

## THE INDEPENDENTISATION OF AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY AFRİKA TARİHYAZIMININ BAĞIMSIZLAŞMASI

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### Abstract

This paper explores the evolution of African historiography within the broader context of global history, highlighting its significance as an academic discipline. The introduction underscores the critical role of history in understanding human agency and change, particularly in the context of Africa's colonial past, which has often been narrated through a Eurocentric lens. The methodological framework employed is comparative, examining African and non-African scholarly contributions, focusing on case studies that illustrate the diversity of perspectives in African historiography. Through a thorough analysis of pioneering figures such as Carl Christian Reindorf, alongside contemporary scholars like Ngūgī wa Thiong'o and Molefe Asante, the study reveals how indigenous narratives and oral histories have increasingly challenged established Eurocentric interpretations. Key findings indicate that despite the progress made in reclaiming African narratives, significant gaps remain within the historiographical tradition, primarily due to historical marginalisation. The paper further discusses the necessity of integrating digital history into African historiography, suggesting that such an approach can enhance accessibility and engagement with diverse historical narratives. This research advocates for an expanded understanding of African history as an essential component of global historiography, emphasising the importance of incorporating multiple methodologies and voices to construct a more comprehensive and nuanced historical narrative.

**Keywords:** History, African historiography, oral history, digital history, indigenous narratives, global perspectives.

### Öz

Bu makale, küresel tarihin daha geniş bağlamında Afrika tarih yazımının evrimini inceleyerek akademik bir disiplin olarak önemini vurgulamaktadır. Giriş, özellikle sıklıkla Avrupalı merkezli bir mercekte anlatılan Afrika'nın sömürge geçmiş bağlamında, insan faaliyetini ve değişimini anlamada tarihin kritik rolünün altını çizmektedir. Kullanılan metodolojik çerçeve karşılaştırmalı olup, Afrika ve Afrika dışındaki akademik katkıları inceleyerek Afrika tarih yazımındaki bakış açılarının çeşitliliğini gösteren vaka çalışmalarına odaklanmaktadır. Carl Christian Reindorf gibi öncü figürlerin yanı sıra Ngūgī wa Thiong'o ve Molefe Asante gibi çağdaş akademisyenlerin kapsamlı bir analizi yoluyla, çalışma yerli anlatıların ve sözlü tarihlerin yerleşik Avrupalı merkezli yorumlara nasıl giderek daha fazla meydan okuduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Temel bulgular, Afrika anlatılarını geri kazanmada kaydedilen ilerlemeye rağmen, öncelikle tarihsel marjinalleşme nedeniyle tarih yazımı geleneğinde önemli boşlukların kaldığını göstermektedir. Makale ayrıca dijital tarihin Afrika tarih yazımına entegre edilmesinin gerekliliğini tartışıyor ve böylece bir yaklaşımın çeşitli tarihsel anlatılara erişilebilirliği ve katılımı artırabileceğini öne sürüyor. Bu araştırma, küresel tarih yazımının temel bir bileşeni olarak Afrika tarihinin daha geniş bir şekilde anlaşılmasını savunuyor ve daha kapsamlı ve ayrıntılı bir tarihsel anlatı oluşturmak için birden fazla metodoloji ve sesi birleştirmenin önemini vurguluyor.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Tarih, Afrika tarih yazımı, sözlü tarih, dijital tarih, yerli anlatılar, küresel perspektifler.

## STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

The significance of history transcends simple accounts of past events; it is integral to understanding human agency, cultural dynamics, and the socio-political frameworks that shape societies. The history of Africa has largely been constructed from a colonial viewpoint, with Eurocentric narratives predominating the discourse. This structured abstract delves into the evolution of African historiography, which has emerged as a counter-narrative to the imperialist perspectives that characterise much of historical writing about the continent. By analysing how African scholars have reshaped historical discourse and incorporated indigenous narratives, this paper underscores the importance of recognising African historiography as a critical component of global history.

The study adopts a comparative methodology, examining the historiographical contributions of both African and non-African scholars. It incorporates qualitative analysis of primary historical texts, oral histories, and contemporary academic works. The research spans historical periods and methodologies, focusing on key figures such as Carl Christian Reindorf, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and Molefe Asante, who provide diverse lenses through which African histories are rewritten and understood. By drawing on case studies of independence movements and cultural identity, the study situates African historiography within broader global narratives.

Analysis reveals that early African historiography was predominantly shaped by European perspectives, often neglecting indigenous narratives and experiences. The works of early historians, mainly anthropologists and ethnographers, reflected a Eurocentric bias that overlooked the complexities of African societies. Carl Christian Reindorf's incorporation of oral traditions marked a pivotal shift, offering a model that reconceptualised African historiography from an indigenous standpoint. Furthermore, the contributions of contemporary scholars like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o illustrate a renaissance in African historical writing, as they challenge colonial legacies and assert the importance of self-representation in historical narratives. Molefe Asante's emphasis on cultural identity underscores the interplay between history and contemporary African realities, highlighting the necessity of an Afrocentric perspective.

The study also identifies the contemporary relevance of integrating digital history into African historiography. Digital platforms facilitate the dissemination of marginalised voices and provide new methodologies for presenting historical narratives. This evolution not only broadens access to African history but also enriches the discipline by incorporating a multiplicity of perspectives that reflect the continent's diverse experiences.

The findings of this research indicate a pressing need for continued efforts to reclaim African narratives within the historiographical tradition. The marginalisation of African historiography stems from a historical inadequacy in scholarship, wherein African scholars have had limited access to platforms for presenting their work internationally. Despite notable progress, the gap between Eurocentric historical narratives and emerging African perspectives continues to exist. Moreover, the study emphasises that the incorporation of oral histories and indigenous narratives is essential to constructing a more accurate and comprehensive African history.

Contemporary historians, while recognising past injustices, advocate for a multifaceted approach that blends traditional historiographical methods with emerging digital tools. This dual approach promises to fortify African historiography, making it more inclusive and reflective of the continent's realities. Furthermore, the argument posited within the paper suggests that a robust understanding of African history necessitates cooperation and dialogue among scholars across the globe, rejecting unilateral interpretations of historical events.

In conclusion, this paper asserts that the evolution of African historiography is crucial for the accurate representation of the continent's past. By examining African and non-African narratives, the study elucidates the need for a more global perspective that accommodates diverse methodologies and voices in the field of history. The incorporation of digital history serves as a transformative tool that can help bridge gaps in existing historiographical traditions, allowing for the uncovering and dissemination of previously marginalised narratives.

This research advocates for the recognition of African historiography not just as a subfield but as a vital and dynamic component of global historical discourse. As the field continues to grow, it is imperative that scholars committed to an accurate and inclusive understanding of history work collectively to challenge existing narratives and foster an environment in which all perspectives are valued. Addressing the challenges faced by African historiography will ultimately contribute to a fuller understanding of the complexities of history, encouraging future scholars to engage with the past in ways that honour the agency and contributions of African peoples.

The study persuasively advocates for the accelerated integration of African historiographical perspectives in global discussions. It advocates for ongoing scholarship that recognises the rich tapestry of experiences and voices that comprise African history. This initiative is not merely an academic pursuit but essential for fostering a more equitable and just understanding of the world's historical narratives.

## 1. Introduction

History is critical in human thought, which appeals to human agency, change, material circumstances in human affairs, and the meaning of historical events. The history of Africa predominantly has been about colonialisation—imperial history, where Africa is treated as a geographical setting for colonisers (Zimmerman, 2013). With the emergence of history as an academic discipline in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with Leopold von Ranke as a founding father of the discipline, historiography emerged (Ranke, 1887). Historiography relied on archival documents that narrated European events, such as the French Revolution (Voltaire, 1757; Anderson, 1876). The fundamental objective of historians was to discover, identify, investigate, elucidate and illuminate acts and situations of the past, which mainly focused on the state (Little, 2020).

With the emergence of history as an academic discipline, the existing historiography was pioneered by Europeans and was Eurocentric in perspective, creating a gap in understanding African historiography from an Afrocentric perspective. The African historiography, despite initially being explicitly written by Europeans, was written mainly by non-historians, with the majority of them being anthropologists, ethnographers, travellers, missionaries and merchants (Bosman, 1704; Dalzel, 1793; Ellis, 1893/1894; Reindorf, 1895). Despite the historiography pioneered by Europeans, there was a lack of comprehensive survey of historiography, which led historians to make adhoc judgements on the nature and theory of historiography; thus, it failed to address the problem of historiography historically (Breisach, 1987). The lack of a comprehensive survey of historiography led Voltaire to posit that "the foundations of all history are the recitals of the fathers to the children," reinforcing the idea that historical narratives are memory-based yet evolve across generations (Voltaire, 1757). This interaction highlights the multiplicity of histories and the varied methodologies scholars worldwide embrace.

Historically, African historiography before the last half decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by Europeans, whose assertions of the Africans and their histories were judged from a Eurocentric eye, therefore not creating an accurate and unbiased history (Dupuis, 1824; Schweinfurth, 1874). This situation created a gap in the African historiography. The first African to engage in African historiography was Carl Christian Reindorf of the Gold Coast, who, in writing the history of the Gold Coast and Asante,

incorporated oral narratives; therefore, reflecting the assertion of Voltaire that history is the recitals of the past to the present (Reindorf, 1895). The paper examines the development of African historiography as a part of global history in the academic discipline of history. The paper argues that historical narratives are shaped by human agency and cultural contexts by providing case studies from Africa to provide a broader understanding of the need for African historiography as a part of global history. It also shows the need to incorporate digital history in African historiography as historiography evolves.

The essay then focuses on the development of tradition by critically analysing African scholars who have contributed to African historiography. For instance, examining Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o's works reveal how African scholars reinterpret colonial histories and promote indigenous narratives, challenging Eurocentric interpretations. Similarly, the works of Molefe Asante exemplify a distinct historiographic tradition emphasising the relationship between history and cultural identity, thus showcasing varied methodologies in historical writing. Additionally, in exploring the historiography of the African continent, the paper will analyse events such as the independence movements, as discussed by historians like Kwasi Botchwey, Ade Ajayi and Basil Davidson, who emphasise the importance of oral histories, Marxism and community narratives in constructing an understanding of the past and the African reality.

This paper aims to deepen the understanding of African historiography as a discipline by examining both African and non-African narratives, focusing on the historiographies of African scholars. The paper drives toward a more global perspective by incorporating empirical data and discussing contemporary issues such as digital history. Specifically, the paper addresses why the historiography of Africa and the African historiography tradition remain weak, as it seeks to find answers in developing the Eurocentric historiographical tradition. The marginalisation of African historiography can be attributed to the lack of writing styles that towed the conventional lines of Western historiography, the absence of formalised universities before WWII and the Europeanisation of the African identity amid colonialisation (Reindorf, 1895; Johnson, 1897; Du Bois, 1915).

## 2. Method

The paper employed a qualitative research approach, utilising three distinct but interwoven historical methods to understand better the evolution of African historiography and the need to incorporate it into the global history of the academic discipline. Specifically, the paper utilised historiographical synthesis, where it combined multiple historical accounts to identify patterns, trends and debates within the historiography of the investigated topic; comparative analysis, as it compared different historical accounts, interpretations and methodologies to highlight similarities, differences and areas of contention; and reflective historiography, where the author engaged in self-reflective analyses, acknowledging the biases, assumptions and limitations of their perspectives while considering the implications of their historical interpretations (Bender, 2002; Mahoney, 2004; Leont'eva, 2021).

To retrieve materials, the author collected various historical sources using traditional archives and digital platforms, such as Google Scholar, the Internet Archives, the UK Parliament website, and Google Books. The author employed sampling as a method of historiography in selecting a representative subset of historical records. The sampled historical writings were based on periodisation, and the periods were categorised into two distinct stages—1895 to 1960 and Beyond 1960. These periods are essential because the first known African historiography after the emergence of history as an academic discipline, which an African authored, was the work of Carl Christian Reindorf, *The History of the Gold Coast and Asante*. The phrase "Beyond 1960" marked the period of political independence and nationalist movements on the African continent as it needed to document and preserve African history (Reindorf, 1895; Boahen, 1961).

The primary sources comprised eight historical works whose authorship dates ranged from 1895 to 1942. They were the works of C. C. Reindorf (1895), Samuel Johnson (1897), John Mensah Sarbah (1906),

Asantehene Otumfuo Agyeman Prempeh I (1907), Joseph Ephraim Casely-Hayford (1911), Charles H. Stigand (1913), Walton W. Claridge (1915), and the colonial records on Denkyira (1920-1945), which was retrieved from the Public Records of Archives and Administration Department (PRAAD) in Accra, Ghana. The selected primary sources provided context and authenticity to historical narratives. The secondary sources comprised twelve books, articles and historical narratives dating from the 1960s. The rationale for selecting more secondary than primary sources is to comprehensively have a clearer picture of the African historiography after the independence movements that characterised the continent. These documents were selected based on their relevance to significant events in African history, such as independence movements and colonial encounters.

The paper used deductive and inductive reasoning and triangulated the data to ensure rigour and validity. Its methodology is centred on a comprehensive literature review of primary and secondary sources, supplemented by interviews with contemporary historians working in African contexts. In identifying the historiographical accounts, the paper used compositional utilisation to examine the evolution and development of African historiography by highlighting pivotal events such as Zimbabwe's independence struggle, the Ashanti Wars, and the impact of colonial rule. The paper examined the backgrounds and orientations of the selected authors' works and the methodologies utilised in their historical writings and recitals. Their thesis statements were evaluated, considering the evidence and sources utilised, the historical context, theoretical frameworks, diction and narrative structure.

The paper, in better understanding the evolution of African historiography and its marginalisation in academic global history, identified changes in the interpretation, such as the use of Marxism and the term African Studies, the controversies of historians and non-historians and the influence of broader intellectual and cultural trends in African historiographical scholarships. The paper also synthesised these historiographical accounts as it integrated the insights and perspectives of authors into cohesive and coherent narratives by specifically evaluating how the historical writings complement or contradict each other, especially before and after 1960, reflect or challenge the dominant historical narratives and recitals and how these narratives contribute to a more profound understanding of the African historiography.

In analysing the collected data, thematic analysis was employed to identify and categorise key themes, such as state formation, nationalism and anti-colonial rhetorics, and patterns from classic manuscripts' archival and oral history sources. This process involved several steps, such as familiarisation, where the data were reviewed to gain a broad understanding of the content and context. Key segments of the texts were coded, identifying important phrases, events, and concepts relevant to the research questions. Codes were clustered into broader themes that reflect commonalities or significant differences across the narratives. This process was iterative, continuously reflecting on how themes relate to existing historiographical frameworks. The findings were cross-referenced with existing literature to contrast the new insights gained from oral histories with established historiographical narratives, particularly those focused on European-tinted interpretations of history.

This research also examined the role of digital technologies in contemporary historiography. Digital archives and databases were accessed to identify additional sources illuminating diverse narratives. The study critically engaged with platforms such as Internet Archives, which specialise in digitising African histories and focus on how this accessibility fosters broader engagement and scholarship around indigenous interpretations of history. This multifaceted approach to methodology aimed to ensure the rigour and validity of the findings but also sought to capture the richness and complexity of historical narratives, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of global historiography. By providing detailed descriptions of how data was collected, including primary sources like colonial archives, oral histories, and local records, readers will better understand the practical implications of the methodologies employed.

### 3.1 Western and Non-Western Historiographical Tradition

As an academic discipline, the field with its historiography in the West emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as an avenue to reassess the political trajectory of Europe; thus, history and historiography sought to debunk all the impediments inherent in defeating reason in early societies and served as a sanctuary to deal with customs and traditions via *verstehen* (empathetic understanding). In 1825, Leopold von Ranke proclaimed his intentions to recapture, understand and convey the past as it is; therefore, it became the starting point for learning history and historicism (Ranke, 1824/1845/1973). Thus, the emergence of history and its historiography emerged in Western society due to the public awareness of the past, the obliteration of religious texts, the rise of nationalism after the French Revolution and the business success of books and scholarships on historical themes by individuals like Thomas Carlyle, Thomas Babington Macaulay and others focused on the nature of the composition of historian communities, the universities and their changing roles in mid-Victorian society (Carlyle, 1841/43; Macaulay, 1842/1848; Seeley, 1870).

In the case of Asia, scholarly historiography emerged in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, beginning with Hindi, where the history of India was conceived through the lens of nationalism. The writing of history in India was modelled after the Europeans imported the concept of nationalism and took assumptions from James Mills' book, *History of British India*, 1817. At the same time, importation was found to be relevant in China. Historical writing has been present in China for centuries, and historical writing was grounded in the 'school of evidential learning', which demanded that history be studied through critical methods. As European interactions with China expanded, the study of history in the academic space argued that the study of Chinese history focused on the values of Chinese traditions and historiography in the form of annals, not narratives (Popkin, 2016, p. 85).

In Japan, the influence of the Western study of history emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (i.e., 1854) when Japan became receptive to the outside world and the effect of the 'Meiji' Revolution of 1868 (Conroy, Davis, & Patterson, 1984). The influence of the Western historical approach caused the Japanese historian Fukuzawa Yukichi (1835-1901) in 1875 to advocate for the abandonment of the Confucian tradition and that the writing of history should explore how Japan could play a significant role in the overall progress of world civilisation (Yukichi, 1875). Thus, in 1887, Ludwig Reiss, a German historian, became the first history professor at Tokyo University, and other Japanese colleagues later joined him to adapt the new methods to their country's history. By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, historiography in Japan had shifted from the previously mentioned goal to Japanese nationalism due to its rise as a superpower.

### 3.2 African Historiographical Tradition

Africans have been perceived to have no history in the eyes of the Europeans on the premise that Africa had no written records before the arrival of the Europeans in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Hegel, 1837). Hegel described the history of Africa as consisting of three typologies—Africa Proper, European Africa, and Asian Africa (Hegel, 1837, p. 491). Accordingly, to Hegel, Africa Proper constituted the south of the Sahara and labelled it as the "land of childhood" and the home of "ravenous beasts" (Hegel, 1837, pp. 491-2), European Africa as the north of the Sahara and Asia Africa as the "river region of the Nile, the only valley-land of Africa, and which is in connection with Asia" (Hegel, 1837, p. 491).

This differentiation proffered by Hegel has been critiqued by scholars who have argued that Hegel displayed ignorance, ethnocentric and xenophobic disposition based on the vulgar words used and diminished the true essence of African history with its historiography as a part of global history. Hegel

purports to be disillusioned to assume that Africa cannot succeed without Europe as he considered Egypt a part of European Africa. This assertion is utterly erroneous as Egypt, also known as Kemet, used to be the home of those he categorised as "Africa Proper" (Diagne, 2013, p. 5; Adegbindin, 2015, p. 20). This assertion of Hegel proves his limited scope of understanding historiography, for before the period of written records, humanity kept its history through the unspoken word—oral history. Also, Hegel's assertion proves that his ignorance of Africa hinged on racism as he refused to understand that the earliest forms of written records included cuneiform and pictograph, which were shared on the African continent at the time of his assertion.

In studying the knowledge of Africa and by Africans, Hountondji (2009) argues that the study of Africa forms part of the initiated and controlled knowledge accumulation project of the West; thus, he admonishes for a proactive, comprehensible and response appropinquation that is appropriate of the African societies themselves rather than the capitalised knowledge bequeathed to them over the centuries. Thus, African historiography should be autonomous and self-reliant, addressing the problems and issues affecting Africans directly and indirectly.

### **African Historiography, 1895-1960**

During the pre-colonial phase, historical writings were of travelogue as they were produced by explorers, travellers, missionaries and traders of European descent and non-historians (Riley, 1817); thus, such historical writings are based on perceptions, making their historical worth and accuracy of events minimal. Nonetheless, the 19<sup>th</sup> century ushered in a phase where historical writings became relevant to local history and offered detailed, accurate information. Examples of such works include Thomas Bowdich's *"Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee: with a descriptive account of that kingdom"* (1819) and Joseph Dupuis' *"Journal of a Residence in Ashantee"* (1824). Such European works were superficial and based on observations during their journeys. These writings are based on misconceptions due to their European biases.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, with colonisation in motion, a new breed of history writers emerged—indigenes with European training, such as C. C. Reindorf (1895), Samuel Johnson (1897), and Apollo Kaggwa (1901). Reindorf and Johnson were trained missionaries, while Apollo Kaggwa, an ethnographer, became the Buganda kingdom's Katikkiro (Prime Minister) in 1890 and served as a prince regent from 1897 until 1914. Other Europeans, who were colonial officers and administrators, also engaged in African historiography, which focused on the Europeans in Africa (Schweinfurth, 1874; Pasture, 1918; Westermarck, 1926). These writers were not trained historians, so they wrote historical writings based on the skills and methods absent from history. The producers of the African historical works were mainly anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists, colonial administrators and missionaries whose works are partially based on misconceptions or influenced by the colonial works.

The African writers' historiographies centred on forming nation-states before colonisation, such as Yoruba, Buganda, Asante, Denkyira and Fante (Reindorf, 1895; Johnson, 1897; Kaggwa, 1901; PRAAD/ADM/23/1/408, 1923). These writings were critical and offered responses to Europeans such as Hegel and Trevor-Roper, who took the absence of written sources as Africa's lack of historical legacy (Agyeman Prempeh, 1907; Adjepong, 2000). In their historiography, these writers relied on oral narratives as they offered the voices of the unwritten and marginalised, such as the comprehensive history of Buganda kingship and Asante rulers (Kaggwa, 1901; Agyeman Prempeh, 1907).

One prolific writer of this breed is C.C Reindorf, whose work served as the first effort at writing the entire history of an African nation—Gold Coast's history and the first historical work of a native who relied on local oral sources predominantly. While his work is a ground-breaking piece, his missionary background



constrained him. While historical writing in Western tradition existed, oral history predates it as both run parallel. A key source of oral history during the period is the *okyame*, who not only served as a counsellor of the chief but also was a court historian trained in the art of oral tradition. Asantehene Prempeh's work "...represents the first major attempt at projecting the story of Asante from an official royal perspective" with its ethnic bias (Adjaye, 2008, pp. 6-7). His work counters the notion that historiography can only be undertaken based on documentary sources, and thus, Africans lacked such sources and no history. The issues of colonial historiography include being premised on Hamitic theory and being anthropological. What existed as history was ethnography and the recording of oral tradition.

However, as colonisation took ground and began to influence the socio-political and economic structures of African societies, the intelligentsia of Africa, such as Casely-Hayford and Mensah Sarbah, began to attack the colonial structure and to offer critical comparative perspectives of the African societies and European societies relying on archival documents, personal observations, oral narratives and letters. The letters included the draft proclamation defining the nature and extent of the Queen's jurisdiction on the Gold Coast. (Sarbah, 1906, pp. 363-6). A classic example is the work of Casely-Hayford, *Ethiopia Unbound*, which employed a qualitative approach by relying on memory and personal observations. Casely-Hayford was a trained lawyer and educator from Anomabo (Casely-Hayford, 1911). *Ethiopia Unbound* is a collection of essays exploring Africa's history, culture, and politics. In telling the story of Africa, Casely-Hayford used his personal experiences in Europe as a student, his activism in the Gold Coast, and his ideals of the Africans in tandem with how to throw the yoke of colonialism away.

Casely-Hayford, in showing how the yoke of colonialism could be removed, cited the *Battle of Adwa* in 1896 and asserted that it served as an inspiration and a symbol of African resistance to colonialism. The literature extensively used metaphors and euphemisms to project the ideas. It serves as a platform in reaction to colonial rule and how the yoke of colonialism ought to be removed. He further argued that the intellectual endowment of the African makes him unashamed to compare himself with the Caucasian, for he is adaptive and adaptable to every sphere of life's struggles. Such intellectuals of the soil include Du Bois, Booker T. Washington, Dunbar and others. The African epitomises pure altruism, the influencer of all human experiences (Casely-Hayford, 1911).

As an African, language should not just be a mechanism of putting across one's thoughts, but it must also serve as a means of intimately studying the philosophy of oneself, especially the idea of religion. It is significant because the concept of 'God' and its attributes of all good are traces of what the Roman pagans (rural folks) learned from the Greeks, who learned these values and concepts from the Ethiopians (Africans). The concept of religion and 'God' is essential for the values and beliefs of a person to be embedded in how one relates with the environment. Accordingly, the Africans understand that divinity runs through humanity, and the issue of gods and humanity depends on the extent of divine influence operating upon humans.

The African historiography after 1902 focused on intellectual history as African writers sought to provide philosophical ideas to help address the issues confronting Africa amid colonial rule (Casely-Hayford, 1903). With this aim to project an African philosophy and consciousness, African historical writers advocated for the need to be educated and spoke against colonial rule. The relevance of education was to the preservation of African identity and fighting against colonialism (Sarbah, 1906; Casely-Hayford, 1911; Stigand, 1913; Guggisberg, 1929). Education became a salvation which gave victory to the campaign against the Land Bill 1897 (House of Common, 1897; Casely-Hayford, 1903).

This victory through the power of education influenced Kwamankra to co-establish the Mfantshipim School in 1904, which aimed to draw the Aborigines' (Fanti) attention to the dangers of neglecting education. Casely-Hayford admonished that no society neglects its own languages, customs and institutions



and survives; therefore, in educating the young primarily, training must be premised on nationality with an adaptability approach to the advanced state of the society. The teaching of lessons should be in one's language, and the promotion of teachers depends on how well they influence people to value education and stay in class. The establishment of Mfantispim brought about the thirst for knowledge, where people began to read and write in their own dialects. This phenomenon made translation work a unique feature of Mfantispim.

Casely-Hayford's paradoxical intuition of the observed social facts in Europe influenced his perspective and writings as he opined that, in observing social facts, the observation of humanity is the most interesting study, and its study is the vertex of an intellectual hobby. Among Africans, 'I' is not about the body but the soul of a person who has communion with others. For these happenings, it was crucial to ensure the mental awakening of Africa, which is why the historiography of the time focused significantly on anti-colonial perspectives.

On the other hand, the African historiography of the period championed by the non-Africans, especially Europeans, was characterised by Eurocentrism, orientalism and imperialist narrative (Stigand, 1913; Claridge, 1915; Pasture, 1918). These historical writings judged the Africans as uncivilised and primitive based on the European lens, emphasising the role of the European explorers and colonisers. The authors perpetuated stereotypes and exoticised African cultures, reinforcing their notion of African "otherness." For instance, Stigand's work is premised on his personal experiences, observations and interactions with local populations. He also drew on existing literature and colonial records, such as accounts by European explorers such as John Hanning Speke, James Augustus Grant and David Livingstone (pp. 23-35). The work of Pasture (1918) draws on the writings, photos and letters of Africans they encountered aside from her observations and personal experiences. For instance, she incorporates the letters and writings of William Taylor A. Wilson of Sekondi, Nathaniel Ashon of Shama and J. E. Cronzoo of Half Assinie (pp. 345-351).

Despite the comparative approach employed by the Africans, their writings lacked a critical perspective on colonialism as their counters sought to reply to the stereotypical and racist portrayals of African culture and relied on limited and biased sources. They were also non-historians, hence lacking the requisite historiographical skills needed by historians to undertake an African historiography. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, African scholars, particularly in America, asserted the need for a unified and objective interpretation of history, which W.E.B. Du Bois championed.

As the first African to earn a doctorate in history in 1903, Du Bois published a significant survey of African and American history in 1915, exploring the role of Africa in global history (Du Bois, 1903/15). Du Bois provided the roles Africans played in the rise of empires from ancient Greece to Great Britain, their impact of the European slaves on the Americas and how significant Africa was to the survival of Europe, hence, the Berlin Conference of 1884 (Du Bois, 1915/1920). In his seminal work, *The Negro* (1915), he challenged the dominant narratives and stereotypes as he offered counter-narrative in an attempt to correct the racist and Eurocentric histories, highlighting the agency, achievements and struggles of the African Americans, situated the African American experience within the broader context of African diasporic history and culture—Pan-Africanism—and utilised an interdisciplinary approach where the work relied on a combination of history, anthropology, literature and sociology to provide a comprehensive understanding of the African American experience.

Du Bois, in his seminal work, employed a range of methods including historical research where he drew on primary sources and secondary sources such as the slave narratives of Fredrick Douglas and Harriet Jacobs, other historical accounts of other historians such as George Washington Williams's *History of the Negro Race in America* (1882), Fredrick Jackson Turner's *The Frontier in American History* (1893)

and William Archibald Dunning's *Reconstruction, Political and Economic* (1907). In such aforementioned works, for example, William's pioneering work challenged racist narratives and highlighted African American achievement; Turner's work highlighted the experiences of African Americans in the context of westward expansion, which was significant of the American frontier and critiqued Dunning's work which reflected the dominant white supremacist views of the time.

Despite the significant foundational work Du Bois provides, his work emphasised African American cultures and identity and focused on the African American elites rather than the broader population. Yet, it remains a pivotal work in African historiography as it helped establish African American Studies as a distinct field of inquiry, informed the intellectual and ideological foundations of the African quest for independence, specifically Ghana, and continues to shape historiographical debates about the African and Afro-American experience, racism, and social justice.

With much work on the need for African historiography pioneered by Du Bois, the colleges on the African continent began to teach African history as part of the educational curriculum. Haitian scholars like Jean Price-Mars collaborated with Du Bois to highlight Africans' substantial but often overlooked contributions to global historical development (Celucien, Jean & Glodel, 2018; Gates, 2006). The interwar period, influenced by the Negritude movement and figures like Leopold Senghor, challenged the traditional objectivity of historical writing, leading historians to recognise and embrace their biases to support the causes they believed in (Senghor, 1998; Popkin 2016, pp. 108-110).

African history was taught at Achimota College in 1927, featuring topics on the Gold Coast, West Africa, and Egypt (Boadu, 2021, p. 13). In 1945, the colonial governments envisioned the need to make university education accessible as the most effective route for preparing the colonised for self-governance and self-determination; hence, African history, for the first time, was taught at the university level (Oxford Delegacy Papers, 1946). It was not until the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century that African American history gained recognition within academic scholarship, with African Americans increasingly becoming part of university teaching faculties. Before the 1950s, no records of African historiography existed on a general history of the whole African continent (Watterson, 2008; Boakye, 2022).

The institutionalisation of African history with its historiography as an academic field became possible through the works of many Africanists, such as Kenneth Onwuka Dike, who pioneered oral narratives in a multidisciplinary approach in African historiography and is known as the father of modern African historiography. Establishing African historiography as an academic speciality changed the narrative of Africans lacking history; hence, African history as a branch of learning was made possible. African historiography advocated for the search for pre-colonial sources, both documentary and non-documentary sources, to challenge such aforementioned historical professions' assertions of Europeans (Watterson, 2008).

Professor John Fage of the University of Birmingham marks the modern era of West African history writing with the establishment of history departments in newly formed universities and the serious study of African history in institutions, primarily in Britain and the USA. The 1945 Asquith Report was pivotal in developing African historiography as an academic discipline, introducing it at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 1948. John Fage and Roland Oliver are rightly recognised as the pioneers of African history as a formal subject (Fage, 1971, p. 244; Nyarko, 2023).

The foundation of this discipline was closely linked to the British strategic interests in trade and security, stemming from the evolving relationship between England and its African colonies from 1787 to 1948, which led to the establishment of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone in 1827. The Asquith Report called for recruiting British scholars to staff new institutions and emphasised the importance of maintaining

British academic traditions and independent research. This initiative triggered a transformative shift in higher education across British colonies, establishing additional universities in Uganda, Sudan, Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone. By 1949, five university colleges had been established in Africa, with all except Fourah Bay College affiliated with the University of London, marking a significant milestone in advancing African history scholarship (Watterson, 2008, p. 22).

As a result, in the 1950s, African history became globally accepted, whereas the discipline of African historiography recognised linguistic data as significant (Philips, 2005, p. 4). In African history, 'observation of change' is fundamental to historiography; therefore, there was a need for original historiography. The requirement for original research by academic staff facilitated the recruitment of British scholars who played a critical role in local research, thus contributing to developing African history with its historiography field. The acceptance of African history with its historiography as a distinct academic discipline was not realised until the 1960s. As Africa's past was recognised and academically justified, African historiography moved away from imperial history (Watterson, 2008).

One of the reasons for the initial hesitation of African historiography was the over-reliance on oral history. For example, the works of R.S. Rattray and Eva Meyerowitz on the Akan of Ghana relied primarily on oral history. One of the pioneering African oral historians was Jan Vansina, whose visit to Kuba, Congo, to learn about funerary dirges, understood that the African knowledge of the past relied on memory. He, therefore, used his knowledge of medievalist scholarship to formulate an approach to oral history as a primary source (Vansina, 1985; Storey, 2013, p. 63). This began the revolution to accept oral history and tradition as sources. The emergence of African historiography as an academic speciality can be traced to the aftermath of WWI and WWII when several significant government papers espoused the need and sponsoring of the academic institutionalisation of African history by UNESCO in 1964 and the emergence of the Cold War.

### **African Historiography, Beyond 1960**

African historiography began to blossom with the independence of a few African countries, such as Ghana, Sudan and Egypt, before 1960. Recognised historians, such as K. O. Dike of Nigeria, established university programmes in African Universities to produce scholars such as Albert Adu Boahen of Ghana, a renowned English-trained scholar, Samuel Yaw Boadi-Siaw and a few distinguished scholars of American background. These non-African scholars included John Fage, Roland Oliver, A.D. Roberts, and Lewis Hanke, all with the requisite proficiencies to sustain the new discipline.

With African history as an academic discipline in universities such as the University of Ghana, the University of Cape Town, and the University of Ibadan, the *Journal of African History* was launched to provide a platform for publishing high-quality research on African history—a significant year in acknowledging African historiography. Archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and linguists contributed articles to the journal, which became the first history journal to delve into African history from a multidisciplinary perspective (Oliver & Fage, 1960, p. 1).

Based on the circumstances that bore the acceptance of African historiography as part of the global history study, Hountondji (2009) admonishes African scholars and intellectuals to appreciate the reality that the nature of research executed has significantly been extraverted to meet the theoretical and practical needs of the so-called global north; hence, the need for Africans to develop a new paradigm for research in African history as African history connotes the historical discourse on or about Africa and not necessarily a historical discourse emanating from Africa or produced by Africans (p. 122). Kenneth O. Dike also promoted an Africanist historiography that sought strengthened, meticulous, non-colonial-focused African research.

With the advent of independence came the awakening of African scholarship, beginning with Ghanaian scholarship. This awakening is due to the notion that the true history of Africa can exist if its history is no longer continued from the non-African perspective and sources. The need for historiography based on oral narratives served to counter the awakening dominance of Western intellectual hegemonies, methodologies and historiography; hence, the aim was to produce historiographies liberated from Western hegemony with the realities of African conditions in account while rejecting the rationalisation of African subjugation (Ki-Zerbo, 1964; Boahen, 1985).

By the 1960s, many African scholars had begun writing about African history, such as Basil Davidson's *Old Africa Rediscovered* (1965) and Jacob Ade Ajayi and Ian Espie's work, *The African Past: Studies in the History of Africa* (1963). In Ghana, the pioneer of the new historiography is Albert Adu Boahen's work, "*Britain, the Sahara and the Western Sudan 1788-1861*" (1961). The methodologies and understanding of the past as African academics still hinged on European conceptions, techniques and research methodologies in the practice of African historiography, with most of the historiographical works focused on centralised nation-states such as Asante, Denkyira and Akyem-Abuakwa. Also, much of the historiography was political history devoid of any significant cultural analysis of societies. The practice of historical works after independence sought to concentrate on the positive reactions of Ghanaians (and Africans) to colonialism, especially the creation and evolution of indigenous states' complex civilisations.

*Old Africa Rediscovered* (1965) and *The African Past: Studies in the History of Africa* (1963) have significantly influenced African historiography. Both works were published during the African decolonisation and independence era, marking a significant shift in African historiography. Both scholarly works challenged the dominant Eurocentric narratives that had marginalised African historiography. Davidson's work focuses on ancient and medieval African history, emphasising the continent's rich cultural heritage and contributions to world civilisation. In contrast, Ajayi and Espie's edited volume covers a broader chronological range from the early medieval period to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on West Africa. Both works share a common objective—to reclaim and reassert the importance of African history and culture. However, they differ in their approaches and methodologies. Davidson's work is characterised by a more generalist and popularising approach aimed at a broad audience. On the other hand, Ajayi and Espie's volume features contributions from specialist historians and adopts a more academic tone.

However, when synthesised, these works reveal key historiographical themes, such as challenge to Eurocentrism, reassertion of African agency, emphasis on African cultural heritage and decolonisation of African history by questioning the dominant Eurocentric narratives that had marginalised African histories, emphasised the agency and autonomy of African societies and cultures, highlight the richness and diversity of African cultural heritage, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions as well as promote a more nuanced and accurate understanding of the continent's past. Both works have inspired a new wave of African historians to reclaim and reinterpret their histories, influenced African Studies as a distinct academic field, and contributed to a more nuanced understanding of African history, challenging Eurocentric and racist narratives.

The nature of African historiography in the 1960s was one of nationalist historiography (Carr, 1982; Weldeananiya & Omeje, 2025). Critics of nationalist historiography posit that this perspective of historiography focuses more on revisionism and it is a contest for attention or readership and that political history cannot be detached from socioeconomic substructures (Carr, 1982) but Weldeananiya and Omeje (2025, p. 2) disagree as they assert that such an approach provides addressing historical issues, such as solving historiographical debates meaningfully. Therefore, this new historiography failed to address the realities. The critics assert that historiography must address the social experiences of workers, the countryside, the urban proletariat and the marginalised. Political history fails to expatiate the reasons for the economic difficulties experienced in Africa.

While analyses within African historiography aimed for an African-centred perspective, the scholarship on resistance paradoxically centred on European colonialism, often overlooking the internal tensions and inequalities within African societies. Growing scepticism about traditional development narratives made the concept of 'underdevelopment' appealing, framing the poverty and vulnerability of marginalised societies as outcomes of the global capitalist system's long-term domination. Walter Rodney, a pivotal figure in this discourse and a founding member of the 'Dar es Salaam,' School of Radical African History, linked dependency theory directly to Africa. This theory catalysed the rise of Marxist thought among Africans and Africanists in the 1970s, establishing a foundational discourse that resonated throughout the Global South. The dependency theory offered little space to African agencies. African historiography, by default, became subaltern studies.

Marxist thought became important to African historiography as it emphasises challenging Eurocentric narratives and understanding the socioeconomic and political structures that have shaped human societies. The African writers of the 1970s adopted Marxism to explain class struggles, exploitation of labour and modes of production, which have shaped the historical events on the continent (Rodney, 1972; Cabral, 1973; Ki-Zerbo, 1974). African Marxist historians such as Rodney and Cabral deployed the approach to critique colonialism and imperialism as systems of exploitation that perpetuate inequality and underdevelopment. Through this approach, African historians have detailed the destructive nature of colonialism on African societies and economies (Rodney, 1972; Cabral, 1973; Arrighi, 1973; Amin, 1974).

The beginning of the 1980s saw the African historiography take a different paradigm. Scholars focused on the dire economic conditions in Africa, particularly highlighting the struggles of African educational and cultural institutions. This historiography underscores the importance of the 'resistance' theory, which is central to understanding colonialism and the development of new knowledge in the field. Resistance theory posits that colonial conquests were met with significant opposition, emphasising that organised military responses and individual acts of defiance were crucial in the struggle against colonial domination. Cooper contends that the political discourse surrounding African history should extend beyond anticolonialism and nationalism.

African scholars began to engage in critical historiography and decolonisation of African history. African historiography significantly shifted towards a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of the past. The quest for decolonisation dominated scholarly writings as history was seen as a way to dismantle the dominant Eurocentric narratives that had long marginalised African experiences (Mudimbe, 1988, p. 12). The period was characterised by a focus on African agency, autonomy and perspectives, and critiques of colonialism and ongoing legacies (Achebe, 1983, p. 15).

A new historiographical trend was embraced with the shift toward critical historiography, recognising the need to critically examine authors' positions and perspectives (Appiah, 1985, p. 120). Historians began to focus on African societies' social and cultural histories, exploring themes such as family, kinship and community (Cohen, 1985, p. 23). Here, African historians began synthesising different approaches and methods, combining social, economic and cultural histories to create a more nuanced and comprehensive account of the African past (Cooper, 1981, p. 2). Oral history also became increasingly prominent, allowing historians to tap into the rich cultural heritage of African societies and challenged written records (Vansina, 1985, p. 12). Also, African historians began to explore the economic histories of African societies, examining themes such as trade, commerce and labour (Hopkins, 1986, p. 15).

With the emergence of critical historiography in African historiography in the 1980s, the trend has continued to date except with little alterations. This alteration has resulted in revisionism, where conventional views on evidence surrounding historical events are reinterpreted. To these scholars, revision is the lifeblood of historical scholarship, as history is a continuous dialogue of the past and the present.

Therefore, reinterpretations of the past are subject to new evidence, questions asked of the evidence, and new perspectives gained over time. With this perspective, there is no single, eternal, immutable "truth" about past events and their meaning.

The next decade and subsequent ones—i.e., from the 1990s to date had seen African historiography transformed, marked by a significant expansion of the field, increased diversity and a growing emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches. The 1990s saw a growing influence of postcolonial and postmodern perspectives on African historiography. Historians began to challenge the traditional notions of objectivity and truth, emphasising instead historical knowledge's fragmented and multifaceted nature (Mbembe, 1992, p. 12). This shift was reflected in the works of historians such as Mbembe, who drew on postcolonial theory to challenge dominant narratives of African history (Mbembe, 1992, p. 15).

African historiography emphasises the need to draw insights from anthropology, sociology and literature to understand the African past (Comaroff, 1993, p. 25). Here, African historiographies began to emphasise the role of African actors and agents in shaping their histories rather than simply being passive recipients of external forces (Mamdani, 1996, p. 12; Appiah, 1992, p. 25). Mbembe (2001) critiques how colonial narratives have shaped perceptions of African identities, governance, and culture, advocating for a more nuanced understanding reflecting postcolonial experiences' complexities as well as explores the ongoing effects of colonialism on African societies, revealing the intricate dynamics of power, identity, and resistance.

The Subaltern Studies Group, representing post-colonial scholars, confronts established historiographical practices, questioning sources, theoretical frameworks, and specialisations to recover the narratives of marginalised populations often overlooked in discussions of global exploitation and national mobilisation. The concept of 'subalternity' highlights how non-Western histories remain overshadowed by European narratives due to the enduring impacts of colonialism (Sheriff, 1987; Mamdani, 1993; Ajumbi, 2001). This colonial legacy perpetuates a skewed vision of historical progress, portraying Global South histories as failures while framing European state-building and capitalist development as benchmarks of success. Acknowledging this dynamic to truly understand and validate the Global South's history is imperative.

Post-colonial scholars aim to foster a diverse consciousness among post-colonial populations, promoting autonomous agency even within the constraints of subaltern status. The Subaltern Studies Group transforms criticisms of modernity and Western discourse into a commitment to visibility for the colonised. Subaltern Studies concentrate on the disparity between people's lived experiences and the historical processes that shape our understanding of knowledge. This disparity is a crucial entry point for evaluating colonial experiences and highlights scholars' struggle to break free from the grips of Europe's material and cultural influence. To recognise 'subalterns' as integral to history, the meanings of domination and subalternity must be re-examined, allowing African historiography to move past fixed notions of modernity, liberalism, and citizenship. Nationalism should be explored in relation to various social movements within the colonial context, acknowledging its contingent nature. In Africa, historical lived experiences profoundly influence the present, underscoring that the continent cannot build effective networks and institutions for dialogue and collective action without addressing the complexities born from its historical context. This situation necessitates a nuanced analysis rooted in Africa's intricate past.

In "An Afrocentric Manifesto," Molefi Kete Asante, a prominent scholar in African studies, presents a compelling argument for an Afrocentric approach to history, culture, and identity. Asante articulates a vision for an African Renaissance that emphasises the importance of placing African experiences and perspectives at the centre of discourse. His work challenges the prevailing Eurocentric narratives that have historically marginalised African contributions to world history and culture. Asante begins by defining



Afrocentrism as a framework that seeks to reclaim the narrative of Africa and its diasporas by prioritising African values, cultural practices, and historical experiences. He argues that it is crucial to critique and move beyond the colonial legacies that have shaped perceptions of Africa and its peoples to understand the complexities of African identity. The manifesto positions African historiography as a dynamic and multifaceted narrative that deserves to be explored from an African perspective.

Methodology is needed for African historiography to constitute a significant part of global history. John Tosh's *The Pursuit of History* (2021) is a significant work that offers a comprehensive overview of history's methods, theories, and practices. While it primarily focuses on Western historiographical traditions, its insights can be integrated into the discourse of African historiography, particularly in how historical inquiry is conceptualised and practised. It emphasises the importance of methodological rigour in historical research, which is crucial for African historiography as it matures into a more recognised academic discipline. His discussions about the influences of ideology, culture, and society on historical writing are particularly relevant when considering how African historiography can challenge dominant Western narratives and highlight unique local contexts. "The Pursuit of History" can be viewed as a foundational text that informs contemporary discussions about integrating African historiography into the broader historical discourse. Tosh's work provides crucial methodological insights and highlights the importance of diverse narratives in pursuing a comprehensive understanding of history.

Additionally, Goody's "*The Theft of History*," which critiques the Eurocentric bias in historical account, which has marginalised the contributions and achievement of African historiography, highlights the need to recentre African historiography and challenge the dominant narratives that have relegated Africa to the periphery (Goody, 2006, p. 50) and helps question the concept of "primitive" societies, which have been used to describe African societies as backward and underdeveloped. African societies have their own complex histories, cultures and knowledge systems (Goody, 2006, p. 150).

Finally, digital history, which emerged in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, has recently transformed how historians engage with the past, offering innovative tools and platforms that expand the accessibility and diversity of historical narratives (Popkin 2016; Gunn and Faire 2012). This transformation is particularly significant in African historiography, where traditional narratives have often been marginalised or overlooked in favour of Eurocentric perspectives. By harnessing digital technologies, scholars can challenge existing historiographical frameworks, create spaces for underrepresented voices, and promote a more inclusive understanding of history (Moretti 2007, p. 1; Manovich 2013, p. 12).

In discussing the impact of digital technology on historiography, Asante (2007) acknowledges the potential for digital platforms to amplify African voices and narratives. His insights can complement the evolving methodologies in historical scholarship. Asante encourages scholars to leverage technology to democratise knowledge production and allow for greater access to African histories, thus fostering a more inclusive historiographical landscape. The digitisation of African archives would play a crucial role in reshaping the landscape of historical research. Institutions across the continent and globally have initiated efforts to digitise primary sources such as colonial records, indigenous manuscripts, and oral histories, with the Java Museum in Elmina, Ghana and Ghana's Daily Graphic as classic examples. These digital collections preserve crucial historical documents at risk of deterioration or loss and democratise access to information, enabling a broader audience of researchers, students, and the general public to engage with African historiographies.

For instance, projects like the African Digital Heritage Initiative and The African Digital Library seek to preserve and promote African cultural heritage by digitising artefacts and archival materials. By making these resources available online, historians can draw upon a wealth of previously inaccessible primary sources highlighting indigenous narratives, cultural practices, and historical events from African



perspectives. Digital history facilitates the engagement of local communities in documenting and interpreting their histories, which is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the past. Digital platforms allow historians to collaborate with local historians and community members, collecting oral histories that challenge dominant narratives and enrich scholarly discourse. This approach is crucial for acknowledging the diverse experiences of communities affected by colonialism and social change (Cohen and Rosenzweig 2006, p. 2).

For example, oral history projects utilising digital recording methods enable historians to capture first-hand accounts from marginalised groups, creating a repository of lived experiences that complement traditional archival research. This engagement fosters a participatory model of historiography, where communities actively contribute to the understanding and interpreting their histories. As oral histories and community accounts preserve and convey marginalised perspectives on the past, digital technology emerges as a vital tool in amplifying these voices, facilitating their documentation and dissemination to a broader audience, thereby democratising historical scholarship and enriching the understanding of diverse narratives.

By incorporating digital history into African historiography, scholars can directly counter Eurocentric interpretations that have historically dominated the field. Digital tools allow for comparative analysis of historical events and figures, revealing complex interconnections between African and global histories (Gunn and Faire, 2012). For instance, the works of scholars like Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o offer critical insights into the reinterpretation of colonial histories through a digital lens, promoting indigenous narratives that challenge the monolithic views prevailing in traditional historical discourse.

Moreover, digital platforms allow scholars to publish and disseminate their research broadly, reaching audiences beyond the academic community. This increased visibility allows for more excellent dialogue around African historiography and encourages a global audience to engage with and reflect on Africa's contributions to world history. Integrating digital history into African historiography presents a transformative opportunity for the field. By leveraging digital tools and methodologies, historians can facilitate access to diverse narratives, promote a more inclusive understanding of the past, and effectively challenge entrenched Eurocentric perspectives. As such, the future of African historiography lies in the ongoing exploration and application of digital technologies to capture the richness and complexity of Africa's historical experience. This development enhances scholarly research and honours and amplifies the voices of those who have long been marginalised in historical narratives.

Despite these merits, the paradigm shift has introduced many challenges that historians must navigate. One of the fundamental concerns is digital preservation, as technological obsolescence and the ephemeral nature of digital media threaten the long-term accessibility of historical records (Kirschenbaum, 2012, p. 12). The sheer volume of digital data has created a 'data deluge' that can overwhelm historians and make it difficult to discern meaningful patterns and trends (Manovich, 2013, p. 181). Also, the collaborative and participatory nature of digital history projects can raise questions about authorship, authority and the role of the historian in the digital age (Rosenzweig, 2003, p. 155). Ultimately, historians must be conscious of these challenges and develop new methodologies and best practices to ensure that digital history is a powerful tool for historical enquiry and a sustainable and enduring record of the past.

The global perspective is a crucial aspect of digital history, enabling scholars from diverse backgrounds to share their research and insights with a worldwide audience. Digital platforms like the Internet Archive and Google Books, which serve as primary sources and avenues for retrieving rare books, have facilitated the globalisation of historical knowledge, allowing local histories to reach a broader audience and fostering collaborations between historians from different regions. These platforms enable researchers to appreciate African historiography's evolution and undertake comparative analysis with

current trends. This development is particularly significant for expanding our knowledge of African histories, which have usually been marginalised or excluded from dominant historical narratives. Digital history can promote a more inclusive, diverse and nuanced understanding of the past by providing a global platform for historical research and exchange.

Through the Internet Archives, researchers can access digitised versions of rare historical texts and colonial records that are often out of print or housed in distant libraries. These documents include primary sources such as government reports, personal narratives, and accounts of colonial administrators, which are crucial for reinterpreting African history beyond the Eurocentric narratives. Google Scholar provides access to many scholarly articles and theses that contribute to the discourse on African historiography, enabling scholars to engage with contemporary debates and methodologies that may not be as prevalent in traditional print publications. By leveraging these digital tools, researchers can uncover diverse voices and perspectives, facilitating a more comprehensive understanding of Africa's historical narrative that counters the mainstream historiographical tradition.

With African historiography's significant contributions to history as a global academic discipline and the emergence of digital history, there is a need for conscious efforts, especially from Western universities and institutions, to promote and strengthen African historiography to enhance diversity and inclusion of all narratives that have contributed to and shaped the field. As the dynamics of our world shift toward greater interconnectedness, the academic discipline of history must adapt, incorporating diverse perspectives that challenge the established narratives and illuminate the multifaceted nature of human experiences across time and space.

Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge that African historiography stands at a crossroads, beckoning scholars to engage with Western and non-Western historiographical traditions. By integrating these varied perspectives, historians can craft a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of history that resonates with the realities of diverse cultures and societies. The rise of digital history presents opportunities and challenges for the field. It compels historians to rethink how historical knowledge is produced, disseminated, and consumed. Digital platforms enable broader accessibility and engagement, promoting the democratisation of previously unattainable history. Therefore, historians must embrace these technological advancements, harnessing them to bridge gaps in historical narratives and amplify underrepresented voices. By doing so, the discipline reinforces its relevance in an increasingly digital world and enriches the global tapestry of historical inquiry.

This study calls for an active reassessment of how history is taught and understood. Academic institutions must prioritise the inclusion of African historiography and methodologies in their curricula, fostering an environment where diverse historical narratives are recognised and celebrated. The future of history as an academic discipline lies in its ability to reflect the plurality of human experiences and the interwoven narratives that define our shared past. By challenging traditional Eurocentric paradigms, scholars can illuminate the contributions of African historiographies and engage in a meaningful dialogue about the complexities of humanity.

To effectively integrate African historiography into the broader historical discourse, universities and educational institutions should revise their history to promote and encourage collaborative research projects between African historians and their counterparts globally through the *concept of evolutionary differentiation*—i.e., the historical writings should be seen as an emergence of human agency devoid of geographical isolation and can metamorphose to suit the peculiarity of its environment and how it helps to reconstruct the continuity and change over time. Joint research initiatives can facilitate the exchange of ideas and methodologies, enriching historical scholarship and promoting a more inclusive understanding of global history. The African historical society should adopt interdisciplinary approaches from

anthropology, sociology, and cultural studies to create a more comprehensive understanding of historical events.

Expanding historical studies into a more global discipline is not just a matter of academic interest; fostering a richer and more nuanced understanding of our world is necessary. The evolution of African historiography provides a critical lens through which we can evaluate broader historical methodologies and implementation. As historians, educators, and scholars, we are responsible for encouraging an inclusive approach that honours diverse narratives while advancing the study of history as a vital link to understanding humanity's past and shaping our future.

#### 4. Conclusion

The exploration of African historiography reveals the critical need for a more nuanced understanding of history that encompasses various perspectives beyond the traditional Eurocentric narratives. Examining contributions from African scholars highlights their vital role in reshaping historical discourse by incorporating indigenous narratives and oral traditions. Figures like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Molefe Asante demonstrate how historical studies can bridge cultural identities and challenge prevailing paradigms of understanding African history.

This paper has shown that the development of African historiography is not merely an academic pursuit but a vital process of reclaiming identity and agency within the global historical narrative. The analysis of independence movements and the emphasis on the significance of oral histories underscore the importance of community narratives in grasping the complexities of the African experience.

Furthermore, the paper advocates for incorporating digital history as an innovative approach to recording African narratives, preserving and disseminating African narratives in a contemporary context. By embracing such developments, scholars can advance a historiographical tradition that authentically represents Africa's multifaceted past while addressing the lingering impacts of colonial thought. The marginalisation of African historiography reflects broader socio-political dynamics and institutional frameworks that have historically sidelined diverse voices. Future scholars, educators, and historians must confront these challenges, ensuring that the history of Africa is not only told but celebrated as a vital component of global history. The journey towards a comprehensive understanding of African historiography is ongoing and necessitates collaborative efforts, inclusivity, and critical engagement with both historical and contemporary narratives.

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