

# Resuscitating ‘Clio’ for the Development of Twenty-First-Century Ghana and Beyond: Arguments in Defence of the Government’s Decision to Reintroduce National History as a Separate Subject in the Pre-tertiary School Curriculum

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## Abstract

In the colonial days, history occupied an enviable position in the school curriculum. At this time, the colonial authorities exploited the discipline to achieve their imperial objectives. After independence, President Nkrumah also retained history in the school curriculum mainly because of his appreciation of the contributions of history to national development. History continued to be studied in pre-tertiary schools up to the 1980s. From 1987, however, the study of history started experiencing a substantial degree of marginalisation in the educational curriculum when the educational reforms of that year placed history under social studies. Over time, the study of history in the primary and junior secondary/high school levels was discontinued altogether, while at the senior high school level, it was made an elective subject, with little patronage by students. As a result, history is currently in a state of disrepute; the welfare of history, as a branch of human knowledge, is certainly exposed to more serious dangers, with academic historians struggling to justify the place of history in the school curriculum. Fortunately, after realising the need for the teaching and learning of the history of Ghana at the pre-tertiary level of education, the new government, the Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo-led New Patriotic Party administration, has decided to reintroduce history as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum. This move raises the question, “For what reasons should history be reintroduced into the pre-tertiary school curriculum?” Using both secondary and primary data, and employing the qualitative research approach, this study seeks to defend or justify the decision of the government through a critical appraisal of the contributions the study of history makes to the development of society. The study concludes that in view of the enormous value of history for the survival of our societies, the government should go ahead and reintroduce national history as a separate and a compulsory subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum. Finally, the paper urges the government to institute measures that would ensure the early, effective and efficient implementation of the decision.

**Keywords:** development, discipline, history, justification (justify, justifying), reintroduce, the study of history, uses of history, values of history

## Introduction: Background, Purpose and Question of the Study

*The knowledge, understanding and skills which the study of history can confer are of great value themselves. To acquire an interest in the past is itself a cultural acquisition which can enrich the whole of one’s adult life .... In addition history can ... encourage young people to use their reason as well as their memories. It can develop skills of analysis and criticism ... by encouraging pupils to evaluate primary source material ... the skills acquired through the study of history can also enhance young people’s use of language, numeracy, observation and communication with other people. History is indispensable to understanding the society we live [in] .... In short, properly taught, justifies its place in the curriculum by what it does to prepare all pupils for the responsibilities of citizenship (Keith Joseph, cited in Salleh, Mohamad and Ambotang, 2013, September:4).*

To *reintroduce something* means to *introduce it again*. It means the thing was once there and, for some reasons, it was removed or abandoned, or even destroyed, and the need for it once again arises so that efforts are made to revive and institute it in order to *exploit* it for the purpose for which it was *resurrected*. Certainly, the verb *introduce* is used in different senses. In one, it is used to mean *to open to notice; to begin; to present*, as in “he introduced the subject with a brief history of the town.” In another, it is used to mean *to bring into notice, practice, cultivation, or use*, as in “to introduce a new fashion, method, plant, course, or programme.” In yet another sense, *introduce* is used to mean *to lead to and make known by formal announcement or*

*recommendation*, as in “to introduce strangers or to introduce one person to another.” Considering history as an academic or a school discipline and the fact that the *reintroduction* is an official government policy, we wish to use the term *to introduce national history as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum* to mean *to make national history known, or to present national history, as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum by formal announcement or recommendation*. Accordingly, *reintroducing national history as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum* means *remaking national history known, or re-presenting national history, as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum by formal announcement or recommendation*.

We wish to set out by first confessing that if ever there were any *Book of History Records*, the decision by the Government of Ghana to reintroduce national history in primary, junior high and senior high schools would obviously have won an enviable entry into it. To bring back to full life and use a very significant, but almost-dead, nation-building tool in the form of an academic species is no mean achievement. This is no exaggeration, because there certainly was great jubilation in the Kingdom of Clio<sup>1</sup> when historians of Ghana and their counterparts elsewhere received the *gospel message*, in February, 2017, that “The Government of Ghana, having seen the need for the teaching and learning of the history of Ghana at the basic level of education, has decided to reintroduce History as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum”<sup>2</sup> (Ghana Education Service, 2017, February 26:1). We, as practising historians, are of the view that this decision, if effectively, efficiently and appropriately implemented, would remain one of the best policies of education ever implemented in the history of Ghana because of the potential benefits the country stands to reap from such a policy.<sup>3</sup> In our research work, teaching and practice, we have discovered from both theoretical and empirical evidence that historical training or history education makes numerous and enormous contributions towards nation-building or national development. Our specific objective in this paper, therefore, is to argue in defence of the decision by the Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo-led New Patriotic Party (NPP) administration to reintroduce and make national history a separate (core) subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum, through a critical appraisal of the potential contributions of history to the development of twenty-first-century Ghana and beyond.

Indeed, the traditions of research and teaching in history in general go as far back as the ancient period. The approach to historical research and the contents of the history used for instruction have, however, differed with time, space, intellectual culture and political tradition, ideology and development agendas, all of which combined to determine the content of the history taught at any level of any country’s educational system at any given period and, consequently, the conduct of historical research. In the situation of Ghana, the teaching of history in schools began in the colonial period, particularly after the British government assumed more effective control over education policy formulation and implementation and increased government involvement in school education provision (Boahen, 2000:81; Adu-Boahen, 2011:3). When history was added to the subjects on the

<sup>1</sup> In ancient Greek mythology, the term *Muse* simply refers to any of the nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory, who were believed to be the protectors or in charge of particular arts and sciences. In their wisdom, the Greeks assigned these Muses – nine daughters (goddesses) – to all the then known disciplines, and Clio was made the Muse of History. Accordingly, when used in academic discourse, Clio simply means History, not only as a discipline but also in its personalised form (see Boahen, 1975:4). As a result, the term *Kingdom of Clio* is used here to refer to the history fraternity: researchers, practitioners, teachers, students, and even non-historians who love history, appreciate the value of historical knowledge and experience, and support the decision to reintroduce national history as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum.

<sup>2</sup> In his first State of the Nation’s Address, the President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (2017, February 21:9), states, “I am in a hurry to ensure that every child born in this country attends school from Kindergarten to Senior High School; in other words, that is the basic education that each child is required to receive.” In this study, however, we have used the term *pre-tertiary school* instead of *basic school*, to refer to the educational levels from Kindergarten to Senior High School. For practical purposes, we have differentiated between the junior and senior high school levels at certain points in the study.

<sup>3</sup> The authors wish to inform readers that this paper is a modified version of a proposal we wrote in January 2017 on behalf of the Historical Society of Ghana which was intended to be presented to the Nana Akufo-Addo led-New Patriotic Party government to make history a compulsory or a core subject in senior high schools in Ghana. At the end of the month, we received a letter from the Headquarters of the Ghana Education Service (GES) informing us of the government’s decision to reintroduce history as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum. We were, thus, invited to an urgent stakeholders’ consultative meeting to discuss papers on the modern trends in the teaching and learning of history, and to identify topics for study at each level to guide panel members who would be selected to draft syllabuses for the various levels. The meeting was to take place at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 3, 2017 in the Director-General’s Conference Room at the GES Headquarters. Unfortunately, on Wednesday, February 1, 2017, we received a text message from the GES Headquarters informing us that the intended stakeholders’ meeting for the reintroduction of history had been postponed, following a meeting between the GES and Ministry of Education management in the afternoon of that day to discuss some of the major manifesto provisions of the government. We were informed that a new date would be communicated to us for the meeting (check details from Ghana Education Service, 2017, January 26:1). As of May, 2017, the new date had not yet been communicated to us. It was under this circumstance that we decided to revise the work, modify the title, and focus on defending or justifying the government’s decision to reintroduce history as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum, and publish it.

school curriculum, it was British history that was taught to Ghanaian school children. Ashby (1964:2), for instance, has emphasised that in the past, one of the symptoms of British cultural nationalism was an invincible confidence in the efficacy of British education, not only for home consumption, but for export; not only for Englishmen but for Indians, Africans, Malaysians and Americans. The content of the history that was taught in schools in Ghana was intended to expose Ghanaian students to the history of Great Britain and emphasise the achievements of the British nation and its past heroes, the greatness of Britain not only as a leading European power but also as a great world naval power.

The history that was taught in the colonial days, thus, projected the British people in the best light possible and drew attention to the grandeur of their empire and their imperial exploits. All this was done at the expense of the greatness and achievements of Ghanaian and African history. Generally, education in colonial Ghana was regarded as ancillary to the goals and purposes of the British. As a result, the educational curriculum reflected this bias, and there was little concern for instruction appropriate to the developmental needs of the country (McCain, 1980:91). Hence, only very little about the history of Ghana or any other African territory was relevant in the colonial school history syllabus (Boahen, 2004:612). Such history was only taught to present a foil between what the imperial masters sought to project as the all-conquering racially, politically and culturally superior British and, in the estimation of the British, uncivilised Africans (Adu-Boahen, 2011:3). It was intended to firmly plant in the minds of Ghanaian school children the idea of the British as bearers of an advanced civilisation of which they were under spiritual and moral obligation to pass on to their conquered *uncivilised* African subjects. Such instruction was expected to make Ghanaian students docile and submissive and to see British civilisation as the means out of stagnation and the gateway to advanced cultural and technological achievement. During the colonial era, therefore, there was little research into Ghana's past for the teaching of less racially coloured history.

It is important to note that some indigenous Ghanaians undertook historical investigations during the pre-colonial and colonial periods with the view to knowing the history of their peoples and states and, more especially, understanding their contemporary circumstances and be able to see into their future and make the appropriate preparations to meet the expected future. Unfortunately, however, their efforts were overshadowed by those of the colonial historians. As a result, the real initiative for researching and teaching any Ghanaian history became evident after independence. The first independent government of Ghana under Dr. Kwame Nkrumah was determined to use history as an instrument for creating awareness about the greatness of the heritage of Africans and to inculcate pride in the African personality and race. As a pan-Africanist, Nkrumah also wanted to promote African unity not only through cultural exchanges but also through the intensification of the teaching of African history in schools. Accordingly, history continued to enjoy its place in the school curriculum. The seriousness Nkrumah attached to the study of African history led to the inclusion of history, and other subjects, in the curriculum of even technical schools that previously did not teach history. This was deemed necessary to avert a situation of narrow-mindedness on the part of the products of the technical schools (Ghana Secondary Technical School, Takoradi, n.d.:5). Indeed, history remained one of the four subjects, the others being English, Geography and Mathematics, which were written during the Middle School Leaving Certificate Examination (MSLCE). History was also offered in secondary schools from Form One up to Form Five as an elective subject for Arts students who wrote the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (SC/GCE 'O' Level). At the Sixth Form, history was one of the subjects offered for the School Certificate and General Certificate of Education Advanced Level (SC/GCE 'A' level) Examination (Dwarko, 2007:169; Okyere-Yeboah: personal interview, March 11, 2017, Ewusiejo).<sup>1</sup>

Content wise, by the 1960s, several topics in African history, including many on the history of Ghana, particularly Asante, had been incorporated into the school history syllabus, although themes in the histories of other parts of the world remained important. At the secondary school level, for example, Dwarko (2007:169), who personally witnessed and experienced these developments, reports that the areas studied included Ghana and West Africa, Egypt and the Nile Valley, Economic History, and Tropical Africa and World History. Significantly, school history teaching no longer placed emphasis on British imperial history as in the colonial period. In spite of the revision of the school history curriculum, English, ancient to modern European and world history continued to be taught in the primary, middle and secondary school levels of education (Adu-Boahen, personal interview: October 25, 2013, Accra). In fact, as admitted, African history was taught in schools even by the late 1980s, but a critical examination of the content of history textbooks used for primary and secondary school levels up to this time shows that even in the late 1980s, European and world history constituted a greater portion of the history syllabus (Okyere-Yeboah: personal interview, March 11, 2017, Ewusiejo). Thus, a huge section of the Middle School Certificate Examination syllabus continued to be covered by non-African topics until the system phased out in 1987. However, there was a gradual progress towards making African history compulsory in schools. Up to the 1970s, secondary school African history was an option available to School

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Charles Okyere-Yeboah personally wrote the GCE 'O' Level history examination in 1986.

Certificate students. There were, in fact, two African history options: General African History (General) as against World History. At the Higher School Certificate level, history was compulsory for students, as candidates had to take two examination papers, one on European history and the other on African history.

With the introduction of the new 6–3–3 educational reforms (six (6) years for Primary, three (3) years for Junior Secondary School (now Junior High School), and three (3) years for Senior Secondary School (now Senior High School)) which began in 1987, school history at the 3-year Senior Secondary School level began, from 1991, to become essentially African history, although it was an elective subject. At the lower level (Junior Secondary School), however, history was collapsed into social studies. The purpose of concentrating on African history at the Senior Secondary School level was to make history at the pre-university level more relevant and meaningful to Ghanaian and West African students generally. The question that may be asked here is, “What is the story of history in schools in Ghana today? Does history still enjoy its place in the pre-tertiary school curriculum, and do contemporary students patronise history with the same interest and enthusiasm as did their predecessors?” As is clear, the answer to all these questions is simply *No!*

It is essential to state at this point that the current *health condition* of history is really very poor, if not worse. The findings of various studies conducted by some historians in Ghana and in other countries, from the last two decades of the twentieth century to the present, show that interest in the past and the image of history have suffered from a consistent decline, heading towards decay (see Adjepong, Oppong and Kachim, 2017, April:237–280). In 1987, David Cannadine (cited in Cruse, 2011:1) observed that at the universities, as in the schools, the belief that history provides an education, that it helps us understand ourselves in time, or even that it explains something of how the present world came into being, has all but vanished. In 2013, the Department of History at the University of Cape Coast also complained bitterly about the marginalisation of history as a subject at pre-tertiary levels (Faculty of Arts, University of Cape Coast, 2013:58). In fact, there is no doubt that there has been a *universal* decline of interest in the study of history in schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities. In second cycle institutions, especially, where attempts are made to keep it alive, the study of history is shuffled into the shelter of *social studies*, making it now one of a myriad of social sciences studied in one small period each day, or, even in some cases, once a week (see Adjepong, Oppong and Kachim, 2017, April:237–280).

Evidently, history is now marginalised and treated with disdain. We, as historians, like many other stakeholders, have been very much worried about this unfortunate and unpleasant state of affairs, and believe that something must surely be done to revive interest in the study of history in order to avoid an *extinction* of our *authentic* history, and, especially, to benefit from the enormous significance of the discipline to the development of the individual and of society as a whole. Accordingly, we were very happy when we heard that the government of Ghana had decided to reintroduce History as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum. The question that baffles the minds of many people is, “Do we need history at all to warrant the reintroduction of national history into the primary and junior high school curriculum and also have two history components, elective (comprising Ghanaian and African history) and core (national history), at the senior high school level as happens in other countries?” Again, if not all Ghanaians, the concerned citizens of Ghana, at least, would want to know what the government means by *having seen the need for the teaching and learning of the history of Ghana at the pre-tertiary level of education*. In other words, “For what major reasons do we need to reintroduce the history of Ghana in the pre-tertiary school curriculum?” This question is important to be posed and answered because, as we have shown above, the colonial regime had a major purpose for introducing history as a school subject, and the Nkrumah administration and subsequent governments that retained the discipline equally had genuine reasons for doing so. At present, we do not know fully what precisely informed the government’s decision. The decision could form part of the government’s own educational policies; it could also be a positive response to our proposal, compiled in January, 2017, to the government to reintroduce history. Whatever the case may be, we seek to justify the need the government has felt in that regard on the grounds that when it comes to issues of development and progress, history is no less mighty than any other discipline. As the Akan of modern Ghana would say, *tete wo bi ka; tete wo bi kyere* – the past has something to say; the past has something to teach.

### **The Contributions of History to National Development: Context of the Study**

In every scientific research work, the proper arrangement, classification and interpretation of the selected facts are very important, not only to enable the historian to form and express his judgements, but also to give meaning to the facts. For this purpose, it is necessary for the data to be considered in relation to one another and synthesised into a generalisation or conclusion which places the overall significance in focus. Renier (1950:170) states that in these operations, the researcher must be guided by his own views or theories. Indeed, the problem of a study is often situated in a specific theoretical framework,<sup>1</sup> which provides a context in which the problem is

<sup>1</sup> In scientific research works, the terms *conceptual frameworks(s)*, *conceptual scheme(s)*, *contextual framework(s)*, *general law(s)*, *generalisation(s)*, *interpretative framework(s)*, *perspective(s)*, *system(s)*, *theoretical concept(s)*, *theoretical*

addressed. The major research question we seek to answer in this work is, “What significant contributions can history make to the development of twenty-first-century Ghana and beyond to justify its reintroduction as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum?” So many factors are relevant in examining the values and contributions of the study of history to national development that it is easy to be lost unless one has a general perspective of the subject. The vastness of the field makes it crucial for researchers who explore the area to specify the context within which they situate and examine their works. After all, every historical analysis is a synthesis of data and interpretative framework, because historians normally interpret their data within specified contexts or conceptual frameworks which they devise (Herbst, 1962:148), meaning that every historian invites his readers to explore his topic from a particular point of view. Hence, this section outlines the context in which we seek to answer the research question posed above.

In his inaugural speech, His Excellency President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (2017, January 7:3) expresses the view that Ghanaians can only create wealth and restore happiness to our country when we have an educated and skilled population that is capable of competing in the global economy. To realise this vision, the President stresses the need for us, as Ghanaians, to expand our horizons and embrace science and technology as critical tools for our development. Also, in his first State of the Nation’s Address (2017, February 21:9–10), the President assures Ghanaians that “The teaching of mathematics and science will take pride of place in all schools, as we aim to make understanding of the scientific basis of life a central plank in our schools. We will, thus, make the use of ICT a central feature of our national life.” This is, certainly, a very sound and development-oriented decision in the sense that it is now recognised globally that scientific and technological knowledge is more essential for wealth creation of nations, and on science and technology depends the standard of living of a nation, whether in agriculture, food production, good health, good housing, communication, or better roads. Indeed, historically, the most powerful countries in the world, in political and economic terms, have always been those who are scientifically and technologically advanced. Hence, emphasising scientific and technology education would enhance the production of more scientific and technological knowledge, which would promote the development of the nation.

Meanwhile, it was in the midst of this emphasis of science and technology that the government saw the need for the teaching and learning of the history of Ghana at the pre-tertiary level of education, and then decided to reintroduce history as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum. What makes these policies interesting is their seemingly *conflicting* and *contradictory* nature. In fact, the question that has engaged the minds of some people is, “Why would the Nana Akufo-Addo led-New Patriotic Party government emphasise science and technology education and, at the same time, see the need to reintroduce, and regenerate interest in, the study of history, an academic discipline that is regarded as both an archaic and a dead subject, and, as a result, uninteresting and irrelevant in our contemporary world of science and technology?” Indisputably, there are people who regard events of the past themselves and reflections on these developments as wholly unnecessary, and there have also been several instances where governments, both in and outside Ghana, have implemented reforms aimed at subjugating history under the hegemony of other subjects or expunging history from the school curriculum altogether (Adjepong, Opong and Kachim, 2017, April:237–280). The tentative answer we could give to the question of the need to reintroduce and emphasise history in the pre-tertiary school curriculum, in addition to science and technology education, is probably the government’s realisation that science and technology, as Professor Allotey (“Science, Technology and Development”, retrieved June 17, 2017) has emphasised, are necessary but not sufficient factors for development. It is true that scientific thinking is the advance guard of knowledge, exploring paths which may lead to truth previously unknown (Hockett, 1961:7), but it is not entirely true that the war against ignorance and economic stagnation could only be won by an increase of knowledge of the natural world. In view of this, other avenues of national development have to be explored to complement the contributions of science and technology. History education or historical training is one such rich avenue for development that must be wisely explored and exploited.

To justify the reintroduction of history as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum is to provide concrete reasons and evidence as to why the study of history should be encouraged in pre-tertiary schools. And at this point, we wish to state emphatically that justifying the existence, position, and relevance of history at a time when its place as a school discipline is being contested by many people around the world appears difficult in the face of chronic practical needs of contemporary Ghana. In the context of an impecunious country with inadequate services, it might appear superfluous to promote the importance and serious study of an academic discipline like history. In view of these and other equally significant considerations, a paper that seeks to project a discipline and justify its place as a compulsory or core subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum

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*formulation(s)*, *theoretical framework(s)*, *theoretical perspective(s)* and *theory* or *theories* are often used interchangeably to refer to the same concept. In this study, we also employ these terms at different times to refer to the same concept. However, for an explanation of these concepts and a detailed information on the application of theories in historical reconstruction, see Adjepong (2013(a):1–18).

cannot found its arguments on the mere fact that the discipline gives pleasure and intellectual satisfaction and satisfies curiosity. Neither would it be enough to justify the study of history in pre-tertiary schools on the utilitarian instrumental basis that it contributes to the leisure economy, consisting of book publishing, films, theatres, etc. (Edgar and Pattison, 2006:92). For although they are important and tenable, these purely intellectual and leisure *justifications* do not really justify the serious need of history in the face of other, far more urgent and immediate priorities that need attention in the sector of education, and in other major fields of the economy. Consequently, a paper that seeks to project a discipline and justify its place as a compulsory or core subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum must show what the study of history actually distinctively contributes to the development of students and the society as a whole.

In spite of the seemingly herculean nature of the task, we still firmly espouse the view that by its special nature, history should be made a core subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum, basically because if examined well, the discipline could provide both individual students and the Ghanaian society in general with several magnificent benefits. Indeed, even though history has suffered a general decline, it still enjoys some amount of privilege in some countries. For instance, since the nineteenth century, history has been accepted more as a respectable discipline in Western Europe and North America, in spite of the various technological and industrial breakthroughs. By the late nineteenth century, history featured more prominently in the university curriculum all over Europe (Tosh, 1986:18). In early twentieth-century Britain, there was also an enthusiasm for historical knowledge because people appreciated history as a literary study capable of enlarging the mind and training political judgement (Clark, 1967:xvii). British historians at this time, including Samuel Rawson Gardiner, demonstrated that a new science of history, more impartial and more exact than anything previously practised, could provide a key to understanding the past, the present and the future (*Ibid.*). We know from Ravitch (“Decline and Fall of Teaching History”, retrieved July 29, 2012) that in France, as of the mid-1980s, all students, not just the college-bound, followed a sequenced programme of history, civics and geography every year from the seventh grade through the twelfth grade. In many European countries today, history is an important tool for national development. In Britain, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Norway, Romania and Spain, national history, as well as world history in varying degrees, is taught in schools. In the case of Britain, the importance of teaching students about the discipline of history has been widely recognised over the past few decades (Lee (2004), “Historical Literacy: Theory and Research”, retrieved March 29, 2015). Also in Norway, history is very popular and has the second largest applicants to Norwegian universities at present (Hatlen: personal interview, May 4, 2017, Trondheim, Norway). Again, Malaysia has, since independence in 1957, consistently emphasised its national history and included it in its school curriculum. At present, history is one of the core subjects for lower secondary and upper secondary levels (junior and senior high schools), and is officially included in the timetable of the ordinary, religious, science, vocational and technical schools in the country (Salleh, Mohamad and Ambotang, 2013, September:1). In fact, because of the importance of history for national development, the Ministry of Education stated in 1987 that beginning from 1991, Malaysian national history should become one of the core subjects in the one-year In-service Teacher Training course, while most local universities also offer history in the first year, even in the non-arts courses such as law, management, medicine and information technology (*Ibid.*).

Obviously, the special respect accorded history in these countries derives from the moral, political, social, economic and intellectual values of the study of history. For example, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 B.C.E.), the Roman orator who bestowed on Herodotus the enviable title, *Father of History*, has emphasised that “History is the witness of the times, the torch of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life, [and] the messenger of antiquity” (Rogers, 2003:xxv). Rowse (1946:v) also believes “There is no end to what we can learn from history, if only we would, for it is conterminous with life. Its special field is the life of man in society, and at every point we can learn vicariously from the experiences of others before us in history.” On his part, Wilks (1996:8) argues that “... history ... is one of the most vital activities in the social and cultural life of any nation ....” Many other scholars and seasoned people have also put history in similar frames, showing how important history is to contemporary societies and generations. Foucault (1970:400) has analysed all these and declared that from the beginnings of human civilisation, history has performed a certain number of major functions: “... memory, myth, transmission of the Word and of Example, vehicle of tradition, critical awareness of the present, decipherment of humanity’s destiny, anticipation of the future, or promise of a return.”

Genuinely, we strongly agree with these observations. History, unlike technology, does not manufacture tools for immediate use; but like technology, it produces scientific knowledge that could be applied to practical human problems and ultimately effect a change. In other words, historical knowledge innovates and improves human life. To bring about change is to bring about development because change implies a process of gradual development, while development also usually implies a purposeful change over time in a specific direction, such as societies evolving and developing to higher levels. As we shall soon demonstrate, several past societies, conscious of the development potentials of history, vigorously exploited the wisdom and experiences of their predecessors. With this hindsight, contemporary Ghana cannot refuse or fail to tap tremendously from the

essential values of the legacy of experiences our predecessors, through their recorded attitudes, actions and ideas, have left behind. We are of the strong conviction that this inheritance of wisdom and experience must necessarily be studied by our youth who would soon become the adults and leaders of this country first because, as G.M. Trevelyan observes, individuals cannot understand their own personal opinions, prejudices, and emotional reactions, unless they possess a knowledge of their nation's history (Schlesinger, 1971:xiv).

What makes historical training for our youth even more important is the task of moulding them for the future. To be well-prepared to meet the future and its uncertainties, the youth must be armed with the appropriate historical knowledge. Ravitch (1985:8) intimates that it is essential for historical-mindedness to begin in the early years, in the home and at the elementary level, in the books children read and the television they watch. His argument is that at these early stages of life, the minds of children are free, and at this stage, the free mind needs to know its past, to debate and discuss how the world came to be what it is today, in order to know what to defend, what to change and how to resist imposed orthodoxies. M'Bow (2000:xxi) has advised that young people, whether school children or students in Africa and elsewhere should study history to be able to form a truer picture of the African past and the factors that explain it, as well as a fairer understanding of its cultural heritage and its contribution to the general progress of mankind. Steeves ("Working Together to Strengthen History Teaching in Secondary Schools", retrieved May 23, 2017) also observes that "... the "habits of mind" (the perspectives and modes of thoughtful judgement) that historians believe are especially important to the understanding of history are needed by all students, no matter what their level of educational attainment is." Again, in the 1920s, Principal Fraser of Achimota School and College (Ghana), though not a trained historian, fully appreciated the role that history must have in any well-rounded education and, thus, encouraged his students to value and understand their own cultures (Wilks, 1996:6). When Ward (1991:i) also joined the staff of Achimota in 1924, he, as a professional historian, "... thought it necessary to teach my African pupils the history of their own country ...." In 2010, Simon Schama (cited in Cruse, 2011:4) stressed that history is particularly important for

Our children, of course: the generations who will either pass on the memory of our disputatious liberty or be not much bothered [sic] about the doings of obscure ancestors .... Unless they can be won to history, their imagination will be held hostage in the cage of eternal Now: the flickering instant that's gone as soon as it has arrived. They will thus remain, as Cicero warned, permanent children, forever innocent of whence they have come and correspondingly unconcerned or, worse, fatalistic about where they might end up.

It is in this context that we seek to justify the decision by the Nana Akufo-Addo-led NPP Government to reintroduce history as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum, not only to help resuscitate the discipline but also, and more especially, to give historical training to our youth and prepare them for the great and complex responsibilities they would assume in the near-future and contribute meaningfully to the development of Ghana. Meanwhile, we wish to remind our readers that the specific variables constituting the context in which we situate and examine the work are: measure of humanity and identity; exposure to cultural heritage for enlightenment and pride; preservation of cultural heritage; inculcation of moral and ethical values; development of imaginative abilities and promotion of critical thinking; promotion of national integration and tolerance; training of patriotic and democratic citizens; preparation for public service and political leadership; providing models for policy decisions; providing keys to understanding our present and foreseeing our future; and providing skills for the job market.

### **Methodology and Data Sources**

This study is a qualitative one and so the qualitative method was used to conduct the study. The focus of qualitative research is to find out the nature or essence of things. Miles and Huberman (1994:10) maintain that one of the major strengths of qualitative research is that it is fundamentally well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, process and structures of their lives. Hence, the views, perspectives, impressions, assumption, theories, feelings, interests, etc. of people about/in phenomena do emerge in qualitative research in response to issues that influence their lives. Because of the nature of the study and to achieve our objective, we relied on both primary and secondary sources of information. We began collecting data first from the relevant secondary sources (see *References*) from which we gleaned some of the major uses of history, which, in our view, possess considerable value to make significant contributions to the development of contemporary Ghana. The secondary works provided us with a theoretical background which helped us to situate the work in its appropriate context.<sup>1</sup> To be able to evaluate the specific values and contributions of the facts we obtained from

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<sup>1</sup> The authors appreciate the fact that they might have missed some important works which could have provided useful information to augment the literature and whose inclusion could have provided a better guide to the study, and duly apologise

the secondary sources and authenticate them, we also collected data from primary sources (see *References*). The views and conclusions of both the secondary works and primary information helped to put the paper in its proper perspective. We were very much aware of the limitations associated with historical documents, as with all documents in all fields of study. We envisaged the likelihood of distortions of facts, exaggerations, understatements and other limitations normally associated with historical evidence. Accordingly, we carefully scrutinised all the data collected from the available primary and secondary sources in order to present only the accurate and reliable facts.

#### *Measure of Humanity and Identity*

One of the important reasons which justify the reintroduction of the study of history in pre-tertiary schools in twenty-first-century Ghana is the opportunity the discipline affords students to understand what it is to be human and appreciate history as human history in a two-fold sense: it is made and recorded by humans; and it records past events of human history. While the history of medicine defines what it is physically to be human, other departments of history, such as the history of religions, history of politics, economic history, social history, and history of music explain what it is to be a spiritual being, a political being, an economic being, a social being, a musical being, etc (Edgar and Pattison, 2006:93). This awareness enables students to also appreciate themselves as humans in diverse strands.

Ernst Cassirer (cited in Herbst, 1962:143) has informed those who are ignorant of the purpose of history that what we seek in history is not the knowledge of any external thing but a knowledge of ourselves. This highlights the fact that history affords individuals and groups a knowledge of themselves and gives them unique identities. “Who I am and where I belong, I first learned to know from the mirror of history”, Karl Jaspers (cited in Winks et al., 1988:xxvii) has declared. History helps in giving groups identity in the same way it does to the individual. In Spain, for example, history is seen by politicians and national leaders as an instrument to contribute to regional and national identity (Zuniga, O’Donoghue and Clarke, 2015:5). Also in Norway, history was the first discipline to be introduced in the nineteenth century because the founders of the country reasoned that it was only through historical knowledge that Norwegians could establish their unique identity (Hatlen: personal interview, May 4, 2017, Trondheim, Norway). In fact, a crucial “... role of history is to tell a people what they have been, where they have been, what they are and where they are. The most important role that history plays is that it has the function of telling a people where they still must go and what they still must be” (Walker, 2006:7). Of course, any attempts to discuss the issue of identity invariably lead to a reappraisal of history, since identity is conferred primarily by historical factors. History has been described as a social necessity, because it gives us our identity and helps us to find our bearings in an ever more complex present, providing us with a navigator’s chart by which we may, to some degree, orient ourselves (Winks et al., 1988:xxvii). This is the reason why some seasoned minds have argued that “History is the clock that people use to tell their time of [the] day. It is also a compass that people use to find themselves on the map of human geography” (Walker, 2006:7). As Marwick (1970:13) maintains, as a man without memory and self-knowledge is a man adrift, so a society without memory, or without recollection, and self-knowledge would be a society adrift. Marcus Garvey (cited in “Brainy Quotes” retrieved January 5, 2017) has also remarked that “a people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots.” Certainly, failure to study our history would lead to the loss of our collective identity in the same way that an individual suffering from amnesia loses his personal identity (Morgan, 1976:ix). This shows that it is essential for history to be reintroduced in pre-tertiary schools for the pupils and students to first identify themselves as individuals and also be much attached to the nation in order to help them contribute their quota, in whatever respect, to the development of Ghana.

#### *Exposure to Cultural Heritage for Enlightenment and Pride*

Simon Jenkins opines that “Without history we are infants”, but for David Cannadine, without historical knowledge, “... we are really not fully human” at all (“Quotes about History”, retrieved July 29, 2012). This means that to be truly human, a civilised adult and avoid living in shame, one must be immersed in and be knowledgeable about his culture. To be civilised here implies a thorough *cultural immersion*. It means to be trained in and be knowledgeable about one’s own cultural pattern. In other words, to be familiar with one’s culture and civilisation and become civilised necessitates an inquiry into the past because one can only acquire

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for any such oversights. Further, the authors wish to emphasise that in this study, all internet materials used have been duly cited in the text, as is usually done. However, we have provided only the surnames of the authors (where available), the full titles of the works and the dates on which we retrieved them. The website addresses are not added in the text. With regard to both personal and telephone interviews, and WhatsApp chats, we have provided only the surnames of the respondents, the dates on which we interviewed or chatted with them, and the places where they were during the interviews and chats. Readers are entreated to refer to the *References* at the end of the study for the full website addresses of all internet materials used and the full details of all interviewees and those we engaged in WhatsApp chats.



knowledge and understanding of one's true and original culture when they study the history of their people; for history, as we know, is a nation's stock of memories. Among the Akan of Ghana, for example, history is inseparable from culture (Garrard, 1980:xi). To them, the events of the past centuries reflect the achievements, attitudes and material culture of the ancestors. Among them, therefore, a person is well-cultured or civilised through inculcating the path (culture) of the Ancients into him (Maison, 2007:28). The noun form of the Akan word *tete* means *the ancient times or the past*, while the verb form of the same word means *to civilise or to train to become civilised*. Thus, to the Akan, a person becomes civilised only when he is taught the culture of the people of the past. The study of history, therefore, helps people to know their culture (and, thus, become well-cultured and civilised) and to appreciate better the context in which it evolved as well as discover their glorious past.

As students become aware of their cultural roots, they develop a sense of pride in the scientific, technological, political, economic and social achievements of their predecessors. Kobina Sekyi of Cape Coast, for example, studied the history of his society, and used his historical knowledge to write to educate his fellow Africans to develop love for their own culture and acquire dignity and respect, to reject Anglicisation or Westernisation, as the best way of life and most significantly to document the histories of their peoples, in an attempt to rebuff the wrong European impressions about Africa and its peoples (see his 1997 work). The President, His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo (2017, January 7:2), a former student of history, is very much aware of, and appreciates, this fact; that is the reason why he proclaims in his inaugural speech,

We have a proud heritage. We are the heirs of John Mensah Sarbah, Joseph Casely Hayford, George Paa Grant, R.S. Blay, Joseph Boakye Danquah, Emmanuel Obetsebi Lamptey, Edward Akufo-Addo, William Ofori-Atta, Cobbina Kesse, Ernest Ako Adjei, Kwame Nkrumah, Komla Agbeli Gbedema, Kojo Botsio, S.D. Dombo, Kofi Abrefa Busia, Baffuor Osei Akoto and others, who taught us that fidelity to principles, courage, patience, resilience and collective action do yield results.

This makes the study of history the more important as it would encourage the youth to abandon the bad influences of foreign cultures, and rather build upon the positive and constructive aspects of our own cultural heritage.

#### *Preservation of Cultural Heritage*

Civilization is not inherited; it has to be learned and earned by each generation anew [because] if the transmission should be interrupted for one century, civilization would die, and we should be savages again (Will Durant, cited in "Quotes about History", retrieved July 29, 2012).

Will Durant's observation should serve as a caution and necessarily impress on us to institute measures which would help prevent the destruction and extinction of our civilisation and cultural heritage as a country. Every serious and forward-looking society makes efforts to foster cultural continuity, so that its material culture, rules and norms are transmitted from one generation to another. And it is clear that one of the fundamental means of guaranteeing the survival and preservation of our culture and heritage is to introduce the youth to our significant and cherished past through education. Education is a feature that is commonly used by societies to transmit what society deems important. Historical training or education is a valuable instrument through which such a goal could be achieved. Unequivocally, teaching history as a compulsory subject in pre-tertiary schools would provide a foundation for the much needed knowledge and preservation of our cultural past (Adjepong, 2013(b):180–185). As Arthur Danto (cited in Runia, 2007:318) has remarked, "We erect monuments so that we shall always remember, and we build memorials so that we will never forget." The Pyramids of Giza, for instance, are constant reminders to the citizens of Cairo and Egypt of their heritage. In fact, in its broader sense, history is an embodiment of the significant memories of the past. It is also true that the memory of an individual can easily be forgotten upon death, and it is possible for a people's collective memory to be intentionally obliterated. Conversely, it is difficult for the memory of a larger group or association to be totally destroyed in the same way as a person can vanish completely from the face of the Earth and, subsequently, from human memory.

The transition from the past to the present and to the future signifies change in the flow of life and time. An obvious pattern in the same movement is continuity due to the principle of inheritance. This element has been made possible due principally to the function of history as a means of dragging the past along the course of civilisation. In view of this, history serves as an essential tool for the preservation of the finer elements of the civilisation and culture of a people. By looking back, historians look ahead, identify what is worthwhile to preserve from the past and carry into the future. As a collective memory of the past of society, history tries to discover what may be discoverable concerning a people's cultural universe and attempts to perpetuate the outstanding developments that occurred in their past, through its function of transmitting from generation to

generation the corpus of knowledge that constitutes civilisation which could be utilised in building a prosperous national future. In this vein, history makes the deeds of men live after them, with the present dragging the past into the future. Herodotus initiated the process of reconstructing the past with the view to preserving the memory of the deeds of humans in his nine volume study, *Histories*. At the outset, he explains,

These are the researches of Herodotus of Halicarnassus, which he presents, in the hope of thereby preserving from decay the remembrance of what men have done, and of preventing the great and wonderful actions of the Greeks and the Barbarians from losing their due meed of glory ... (2000:3).

In ancient cultures and civilisations, for example, every kingdom had its own history laureate whose task was to record and remember the past. At this time, history was used to relate the past to the present and future in all aspects of life. History served as a means of promoting a wholesome understanding and respect for the institutions, norms, values and practices of the community. In the contemporary world, all development-oriented governments usually spend huge sums of money on the writing and re-writing of the history of their nations in order to preserve their heritage, perpetuate their memory, and bequeath a *useable past* to succeeding generations. In 2011, for example, the Danish Government complained bitterly about the obscurity of the fact that Denmark and Norway signed the first bilateral agreements with the Ga King, Okaikoi. The Government also lamented that many people were not aware that the Danes were the first to abolish the slave trade and attempt the establishment of plantations in Ghana (Historical Society of Ghana, 2011:3). The Danes were also not happy because the few Danish forts, which were "... arguably the only tangible evidence of the Danish involvement in the Ghanaian past ... , were more in danger of destruction partly due to neglect and partly as a result of marine erosion." The Danish Government, then, concluded, "Preserving them is therefore of vital importance" (*Ibid.*). Obviously, Denmark desired to preserve the memory of its relationship with Ghana for the knowledge and understanding of future generations. In pursuit of this objective, the Danish Government embarked on a project which aimed at "... encouraging some students to undertake further degree studies in their subject [History – M.Phil. and Ph.D. – so that the Government would ultimately produce] ... graduate students and also benefit from the detailed research which is bound to result from graduate studies" (*Ibid.*). The Government underscored its seriousness to preserve Danish diplomatic history by instituting scholarship packages to award grants to students to undertake their research projects (*Ibid.*, p. 5).

This is a clear attempt on the part of a forward-looking government to preserve the memory of its country for the knowledge and understanding of future generations. Genuinely, this practice of *handing-over* and *inheritance* points to the fact that if we ask why people or societies have made a certain choice or possess a particular culture, the answer lies usually in their history (Lewis, 1965:418). Certainly, as our history embodies our knowledge of our world and cultural heritage, teaching and studying our history would amount to preserving our knowledge and heritage by preparing newcomers to join and revitalise them. In this sense, history is knowledge-building and culture-building, as the quest for historical truth would end up leaving behind a growing treasure of historical knowledge and aspects of our culture that are retained and kept in store as part and parcel of our world. Essentially, history constitutes a nation's memory, perpetuating its deeds, its traditions, its aspirations and ideals, and even its mistakes (Hockett, 1961:8), and contributes to enriching, adding to, and preserving value in culture and society. In this way, the reintroduction of history in the pre-tertiary school curriculum would contribute significantly towards keeping our glorious past from fading away from memory. This is particularly crucial because we learn from history itself that the societies that have attached much importance to record keeping and preservation have now accumulated more history than others, and derive enormous advantage from such rich history. This shows that preserving our history would equally enable us to trace the history of the efforts of our predecessors and learn from many experiments in civilisation on record as well as draw moral and ethical lessons from the past. Livy (1976:7) draws our attention to this issue when he observes, "Let us know our traditions in order to recover our standards of conduct."

#### *Inculcation of Moral and Ethical Values*

The decision of the Government to reintroduce History as a separate subject in the basic school curriculum is a remarkable one, especially because of the moral lessons History teaches. The reintroduction is necessary particularly at this time when most public office holders and political leaders have become too corrupt, and when most people interpret good living solely in terms of material acquisition (Nyarko: personal interview, May 18, 2017, Cape Coast, Ghana).

The above argument conveys a message that makes one question the extent to which public office holders in Ghana are aware of Chapter Twenty-Four and other related sections of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. These sections of the Constitution outline the code of conduct for public office holders. These portions of the Constitutions and other laws of the country seek to prevent public office holders from abusing their offices. In

spite of all these measures, we live in a society in which some public office holders are so greedy, selfish, corrupt, arrogant and indifferent towards the plight of the ordinary person. For the question of immoral living on the part of the youth, we need not waste time to outline and discuss it here. When we examine these social problems in the mirror of Nyarko's view, the image we see is an urgent need for the reintroduction of history in pre-tertiary schools for moral purposes.

Ernst Troeltsch (cited in "Historical Quotes", retrieved July 29, 2012) states emphatically that we get our moral and ethical values from our history and judge our history by our moral and ethical values. The Malaysian Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) (cited in Salleh, Mohamad and Ambotang, 2013, September:1) has also stressed that the inclusion of history as a core subject in the Malaysian school curriculum is intended to fulfil the noble aim "To further develop the potential of the individual in a holistic, balanced and integrated manner encompassing the intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects in order to create a balanced and harmonious human being with high moral standards." Unquestionably, apart from religion and literature, history is the one discipline that lends itself more than any other to implanting in the minds and hearts of pupils and students certain ideals and moral values, both religious and secular, which are essential for positive human relations and co-operation. When history first appeared on the school curricular in the nineteenth century in Europe, it was the general belief that it would serve as a vehicle for the transmission of moral ideas (Gosden and Sylvester, 1968:2). Historical research has shown that in the past, there were many historians who adhered to the widespread custom of writing history through the eyes of a moralist. In his studies on Roman history, Livy (cited in Grant, 1998:353), for example, aims at telling the truth about the Roman past, but his main purpose is to draw moral lessons from the historical past for the needs of the present. In medieval Europe, particularly in Renaissance Italy, history focused on the *motif* of veneration of ancient heroes and traditions with the view to engineering the restoration of the good morals of the ancient times. In many parts of the ancient world, history was held in high esteem in view of its great value in cultivating judgment and in stimulating right conduct. In contemporary critical historical reconstruction, the past is usually conceived as a kind of a stage on which students see all kinds of historical figures, both men and women, with their deeds and misdeeds, courage and cowardice, wisdom and folly, etc. laid bare to the judgement of students (Crookall, 1975:4).

In historical research activities, the historical method also emphasises objectivity and finding the truth and establishing it as the sole object of the search – to record with absolute fidelity all the sources the researcher taps, all the ideas he borrows, all the words he quotes, so that other historians and general readers may inspect, criticise, and modify their conclusions (Gay and Cavanaugh, 1972:x). Historians respect the worth of the past and abstain, as much as lies within their conscious control, from imposing their preferences on it. In training students to be fair and contextually considerate in their judgements on historical actors and their actions, history implants in students the spirit of commitment to impartial sympathy and emphatic concern for issues. History also teaches the importance of value-laden concepts such as faithfulness, honesty, integrity, civility, humility, accountability, courage, confidence, fearlessness, hard-work, endurance, tolerance, selflessness, determination and perseverance. As students come across these values and reflect on them, they use them as a basis for judging the conduct of historical figures. The sense of difference which historical studies uncover between good and bad morals, by pointing out the consequences of the actions of historical figures, tends to influence students' sense of moral values and influence their thoughts and character. Thus, if Nana Akufo-Addo (2017, January 7:5) really means "Calling yourself a Ghanaian must mean you have signed up to a definable code and conduct", as he intimates in his inaugural speech, then it is crucial to expose the pupils and students of Ghana at the pre-tertiary level to the rich moral and ethical lessons embedded in our glorious history. It is equally significant to note that apart from inculcating moral and ethical values in pupils and students, historical training would also contribute greatly to the development of the imaginative abilities of our youth and also help them to think critically.

#### *Development of Imaginative Abilities and Promotion of Critical Thinking*

History, as an academic discipline, quickens the imaginative abilities of students and promotes critical thinking. When Lord Acton observed that history hails from Edmund Burke, as education from Helvetius, or emancipation from the Quakers, what he meant was that Burke's high imagination gave to modern writers a true sense of the past, and restored an understanding of the Middle Ages and of the great continuity which joins Christianity and classical civilisation (Kirk, 1965:v). Of course, imagination, as Pieter Geyl (cited in Szasz, retrieved June 7, 2013) maintains, plays an important role in historical writing. Essentially, the study of history is an imaginative study, and the process of studying history is a process of living in imagination in some past age. Imagination is the ability to be aware of things and people not present to the senses, and take part in experiences which are or are not our own. It is the process by which we deliberately bring into our immediate awareness impressions stored in our memory. Crookall (1975:4) indicates that history offers the material which is able to stir the imagination of people more than any other subject.

It is also true that history is the ideal laboratory for promoting critical thinking (Martin et al., 2004:xxiv).

Historians and philosophers of history argue that true history is the product of historical thinking, and historical thinking is critical thinking (Gay and Cavanaugh, 1972:xi). Critical thinking, as Johnson (2005:27) maintain, is a multidimensional skill, a cognitive or mental process or set of procedures that involves reasoning and purposeful, systematic, reflective, rational, outcome-directed thinking based on a body of knowledge, as well as examination and analysis of all available information and ideas. Carroll (“Critical Thinking”, retrieved February 19, 2016) also explains that critical thinking denotes a mode of thinking that is clear, accurate, knowledgeable, reflective and fair in deciding what to believe or do. It emphasises the ability and tendency to gather, evaluate and use information effectively and in the most appropriate way. It also implies the ability to differentiate between facts and judgement, belief and knowledge and skills in basic inductive, or empirical, and deductive, or rational, processes, including an understanding of the formal and informal limitations of thought. In broad terms, critical thinking is the method of thinking that entails the analysis, synthesis and logical reasoning of facts and information, investigating different options, and seeking out different kinds of information to evaluate and ultimately pass scientific judgements on issues. Essentially, critical thinking leads to the formulation of conclusions and the most appropriate, often creative, decisions, options, or alternatives (Johnson, 2005:27). Ultimately, critical thinking gives one the tools to use scepticism and doubt constructively so that one could analyse what is before him; it helps one to make better and more informed decisions about whether something is likely to be true, effective or productive (Cottrell, 2005:2).

Most disciplines, including economics, law, logic, mathematics, philosophy and psychology make great efforts to promote critical thinking. History also makes a considerable contribution to the demands of critical thinking by producing intellectually strong graduates who are endowed with sound reasoning and are capable of critical analysis of situations, making intelligent choices and fitting well into society as well-informed citizens. Boahen (2004:612) has maintained that history is the best discipline for the production of people who can have both the general information, the necessary theoretical experience and hindsight and a disciplined, analytical and critical mind. Genuinely, historians actively teach their students to look at the world in a critical and analytical way. This is the reason why Justice Louis D. Brandeis is convinced that history is advantageously studied with a view to the general development of the mind (Katsh, 1997:i). This contribution is made from two perspectives. Renier (1950:195) maintains that the study of history, both in the form of *intensive reading of recorded history* and of *research and handling of evidence*, particularly written evidence, increases historians’ power of psychological insight. Hence, the first is through exposing students to the knowledge, ideas and wisdom of great historical figures who reasoned carefully before acting in certain circumstances. A.J. Ayer (cited in *Ibid.*, p. 17), for example, believes that being rational involves being guided in a particular way by past experiences. John Dewey (cited in *Ibid.*, p. 18) is of the view that without past experiences, humans would not be able to frame any ideas whatever, and that past experiences are significant in giving us intellectual instrumentalities of judging. In fact, as students study history, they come into direct contact with philosophical and proverbial statements made by sages, philosophers, historians, politicians, and other specialists of great minds, which influence them and become part of their thinking habits. It is on this score that Jay (2007:viii–x) maintains that our predecessors lived in ages that were full of wisdom, and so reading the views of past generations makes one wise.

The second means by which history promotes critical thinking is through the critical method of analysing historical facts and historical documents. For example, James (1971:19) has urged academic institutions of higher learning to teach the history of anything and everything because historical training suffuses the whole mentality of students with something more important than skill. He stresses that history redeems people with a naturally boorish and caddish mind, and makes them well-bred and “good company” mentally (*Ibid.*, p. 18). Wallerstein (1961:7) also has emphasised the importance of history in general for those who want to advance knowledge in the social sciences and those who wish to understand their world in order to act upon it. All these judgements point to an important truth. It is true that historical training takes students through some rigorous mental exercises, which endow them with an analytical mind. History is a subject in which students are made to understand that they have a duty to ascertain the meaning of every statement they come across in the historical documents, and are, at the same time, expected to produce reasons for whatever statements they make in their research works. Historical training aims at freeing students from any static, rote-learning habits they may have acquired at the lower levels of their education. It provides certain opportunities of intellectual discipline by way of reading widely, and with discrimination, by examining the motives of historical characters, and by estimating some of the forces at work at critical moments in the historical records. Training in history requires students to make a painstaking effort to find evidence, weigh it through the internal and external mechanisms of critiquing historical documents, and reach their own conclusions without prejudice. The ability to weigh evidence, to separate the trivial from the significant, to distinguish between assertions or opinions and facts, and to distinguish between propaganda and truth, bestows on history students a superior value. For instance, learning how to interpret the statements of past political leaders helps in forming the capacity to distinguish between the objective and the self-serving among statements made by present-day political leaders. Also, learning how to combine different kinds of evidence, including public statements, private records, numerical data, and visual

materials, and weave them into a coherent and intelligible account develops the ability to make coherent arguments based on a variety of data. All this endows history students with the power of rational adult life, as they acquire the habit of identifying truth in a multitude of conflicting claims.

This rigorous intellectual training in history obviously helps graduates to cope with the bewildering confusion of voices in the world around them. It gives them the tools to guard against entrancement, and to distinguish between what is true and what is false, what is valid and what is invalid, in the claims of politicians, religious leaders, promoters of causes, newscasters, advertisers, salespeople, teachers and lecturers, parents and siblings, employers and employees, neighbours, friends, and lovers, any of whom may be engaged at some time in attempting to persuade him to accept a belief or adopt a course of action. This is what Ravitch (1985:1) means when she argues that without historical perspective, voters are more likely to be won over by emotional appeals, by stirring commercials, or by little more than a candidate's good looks or charisma. In this sense, historical training equips people with the knowledge to reach independent judgements and helps them to avoid becoming the slave of other people's mind, no matter how persuasive their arguments are. Such training also affords a mental discipline that helps humans to confront new problems soberly and intelligently instead of emotionally and superficially. The study of history, therefore, trains students to be inquisitive, fair-minded truth-seekers, as well as conscious, outcome-oriented, purposeful individuals who are capable of *thinking outside-the-box* in many situations. D.W. Robertson and J. Higharm (cited in Mohammed, 2013, July:51) have summed up the value of critical thinking derived from historical training; they have emphasised that the study of history enriches human experiences, develops the power of thinking and also generates new ideas that greatly contribute to nation-building. Particularly at this time when national integration and tolerance of the cultures of other fellow citizens are among the cardinal desires in our attempts to build a strong, united society, having a historically trained and conscious youth is crucial, because with their thinking levels, they are certainly in a better position to understand themselves and their fellow citizens and bring about peace and harmony, which are essential ingredients for nation-building.

#### *Promotion of National Integration and Tolerance*

P.J. Shea (cited in Mohammed, 2013, July:50) has remarked that "Every person has a history, the more and the better we understand all these histories the better we shall all be." In this sense, Shea implies that peace, unity, progress and nation-building could best be achieved under the pretext of historical awareness. In other words, historical scholarship promotes mutual understanding, as a result of the understanding of our past. Indeed, one of the strongest bonds uniting large social groupings is the members' consciousness of a common history. Without that consciousness, people could not easily acknowledge the claims on their loyalty of large abstractions. Historical research has established that cultural homogeneity, which establishes common identity, plays an important role in the life of many countries. This is manifestly true in modern times of the nation-state. Being aware of sharing the same past or history with others helps in promoting national integration. This consciousness is what has often been described as *nationalism*. The term *nationalism* conveys connotations of a striving for *national* independence or *national* unity, which assume the existence of a *nation* and of *national* consciousness (Kautsky, 1966:30). In stating the true nature and limits of nationality, John Stuart Mills (cited in Hobson, 1902:3-4) says,

A portion of mankind may be said to constitute a nation if they are united among themselves by common sympathies which do not exist between them and others. This feeling of nationality may have been generated by various causes. Sometimes it is the effect of identity of race and descent. Community of language and community of religion greatly contribute to it. Geographical limits are one of the causes. But the strongest of all is identity of political antecedents, the possession of a national history and consequent community of recollections, collective pride and humiliation, pleasure and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past.

From Mills' exposition of the nature and limits of nationality, we realise that history plays a dominant, and a leading, role in the formation and survival of nations. In fact, several past societies, including the Western Sudanese societies and the states, kingdoms and empires of pre-colonial Ghana, exploited the awareness of their common ancestry and history to ensure unity among the members of their groups in their attempts to achieve advanced political, economic and social development. The consciousness of sharing a common ancestry and history made them regard themselves as one people with a common destiny. This historical consciousness reduced the rate of rivalries among the citizens in their efforts to build their societies. This provides us with evidence to maintain that consciousness of common identity and history removes some of the causes of strife because the people who share these common features have less to quarrel about, and may develop a habit of tolerance (Lewis, 1965:417).

Even in cases of major conflicts, history is still relevant in the reconciliation process. In the nineteenth

century, for example, France exploited its history to heal the French nation in the blood bath of the revolutionary period, and the United States of America also taught history to mend fences and reconcile the country after the Civil War. After the Second World War when Africans were agitating for independence, the nationalist historians argued that modern nation-states are products of history, or that history led up to the existence of modern nation-states, and so history should be placed at the service of the nation-states. They, therefore, adopted an approach which tended to contribute to the growth of nationalist feeling and to unify people in the face of tribal, linguistic, or class differences. It is significant to note that even in cases where the inhabitants of a country do not share a common ancestry and culture, history is still able to contribute towards nation-building by ensuring peace, law and order through the promotion of tolerance of diverse cultures and varied or opposing views. Lewis F. Powel (cited in “Historical Quotes, retrieved June 29, 2012) emphasises that history teaches tolerance for human shortcomings and imperfections. In fact, historical studies expose students to how individuals and societies tolerated each other in the past and the benefits such atmosphere of tolerance brought to them. In another respect, by explaining the importance of different cultures, practices, and forces which operate within a country and how different ethnic collectivities have responded to or interacted with each other, history enlarges the sympathies of students and develops in them a sense of genuine tolerance, which is an important ingredient for peaceful human co-existence in our homes, work places, social, economic and political groups, within the society as a whole and between nations.

The decision by the government to reintroduce history in the pre-tertiary school curriculum is clearly an opportunity for the youth to be exposed to the various cultures of the major ethnic groups in Ghana. This, in itself, is a step toward cultural assimilation or integration. Since those who have a good sense of history understand cultural diversity better, historical knowledge is a recipe for accommodation and tolerance in a multi-cultural environment. Harmonious inter-cultural relations are essential and even critical for creating the enabling conditions required for meaningful national development. Peaceful and harmonious co-existence is required for the avoidance of conflicts as well as bringing peace and stability to a nation. These conditions are prerequisite for technological development as well as social, political, and economic progress. Accordingly, Nana Addo’s (2017, March 6:8; 2017, January 7:4–5) call on all Ghanaians home and abroad to unite and contribute towards building a new Ghanaian civilisation which would be the beacon of Africa and the wonder of the world necessarily requires a serious study of our history, through which the principles of the needed integration and tolerance would be made available to the youth. And when they understand each other’s cultural background and tolerate them, they would be contributing towards ensuring political and social stability. In the same vein, they would understand that as citizens of the same country, each and everyone has the same rights and privileges, as well as responsibilities. This, then, points to another major use of history: training of patriotic and democratic citizens.

#### *Training of Patriotic and Democratic Citizens*

As noted above, a common feature of nationalism, as a characteristic of the development of the nation-state across the world, is the creation of a single *national* and *unified* culture created by the citizens, who, for our purpose, may be referred to as the *nationalists*. Within this unified culture, two levels of response have always evolved: *patriotism* and *ultranationalism*. Patriotism is a positive extreme of nationalism and so its development on the part of citizens of the nation-state is an important element in the progress of every country. George M. Wrong (cited in The Quote Garden, “Quotations about History”, retrieved June 7, 2013) has rightly maintained that the study of history is the playground of patriotism. It has also been said that the great statesmen of the past were successful in their careers because they thought historically and appreciated that history is the most important discipline for the citizens of every free republic, due to its inculcation of the spirit of patriotism in students.

Historically, patriotism has been a vital element in the life of all societies and civilisations in time and space. Every generation encourages its youth to emulate the patriotic features of the founders of their nation-states. It does this by exposing the wonderful deeds of great heroes and heroines who contributed significantly to the defence and development of their societies. In the past, many societies had folk stories that were about heroes and heroines of the past whose lifestyles typified the generally accepted norms of society so much so that these stories were related to the youth to encourage them to emulate the deeds of these historical figures. The ancient Greeks and Romans, for instance, related fascinating stories about their past heroes to their youth at home with the intent that the youth would emulate the examples of these great personalities of the past. It is actually in an attempt to “... rekindle the spirit that made Ghana the leading light on the African continent, and make our conditions deserving of that accolade” that Nana Akufo-Addo (2017, January 7:2 and 4) reminds the world, particularly Ghanaians that the founders of modern Ghana “... fought with intelligence, guts, steely determination and patriotism to liberate our land and reclaim our worth as human beings. Their love for country continues to inspire generations of us to commit our lives to the search for an enduring democratic legacy for Ghana.”

Generally, all these historical figures serve as role models whose deeds implant in students the spirit of being law-abiding and committed to their nations. We observe from the historical record that when Western European countries began to approach unity, beginning from the end of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, their rulers appointed historians whose major responsibility in writing was to glorify the ruling dynasties. Key European scholars, including Voltaire, Guizot, Augustin Thierry, Macaulay, Droysen, and Leopold von Ranke and his disciples also influenced the development of nationalism through their superlative emphasis on political history which recognised the ‘state’ as the embodiment of the divine idea of history (Renier, 1950:59; and Barzun and Graff, 1977:46, 166–169). The importance of the state was emphasised so that in like manner, liberals and reactionaries, royalists and republicans, believers and free-thinkers, racialists and socialists, formed large ‘sects’ that rewrote their national history from their own nationalistic point of view. This indicates that reflections on the past are the most essential method to inculcate in us the spirit of patriotism. This is the reason why the nationalist leaders of the early twentieth century believed that “... an intelligent study of our own history will breathe into our youth a pure public taste and kindle the flames of patriotism in ... [them]” (Boahen, 1975:12). From Nana Addo’s (2017, March 6:4–7) emphasis and repetitions of “‘I pay homage to’ this person and to that person’ in his 60th Independence anniversary speech, we are convinced that our President and the leaders of this country would be very happy if the youth of today and of the future could emulate the patriotic deeds of the heroes and heroines who struggled for the recovery of our independence on March 6, 1957, and, through their remarkable toils, laid the foundations of our dear country. Meanwhile, the knowledge of the founders of modern Ghana and their fashionable thoughts and deeds could only be made known to the youth through a serious study of our history. It is only through the study of our national history that the youth could be exposed to the *nationalistic, patriotic* and *sacrificial* deeds of our predecessors. This exposure to the lives and works of our founders would considerably influence the thinking of the youth and impress upon them to be *patriotic and concerned citizens*, and not *mere spectators*, and selfish and greedy bastards whose prime motive would only be to invade and loot our national treasury to enhance their own personal wealth rather than to advance the interests of all Ghanaians.

In addition, it is a fact that the study of history has implications for citizenship training. What this means is that apart from inculcating the spirit of patriotism in the youth, the study of history is also essential for democratic, sound, responsible, active and participative citizenship. As is well appreciated, the fundamental premise of the democratic form of government is that political power derives from the informed consent of the people. Ravitch (1985:1) argues, however, that informed consent requires a citizenry that is rational and knowledgeable. He stresses that free and democratic systems of government are sustainable when the citizens know not only how to judge candidates and their claims but also how the institutions of society evolved. Robert V. Daniels (cited in Government du Quebec, 2010:22) has rightly emphasised that “Historical awareness is important for the citizenry as a whole if they are to choose intelligently in a democracy ... What history can give citizens ... is a realistic perspective on the nature of their society, its problems, and the direction it is headed in. Citizens of the United States of America, for example, have long considered history education as the best means to foster democratic citizenship, while their politicians have increasingly mounted pressure on history teachers to make their students commit to memory extensive – and possibly politically motivated – lists of historical names, dates and events through mandated curricula and standardised testing (Martell, 2011, April 8:2–3). Also in Canada, the Government du Quebec (2010:1) has developed a History and Citizenship Education programme the aims of which are to enable students to develop their understanding of the present in the light of the past and to prepare them to participate as informed citizens in the social life of a democratic, pluralistic society that is receptive to a complex world. Obviously, human rights and privileges, and duties and obligations all come from the state. In essence, citizens’ consciousness of their rights and duties and their ability to know how to exercise these rights and discharge their responsibilities no doubt require historical knowledge. Otherwise, how could they appreciate the existence and importance of national institutions and the need to accord them respect and protect them for the use of future generations? How could the youth, and Ghanaian citizens in general, understand the essence of such concepts as rule of law, supremacy of the law, equality before the law, separation of powers, and checks and balances, without being informed by history? Again, we duly appreciate the fact that democracy requires citizens not only to do the work of democracy, but also have a deeper understanding of the concept itself. It is only logical to ask ourselves here how this required understanding could be gained without historical knowledge, knowing very well that “citizens are not ‘natural’-born already grasping the [concept of democracy and its] principles ... such as tolerance, equality and impartial justice, or the need to limit majority power”? (Parker, 2002:ix).

Yet another reason which makes the study of history relevant for citizenship training is that the emphasis it lays on the convergences and divergences in past humans and their societies constitutes an intellectual exercise, which broadens the horizon of students and affords them the opportunity of appreciating the differences and common grounds among contemporary humans and their cultures, and to critically compare the cultural values of their own society with those of others (Kachim: personal interview, May 13, 2017, Cape Coast). The study of

history enables students to develop a critical mind that helps them to appreciate the diversity of human experience and the variety of human behaviour and motives and to understand politics, economics, religion and society. It provides them with the best available guide for public action, especially in encounters with outsiders, whether from other nations, civilisations, or some special groups. It is often assumed that it is enough for people to know about outsiders. However, democratic citizenship and effective participation in the determination of public policy require citizens to share a collective memory, organised into historical knowledge and beliefs. Otherwise, agreement on what ought to be done in a given situation would be very difficult to achieve. Without reasonably accurate knowledge of the past, we cannot accomplish intended results, simply because we would fail to foresee how others are likely to react to anything we decide on. The nationalist leaders of Ghana once wrote in the editorial of the *Gold Coast People*,

In our opinion, a young man should learn what the constitution of his country really was and is, how the country had progressed into its present state, the people that had threatened it, the malignity that had attacked it, the courage that had fought for it, and the wisdom that had made it great (Boahen, 1975:12).

In saying this, the founders of modern Ghana draw our attention to the citizenship training potentials of history. To think about progress from the past to the present also implies consciousness of transition from the present to the future. Here comes in, once again, the issue of cultural continuity or *citizenship transmission*, which requires that the basic school pupils and students must be taught the rules and norms of society, a vision that is important especially because of its relation to the view of encouraging the youth to participate actively in society, and considered as part of the development of students' sense of place in a local, national and global context (Zuniga, O'Donoghue and Clarke, 2015:16). This shows that the emphasis in history on the use of evidence and processes of enquiry can help students to discuss and reach informed judgements about topical and contemporary issues, which are the lifeblood of citizenship, and to develop the confidence to take informed action. Undoubtedly, giving the youth historical training today would be one of the best means of preserving the democratic principles of our society. The same training would serve as a means of preparing our future public servants and political leaders, since historical training also has implications for public service and political leadership.

#### *Preparation for Public Service and Political Leadership*

A firm understanding of history is paramount to the success and effectiveness of our political leaders (McCullough, cited in Doherty, "The Decline of American History in Public Schools", retrieved May 23, 2017).

In the 1970s, the government of India acknowledged that the tasks facing the administration were larger in magnitude and more complex (Sastri and Srinivaschari, 1974:213). Meanwhile, it was very much aware that in all directions, the pace of development would depend largely on the quality of public administration, the efficiency with which it would work, and the cooperation which it would evoke. Recognising this, the government tried to maximise the contribution of every citizen through the national effort at development (*Ibid.*). Considerable emphasis was then laid on the development of human resources through increased facilities for health, social welfare and, especially, education. The idea here was to get a body of officials who were competent, honest and efficient in the discharge of their duties, so as to help the government achieve its targets (*Ibid.*, p. 214). This obviously indicates that every serious government must necessarily pay special attention to social overhead capital<sup>1</sup> and develop its human resources in order to have the needed human capital for the effective and efficient management of public institutions and the administration of the country. What is left to be considered is the kind of education or training that should be given to such trainees to produce the desired personnel.

Sir Michael Howard has argued that people, often of masterful intelligence, trained usually in law or economics or political science, have led their governments into disastrous decisions and miscalculations because they have no awareness whatever of the historical background of the issues they deal with ("Quotes about History", retrieved July 29, 2012). As Rowse (1946:18) intimates, a knowledge of history is crucial to the higher direction of society. Weighed in this context, historical training is essential for public service purposes and political leadership. In pre-colonial Africa, the custodians of the past, the court officials or oral traditionists, were public servants inasmuch as they were trained to study and memorise the histories of their states and peoples and recount them during important national occasions, and to also help preserve and transmit them to succeeding generations. Also, in the early Roman period, history was of public value. In the early sixteenth century, Machiavelli and others like him who were mainly concerned with expediency in the conduct of public affairs and

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<sup>1</sup> *Social overhead capital* is a term in economic development studies used to indicate factors such as a population's health, education and welfare that contributes to economic growth. See Duncan, Jancar-Webster and Switky (2004:492).



not *virtu*, concentrated attention on using history as didactic for political leaders. Also in the nineteenth century, European princes, princesses and heirs-apparent were obliged to study history because the science was considered as the supreme discipline that trains dynasties (Ifammose, 2006:108).

In the modern times, several sages, scholars, societies, etc. have emphasised the significance of history for public work. The former British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill (cited in “Historical Quotes”, retrieved June 29, 2012), has advised the contemporary youth to study history because in history lies all the secrets of statecraft. While Taylor (cited in (Zuniga, O’Donoghue and Clarke, 2015:5) contends that “history’s contentiousness lies in its close relationship with politics”, T.R. Seeley has stated categorically that the historian is a politician (Aggarwal, 2004:13). Grattan (1971:358) argues that people who occupy decision-making positions must possess relevant historical knowledge in order to ensure the development of society and prevent disasters. From careful observations, Hugh Trevor-Roper (cited in Jay, 2007:398) realises that those who exercise power and determine policy are generally people whose minds have been formed by past events. Elechi (2014) (cited in Tawiah et al., 2017:6) appreciates that leadership recruitment is a challenge, and so he recommends that it should be for people who have intermingled with *history*, battled with vision and have sieved out pragmatic vision from frivolous illusion, people who have developed a sense of love for the well-being of others, whose hand can reach the higher strata, including the celestial stratum, and whose love can subdue innate jealousy and can use their strategies to score needle-point excellence. And while Espie (1970:3–4) advises that no branch of public affairs must be entrusted to people who do not appreciate the history of their country, Rowse (1946:10 and 137) demands historical understanding from those who seek to occupy leadership positions on the grounds that societies cannot afford a political leadership which is ignorant of the facts and trends of history.

The essence of these views is that historical knowledge is crucial for a successful career in politics and public administration, or that there is a direct relationship between history and power, history and rulership, and history and political development (Wilson, 1993:14–15). Certainly, one requires an extraordinary sense of the past in order to be successful in leadership. In his calculations, Nketiah (2009:202) recognises that Plato required the leader he idealised in his *Republic* to be knowledgeable, not in abstract things as one may think, but in things which have happened before and which have the potential to provide experience necessary for future preparedness to deal with like-mannered issues. The basis of this argument is that public administration is fundamentally concerned with the administration of human affairs, and history also examines the interactions of humans in societies. History evaluates the lives and works of people, including politicians and public administrators, and, thus, exposes students to the key strategies in politics and endows them with special skills and knowledge in political leadership and public administration. An easy way to understand the special competence of the historian in public affairs is to appreciate the fact that public administration, politics, and political science in general consist in history.

Many past public administrators, politicians and heads of state attached much importance to the acquisition of historical knowledge. Winston Churchill, for example, educated himself by studying history, formed his mind upon it, and eventually became a historian (Rowse, 1946:16). Some of our own national founders, though did not possess degrees in history, saw the need to devote themselves to the serious study of the history and traditional institutions of their societies. Kobina Sekyi, J.B. Danquah, Kwame Nkrumah, K.A. Busia, and many others are typical examples here, and it was their historical knowledge that enabled them to successfully challenge the validity of several colonial measures and the colonial system as a whole, securing for them enviable places in Ghana’s register of successful public figures. The Speaker of Parliament, His Excellency Professor Mike Oquaye (2006:70), reminds us of how Professor Adu Boahen’s historical knowledge and experience made him one of the outspoken, courageous, and successful public figures and politicians in the history of Ghana. Our current President, His Excellency Nana Addo, and the Speaker of Parliament also read history during their undergraduate studies at the University of Ghana. Former President John Dramani Mahama also read history during his undergraduate studies, and even taught history for sometime at Tamale Senior High School. There are also many public administrators, servants and politicians who became successful in their public works as a result of the historical knowledge and experience they possessed. Aside from this, the study of our national history would also expose the youth to the thoughts and deeds of past public officers and political leaders. For example, students of the history of Ghana would naturally come into contact with J.B. Danquah, and learn from him that one should be interested in political power, but gaining power should not overwhelmingly be one’s forte in politics (January 25, 1957:106), and that one should “... not enter politics for personal enrichment” (April 30, 1957:115). These and other great exhortations from our founders would constitute a baggage of knowledge on public office holding and political leadership for the youth and influence their character and behaviour when they assume the mantle of leadership in the future.

#### *Providing Models for Policy Decisions*

Robinson (1995:3) maintains that ideas developed in one area of investigation often find practical application in other areas. This implies that what is good and works successfully in one field can act the same way in another

location. In the same way, some historical ideas are pro forma, although they were taken or conceived in different time contexts. Thalheimer (2005:iv) has observed,

If we look familiarly into the daily life of our fellow-men thousands of years ago, it is to find them toiling at the same problems which perplex us; suffering the same conflict of passion and principle; ... The national questions which fill our newspapers [today] were discussed long ago in the Grove, the Agora, and the Forum ... and no man ... can afford to be ignorant of what has already been so wisely and fully accomplished. Present tasks can only be clearly seen and worthily performed in the light of long experience ....

In fact, the writings of the historians before the eighteenth century and even after are full of implications which claim to be valid for all human action, irrespective of time and milieu (Mises, 1991:92). In view of this, past experiences can, and really do, inform present and future decisions. The Historical Society of Ghana (2008:3) has asserted that the importance of history is observed in its potential or ability to provide fundamental data about past developments to influence present and future decisions (see also Adjepong, 2013(c):42–55). Thus, history is capable of offering examples of practical solutions to present obstacles and debacles as well as forestalling future problems. To many seasoned minds, history is not just a branch of knowledge to be studied for its own sake, but a kind of knowledge which is useful to humans in daily life, because it teaches the present generation, by examples of the past, such wisdom as may guide our desires and actions. Similarly, Johnson (cited in Aggarwal, 2004:4) has pointed out that people can draw significant lessons from the inexhaustible legacy that the saints, sages, statesmen, scientists, artists, poets, musicians and philosophers have left behind. Nana Addo (2017, January 7:2; 2017, February 21:1) seems to clarify this point when, in his inaugural speech and message on the State of the Nation, he says that he is in the unique and enviable position of being the first Ghanaian leader to be able to draw on the wisdom and experience of three former Presidents of the Republic, their Excellencies Jerry John Rawlings, John Agyekum Kufuor and John Dramani Mahama, to enrich his tenure of office.

The substance of all these observations is that lessons drawn from the past can provide present and future generations with keys to solving most of our numerous problems. The fact is that history is genuinely a great storehouse of knowledge in which the present and future can search at will and be able to cope with problems of all kinds, such as shortages of resources, including water, energy sources, or food. Gay and Webb (1973:639) remind us that during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, European architects drew on a variety of past styles, notably Gothic, while designers and craftsmen ransacked the history of ancient China and Egypt for motifs. Again, they reveal how painters were fortunate enough to find large audiences for their portrayals of imagined scenes of events from Roman history and from incidents from Napoleon's career (*Ibid.*, p. 640). Skidelsky (cited in "Quotes about History", retrieved July 29, 2012) has also observed that politicians explore the past for lessons, while fashion designers do the same for styles. All this stresses the fact that humans require a consciousness of their past to be fully seized of their predicaments in the present, and on which to found their rational expectations for the future. It is in support of this argument that Grattan (1971:358) has expressed the view

... that if society becomes overburdened with men elevated to decision-making positions who are without a sense of the past, and without more or less relevant *knowledge* of the past, then we have identified one factor which will contribute to society's barbarization.

At any rate, we are not implying that a sense of the past, or an understanding knowledge of history, would automatically produce better decisions for leaders to choose and implement. Our argument is rather that since the study of history helps us understand the range of ways in which people have met challenges and the relative successes of the solutions they offered to those problems, it may offer a significant assistance to the individual, group leaders, heads of institutions, and national and international policy-makers to respond to the problems of the modern world in an informed manner. In fact, a knowledge of the past cannot accurately predict future events, but it can provide helpful insights; the knowledge of how people acted in the past, how they strove to order the life of their respective societies, and how they struggled to overcome diversity, may not always suggest ingenious solutions to present crises, but it undoubtedly makes the task easier by providing a background and a body of past experiences. The fact that the past plays an important role in decision-making justifies the compulsory study of history at the pre-tertiary school level since the students here are often presented with several alternatives on which they need to make decisions before making choices. What is more important here is that our youth would become more historically conscious, since their ability to draw on the experiences of the past would help them to appreciate that the present, as well as the future, is connected to the past in several ways.

### *Providing Keys to Understanding Our Present and Foreseeing Our Future*

The subject-matter of history belongs mostly to the past, but in reality, and for practical purposes, the focus of history is on the present and the future, meaning that history is concerned with the three divisions of time: the past, the present and the future. This means that a good reconstruction of the past affords an understanding of the present and a perspective of the future. It is undeniable that only events already gone by can disclose the prevailing state of things. It is only through studying history that we can grasp how things came to be what they are, and it is only through the serious study of history that we can begin to understand the factors behind the present state of affairs. Comparing what *was* with what now *is* helps us to gain a deeper understanding of the past and its meaning for the present. In other words, a knowledge of the past gives us a perspective on our societies today. Obviously, since most current events have a past 'history', it is generally necessary for us to acquaint ourselves with this history if we genuinely desire to appreciate their real significance. The study of history will, thus, give the youth the key to unlock hitherto tightly sealed doors of the present, which will then enable them to enter the doors to the future.

It is also true that a critical evaluation of the past helps us to read into the future. It is in appreciation of this fact that Miles (1989:16) has maintained that in finding the way to the future, our understanding of the past has a crucial part to play. In appreciation of this view, the former Canadian Prime Minister John G. Diefenbaker (cited in Jay, 2007:118) has remarked that there can be no dedication to Canada's future without a knowledge of its past. Actually, historians place premium on the scientific reconstruction of the past in their belief that life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards. The implication is that our search of the records of the past and what we discover therein should prepare or empower us for the future. In view of all this, we often define history as *the science, art and practice of studying, interpreting and giving meaning to significant past human activities and events, through time and space, which help in our understanding of the present and gives us a perspective of the future* (Adjepong, 2014:13). This underscores the vitality and necessity of history in our lives, and the need for its systematic and serious study, not only as a separate subject in the school curriculum but also as a major component of the sciences, in order to achieve the objective of applying scientific knowledge and methods to the process of our development. By understanding the past and present and having a perspective of the future, history graduates are better placed to contribute towards realising the present goals of public and private organisations, and planning for the future growth of such business entities. Essentially, historical knowledge contributes towards good performance at the work place.

### *Providing Skills for the Job Market*

It must be noted, first, that historical training is valuable to students of any aspect of life and to the worker in any branch of social intelligence, because it enables students to acquire advanced analytical skills which could be effectively applied in a variety of contexts. As historical training engages students in both inductive and deductive reasoning, which, in turn, develops their reasoning ability, they are situated in a better framework to function creatively and positively in their jobs as well as in their labour unions, companies, professional organisations, and in any other social group to which they may be affiliated. Again, it should be remembered that training in history provides the historian with the power and skill of argument, and the power of speech, in constructing cases in a variety of situations, not only in arguing public issues. Traditionally, when dealing with assignments or critical issues in history, one is required to demonstrate good analytical and evaluation skills. In the same way, in life, we often encounter situations in the workplace that call for the same analytical and argumentative skills employed in historical analysis. Almost everywhere, in small-scale businesses as well as in large corporations, a worker who can articulate his or her views well has an important advantage in gaining access to positions of greater interest and challenge. Even when they are primarily informative, the memoranda, reports, instructions, questions, and explanations that issue from offices and factories obey the rules of argumentative discourse. Malaysia provides a very good example here. In order to assess the knowledge and understanding of the historical development of the country, all Government servants in Category B and above are required to write an examination (*Peperiksaan Am Kerajaan* – Government Examination) in order to qualify for a permanent post (Salleh, Mohamad and Ambotang, 2013, September:1–2). In this respect, history graduates, undoubtedly, have a superior advantage over their colleagues who lack historical knowledge.

This notwithstanding, we know very well that one major reason for the decreasing student interest in history is the view that the discipline offers little opportunities for employment, especially when compared to the so-called utilitarian, job-oriented, practical subjects such as business management, accounting, engineering, etc. (Adjepong, Oppong and Kachim, 2017, April:237–280). This is not only a perception; it is a fact that we often observe on the job market.<sup>1</sup> It needs to be stressed, however, that although history does not train students for any

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<sup>1</sup> We are very much aware of the difficulties history graduates in general encounter in job acquisition. In fact, in dealing with this section, we had to contact some of the alumni of the Department of History, University of Cape. Some of them complained bitterly and even pointed out that they feel disappointed to have read history at the university. One of them, Mr.

specific careers, it is still useful for work. As Steeves (“Working Together to Strengthen History Teaching in Secondary Schools”, retrieved May 23, 2017) has clearly emphasised,

[History] Graduates could become involved in government, using their historical knowledge to write legislation or to present arguments for change; in business, training workers or collaborating with colleagues to write documents; in a service capacity, instructing learners overseas or locally in new technologies or about their own neighborhood structure or history; in the media, producing or distributing information for a mass audience; in education, teaching young people who will carry the story on to future generations; or as parents, encouraging children to explore and learn.

Indeed, it is not that history itself does not offer its students any career knowledge and skills; it is rather our perception, our own view, wrong though, which society has imposed on the discipline. As Rowse (1946:4) clarifies, history has its uses for career purpose, no less than the other sciences. The study of history helps create good business people, professionals, and political leaders. The number of explicit professional jobs for historians is considerable, but most people who study history do not become professional historians. Professional historians teach at various levels, work as curators of in museums, do historical research for businesses or public agencies, or participate in the growing number of historical consultancies (Adu-Boahen: personal interview, October 25, 2013, Accra). Others work as librarians, archivists, secretaries of institutions, social service workers, and media centers as journalists and broadcasters. For political journalists, foreign and military correspondents, it is a great advantage to have read history because many of the issues such professionals deal with need historical background in order to understand them and make them clear (Rowse, 1946:5). Reference has already been made to the relevance of historical knowledge for a successful career in public administration and politics. It is important to add here that history is one of the recognised paths into the higher ranks of the civil service; it gives the right background for most of the affairs which those who occupy administrative positions in the civil service deal with. Historical knowledge is also indispensable for members of the foreign service, for diplomats and consuls abroad. These categories are important to keep the basic enterprise of history going, but most people who study history use their training for broader professional purposes. History graduates find their experience directly relevant to jobs in a variety of careers as well as to further studies in fields like business administration, democracy and local government, development studies, diplomacy and international relations, human resource development, human resource management, law, peace and conflict management, project management, public administration, public policy, etc.

Even in some cases, employers deliberately seek graduates with the kind of capacities historical study promotes (Adu-Boahen: personal interview, October 25, 2013, Accra). The reasons are not hard to identify: students of history acquire, by studying different phases and societies in the past, a broad perspective that gives them the range and flexibility required in many work situations. They develop research skills, the ability to find and evaluate sources of information, and the means to identify and evaluate diverse interpretations. Training in history also improves basic writing and speaking skills which is directly relevant to many of the analytical requirements in the public and private sectors, where the capacity to identify, assess, and explain trends is essential. Historical study is unquestionably an asset for a variety of work and professional situations, even though it does not, for most students, lead as directly to a particular job slot as do some technical fields. But history particularly prepares students for the long haul in their careers, its qualities helping adaptation and advancement beyond entry-level employment.

Truly, in spite of the dominance of the technologically and vocationally-oriented programmes in our educational institutions, history graduates have a future as both respected intellectuals and adaptable, competitive graduates on the job market, if they should commit themselves to the acquisition of the elegant skills of thinking historically. This is particularly so in the light of developments in the advanced economies where corporate organisations are increasingly recognising the increasing relevance of historical knowledge and critical skills which have been found to be increasingly lacking with the diminution of the number of history graduates (*Ibid.*). In fact, over the years, historians have efficiently filled various positions locally and internationally and in all

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Thomas Ocran (2012), a teacher at Sammy Otu Senior High School, Cape Coast, stated categorically, “Job prospects for History graduates is a big problem in Ghana” (WhatsApp Communication: May 20, 2017). Mr. Gideon Boadu, a product of the Department of History, University of Cape Coast (2014), now pursuing his M.Phil. (History Education) in Australia, also made the same complaint. He stressed, “Most history graduates are bitter about the subject and have regretted studying it at the university (both Single Major and Combined). Discussions precipitated on WhatsApp by your call for graduates working in different institutions point to this. As a trained history teacher and a researcher, I have serious concerns about this sentiment (whether or not it is a minority view), and I know you will have same” (WhatsApp Communication: May 21, 2017). He, thus, suggested that we include in this study or we undertake a special study in the future on the difficulties history graduates face in securing jobs in Ghana. And fortunately for us, one of our students has selected “History Graduates and the Job Market in Ghana: A Historical Survey of the 2000–2016 Period” as her Project Work topic.

sectors of the economy. In the ministries, public service and the private sector, historians have demonstrated great, and sometimes exceptional, ability and continue to do so. Historians are in careers in individual or small firms, policy research for government agencies and corporations; public sector agencies and bodies such as the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of central and local governments, the military, planning agencies, public archives and libraries; private sector corporations in areas like banking, communications, media, advertising, publishing and public relations and educational institutions as administrators and teachers.

### Conclusion

We have emphasised, in the foregoing analysis, that the decision of the Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo-led New Patriotic Party administration to reintroduce history into the pre-tertiary school curriculum as a separate subject is a laudable one. If it is true that government policies are always officially justified when they seek to address the concrete interests of the citizens and concrete advantages for all classes are to be expected (Schumpeter, 1951:5), then it is clear that the decision to reintroduce history is certainly justified. The reason is that this policy seeks to address a major concrete need of the country and enormous concrete advantages for all Ghanaians are to be expected when this policy is eventually implemented. The basis of our argument is that in spite of the several limitations associated with history, and the numerous challenges it faces, the discipline has not outlived its importance as an academic subject. Undoubtedly, there are so many significant benefits of the study of history which could not be captured in this document, but we believe that what has been presented here is enough to show that history contributes more to knowledge and to personal and societal development. It is rather unfortunate that social stereotypes have blinded the eyes of the contemporary generation to the vital uses of history as an academic discipline. Certainly, the facts we have provided in support of our arguments indicate that the neglect of history since 1987 has contributed significantly to the slow pace of our national development, since we have not judiciously exploited the discipline to our advantage. By reducing the value of history in the pre-tertiary school curriculum, we have deprived our youth of the opportunity of studying and acquiring knowledge on, and from, our national heritage, an inheritance from which they, as citizens of Ghana, are also entitled to benefit. This, indeed, constitutes a great injustice to the youth of Ghana today.

Many of us have had reasons to raise concerns about the awkward and unpalatable attitude and behaviour of the youth on numerous occasions. Genuine though these concerns are, we have never thought of our contribution to the problem. By denying the youth of the study of their heritage, we have contributed immensely to weakening the foundations upon which modern Ghana was erected, because we have raised a youth without any real sense of humanity and national identity. We have also denied them of the opportunity to the good moral lives and useful experiences of the founders of the nation, and have rather exposed them to the unfortunate dimensions of foreign cultures through technological devices and the modern media. Of course, there were several major problems in the country before 1987, but we all agree that such social problems as bribery and corruption; the evil practice of *loot-and-share* in national, and even local, politics; embezzlement of national funds; failure of contractors to execute projects; selfishness and greed; favouritism and cronyism in institutions; ritual murder, serial killing and *sakawa*; teenage prostitution; armed robbery; drug abuse; husband and wife snatching; careless driving, and many others, have assumed new dimensions. These vices have increased in volume and strength because many citizens of Ghana today lack the cultural enlightenment they would have derived from the study of our national history which would have made them proud of their own cultural heritage. Equally, we have denied them of the keys to patriotic and democratic citizenship, the sense of national integration and tolerance, public service experience and political leadership skills. In the same way, they have lost the chance of developing their imaginative abilities and helping them to think critically. Again, by being denied historical training, they have been denied access to the keys to the door of patriotic and citizenship training, and access to models for policy decisions. The inability of the youth of today to relate the past to present developments and future aspirations is also due to their lack of historical knowledge which could have given them the keys to understanding our present and foreseeing our future. The same argument could be made of many workers' inability to deliver as expected in their career pursuits, for they lack the necessary historical skills applicable to the positions they occupy. Putting all these issues together, we wonder if any well-constituted body of professional anthropologists, demographers, economists, historians, mathematicians, political scientists, sociologists, statisticians, and other experts could ever be able to assess, calculate and quantify precisely the developmental deficits Ghana has accumulated since 1987 from the denigration and relegation of history to the background. And we should be prepared to welcome more social problems and incur more developmental debts if we should continue to train our children without exposing them to historical knowledge. As Boahen (1975:22) has emphasised, "In grappling with this problem [of nation-building] in Africa today, we ignore the lessons that Clio ... holds for us at our own peril."

In his analysis of the factors that contributed towards developing the United States of America "... into a nation *par excellence* ...", Boahen (*Ibid.*, p. 7) maintains that the "... last and probably the most potent of all, [was] the establishment of universal compulsory education at the very initial stages." Certainly, education is

considered the key to change and progress, but the *kind* of education provided to the people plays a major role in determining the progress and prosperity of every society. As Nasibi (2015, January:182) has stressed, the development of every country depends upon the type of education offered to its citizens and its relevance to the needs and aspirations of the people it serves. This education should not only bring up individual development, but also the desired change, while preserving the culture and values of the society. All this brings us to the point where the need to emphasise the serious scientific study of history – that is, national history blended with the significant aspects of the major themes in African and world history – becomes crucial, since an understanding of *yesterday* is essential to our survival *today* and *tomorrow*. Thus, contrary to the numerous tenuous impressions people have about history, there is the need for a more systematic research into our history and a scientific utilisation of its results. In the general sense, the American historian, George Bancroft has argued that “Of all pursuits that require analysis, history ... stands first” (Lewis, 1955:159). Reinforcing this view, Simon Jenkins maintains, “Of all intellectual pursuits, history is the most supremely useful. That is why people crave it and need ever more of it” (“Quotes about History”, retrieved July 29, 2012). Rowse (1946:v) has also added that there can be no subject of study more important than history. These observations underscore the significance of history in our everyday lives. Moreover, every society that places special value on its existence expects an interpretation of its past, which is relevant to its present, and serves as a basis for formulating decisions about its future. It is in appreciation of these uses of history that we set out to justify the Nana Akufo-Addo government’s decision to reintroduce history as a separate subject in the pre-tertiary school curriculum so that future generations would become more nationalistic and patriotic, and make selfless contributions towards the development of Ghana.

What makes the serious study of history in Ghana at the pre-tertiary school level more crucial now is that fact that the country has already suffered in several ways from the use of propaganda history by some people to achieve political ends. Boahen (1975:13), for instance, insists that history should be taught in primary and secondary schools so that “every pupil should have a conviction of democratic processes. He should be alert to the threats which always confront democratic processes, but determined to expand rather than curtail these processes.” The great historian makes this appeal because of his consciousness of “... the deliberate manipulation of History for the purposes of political propaganda and political indoctrination in very recent times” (*Ibid.*). Accordingly, it would only be logical for history to be made a core subject in basic schools in order to offer the youth the opportunity to know the true history of the country; to be conscious of and comprehend the conceptual strand of continuity and change in the history of Ghana; and to bring the appropriate historical perspectives to explaining contemporary issues. In the case of the USA, P.J. Shea (cited in Mohammed, 2013, July:51), for example, has urged that no matter the type of discipline pupils and students need to study, they must include history as a subsidiary course for the understanding of the national history of the country. We wish President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo and the New Patriotic Party a very successful tenure of office. We would, however, be very happy if the government could institute measures that would facilitate the early, effective and efficient implementation of its decision so that by 2020, Nana Addo and the NPP could count the making of history as a core subject in pre-tertiary schools in Ghana among their spectacular achievements, partly based on which they would seek a second term of office.

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