it happened. It does not allow us to predict what might happen in other similar circumstances with any degree of certainty but it does enable us to explain the event that occurred.

When the cause is defined as a necessary moment of a complex of conditions or as a condition that is necessary under the circumstances, it is assumed that the historian is only explaining why the event E occurred in this instance. The explanation is complete but it is offered post-hoc (i.e., after the event has occurred) and no prediction follows necessarily from this explanation. To use an example given by J.L.Aronson, ‘Suppose we had a gun that shot bullets through a force field at a screen, what is special about the force field is that it is composed of force vectors that change with time in a completely randomized fashion’. In this situation we cannot predict in advance where the bullet might land, but once the bullet makes it to the screen we can explain as to why it reached in that position. We can, after the event, examine the speed of the bullet, the

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angle at which the vectors must have been when the bullet hit it, the position of the gun, friction and other intervening elements, and on the basis of these explain why the bullet arrived at the point P on the screen. The offered explanation is complete in so far as it provides a satisfactory answer to the 'why' interrogative but it cannot help us to predict where the next bullet will arrive on the screen.

Historical explanations are often of a similar kind. They explain fully what happened and why it happened but do not, by and large, predict. Laws may be implicit in the stipulated causal connections but the historian neither "dredges up" these laws nor regards it as his task to do so (see, Dray 1970). Historical accounts do not aim to discover general laws and the causal explanations they offer must therefore be distinguished from predictions. The fact that they do not seek to predict or pinpoint a set of laws and the initial conditions under which they operate does not imply that they offer partial explanations. Contra what is argued in the "Covering Law model" used by Carl Hempel and other positivist philosophies of social science, historians explain completely what happened through singular causal assertions. What needs also to be clarified here is that these singular causal assertions are distinct from explanations involving reasons and purposes.

Events that historians study – e.g., rebellions, battles, treaties of peace, movements, revolts, etc. – are all outcomes of the actions of individuals and groups. In studying these events historians often make sense of what happened and why it happened by mapping the intentions and motivations of actors. They explain, for instance, the withdrawal of Non-cooperation movement in terms of the intentions of its leaders – in this case, Gandhi. The reasons they accept are at times those that are avowed by the agents themselves, or else, those that can be deduced from the purposes that are either avowed by them or purposes that may reasonably be attributed to the agents. Whatever be the basis of identifying the relevant reason what is significant is that events are treated not merely as happenings in the external world, rather they are perceived as performances of particular agents that can be explained by uncovering their reasons and motivations. Such reason-action explanations are frequently treated as being similar to causal explanations and reasons are

often confused with causes. It appears that reasons explain by building a link between purposes/motivations and action just as causal explanations link a cause with an effect. However, even though beliefs and motives are often seen as producing a given event it is essential to remember that reasons are not the “right kind of causes”. In a causal explanation, causes are external conditions operating in the physical world and the cause is linked to the effect contingently. Reasons, by comparison, are linked internally and the connection between a reason and action is a logical one. For example, when we explain why A murdered B by pointing to revenge as the motive for this action we suggest an intrinsic link between the motive – reason – and the action – murder. We also assume that referring to revenge as the reason for murder does not require any further elucidation for the latter can follow from the former. While we may need evidence to show that murder was committed by the said person and that he could have had this motivation, the link between motive and action requires no external corroboration.

Indeed the action is said to follow from the motive and having this motivation provides good reason for assuming that he could have performed this action. Similarly when we say that the loss of popular support was the reason for the decision to withdraw the strike an internal connection is stipulated between the reason and the action. Further, the postulated connection rests upon the assumption of rational behaviour. It presupposes a background of beliefs that prompt the given action. For instance, the decision to withdraw the strike because it was losing support among the cadre assumes that the leadership considered it desirable to withdraw before the strike fizzles out; or that they preferred to call off the strike so that they do not lose the gained advantage. Such rational calculations of interests is an integral part of reason-action explanation but these considerations are not, and must not indeed be, considered as initial conditions under which certain laws operate.

Reason-action explanations are teleological in nature. Here, the desired end-state that is to be realized through the action is also the motive or the purpose. It therefore logically precedes the action. In a causal explanation, on the other hand, the effect is subsequent to the cause. That is, it comes after the causal condition and it follows it due to the

presence of certain conjunctive conditions. Historians, in offering causal explanations seek to identify the set of conditions that collectively yield a given effect; and within that collectivity they aim to pinpoint a condition that made the crucial difference. Such explanations are distinct from explanations based on reasons as well as the covering law model used by the positivists. In addition, as was argued earlier on, these are explanations that tell us why a specific event occurred at a given time. They are, in other words, singular causal statements that seek to explain and not predict future events. The relative neglect of prediction in these explanations however does not weaken these explanations nor does it render them inadequate. The offered explanations are complete and their truth can be debated by the community of historians on the basis of available evidence and documentation.

### **Check your progress –**

1. Define causation.

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2. Discuss link between history and causation.

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## **2.4 LETS SUM UP**

As discussed above collection of data will be done once the problem or topic of research is chosen and research design is plotted by the researcher or historian. Survey of literature should be done to know the availability of sources related to the particular research topic. Secondary sources should be consulted as a preliminary step. This will push the researcher for the further study and clarification needed thus leading to consult primary sources which is the most important and crucial stage in the research process. Collection of primary sources is very important as it will act like the DNA structure of a human being. High level of care should be taken while



collecting data which is the base for the research. This will in turn reflect the credibility of the research work done by the historian.

The discipline of history, as other social sciences, constantly seeks the causes which give rise to various phenomena. The search for causes is crucial to historical analysis. The causes are not specific events which occur before certain other events whose origins can then be traced back to the former. Rather the causes are conceived as a set of conditions under which particular events take place. These conditions provide both the necessary and sufficient ground for the occurrence of certain events. However, unlike in the natural sciences, the search for causes in history cannot be conducted in a controlled atmosphere as in a laboratory. Instead, the social scientists look for similar and different conditions for the occurrence of an event. In other words, they look for the conditions which are present and those which are absent when an event takes place. Moreover, causes are generally sought to explain a phenomenon and not to predict it.

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## **2.5 KEYWORDS**

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Correlation, Causation, Association

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## **2.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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- 1)What is causality? How is it used to explain an event or phenomenon?
- 2)Discuss the different approaches of the natural scientists and the social scientists in seeking the causes of a phenomenon.
- 3)Discuss the method followed in history for establishing the causality and explaining the occurrence of an event.

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## **2.7 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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K. Rajayyan, History in Theory and Method, Madras, 1993.

Manoj Sharma, Research Methodology, New Delhi, 2004.

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N. Jeyapalan, *Historiography*, New Delhi, 2008.

G.E.M Anscombe, 'Causality and Determination' in E.Sosa (ed.), *Causation and Conditionals* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975)

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## **2.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Hint – 2.3

2. Hint – 2.3

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# UNIT 3 – SUBJECTIVITY AND OBJECTIVITY

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## STRUCTURE

3.0 Objective

3.1 Introduction

3.2 What Is Objectivity?

3.3 Development Of The Principle Of Objectivity

3.4 Critiques Of Objectivity

3.4.1 constraints Of Evidence And Individual Bias

3.4.2 cultural Relativism

3.4.3 linguistic And Postmodern Turn

3.5 Historian's Concern

3.6 Possibility Of Objectivity

3.7 Let's sum up

3.8 Keywords

3.9 Questions for Review

3.10 Suggested Readings

3.11 Answers to check your progress

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## 3.0 OBJECTIVE

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To learn about subjectivity in historiography

To learn about objectivity in historiography

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## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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The principle of objectivity has been the most important principle of the Western historiography over the ages. In fact, it is the foundation on

which the edifice of historical profession stands. In the Western world, the historians since the early ages have believed that their writings about the past are true and objective. This belief was challenged by many philosophers and thinkers who said that the quest for objectivity was futile. However, the mainstream of historiography remained stuck to the notion of objectivity. In the words of Peter Novick, an American historian and a radical critic of the principle of objectivity, it was ‘the rock on which the (historical) venture was constituted, its continuing *raison d’être*.’ Most, if not all, historians wrote in the belief that their writings presented an objective picture of the world. Even when they disagreed among themselves, they believed that their accounts were more objective than those of others whom they criticised. Thus the historical battles were fought on the grounds of objectivity. However, it is since the 1970s that the notion of objectivity faced its most serious challenge. Now it has become rather difficult to forcefully assert that objectivity is possible to achieve in the writing of history. In fact, some of the critics of objectivity even doubt whether it is desirable to achieve it. The controversy has become really bitter, even though most of the functioning historians still go about their work believing in the possibility of presenting a true account of the past. This Unit will acquaint you with many sides of this controversy.

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### **3.2 WHAT IS OBJECTIVITY?**

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Objectivity has been the founding principle of the historiographical tradition in the West. Right since the days of Herodotus, the historians have believed in the separation of the subject and the object, in the distinction between the knower and known and in the possibility to recover the past. Peter Novick, a critic of the principle of objectivity, has clearly defined it in the following words:

‘The principal elements of the ideal of [objectivity] are well known and can be briefly recapitulated. The assumptions on which it rests include a commitment to the reality of the past, and to the truth as correspondence to that reality; a sharp separation between knower and known, between fact and value, and above all, between history and fiction. Historical facts

are seen as prior to and independent of interpretation : the value of an interpretation is judged by how well it accounts for the facts; if contradicted by the facts, it must be abandoned. Truth is one, not perspectival. Whatever patterns exist in history are “found”, not “made”.

Though successive generations of historians might, as their perspectives shifted, attribute different significance to the events in the past, the meaning of those events was unchanging.’(Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream* :

The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession, Cambridge : CUP, 1988, pp. 1-2)

For this purpose, however, the historian has to be impartial and should not take sides. He/she should be able to suspend his/her personal beliefs and rely only on the truth of the evidences.

In the words of Peter Novick :

‘The objective historian’s role is that of a neutral, or disinterested, judge; it must never degenerate into that of an advocate or, even worse, propagandist. The historian’s conclusions are expected to display the standard judicial qualities of balance and even-handedness. As with the judiciary, these qualities are guarded by the insulation of the historical profession from social pressures or political influence, and by the individual historian avoiding partisanship or bias—not having any investment in arriving at one conclusion rather than another. Objectivity is held to be at grave risk when history is written for utilitarian purposes.

One corollary of all this is that historians, as historians, must purge themselves of external loyalties : the historian’s primary allegiance is to “the objective historical truth”, and to professional colleagues who share a commitment to cooperative, cumulative efforts to advance toward that goal.

”Thomas Haskell, a historian, has questioned this conflation of objectivity and neutrality. In his article ‘Objectivity is not Neutrality’, he has argued that objectivity and neutrality are two different things, even though in most of nineteenth-century historiography they were equated

with each other. Now, 'among the influential members of the historical profession the term has long since lost whatever connection it may once have had with passionlessness, indifference, and neutrality'. He cites the cases of historians, particularly, Eugene Genovese, the American historian on slavery, whose history is objective, though not neutral. Haskell further clarifies his position : 'My conception of objectivity ... is compatible with strong political commitment .It pays no premium for standing in the middle of the road, and it recognizes that scholars are as passionate and as likely to be driven by interest as those they write about. It does not value even detachment as an end in itself, but only as an indispensable prelude or preparation for the achievement of higher levels of understanding ....'We, therefore, now have two somewhat differing perceptions of objectivity, so far as its relation with neutrality is concerned. However, in other areas such as objectivity's position as the founding principle of the historical profession, its distance from propaganda and from wishful thinking, its reliance on evidence and logic, and its requirement for a minimum level of detachment are common to all its definitions.

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### **3.3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRINCIPLE OF OBJECTIVITY**

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The belief that there is a reality of the past and it is possible to historically capture it has been engrained in the dominant tradition of the Western historiography. The mainstream historiography in the Western world since the time of Herodotus maintained that the historical records referred to a real past and real human beings. The objectivist tradition believed in both the reality of the past as well as in the possibility of its mirror representation.

It maintained that there was a correspondence between the intentions and actions of the people and the historians should exert themselves to comprehend the mental world of the people in the past. The development of modern science added a new dimension to this belief. It was now asserted that the methods used in the sciences could be applicable to various branches of human knowledge. The Positivists asserted this claim most strongly, even as it developed as a common belief in the

nineteenth century. August Comte, the founder of Positivism, believed that the inductive method used in the natural sciences needed to be applied to the history as well as the humanities in general. He also claimed scientific status for the humanities. He thought that all societies operated through certain general laws which needed to be discovered. According to him, all societies historically passed through three stages of development. These stages were :

- i)The ‘theological’ or fictitious stage, during which the human mind was in its infancy and the natural phenomena were explained as the results of divine or supernatural powers

- ii)The ‘metaphysical’ or abstract stage is transitional in the course of which the human mind passes through its adolescence. In this stage, the processes of nature were explained as arising from occult powers.

- iii)The ‘Positive’ stage which witnessed the maturity of human mind and the perfection of human knowledge. Now there was no longer a search for the causes of the natural phenomena but a quest for the discovery of their laws. Observation, reasoning and experimentation were the means to achieve this knowledge. This was the scientific age which is the final stage in the development of human societies as well as human minds. The followers of Comte, also known as the Positivists, time and again asserted the existence of universal laws applicable to all societies and all branches of human knowledge. However, it was another tradition which laid the foundation of objectivist history in the nineteenth century. It was the tradition starting with Niebuhr and Ranke in Germany. Although it was Niebuhr who first introduced the critical method in writing of history, it was Ranke who truly and elaborately laid the foundation of a genuinely ‘objective’ historiography. He clearly distinguished history from literature and philosophy. By doing so, he attempted to rid it of an overdose of imagination and metaphysical speculation.

For him, the historians’ job was to investigate the past on its own terms and to show to the readers ‘how it essentially was’. It did not mean, however, that Ranke had a blind faith in the records. He, in fact, wanted the historians to subject the sources to strict examination and look for their internal consistency so as to determine whether they were genuine

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or later additions. He wanted the historians to critically examine and verify all the sources before reposing their trust in them. But, once it was proved that the records were genuine and belonged to the age which the historian was studying, the historian may put complete faith in them. He called these records as 'primary sources' and maintained that these sources would provide the foundations for a true representation of the contemporary period.

Thus the historians should trust the archival records more than the printed ones which might be biased. He, however, believed that it was possible to reconstruct the past and that objectivity was attainable. This trend emphasised that the facts were in the records which the historians needed to discover. If the historians were impartial, followed a proper scientific method and removed his / her personality from the process of investigation, it was possible to reconstruct the past from these facts. There was an enormous belief in the facts in the nineteenth and the early decades of the twentieth centuries. It was thought that once all the facts were known, it was possible to write 'ultimate history' which could not be superseded.

As Lord Acton, the Regius Professor of History and the editor of the first edition of the Cambridge Modern History, said :

'Ultimate history we cannot have in this generation; but we can dispose of conventional history, and show the point we have reached on the road from one to the other, now that all information is within reach, and every problem has become capable of solution.'

This confidence in being able to get hold of all the sources and to write 'ultimate history', even though at a future date, was reflected in his belief to achieve complete objectivity which would transcend nationality, language and religion. Therefore, in his instructions to the contributors to the volumes of the Cambridge Modern History, he wrote : 'Contributors will understand that our Waterloo must be one that satisfies French and English, German and Dutch alike; that nobody can tell, without examining the list of authors, where the Bishop of Oxford laid down the pen and whether Fairburner Gasquet, Libermann or Harrison took it up.'



This belief in possibility of uncovering all the sources and thus writing 'ultimate history' was asserted in an extremely popular text book in historical method by French historians, Langlois and Seignobos: 'When all the documents are known, and have gone through the operations which fit them for use, the work of critical scholarship will be finished. In the case of some ancient periods, for which documents are rare, we can now see that in generation or two it will be time to stop. 'The scientific status of history was forcefully asserted by J.B.Bury, Acton's successor to the Regius Chair at Cambridge. He believed that although history 'may supply material for literary art or philosophical speculation, she is herself simply a science, no less and no more'.

Even George Clark, in his general introduction to the second Cambridge Modern History, though he did not believe in the possibility of writing 'ultimate history', made a distinction between the 'hard core of facts' and the 'surrounding pulp of disputable interpretation'. It is evident that in such thinking interpretation had very little role to play. The writing of history was simply related to the documents. It did not matter who the historian was as long as verified documents for the period were available. In this view, as E.H.Carr put it: 'History consists of a corpus of ascertained facts.

The facts are available to historians in documents, inscriptions and so on, like fish in the fishmonger's slab. The historian collects them, takes them home, and cooks and serves them in whatever style appeals to him.'

But even before the nineteenth century ended, such beliefs started to look implausible. Application of some new techniques in archaeology and other areas uncovered ever-increasing information even about most ancient societies. Moreover, in the beginning of the twentieth century, historiography moved to other directions away from political history which the nineteenth-century historians specialised in. Social, economic and cultural histories began to be written. The historians started to look at already available documents from new perspectives and for different purposes. It was also pointed out that the works of even those historians, including Ranke, who believed in complete objectivity and professed the use of 'primary sources' were full of rhetorical elements and were many

times based on printed 'secondary sources'. The Rankean tradition was criticised in the twentieth century for being too naïve and being concerned with individual facts instead of the general patterns. Moreover, it was also criticised for being narrowly political and being concerned with elite individuals.

The new trends in the historiography in the twentieth century focused on economy and society as opposed to the political and on common people as opposed to the elite. The most influential among these trends were the Marxist and the Annales schools of historiography. However, they shared with the Rankean tradition two fundamental themes. They believed that history could be written scientifically and objectively and that there was a direction in which the history was moving continuously.

However, the scientific and objectivist claims of historiography suffered somewhat between the wars. The records and facts were blatantly manipulated by various national political establishments. The continued tension led to partisan assertions both by various governments and respective intelligentsia. History-writing was also affected by this. After the Second World War, the Cold War also influenced the academia and prompted the intellectuals to take sides or, conversely, to hide their opinions to avoid repression. But most of functioning historians retained their faith in the possibility of achieving objectivity in history. The proponents of objectivity from Ranke in the 1820s to Robert Fogel in the 1970s believed in the scientific status of history. They thought that if proper scientific methods of inquiry were used, it could be possible to get close to what really happened in the past. It was also necessary for them to make a sharp division between history and literature.

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### **3.4 CRITIQUES OF OBJECTIVITY**

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By the late twentieth century the confidence in the objectivity and scientific of history faced increasingly radical challenges. Anthropologists like Claude Lévi-Strauss denied that the modern western civilisation, based on rationality and science, was in any way superior to the pre-modern, or even 'savage', communities so far as successfully coping with life is concerned. At another level, many historians and

theorists of history began to think that history was closer to literature than to science. Moreover, the new linguistic theories starting with Saussure strongly professed that the role of language is not to refer to reality but to construct reality. Thus the world which is conveyed to us through language is not the real world. Similarly, the historians' accounts of the past does not refer to the real past, but to the world imagined by the historians. History, therefore, is the story told by the historian. In the words of Louis Mink, an American philosopher of history, 'Stories are not lived but told.' Mink further argued that life 'has no beginnings, middles or ends'. Such sequences belong only to stories as well as to history. And, therefore, history is much like the story. Although they are related in certain ways, there are broadly three lines of criticism on the notion of historical objectivity : constraints of evidence and individual bias, cultural relativism and postmodern and linguistic turn.

### **3.4.1 Constraints of Evidence and Individual Bias**

Ironically, it was Kant, the great German philosopher influenced by the ideas of Enlightenment, who propounded the ideas which were taken up by Dilthey, Croce, Collingwood and Oakeshott for criticising the philosophical quest that the human world could be comprehended in the same way as the natural world. Kant's formulation that there was a separation between the real world and the subject trying to make sense of it led to the idea that it was not possible to reconstruct the reality and that the correspondence theory of truth was not valid. This view was developed later to challenge the notion that history could be like science. It was, however, the tradition of philosophical thinking that followed Nietzsche which posed a more serious challenge to objectivist historiography.

Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), a German philosopher, clearly demarcated between scientific knowledge and cultural knowledge. In his book, entitled *Introduction to Historical Knowledge* and published in 1883, and in some later articles, he differentiated between science and history on the basis of their different fields of research, different experiences and different attitudes of the researchers. According to him, while the scientist was external to the reality in nature, the historian was involved in the process of constructing reality. Thus, unlike the

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scientist, the historian could not be just an observer. It is, therefore, impossible to achieve objectivity in history-writing. Benedetto Croce (1866-1952), the Italian historian and thinker, followed Dilthey in the belief that there is a fundamental distinction between science and history.

According to him, the past exists only through the mind of the historian. He declared that 'all history is contemporary history'. It was, however, R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943), a British historian and philosopher, who provided a detailed exposition of this line of criticism. In his posthumously published book, *The Idea of History*, Collingwood elaborated his idea of historical relativism. He believed that 'the past simply as past is wholly unknowable'. Therefore, the history was not at all about the real past but a creation of the historian. In his opinion, '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....'

Each historian writes his / her own history which may or may not have things in common with others. He wrote:

'St Augustine looked at history from the point of view of the early Christian; Tillamont, from that of a seventeenth-century Frenchman; Gibbon, from that of an eighteenth-century Englishman; Mommsen from that of a nineteenth-century German. There is no point in asking which was the right point of view. Each was the only one possible for the man who adopted it.'

History is, therefore, written by the people who are basically concerned about the present. And there is nothing wrong with it. Collingwood thought that 'since the past in itself is nothing, the knowledge of the past in itself is not, and cannot be, the historian's goal. His goal, as the goal of a thinking being, is knowledge of the present; to that everything must return, round that everything must revolve.' Thus the present is, and should be, historian's only concern. And since all history is historian's ideas about the past, 'all history is the history of thought'.

E.H. Carr approvingly summarises some of these views. He says that the historians are products of their own times and their mental world is shaped by the ideas and politics of their contemporary world. They are

driven by contemporary concerns and their viewing of the past is through the lens of the present. It is, therefore, difficult for them to be objective in the representation of the past. Their researches and presentations are always coloured by their present concerns. Even the evidences they collect do not present the whole picture of the past because they are chosen according to their contemporary

Objectivity and Interpretation preoccupations and ideological bent. Moreover, even the records which the people in the past bequeathed to us are selective. In Carr's words, 'Our picture has been preselected and predetermined for us, not so much by accident as by people who were consciously or unconsciously imbued with a particular view and thought the facts which supported that view worth preserving.' It is difficult to rely upon the evidences and be complacent about the facts because 'the facts of history never come to us 'pure', since they do not and cannot exist in a pure form: they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder.'

It is in this light that Carr concludes : 'No documents can tell us more than what the author of the document thought –what he thought had happened, what he thought ought to happen or would happen, or perhaps only what he wanted others to think he thought, or even only what he himself thought he thought.' Thus there are two levels at which the process of selection goes on : one by the contemporary recorder who decides what is worth recording and second by the historian who further narrows the selection by deciding what is worth presenting. In this opinion, the past, therefore, is doubly constructed for us.

### **3.4.2 Cultural Relativism**

Inspired by the cultural anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, some of the recent historical thinkers have argued that the historians' accounts of the past are coloured by the ideas, concepts and language of their own societies. This means that such narratives are necessarily influenced by the cultural prejudices and social preoccupations of the historians. Since different cultures perceive the world differently, the descriptions of a different society or of the past, which belongs to a different culture, cannot be objective. These descriptions are culturally determined. Thus a

solar eclipse may be described variously by people belonging to different societies. Similarly, the death of a king maybe attributed to evil spirits, illness or conspiracy by his enemies. Therefore, the history written by the historian is shaped by the concepts and beliefs of his / her own culture. Paul A. Roth has argued in support of this belief that ‘There is no warrant for maintaining that there is some static past world which diligent research in the archives ... uncovers.’

He, therefore, suggests that it is important to rid ‘oneself of a notion of historical truth’, because ‘past events exist, qua events, only in terms of some historically situated conception of them. The notion of a historical truth for events, that is, a perspective on happenings untainted by human perception and categorisation, proves to be incoherent. There exists a world not of our own making, but any subdivision of it into specific events is our doing, not nature’s. ‘Moreover, Geertz also derives from the new linguistic theories in his conception of culture as an ‘interworked system of construable signs’. In his opinion, culture should be seen as ‘an assemblage of texts’ which are ‘imaginative works built out of social materials’.

Even society is ‘organised in terms of symbols ... whose meaning ... we must grasp if we are to understand that organisation and formulate its principles.’ Thus society and culture become ‘texts’ whose meanings can be understood only through semiotic codes. He further emphasised the point about the textual nature of society and culture by asserting that ‘the real is as imagined as the imaginary’. In such a theoretical framework, any notion of reality, and history, disappears. As Gabrielle Spiegel, an historian of medieval Europe, remarked: ‘If the imaginary is real and the real imaginary and there are no epistemological grounds for distinguishing between them, then it is impossible to create an explanatory hierarchy that establishes a causal relationship between history and literature, life and thought, matter and meaning.’

### **3.4.3 Linguistic and Postmodern Turn**

This tradition offers the most radical critique of the possibility of retrieving truth from the past. It considers language, instead of reality, as constitutive of social meaning and human consciousness. It all started

with Ferdinand de Saussure, a Swiss linguist, who propounded the theory of structural linguistics. His theories influenced many intellectual movements such as structuralism, semiotics and poststructuralism. In his book, *Course in General Linguistics*, posthumously published in 1916, Saussure radically questioned the referential function of language. According to him, language is a close autonomous system and words in any language (which may be called 'signifiers') refer to concepts (which may be called 'signified') and not to concrete things in the world. In other words, the language does not refer to real things in the world. It is not a medium to communicate meaning of the world, and the relationship between the language and the world is arbitrary. Language, according to Saussure, creates meaning on its own and human thoughts are constituted by language. Roland Barthes, a renowned French linguist and thinker, carried the arguments further.

According to him, the claim of the historians to write about the reality of the past is fake. The history written by them is not about the past but 'an inscription on the past pretending to be a likeness of it, a parade of signifiers masquerading as a collection of facts'. According to Barthes, historians' description of the past basically refers to a number of concepts about the past and not the reality of the past. He states that: 'Like any discourse with "realistic" claims, the discourse of history thus believes it knows only a two-term semantic schema, referent and signifier.... In other words, in "objective" history, the "real" is never anything but an unformulated signified, sheltered behind the apparent omnipotence of the referent. This situation defines what we might call the reality effect. 'Thus Barthes considers objectivity as 'the product of what might be called the referential illusion'.

This illusion lies in the historians' belief that there is a past world to be discovered through meticulous research. In fact, the past, which the historians refer to, is all their own creation. All the paraphernalia fashioned by the historical profession such as verbatim quotation, footnotes, references, etc. are façade to create a make-believe world which the readers may consider real. In fact, Barthes says, these are the devices to produce the 'reality effect' which may persuade the readers to believe in the world created by the historian. The most radical challenge

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to history-writing came from the theory of deconstruction developed by Jacques Derrida. It completely denied the possibility of human beings to comprehend reality outside the language-system of which they are a part.

And the language does not refer to an external reality but is a self-contained system which has no relationship to reality. Even the author has no role to play in determining the meaning of the text. Moreover, the language itself has no logical and coherent pattern. Derrida considered language as a system of arbitrary codification without any fixed meaning. Thus the text contains several meanings which may be at variance with each other. Derrida states that a text 'is henceforth no longer a finished corpus of writing, some content enclosed in a book or its margins, but a differential network, a fabric of traces referring endlessly to something other than itself, to other differential traces.

Thus the text overruns all the limits assigned to it so far. 'Therefore, Derrida proposes the use of 'deconstruction' to reveal the hidden meanings in a text. However, deconstruction ultimately does not bring out any meaning from the text. It only shows the incapacity of language to refer to any reality outside its own boundaries. In Derrida's difficult prose, this process is explained:

'Through this sequence of supplements a necessity is announced: that of an infinite chain, ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing they defer: the mirage of the thing itself, of immediate presence, of original perception.'

Gabrielle Spiegel, an historian of medieval period, critically puts Derrida's position in slightly simpler language as follows:

'Behind the language of the text stands only more language, more texts, in an infinite regress in which the presence of the real and the material is always deferred, never attainable. According to deconstruction, we are confined within a "prison house of language" (to use the fashionable Nietzschean phrase) from which there is no exit....'

If the words in the language cannot refer to any external reality, if the language has no fixed meaning and if the text contains infinite meanings, how it is possible to write history objectively. It is precisely this that the



deconstructionists are trying to attack. As Richard Evans points out: 'They imply that authors can no longer be regarded as having control over the meaning of what they write. In the infinite play of signification that constitutes language. The meaning of a text changes every time it is read. Meaning is put into it by the reader, and all meanings are in principle equally valid. In history, meaning cannot be found in the past; it is merely put there, each time differently, and with equal validity, by different historians. There is no necessary or consistent relation between the text of history and the texts of historians. The texts which survive from the past are as arbitrary in their signification as any other texts, and so too are texts which use them.

'Other historians have also expressed their apprehensions regarding dissolution of meaning. Thus Lawrence Stone remarked that 'If there is nothing outside the text, then history as we have known it collapses altogether, and fact and fiction become indistinguishable from one another'.

Gabrielle Spiegel also expressed her concern that 'if texts – documents, literary works, whatever – do not transparently reflect reality, but only other texts, then historical study can scarcely be distinguished from literary study, and the "past" dissolves into literature'. These apprehensions were not wide of the mark as was proved by the works of Louis Mink, a philosopher of history, and Hayden White, an American historian and theorist. Mink spoke about an internal contradiction in history-writing; 'So we have a ... dilemma about the historical narrative: as historical it claims to represent, through its form, part of the real complexity of the past, but as narrative it is a product of imaginative construction, which cannot defend its claim to truth by any accepted procedure of argumentation or authentication.

'Hayden White is more extreme in considering that the historical narrative cannot lay any claim to truth and it should be considered as a form of fiction. In many books and articles, White argues that there is no difference between history and fiction. In his view, historical writings are 'verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much invented as found and

the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in sciences’.

Closely allied with this is the postmodernist position which considers that modern historiography is too closely related to western imperialist expansion to be impartial. It has all along justified the notion of the superiority of modern Europe over other peoples and cultures. Therefore, its claims to objectivity and impartiality are suspect.

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### **3.5 HISTORIAN’S CONCERN**

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In the recent past many historians have started expressing concern about this total denial of the possibility of achieving objectivity. Lawrence Stone, a British-American historian, stated it clearly as follows :

‘During the last twenty-five years, the subject-matter of history – that is events and behaviour – and the problem – that is explanation of change over time –have all been brought seriously into question, thus throwing the profession, more especially in France and America, into a crisis of self-confidence about what it is doing and how it is doing it.’

According to Stone, these threats to historical profession came from three different sources which were related – the theory of deconstruction developed by Jacques Derrida, cultural anthropology enunciated by Clifford Geertz and the New Historicism. Another historian, Gabrielle Spiegel, is equally concerned about this development. She outlines the process thus :‘... the paradigms that have governed historical and literary study since the nineteenth century no longer hold unquestioned sway. The confident, humanist belief that a rational, “objective” investigation of the past permits us to recover “ authentic” meanings in the historical texts has come under severe attack in postmodernist critical debate. At stake in this debate are a number of concepts traditionally deployed by historians in their attempts to understand the past :causality, change, authorial intent, stability of meaning, human agency andsocial determination.’

Based on this observation, she concludes that ‘Looking at the current critical climate from the vantage point of a historian, the dominant

impression one takes away is that of the dissolution of history, of a flight from “reality” to language as the constitutive agent of human consciousness and the social production of meaning.’

These are not misplaced concerns. The postmodernists also think the same way that their theories would lead to the withering of history. Keith Jenkins, a postmodern thinker, proclaims the demise of both the ‘upper and lower case histories’. He says that ‘history now appears to be just one more foundationless, positioned expression in a world of foundation less, positioned expressions’.

Even before that, Peter Novick, concluded his famous book by stating that ‘As abroad community of discourse, as a community of scholars united by common aims, common standards and common purposes, the discipline of history had ceased to exist’.

Patrick Joyce, another adherent to this idea, proclaims the ‘end of history’ because ‘social history is the child of modernity’ which does not engage in the process of ‘innocently naming the world but creating it in its own political and intellectual image’.

Even in the field of Indian history, this concern is now increasingly evident. Many historians have reacted against the postmodernist tilt of the later subaltern studies. Pro eminent among such historians are Sumit Sarkar, Rosalind O’Hanlon, C.A.Bayly, Ranajit Das Gupta and David Washbrook. They have questioned the shift towards culturalism in theme and relativism in approach in Indian studies. We will discuss these issues in detail in Unit 25. Here we will conclude this section by reiterating that the postmodernist intervention in historiography has unsettled the long-lasting notions so far as the philosophy of history is concerned.

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### **3.6 POSSIBILITY OF OBJECTIVITY**

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Faced with such radical attacks on the possibility of objectivity, one wonders whether it is at all possible to achieve any measure or kind of objectivity, whether it is possible to have any understanding of the past or of different societies and cultures. These critics have made unaware that a simple correspondence theory of truth is not quite reliable. Our

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knowledge of the world is mediated through our present concerns, ideological commitments, cultural environment, and intellectual atmosphere. The historians also accept that the sources are not unproblematic. They are suffused with levels of subjectivity which are sometimes quite alarming. And, despite our critical evaluation, it is not always possible to do away with the bias in our sources. Similarly, despite our conscious attempts, it is often difficult to annul all culturally induced biases in our own thinking as historians. Most historians now recognise that it is not possible to get a full picture of the past. Sources are varied and their interpretations are innumerable. In such situation any claim to fully represent the past may well be a hollow claim. However, a total denial of the possibility of objectivity is to stretch the point to another extreme. The fact that total objectivity is not possible does not mean that no objectivity is possible, that any quest for objectivity is useless. Even though it may not be possible to tell the whole truth of the past does not mean that even partial truth cannot be reclaimed. As Noel Carroll, one of the critics of the relativist position, has pointed out :‘In one sense, historical narratives are inventions, viz., in the sense that they are made by historians; but it is not clear that it follows from this that they are made-up (and are, therefore, fictional).’He further emphasises this point by stating that :‘... narratives are a form of representation, and, in that sense, they are invented, but that does not preclude their capacity to provide accurate information. Narratives can provide accurate knowledge about the past in terms of the kinds of features they track, namely, the ingredients of courses of events, which include : background conditions, causes and effects, as well as social context, the logic of situations, practical deliberations, and ensuing actions.’

Carroll criticises Hayden White and others for believing that only a mirror-image of the past can satisfy the truth condition for a historical narrative. If it fails to provide a picture image of the past, it will remain at the level of fiction. So, either it is a mirror-image or it is a fiction; there is nothing in between. Many historians have reacted against this view and have appealed for what Brian Fay has called a ‘dialectical middle ground which preserves the insights of each Attitude and prunes each of its excesses.

"Is history a science?" is a debate among philosophers regarding this theme and how far the historical inquiry is objective.

EH Carr's book *What is History?* describes the influence of historical and social environment on the selection and interpretation of facts by the historian. Therefore, he rejected absolute and timeless objectivity in history because history requires the selection and ordering of facts about the past in the light of some principle or norm of objectivity accepted by the historian which necessarily included elements of interpretation.

Without this, the past dissolves into a jumble of innumerable isolated and insignificant incidents and history cannot be written at all. Further, he explains the facts of history cannot be purely objective as they only become facts of history by virtue of significance attached to them by the historian. Therefore, historian craft is all about getting the facts right and applying the right standard of significance to the past.

Carr calls a historian objective based on two factors.

Firstly, "he has the capacity to rise above the limited vision of his own situation in society and in history—his capacity to recognise the extent of his involvement in that situation, to recognise that is to say, the impossibility of total objectivity".

Secondly, a historian "has the capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past than can be attained by those historians whose outlook is entirely bounded by their own immediate situation". Therefore, some historians write history which is more durable and has more of objective character than others.

This historian, terms that historian objective who have a long-term vision over the past and over the future.

As historians endeavour to reconstruct or recreate history to reflect how life was experienced and how it may be understood, as it requires an imaginative engagement with the mentality and environment of the past. Thus, a historian cannot be objective as facts do not speak for themselves and no two historians will have completely identical imaginative response to any hypothesis.

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Objectivity, subjectivity and bias Objectivity means existing independently of perception or an individual's conception. It is undistorted by emotion or personal bias and is related to actual and external phenomena as opposed to thoughts, feelings etc. Something is objective insofar as it is independent of either a particular mind or minds altogether.

Secondly, subjectivity referred as it is a belonging to, proceeding from, or relating to the mind of the thinking subject and not the nature of the object being considered. It is related to or emanating from a person's emotion, prejudices, etc and lastly, biasness stand for as a mental tendency or inclination esp. an irrational preference or prejudice or influence.

Norman Hampson's Subjectivity and Objectivity in History describes the difference between fact (objective) and opinion/interpretation (subjective) is that objective information has the ability to be counted or described whereas subjective information usually consists of statements of judgment, assumption, belief, suspicion, or rumour. Objective information does not vary and is close to the truth, whereas subjective information can vary greatly from person to person and is far away from the truth.

Carr explains there are simply too many facts, even after the historian followed the procedure of selecting only the significant ones, what he calls "the facts of history" and the major obstacle to objectivity is 'the historian himself'. Objectivity in history cannot be objectivity of facts and absolute truth is unachievable.

### **Is history a science?**

The questions attached to objectivity is discussed by John Tosh's 'The Pursuit of History' Is History a Science? The first proponents argue that history employs the same procedures as the natural sciences and that its findings should be judged by scientific standards.

The basis of all scientific knowledge was the meticulous observation of reality which fitted all the known facts and explained the regularity observed. These views are much closer to the view positivism. In this

regard, the beliefs and values of historians are irrelevant and their sole concern is with the facts and the generalisations to which they logically lead.

Whereas the second view, gives conceptions of the nature of science have been radically modified, which were closer to the philosophy of idealism, "human events much be carefully distinguished from natural events because the identity between enquirer and his or her subject-matter opens the way to a fuller understanding than anything â€¦ natural events can only be understood from the outside, human events have an essential inside dimension composed of the intentions, feelings and mentality of the actors". They believe historical knowledge is inherently subjective. Thus it's necessary to evaluate every age be understood in its own terms and their practical emphasis on political narrative make-up of the actions and intensions of great men.

Furthermore, M.E. Hulme's *History and its Neighbors* maintains that "historical facts, in sharp distinction from scientific facts, are highly subjective". Science has the characteristic that it uses expression we can bring to the "test", but history could certainly not be conducted objectively if its statements were not criticisable and some historians make statements which are not in this sense objectively testable. Therefore, history is not a science and as a paradigm of objectivity for the philosophy of history science just will not exist.

### **Who is an objective historian?**

The essential requirement to be an objective historian are believed to be, firstly, that he has a capacity to rise above the limited vision of his own situation in society and in history; secondly, he has the capacity to project his vision into the future in such a way as to give him a more profound and more lasting insight into the past. No historian can claim to write ultimate history or total history of an event but some historians write history which is more durable and has more of objective character than others, these are the historians which have a long term vision over the past and over the future. The historian of the past can make an approach towards objectivity only as he approaches towards the understanding of the future.

## Notes

Neil Munro narrates that a historian who, "gather the facts from the history is also a human being, who comes with full complement of background, education, attitudes, opinions, likes and dislikes. He may even have a belief in one or other of the great determinist theories of history, which will be better suited by some facts than by others. Historian will inevitably see the course of history through those particular eyes". Carr warns that the facts of history cannot be pure, being always "refracted through the mind of the recorder!"

Therefore, before reading a history, he suggests that the reader should first study the historian and find out all that one can about the author. This will help the audience to know the author's mind of expressing history. One scholar said objectivity in history lose value when it is applied to nothing and it loses its usefulness when applied to everything.

### **Can history be Objective?**

Many philosophers have rejected the possibility of objective historical knowledge on the premise that one does not have access to a given past against which to judge rival interpretations. However, Mark Bevir's *Objectivity in History* explains objective interpretation are those which best meet rational criteria of accuracy, comprehensiveness, consistency, progressiveness, fruitlessness and openness and these interpretations should be regarded as moving towards truth understood as a regulative ideal. He defended the objectivity via an intentional theory of meaning and his claim that it might be possible to extend this logic of the history of ideas to history in general; he calls an anthropological epistemology, a standard based on appeals to shared facts based on historians' consensus about what happened, a critical/rational attitude by the historian and comparing rival webs of theories of, or hypotheses for explanation. For him, objectivity rests on comparison and the explanation of human actions.

Marc Trachtenberg questions if objectivity is possible as he believes history should be ultimately obtainable but shows concern the way in which society is moving it will become an obsolete ideology.

He stress one should put ones political beliefs aside and draft questions in a manner that answers turned on what the evidence demonstration.



Whereas, Keith Jenkins article *What is History?* outlines that objectivity is impossible to achieve in the study of history, as actual past has gone and creating history in present means content is as much invented as found. As it is impossible for historian to remove his or her, preconceived ideas and personal motives to write history in an objective way.

Furthermore, he believes historians disregard the facts which do not fit into his or her ideologies.

**Check your progress –**

1. Can history be objective

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2. Is history a science?

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### **3.7 LET'S SUM UP**

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The principle of objectivity has provided the basis for the writing of history in the Western world since ancient times. That there is a past world beyond human subjectivity led to the attempt to recover it. This endeavour was given a solid foundation in the early nineteenth century by the German historian, Wilhelm Ranke. Several generations of historians followed Ranke and wrote objectivist and empiricist histories. This tradition is still broadly accepted within the historical profession. However, there have been many critiques of this tradition. The most common criticism focused on the inability of the historians to completely abandon their ideological and cultural biases. Moreover, it stressed that the reality of the past was impossible to recover due to bias in the sources. Another type of criticism emphasise that our knowledge of the world is entirely through the language which the historians or

others speak and in which they write. Thus, there is no world beyond its linguistic representation. Any kind of objectivity is, therefore, impossible to achieve. These critiques sometimes question the very basis of historiography. Most practicing historians, however, tread a middle ground between the claims of total objectivity and its total denial by some critics.

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### 3.8 KEYWORDS

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objectivities

objectivism

subjectivity

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### 3.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. What is objectivity? Discuss the historiographical traditions which take the principle of objectivity as their basis.

2) Why are historians so concerned about the criticism levelled against the principle of objectivity? Do you think objectivity is possible to achieve in history-writing?

3) Who were the earliest critics of objectivity in history? What are their arguments? Do you agree with them? 4) Write notes on the following:  
a) Cultural Realism  
b) Linguistic Turn.

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### 3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

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C. Behan McCullagh, *The Truth of History* (London, New York, Routledge, 1998).

C. Behan McCullagh, *The Logic of History* (London, New York, Routledge, 2004).

Richard J. Evans, *In Defence of History* (Granta Books, London, 1977).

Brian Fay, Philip Pomper and Richard T. Vann (eds.), *History and Theory: Contemporary Readings* (Mass. and Oxford, Blackwell, 199).

Keith Jenkins (ed.), *The Postmodern History Reader* (London and New York, Routledge, 1997). Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory : Critical Interrogations* (London, MacMillan, 1991).

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## **3.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Hint – 3.6

2. Hint – 3.6

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# UNIT 4 – INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH IN HISTORY

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## STRUCTURE

4.0 Objective

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Interdisciplinary Approach

4.3 Lets Sum Up

4.4 Keywords

4.5 Questions For Review

4.6 Suggested Readings

4.7 Answers To Check Your Progress

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## 4.0 OBJECTIVE

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To learn about the interdisciplinary approaches in studying historiography.

To learn about the role of other disciplines like anthropology, politics helps in studying history

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## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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

existing historical data. It is therefore, imperative to examine the various sources and methodology (approach) of historical writing. For the purpose of this study, four areas have been identified in categorising related disciplines to be examined. They include; Arts/Humanities with disciplines such as; Linguistics, Philosophy and Psychology etc, Social Sciences with disciplines such as; Economics, Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology etc, Biological Sciences with disciplines like Palaeontology and Physical Science with disciplines such as; Archaeology, Geography and Geology. The roles of these disciplines to be examined are evident in their contributions to historical writing. In other words, a historian writing family or intellectual history takes a cue from Psychology, pre-historic writing was influenced by Archaeology, political history by Political Science, economic history by Economics, demography(ic) by Sociology, ethno-history/cultural history by Anthropology, genetics study by Palaeontology, while Ecology serves as inspiration for environmental history.

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

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## **4.2 INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH**

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

forgotten by posterity, history adds to man's knowledge of man, history helps protect and preserve traditional and cultural values of a nation and most importantly history helps grasp relationship with the past. Ademola-Ajayi opined that; the relevance of history lies in the fact that its knowledge helps and guides in the present circumstances not through prophecies but rather through reasonable projections.

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

### **HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

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

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

The techniques employed by archaeologists especially in the identification of location of sites are the Aerial photography,

Reconnaissance survey and Geophysical survey. Another benefit of the interaction of history and archaeology is the provision of sound chronological framework to fit the evidence from artefacts so as to be reliable in comparison. A reconstruction of the nature of palaeo-environment. Dating in historical reconstruction is to a large extent difficult as it was drawn from accounts of oral tradition which were generally not precise, the intervention of archaeology through the attempt to get closely actual dates of occurrence through the science of Radio-Carbon dating cannot be overlooked, even though these dates are indefinite, they have been instrumental to ascertaining years of occurrence within centuries (e.g. the use of  $\pm 200$  AD) History tends to study economic, social and political aspects of man, while Archaeology studies more of economic and social aspects. Unlike history which draws facts from oral and written tradition, archaeological analysis is drawn from scientific observation. Archaeology has been the most useful discipline in interaction with history in determining the various stages of human civilization (Stone Age, Iron age and Neolithic age). Archaeology, though a relatively young discipline in Africa, has aided the historian in reconstructing the past history of some African peoples and states. The culture of Benin, Ife, Igbo-Ukwu, Nok, Taruga, Daima, (Nigeria), Bigo in Uganda, Old Zimbabwe, Egypt and the Nile valley, etc. have deepened the historian's knowledge of the peoples' among whom the cultures developed.

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

### **HISTORY AND LINGUISTICS**

Linguistics is the scientific study of language and its structure, and or the systematic study of human language. The use of glottochronology, a branch of lexicostatistics and a study of the rate which languages change or are replaced, have been useful in historical reconstruction as evident in

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its role of analyzing vocabulary, grammatical forms and social changes of a given language to understand its evolution and which in turn is beneficial to historical reconstruction done through the study of migration or movement of a group. Linguistics became a historical source in Africa due to the overlap of languages. T. Obenga further opined that its influence is mainly a matter of comparative and historical linguistics. The method adopted is comparative and inductive: for the object of the comparison is to reconstruct, i.e. to find the point of convergence of all the languages being compared. This point of convergence will be called the 'common predialectal language'. The point of historical linguistics lies not so much in finding a common predialectal language as in appreciating the overall linguistics spread of different, apparently unrelated languages. A language is seldom enclosed within a clearly defined space, but most commonly overflows its own area by making relationship being sometimes imperceptible at first. A common language does not necessarily go together with racial identity. But it does give relevant information about an essential, indeed the only real, unity, namely, the basic cultural unity of people united by a common language even though sometimes with very different origins and political systems. There were inter-group relations forged by language. Linguists have classified the various African languages into groups according to how closely related they are to each other or to one another. It is believed that most of these languages come from a common parentage i.e. proto-language

### **Circa 500 B.C.- A.D**

.1, there exist groups of African language which are categorized into four. These groups spread over different regions, on the continent and in some instances extended to some area outside the regions in which they are particularly resident. The African language groups are; Niger-Congo

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

– Saharan, Nilotic, and Songhaic (Songhay) Khoisan

– Koi and San of South & South East Africa Afro-Asiatic



–Ancient Egyptians, Berbers, Chadic and Cushitic

The increasing acceptance among scholars of a correlation between proto-Nilotic speakers and the herding- fishing Khartoum Neolithic peoples. At an earlier level, however, prior to the adoption of livestock herding by about 500 B.C., the ancestral Khartoum Mesolithic peoples, with a strong emphasis on fishing, had an even wider distribution within the general southeaster Sahara area. This correlates very closely with the modern distribution of the combined languages of the entire Nilo-Saharan family: that is, the Nilotic branch, the Saharan branch, and the Songhaic branch. Interestingly, the subsistence patterns of many of the modern speakers of this family still emphasizes herding and fishing. (Nuer), herding (Maasai, Teda), or fishing (Songhai). Another technique is the study of loan words: which shows the relationship between the speakers of one language and another language from which they have borrowed. The study of loan words among language groups has also helped to improve our knowledge of culture change and contact in the past. For example, there are several Kanuri loan words in the Hausa language Similarly, many Arabic words which the Hausa people borrowed through their contact with the Arabs are today found in the Yoruba language e.g.alaafia, wakati, wahala, anfaani, alubosa among others.

### **HISTORY AND PALAEOONTOLOGY**

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

### **HISTORY AND PSYCHOLOGY**

Psychology is the scientific study of the mind and behaviour. Psychology just like history is a multifaceted discipline and includes many sub-fields of study such areas as human development, sports, health, clinical, social behaviour and cognitive process.

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Some aspects study the influence of culture and society and the analysis of role of evolution complements historical studies. Psychology is seen as one aspect of social situation explained in historical context. Psychology complements history in analysing the motives and actions of man and societies. The role of psychology in historical writing of biography and auto-biography is unequivocal. The impact of psychology on history is evident from the fact that in the past, historians inquired primarily into the origins of war and ignored the result of war, and as a result of the influence of psychology, historians have undertaken the study of results and impacts of war and can further help determine the role of masses in such wars or revolution. Effects of events such as war and natural disaster on the citizens of a geographical space is best understand through the help of psycho-analysis of the inhabitants/residents of the affected and neighbouring community.

### **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

Geography is the study of the physical features of the earth and its atmosphere, and of human activity as it affects and is affected by these, including the distribution of populations and resources, and political and economic activities. It is believed that history and geography have very close ties. Some scholars have opined that geography answers questions spanning the local to the global, in the past, present and future

The eminent geographer Donald Meining views geography and history as complementary and necessarily connected in teaching and learning about the past and present, as exemplified in his work: *The Shaping Of America: A Geographical Perspective On 500 Years Of American History*. The importance of geographic knowledge to history are characterised by the abilities to; develop location skills and understandings, understand human and environmental interactions, understand human movement, and understand the region. Geographic concepts and tools are beneficial to enhancing a multicultural perspective, especially in the study of migration and movement by a group having examined and interpreted the economic and cultural space of the migrants and host community. The interaction of geography and history help understand historical events through the knowledge of

physical and human characteristics of a specific space of occurrence.

Physical characteristics includes:

landforms, water bodies, soils, natural vegetation and animal life, while human characteristics includes: population density and distribution, cultural traditions and political institutions, and social traits. Without a rudimentary knowledge of geography, it would be difficult to understand or study certain branches of history such as: diplomatic history or military history as these cannot be fully grasp except with the understanding of location skills. According to Kant:

Geography lies at the basis of History

Herder opined that:

**History is Geography set in motion.**

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

**HISTORY WITH ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY**

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

Anthropology helped to provide insights into features of the past which were so strange that modern historians had found them difficult to comprehend or examine. Complex rituals, blood-feud, trance and ecstasy, millenarianism, oath-taking, the Divine Right of Kings, and

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particularly magical and witchcraft beliefs became legitimate and fruitful topics for study. In the last of these, for instance, models from African witchcraft provided a stimulus for many important works on English, French, Spanish, and North American and German witchcraft. Also, Anthropological works also had the effect of distancing the familiar, making historians aware that much of what they had regarded as normal in the past really required investigation because it was, cross-comparatively, unusual. A particularly striking example of this was in the field of family relationships. Much of anthropology is concerned with kinship and marriage. These works helped to stimulate many of the studies of sexuality, marriage, childhood, parental ties, domestic groups, women, love, incest and other topics. The anthropological inspiration joined up with interests from historical demography and women's studies, and thereby opened up the whole field of interpersonal relationships and sentiment. Historical research into many other topics was stimulated by anthropological enquiries: conflict, ceremony, work discipline, time, space, myths, folklore, style and fashion, oral and literate culture, birth, death, dreams, suicide, animals, and many other subjects were investigated. The formal historical documents usually conceal such topics, so that it was largely under the pressure of anthropology that a vigorous development of the study of past mentality and emotional structures took place, exemplified in the work of historians such as E. Hobsbawm, E. Le Roy Ladurie, E.P. Thompson and Keith Thomas.

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

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

the universal from the particular, to explain both the single event and the broad institution. Sociology is the study of human social relationships and institutions with diverse subject matter ranging from family to state, from crime to religion, from divisions of race and social class to the shared beliefs of a common culture, and from social stability to radical change in whole societies. Sociology offers a distinctive and enlightening way of seeing and understanding the social world.

Sociology as a science of society tries to analyse human interactions and inter-relations with all their diversity and complexity, this concept to a large extent is sacrosanct to historical reconstruction even though they differ in regards to approach. Sociology provides social background for the study of history as well as help history to develop the narrow areas of human activity.

### **HISTORY AND ECONOMICS**

Economics is the study of the production, distribution and consumption of goods. Economics offer history theories to substantiate its facts, as well as using statistics and mathematics to support these facts. It is believed that in the evolution of man, economic sub-structure succeeds the cultural structure and precedes the political super structure. Thus, activities of man in the society are closely related to economic matters, a rudimentary knowledge of this science is needed by the historian. The role of economics in historical reconstruction has been so defined that, there is an aspect of history called 'Economic History'.

Economic history is an important branch of history, its understanding is absolutely essential for proper understanding of history of any period. Due to the complexity of study of economics, especially as it involves mathematics and statistics (calculations of figures as facts), dedicating time to acquire basic knowledge of economic theories for a historian to analyze historical cum economic events will be at the detriment of the study and writing of history, hence, the need arose for a historian to employ the use of existing economic tools, statistics and facts to help solve relevant economic problems in historical reconstruction. A major example of the benefits of economic analysis in historical reconstruction is evident in Paul E. Lovejoy's book:

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Transformation in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa, published in 2012, where he extensively employs the use of economic tools and word register to include statistics analysis in explaining how the Medieval slave trade and Atlantic slave trade from the 15th – early 20th

centuries was carried out, indicating to a large extent figures that closely shows the number of victims of these trades and enslavement process.

### **HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE**

In the words of Paul Janet:

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

Based on the foregoing, history tends to learn the nature of fundamental political institutions from the knowledge of or expertise of political science. As political science is beneficial to history, so is history helpful to the study of science, because political aspect is a part of the whole range of activity recorded by historians. In fact, our knowledge of history is somewhat meaningless, if the political bearing of events and movements are not adequately evaluated. For instance, the history of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe is an incomplete narration of facts without putting into account full significance of the movements, like nationalism and socialism. The history of the rise of major Yoruba towns of the South-western region of Nigeria in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century would be incomplete without the study of the evolution of new form of political organization in Yorubaland such as: Republicanism in Ibadan, Military Dictatorship in Ijaiye, and Military Federalism in Abeokuta, which was attributed to the fall of the Old Oyo Empire. Undoubtedly, opinion polls taken today by those in the social science will form valuable source materials for the historian in the future, but of course, for the vast sectors of the past with which the historian is concerned, there can be no question of quizzing the opinions of the dead. Where history has been beneficially influenced is through the insight recent polls give into electoral behaviour in general, it is less easy now for historians to deliver those fatuous judgment about ‘ the people thought this’ or ‘ the electorate wanted that’, which were pure guesses and pretty shoddy ones at that.

"Interdisciplinary history" means historical scholarship which makes use of the methods or concepts of one or more disciplines other than history. "Discipline"-in the sense of "a branch of instruction or education; a department of learning or knowledge"-is a very old term in English. The earliest use cited by the Oxford English Dictionary comes from the prologue to Chaucer's "Yeoman's Tale" (1386): "Assaye in myn absence this disciptyne and this crafty science." The term derives from the word "disciple" (Latin disciplina) and the idea of "instruction imparted to disciples or scholars." In the vocabulary of twentieth-century academic life the word normally refers to the specialized fields into which instruction and research have been divided in modern university curricula. The term "interdisciplinary" is of considerably more recent vintage.

The OED defines it as "Of or pertaining to two or more disciplines of learning; contributing to or benefitting from two or more disciplines," and cites a sociological article published in 1937 as the earliest instance of its use. Nowadays, the term "interdisciplinary" has become common to members of every academic discipline. It has been made familiar in innumerable discussions, and is quite often used to connote something desired, something worthy of achieving in teaching and scholarship. It has become a topical word because of growing fear that the specialized disciplines have seriously narrowed the intellectual outlook of those engaged in teaching and research in their own field of knowledge. The word embodies a call to cure this situation, to counteract the baleful results of over-specialization. On reflection, however, it is clear that less specialization is not a possible solution, for it is this very drive towards specialization since the start of the nineteenth century which today has given us precise and accurate knowledge in all of our academic disciplines. The growth of significant knowledge depends upon an accumulation of more and more complex bodies of information, and these bodies of information in turn are the results of more and more complex methods of analysis. What all of this points to is the fact that interdisciplinary teaching and research should not be understood as a way of replacing specialization, but as a new kind of specialization

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which builds on and integrates the specializations of the discrete disciplines.

American-trained historians have used the term "interdisciplinary" since at least the early 1950s. The expression "interdisciplinary history" became fashionable in the 1960s, and was endowed with a measure of professional acceptance with the founding of *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* in 1970 (a methodologically related journal, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, had already been founded in 1958). The underlying concept of interdisciplinary history considerably antedates introduction of the term itself, however. In order to understand the rise and development of the concept of interdisciplinary history it is helpful to say something about the traditional model of historical scholarship established in the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century historical research, allowing for notable exceptions such as Jacob Burckhardt's famous *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, was strongly and narrowly oriented toward politics, the evolution of institutions, the role of political personalities, and the narration of discrete events-what the turn-of-the-century French scholar Paul Lacombe dubbed "*l'histoire gvenementielle*" (the "history of events").

The situation was aptly reflected in E. A. Freeman's famous opinion that history is simply "past politics." Though historians did not completely ignore the non-political aspects of the past-social structure and development, cultural affairs, the history of thought, etc.-they tended to treat them "for the most part as an impressionistic 'backcloth,' roughly sketched in, against which the drama of political events was played out." The tradition of equating history with the narration of political events is, of course, ancient; it reaches back to historiographical models established by Thucydides and Polybius, to the Greco-Roman notion that history's chief purpose is to provide political lessons for future statesmen, and to the theory of historical understanding found in Aristotle's *Poetics*, according to which history (in contrast to the higher occupations of poetry and philosophy) deals with particular events rather than general truth. This venerable tradition was powerfully reinforced in the early nineteenth century, at precisely the time history was establishing itself as an academic profession as opposed to a gentleman's avocation or



pursuit for active or retired politicians. The new business of academic historiography, which emerged first in the universities and archives of Germany and France, was based on the close analysis of written documents, and the kind of documentation most readily available to disciplinary "role models" such as Leopold von Ranke and Fustel de Coulanges was political and diplomatic. This naturally conditioned the kind of history they wrote. Moreover, these early continental historians, men who set standards for the later professionalization of history in England and the United States, were bureaucrats whose job was to provide their countries with historical pedigrees and national heroes, so it is hardly surprising that their work focused on political and institutional matters. The rank-and-file scholars who followed in the footsteps of pioneers such as Ranke and Fustel were, by and large, uninterested in the underlying epistemological problems of their new science; they were primarily engaged in the collection and organization of facts, and in the publication of scholarly monographs on carefully delimited topics.

It is against this background that the rise of the concept of interdisciplinary history must be understood. Key manifestations of the idea at the turn of the twentieth century were, in Germany, the work of Karl Lamprecht (1856-1915); in France, the movement for historical "synthesis" founded by Henri Berr (1863-1954); and, in the United States, the crusade for a "New History" led by James Harvey Robinson (1863-1936). In each case we find a self-conscious rebellion against the prevailing orthodoxy that the historian is basically a narrator of particular events which occurred in the past and against the belief that history is a discrete kind of inquiry whose methods, goals, and purposes differ in kind from those of natural science. In each case it was claimed that history must borrow ideas from other fields, especially from the new family of empirical "social sciences" being institutionalized in the 1880s and 1890s. It should also be noted that each of the turn-of-the-century appeals for interdisciplinary cooperation, and especially that of Berr, was in some direct or indirect way indebted to the mental orientation known as "positivism," an outlook associated particularly with the name of the mid-nineteenth century French social theorist August Comte. Comte and his historiographical followers (notably H. T. Buckle in England)

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believed that history could, and should, be placed on the same epistemological plane as the natural sciences, which Comte idealized for their capacity to proceed from the empirical analysis of observable phenomena to the formulation of universal laws. In the late nineteenth century, Comte's philosophy was widely discredited among historians and T.C.R. Horn and Harry Ritter many others, including the neo-idealist philosophers, but his conviction that all paths to knowledge are essentially similar persisted and became a basic assumption of the first generation of interdisciplinary historians. Karl Lamprecht was an idiosyncratic and astoundingly prolific German historian who taught at the University of Leipzig from 1891 to his death in 1915.

Lamprecht used the term "cultural history" (Kulturgeschichte) as an umbrella label to designate his idea of a comprehensive approach to the study of the past, based on a pot-pourri of the findings and concepts of traditional history, economics, art history, and psychology-especially the psychology of Wilhelm Wundt and Theodor Lipps. The Leipzig scholar was among those late nineteenth-century intellectuals who, in the face of growing specialization, "felt the need for a more systematic and comprehensive view of all new knowledge and diversified concerns"; his basic question was "how could the history of the many diverse activities of man be brought together in one unified form and intelligible structure?" He regarded psychology as especially important, and defined his version of cultural history as "the comparative history of the factors of socio-psychic development." For psychology to be genuinely useful for historians, however, he believed that it must be transformed into a collective "social psychology," one which focused on groups and situations rather than single personalities. In 1905 he formulated the basic principle of his orientation: "Modern historical science is above all a social-psychological science." To this fundamental principle, Lamprecht wedded the eighteenth-century concept of Volksgeist ("national spirit") and made this idea, which he re-christened Volkseele ("national psyche"), the fundamental object of his research. His grandiose, twenty-one volume *Deutsche Geschichte* (1891-1915) was designed to trace the course of development of the collective German psyche through a progression of stages from antiquity to the present. He

believed it would ultimately be possible to write a general history of the psychic development of mankind which would exhibit a universal pattern; for the moment, however, historians would have to begin with individual histories of national psychic development. Lamprecht's unorthodox ideas provoked a furious and often not very edifying Methodenstreit among German historians prior to World War I, and these ideas were eventually totally discredited as "eclectic trifling."

It is only since the 1960s that a new generation of historians in West Germany, itself in conscious revolt against traditional ideas, has taken a renewed interest in his theory; even now his approach is viewed essentially as a matter of antiquarian curiosity. It is generally agreed that Lamprecht's vision was too vast for the methods available to him (social psychology and statistics, for example, were still in their infancy), that his promethean vision was too grandiose, vague in conception, and based on time-bound, now discredited assumptions, and that his books were feverishly produced without careful attention to factual accuracy. The psychological doctrines to which Lamprecht appealed are now considered to have been superseded, and even Wundt, the author of many of the ideas he sought to use, stated that "as a psychologist [Lamprecht] went his own ways.... The psychology in which he lived simply was not one which seeks to explain connections between psychic phenomena through an analysis of them, but it was the intuitive psychology of the artist." Lamprecht left no enduring legacy in Germany, but his ideas had an important impact in the United States, where they helped to inspire the so-called "New History" which blossomed on the eve of the First World War. A key feature of this doctrine, which flourished from ca. 1912 (the publication date of James Harvey Robinson's *The New History*) to the mid-1930s, was the call for an "enthusiastic alliance with the social sciences."

A third, and in some respects the most important, manifestation of turn-of-the-century interdisciplinary historical theory arose in France under the leadership of the philosopher and entrepreneur of cooperative research, Henri Berr. Berr, who founded the *Revue de Synthèse Historique* in 1900, described his program for "historical synthesis" as "basically an appeal for greater cooperation between social scientists

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and historians."The core of his approach is reflected in his statement of 1900 that "Historical synthesis is ... intended . . . to induce . . . various teams, together, each to perform its particular function and to be of greater mutual assistance through a clearer conception of the common task. " Berr's *Revue de Synthèse* became an international forum for the discussion of new theories and novel research in a variety of fields- psychology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy, as well as history. Among its contributors were the sociologist Emile Durkheim, the philosopher Benedetto Croce, and the aforementioned historian Lamprecht. Berr countered criticism that his crusade was too ambitious with an interesting darwinist argument: Among living seeds only a small number ever develop. Among ideas, in likewise, an inevitable process of selection takes place; and a program must be too rich in order to be sufficiently so [emphasis added]. It is through the development of the *Revue* that we shall see what is fated to prosper and what has no future.

The interdisciplinary momentum generated by the *Revue de Synthèse* helped create the atmosphere in which the now famous "Annales school" of French historiography originated. This movement, led by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch (co-founders of the *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale* in 1929), was based on the idea that history must be wide open to the findings and methods of other disciplines-geography, economics, sociology, psychology-and at the same time must resist the temptation... to divide itself into a number of "specialisms" (economic history, the history of ideas, etc.) each going its own independent way. Febvre, originally a member of Berr's circle, emphasized that "What we need are alert, inventive and ingenious brains looking for alliances; men who, when they come across any intellectual work, ask themselves. . . 'What use can be made of this though it was not made for me?'" Since the 1930s, the Annales school has been the historiographical avant-garde in France; indeed, it is now virtually the reigning orthodoxy, and its leaders have "promoted a view of history resting on the close collaboration of all the human and social sciences, to which the special contribution of the historian is *le sens du temps*."

In 1947 Febvre was named president of the newly-created "Sixth Section" of the French *Ecole des Hautes Etudes*, the aim of which was to

"promote research and teaching of the most advanced kind in the area of economics and the social sciences" and to encourage the kind of interdisciplinary teamwork which Berr had championed as a private intellectual impresario. Under Febvre's direction and that of his successors, the "Sixth Section" became the world's single most important center for the development of interdisciplinary theory, methodological innovation (notably in the areas of quantitative or "serial" analysis, historical demography, and the historical study of collective psychology [mentalites]), research, and publication. By the 1960s the international reputation of the Annales school—one might even use the word *mystique*—had grown to such an extent that it had become the major source of inspiration to advocates of interdisciplinary history in West Germany, Eastern Europe, England, and the United States.

The importance of figures such as Lamprecht, Robinson, Berr, and even Bloch and Febvre, at least from the point of view of our subject, lies mainly in the gradual creation of a climate of thought open to the possibilities of interdisciplinary exploration. For all of their programmatic emphasis on the importance of cross-disciplinary work, their own publications, methodologically speaking, were surprisingly conventional. Berr was really a publicist, not a historical scholar; and despite Lamprecht's genuine theoretical radicalism, his monumental *Deutsche Geschichte* was filled with "plain historical narrative," a great deal of it "rephrased material borrowed from the works of others."

Febvre, while calling for team-produced, socio-psychological histories of sensibility and collective mentalities, was really a rather traditional historian of ideas who worked impressionistically, alone, using time-honored methods of textual criticism. Bloch, perhaps more innovative methodologically, was also basically a private scholar rather than a team worker. Even today, there is doubtless more talk about the need for interdisciplinary history than actual production of interdisciplinary work. As far as pioneers such as Lamprecht and Berr were concerned, the problem was to some extent simply the fact that methods and concepts did not yet exist to do what they wanted to do. Social psychology was still in its infancy, and the computer revolution had to await the end of World War II.

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It has really only been since 1945, and especially since 1955, that a major shift in the direction of consciously interdisciplinary practice has occurred, something made possible in large part by the refinement of statistical techniques and the development of other quantitative methods, and by computer technology. A detailed analysis of the achievements of interdisciplinary historical research since 1945 would require another lengthy paper; here it is only possible to briefly characterize some of the main points of focus typical of research in West Germany, the United States, and France. In view of the determination with which Lamprecht's ideas were opposed in Germany prior to World War I, it is not surprising that interest in interdisciplinary work has grown very slowly in post-1945 West Germany. Much of the energy of the West German historical profession in the period since 1945 has been exerted in the production of ideologically revisionist but nonetheless methodologically conventional diplomatic and political histories which reassess Germany's role in twentieth-century affairs.

The classic example is Fritz Fischer's now famous study of Germany's Aims in the First World War (1961)-radical in its attack on the patriotic, state-oriented historiography of traditionalist scholars such as Friedrich Meinecke and Gerhard Ritter, but completely conventional in its methodology. Significant interest in quantitative methods developed only in the 1970s, and is still in its infancy. Most interdisciplinary work has been inspired by the example of historically-oriented political sociology, which stems primarily from the native sociological tradition established by Max Weber, Werner Sombart, Georg Simmel, and Josef Schumpeter in Lamprecht's time, but which was largely ignored by historians until the 1950s because "social" history was identified with "socialist" history.

The Weberian approach is based on the use of now familiar "ideal typical" concepts, i.e., idealized characterizations of social groupings and phenomena, intellectual climates, etc., which are abstracted from actual historical situations and used for purposes of comparative historical analysis.

The best known examples are Weber's own concepts of the "Protestant ethic," "capitalism," and "bureaucracy." One of the best recent German

examples of the historiographical use of Weberian ideal types is Hans Rosenberg's *Bureaucracy, Aristocracy, and Autocracy* (1958), a book which analyzes the development of the Prussian bureaucracy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among other things, Rosenberg uses the now commonly-accepted sociological device of the "case study" as a springboard for his generalizations, in this instance the mid-eighteenth century jurist Samuel von Cocceji provides him with a "representative" individual who is treated as a model, or "ideal type," for the eighteenth-century Prussian bureaucracy as a whole. Rosenberg, it is true, wrote the book while living in the United States, but he was German-born and trained, and his work has been a major influence in establishing a tradition of sociological history in post-war West Germany. Also noteworthy in this connection is the revival of interest in the works of hitherto neglected German historians, e.g., Eckart Kehr (1902-1933), whose works reversed the previous dominance of "foreign policy" over "domestic politics."

Kehr insisted upon the importance of domestic tensions, class conflicts, social and economic considerations, etc., as shaping influences on German foreign policy, especially during the Wilhelmine era. Such researches encouraged the post-World War II movement in the direction of social and economic history, and the use of the methods of social science, long familiar in French and Anglo-American scholarship. See, for example, the work of the contemporary West German historians Hans-Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka. Finally, it should be said that Marxian social theory has become quite influential in West Germany, and there has been a growing dialogue between East and West German historians since the normalization of diplomatic relations between the two Germanies in the early 1970s. The fact that Marxian historical materialism has only recently begun seriously to influence German historical studies is an indication of the persistence of traditional attitudes; outside of Germany, historical materialism began to exert significant influence as early as the 1890s. It should be recognized, however, that Marxism itself is a product of the nineteenth-century German idealist and historicist traditions and has often been militantly opposed to so-called "bourgeois social science" in the twentieth century,

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especially sociology. Thus, Marxian influence has sometimes hindered interdisciplinary exploration. But, on the whole, it has probably helped; one might generalize and say that the methodology of the interdisciplinary avant-garde in West Germany today is a hybrid of Weberian sociology and Marxian social theory.

### **Check your progress –**

1. Discuss link of history with sociology

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2. Discuss history's relationship with economics.

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## **4.3 LETS SUM UP**

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As with any interdisciplinary project, the disciplines are often alien to one another. Academic traditions are always under pressure to prove and justify themselves. However, such a process does not result in any departure from the central tasks of research in history didactics, but instead supports their ability to link with other research. That this is an important contribution to the internationalisation of research is demonstrated not least by the fact that, in some other countries, research traditions regarding historical thinking and learning are not addressed by the science of history, but instead often by researchers in educational science or psychology. Making an approach to these disciplines and to speak of their methods and language seems central to advancing the empirical research in history didactics so that we are not trapped in the well-worn approaches of the last century.

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## **4.5 KEYWORDS**

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Economics, sociology, anthropology, geography

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## 4.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW

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1. Discuss the link of history with sociology.
2. Discuss the link of history with science.

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## 4.7 SUGGESTED READINGS

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

Adetoro, Adejoke R. 2012. The Political Transition of Ibadanland From Bale to Olubadan, 1820-1936. B. A. Project. Dept. Of History and International Studies. University of Ilorin. Vii + 60pp. 3-4

Aggarwal, Mamta. Relationship of History with other Sciences: Study of History.

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## 4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Hint – 4.2
2. Hint – 4.2

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# **UNIT 5 RELATIONSHIP OF HISTORY WITH – ARCHAEOLOGY, GEOGRAPHY, ANTHROPOLOGY**

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## **STRUCTURE**

5.0 Objective

5.1 Introduction

5.2 History, Archaeology, And Related Sciences: Common Concerns

5.3 Between History and Geography

5.4 History With Anthropology

5.5 Lets Sum Up

5.6 Keywords

5.7 Questions for Review

5.8 Suggested Readings

5.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

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## **5.0 OBJECTIVE**

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To learn about the relationship of history with archaeology

To learn about the relationship of history with geography

To learn about the relationship of history with anthropology

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## **5.1 INTRODUCTION: ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY, GEOGRAPHY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

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There is a long-standing tradition, in both archaeology and history, to consider the former as a source-studying, a branch of the latter (Meneses, 1965, p. 22; Zimmerman and Dasovich, 1990, p. 1; Klein, 1993, p. 729). European archaeology sprang out of philology

(Champion, 1990, p. 89) through history and its rôle as a “handmaiden to history” was a result of a very specific definition of history as an interpretive discipline which uses different sources, studied by technicians (like palaeographers, in charge of manuscripts), and archaeologists, collecting artifacts (Austin, 1990) and art objects (Bandinelli, 1984, p. 157; 1994). American archaeology followed a different development, being always considered as part of anthropology (Deetz, 1967, p.3; Trigger, 1989b, p. 19; Smith, 1992, p. 24; Renfrew, 1993, p. 73), even though it has also often been interpreted as a discipline bound to collect data to be interpreted by a the true social scientist the anthropologist. Most recent students of the discipline would, however, agree that “archaeology is a social science in the sense that it tries to explain what has happened to specific groups of human beings in the past and to generalize about processes of cultural change” (Trigger, 1990, p. 19). It is considered an independent discipline closely related to history and other social sciences (Otto, 1975, p.11; Patterson, 1990, p.5). Archaeology becomes increasingly historical in orientation (Trigger, 1984, p. 295) and in practice history and anthropology converge (Sherratt, 1992, p. 139), as archaeologists and anthropologists express the need for a more historically based human science, and historians realize that anthropological and archaeological enquiry has become crucial for history (Knapp, 1992, p.3). The renewed interest in Benjamin, a pioneer in the use of material culture and excavations as metaphors in 1 Departamento de História, Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, Caixa Postal 6110, Campinas, 13081-970, São Paulo, Brazil.

2 historical analysis, is felt not only in post-processual archaeology but also in the other related human and social sciences (Härke and Wolfram, 1993, p.184; Funari, 1996a, pp. 52-53). A dialogue between archaeology and history is thus a must (Moreland, 1992, p. 126). In some quarters, particularly in the Americas, an opposition between history and theory has been claimed by some archaeologists (Hodder, 1991, p. 10) but this misguided approach has been counteracted by pleas for an interdisciplinary collaboration, as emphasized the Uruguayan

archaeologist José María López (n.d., p.62). Some archaeologists would go up to the point of defining archaeology as an historical discipline (Fonseca, 1990; Newell, 1991), a special kind of social history (Cerdà, 1991, p. 420). There is an acknowledgment that history is a vital element in archaeological interpretation (Little, 1988, p. 264; Little and Schackel, 1992, p. 4) and that archaeologists must rely on both written and material evidence (Orser, 1987, p. 131).

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## 5.2 HISTORY, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND RELATED SCIENCES: COMMON CONCERNS

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Braudel's *longue durée*, or long term trends, is a concept which would enable a closer relationship between historians and social scientists, including archaeologists (Braudel, 1969, p. 103; Carandini, 1979, pp. 66-69). Traditional factual history focused its attention in microscopic political developments of difficult access to the archaeologist, but *Alltagsgeschichte* proposed to study repetition, something well-known by archaeologists under the name of typology (Lüdtke, 1989). Interdisciplinary cooperation has been also advocated by different specialists as a fundamental critique of divisions of knowledge (Kern, 1985, p. 10; 1988, p. 185; 1994, p. 78; Epperson, 1990, p. 36). The breaking down of current disciplinary boundaries and the production of a unified science dealing with society (Spriggs, 1983, p. 3) means that apparently unrelated disciplines, like philosophy and archaeology (Salmon, 1982), have much to gain with dialogue (Miller and Tilley, 1996). Political science, social philosophy, economics are good tools to surmount specialization (Hale, 1995, pp. 215-216) and Pierre Bourdieu's (1988, p. 779) call to avoid the profoundly harmful opposition between disciplines has been heard in different quarters. Argentine political historiography is a case in point (Sábato, 1993, pp. 87-88) and it is very symptomatic that Jones (1976, p. 295) stated in the *British Journal of Sociology* that "there is no distinction in principle between history and any of the other 'social sciences'".

Recently, Paynter (1995, p. 95) would remind us that the use of poetry by archaeologists is a result of the discipline's position on the cusp between the humanities and the sciences. Poetry is another common feature of different disciplines which were influenced by linguistics and semiotics. As mentioned above, all modern human sciences were the result of language studies, from the Enlightenment onwards (Reill, 1994, p. 365; for criticism, see Bernal, 1991), but modern discourse analysis would bring new insights since the 1960s. There is a growing body of agreement as to the semiotic foundations of science (Grzybek, 1994, p. 344), and the analysis of discourse is now as ordinary in archaeology (Shanks and Tilley, 1987; Tilley, 1990, pp. 151-152) as in history (Carrard, 1986; Funari, 1994b). Semiotics may contribute to the project of dialogized pluri-lingualism where different universes of discourse, like archaeology and history for instance, can interact dialogically, interpreting one another reciprocally and critically (Petrilli, 1993, p. 360).

The nature of the evidence, for historians and archaeologists alike, has often been discussed in recent years and the word "evidence" has been regarded as a trope or figure of speech (Somekawa and Smith, 1988, p. 152). It is not fortuitous that it was an archaeologist, who acted also as philosopher and historian, Collinwood (1970), who formulated the concept of subjectivity in interpretation (Debbins, 1965; Vann, 1988; Ucko, 1989, p. xii). Even though subjective, evidences are often interpreted as clues in a law court and archaeologists and historians are compared to detectives (Honório Rodrigues, 1969, p. 20; Couse, 1990), accepting that *die Geschichte ist ein Kriminalgericht*. The search for new data was thus in no contradiction to the subjective character of the evidence (Ankersmit, 1986, pp. 1-11). However, historians (e.g. Bevir, 1994, p. 343) and archaeologists (e.g. Trigger, 1989a; Murray, 1995, p. 291) discuss how to avoid extreme relativism and objectivism and how to find a middle ground between them (Shanks and Hodder, 1995, p. 11).

## **ARCHAEOLOGY, HISTORY, AND SOCIETY**

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There has been a growing realization by historians and archaeologists that both disciplines cannot be separated from their basis in the social and intellectual realities and conflicts of their time, and these disciplines must be viewed critically within the broader context of the history of the modern world (Iggers, 1984, p. 204). The scholar is no neutral observer who stands above and beyond classes and conflicts in society (Olsen, 1986, p. 37), and academic disciplines are not free of social and political ties (Champion, 1991, p. 144). Our views of the past are continually reshaped by changing cultural biases (Blakey, 1990, p. 38). The post-processual movement in archaeology has observed that archaeologists' present social and political contexts do shape their interpretations of archaeological remains (Wood and Powell, 1993, p. 407), echoing historians' claims that they are embedded in their own historical traditions (Burguière, 1982, p. 437; Harlan, 1989, p. 587; Calhoun, 1993, p. 91). Changing scientific standards (Burckhardt, 1958, p. xi) depend on present-day, social understandings (França, 1951, p. 266; Goldmann, 1975, p. 40). The impossibility of disentangling research and the interests of society was also acknowledged by anthropologists and social scientists (Rowlands, 1983, p. 109; Nassaney, 1989, p. 90; Veit, 1989, p. 50) and the connections between present and past are common, specific, and direct (Wilk, 1985, p. 311; Pinsky, 1989, p. 91; McCullagh, 1993, p. 37), as scholars are a product of culture and their interpretations of the past are influenced by their cultural milieu (Burley, 1995, p. 75). A critical approach has been thus put forward by social scientists and even though archaeologists lagged behind in developing a critical awareness (Mazel, 1989, p.11), Norbladh (1989, p. 28) was in no doubt to state that the main goal of archaeologists is "to promote a constant reflection on human and societal conditions and bring this to present-day social criticism". He kritiké tékhne, "the power of discerning, separating, judging" (Aristotle, De Anima, 432a 16) means a critical method of enquiry and exposition (Marquardt, 1992, p. 103), exploring the social and political contexts of knowledge (Leone, Potter, and Shackel, 1987, p. 285; Handsman and Leone, 1989, pp. 119-134; Potter, 1992). The same kind of vocabulary is used by historians when they refer to history as critique, as

a way of exposing ideological presuppositions, as a means of criticizing common sense (Wood, 1994, p. 9). The development of self-consciousness is a common concern among linguists (Fairclough, 1990, p. 167) and historians (La Capra, 1992, p. 439). Mommsen's contention that *die Historiker einer nationalen Kulturgemeinschaft angehören* (Mommsen, 1984, p. 57) could now be extended to all other social thinkers and, if it is true

4 that the historian or the archaeologist carries in his or her mind the present (Wright and Mazel, 1991, p. 59), the focus of their attention should move to everyday life and ordinary people. Archaeology democratizes the past, providing insights into everyday lives of common people (Deetz, 1991, p. 6; Hall, 1991, p. 78), overcoming the one-sidedness of learned evidences (Paynter and MacGuire, 1991; Johnson, 1992, p. 54). "Invisible" subjects in written history are accessible thanks to material remains (Brown and Cooper, 1990, p. 19), and the dynamic interactions between elites and non-elites, between vernacular and high-style, are common archaeological subjects (Paynter, 1988, p. 409; Pendery, 1992, p. 58). "History from below", "popular culture history" are recent developments within historiography (Thompson, 1966; Fletcher, 1988; Walinski-Kiehl, 1989; Sharpe, 1991) but archaeologists are mostly aware that "history is written by the winners" (Paynter, 1990, p. 59), and that subordinate groups can use the archaeological past to empower their knowledge claims in the present, writing the history of domination and resistance (Leone, 1986, p. 431; Hodder, 1991, p. 10). When we talk about society and scholarship we talk about ethics. Peter Ucko's strong words on the subject are worth quoting at length (Ucko, 1990, p. xx): "The problem confronting archaeology today is an acutely moral one ... archaeologists can no longer afford to remain unaware of at least two forces competing for their services - the rulers and the ruled". Historians face the same dilemmas, when they aim at upsetting the ideological hegemony of the powerful (Ortiz, 1993, p. 65) or at unmasking the blunt fabrication of historical facts, like the denial of the possibility of proving the Holocaust (Tucker, 1993, p. 656). Historians' and archaeologists' responsibilities are quite similar (Florescano,

1994, p. 51; Maier, 1994, p. 42), as they share common subjects: society, in the past and in the present, its characteristics and dynamics (García, 1991, p. 38).

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### 5.3 BETWEEN HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

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While general questions regarding the definition of historical geography have not escaped notice, its position has not yet been sufficiently defined. This is true in spite of the fact that significant attention has been devoted, in particular, to the history of historical geography and its relationship with geography and/or historiography (see, for example, Baker 1987, 2003, 2007; Butlin 1993; Carter 1971; Chrastina 2005; Chromý 1999, 2001; Chromý, Jeleček 2005; Darby 1953, 1983; Guelke 1997; Holdsworth 2003, 2004; Jeleček 1983, 1987; Naylor 2005, 2006; Norton 1980; Ogborn 1997, 1999; Sauer 1941; Semotanová 1995; Trávníček 1983). The insufficient distinction of historical geography mentioned above is a direct result of the absence of a broader, theoretical-methodological debate.

According to Eva Semotanová (2002, pp. 11–12) historical geography can be established, in accordance with today's prevailing opinions, as an "independent, interdisciplinary, border discipline, which concerns earth and man, combines space with time and natural with social sciences. It seeks learning and new directions, how to live with nature in a symbiosis acceptable for earth as well as human society. It studies the status, development and change of the geographic environment in the past, the causes behind these changes, their consequences and corresponding regularities. It reconstructs formerly existing landscapes in light of the mutual relations between man and nature, both positive and negative. It is located in between the social and natural sciences, primarily between historiography and geography. It attempts to clarify the historical roots of the present state and character of the landscape and to determine the development of the system of mutual relations between man and the landscape as well as relations among landscape regions of all varying,



size levels.” Similarly, we can also view the branch of historical geography as follows: “historical geography is the study of the geographies of past times, involving the imaginative reconstruction of a wide range of phenomena and processes central to our geographical understanding of the dynamism of human affairs, such as change in the evaluation and uses of human and natural resources, in the form and functions of human settlements and built environments, in the advances in the amount and forms of geographical knowledge, and in the exercising of power and control over territories and peoples” (Butlin 1993, s. IX; compare with Chromý, Jeleček 2005).

Most recently Baker (2003) attempted to define the position and research orientation of historical geography with the formulation of seven fundamental principles for the discipline. He places and emphasis on historical geography’s research focus on the past

(1). He points out the problem of interpretation and creation of facts (2), emphasizes the significance of dialogue on developing the discipline (3), emphasizes that historical geography deals with research of geographic changes in time (4), that it is a central discipline in a holistic comprehension of geography (5), it deals primarily with the geographic synthesis of place and not with spatial analysis and is focused on “period and place” rather than on “time and space” (6) and promotes the historical specificity of certain places to the forefront, emphasizing the peculiarity and distinctiveness of geographical phenomena and processes identified in historically and geographically specific and unique places (7). If we begin with the claim that historical geography is an interdisciplinary branch that combines space with time and social with natural sciences (see the above-mentioned Semotanová 2002), there is clearly no doubt that historical geography must, by its very nature, be an interdisciplinary branch. Nonetheless, this should not be allowed to justify its currently rather eclectic character. Historical geography should not merely be a synthesis of geography and historiography. It should be something special, something more. It may seem that this problem could be resolved by designating historical geography as the “geography of the past” (Butlin 1993).

However, even by doing so, we would not resolve the independent problem of whether historical geography is a geographical or a historical discipline. In other words: are we dealing with attempts to apply geographical approaches in historiography or is it rather geography, which is naturally using geographical methods to address similar topics in the past as those addressed by the so-called “geography of the present”? I think that the fundamental problem of the self-definition of historical geography does not lie in comprehending the meaning of “historical” in the two-word title, but rather in the fact that it remains unclear, what we mean by the “geographical”. The historicalness of historical geography seems to be emphasized too often, while its relation to geography remains completely unnoticed. However, dividing geography into a so-called “geography of the present” and “historical geography” seems to be a very artificial treatment that does not correspond with reality. The world around is continually changing and our nearly non-apprehensible present (which can be perceived as a never-ending small point on time axis) continuously moves from the past into the future (see, for example, Lynch 1972; Pred 1984; Třeštík 2003). In other words, we are always researching something that has already happened and not what is now. Moreover, due to its nature, geography must and does deal with the changes and development of certain expressions in time (Ogilvie 1952; Hägerstrand 1970, 1989; Pred 1984; Sauer 1974; Thrift 1977a,b; compare, for example, Bednář 1969; Darby 1962; Dodgshon 1998; Jones 2004; Pred 1977; Pumain 2000). And, of course, in terms of the above-mentioned claim, it also pays significant attention to the past and to the ways we deal with it (see, for example, Howard 2003; Lowenthal 1975, 1985, 1998). Why should we even separate historical geography from geography? Is it not possible to agree with the opinion that if historical geography deals with the study of the development of the geographical environment in the past in relation to the present, then all geographical topics are historical geographical (Butlin 1993, s. 25; srovnej Baker 2004; Johnston a kol. 1994, s. 337–341)? The connection of space and time is not what makes historical geography unique. Space and time are connected in geography as well as in historiography. Implementation of a different way of understanding the present, referred to as “embedded time” could represent a certain

methodological point of departure in resolving this dilemma. “Embedded time (...) suggests that there is no clock sharp present common to everything. Instead the full life-time or the whole time of existence for each corpuscle stands out as its present. The past is what happened before the point of birth and the future what will happen after death or destruction. There is a story about this difference. Some years ago (...) famous slalom skier, Ingemar Stenmark, who comes from a small village in northern Sweden, was asked by a journalist if he had lived in Tärnaby all his life. Stenmark instantly replied, ‘Not yet.’ The journalist referred to life from birth to the moment of the interview. Stenmark saw his life in one piece from beginning to end” (Hägerstrand 1989, p. 6). Shouldn’t historical geography construct its research topics on this type of an understanding of the past? Or rather, shouldn’t it deal with the direct geographical reconstruction of the past (see Butlin 1993), which is understood as phenomena no longer existing?

We can clearly see that understanding the concepts of time and space should be one of the fundamental topics discussed in attempts to define historical geography. From this discussion on the time and the past we can easily move into contemplation of the seven principles of historical geography (Baker 2003) listed above. Their author places emphasis primarily on the concept of historical geography as an idiographic science concerned with the singularities and peculiarities of specific places during certain periods. In so doing, he resigns the possibility to generalize research findings, whereas he reduces historical geographical research to the mere creation of case studies emphasizing the uniqueness of a place and a time period. The results of such studies, however, are very difficult to apply in practical ways. Moreover, historical geography cannot simplify its extent to the mere historical geographical research of spatial phenomena without losing its competitiveness and its distinctiveness from other better established scientific branches such as historiography and archaeology. If historical geography is to attempt to clarify its current status (Semotanová 2002) and to practically apply knowledge arising from its own research (Chromý 2004), it must be, to a certain degree, nomothetic. That is, it must attempt to seek regularities in

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the development of the geographical organization of the past, in which case studies are perceived.

So, now we come to the dilemma of using the terms “geography” and “geographical” in historical geography and to the claim that historical geography combines social and natural sciences, especially historiography and geography (Semotanová 2002). Such a claim, of course, contains the assumption that historiography is considered as a social science and geography as a natural science. Can we really separate these branches of science so clearly? History itself is the social construction and interpretation of the past, but just as we can write the history of the human race, we can also describe the history of any other species, expression or object. A good illustration of this position on history is found in the increasingly popular environmental history (about this, see Jeleček 1994a, b, 2000; Winiwarter a kol. 2004; Worster 1984; též Williams 1994). This can be conceived not only as the history of relations between society and nature, but also as the story of nature in historical periods. In a similar way, we cannot consider geography to be a purely natural science. In terms of its subject and object of interest, geography has always existed outside of natural and social science. To a certain degree, it has integrated the knowledge, goals and interests of both of these broad scientific research fields.

While today, naturally, we often hear, especially in the context of so-called human or, in Czechia, social geography, an opposing claim: that geography is a social science (Massey 1995). We can perhaps more easily agree with the claim that the classification of sciences according to their focus on societal or natural is inappropriate for characterizing the position of geography in the system of sciences (Gardavský, Hampl 1982; Hampl 1998a). For example Hampl (1998a) proposes an alternative concept of classification of the sciences according to principles of evolutionary complexity and comprehensiveness, which better pinpoints the position of geography as a comprehensive science in light of its object and subject of study. The landscape sphere is the object of study and relations between the various components comprise its subject. Geography is not about clarifying the internal composition and organization of these objects, but about describing their mutual relations.

Today's prevailing division of geography into a social and natural component (i.e. the dualism of geography), which can lead to understanding geography as a social or natural science, is a result of the discipline's unique historical development (Bird 1993; Cloke, Philo, Sadler 1991; Hampl 1998a,b; Holt-Jensen 1999; Johnston 1997).

Nonetheless, we must be aware of the fact that both strengthening and converging geography's social science and natural science components, leading to a conception of geography as one whole (so-called monism; see, for example, Holt-Jensen 1999), are necessary for the internal integrity and continued development of the discipline. This brings us to discussion of the last dilemma in the definition of historical geography: the meaning of geography in this two-word term. What do we mean by the "geographical"? At this point we have limited ourselves to a basic discussion of the problem as it is a very extensive topic, exceeding beyond the scope of one article. Geographical knowledge, whose goal is often simplistically considered to be the explanation of the spatial organization of the landscape sphere, is often confused with topography. Gould (1985, pp. 4–5) offers a poignant example, which clearly arises from the difficulty of defining geography itself: "The scene was typical of that extraordinary ritual known as the Cocktail Party. Groping for something else to fill the silence, she got in her word first. 'And what do you do?' she said. 'Oh', I said, grateful for the usual filler, 'I'm a geographer.' And even as I said it, I felt the safe ground turning into a familiar quagmire. She did not have to ask the next question, but she did anyway. 'Oh really, a geographer ... and what do geographers do?' It has happened many times, and it seldom gets better. The awful feeling of desperate foolishness when you, a professional geographer, find yourself incapable of explaining simply and shortly to others what you really do.

So, what should historical geography be? A simple and declarative answer to such a question does not exist. Moreover, such was never the goal of this essay. We have only attempted to shed light on some of the key dilemmas faced by today historical geography and we subsequently analysed a number of fundamental problems, regarding its definition. This paper's intent was primarily to point out the importance of further dialogue on the nature of historical geography, its character and its

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further development. In conclusion, I shall attempt to define several remarks and opinions on the further orientation of the branch:

1) First and foremost, historical geography is geography, a geographical science. As such, it should not be merely topography. This, naturally, assumes that it will seek regularities (Hampl 1998a).

2) Even though it is sometimes very difficult to distinguish historical geography from other geographical disciplines, its uncontested contribution lies in the fact that it deals primarily with the reconstruction of phenomena that no longer exist and, in so doing, contributes to our understanding of the current state of the landscape. Much the same as historiography, it becomes, in this way, a sort of “bridge” between our past and present.

3) In order for historical geography to be distinguishable from historiography, it should place a greater emphasis on space than on time as well as on the contemporaneity of the expressions being studied. Whereas, in this case, with contemporaneity we mean the simultaneity of existence of observed expressions throughout the researched time period, in the given time segment. Historical geography is primarily a science on the geographical organization of the landscape sphere in the chosen time period, and not a science dealing with the chronological description of the development of a certain phenomena. We can agree that while historiography, with its emphasis on linear development in time and chronology, is more a “time-space science” and that historical geography is more a “space-time science”.

4) Nomothetically oriented historical geography should study the status and development, causes and mechanisms of landscape variation or their various components in a certain time period in the past in a geographical manner. And, in doing so, contribute to seeking and verifying general regularities. If certain regularity is to be considered generally valid, it must apply not only in the present as we perceive it, but also in the past.

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## **5.4 HISTORY WITH ANTHROPOLOGY**

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Anthropology deals with man who is not merely a part of nature but also a dynamic creature in terms of biological and social features. It is a theoretical problem to determine the position of anthropology—where the discipline has to be put—whether in the fold of sciences or in the fold of humanities. A group of anthropologists took it as a natural science whereas some other anthropologists placed it as a subject under humanities.

In nineteenth century some German idealists and before that in eighteenth century a few French humanists considered anthropology as a branch of history and therefore they placed the discipline strictly under humanity.

According to them man is a social creature as they live in a society and lead a social life. Although the biopsychic nature of man is of prime importance, but as man behaves within an organized group of social relatives, it enters into a new level, which is more or less super- psychic and super-organic.

Therefore, in this level he is guided very little by his natural instinct; rather the norms of the particular group dictate him. Starting from the food-habit (what type of food should be taken and the very way to eat them), everything in a man's life – the dress-pattern, family structure, marriage form, religious belief and so on are decided by the social norm.

Within a social system, man is thus more social creature than biological organism. This school of thought also held that the social relations are essentially the products of history, bound together by the moral values and not by the natural forces. Anthropology was viewed as a part of history and the anthropologist's role lay in social reconstruction. Kroeber, Sidney and Evans pritchard were in favour of this ideology.

In fact, there is a close relationship between history and anthropology for which controversies are found for a long time. Everything in this world offer a history as their existence is counted by time factor. A sort of historical investigation is essentially required in order to understand the factors and processes of change.

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Since human is the subject of anthropological investigation, we cannot proceed at all without the consideration of temporal dimension. Both the disciplines aim to unveil the unexplored events of human life situation but differ from one another in tackling the problems. Each of them has developed its own methodological principles. History is chiefly concerned with the events. They count actions and interactions of human, both in individual and group perspectives. Whereas, anthropology takes interest in determination of culture; biological evolution terminates in cultural revolution.

Anthropology and more particularly the social anthropology is indebted to history. Earlier scholars like August Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber in studying social phenomena deliberately drew facts from history. Sir J.G. Frazer being first chairman in the school of Social anthropology in Britain gave emphasis on the historical analysis of the anthropological facts.

In 1899, Franz Boas as a founder of the First University department of Anthropology at Columbia tried to highlight the life-ways of the primitive communities through historical methods. A.L. Kroeber in his two important papers, 'History and Science in Anthropology' (1935) and 'Anthropologist looks at History' (1966) attempted to establish the logical ground that the study of preliterate people would be more meaningful if the facts could be analyzed in historical perspective.

According to him, anthropology is not wholly a historical science but its large areas are historical in interest. Moreover, he believed that the difference between the two disciplines was for the difference of the nature of insight but they were complimentary to each other.

In a lecture at the University of Manchester in 1961, E.E. Evans Pritchard said, "the main differences between history and anthropology are not aim or method, for fundamentally both are trying to do the same thing". There is no doubt in this point that the continuity of a social process can be clearly estimated if historical methods are applied side by side with anthropological methods.

The relation between anthropology and history can be established in three distinct ways:



1. The subject matter of anthropology is basically historical in character. Anthropologists select different aspects of human culture derived from a common matrix. Since human cultures are not eternal like the subject matters of physics and chemistry, it changes with time.

Each and every institutionalized organization viz., technological organization; economic organization, political organization, religious organization etc. are subjected to change. They remain largely relative and restricted to the particular situations. Therefore, all phenomena need a historical analysis.

2. Many of the institutions studied by the anthropologists deal with such a structure, which is essentially temporal or historical. For example, to study any development anthropologists have to trace the event from the beginning. Naturally such a study gets associated with history.

Again, some of the problems have to be understood in the light of early stages, which are completely different from the present form. We can illustrate this point with the structure of feudalism, capitalism or socialism.

3. Anthropology often employs methods of Historical analysis, which is not always sufficient to deal with any problem of anthropology, but there are different types of historical analysis appropriate to different kinds of problems in anthropological science.

In majority of cases historians have accepted the idea that each age will tend to view the past in the light of its own cultural milieu and stress upon the aspects of the past which provide an explanation of the existing problem.

The common features between history and anthropology are, both the disciplines depend for their materials on the actual happenings or occurrences in the natural course of human life. Teamwork is Suitable

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for both. Both of them differ from other scientists who make and get their data by experiments as per their needs.

It is true that traditionally the historians differed from the anthropologists; historians were interested in past periods while the anthropologists-were concerned with the primitive people. But now both are inclined to study the contemporary problems of the modern civilizations of the world.

Both of them have been able to account for the whole of a society. They do not remain satisfied after knowing what happened and what happens, their interests have also extended to find out the nature of social processes and associated regulations.

With the advent of the Darwinian theory of biological evolution and also with the introduction of new archaeological evidences, the quest in study of man got a new dimension. Unlike the seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers, the nineteenth century historians and ethnologists became interested in the natural history of cultural development. Tylor, Lubbock, Maine and Morgan took anthropology as a historical discipline concerned with the culture of pre literate people.

The group of thinkers who believed anthropology as a subject of science includes Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Fortes, Nadel and other eminent anthropologists. They pointed out that the subject studies human society following the methods of natural sciences. Science is the systematic investigation of phenomenon in the universe for the search of universal truth. It applies the logic, order and precision to identify laws, principles and generalizations. Anthropology proceeds like science.

Its task is not to keep long reports about the individual cultures but through a comparative analysis of all such specific reports, it tries to arrive at 'social laws' regarding the emergence, growth, functioning and change of human societies.

The believers of this school suggest that there are some regularities in social life which remain unaffected by the variation of time and place, so anthropologists can build a body of scientific laws by dealing with the

repetitive, non-variant relations and events. In fact, anthropologists follow the scientific law to discover the rules of behaviour, conduct and organization. Their research methods and techniques strive for validity and reliability.

In 1920, B. Malinowski pointed out the importance of field work. He believed that the participant observation (fieldwork) was only method to go deep into the social forces of human society. According to him, anthropologists should not fully depend on the recorded materials like the historians; they must meet people and through long-term intimate contact data will come out.

Although the early workers like Franz Boas and A.R. Radcliffe Brown realized the importance of direct contact with the people in the field, but Malinowski categorically pointed out fieldwork as a method of establishing scientific facts and laws.

At present the scope of anthropology as a scientific discipline has been established. Though the subject utilizes the historical method and draw data from history and other subjects of humanities, it is more meaningful as a science. Because its orientation is much more towards the science than the humanities.

The next point is the determination of its exact position. In science, there are four divisions as per their nature and the field of operation. They are. Physical science comprising the subjects like Physics, Chemistry, etc.; Natural science embracing Geology, Astronomy, etc.; Biological science containing Zoology, Botany, etc.; and lastly the Social science consisting of Economics, Political science. Sociology, etc. Ambiguity appeared with the point that in which of the divisions 'anthropology' should be placed.

Anthropology has polarity within the subject itself. One of its branches is concerned with the anatomical structure and physical features of the man. This branch is known as physical anthropology, which is more or less akin to the biological science. It shares many materials with zoology, physiology, embryology, etc.

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In this branch man is predominantly an animal rather than having a history and social qualities. The other branch of anthropology is concerned with the social and historical factors mainly. It shares the concept from different social sciences like economics, history, jurisprudence, sociology, etc.

Here anthropology is non-organic or more than organic having a closer relation to humanities. The subject, thus possesses a holistic tendency to explain man from all respect— biological and social point of view. It is superior to all other disciplines, even from which it borrows ideas and theoretical concepts.

In fact, different disciplines are held together in an invisible fine thread from which anthropology harvests the essence of life. Man being the greatest wonder of the world when deserves to study himself, it surpasses all other disciplines of own creation.

It becomes both a scientific and humanistic study. Its methodologies are highly abstract and sophisticated as of science. In one way, it perceives human beings as a product of socio-cultural process, and compels human feelings and sentiments to lead a group life demanding cooperation, competition, accommodation and adjustment. At the same time, it initiates human imagination to find expression in arts, artefacts and other mental faculties. On the whole, the subject offers both biological and social dimensions to be a master-science.

There are many variants of history. It cannot be defined in a single sentence. Most of the scholars define history as a chronological account of the past events. Traditionally, therefore, the emperors, rulers and elites, who make history, constitute the theme of history.

Looked at from this perspective, history is like a railway timetable which moves year after year, century after century. In simple words, history is the account of ruling dynasties.

The preliterate people do not have anything of this history. There are no records for them. Here is a breaking point between history and social anthropology. Social anthropology writes about prehistoric people and their traditions and institutions.

The field of history is the people of society; the field of social anthropology is the society; and the field of social anthropology is the masses of people who are illiterate.

Yet another definition of history is that given by the Indian historian, D.D. Kausambi. He has defined it from the Marxian conceptual framework and argues that history is about the means of production and the property relations developed out of production.

On the other hand, yet another approach to history is suggested by Carr who says that the events which involve and affect larger masses of people are historical events.

Without entering into the controversies of the definition of history, it must be said that history is a methodology and it should be used as such only. The relationship of history and social anthropology is of a kind of love and hate.

There was a time when social anthropology did not employ historical methodology. If we look at anthropological texts, we usually find that these are written in the pre-sent context.

“Many of the most influential monographs in social anthropology were written half a century ago or more, and in virtually every case the societies they deal with have changed radically since the original fieldwork took place.”

The social anthropologists all over the world have hated history. They were concerned with detailed narration and, therefore, generated only empirical data. Tracing the relationship of history and social anthropology, Eriksen says that in the past social anthropology did not criticize historical accounts for empirical narrations. He writes:

Frequently, moreover, fieldwork was carried out during an unusual not a ‘typical’ historical period. For example, classic African anthropology was developed during the last phase of French and British colonialism, namely, between the First World War and 1960.

## Notes

It must be stressed that social anthropology has never tried to re-place history. Its analyses have traditionally been focused on social and cultural interrelationships at a particular point in time, and until recently, have rarely emphasized the historical processes which have led up to the present.

Interestingly, in the British, American and French traditions, the aim is usually to account for the workings of a particular society or culture, not to try to explain how it emerged.

As a matter of fact, the founding fathers of social anthropology, namely, Boas in the US and Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski in England, were all critical of the rather speculative forms of cultural history which preceded modern anthropology.

Thus, the older social anthropology was more or less a still or snapshot anthropology. The historical methodology and social anthropology remained averse to each other because of the anthropological thrust of functionalism which dominated the first quarter of the 20th century.

A change has come about in the relationship of social anthropology and history after the 1980s. It became obvious to Third World countries that the situation of primitive peoples can hardly be analyzed without explaining the historical processes which shaped their structure.

The status of Nuer in Africa is empirically alright but it is also resultant of the domination of whites over the coloured people.

In India also, the primitive peoples were dominated by the colonial rule. Functionalism as a methodology took an amazing turn in India. Though empiricism all over the world has emerged as a reaction to historicism, in India, empiricism and historicism go together.

Here, those who are empiricists are also history-friendly. For instance, M.N. Srinivas explains the status of Coorgs and for that matter the caste hierarchy from a historical perspective also. Explaining the relationship as is currently found between social anthropology and history, Erikson very interestingly observes:

Anthropology may be described as the processes whereby one wades into a river and explores it as it flows by, whereas historians are forced to study the dry river bed. One cannot engage in particular observations of the past.

Not only Eriksen who is British but also Kroeber from the US stresses the importance of knowing the history of a society and its contribution to the present. This can be specially rewarding-some would say absolutely necessary-in studies dealing with societies with a written history.

Further, the connections between different societies which are often crucial for the understanding of each society, can only be properly investigated historically.

It would be impossible to understand, for example, the Industrial Revolution in England properly without prior knowledge of the slave trade and the cotton plantations in the United States.

As a matter of fact, history and social anthropology are not mutually exclusive. Empiricism and history are both integrated. It could be safely said that in the Indian context social anthropology cannot be properly understood without reference to its history.

The classical works of social anthropology, such as those of Andre Beteille, S.C. Dube and K.S. Singh, very clearly indicate that historical context is quite useful in understanding tribal ethnography and social anthropology.

Despite this relationship, social anthropology earns its own autonomous status. For it there is no bias of time. It studies its subject matter notwithstanding any period boundaries.

**Check your progress –**

1. What is anthropology?

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2. What is social anthropology

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## **5.5 LETS SUM UP**

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Because world history and geography are inseparable, they are treated as essentially one subject on this website. When the term "history" is used here, it may generally be considered to include geography. History is the broader field, encompassing all of human experience. Geography's concern is more specialized, focusing on human interaction with the physical environment. Therefore, geography is an important constituent of world history along with other human-centered disciplines such as political science, anthropology, sociology, and economics.

The relationship between history and geography is especially close because they represent two fundamental dimensions of the same phenomenon. History views human experience from the perspective of time, geography from the perspective of space. These dimensions of time and space are locked in an interactive feedback loop in which one dimension constantly affects the other.

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## **5.6 KEYWORDS**

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Historical geography, anthropology, geography

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## **5.7 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Discuss the relationship of history with archaeology.
2. Discuss the relationship of history with anthropology.

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## **5.8 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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## 5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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1. Hint – 5.5

2. Hint – 5.5

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# **UNIT 6 RELATIONSHIP WITH HISTORY – LINGUISTICS, SOCIOLOGY, ECONOMICS, POLITICS, PHILOSOPHY**

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## **STRUCTURE**

6.0 Objective

6.1 Introduction

6.2 With Linguistics

6.3 With Sociology

6.4 Economics

6.5 Politics

6.6 With Philosophy

6.7 Lets Sum Up

6.8 Keywords

6.9 Questions For Review

6.10 Suggested Readings

6.11 Answers to Check Your Progress

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## **6.0 OBJECTIVE**

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To learn about the relationship between history and –

Linguistics

Sociology

Economics

Politics

Philosophy

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## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

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Historical linguistics, also called Diachronic Linguistics, the branch of linguistics concerned with the study of phonological, grammatical, and semantic changes, the reconstruction of earlier stages of languages, and the discovery and application of the methods by which genetic relationships among languages can be demonstrated. Historical linguistics had its roots in the etymological speculations of classical and medieval times, in the comparative study of Greek and Latin developed during the Renaissance, and in the speculations of scholars as to the language from which the other languages of the world were descended. It was only in the 19th century, however, that more scientific methods of language comparison and sufficient data on the early Indo-European languages combined to establish the principles now used by historical linguists. The theories of the Neogrammarians, a group of German historical linguists and classical scholars who first gained prominence in the 1870s, were especially important because of the rigorous manner in which they formulated sound correspondences in the Indo-European languages. In the 20th century, historical linguists have successfully extended the application of the theories and methods of the 19th century to the classification and historical study of non-Indo-European languages. Historical linguistics, when contrasted with synchronic linguistics, the study of a language at a particular point in time, is often called diachronic linguistics.

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## 6.2 WITH LINGUISTICS

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Language and culture are intertwined. A particular language usually points out to a specific group of people. When you interact with another language, it means that you are also interacting with the culture that speaks the language. You cannot understand one's culture without accessing its language directly.

When you learn a new language, it not only involves learning its alphabet, the word arrangement and the rules of grammar, but also

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learning about the specific society's customs and behavior. When learning or teaching a language, it is important that the culture where the language belongs be referenced, because language is very much ingrained in the culture.

### **Using paralinguage**

Complex is one term that you can use to describe human communication since paralinguage is used to transmit messages. Paralinguage is specific to a culture, therefore the communication with other ethnic groups can lead to misunderstandings.

When you grow up in a specific society, it is inevitable to learn the glances, gestures and little changes in voice or tone and other communication tools to emphasize or alter what you want to do or say. These specific communication techniques of one culture are learned mostly by imitating and observing people, initially from parents and immediate relatives and later from friends and people outside the close family circle.

Body language, which is also known as kinesics, is the most obvious type of paralinguage. These are the postures, expressions and gestures used as non-verbal language. However, it is likewise possible to alter the meaning of various words by changing the character or tone of the voice.

### **Homologous relationship of culture and language**

The phrase, language is culture and culture is language is often mentioned when language and culture are discussed. It's because the two have a homologous although complex relationship. Language and culture developed together and influenced each other as they evolved. Using this context, Alfred L. Kroeber, a cultural anthropologist from the United States said that culture started when speech was available, and from that beginning, the enrichment of either one led the other to develop further.

If culture is a consequence of the interactions of humans, the acts of communication are their cultural manifestations within a specific community. Ferruccio Rossi-Landi, a philosopher from Italy whose work focused on philosophy, semiotics and linguistics said that a speech community is made up of all the messages that were exchanged with one

another using a given language, which is understood by the entire society. Rossi-Landi further added that young children learn their language and culture from the society they were born in. In the process of learning, they develop their cognitive abilities as well.

According to Professor Michael Silverstein, who teaches psychology, linguistics and anthropology at the University of Chicago, culture's communicative pressure represents aspects of reality as well as connects different contexts. It means that the use of symbols that represent events, identities, feelings and beliefs is also the method of bringing these things into the current context.

### **Influencing the way people think**

If you are familiar with the principle of linguistic relativity, it states that the way people think of the world is influenced directly by the language that the people use to discuss it. Anthropologist-linguist Edward Sapir of the United States said that the language habits of specific groups of people built the real world. He further added that no two languages are similar in such a way that they would represent one society. The world for each society is different. In analysis, this means that speaking a language means that the person is assuming a culture. Knowing another culture, based on this principle, is knowing its particular language. Communication is needed to live the interpretations and representations of that world.

### **Inter-cultural interactions**

What is likely to happen if there is interaction between two cultures? In today's scenario, inter-cultural interactions are very common. Communication is necessary for any person who wants to understand and get along with people whose background and beliefs are greatly dissimilar from their own.

Cultural identity can be marked by language, although language can be used to refer to other processes and developments, like when intentions are explained in the language by a specific speaker. A specific language refers to a particular cultural group.

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Values, basic assumptions, behavioral conventions, beliefs and attitudes shared by an ethnic group make up what we call culture. This set of attributes influences the behavior of the individual members of the group and their interpretations of the meanings of the behavior displayed by each member.

The set of attributes of a culture is expressed through language. Language is also used to point to objects that are unique to a particular culture.

All this means that learning and teaching another language is essential for international communication and cooperation. The knowledge of other languages facilitates knowledge of other countries and the specific cultures of each one.

### **Transmission of culture and language**

Language is learned, which means it can be culturally transmitted. Pre-school children take on their first language from their exposure to random words they encounter in and out of their homes. When they reach school age, they are taught either their first language or another language. If it is the first language, the children are taught writing and reading, the correct ways to construct sentences and how to use formal grammar. However, the initial knowledge of the child about the essential structure and vocabulary of the first language was learned before the child went to school.

Conversely, culture is transmitted in a large part, by language, through teaching. Language is the reason why humans have histories that animals do not have. In the study of animal behavior through the course of history, alterations to their behavior were the result of the intervention of humans through domestication and other types of interference.

The culture of humans on the other hand is as different as the world's languages. They are likely to change over time. In industrialized countries, the changes in the language are more rapid.

Culture is not learned by imitation but by oral instruction. There could be some imitation, if the learner is still young. With language, methods of social control, products, techniques and skills are explained. Spoken

language offers a vast quantity of usable information for the community. This helps to quicken new skill acquisition and the techniques to adapt to new environments or altered circumstances.

The advent of writing increased the process of culture dissemination. The permanent state of writing made it easier for information to be diffused. The process is further hastened by the increase in literacy and the invention of printing.

Modern techniques for fast communication transmission across the globe through broadcasting and the presence of translation services around the world help make usable knowledge to be accessible to people anywhere in the world. Thus, the world benefits from the fast transference, availability and exchange of social, political, technological and scientific knowledge.

### **Assimilation and social differentiation, and language**

Through time, variations appeared within a language. Transmission of a language is self-perpetuating unless there is deliberate interference. However, it became important for humans to improve their social hierarchies and social status to advance personally. Thus, many people cultivate the right dialect with its phonological, grammatical and lexical features to make themselves better than the rest and get accepted in new communities.

An example of this phenomenon is the insistence of immigrants from Europe to speak American English when they decided to move to the United States. It is because they realized that speaking American English is the sign of acceptance in their new home country. Unexpectedly, third generation immigrants now want to get in touch with the language of their ancestors.

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## **6.3 WITH SOCIOLOGY**

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As a mother of social sciences sociology has close and intimate relationship with all other social sciences. Accordingly it has close relationship with history. Because present society bears symbols of past. Relationship between the two is so close and intimate that scholars like

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G. Von Bulow have refused to acknowledge sociology as a science distinct from history.

Sociology is the science of society. It is a study of systems of social action and their inter-relations. Sociology is a science of social groups and social institutions. History studies the important past events and incidents. It records men past life and life of societies in a systematic and chronological order. It also tries to find out the causes of past events. It also studies the past political, social and economic events of the world.

It not only studies the past but also establishes relations with present and future. That is why it is said that “History is the microscope of the past, the horoscope of the present and telescope of the future.

However, both the sciences are closely inter-related and inter-dependent on each other. Both study the same human society. Their mutual dependence led G.H. Howard to remark that, “History is past Sociology and Sociology is present history.” Both takes help from each other. At the same time one depends on the other for its own comprehension.

History helps and enriches Sociology. History is the store house of knowledge from which Sociology gained a lot. History provides materials sociologists use. History is a record of past social matters, social customs and information about different stages of life. Sociology uses this information. Books written by historians like A. Toynbee are of great use for Sociologists. To know the impact of a particular past event sociology depends on history.

Similarly Sociology also provides help to history and enriches it. A historian greatly benefited from the research conducted by Sociologists. Historians now study caste, class and family by using sociological data. Sociology provides the background for the study of history.

Now history is being studied from Sociological angle. Every historical event has a social cause or social background. To understand that historical event history need the help from Sociology and Sociology helps history in this respect. Sociology provides facts on which historians rely on.



Thus history and Sociology are mutually dependent on each other. History is now being studied from Sociological angle and Sociology also now studied from historical point of view. Historical sociology now became a new branch of Sociology which depends on history. Similarly Sociological history is another specialized subject which based on both the Sciences. But in spite of the above close relationship and interdependence both the sciences differ from each other from different angles which are described below.

Differences:

- (1) Sociology is a science of society and is concerned with the present society. But history deals with the past events and studies the past society.
- (2) Sociology is a modern or new subject whereas history is an older social science.
- (3) Sociology is abstract whereas history is concrete in nature.
- (4) The scope of Sociology is very wide whereas the scope of history is limited. Sociology includes history within its scope.
- (5) Sociology is an analytical science whereas history is a descriptive science.
- (6) Attitude of sociology and history differ from each other. Sociology studies a particular event as a social phenomenon whereas history studies a particular event in its entirety.
- (7) Sociology is a general science whereas history is a special science.

In this post-Foucauldian era every schoolchild knows that disciplinary boundaries are technologies and artefacts of power. From the standpoint of the underlying ontological and epistemological issues, the boundary between history and sociology is as arbitrary as the political borders that European colonial powers drew onto the map of Africa. History and sociology are both concerned with human social practice in its capacity for willed or unintentional change, and also in its tendency to reproduce itself historically in ways that appear unhistorical. By describing the radical incommensurability of past societies, historians

## Notes

denaturalize the present; similarly, sociologists' "genesis explanations" reveal the arbitrary-ness of present social practices.

Both history and sociology belong to (or should belong to) the *historica* | *Geisteswissenschaften* or sciences of culture. This essential identity of the two disciplines has been recognized repeatedly. Sociologist Robert Lynd's 1939 *Knowledge for What?* described history as "the most venerable of the social sciences" and speculated that sociologists would soon begin to do their own historical writing.<sup>3</sup> Fernand Braudel presented similar arguments in the 1950s and 1960s.

At the beginning of the 1980s Philip Abrams concluded that there was no intrinsic difference between history and sociology in terms of their object or methods. Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron made similar arguments in France. Most recently, historian William Sewell, Jr. has argued that "a deeper theoretical engagement between historians and social scientists [including sociologists] could be mutually enlightening." This short paper is inspired by Sewell's call for such an *approchement*. But there is a vast gulf between "is" and "ought" in the human sciences, and the views of Lynd, Braudel, Abrams, Bourdieu, and Passeron were far from hegemonic in their respective periods and national contexts.

In reality the history-sociology relationship – at least in the United States, which is my focus in these remarks – has long been fraught with mutual mistrust and misunderstanding.

Although theory has perhaps had "a strikingly less central place in history than in the social science disciplines," as Sewell remarks, this does not seem to be the main reason for the paucity of sub-statives communication between historians and sociologists. The tension has been due to the unequal resources that were provided to the two disciplines in post-WWII America and to the entrenched resistance among more scientific sociologists to historical ways of thinking. At the more microscopic level of daily interactions in US universities, the tension has been heightened by a widespread arrogance on the sociological

side of the boundary, one that has often been remarked upon by historians, even those willing to enter into dialogue with sociologists.

If positivist sociology has long exhibited a kind of “science envy” vis-à-vis the more scientific disciplines such as economics, physics, or biology, it has combined this with disdain toward the more humanistic and historical disciplines. These problems have been reproduced within the subfield of historical sociology. On the one hand there has been a proliferation of languages and methodologies that promise to reconfigure historical research in ways that simulate the natural sciences. Thus comparison and the “method of difference and agreement” are promoted as analogues to multiple regression analysis. A scientific vocabulary is proffered as a substitute for historians’ terminology, which often expresses less scientific ontologies and epistemologies. For example the seemingly innocuous concept of “path dependency” has been borrowed from economics and introduced in place of the historians’ widespread belief in the fatefulness and irreversibility of time, their assumption that “an action, once taken, or an event, once experienced, cannot be obliterated” but is “lodged in the memory of those whom it affects and therefore irrevocably alters the situation in which it occurs.” The seemingly technical term “scope conditions” is deployed to deal with the historiographic truism that context matters, i.e., that events are produced by a “conjuncture of structures” (Sewell) with diverse temporalities. Like “path dependency,” the idea of “scope conditions” is only necessary against a background assumption that in normal science, causal regularities are universal across space and time. By claiming to represent and even to reinvent history single-handedly, historical sociologists unwittingly collude with the discipline’s “Homeland Security Agents,” whose goal is to seal the frontier against historical interlopers. A preferable option would be to open the border to history, inviting processes of transdisciplinary and transculturation. Without this, sociology will continue to expel and repel historically-minded thinkers and to prevent trained historians from being hired in sociology departments. Sociologists will be deprived of the benefit of interacting with a discipline that has been dealing for centuries with the same theoretical,

epistemological, and methodological questions that concern sociology.

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## 6.4 ECONOMICS

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In recent years, an exciting new literature has emerged empirically examining whether historic events are important determinants of economic development today. The origins of this literature can be traced to three lines of research that began roughly one decade ago. Engerman & Sokoloff (1997, 2002) examined the importance of factor endowments and colonial rule for the subsequent economic development of colonies within the Americas. Acemoglu et al. (2001, 2002) developed a research agenda that sought to better understand the historical origins of current institutions and their importance for long-term economic development. The line of inquiry undertaken by La Porta et al. (1997, 1998) also examined the importance of colonial rule, but they focused on the legal institutions that were transplanted by the different colonial powers and the long-term consequences this had for investor protection and financial development.

What united these three lines of research, and what made them particularly novel at the time, was their analysis of the potential importance of an historic event, colonial rule, for long-term economic development. These three studies spawned a large literature of empirical studies seeking to identify the importance of historic events for economic development. The earliest subsequent studies typically examined correlations between variables quantifying the impact of historic events, which almost exclusively was colonial rule, with a country as the unit of observation. These initial studies were successful at highlighting correlations in the data consistent with the notion that history can matter, even in the long-run. However, because of their inability to establish causality, the evidence presented was suggestive at best. For examples of these early studies, see Grier (1999), Englebert (2000a,b), Bertocchi & Canova (2002), and Price (2003).

Since these early contributions, the literature has developed in a number of significant ways. Much more effort has been put into collecting and

compiling new variables based on detailed historic data. Recent studies, exploiting these richer data sources, are also able to employ much more satisfying identification strategies that typically rely on instrumental variables, falsification tests, regression discontinuities, differences-in-differences estimation, or propensity score matching techniques: See Acemoglu & Johnson (2004), Banerjee & Iyer (2005), Iyer (2007), Berger (2008), Dell (2008), Huillery (2008a), Nunn (2008a), Nunn & Qian (2008), Nunn & Wantchekon (2009), and Feyrer & Sacerdote (2009). The literature has also moved beyond simply estimating reduced-form causal relationships between historic events and economic development. For many studies, the goal is also to explain exactly how and why specific historic events can continue to matter today. That is, the literature has moved from asking whether history matters to asking why history matters: See Acemoglu & Johnson (2004), Acemoglu et al. (2005a), Iyer (2007), Dell (2008), Munshi & Wilson (2008), Nunn (2008b), Nunn & Qian (2008), Nunn & Wantchekon (2009), and Becker & Woessmann (2009). This paper provides a survey of this body of empirical research. I begin by reviewing the seminal articles by Acemoglu et al. (2001), Engerman & Sokoloff (1997, 2002), and LA Porta et al. (1997, 1998) as well as the body of literature that each contribution has generated. Section 3 reviews the additional evidence from second-generation studies that provide identification-based evidence that history matters. Section 4 then surveys the precise channels of causality that have been examined in the literature. The evidence for the importance of (a) multiple equilibria and path dependence, (b) domestic institutions, (c) cultural norms of behavior, and (d) knowledge and technology is examined.

The penultimate section of the paper, Section 5, discusses the interesting relationship between geography and history that has developed in the literature. Whereas some studies have pitted these two factors against each other as alternative determinants of economic development, other studies have shown that the two factors interact in interesting and important ways. As is discussed, the existing body of evidence indicates that the greatest effect that geography has on economic development is

through its influence on history. Section 6 concludes by discussing the current direction of future research.

### **THE SEMINAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

The literature linking history to economic development has its origins in three distinct but related strands of research: Acemoglu et al. (2001), La Porta et al. (1997, 1998), and Engerman & Sokoloff (1997, 2002). All three examine one of the largest and most important events in the world's history: European expansion and colonization of the globe, which began in the sixteenth century. The studies document the lasting impact that Europe's colonization had on the development paths of former colonies. They also share a common view that an important part of the causal mechanism was the impact that colonial rule had on the domestic institutions that persisted after independence.<sup>1</sup> Viewed in this light, all three lines of research are conceptually consistent with one another. All three argue that the institutions of a society are an important determinant of long-term economic development and that historical events can be an important determinant of the evolution and long-term persistence of domestic institutions. Where the studies differ, however, is in their views of which aspects of colonial rule were crucial for shaping institutions and in the specifics of the proposed causal mechanisms.

For La Porta et al. (1997, 1998), the identity of the colonizer determined whether a civil law or common law legal system was established, which was important for long-term development. Unlike La Porta et al., Engerman & Sokoloff (1997, 2002) and Acemoglu et al. (2001) share the common view that the characteristics of the region being colonized were crucial factors that determined the effect of colonial rule on long-term economic development. For Acemoglu et al., the initial disease environment shaped the extent to which secure property rights were established in the colony, and through their persistence, these initial institutions had a large effect on long-term economic development. Engerman and Sokoloff focused on the importance of a region's endowment of geography suitable for growing lucrative globally traded cash crops that were best cultivated using large-scale plantations and slave labor. These large plantations resulted in economic and political

inequality, which in turn impeded the development of institutions that promoted commercial interests and long-term economic growth. La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes, Shleifer, and Vishny

The core of the analysis by La Porta et al. (1997, 1998) is their emphasis on the differences between legal systems based on British common law versus Roman civil law. They argue that countries with legal systems based on British common law offer greater investor protection relative to countries with legal systems based on civil law. They then recognize that in British colonies common law-based legal systems were transplanted, whereas the European countries with a legal system based on Roman civil law—namely Spain, France, and Portugal—transplanted civil law legal systems. La Porta et al. (1997, 1998) used this historic fact to examine the causal effect of the strength of legal rules protecting investor rights on financial development. The authors argue that for former colonies legal origin is largely exogenous to country characteristics and is therefore a potential instrument that can be used to estimate the effect of the protection of investor rights on financial development. The first stage of their instrumental variables (IV) estimates shows that civil law countries, relative to common law countries, do have better investor protection, and their second-stage estimates indicate that countries with weaker investor protection have smaller debt and equity markets

.Since these initial studies, a large literature has emerged exploring the potential effect that legal origin may have on other factors [La Porta et al. (2008) provide a survey of these early studies as well as the subsequent literature that they generated]. These studies show that legal origin is also correlated with a host of other country characteristics, such as military conscription (Mulligan & Shleifer 2005a,b), labor market regulation (Botero et al. 2004), contract enforcement (Djankov et al. 2003, Acemoglu & Johnson 2004), comparative advantage (Nunn 2007b), and economic growth (Mahoney 2001). These results are both good and bad for the initial studies by La Porta et al. (1997, 1998). They suggest that legal origin may have effects that are even more wide ranging than originally assumed in La Porta et al. (1997, 1998). However, if this is the case, then the validity of their use of legal origin as an instrument for investor protection is called into question. Given that legal origin appears

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to be correlated with a host of other country characteristics that may also affect financial development, it is unlikely that the exclusion restrictions from original papers by La Porta et al. are satisfied. As discussed in La Porta et al. (2008), the authors are clearly aware of this fact. Subsequent studies also look for similar relationships involving legal origin within the United States.

Ten U.S. states that were first settled by either France, Spain, or Mexico initially developed civil law legal systems.<sup>2</sup> Berkowitz & Clay (2005, 2006) found that today these civil law states have less independent judiciaries, lower quality courts, and less stable constitutions. Although both studies rely on ordinary least squares (OLS) estimates, they show that the correlations remain robust to controlling for a number of additional factors, such as slavery, date of entry into the Union, state size, and climatic characteristics. Other studies also highlight correlations in the data and show that a relationship exists between the identity of the colonizer and various measures of long-term economic development. For example, Grier (1999) found that, at independence, former British colonies had on average a larger share of their populations in school. Bertocchi & Canova (2002) found that, within Africa, former British and French colonies have higher levels of investment and education after independence. Although these correlations do not provide proof of the causal importance of the identity of colonizer, they are consistent with the emphasis by La Porta et al. on the impact that the identity of the colonizer (specifically, its legal system) has on the long-term economic development of its colony.

Like La Porta et al. (1997), Acemoglu et al. (2001) also examined the effect of colonial rule on the institutions that were implemented and their long-term impact on economic development. However, Acemoglu et al. (2001) focused on an alternative determinant of the differences in institutions that evolved across former colonies. They hypothesize that, because colonies with a less deadly disease environment had greater European settlement, growth-promoting institutions were established in these colonies to protect property rights during colonial rule. In colonies in which European mortality was high and settlement low, the colonizers



did not have an incentive to establish strong property rights and instead established extractive rent-seeking institutions.

Using this logic, the authors estimate the causal effect of current domestic institutions on per capita income, using early European mortality rates as an instrument for institutions. One of the assumptions underlying the IV strategy is that initial settler mortality is not correlated with current income other than through domestic institutions. In the first stage of their IV procedure, the authors found a strong negative relationship between initial settler mortality and current institutional quality. The second-stage estimates indicate that domestic institutions exert a strong positive effect on per capita income. The elegance of the paper lies in its ability to develop a clear and convincing historical narrative with supporting empirical evidence and to show how an historic event can affect past institutions, which through their persistence have an influence on income levels today. The study provides an empirical foundation to support the seminal works on the importance of institutions written by North & Thomas (1973) and North (1981, 1990); for a more recent analysis, see Greif (2006).

The study emerged at a time when the literature was in the process of trying to estimate convincingly the causal impact of domestic institutions on economic development: Early papers in this literature include De Long & Shleifer (1993), Knack & Keefer (1995), Mauro (1995), Hall & Jones (1999), and Englebert (2000a,b). An important contribution of Acemoglu et al. (2001) was to develop a much more satisfying identification strategy than that provided by previous empirical studies.

A number of studies have attempted to extend Acemoglu et al.'s line of research, providing evidence for the importance of historic institutions for current economic development. Two recent studies by Banerjee & Iyer (2005) and Dell (2008), rather than taking a broader, more macro perspective, focus on a specific region. By doing this, the authors are able to collect and analyze richer data at a more micro level. The use of these richer data also allows the authors to employ additional estimation strategies that help identify the causal effects of history on economic outcomes today. Dell (2008) examines the impact of forced mining labor

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system, which was instituted by the Spanish in Peru and Bolivia between 1573 and 1812. The study combines contemporary household survey data, and geographic data, as well as data from historic record, and uses a regression discontinuity estimation strategy to identify the long-term impacts of the mita system. Her identification exploits the fact that there was a discrete change in the boundaries of the mita conscription area and that other relevant factors likely vary smoothly around the mita boundary. As a result, comparing the outcomes of mita and non-mita districts very close to the border provides an unbiased estimate of the long-term effects of the mita.

The study found that the mita system had an adverse effect on long-term economic development. All else being equal, former mita districts now have an average level of household consumption that is 32% lower than households in former non-mita districts. The study also found that a significant proportion of the difference can be explained by lower levels of education and less developed road networks. Dell's study provides valuable evidence showing that the institutions established during colonial rule can have long-term impacts that continue to be felt today. Like Dell (2008), Banerjee & Iyer (2005) also analyze the long-term effects of colonial institutions, but they examine differences in revenue collection institutions across districts within colonial India. The authors compared districts where revenue was historically collected directly by British officials against districts where revenue was collected by native landlords. They found that, after independence, districts with non-landlord systems have higher levels of health, education, and agricultural technology investments relative to those levels in landlord systems. To determine the extent to which the correlation is causal, the authors exploit the fact that, in the parts of India conquered between 1820 and 1856, non-landlord revenue collection was implemented. They argue that the historic reasons for this pattern are orthogonal to district characteristics, and therefore, the date of British conquest can be used as an instrument for the revenue collection system. Their IV estimates are consistent with their OLS estimates. They also show that their OLS results are robust when the sample is restricted to 35 districts, in which all landlord districts are bordered by non-landlord districts. Although the

analysis of Banerjee & Iyer (2005) and Dell (2008) provides evidence of the long-term impacts of initial colonial institutions, the studies do differ from that by Acemoglu et al. (2001) because the transmission mechanism is not the persistence of these initially implemented institutions. In Dell (2008), the hypothesized mechanism is the concentration of wealth and power and the resulting provision of public goods. Similarly, in the analysis by Banerjee & Iyer the transmission mechanism is not through the persistence of these initially implemented institutions, because the differences in colonial land revenue collection systems no longer exist. One study that does empirically link early colonial institutions to institutional outcomes today is sociologist Matthew Lange's (2004) analysis of the differential effects of indirect rule relative to direct rule on the quality of institutions and governance today.

Using colonial documents housed in Britain's Public Records Office, Lange compiled information on court cases held in 33 former British colonies in 1955. He then used the fraction of the court cases that were presided over by local chiefs, rather than colonial officials, as a measure of the extent of indirect rule in each country. The measure was intended to provide a proxy for the overall extent to which colonial rule in the country relied on traditional legal, political, and institutional structures. The study found a positive relationship between the extent of indirect rule and a variety of measures of institutional quality and good governance. The primary shortcoming of the study, however, lies in its lack of a convincing identification strategy. Because the paper relies on OLS estimates, it is unknown whether the correlations between past and current institutions capture the causal effect of historic institutions on institutions today or simply reflect a spurious correlation driven by omitted country characteristics.

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## 6.5 POLITICS

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All political institutions —State, Government, Legislature, Executive, Judiciary and others— have a history of evolution behind them. Without

studying their history Political Science cannot really study their contemporary nature, position and relations among these.

Hence, Political Science always takes the help of History for studying political institutions i.e. the history of their evolution from their emergence and gradual evolution into their contemporary forms, powers, functions, mutual relations and relative positions.

Likewise, the study of History essentially needs a study of the political implications of all historical events and developments in each society. Without such an exercise History gets reduced to a mere narration of events, episodes and developments. History depends upon Political Science for getting knowledge about the political dimensions of historical events. History of political institutions constitutes a rich area of study to History.

### **Contribution of Political Science to History:**

#### **1. Politics creates History:**

##### ADVERTISEMENTS:

The actions of the states, governments, political parties, political leaders, rulers, statesmen, politicians and diplomats all create history. The political events and movements like the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy (1919), Non-violent, Non-cooperation Movement 1920, the Civil Disobedience Movement 1930, and the Quit India Movement 1942 have all been the handiworks of political leaders. History of India stands determined by these. The actions of rulers and power-holders always create history.

#### **2. Political Science makes History fruitful and interesting:**

Without Political Science, History gets reduced to a mere description and narration of events and facts. It is Political Science which provides meaning to History and makes it interesting and rewarding. History of kings, wars that they fought, and struggles of the people against dictators are all political acts which make history interesting.

#### **3. Political Leaders are the makers of History:**

In contemporary times Political leaders (power-holders) determine the course of history by their policies, decisions and action. The leadership

of Mahatma Gandhi gave a turn to history and enabled Indians to secure freedom from the clutches of British Imperialism.

Vision and decisions of men like Jawahar Lai Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, set the tone of India's history as an independent nation. Mrs. Indira Gandhi's role in Bangladesh Liberation war against Pakistan and her decision to impose Emergency rule in 1975 gave a particular push to Indian history.

#### **4. Political Science depends upon some and not all Historical Facts:**

Whereas History is a chronological record of all events and developments, Political Science is interested only in those facts which had an impact on the nature and functioning of the state system and governments of various states. Political Science makes use of some selected historical facts.

#### **5. History depends upon Political Science for ascertaining Causal Connections:**

History is only a narration of facts. It is Political Science which analyses the connections among various facts. Political Science gives meaning to historical facts and uses these for answering the questions what should be done and what should not be done? History without Politics is fruitless.

History cannot determine the ultimate end standard of good, bad, right and wrong in political institutions. It is done by Political Science. Thus Political Science contributes a lot to History. In fact, Political Science and History are closely, intimately and inseparably related to each other. Each needs the other. Both are complementary and supplementary to each other.

Every social science is directly related to every other social science. Study has become comprehensive, interlinked and complex. Any of the social sciences is neither completely independent nor completely dependent on other social sciences, but all the social sciences are interdependent to each other. In order to achieve purpose and function, there is always interconnection. Political Science is no exception. It is related to all social sciences in one way or the other, but its relationship with history is somewhat special due to certain reasons. In this regard,

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Prof. Seeley has cited rightly that, “History without Political Science has no fruit; Political Science without History has no roots”.

History is the living record of the past events; be it social, political or economic. Any current event cannot be completely understood without getting thoroughly through its history. Therefore, in order to study the politics of today, comprehending the politics of yesterday is quintessential.

Let us try to understand this with the help of an example. In our History textbooks today, we study about the French Revolution of 1789, which was a major social and political event of that time. What was politics in 1789 turned out to be the history of today. In a very similar fashion, the major political events of today will be studied as the history of tomorrow. As Freeman has rightly opined, “History is past Politics and Politics is present History”.

### **Contribution of History to Political Science:**

As already mentioned, in order to go into the depth of today’s events, peeping into the past is a prerequisite. History furnishes Political Science with the facts it needs. Today we often take the ideas of liberty, fraternity and equality for granted, but in order to know how, why and from where did they emerged from, peeping into the past is quintessential. And it is History which gives us the account of such past events, for the roots of all the political institutions and ideologies are in history.

History is the laboratory of Political Science. Today’s political leaders learn a lot from the past events. This is partially because of the fact that human beings know to learn from the mistakes of others. History deals with concrete facts. It is these concrete facts which help today’s political leaders and activists learn from the experiences of the political leaders of yesteryears. They study their actions and observe carefully their outcomes, and thus take the course of action which best suits the needs of today’s time.

History is the balance sheet of the activities of man in past and it includes his political activities also. Most of the political decisions made today are on behalf of this balance sheet.

**Contribution of Political Science to History:**

There is no contribution of today's Politics to the History of today; in fact, today's politics itself depends on today's history as we discussed above, but today's Politics is definitely the History of tomorrow. All the political events happening today will be the History of tomorrow. Yesterday's political leaders feared that if they did something wrong for the public today, their name will be taken with disrespect in tomorrow's history. Today's History obviously remembers those who devoted their lives for the public welfare.

Let us consider the case of Mahatma Gandhi. He was a political figure of the twentieth century, but is studied under the history of today. Similarly, our future generations will study the deeds of today's political leaders and also the major political events under history. Therefore, we can say that yesterday's politics is today's history, while today's politics is the history of tomorrow.

Political events change the course of history. This again is justified on the basis of the same facts as described above. How would had India been today if it was never colonized? If that would have been the case, the course of the history of India would have been much different than what it is today. Thus in this way politics contributes to tomorrow's history.

**Differences between Political Science and History:**

Besides the relationship between Political Science and History as discussed above, there are also some important differences between the two which cannot be left untouched in this article. History differs with Political Science in scope, subject matter, origin, approach and method of treatment.

History is narrative with chronological orders of events, while Political Science particularizes, depicts, describes and analyzes the political events. History on one hand is comprehensive in scope, dealing with economy, military, social and many other aspects, but Political Science on the other hand deals with political institutions only like the state, government authority and political relations. History deals with concrete

facts whereas Political Science is known to deal with ideal and abstract ideas. Not only this, but history deals with past only while Political Science deals with past, present and future.

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## 6.6 WITH PHILOSOPHY

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Ankersmit's central line of argument is that the very opposition between a descriptive statement and a perspective – and therefore the opposition between individual descriptive statements in narratives and the complex “narrative substance” they collectively generate – is taken over from empiricism without questioning. At stake is the idea that there is a fundamental opposition, on the one hand, between proper names and individual descriptive statements – formerly known as *Protokollsätze* – which individually and directly refer to reality and whose reference can be “fixed”, and, on the other, that there are sets of non-descriptive statements – in science usually known as “theories” and in history as “narratives” (or “narrative substances” and “representations”), whose reference to reality cannot be “fixed”. As is well known, empiricists have tried long and hard to construct the “fixes” between the theories and the observation statements in (philosophy of) physics in the hope of “reducing” theories to observational statements. This was the programme of logical-positivism from the 1930s onwards. And, as we all know only too well, this project turned into one of the most interesting failures in the history of philosophy of science in the 1960s and 1970s. However, in conformity with this opposition deriving from empiricism, Ankersmit is still arguing that singular, descriptive statements can be individually “fixed” to reality, while “narrative substances” and “historical representations” cannot be “fixed” to reality. They can only be compared to each other – and Ankersmit at some points in time has proposed to express their relative qualities in terms of “relative objectivity”.

However this may be, Ankersmit's fundamental argument is still based on the empiricist idea that individual descriptive statements do not contain any perspectival element and that they can be “fixed” – and thus somehow “founded” – in observation. It is also based on the empiricist idea that without this referential “fixity”, statements have no cognitive



content. The very idea of “fixing” individual descriptive statements to (the experience of) reality, however, has been discredited effectively and definitively by post-empiricism and post-positivism – from Quine to Popper and Kuhn and beyond. This idea has been replaced by the insight in “the theory-ladenness of all empirical observation” and thus by the insight that all individual knowledge-claims are embedded in a “web of beliefs” and therefore have a “network-character”. This insight – dubbed “semantic holism” by Quine – remarkably – was not incorporated in Ankersmit’s original philosophy of history in 1983, and it was explicitly rejected by him in his latest book, in 2012.

This legacy of empiricism in Ankersmit is all the more remarkable since he has been dealing with both Quine and Popper directly. Nevertheless, he has been rejecting the very idea of the “theoryladenness” of descriptive statements in history explicitly, from *Narrative Logic to Meaning, Truth and Reference*. And he does so for good philosophical, that is for systematic, reasons. He does so, I must assume, because all of his fundamental conceptual distinctions – between description and representation, and between the “fixability” of singular descriptive statements and the “non-fixability” of narrative substances and representations – and as a consequence their respective *Wahrheitsfähigkeit* and *Wahrheitunfähigkeit* depend on it. This is one important example of the continuing presence of “objectivism” – that is both empiricism and positivism – in inverted forms in philosophy of history.

Another important example of “inverted empiricism” can be found in some of the work of the other “grand old man” in present-day philosophy of history, Hayden White. As with Ankersmit, my admiration for many of White’s achievements goes hand in hand with fundamental criticism. What I have been criticising is what looks like an expulsion of epistemological questions and questions of explanatory logic from philosophy of history in White’s *Metahistory*. This “expulsion” is the consequence of limiting philosophy of history to philosophy of historical writing. By arguing that the preferences of historians for modes of emplotment, and so on, are conditioned only by aesthetic and ideological reasons and are unconnected to issues of epistemology, White in

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Metahistory did just that, just like Ankersmit was doing by arguing that narrative substances are “autonomous” from historical research and empty of any cognitive content. Therefore, I was basically arguing for a balanced approach to philosophy of history, including both the new questions that White and Ankersmit had put on the agenda concerning historical writing, and the old questions of epistemology and methodology concerning historical research. Again I was arguing against an either– or approach, and this time against the reduction of philosophy of history to philosophy of history writing because this reduction amounts to an “inversion” of its former reduction to the philosophy of historical research by analytical philosophy. With authors like Allan Megill, Carlo Ginzburg and Anthony Grafton, I regard the interconnections between historical writing and historical research of constitutive importance for history as a cognitive, disciplinary enterprise – also limiting the “fictionality” of history writing fundamentally.

This in no way implies a negative judgment on fictional and metaphorical ways of handling the past. To the contrary: elsewhere, I have argued that authors of fiction usually have been much earlier than professional historians when it came to developing new forms and new contents in representing the past. This especially holds for “liminal”, “extreme” experiences, so characteristic of the catastrophic twentieth century. Metaphors in historical writing, in my view, however, should be analysed as both cognitive and as practical linguistic instruments.<sup>22</sup> Remarkably, both Ankersmit and White (as far as I know) have not analysed the practical dimensions of metaphor, although for historians this dimension should be very obvious. Just think of the practical dimensions (and the historical consequences) of representing specific individuals and groups in quasi-biological concepts as “Fremdkörper”, or as “pests” like cockroaches. In my view, this “blind spot” of narrativism is another legacy of “objectivism”.

Neither does my argument imply that questions of narrativity can be reduced to questions of the logic of singular descriptive statements. To the contrary, in my view narratological approaches to history writing have been very fruitful in opening our eyes to the perspectives and the constructive aspects and patterns embedded in historical narratives.

Maybe this is the moment to “confess” that a recent volume that I have edited, together with Stefan Berger, is even based on narratological approaches of national histories. Therefore, my criticism of narrativism notwithstanding, it is hard to conceive of my recent work in historiography without it.

In my view – and similar views have been developed by authors such as Aviezer Tucker, Mark Bevir and John Zammito – in philosophy of history too we should start by rejecting the very idea of “fixing” individual statements to reality. Instead, we should start by adopting the distinction, introduced by Imre Lakatos (and already present in the thought of conventionalists like Henri Poincaré, Ludwik Fleck and Thomas Kuhn), between observational theories and explanatory theories. We should stop seeing this distinction as a binary opposition and start conceiving it as a sliding scale – as is also suggested by the history of science. When historians claim to give descriptions, they are actually presenting their observational theories, which are as fallible and “unfixable” as their explanatory theories. As a consequence, descriptions are as open to revision and to change as theories – as is amply demonstrated both by the history of science and history of historiography. So, together with Lakatos, Bevir, Zammito and Tucker, I would argue that the distinction between “descriptions” and “theories” – and the latter also sail under the flags of “interpretations” and “explanations” – is a matter of degree and not of a kind. All “theories” are underdetermined by the evidence – and this also holds both for “explanatory” and “observational” theories. Therefore I have positioned myself in a fundamental pluralist framework within which several “true” descriptions and “true” theories of “reality” may coexist (like the wave and particle theories of light in physics or the theory of action and systems theory in the social sciences). And they may coexist peacefully or not – whatever is the case, pluralism is not the same as relativism. This is the practical meaning of what I have called – following Putnam – “internal realism”.

As long as philosophers of history don’t acknowledge the conventional character of both descriptions and theories, they keep paying tribute to what one could call the last dogma of empiricism: the epistemological

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privilege of factual over theoretical statements. In contrast. I am pleading – with, among others, Nelson Goodman – for an epistemological “equal treatment” of theories and facts, based on the following insight: “Facts are small theories and true theories are big facts.” For most historians and many philosophers of history, this insight still seems to be “a bridge too far”.

Since Quine, Kuhn and Lakatos, philosophers of history have better acknowledged that the basic problem in all disciplines is not the direct “fixity” of theories to the world – or their lack of “fixity” – but the “fit” between (at least) two kinds of theories among each other. In my view, this is one of the lasting and fundamental insights produced by the “linguistic turn” and by “representationalism”. For those who (mistakenly, I would say) suppose that “realism” is dependent on the idea of a fixed relationship between language and the world, the “linguistic turn” also means a final goodbye to “realism”.

Once we have cast the problem of a direct “fixity” of language to the world into the dustbin of empiricist philosophy – where it belongs – we should also realise that there are no sound reasons to believe that narrative substances and representations are devoid of cognitive content (because of their supposed lack of fixity). I have argued repeatedly that it is fruitful to regard the function and the cognitive content of narrative schemes in history as similar to the function and the cognitive content of explanatory theories in the sciences. This, of course, does not mean that I do not recognise also the enormous differences between explanatory theories and narrative schemes. The fact that explanatory theories in physics especially can usually be formalised and are expressed in the form of mathematical equations can hardly be overlooked, to give just the most obvious example of a difference.

So much for the problem of the legacies of objectivism in philosophy of history and my reasons for engaging them in some of my texts. Let me now move to the problematic legacies of relativism in philosophy of history, which will bring me to the second critical line of attack in my articles.

Relativism is basically the philosophical double, or *Doppelgänger*, of objectivism. In whatever variety – and there are quite a few of them – relativists argue against some, or all, claims of objectivism. Relativists typically deny, or downplay, the epistemic claims of history by arguing that “the past” is just “a construction of the present”, that doing history is therefore just another form of “politics” or of “ideology”. The favourite targets of relativists therefore are the ideas that history can be “true” and “objective” in any meaningful sense. The same relativist point is made by those who argue that the selection and the development of historical narratives in time is completely independent of epistemological arguments and is only dependent on political or aesthetic preferences, as White famously did in *Metahistory*.

My critique of relativism in philosophy of history is, in a fundamental sense, the complement of my critique of objectivism. While objectivism approaches historical knowledge only from the epistemic viewpoint of the – distant – observer, relativism approaches historical knowledge only from the political viewpoint of the – involved – actor. In my view, philosophy of history needs to include and analyse both the epistemological and the practical viewpoints, and we should avoid the reduction of our analysis of history to one of them. If we analyse historical knowledge only from the external observer’s viewpoint, philosophy of history will inevitably shrink to epistemological and methodological analyses. But if we analyse historical knowledge only from the political actor’s point of view – and this is the case when we view history exclusively as a form of practical action and when we regard historical theories as devoid of cognitive content – then philosophy of history will inevitably shrink to political and ethical analyses. In my view, therefore, philosophy of history worthy of the name both needs to analyse the historical and the practical past in their interconnections and intersections.

The most interesting insights can be gained by analysing exactly the intersections of epistemology and politics in history – and in this domain I have drawn some inspiration from both Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. I have tried to do this by analysing the politics of historians and their politics of comparison in a couple of historiographical

controversies, like the Historikerstreit, the Goldhagen debate, the Holocaust debate, the debate about the second German empire and the debate about the national identity of Canada/Quebec. I have argued that basic political options of historians are usually hidden in their choice of “contrast classes”, of the cases they use implicitly or explicitly in comparisons. So, my basic interest can be located on a terrain one could call the politics of method. Whether this is a worthwhile approach to philosophy and to historiography is not for me to decide.

### **The ‘politics of history’**

Now let me illustrate my approach to the politics of history. Again, I can clarify my way of approaching the politics of historians by comparing my way to the way pursued by Ankersmit. I am now referring to his recent book *Sublime Historical Experience*, in which he analyses how the writing of history has been conditioned by the political experience of individual historians – especially by the experience of political catastrophes, like the French revolution. Next to the level of the individual historians, Ankersmit distinguishes another, collective level of experience: the level of whole “cultures”, whole “civilisations” and of whole “periods”. In a remarkable Hegelian fashion, he identifies these collective subjects, like “Western civilisation” or “Indian civilisation”, as the subjects of “sublime” or “historical traumas”. He also regards these collective subjects as the carriers of “historical consciousness”, which in his view is the unintended consequence of a sublime historical trauma. Just like Hegel, Ankersmit focuses on “great individuals” – in his case “great historians” – when he is analysing “historical consciousness”.

He then goes on – with his outspoken preference for paradoxes – to argue that the Holocaust does not represent a “historical trauma”, as has been assumed by many for a long time, because there is no “collective subject” characterised by it. The Holocaust is only a “psychological trauma” – that is, for the Jews – but not a “sublime historical trauma” for “Western civilisation”. He neither considers the possibility that the Holocaust could be a trauma for the Germans, thus ignoring the fact that Germany has been identified as “the Holocaust nation” for a long time – by Günter Grass among others. Last but not least, Ankersmit ignores

those historians and memory specialists – like Dan Diner and Aleida Assmann – who argue that the Holocaust does represent a “Zivilisationsbruch” and a “trauma” for the west as a whole. The same applies for those social scientists that defend Diner’s thesis to the world at large – like Jürgen Habermas, John Torpey, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider. This, of course, in no way means that Ankersmit is “relativising” or “downplaying” the Holocaust.

This is not the place to go into all complexities of Ankersmit’s analysis of trauma, but in my own, more “empirical” approach to philosophy of history, I am more interested in the question how concepts of trauma and catastrophe are actually being used in historical and historiographical debates – and whether these concepts can be used to explain specific features of these debates (like “silences” and “displacements”). The reason for my more empirical approach is simple: it is because the Holocaust is generally regarded as the traumatic event of the twentieth century, at least as far as the west is concerned (although it was and is never without competitors, especially Stalin’s Gulag archipelago). Actually, most of what I find interesting in the politics of history is located exactly between the level of the individual historian and the collective level of Ankersmit’s “cultures” and “civilisations”. My interest in this “middle ground” (vis-à-vis Ankersmit’s “holistic” Hegelian perspective of whole “cultures” and “civilisations”) derives from the fact that whenever I have analysed “collective subjects” at a “lower” empirical level than “civilisations” – like, for instance, nations in national historiographies – I found that they are somehow always fundamentally divided among themselves. Therefore, I find it more fruitful not to regard collective subjects as unitary, but rather as the locations of power struggles, including struggles about the Definitionsmacht, how collective identities are represented and how they are essentially contested. My historiographical analyses of the discourses concerning German, Canadian and other national identities can be read as historical “illustrations” of this systematic point. So much for the “systematic” background and coherence of the articles collected in this volume.

**Check your progress –**

## Notes

1. Discuss the link between sociology and history.

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2. What is economic history?

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## 6.7 LETS SUM UP

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For the purpose of this study, four areas have been identified in categorising related disciplines to be examined. They include; Arts/Humanities with disciplines such as; Linguistics, Philosophy and Psychology etc, Social Sciences with disciplines such as; Economics, Sociology, Political Science and Anthropology etc, Biological Sciences with disciplines like Palaeontology and Physical Science with disciplines such as; Archaeology, Geography and Geology. The roles of these disciplines to be examined are evident in their contributions to historical writing. In other words, a historian writing family or intellectual history takes a cue from Psychology, pre-historic writing was influenced by Archaeology, political history by Political Science, economic history by Economics, demography(ic) by Sociology, ethno-history/cultural history by Anthropology, genetics study by Palaeontology, while Ecology serves as inspiration for environmental history. The scope of this work starts with a general overview of History (identifying what History is, its nature and values), and further delve into the discourse of the relationship between history and related disciplines, examining the benefits in tandem with the shortcomings. While adhering to focus of the work/a paper in historical writing, historians welcome ideas and methodology of analysing, structuring and interpreting events from other fields. The influence of these related disciplines such as: Archaeology, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Geography, Anthropology, Linguistics, Psychology and Palaeontology will thus be examined.



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## **6.8 KEYWORDS**

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Economics, politics, philosophy

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## **6.9 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Discuss the relationship of history with philosophy.
2. What is linguistic history?

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## **6.10 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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Aggarwal, Mamta. Relationship of History with other Sciences: Study of History

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

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## **6.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Hint – 6.4
2. Hint – 6.5

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# **UNIT 7 RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURAL SCIENCES, LITERATURE**

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## **STRUCTURE**

7.0 Objective

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Relationship with Natural Science

7.3 Literature

7.4 Lets Sum Up

7.5 Keywords

7.6 Questions for Review

7.7 Suggested Readings

7.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

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## **7.0 OBJECTIVE**

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To learn about the relationship of history with natural sciences

To learn about the relationship of history with literature

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## **7.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In the development of the history of science, the histories of the individual scientific disciplines have played an enormously significant role. The goals and functions of these have recently received considerable attention, both because of the influence that such histories have had on the legitimacy and self-image of the disciplines and also because of the adaptability that they have shown when faced with the conceptual and methodological changes that they have undergone. With regard to these disciplines, there are, moreover, alternative approaches whose advantages and disadvantages are also the subject of debate: from within the discipline itself or from a more general starting point external

to the history of science; from motives that lead into history our the problems of today, and out of an interest for the past unrelated to present-day concerns.

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## 7.2 RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURAL SCIENCE

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R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943) is well known for his contributions to the fields of aesthetics and the philosophy of history. Perhaps the most distinctive and constant feature of his work, however, is his effort throughout to articulate and clarify the relations between domains of thought that are traditionally held to be distinct – such as religion, art, history, science and philosophy.

If in his early published writing – most notably in *Speculum Mentis*– he formulated the relationship between these in such a way that philosophy seemed to come out on top, we find him struggling in his later works, both published and unpublished, to make sense of each of these domains both on their own terms and in terms of their interpenetration and interdependence.

On Collingwood's account, for example, the aims and methodologies of religion and science are distinct, and it would be a mistake to suppose that one can dictate to the other. At the same time, the objects of scientific investigation and of religious experience inevitably overlap, and their differing approaches to the same object are mutually illuminating. The same can be said, on Collingwood's account, of natural science and history. Yet in this case, while Collingwood has been a harsh critic of the view that historical research should take scientific inquiry as a model, he appears to be less appreciative of the autonomy of science itself with respect to historical investigation. Collingwood's work has for a long time been considered valuable by both historians and philosophers of history for its defense of the autonomy of the methodology and results of history with respect to those of natural science. Yet he may appear not to have a similarly robust conception of the character of the natural sciences themselves, insofar as for the most part his comments on natural science are negative, aimed at demonstrating that other modes of inquiry

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such as history or philosophy properly understood do not and should not take the natural sciences as their model.

Even in *The Idea of Nature* – the published version of the only manuscript he devoted primarily to natural science – he does not focus so much on the character of the natural sciences as sciences but on the ways in which the conception of nature has developed historically, from the natural philosophy of the Ancient Greeks to the natural science of the contemporary age, as exemplified by evolutionary theory, quantum mechanics and relativity. Moreover, in spite of some early assertions in *The Idea of Nature* that he holds natural science, like history and philosophy, to be an independent mode of discovery, in the published conclusion to that text Collingwood appears to claim that in the end natural science is subordinate to and depends upon history.

The aim of the present essay is to clarify the significance of this conclusion, and to indicate what it says about Collingwood's mature conception of the relationship between natural science and history. I will contend that, contrary to appearances, this conclusion should not be read as a denial of the autonomy of natural science with respect to history. In fact, it will turn out that the central claim of the conclusion, that scientists engage in historical investigation as a regular part of their research, is intended precisely to challenge any presumption on the part of historians or philosophers to suggest that scientists don't understand the significance of their own work until the arrival of the historian or philosopher of science.

But insofar as natural scientists make use of or attempt to repeat the results of others, they are faced with just this kind of historical task: the problem of understanding what was done by their predecessors, why they did it, whether they were successful, and what issues are resolved by the results they obtained. Far from accepting as a limitation of historical research with respect to natural science the idea that the past cannot be repeated but that natural occurrences can, Collingwood holds that, with different aims in mind, both scientist and historian engage regularly and successfully in the effort to bring to life the character and significance of past events. Collingwood's assertion of the dependence of natural

science upon history The conclusion to R.G. Collingwood's *The Idea of a Nature*, at least in the form we have it, feels like something of a let-down.

As a whole, the text is a historical study of the conception of nature implied by the history of natural science in the Western world. The conclusion gives an account of the relation between natural science and history, and is intended to prepare the reader for another historical and philosophical study, this time of the principles and methods of history. What disappoints, at least on first read, is that the conclusion says much less than one would apparently have a right to expect, given the content of the text itself and the suggestive (but mostly inconclusive) character of the author's remarks elsewhere on the subject. In *The Idea of Nature*, Collingwood identifies three broad, successive historical periods during which detailed investigations into the natural world coincided with philosophical explorations of the character and object of such investigations, producing in each case a distinctive cosmology or conception of the natural world as a whole. During the final, modern, period, whose thinking is exemplified according to Collingwood by the work of Bergson, Alexander and Whitehead, the object to be investigated by natural science has come to be recognized as itself a historical process. One conclusion that might have been expected at the end of the book would have developed this notion further, exploring what it might mean to say that the natural world is itself at bottom historical.

Perhaps even more desirable would have been a conclusion in which the positivist conception of science, which Collingwood elsewhere suggests is inadequate, was challenged directly by its failure to account for the historical character of the conception of nature that natural science must at any time presuppose. It has often been noted that Collingwood anticipates Kuhn, and the concluding section of *The Idea of Nature* seems to present an ideal opportunity for Collingwood to display the direct relevance of the history of science to the philosophy of science.

What we have instead is the apparently radical assertion that "natural science as a form of thought ... depends on historical thought for its existence."

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In this context, however, this seemingly radical assertion is justified – not by appeal to the historical character of the framework within which any given scientist must operate but by appeal to the historical character of the objects themselves that are investigated by scientists – but rather by appeal to the apparently trivial fact that scientists, like historians, must occasionally consult and interpret historical documents that report the observations of other scientists.

What puzzles, especially, is that this conclusion is clearly intended as a serious challenge to positivism. For, as Collingwood himself is well aware, there is an easy and obvious response. While both natural scientists and historians make use of documents from the past, the scientist, according to the positivist conception, has the advantage of a method for checking the accuracy of factual reports contained in such documents. If a scientist doubts a fact that is recorded as the result of an experiment, “he can repeat the experiment ... [and thereby] reproduce the facts under his own eyes.”

The historian, by contrast, can according to this conception do no better than rely upon the authority of such documents, from which alone she can piece together a partial and problematic picture of the past. In fact, as Collingwood points out elsewhere, the traditional grounds for asserting the priority of the natural sciences over history was precisely the assumption that the historian was entirely dependent upon factual reports while the scientist was autonomous in relation to them.

That is why it should appear odd that Collingwood would proclaim the consultation of historical documents by natural scientists as sufficient grounds for asserting the opposite. Of course, as is well known, Collingwood himself denies that historians depend uncritically upon recorded assertions of fact. That would be the case only if history were what he calls a “scissors and paste” affair: if the historian’s task were limited to compiling, arranging and interpolating between sources.

Instead, he holds that genuine history begins with a critical assessment and interpretation of source material, so that what serves the historian as evidence are never merely documents and artefacts but rather the

informed judgements of the historian regarding their significance and weight.

The historian draws upon such judgements in her efforts to reconstruct a rational conception of past events, in which all of the disparate items piece together in her mind to form a coherent whole. This is Collingwood's famous doctrine of historical re-enactment.

Collingwood's assertion that natural science depends upon the methods of historical thinking must be read and interpreted in connection with this mature doctrine of history. In other words, Collingwood is not making the relatively trivial claim – proclaimed as an important discovery by recent social epistemologists – that while in principle scientists can check the work of their predecessors they are compelled in practice to invest a good deal of trust in their results.

Rather, his conclusion has the implication that the scientist – as much as the critical historian – must evaluate and interpret the documents she judges relevant to the problems she faces; and, even where she finds it necessary to redo experimental work, what is at stake is not merely the question whether the reported results can be repeated, but what these results signified for the original observer, what he or she had to know or take for granted in order to obtain them, and what implications they have for the questions that are currently of interest. The answers to these questions cannot be determined or evaluated by appeal to the positivist criterion of experimental repetition. Rather, what determines the adequacy of judgements on such matters, on Collingwood's account, is the extent to which they enable the scientist-historian to re-enact in her mind the historical event to which they refer, in this case the observations reported by the original scientist in the experimental record. Collingwood's thesis that natural science depends upon the methods of historical investigation implies both a criticism of the positivist doctrine that experimental knowledge of the natural world has a privileged epistemic status, as well as a highly original account of the character and method of both history and science. Collingwood's fresh view of history – according to which history is an autonomous science, whose methods are neither reducible to nor less rigorous than the methods of the various

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natural sciences – is well known and highly influential, even if it is also controversial.

What I will aim to do here is elucidate what I take to be the original conception of natural science implied by the concluding remarks to *The Idea of Nature*, at least when these are interpreted in light of his other writings on the relation between the natural sciences and history determine the plausibility of the results given her understanding of the material conditions under which the observations were made. She must determine what the researcher was trying to accomplish and whether this was achieved, in order to decide whether she can make use of and build upon this work.

Such interpretive historical thinking, as Collingwood points out elsewhere, is essential to the progress of science. He writes, for example, that “progress is not a mere fact to be discovered by historical thinking: it is only through historical thinking that it comes about at all... If Einstein makes an advance on Newton, he does so by knowing Newton’s thought and retaining it within his own, in the sense that he knows what Newton’s problems were and how he solved them.”

Although Collingwood may have lacked the historical background necessary to make this case in application to less revolutionary developments in the history of natural science – or may have used this example of “revolutionary” change in natural science because it would be familiar to his readers – the result appears to be quite general. In fact, the upshot of Collingwood’s claim is that the distinction between normal and revolutionary science breaks down: all science is normal science in the sense that it has a body of work as its starting point and this body of work carries with it a number of non-arbitrary presuppositions; and yet all science is potentially revolutionary insofar as each individual researcher must take up, interpret, and respond to the assumptions embodied in the work of her predecessors. To engage in natural science is essentially to be involved not only with nature but also with a community of scientists, whose work must be taken seriously, assessed carefully, interpreted and criticized appropriately, so as to build upon it. One way of making explicit the contrast between Collingwood and Kuhn



is to say that while both hold that scientific understandings of nature are mediated by historically emergent conceptual frameworks, Collingwood holds that these frameworks are constantly renegotiated in even such basic scientific practices as consulting documents. The apparent triviality of the points in fact a signal of its profundity: it points to a highly specific manner in which individual scientists are engaged with a historical tradition. Insofar as they study the works of other scientists, both in the process of their scientific education and as a part of their own work, scientists not only bind themselves to a tradition but are also required to place themselves within that tradition. Collingwood's insights regarding science and history may be usefully summed up as follows: while the history of science is a special problem for the historian, it is a going issue for the scientist. They must take it up and make it their own, not only in order that they may build upon it but also in order that they be able to take responsibility for the work that depends upon it. Scientists are and must be historians, and only to the extent that they are good historians within their field can they be genuinely autonomous. Alan Donagan points out that there is a tension in Collingwood's philosophy of natural science.

On the one hand, he wants to insist that the natural sciences raise and solve their own problems, and that reflection upon the results of the natural sciences can never take the lead in addressing such problems. On the other hand, he occasionally praises thinkers, like Hegel, who anticipate conceptual developments in science that are not yet borne up by scientific practice. While this is a real tension in Collingwood's thought, the account I have given of his grounds for setting aside the first two conclusions suggests that it was a tension of which he was not unaware. The final conclusion to *The Idea of Nature* in fact appears intended to suggest a manner in which the tension might be overcome. Science and history differ in aim, insofar as science aims to produce successful generalizations regarding the relations between types of phenomena and history aims to uncover specific accounts of the unfolding of individual events.

Yet the methods of science depend upon those of history insofar as the scientist must decidewhat kinds of problems are worth taking up, and

what can be taken for granted in resolving these problems, and these questions inevitably root her within a community of investigators of whose thinking she must have a reasonable historical understanding. Neither the historian nor the philosopher can anticipate the problems that will be addressed by this community, or the solutions that will present themselves as a result of experimental research. Yet the fact that the historian and philosopher of science are sometimes capable of considering the presuppositions of a given research community in their larger context can enable them on occasion to see patterns and assumptions that might not otherwise be perceived. This grasp may enable insight into the kinds of scientific work that is likely to prove successful in the future, and also into the avenues of research that at least for the moment are likely to be dead ends.

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### 7.3 WITH LITERATURE

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Towards History-Fiction Literature may be defined as that which has permanent interest because both of its substance and its form, aside from the mere technical value that inheres in a special treatise for specialists. For a great work of literature, there is the same demand now that there always has been; and in any great work of literature, the first element is great imaginative power. The imaginative power demanded for a great historian is different from that demanded for a great poet; but it is no less marked...on the contrary, very accurate, very real and vivid, presentation of the past can come only from one in whom the imaginative gift is strong.(Roosevelt 8)That literature certainly has its roots in history is corroborated by various writings of the world literature. The proposed study intends to take up some select fictions that deal with history. And the researcher aims to foreground the dynamic interaction between history and fiction thereby arriving at the perception of how fiction narrates history and how these “chronicles” of time present and time past, present the idea of history as such. History in the conventional sense can be defined as a record of “real” events that happened in the past. Traditionally, history is considered as a branch of literature, and then as a

discipline, that has a close link to science. It is generally taken for granted that there is truth in everything history supplies to the world. No questions or doubts generally rise against history because people usually lack access to the past hence do not question authenticity of the past. Therefore, it is a wonder when history says that Sher Shah Suri laid the GTR (Grand Trunk Road) to Delhi that we do tend to agree with the statement. Somebody asks, "Do you know the history of First Battle of Panipet in 1526 A.D.? It was a great one, only with thirty thousand soldiers Babur fought Ibrahim Lodi and seized Delhi". Generally, there is a universal tendency to accept history without questioning the authenticity of the recorded history. On the other hand, Indian history is given in most of the textbook as "blood stained history", history of events, dates, killings, blood. The historians have never bothered to record people, culture, and way of life of people.

In terms of history and history writing, and met fictional novels as Patricia Waugh would term it, it is evident that "history consists of multiple worlds which are fictional" (104). At this point, in a postmodernist context, fiction about history is called "historiographic metafiction", a term coined by Linda Hutcheon, which has been discussed in the first Unit. Nevertheless, before dealing with the interrelatedness and history-fiction interface, it is better to investigate history, fiction, narrative, and analyze the discourse that marks this phenomenon. History is often defined as a study of past events. The past is not very comprehensible, although it might be put together coherently by an imaginative, in the case of a novelist or a filmmaker, or an evidence-seeking mind, as in the case of a historian. The past is available to us only in shreds and shards in form of fragmented recordings presented to us in many modes (oral, coins, recordings in reeds and skins, and ancient epic poetry and literature). The absence is great and a never-explorable territory except in the case where an accidental finding corroborates such an absence. It can only be scrutinized and systematized by filling in the gaps with imagination as the necessity of a medium demands. Thus, history can be defined as writings about how we tell the story of what happened rather than a story of what

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happened. In this sense, any narrative is always and already a metanarrative. The first Unit explained how the conception of how the story is told about what happened has taken considerable shifts from generation to generation in refining and focusing the problematic nature of history.

The word “narrative” indicates that there is an arrangement of events, characters and plot, which are organized like a story (Gunn 26). However, if one considers the word “real”, a number of arguments arise regarding reality and any number of permutations and combinations of past events are possible (?) because of the ‘interpretive characteristic of history writing, of all writing’. The difference between traditional historicism and new historicism lies in their respective reading/understanding of history. While in the hands of traditional historicists history is handled as universal, history in the hands of new historicists is regarded as cultural (Dogan 78-79). New historicists believe that a literary text can never be evaluated apart from the social, political and cultural conditions of the society in which it is produced. In this context of cultural production, subjectivism plays a key role in new historicism, as nothing about history can be objectively known. As a result, no one can be regarded as an authority on a historical subject, as there may be so many interpretations on that subject.

Since the eighteenth century, particularly the four major theorists of historiography of the eighteenth century have rejected the concept of objectivity: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Johann Gustav Droysen, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Benedetto Croce. All of these theorists have accepted the dominance of interpretation in history writing. Hayden White stated in his article “Interpretation in History” that all of the four names were against the “innocent eye” of the historian. For instance, Droysen believes that interpretation is compulsory and inevitable, as the historical record is not complete/can never be complete. As for Nietzsche, interpretation is necessary in order to reach objectivity. (284). In terms of the scientific aspect of history, traditional historians regard history “as an empirical search for external truths corresponding to what was considered to be absolute reality of the past events” (Onega, 1995: 12). Thus, they believed that past could actually reflect truth and

this was a generally accepted notion among the eighteenth century historians. White also added in his article that traditional historians explain past events by a concise reconstruction of the recorded documents and that new historians whom White called as “meta-historians”, explain past events by interpreting the documents subjectively. New historicists interpret the documents sometimes by including some other facts or comments, but sometimes by excluding some of them. That is why White asserted: “A historical narrative is thus necessarily a mixture of adequately and inadequately explained events, a congeries of established and inferred facts, at once a representation that is an interpretation and interpretation that passes for an explanation of the whole process mirrored in the narrative”.

Therefore, it is impossible to talk about objectivity while dealing with history, as new historicists blur the line between so-called facts and the interpretations about these facts. At this point, the writers determine the importance of events and chose what to explain and what to ignore. Besides White, E. H. Carr deals with the importance of the interpretation of the historian in history writing. He noted, “It used to be said that facts speak for themselves. This is, of course, untrue. The facts speak only when the historian calls on them: it is he who decides which facts to give the floor, and in what order or context” (11-12). Therefore, subjectivity is an indispensable concept in the process of history writing. However, in order to reach the aim of objectivity, traditional historians give place to footnotes, citations, quotations, and bibliography, which are scientific attempts. On the other hand, postmodern historians believe that this is done for ideological reasons. Traditional historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth century “conceal its ideological structure behind a scholarly façade of footnotes and ‘facts’” (Himmelfarb 75).

An implication of this phenomenon could be located in the way women look at history. Women historians, for instance, want to break with the existing notion of history writing and have contributed several notions of histories, which would tell of the experience of both men and women as opposed to earlier notions of

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history, which has covered the experiences of men alone. Women historians such as Natalie Zemon Davis (b 1928-) a Canadian and American historian of the early modern period, Joan Wallach Scott (b 1941-) an American historian of France with contributions in gender history and intellectual history, Sheila Rowbotham (b1943-) a British socialist feminist theorist and writer have also contributed to the conceptual positions of history. Natalie Zemon Davis has expressed her earnestness for female voice in her work *Women on the Margins* (1995) which opens with the exchange between her subjects Glikl bas Judah Leib and Maria Sibylla Merian and herself and ends with a dialogue between Laurent Joubert. The book's vital point is to reflect the voice of the nun, the beggar and peasants of the time. Joan Wallach Scott has shared her version of gender history, which is original and promising. She writes drawing on the ideas from Michel Foucault:

Concepts of gender structure perception and the concrete and symbolic organization of all social life. To the extent that these [concepts] establish distributions of power (differential control over or access to material and symbolic resources), gender becomes implicated in the conception and construction of power itself. (Scott 45) As a result, the discipline History, which is usually understood as a scientific study of facts and events which represent truthfully as it happened(?), has taken the position of creation/narrative. Hence there is a shift from 'owned history to shared history'. Here the point is that history is created by human beings and human beings are created by history/histories. Commenting on Scott, Marnie Hughes-Warrington says: In Scott's view, the two major forms of women's history - social history and 'her-story' - are seriously flawed. In the 1960s and 1970s, social historians tried to shift attention in history away from the deeds of elite statesmen towards the experiences of ordinary people. Alongside studies of peasants, workers, and racial and ethnic minorities emerged those of women. Sheila Rowbotham is another feminist theorist who is interested in history. According to her, history demonstrates that what is needed is 'a revolution within a revolution or, in the case of the developing world, liberation from the colony within the

colony': the overturning of both capitalist conditions and the understanding of liberation as the power to control other things. This requires a radical transformation of the 'cultural conditioning of men and women, upbringing of children, shape of the places we live in, legal structure of society, sexuality, and the very nature of work'.(Rowbotham 245, 249)

History refers to what happened in the past, while historiography refers to what historians write about what happened in the past. History and historiography are the terms more often used synonymously, as in "a work of history". Historiography is a study of not simply chronologies of historical evidence that are kings names, dates, places, events, etc. from the past but it is a study of 'arguments/interpretations about the past that emerge from an immersion in and are built upon a foundation of historical evidence—the echoes and fragments and shards from the past that historians cull from archival collections and other primary sources'. The novelist William Faulkner emphasizes in his *Requiem for a Nun*(1951) which is partly novel and partly drama that "The past is never dead. It's not even past" (Act1, Sc. 3). Historiography stresses this notion of history. It does not mean that "facts" change all the time and that everything in history is relative but the process of interpretive spins that historians provide to the historical facts that they assert and spin together are continuously shifting.

New primary sources can sometimes be found in the process of shifting historiographical postures. These shifts owe to adjust our ideas of history, attitudes, etc. in the present. Such shifts not only reorient how we perceive/understand the here and now, but also the there and then. It may be argued that historiographic creation or historic thinking before the era of historicism and professionalization of history as a separate discipline was still naive and attached to collective memory, while historiography since the nineteenth century has been critical, reflective, and conscious of the uniqueness of time and period. Halbwachs' attribution to collective memory of characteristics of precritical historiography (such as Christian typological thought) is significant and telling. Yet the transition from pre-critical historiography to historicism, however revolutionary, was not

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altogether new. Several indications of historicism can be discerned within the presumably naive historical consciousness that preceded it, including the distinction between one “spirit of the time” and another (*qualitas temporum* in medieval language). In no way did it lack awareness of varying linguistic uses: “Before time in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he spoke, Come, and let us go to the seer: for he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer”. (I Samuel 9:9); the poet, Cicero says, is permitted to use archaic linguistic forms.

Fiction can be defined as “fiction about fiction: novels and stories that call attention to their fictional status and their own compositional procedures” (Lodge 1992: 206). Fiction is a literary narrative based on invented events, which have not happened in actual life. The unreal and imaginary telling of events is called fictions in general. In a specific sense, fiction stands for only narratives that are written in prose such as novel, short story; sometimes fiction is used as a synonym for the novel. Among the literary narratives, fiction stands to ‘a prominent degree based on biographical, historical, or contemporary facts’ (Abrams). These are called in generic terms as historical novel, science fiction, fictional biography, detective novel, social novel and nonfictional novel. Most of the philosophers and literary critics have focused themselves to the literary utterances, which constitute a fictional text. They are concerned with the “truth-value” of literary utterances. “Fictional sentences” should be regarded as referring to a special world, “created” by the author, which is analogous to the real world, but possesses its own setting, beings, and mode of coherence.

Although these are imaginary things they ‘represent the verbal action’ of human beings. The words, expressions, and experiences, which are unreal/imaginary, however they are imitative of the everyday happening of the world. The truth-claims of narrative fiction can be judged based on “readers’ own moral, religious, and social convictions”. (Abrams 96) Human beings use the language to express their emotions, aspirations, desires, sufferings, psychological status, failures and achievements, etc., in the form of story / narrative which demands plot, characters,



settings, problems and Aristotelian concept of a beginning-middle-and an end. On the other hand, the narration of a story takes every ingredient from actual world whether it is tragedy or comedy and whether it is realistic fiction or fiction with fully imaginative events.

Whatever may be, a fiction is an arrangement of language. Leda Cosmides and John Tooby characterize fiction as “information management” (quoted from Lisa Zunshine, 217). Thus, “Fiction can be defined as a type of discourse or communicative practice in which participants are transported, through a more or less immersive experience, to a STORYWORLD assumed to be imaginary rather than actual”. (Herman) An important element of fiction is narrative, which needs to be analysed before dealing with literature and history in order to comprehend historical fiction and its truth-value in a better manner. Narrative is a combination of plot, character, dialogue, genre, ideology, language and identity. It is ‘a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process and change’ (Herman 3). Marie-Laure Ryan describes that narrative is culturally not recognized as a general category like that of historiography, historical fiction, science fiction, or fantasy. The framing of concept about an event bears a vital significance, which leads to frame narrative. The fantasy or imagination of the author in the form of a story kindles our mental framing of certain conception. In relation to this Marie-Laure Ryan says If defining narrative has any cognitive relevance, it is because the definition covers mental operations of a more fundamental nature than passing global judgments of narrativity: operations such as asking in what order did the represented events occur; what changes did they cause in the depicted world; what do the events (and their results) mean for the characters; what motivates actions and does the outcome of these actions compare to the intent of the agent. If a text confronts us with such questions, and if we are able to answer them, we read the text as a story, or rather, we read the story told by the text, whether or not we are aware of what we are doing. (Ryan) What one perceives in reality (?) is presented in the conversation form.

The conversation requires a sequence of words and sentences to be told in an impressive way. The employment of language and its manipulation

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play significant role in arranging the events in the form of a story. Thus, Gerard Genette says, “one will define narrative without difficulty as the representation of events or of a sequence of events” (127). In the process of representing events, the teller communicates to more than one audience at the same time employing multiple narrators and multiple events, which can be real and unreal. Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) has several points of view and narrated by more than one narrator. Commenting on *Wuthering Heights* Andrew Sanders says that “it plays with shifts of time and perception by balancing the complementary, but not really concordant, viewpoints of two major and five minor narrators” . This type of narrative fits the definition of Gerald Prince that narrative can also be, “the representation...of one or more real or fictive events communicated by one, two or several ... narrators...to one, two or several narratees” . On the other hand, H. Porter Abbott says, “Narrative is the representation of events, consisting of story and narrative discourse, story is an event or sequence of events (the action), and narrative discourse is those events represented” . To focus still further narrative deals with the cognitive and ideological discourse of the context represented in actual world. For instance, Salman Rushdie’s version of history of India in *Midnight’s Children* shows the contemporary need for understating of India as far as the socio-political and cultural-religiousness is concerned and also the often breakable relationship of Muslim and Hindus. He does not present the readers with a final history of India, rather projects the temporality of India in the form of discourse and raising problems regarding history and its multiple shoots. Paul Ricoeur says, “I take temporality to be that structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity, and narrativity to the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate reference” (165) while Peter Brooks says, “Plot is the principle ordering force of those meanings that we try to wrest from human temporality”.

The historical fictions fit in Heise’s definition of narrative that “Narrative can be characterized as the mode by which we mediate and negotiate human temporality”. (Heise 47) A good narrative is a multifaceted one. “Narratives” can be defined as a type of communication that happens in conversation, is composed of discourse, appears in a

sequence, and is interpreted retrospectively (Boje). "Complexity" can be defined as non-linear relations, driven by small forces that result in the emergence of sudden changes that produce unexpected outcomes. (Morowitz) The general focus as far as language is concerned used to be the isolated units of language such as sentence, or single words, phrases, and figures. According to M.H. Abrams, "Discourse analysis, as inaugurated in the 1970s, concerns itself with use of language in a running discourse, continued over a sequence of sentences, and involving the interaction of speakers (or writer) and auditor (or reader) in a specific situational context, and within a framework of social and cultural conventions". He says that the current use of discourse analysis in literary studies has been taken a different movement by the speech-act philosopher H.P. Grice. According to Grice quoted from M.H. Abrams, "the users of a language share a set of implicit expectations which he calls the "communicative presumption" –for example, that an utterance is intended by a speaker to be true, clear, above all relevant".

Since the late 1970s, most of the critics have increasingly adapted discourse analysis to the assessment of the conversational speech in fictions as well as dramas. M.H. Abrams says: A chief aim is to explain how the characters represented in a literary work, and also the readers of that work, are constantly able to infer meanings that are not asserted or specified in a conversational interchange. The claim is that such inferences are "rule-governed", in that they depend on sets of assumptions, shared by users and interpreters of discourse that come into play to establish meanings, and furthermore, that these meanings vary systematically, in accordance with whether the rule – guided expectations are fulfilled or intentionally violated. Such explorations of conversational discourse in literature often extend in the literary narratives. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak says in 'Feminism and Critical Theory' (1985) that literary texts exhibit some kind of thoughts, which are presupposed by the notions of the world and consciousness of the most 'practical critic'. Spivak refers to the male texts as practical critic. She agrees to take them as examples to work out feminist ideas and reassess them rather than neglecting as

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adversaries. As far as male texts' discourse are concerned: These tests must be rewritten so that there is new material for the grasping of the production and determination of literature within the general production and determination of consciousness and society. After all, the people who produce literature, male and female, are also moved general ideas of world and consciousness to which they cannot give name. (Spivak) In the narrative process, the authors use language, which goes beyond the required communicative expression. Such language / expressions are focused in order to analyze those patterns of linguistic expression across in texts highlighting the relationship between such language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. This analysis is called discourse analysis. "Discourse analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents different views of the world and different understandings. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as the effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations. It also considers how views of the world, and identities, are constructed through the use of discourse" (Paltridge 2).

Discourse analysis examines both spoken and written texts. Literature generally refers to "things made from letters". In recent centuries, literature concerns with some of the political movements like literature of feminism, post colonialism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, post-modernism, romanticism, and Marxism. In addition to this, literature concerns with nation, race, gender, and caste which become literature of Black writing in America, Indian writing, Dalit writing, African writing, women's writing, and others. This can be brought under general categories. There are World Literature, National Literature, and Regional Literature, which engage with history indulging in the act/art of chronicling in order to bring their own narratives. In the contemporary context, there are other literatures like Electronic literature, Films, and Graphic novels and comic books, which are, create from the digital environments. Literature is a canon, which consists of those works in language by which a community defines itself through the course of its history. It

includes works primarily artistic and also those whose aesthetic qualities are only secondary. The self-defining activity of the community is conducted in the light of the works, as its members have come to read them (or concretize them). (McFadden 56) Literature represents tradition, culture, and language of people of world in their own way. On the other hand, it functions as initiator of new worlds of experience, which bypasses its boundary as a historical or cultural creative work. In the Indian context, there are several literatures: canonical Indian literature, all the Regional Literatures, and Oral and Adhivasi literature that can be broadly referred to literature in India. In connection with this, Murali Sivaramakrishnan says, Writing in English in this country could be seen side by side with writing in other regional languages as well. English is as much indigenized and nativised as Marathi or Gujarathi, Tamil or Malayalam. The historical terrain of Indian writing in “english” could be seen to parallel the nuances of the writings in the regional languages too.

The researcher has probed into the literature that concerns with the subaltern, minority, forgotten, imagined communities, and voiceless people and has brought out how the authors have historicized and problematised and have given some space in history to the literature that is deprived of the mainstream history. The select authors concentrate on the Indian Fiction in English on specific features such as history, language, landscape (place), customs, dialects, temporality (time), and characters situated in a particular region. In a way, these select authors have tried to turn “our heads backwards into our past” (Sivaramakrishnan, Introduction: Theorizing Interreadings 1). And as Murali Sivaramakrishnan rightly observes, Literature is not the only domain where these (sense of place, time and action) issues are problematised, of course. The consequences of the decode–encode complex and its dimensions in terms of the cultural–historic rhetoric/fabric has been discussed and debated ad nauseum by now in academic circles all over the world, in as varied a discipline like Anthropology or Cybernetics, Geography or Ecology.

The contemporary postcolonial Indian fiction in English, which engages with history, has drawn our attention into narratives of local, marginal

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and the forgotten terrain. The fictional writers of this type have written postmodern historiographic metafiction where story telling becomes an act/art of chronicling as well as narrativising history and politics. The act of storytelling, their narrativity becomes an alter history. The entire thesis is centered on this fact as to how the select authors engage with history in order to process history rather than to produce it along with experimenting/highlighting the local flavour thereby creating some identities for the marginal. Literature is not only able to characterize the ideology of the contemporary society but also shape / (re)form / general beliefs of the society. It is highly difficult to criticize which creations of the authors is influential/revolutionary. There is no doubt about the author's shaping/manipulating/changing the thinking of people of the authors' period. The reader is an important being who locates in the texts the 'multiple playfulness of meanings' (Derrida). The reader's position in the world of fiction apparently brings changes over the period of time and variations in the dominant ideology. Mikhail Bakhtin says in this regard in *Discourse in the Novel* that the novel being realistic is influential and revolutionary, which permits the ideology and system of beliefs of the author to be noticeable in myriad styles. R.V. Young says that literature is not 'innocent' but throws multiple 'discursive practices' as Foucault mentions in most of his works. Thus an attempt is made to highlight the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its possibility and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility; in this account, what should appear are those configurations within the space of knowledge which have given rise to the diverse forms of empirical science. Such an enterprise is not so much a history, in the traditional meaning of that word, as an 'archaeology'.

Foucault attempts to explain that the practices of beliefs, cultural habits, religious dogmas, social practices produce minds. The practices of ideology shift in the course of time. The shifts take place according to the socio-cultural and geographical-religious milieu.

Our mind is produced, programmed, and processed. There is a progressive materialization and emergence of a “positive turn” in human sciences and it appears appropriate to study the relationship between history and fiction. Though the relationship is done greatly and potentially to prove the “historicity of the text” and the “textuality of history” in the ancient times, early modern times (renaissance times- Christopher Marlowe, Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, and so on), and much bearings of the connections between literature and history, and historiography are given to early 19th century. The postmodern historical fiction looks for ‘gaps and marginalized silences’ (Fielitz<sup>2</sup>) in the established ‘factual/truthful history’ (?).

According to Sonja Fielitz, ‘text and context, literature and history are equivalent and interactive, and show no interest in the history of ideas, since history is textualized, ideologically constructed, non – transparent, resistant to objective understanding’.(Fielitz 2) Historical novels deal with events of the past. They may follow the factual history or fictional history systematically. This dissertation will also explore the idea of the past and how the past events (which are being forgotten day by day), become a platform for the present and future. It is also about the use and abuse of history in history-fiction. The term “history-fiction” is meant to be the authors’ engagement with history and about the influence of the history on fiction and creating historicized novel or fictionalized history. The novelists merge the historical ‘facts’ and fictitious ‘history’ into literary texts where imagined alternate history dominate the actual representation of history. History-fiction is a bit different from historical fiction. In the sense, the novelists’ active involvement with history kindles the use and popularization of the generic category of the genre “Historical Fiction”. It explores, and evaluates the connection between history and fiction. It is a kind of narrative mode, which reconstructs history imaginatively. The result is that both the historical and the fictional characters may appear in the fictional narratives. Who has seen maharajas, Katabomman, Tippu Sultan and Chera, Chola, Pandiya and so on? The Historians make their level best to record the lives of the people of the past, but the novelists are those who give life to

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their bodies making the historical characters live and make it universally withstanding the test of time. The novelists create the historical characters in such a way that they are meaningful for all times. For instance, Shakespeare's Othello, Hamlet, King Lear, and Macbeth and so many others are relevant even today. They give meaning to life; act as guides in our lives. Not many consider past as important or vital in bearing significant implications for the future. The (re)presentation of the past events either venerated as having absolute bearing on the present and the future or decried as an act of insignificant consequences. This thesis aims at how historical characters, events, myths, symbols, and other religio-political and socio-cultural metanarratives are/have been recast in the contemporary Indian Fiction in English, especially that of post-independence Indian fictions to (re)construct history and help to deliver us from this collective amnesia and remind us the pluralistic repercussion of the past in the present and, perhaps, the future, thus maintaining certain humanistic ethical perceptions and absolute values that are essential in creating an egalitarian society.

### **Check your progress –**

1. What is electronic literature?

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2. How history connects to literature?

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## **7.4 LETS SUM UP**

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The histories of the scientific disciplines, including the history of geography, had at first -and to some extent still have- the functions of legitimacy and socialization. In general, these histories have been developed with the disciplines themselves as the point of departure and,



in the most developed cases, taking into account the theoretical and methodological issues that they have. With time, however, they have been able to reinforce this historical dimension by gradually evolving towards the history of science, and this conflux has been facilitated by the fact that the latter has also at times turned into a history of the sciences, i.e. a history of the individual disciplines.

There is undoubtedly a dialectical relationship -a toing and froing- between the history of a discipline and its professional practice. It has been said many times that the study of history reflects contemporary issues; one turns to history, above all at moments of crisis, seeking origins, precedents, foundations. Starting from current issues, one approaches the past in order to understand the present better, and this always leads to the definition of new topics and new viewpoints in historical studies.

Nevertheless, the history of a discipline, like the history of science in general, is also an area of history proper; it has a value of its own irrespective of the benefits it brings to the work of scientists today. In geography there is a long tradition of historical studies which has produced works of great value from the viewpoint of the history of science or of social and cultural history. Thus a history of geography is - to paraphrase a well-known saying- more history of geography than history of geography. Even so, in spite of the distance from today's concerns, the effects of these historical studies on current practice is unpredictable; they sometimes have unexpected positive results since, viewed from the past, the present is seen from new angles which can effect current scientific practice.

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## **7.5 KEYWORDS**

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Natural Sciences, Literature

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## **7.6 QUESTIONS FOR REVIEW**

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1. Discuss the relationship of history with natural sciences.

2. Discuss the various forms of literature

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## **7.7 SUGGESTED READINGS**

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The Idea of History, rev. ed., ed. Jan Van Der Dussen (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p

Principles of History

(New York: Oxford University Press, 2001),

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## **7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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1. Hint – 7.3

2. Hint – 7.3