

# Essay on quot;the historians task is to understand the past; the human scientist,...

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



## **Philosophy**

Historians and scientists play an extremely significant role in society. While the former is concerned with activities that happened in the past, the latter not only seeks to predict with a particular amount of precision what is likely to happen in the future, but also seeks to influence these opportunities. These two activities lead to the collection of two sets of facts. These facts undergo probability tests and analyses whereby inferences are made. Indeed, logic is significant to determine which propositions are true and which are false. There are usually two sets of truth presented by these phenomena. This is 'truth' in terms of fact and deducible meaning of the collected data. For a scientist or a historian to grade with certainty that a particular observation is true, this must be probable. Essentially, it should be possible to appeal to the beliefs of man with a particular degree of probability. Human beliefs shape one's behavior. This paper interrogates to what extent scientists and historians use their skills and expertise to using the theory of knowledge to either reveal the past or change the future. All these depend heavily of the behavior of man and how his beliefs influence what can be deduced as truth from logic.

In order to understand the past, historians have to reconstruct behavior. To achieve this, they provide factual and conceptual descriptions of past circumstances and events. Such descriptions must be able to be replicated and must be guided with existing beliefs. The observed behavior will be regarded as the truth depending on how man can hold his beliefs. This involves determining the degrees of precision of the methodology and degree of certainty. The historian will seek to answer questions-like what

happened? What circumstances were present? In practice, this involves a daunting task of collecting historical sources in order to create a logical sequence. The meaning of 'logic' is usually extremely subjective. This means that a reconstructed theory must seem probable to modern man that early man or the past events happened as the theory suggests. The capacity of the historian to believe the findings as being the truth with certainty is significantly influenced by the composition of the modern body of language. Moreover, the historian is also usually engaged in substantial concepts analyses. It is vital that the historian uses a set of vocabularies to explain to the world the phenomenon. For example, what happened during the Declaration of Independence in 1776? How did congress relate to Great Britain? These are some of the questions that the historian will seek to answer. These questions require him to elect his vocabulary prudently. Words significantly influence findings. It is critical to use the right words in order to bring his view into harmony with the current state of human behavior. The use of words produces conditional responses that would otherwise be regarded as 'thinking'. The conclusions must not only be true, but also appear to true by being in tandem with 'belief'. However, it is vital to understand that the influence words have cannot be regarded as evidence of beliefs.

On the other hand, scientists are preoccupied in answering the why question. It is crucial for a scientist to answer the why question in any given phenomenon. In essence, this affords him an opportunity to provide a candid and convincing explanation. He may be explaining an occurrence, pattern or test findings. For example, some scientists have provided a sample picture of

how man will look like in after the next 100, 000 years. In this picture, the human face has a smaller skull but bigger eyes. Using existing body of knowledge in biology and evolution, these scientists have given their explanation of why they think the human skulls would be smaller and the eyes bigger. The forecast must be reinforced by human choices and provide a comprehensive explanation of the casual mechanisms involved. In order to change the future, a scientist must identify causes of a phenomenon, change variables that would influence particular actions and tap natural forces that would propagate the modified phenomenon.

For a historian to understand the past and a scientist to change the future they both must answer the question how. This has to be canvased with the help of the datum and the inferred. They both must be able to separate the inferences from data. This would help them establish a methodology that would demonstrate the ' how'. The historian would ask, " How was this outcome achieved?" " How did Napoleon Bonaparte rule France?" Likewise, the scientist would be concerned with " how can this be possible?" " How can we alter the conditions to achieve desired results?" Despite these questions seeking an explanation, they also provide answers as to the methodology. The methodology will lead to the observation and deduction of two types of data. This is the case in both science and history. These include the physical and the mental data. While the physical data is obtained by observance and thus less controversial, if the methodology was valid, mental data is inferred from introspection. The distinction between the two can also be made in relation to constructions and inferences made by researchers. This is because data denotes a particular set of events caused by a set of actions

and reactions initiated by the researchers. Inferences are then deduced from the findings. The research may decide to generalize the findings to a significant extent than the scope of his research.

It is critical for either the scientist or the historian to synchronize their findings with the characteristics of beliefs and behavior. For history, this is because it is modern man's attempt to reconstruct the absent past. It is a mental representation of the modern man of how the past existed. With regards to science, scientists are obsessed with the idea of controlling the future direction of development of mankind. Therefore, they are involved in daily coding of future imprints through experiments.

In the 21st century, the world is filled with uncertainty and instability. This can be deduced in all sectors of man's life including culturally, politically, economically, and socially. It is, therefore, logical that man is concerned in understanding his past and controlling his future. Indeed, it is true that knowledge available to both professionals is tainted with uncertainty and vagueness. It has been argued that precise knowledge, while more significant than vague knowledge, is likely to be false than vague knowledge. The cardinal objective of science is to establish certainty of knowledge without tampering with its precision. On the other hand, history is obsessed with precision of occurrences of events to create believable patterns.

However, inferences are instrumental to these disciplines. An inference denotes believing the existence of another set of facts after the arriving at one set of facts. This is because of the observable characteristics which are dependent on the body of knowledge known to the researcher. The inferences must be probable. In order to understand why man domesticated

cats, the explanations from the historians should be more than just mere animal prejudice. He should present a detailed argument of man associated with the cat and the benefits derived from the symbiotic relationship. The scientists and historians are also usually aware of the degree of probability expected from their findings. These vary depending on many factors. For example, a scientist must be alive to the natural factors that affect the life of man on earth in designing any plans for the future. Naturally, people will infer that such factors were taken into account. Indeed, it is true from a theory of knowledge perspective that scientists seek to change the future while historians are primarily concerned with the past. In order to have a clear understanding of this phenomenon, it is vital to interrogate it from a partly psychological and partly logical perspective. This will make one understand that beliefs, perception and memory color the thinking of the human mind and thus explains the differences in grades of certainty.

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