

Essay on marx and whip understanding of history

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Historical materialism is an approach that is used in the study of the society and its operations in regard to history and economics. It seeks to explain the causes of current happenings in society through an historical perspective (Rupert & Smith 2002: 93). That history has played a crucial role in shaping the present and the future. This could be true because the world has evolved through different stages to be what it is today.

The great man theory came into being in the 19th century and its proponents were of the opinion that people who were considered heroes and great influenced how society operated. According to them, these proponents argued that life in all its aspects is determined by individuals who impacted society in one way or another. It therefore goes without saying that, to them, society is shaped by personalities. For instance, Napoleon is thought to have impacted the lives of the people who lived in his era and even to this day.

Karl Marx's understanding on the other hand is that, the present will always be impacted by the past in so many ways. The present in his view can only be seen through the eyes of the past in order to understand it (Rupert & Smith 2002: 152). Therefore, economic processes presently seen borrow from the past and yet again, they are used by the present generation to better the economy and in turn pass them to the future generation for the future generations. This will in the long run expand economic production and exchanges just like business seem to better people's lives.

These two perspectives seem to be different and compete with each other greatly. Whereas Marx proposes that it is history that plays a major role in how present life is the Whig version of history looks at it differently through single individuals in history. But also they seem to agree on one point when

both, are looked at as the past r history. This brings forth the issue of social transformation as both can be merged to explain current trends in society (Rupert & Smith 2002: 166).

These two competing perspectives seem to explain the realities on the ground. It is inevitable to assume the past regardless of looking at its history in general or individuals. The bottom line is that both play a crucial role in shaping society today. It is for this reason that both cannot be ignored. The two perspectives may differ in one way or another, but they seem to influence the present.

References

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Rupert, M. & Smith, H. (2002). *Historical Materialism and Globalization*. New York: Routledge.