

The Relevance of History and Philosophy to Nation Building

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Abstract:

This paper identified and examined the correlating relationship between Philosophy and History. The paper reevaluated the sources, as well as the interconnectivity between Philosophy and history.

The study relied on the documentary data that were subjected to textual and contextual analysis.

The researchers connected Philosophy and history and societal growth and development.

Keywords: Philosophy, History, Governance and War

Introduction

History is the study of the past in all its forms. Philosophy in historical concept examines the conjectural foundations of the practice, application, and social consequences of history on the society. Philosophy hereby is defined as the idealistic study of history. The context of both studies was coined by the French philosopher Voltaire. In the 21st century, philosophy, a distinction has developed between the investigative philosophy of history and the vital philosophy of history, now referred to as logical. Hence the methodical of History is indeed philosophy. History is the study of change over time. Political, social, economic, scientific, technological, medical, cultural intellectual, religious and war developments are all part of history. Marx for instance adopted a directional view of history. For Hegel, in fact, there is no strong consensus among prominent Hegel scholars in the 20th and 21st century as to what the core of his philosophy was. For instance, philosophers like Catherine Malabou, Longueness, Slavoj Zizek all defend radically different readings of Hegel. Hegel in his days believed that the universe was plainly one big living creature a background of Historical evolutions from the past. In the 21st century, it may look strange but it was quite popular with intellectuals like Goethe and Schelling who influenced Helgel philosophical development. Hegel's conjecture of dialectics constitutes the last great philosophical system. According to Hegel, History is a process that includes everything and everyone, a process in which we all participate; hence Hegel drew an equivalence of both studies. Hegel's original idea is that the past is not a matter of dates and battles and events but of common sense. Common sense is an aspect of philosophy; correlating both studies. Philosophy as an educational discipline is yet finding its feet, fighting against the popular prejudice that perplexing and scholarly thinking is an opulence concerning developing society. Yet the rapid pace of change seems to demand the existence of a group specializing in clear logical thought in an attempt to elucidate for us the meaning and direction of logical milieu to chronological background. Even though the concept of history plays a basic role in historical thought; it invokes notions that aid national development; change, the role of material circumstances in human affairs and the reputed meanings of past events and activities. However, some African scholars such as Adewunmi and Olajiga had argued that civilizations are born out of more prehistoric societies, not as the result of racial or ecological factors, but as a response to challenges from other civilizations and penalization. History, at least in the way of Emmanuel Kant understands it as the critical reaction of man's doggedness to master its own terrain. Kant believes that it is only such a reception that generates the hypothetical task that allows man to progress towards the implementation of the Moral Law within a municipal union. The procedural renewal taking place in the social sciences by the use of historical cupidity and structuralism; it is therefore urgent to proceed to a scientific re-writing of history and to insist on the contributions of the Africans to humanity. In the same way, words like "tribe", "primitive", "pagan", "savage", "barbarian", "dark ages"...etc by which European historians justified the colonial enterprise should disappear from the African historical vocabulary (Eshete, 1977). Some scholars justified the study of the History by claiming that they improved the soul and enabled man to fulfill his religious and human desires better. Other scholars sought justification in claims that the History improve men as men and therefore enable them to better fulfill their obligations to one another (Ade-Ajayi, 1977). Other scholars like Nwachukwu John and Duyile William Abiodun conceived of History as "enlightening" or making man better citizens or "social" human beings. Others called the History a source of

“clarification” (Nwachukwu, 2023). Scholars are concerned with significance in terms of meaning and connotation to the lives of the citizens, - in terms of a direct relationship between the study of the History and an improvement in the quality of life of the masses (Ogot, 1977). History is not the past but a study of the past, an endeavor to understand and construe the past for the benefit of the present and also the future why Philosophy scrutinizes the procedures and assessments made by historical characters. Many historians envision history largely as a sociological science, the core sciences and in some instances economics or a study of societies rather than a pure bred humanity course. Hence history is the belief that man shares a common race with each other to the extent that historians in the twenty first century assumes that he can foretell through his historical notes and occurrences, some accounts for the behavior of the human characters several thousand years ago in different societies and environments and at the same time that man is nevertheless so unique that in the final scrutiny no two men are actually the same: as psychologist had always believed there were no completely identical twins, and each people, each society, has an integrity of its own to which standards derived from other cultures and the history of other peoples are really irrelevant, some conjecture to the concept of philosophy. The impediment here for the researcher is not to be dozy of cultures and civilizations that are fretful to impose on others, their own values and standards evolved from their own experience and for their convenience as universal values and standards (Ajayi, 1977). This is what the European ‘Masters’ connotes as colonization. Colonization shares idealistic terms that is driven by philosophical connotations. This is particular to Africa and its quick acceptance of concepts such as democracy and socio- capitalist and socio-economic tendencies. The African acceptance of theoretical terminologies unknown to him hence finds it very tricky to cope with or understand. Viewed in this way, it is hoped that man should reflect on the challenges of the History in Africa in the attempt to balance the universal nature of man with its unique distinctiveness. Africa, majorly Nigeria must learn to assert its uniqueness in culture, administration, religion in their governmental policies. For instance, Africans finds it hard to interpret concepts such as democracy, and many more. Nigeria, for instance do not need to be unobtrusive rejecting some of this globalised concepts having no barring with Nigeria’s peculiar cultures. Although, a nation like Nigeria needs to equally assert, its own version or contribution to National Development. Another aspect has to do with infrastructures and this comes down to the colonial period. The colonial impact on infrastructure must be seen to be manipulative (Infrastructural Development in Nigeria, 2020). In terms of Migration in and out, history is an important subject to shape and reshape the principled development of Nigerians. Philosophy compliments history. History is not complete without analogy and logic, a key component of philosophy. Since independence the colonial pattern of labor migration continue, with Ghana, Ivory Coast and Nigeria continuing to provide seasonal employment in their coffee, cocoa and groundnut plantations for migrants from Benin, Togo, Burkina Faso and Niger, and Senegal’s groundnut farms receiving a large number of laborers from Mali (Duyile, William Abiodun, 2021). History is indeed important today and knowledge of the past encourages citizens to face the past. Today, the security situation in Nigeria is tense as the media echoes what groups like Boko Haram was able to do against the Nigerian State (Duyile, Adu, Jegede, & Buhari, 2020). History as a set of academic discipline correlates with the study of the past correlating facts from the past and make an interpretation of the facts. It is a core understanding of history. History and Philosophy does correlate and complements one another. Philosophy, in this case, also context and correlate History towards development; making both subjects an important tool for growth and development; the logical approach questions, the meaning and purpose of the historical process whereas the exploratory approach studies the foundations and implications of history and the historical method.

Correlating History and Philosophy as a tool for National Development

The study of Philosophy enhances a person’s problem-solving capacities. It helps us to analyze concepts, definitions, arguments and problems. It contributes to our capacity to organize ideas and issues to deal with questions of value, and to extract what is essential from large quantities of information. Thus, philosophy for this reason is without a doubt important for human development as thus history. According to Onwuama, he views philosophy as: A critical, reflective and unbiased investigation on development aimed at providing principles, theories for development. Philosophical issues for development refer to those areas and problems of development that are reserved exclusively for philosophical clarifications and hermeneutics. Philosophy is a purposive goal-oriented discipline aimed at liberating man from the shackles of ignorance, for sustainability of human existentialism. Whilst the historian collects data, written, oral, archaeological, linguistic, social or economic data from the past, and selects what he considers most significant for making the past meaningful for the present. He collects data to study and not as an alternate to swap or revitalize a dead past. When the historian studies what is significant, he is concerned with what is most meaningful and important among the data collected about the past, significant in the sense of relevance to the concerns of the present. It is the understanding of the past that makes the historian work relevant to the present. Some scholars like Schumpeter made use of the concept of modernism to identify growth, linking it to societal growth and development. Ethics is core to Philosophy and defines the logicity associated with the evolutionary trends in occupation. The research would then consider the extent to which the knowledge of historians is relevant in the wider context of the society; particular attention is usually focused on history with its emphasis on the past while significance points to the present and the future; compared to philosophy, logic and ethics is of the essence to the modern era. The surprise that historians express whenever challenged to demonstrate the application of their pre-occupations comes largely from the extent to which they have been concerned – more unreservedly than unambiguously, but very concerned all the same – with the search for relevance. The relevance that the historian seeks correlates to logic and ethics. With all the technology at the historians’ disposal for recording events and preserving records, complimented by the AI technology, historians know that there is no chance

of re-making or re-inventing the past and they are not interested in recreating that past. Historians also capture that we can only opt for the facts available from the past according to what data is postulating and which of the facts available does the historian considers most significant (Ajayi, 1977). In this sense, exploratory philosophy of history is a historical method that is based on the dependence on past historical events to appraise present happenings or even predict present and future happenings. This type of historical study relies more on instinct rather than data; instinct in this case has philosophical undertones. Philosophy aids and supports this choice of facts. Some European scholars had indeed casted this exploratory hypothesis on the rich contribution made by pre-colonial Africans to the development of their societies and the civilization of the Africa.

Nationalist ideology was backed using historical standpoint, asserting much as an article of faith that Africans had not merely a history but in fact a glorious history. Historians at the time of the independence movements had to go beyond asserting that blacks had a history. They had to demonstrate by the criteria of evidence acceptable to other historians not merely that African history exists, but also that it has as much time depth as the history of others, and that it contained evidence of the ability of Africans in the past to build and manage large political empires comparable to modern multi-ethnic territories seeking political independence. African historians first began by focusing attention on the periods of Pre-colonial civilization when there were written references to Nigerian socio-political, economic and governance achievements. They went extra and lay bared not only the indispensability of oral sources of history, but also its legitimacy for historical writing. In the process, African historiography has changed the course of historical writing which now doubts the competence of written sources alone for historical writing even when written sources appear profuse. African historiography continues to refine the method of using oral sources, combining them with linguistic, religious, archaeological and other forms of evidence. The 21st century historians also identify achievements associated with biological studies to support its fact in historical studies.

During the period of independence movement, the necessity was to convince or force the colonial ruler to abdicate power. The expression of history was essential to extend the right mental attitude of the leaders of the independence movements and their followers as well as to persuade the colonial rulers. Historians considered the pre-colonial period most relevant because it provided the necessary time-depth and evidence of the performance of independent African polities. In the period of decolonization, while the debate with former colonial rulers continued there was a fresh necessity to disabuse that Europeans racial views and persuade the rank and file of political supporters that Africans indeed had the abilities to take over power from Europeans. The process of decolonization thus involved studies of the colonial period for a more critical review of the role of Europeans, the response of Africans to European domination and the continuities that survived from the pre-colonial past to the newly emerging political structures (KI-Zerbo, 1977). Governments sought precedents for their political programmes whether parliamentary or non-parliamentary, village democracy or one-party state and drew on the work of historians for such precedents. Some historians have sought social relevance in emphasizing the social science approach to historical methodology, the significance of the past to an understanding or the processes of political cum economic and social change. The undue emphasis on political achievement and in some cases philosophical ideology understudied by the size of political states in the past is therefore giving way to a more balanced view of history, stressing social- philosophical cum economic factors, migrations, developments in the means of production, technology, the system of land tenure, etc. In the struggle against neo-colonialism and the further liberation of the rest of Africa, the old crude assertions of “you have no history, we have a history”, is giving way to more sophisticated philosophical interpretations and re-interpretations of history. It is philosophy that interprets history better and deeper.

Conclusion

In conclusion history has been asserting both the uniqueness and the common humanity of the African in Diaspora; ‘japarians’ they say these days and the African (Duyile & Nwachukwu, 2023). The research has drawn heavily on philosophical methodology and traditional historiography both in terms of the content of oral tradition and other historical forms as well as the responsibility of history in society. History sometimes associates with linguistics. Language is very important to man. It is also an important aspect to historical studies and philosophical methodology; it is core to philosophical studies and historical studies. Language use involves the special codes that are peculiar to human socialization and relationship which are core to the interpretation of events and activities (Duyile, Allison, Ediagbonya, Aluko, & Taiwo, 2020).

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