CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND SCIENCE : THEIR METHODS

It has become pertinent question as to what history is; and how it differs from scientific thinking; and what are its genuine methods; and how it differs from scientific ones. The last important problem which belongs to Critical philosophy of history is very closely bound up with the question whether history is an art or a science like natural sciences. These important points will be the subject matter of this chapter.

Our age has shown a tremendous inclination to accept the biological dictum 'that which is, is because it has a history'. We are conscious of increasing influence of historical or genetic approach in different disciplines. This interest of our time has also resulted in a certain vagueness about the nature and character of proper historical - Material and doubts have been expressed against its existence as a separate discipline. Mr. White1 in his attack on History has stated that possibility of History as a discipline is bound up with finding out of relevant historical terms different from disciplines like sociology and politics. Mandelbaum2 has also


suggested that history as the record of all that humanity has ever thought, felt or achieved shall embrace at least in material all sciences and art that deal with man, and the need of clearly understanding its exact scope, material and nature forces us to investigate the receptive methods of these sciences on the one hand and that of history proper on the other.

In the first place let us know how history has been defined by idealist philosopher, Collingwood. I do this because idealists have to offer a bold and clear-cut account of historical explanation. Collingwood defines "history as Re-enactment of Past Experience." He says that the historian must re-enact the past in his own mind. Next he points out that history is a kind of inquiry. If it is an inquiry, what kinds of things does history find out? He answers, "res gestae: actions of human beings that have been done in the past." Let us discuss how Professor W. H. Walsh defines history in this connection. He defines history as "the study of the past." What past? The answer is "the past of human beings." History begins to be interested in the past when human beings first appear in it. "Its essential concern is with human experience and actions." Thus Professor Walsh, Dray and other idealist

philosophers agree that history is concerned with the
activities of human beings that have been done in the past.
Whether Queen Elizabeth had a sore throat on a given morning
becomes an object of historical study only if it may have
prevented her from attending a Privy Council meeting. This
also illustrates the limitation: that although, in a sense,
history is concerned always with the activities of individuals,
it is not concerned with them as such. An action does not
become subject matter for a historian unless it has what
Maurice Mandelbaum calls "Societal Significance." If history
is concerned with past human action of Societal Significance,
what is the nature of that concern? The obvious answer is:
to find out what they were "to establish the facts." It is
surely the historian's task, it must be said, not only to
establish the facts, but to understand them. It is true, of
course, that history records not merely what human beings did
and suffered, but also a considerable number of natural events
in the past — earthquakes, floods, droughts and like. But its
interest in these events is strictly subsidiary. The historian
is not concerned, at any point of his work, with nature for its
own sake; only with nature as a background to human activities.
If he mentions natural events, it is because those events had

5, The Problem of Historical Knowledge, pp. 9, 14.
effects on the lives of the men and women whose experiences he is describing. Had they no such effects, he would not have mentioned them. The same argument has been given by Professor Dray in his book, *Philosophy of History*. "Natural occurrences may certainly be referred to in histories; but only insofar as they are thought to effect, or present problems to, those human beings whose story the historian seeks to tell".

"That this is not mere dogmatism one can see for himself by reflecting on actual historical writings. A history of the world does not normally begin with speculations about the origins of the universe, nor does it include an account of the mutations of plant and animal species once life had appeared on this planet. Its effective range is very much shorter: it concentrates on the activities of man as known over a comparatively brief space of time."

Let us therefore take it as agreed from above discussion that it is the human past which is the primary object of the historian's study. The next point as explained by Professor Walsh for consideration is the type of understanding he aims at.

8. Ibid., pp. 32-33.
Here we have two possibilities to consider. The first is that the historian confines himself (or should confine himself) to an exact description of what happened, constructing what may be called a plain narrative of past events. The other is that he goes beyond such a plain narrative and aims not merely at saying what happened but also at (in some sense) explaining it. In the second case the kind of narrative he constructs may be described as 'significant' rather than 'plain'.

Walsh says in his paper included in Theories of History by Patrick Gardiner that history has a meaning, that there is point, significance, intelligibility in the historical process as a whole or we must accept the view that history is a chaotic aggregate of unconnected events and processes lacking all rhyme or reason. To him history is meaningful or it is unintelligible. If unintelligibility were accepted no history would be attempted. To make sense of a given piece of history one has to see connections between different historical events, the causal connections between them. It is not only the 'what' but also the 'why' that has to be set forth by the historian. It is not always that the 'why' follows 'what'. In other words, he aims at a reconstruction of the past which is both intelligent and intelligible. It is true that historians often fail to reach this high level: they lack either the evidence or the insight required for an adequate reconstruction, and find themselves in
consequences driven to recite isolated facts without being able to fit them into a coherent picture. It often happens that the 'what' is collected and presented as answer to or an explanation of an already perceived 'why'. Professor Oakeshott (in his 'Experience and its Modes') held that the word 'cause' is no part of the historian's vocabulary. When he held that view, he was thinking of causation which is appropriate to the natural sciences. He and those of his line of thinking overlooked the fact that the primary concern of historians is with the actions of human beings, questions about purposes, intentions, policies and ends. To explain is to render intelligible. There are occasions when the historian cannot go beyond the stage of describing the situation in which the man about whom he is writing found himself. He cannot fully reconstruct the thought behind his actions, cannot see how he came to act as he did. On these occasions explanations in terms of external and internal factors of a kind which could be broadly classified as psychological not merely supplement but actually replace explanation in terms of purposes.

There is a distinction made by Croce at the beginning


a sort of psycho-analytical study of men like Caesar, Nero, Napoleon, Wilson, Gandhi and Hitler has been attempted wherein their behaviour is treated not as an aggregate of individual choices but as products of psychological internal compulsions.
of his book on the Theory and History of Historiography, which may be found illuminating in this connection. Croce there contrasts history proper with chronicle, describing the first as the living thought of the past, whilst the second is, as it stands, dead and unintelligible. The sort of knowledge we have of the history of ancient Greek painting, to take an example of Croce's own, is very different from that which we have of e.g. the political history of nineteenth-century Europe; and indeed the difference is so profound that they may almost be said to belong to separate genres. It is not only that in the case of nineteenth-century political history we have far more material to work on than when we are dealing with the history of Greek painting, of which very little direct evidence remains. There is also the fact that, because we stand nearer to the nineteenth-century, we can inter far more easily into the thoughts and feelings of the age, and so use our evidence in a far more effective way. The narrative we can construct of nineteenth-century political history is both full and coherent: events in it can be presented in such a manner that their development seems to be orderly and intelligible. A history of this sort is close-knit and consequential. But a history of Greek painting, or what passes for such a history, is a sorry affair by comparison, consisting of little but the names
and approximate dates of a few celebrities, with the titles of their works as recorded by ancient authors. It gives us no insight into the actual development of painting in the ancient world, but is really only an unsatisfactory chronicle, a mere skeleton of a history.

The point on which Professor Walsh wants to insist is that "what every historian seeks for is not a bare recital of unconnected facts, but a smooth narrative in which every event falls as it were into its natural place and belongs to an intelligible whole. In this respect the ideal of the historian is in principle identical with that of the novelist or the dramatist. Just as a good novel or a good play appears to consist not in a series of isolated episodes, but in the orderly development of the complex situation from which it starts, so a good history possesses a certain unity of plot or theme. And where we fail to find such a unity we experience a feeling of dissatisfaction; we believe we have not understood the facts we set out to investigate as well as we should."10

The task of historian is to penetrate to the inner nature of the events he is studying, and the historian can grasp them as it were from within. This is an advantage which

can never be enjoyed by the natural scientist, who can never know what it is like to be a physical object in the way in which a historian can know what it was like to be Julius Caesar. In Collingwood’s words:

"To the scientist, nature is always and merely a 'phenomenon', not in the sense of being defective in reality, but in the sense of being a spectacle presented to his intelligent observation; whereas the events of history are never mere phenomena, never mere spectacles for contemplation, but things which the historian looks, not at, but through, to discern the thought within them."

History is intelligible in this way because it is a manifestation of mind. "It may be that all history is, in some sense, the history of thought. Before we say anything we should turn our attention to the first proposition, and in particular to its key-word 'thought'."

When it is said that history is essentially concerned with 'thought' what is being referred to? To this question Prof. Walsh answers in the following way. "The term is capable of both a wider and a narrower meaning, and the ambiguity is

reflected in an important division among supporters of the idealist theory. For Dilthey, history, along with e.g., law, economics, literary criticism and sociology, belonged to the group of studies he called sciences of mind. The characteristic of these studies, which contrasted with the natural sciences, was that their subject-matter could be 'lived through' in Dilthey's sense is human experiences in the widest use of the term: men's feelings, emotions and sensations, as well as their thinkings and reasonings. Hence, for Dilthey, to say that history was properly concerned with human thoughts would be the same as to say it was concerned with human experiences; the word 'thoughts' would be used generally, such as cogitation is in the philosophy of Descartes. Dilthey would have denied that all history is the history of thought if that were understood to mean the history of thinking proper, considering such as a conception altogether too narrow and intellectualistic to fit the facts.

But Collingwood, who was certainly familiar with Dilthey's theories, deliberately opted for this narrow view. When he said that "all history was the history of thought, he meant that it was properly concerned with intellectual operations. All thinking, he explained, took place against a background of feeling and emotion, but it was not with that..."
the historian was concerned. The historian could not be occupied with that background, because he could not hope to re-live it. It was only thoughts in the strict sense which were capable of resurrection, and so only thoughts could constitute the subject-matter of history.  

One may well be puzzled to know what led Collingwood to maintain so apparently extreme and paradoxical a theory as this, and it will perhaps be worth our while to look at the contrasting views more closely.

Dilthey supported his theory of the autonomy of the Geisteswissenschaften with an account of how mental operations are known. At the centre of this were his concepts of 'expression' and 'understanding'. According to him, all our mental experiences — feelings, emotions, thinkings — tend to get some sort of external expression. Thinking, for example, is normally accompanied by spoken or written words or other symbols, grief by one sort of facial expression and bodily behaviour, joy by another, and so on. The process of understanding the minds of other people, and for that matter part of the process of understanding our own minds, is one of interpreting these expressions. But Dilthey was emphatic that it was not a process of inference. We pass directly, ho

appears to think, from awareness of the expression to awareness of that which it expresses; or rather, though we do not get at the original experience itself, we have in ourselves an experience precisely like it. Thus when I see someone showing all the signs of pain I am immediately pained myself. I know what it is like to be the man in question because my mental state corresponds exactly to his.

Professor Walsh has criticised this account in two ways. First, it can be asked why, if Dilthey is right in thinking the process to be immediate and not inferential, we sometimes get it wrong. That we do often misread people’s thoughts and feelings could not be denied, and it seems most natural to say that when we do we draw the wrong conclusions from the evidence at our disposal — the expressions of which Dilthey speaks. In that case the process is, after all, one of inference. And secondly, it may be suggested that Dilthey’s theory leads to a fundamentally sceptical position. If we can never get at the actual experience which gave rise to a certain expression, how do we know that our own experience is, as he assures us, precisely like it? It looks as if Dilthey was involved here in the common difficulties of the representative theory of knowledge, and had not sufficiently considered how to avoid them.

Collingwood felt the force of both these points, though he was in general sympathy with Dilthey's point of view and alive to the great importance for history of the theory of expression. But he wanted to avoid scepticism about historical knowledge and, as part of that, to avoid having to say that we can make only more or less well-founded guesses about other people's minds, including the minds of past persons. And the only way he saw of achieving this result was to argue that all we could know of them was their thoughts and reasonings in the strict sense.

Accordingly for Collingwood, "the central concept of history is the concept of action, i.e. of thought expressing itself in external behaviour. Historians have, he believed, to start from the merely physical or from descriptions of the merely physical; but their aim is to penetrate behind these to the thought which underlay them."16. Thus they may start from the bare fact that a person (or, more strictly, a body) called Julius Caesar on a certain day in 49 B.C. crossed the River Rubicon with such - and - such forces. But they are not content to stop there; they want to go on and find out what was in Caesar's mind, what thought lay behind those bodily movements. In Collingwood's own terminology, they want to

pass from the 'outside' of the event to its 'inside'. And once they make that transition, he claims, the action becomes for them fully intelligible:

"For history, the object to be discovered is not the mere event, but the thought expressed in it. To discover that thought is already to understand it. After the historian has ascertained the facts, there is no further process of inquiring into the causes. When he knows what happened, he already knows why it happened."17.

Thus the important factor, which influences historical interpretation is the historian's role. He has to function as 'insider' while interpreting the historical events. The outside of an event refers to the objects, bodies, movements which constitute the 'field' in which an event takes place. The 'inside' of an event refers to the thoughts and attitudes of the historical agents. Every event is rather an unity of 'outside' and 'inside' aspects. The historian is never cernainted with either of these two aspects to the exclusion of the other. He is investigating not mere events (where by a mere event I mean one which has only an outside and not inside) but actions, and an action is the unity of the outside and inside of an event. His work may begin by discovering the

outside of an event, but it can never end there; he must always remember that the event was an action, and that his main task is to think himself into this action, to discern the thought of its agent.

Collingwood\textsuperscript{13} deliberately restricts history to the history of thought. "The historian has no direct or empirical knowledge of facts, and no transmitted or testimonial knowledge of them". How, then, can he know the past? "The answer is deliberate; we are given it again and again: the historian knows the past by re-enacting it in his own mind. This is done by thinking the thoughts of men who lived in the past"\textsuperscript{19}. Therefore, history is "nothing but the re-enactment of the past thought"\textsuperscript{20}. He says that "it is not knowing what people did, but understanding what they thought that is the proper definition of the historian's task"\textsuperscript{21}.

Let us not seek consolation in the thought that we are wandering in the land of speculation. Collingwood's principles are meant to be applied. "So far as man's conduct is determined by what may be called his animal nature, his impulses and appetites, it is non-historical; the process of these

\textsuperscript{13} Collingwood, Op.Cit., p. 214.

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., pp. 39, 209, 301.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., p. 226.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., p. 115.
activities is a natural process. Thus, the historian is not interested in the fact that men eat and sleep and make love and thus satisfy their natural appetites; but he is interested in the social customs which they create by their thought as a framework within which these appetites find satisfaction in ways sanctioned by convention and morality. Does this not exclude Drummond's work upon the food of our ancestors, although metabolism depends upon the nature of food, glandular functions upon metabolism, and behaviour in part at any rate upon glandular functions?

History is not exclusively the history of philosophy, as one might imagine after reading some of Collingwood's statements. "There can be history of warfare ... Economic activity, too, can have a history .... Again, there can be a history of morals; for in moral action we are doing certain things on purpose." But, always, these things must issue from thought. "Of everything other than thought, there can be no history." No doubt this is because "wrong ways of thinking are just as much historical fact as right one" as

25. Ibid., p. 304.
explained by Professor Renier. Nevertheless, the cynic might feel inclined to ask whether the history of warfare necessarily presupposes the existence of right, or even wrong, thought, and whether its very existence does not frequently presuppose the absence of all thought. To this the answer would seem to be that "when an historian says that a man is in a certain situation, this is the same as saying that he (i.e. that man) thinks he is in this situation". Is it the same thing? What if our man is blissfully unaware of the situation, if he does not know that he has been poisoned — not by the thought-act of a fellow man, of course, but by the non-historical fact (see above) that he has just eaten poisonous mushrooms, absent-mindedly, entirely without thinking of what he was doing? Does the historian escape from this predicament by being told that "the rational activity which historians have to study is never free from compulsion"? Certainly not; even with Oakeshott's identification of experiencing and the thing experienced, we are not always sure whether Collingwood speaks of past thought or of the historian's thought, and in the present case compulsion appears to apply to the historian, not to my mushroom eater.

28. Ibid., p. 316.
"There is an answer, a somewhat unexpected one. Collingwood does not give it in so many words, but he was groping for it. It is provided by the unanimous philosophy of Jules Romains. 29. "The deeds and thoughts of all men are subtly intertwined. Therefore, "non-historical" deeds, deeds that are innocent of all thought, are so intermingled with historical thought-actions that they reach our knowledge whether we want it or not." 30.

The views of Collingwood 31 can be summarized as follows. The philosophy of history is concerned neither with 'the past by itself' nor with 'the historian's thought about it by itself', but with 'the two things in their mutual relations'. (This dictum reflects the two current meanings of the word 'history' - the inquiry conducted by the historian and the series of past events into which he inquires). 'The past which a historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present'. But a past act is dead, i.e. meaningless to the historian, unless he can understand the thought that lay behind it. Hence 'all history is the history of thought', and 'history is the re-enactment in the historian's mind of the thought whose history he is

studying'. The reconstruction of the past in the historian's mind is dependent on empirical evidence. But it is not in itself an empirical process, and cannot consist in a mere recital of facts. On the contrary, the process of reconstruction governs the selection and interpretation of the facts: this, indeed, is what makes them historical facts. 'History', says Professor Oakeshott, who on this point stands near to Collingwood, 'is the historian's experience. It is "made" by nobody save the historian: to write history is the only way of making it'. The most central idea of Collingwood's philosophy is that "history cannot be scientifically written unless the historian can re-enact in his own mind the experience of the people whose action he is narrating". This searching critique, though it may call for some serious reservations, brings to light certain neglected truths.

In the first place, the facts of history never come to us pure, since they do not and cannot exist in a pure form: they are always refracted through the mind of the recorder. It follows that when we take up a work of history, our first concern should be not with the facts which it contains but with the historian who wrote it. In order to appreciate history

32. Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes, p. 93. Also Carr, What is History?, p. 22.
at its full value, we have to understand what the historian is doing. For if, as Collingwood says, the historian must re-enact in thought what has gone on in the mind of his dramatic personae, so the reader in his turn must re-enact what goes on in the mind of the historian. Study the historian before you begin to study the facts.

The second point is the more familiar one of the historian’s need of imaginative understanding for the minds of the people with whom he is dealing, for the thought behind their acts; I say ‘imaginative understanding’, not ‘sympathy’, lest sympathy should be supposed to imply agreement. The nineteenth century was weak in medieval history, because it was too much repelled by the superstitious beliefs of the Middle Ages, and by the barbarities which they inspired, to have any imaginative understanding of medieval people. History cannot be written unless the historian can achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing.

The third point is that we can view the past, and achieve our understanding of the past, only through the eyes of the present. The historian is of his own age, and is bound to it by the conditions of human existence. The very words which he uses — words like democracy, empire, war, revolution — have current connotations from which he cannot divorce them.
The historian belongs not to the past but to the present. Professor Trevor-Roper tells us that the historian 'ought to love the past';\(^{34}\). This is a dubious injunction. To love the past may easily be an expression of the nostalgic romanticism of old men and old societies, a symptom of loss of faith and interest in the present or future.\(^ {35}\). Here Professor Carr prefers the one about freeing oneself from 'the dead hand of the past'. "The function of the historian is neither to love the past nor to emancipate himself from the past, but to muster and understand it as the key to the understanding of the present.\(^{36}\).

**Criticisms of Collingwood's theory**

We may agree to take Collingwood's version of the idealist theory as its standard form for our present purposes, and must now proceed to comment on it. William H. Dray and W.H. Walsh have made a number of objection to Collingwood's theory. I shall concentrate first on what he has to say about

34. Introduction to J. Burckhardt, Judgements on History and Historians, p. 17. Also Carr, What is History? p. 25.


the central importance for history of the conception of action, and on his description of the historian's procedure as being the re-thinking of the past thoughts.

Exception may be taken to these views on various grounds. Let us discuss how Professor Walsh objects it. (a) We may consider the criticism that Collingwood's view would only hold water if all human actions were deliberate, when so many of them clearly are not. What the historian has to do, he tells us, is to penetrate from the external event to the thought which constituted it and re-think that thought. But a great many actions which history investigates were done on the spur of the moment, in response to a sudden impulse; and how Collingwood's programme is to be carried out in regard to these is not immediately obvious.

(b) With this criticism we may connect another, that the theory is plausible only so long as certain types of history are considered. So long as we concentrate our attention on biography, political and military history, it sounds reasonable enough; but if we pass to the consideration of, for example, economic history, it becomes very much more difficult to apply. The force of the objection depends on the assumption that the theory will work only if the thoughts spoken of are embodied in deliberate acts of thinking occurring in the minds
of single agents. The actions with which economic history
deals are the actions of innumerable agents — in fact, all
those who take part in the economic processes under
investigation. Is it at all illuminating to say that one who
deals with, e.g. the history of prices is essentially concerned
with human actions, and that his proper business is to re-think
the thoughts of the agents who did them? What actions and
whose thoughts are in question here? 37

Similar objections have been given by Professor William
H. Dray. He says, few actions of historical agents had a
"thought-side" in the sense of being done for reasons
consciously entertained; and those that did often involved
irrational ways of thinking which would be quite impossible to
"follow" in the sense Collingwood appears to have in mind. To
this it is often added that rational explanations would, in any
case, be limited to the actions of individuals, and would be
inapplicable to nations or institutions, movements or conditions,
which historians spend so much of their time talking about.

Few Collingwoodians would regard this range of
objections as very damaging. As Collingwood himself points out,
a thought not fully articulated by the agent to himself may still
make what was donerationally intelligible. Collingwood's

theory does not depend on a view of "thought" which limits it to the content of an internal monologue. What it asserts is a criterion of intelligibility for actions; and this, it may be argued, will be the same even for explanations in terms of "unconscious" thoughts. The claim that Collingwood's analysis is inapplicable to actions which are not fully rational also requires further examination. For there are many sorts of cases falling under this general description which can be given Collingwoodian explanations. A person may act hastily, for example, or he may act for foolish goals. In neither case is rational understanding, as Collingwood conceives it, ruled out; for we can still follow the agent's practical deliberations from the standpoint of what he did take into account.

Collingwood speaks of historians looking not at, but through historical phenomena, to discern the thought within them. Thus history has both inside and outside. And it is with its inside that historians are properly concerned.

To this Walsh says that "though we are prepared to defend the first part of the idealist theory, it does not follow that we accept the whole idealist account of historical explanation. To say that historians must penetrate behind the phenomena they study is one thing; to hold that such

penetration is achieved by an intuitive act is something very different. 39

Can we find any reason for accepting so extravagant a view? Collingwood, as we have seen, confined the sympathetic understanding which Dilthey had been prepared to extend to all mental experiences to acts of thinking in the strict sense; but I doubt if we can follow him even in that. When he tells us that a study of the evidence will enable us to grasp in a single act both what Nelson thought at Trafalgar and why he thought it, and that this knowledge is achieved without reference to any general proportions about the behaviour of admirals, we may well wonder whether he has not been deceived by his own example. We feel that there is no major difficulty about the doctrine when it is applied to persons like Nelson and Julius Caesar, because we assume all too easily that Nelson and Julius Caesar were men like ourselves. But if we try to apply it to the actions of an African witch-doctor or a Viking chief, we may well begin to have serious doubts about it. To make anything of the behaviour of such persons, we should all be inclined to say, we need something more than sympathetic understanding; we need experience, first or

second-hand, of the ways in which they commonly react to the situations in which they find themselves.

But for an idealist to admit this is "to give his whole case away, for that experience reduces to awareness, explicit or explicit, of certain general truths". What is being said, in fact, is that the process of interpreting the behaviour in question is one of inference in the ordinary sense. And if this applies to unfamiliar cases like that of the witch-doctor, should it not apply to familiar cases too? Is it not true that our understanding of Nelson depends in an important way on our knowing something about the conduct of sea battles generally? If we had no such knowledge, should we understand his actions at all?

Professor Walsh concludes that "Collingwood's main thesis will not bear examination. It is not true that we grasp and understand the truth of past persons in a single act of intuitive insight. We have to discover what they were thinking, and find out why they thought it by interpreting the evidence before us, and this process of interpretation is one in which we make at least implicit reference to general truths". The historian certainly has to do something different from the

41. Ibid., p. 58.
scientist, but he has no special powers of insight to help him carry out the task. He needs imagination in a large degree, but he needs experience too. To suggest that he can do his job by putting himself in the place of the persons he studies, whilst appearing to answer to the facts, is not ultimately illuminating. For the process of putting oneself in another's place is itself susceptible of further analysis.

In addition to this some further problems arising out of the preceding discussion, which bears on the question of historical truth no less than on that of historical explanation. For the present I need only add the remark that the rejection of Collingwood's version of the theory removes any incentive there was for accepting his theory narrow definition of the field of history. Collingwood himself proposed to confine history to thought proper because he believed that thinking alone could be understood in his peculiar sense: it was only of thinking that we could have individual and direct knowledge. But we have been reasons for rejecting his view, and can therefore go back without hesitation to the wider formula from which we started — that history is concerned with the doings and experiences of human beings in the past. The historian, we shall continue to say, does try to resurrect the thought of the past; but he is interested not solely in ideas proper, but
also in the background of feeling and emotion which those ideas had. When he attempts to uncover the spirit of an age, it is not merely its intellectual life he hopes to penetrate; he wants to get at its emotional life too. No doubt, as Collingwood saw, there are difficulties in his carrying out the task, but they apply to both parts of it. If historical scepticism is justified, it applies to thought as well as to feeling.

In the critical discussion of historiography, new questions have been raised about history itself. Questions as to what are its data for investigation and what are its aims. It is to be noted here that in such discussions about a new approach materials have been brought in, which are not particularly or specifically relevant to the subject.

Mr. Michael Oakeshott in his 'Experience and its Modes', while making an analysis of historical knowledge says, "There is nothing whatever outside the historian's experience we must discard absolutely and altogether this notion of course of events which the thought of the historian may represent which too much thinking will distort ...."42.

History, then, is experience as a whole, conceived as

a system of past events. From this point of view Oakeshott develops a brilliant and penetrating account of the aims of historical thought and the character of its object. He begins by showing that history is a whole or a world. It does not consist of isolated events. This involves him in a vigorous and triumphant attack on the positivistic theory of history as a series of events external to one another, each to be apprehended (if indeed anything can be thus apprehended) in isolation from the rest. 'The historical series', he concludes, 'is a bogey'. History is not a series but a world: which means that its various parts bear upon one another, criticize one another, make one another intelligible.

The author suggests that history ought not to look towards 'course of events', but should confine itself to offer more plausible arguments for the totality of concepts assimilated from the past events. History is a mode of thought using past as the form of reference and rationalization. It is the contemporary consciousness of the philosopher who

46. Oakeshott, Experience and Its Modes, p. 118. History is defined here as the experience interpreted as "Sub species praeteritorium".
investigates. This conception of history as a form of thought asserts the "presence of thought in the tool bag of historian". But though the rational may be historical what historian is performing is not only rationalistic. He is working upon the data which is fixed, and whose existence, he as a historian must take for granted. Croce and Collingwood here suggest certain improvements. They say that it is the thought of the present historian that determines the nature of history. The 'dead data' must be brought to life by re-enactment, by a sort of imagination in the thoughts of the historian, the reason and rhyme of such re-enactment therefore, is the consciousness of the present historian and all that he performs or achieves has reference to his spiritual and speculative purposes. A history without a problem to solve, or an idea to display is a bare chronicle, a sort of catalogue lacking soul and meaning, fit only to the consumption of philologists.

47. Collingwood remarks on p. 265 (The Idea of History) - evidence of History has nothing very definite to impose or restrict on Historian. On the contrary, only by accepting this evidence any History can call itself History. Also Goel, Op.Cit., p. 17.

48. B. Croce attacks in his "History as the Story of Liberty" the labours of empirical historians who do not admit any necessity of a purpose in history, see p. 18. Also Dharmendra Goel, 'Philosophy of History', pp. 17-18.
Thus Croce declared, 'All history is contemporary history', meaning that history consists essentially in seeing the past through the eyes of the present and in the light of its problems, and that the main work of the historian is not to record, but to evaluate; for, if he does not evaluate, how can he know what is worth recording? In 1910 the American historian, Carl Becker, argued in deliberately provocative language that 'the facts of history do not exist for any historian till he creates them'.

Similarly Professor Carr shows that the relation between the historian and the facts of history are necessary to one another. He says, 'The relation of man to his environment is the relation of the historian to his theme. The historian is neither the humble slave nor the tyrannical master of his facts. The relation between the historian and his facts is one of equality, of give-and-take. As any working historian knows, if he stops to reflect what he is doing as he

49. The context of this celebrated aphorism is as follows: 'The practical requirements which underlie every historical judgement give to all history the character of "contemporary history", because, however remote in time events there recounted may seem to be, the history in reality refers to present needs and present situations wherein those events vibrate' (B. Croce, History as The Story of Liberty, p. 19).

he thinks and writes, the historian is engaged on a continuous
process of moulding his facts to his interpretation and his
interpretation to his facts. It is impossible to assign
primacy to one over the other. 51.

The historian starts with a provisional selection of
facts, and a provisional interpretation in the light of which
that selection has been made - by others as well as by himself.
As he works, both the interpretation and the selection and
ordering of facts undergo subtle and perhaps partly unconscious
changes, through the reciprocal action of one or the other.
And this reciprocal action also involves reciprocity between
present and past, since the historian is part of the present and
the facts belong to the past. The historian and the facts of
history are necessary to one another. The historian without
his facts is rootless and futile; the facts without their
historian are dead and meaningless. "My first answer, therefore,
to the question 'What is history'? is that it is a continuous
process of interaction between the historian and his facts,
and unending dialogue between the present and the past" 52.

What he has called "the dialogue between present and

52. Ibid., p. 30.
past, is a dialogue not between abstract and isolated individuals, but between the society of to-day and the society of yesterday. History, in Burckhardt's words, is the record of what one age finds worthy of note in another. The past is intelligible to us only in the light of the present; and we can fully understand the present only in the light of the past. To enable man to understand the society of the past, and to increase his mastery over the society of the present, is the dual function of history.

Collingwood and Croce also suggest the same thing. They say that it is the thought of the present Historian that determines the nature of history. According to Collingwood, historical knowledge is the knowledge of what mind has done in the past, and at the same time it is the redoing of this, the perpetuation of past acts in the present. Its object is therefore not a mere object, something outside the mind which knows it; it is an activity of thought, which can be known only in so far as the knowing mind re-enacts it and knows itself as so doing.

To the historian, the activities whose history he is

53. J. Burckhardt, Judgements on History and on Historians, p. 158.

studying are not spectacles to be watched, but experiences to be lived through in his own mind; they are objective, or known to him, only because they are also subjective, or activities of his own. "A history without a problem to solve, or an idea to display is a bare chronicle, a sort of catalogue lacking soul and meaning, fit only to the consumption of Philologists".

But some empiricists who though recognise the value of these very suggestive ideas of Reason laying down the form and ways of narrative of events, wish to attract the attention of dreaming idealists, to the plain fact, that in history the interest is to know the events as best, as rightly and free from any kind of bias as may be possible in any given circumstances. They do not deny that data have to be worked, but they do assert that history is bound to the fact. But what is a fact? This is what Professor Oakeshott has asked in his "Experience and Its Modes". Indeed everybody must admit that all is not "thought". To deny this, would be fall into the blind alleys of panlogism proliferating into complete Experience. The historian, with ease, can point to the nearest

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lamppost and refer like Johnson that the world is there outside in spite of anybody's interpretation of it, in knowledge.

"History in the way it is generally understood by man always concerns a world that has actually been in time and is called 'Human Past'. That there are events that can subsist by themselves without waiting for the idealist philosopher who may interpret them is an absolute presupposition of all history." 57. Idealists go too far when they denounce the possibility of a past free from all human interpretation. To historians, past has been lying there waiting to be discovered by them. History is not creative if creation means the sort of performance we expect from a novelist. It is basic to history that all the pronouncements of the historian are checked and verified by reference to actual events in past.

That is why it is a matter of surprise to a historian 58.

"how Croce and others have written history and have not seen that writing of history involves a belief in historical reality independent of the psychological and biological reference to their own existence".


58. Morris R. Cohen - 'Meaning of Human History', p. 17. The author has shown that it is intriguing that idealists deny past events and still do not disapprove of the historical research. For, history is possible only when there is something independent of present moment that may be discovered. Also Dharmandra Goel, Philosophy of History, pp. 18-19.
It can therefore be held that history in its most general form as Ranke thought, is concerned with all that has happened in the past. To know how it happened, and how it did, is the most substantive role of any worshipper at the altar of the muse of clio. Any historical record must be record of some real events; and to hope that mere exercise of concepts is sufficient to raise the card house of events is to indulge in mere idle speculation.

**History and Scientific Knowledge**

The question whether history is a science or an art was discussed at great length in the beginning of the present century. The prestige which the sciences enjoyed as a result of their remarkable achievements in both theory and practice made all other branches of learning to view them as models to be emulated. This tendency of the historians to take history as a science is part of the general tendency seen in all other discipline. In England it was brought to a head by Bury's celebrated challenge in his inaugural lecture at Cambridge: "History is a science, no less no more"; He followed it up with the declaration that "so long as history was regarded as an art, the sanctions of truth and accuracy could not be severe", and, even more rigorously, "I remind you that history is not a
branch of literature. Others like York Powell distinguish between "New History and Old History and regard the former as a branch of science". Now there are historians like Edward Meyer who go to the other extreme of saying that history is not a science at all. Any science worth the name must be a systematic branch of knowledge and history, according to him, "is not a systematic branch of knowledge". It is the aim of my work to show that it is possible for the historian to take a position in between these two extreme views and that historian can effectively function as a scientist at least in certain limited areas of history.

Before discussing history and scientific knowledge, let us now examine first briefly the main features of the common conception of science and scientific knowledge as follows. Firstly, we apply the term 'Science' to knowledge which is methodically arrived at and systematically related. Secondly, it consists of, or at least includes, a body of general truths. Thirdly, it enables us to make successful predictions and so to control the future course of events, in some measure at least. Fourthly, it is objective, in the sense that it is such as every unprejudiced observer ought to accept if the evidence were put

60. Ibid., p. 75.
before him, whatever his personal predilections or private circumstances.

With these considerations in mind, let us now attempt to determine the question whether history is a science.\textsuperscript{61}

That history is a scientific study in the sense of one pursued according to a method and a technique of its own is not likely to be denied. History, like the positive sciences is primarily based upon facts or phenomena. So there is no justification in including it under humanities in which imagination and feeling, rather than actual facts, play a dominant part.

Further, history, like the exact sciences, should describe its data in most accurate terms, and with complete objectivity. The conclusions historians seek to establish are arrived at by the examination of a clearly defined subject matter — the actions and sufferings of human beings in the past — carried out according to rules which successive generations of enquirers have rendered increasingly precise. On this matter there is hardly room for serious controversy.

The second point is: history consists of or at least includes, a body of general truths. So far as this point is concerned, there seems to be a clear difference between history and the sciences. Historical events are unique and

unclassifiable and they deal with unique individuals, placed in unique life-situations. So there is a large element of uncertainty unpredictability about them. In the actual historical situation factors are so numerous, so complex and variable that it is difficult to reduce them to some law in the scientific sense. "There are no identical situations, only parallels; there are no laws, only tendencies; there is no inevitability, only likelihood" 62. It is true that history is sometimes said to point to certain 'lessons', and these certainly take the form of general truths : Lord Acton's 63 celebrated dictum that 'all power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely' is an example. But though judgements of that sort are found from time to time in historical works, it cannot be said that they constitute the historian's main concern. Thus historical phenomena cannot be explained in the manner in which a scientist can explain the workings of a machine. 62. Robert V. Daniels, Studying History : How and Why?, p. 50. 63. Walsh, Op.Cit., p. 39.

The central preoccupation of the historian, there seems no doubt, is not with generalization, but with the precise course of individual events: it is this which he hopes to recount and render intelligible. He wants, as I said before,
to say precisely what happened and, in doing so, to explain why it happened as it did. And this means that his attention must be concentrated on the events which are the immediate object of his scrutiny; unlike the scientist, he is not all the time led beyond those events to consideration of the general principles which they illustrate. He is interested, for example, in the French Revolution of 1789, or the English Revolution of 1688 or the Russian Revolution of 1917; not (except incidentally) in the general character of revolutions as such. That is why the average history book ends when the writer has finished his account of the period under review; if the historian's interest were the same as the scientist's it would include another chapter, the most important in the work, in which the main lessons of the events in question would be set out in general terms.

Let us examine the third common characteristics of scientific knowledge. It is true that scientific knowledge enables to make successful predictions and so to control the future course of events, in some measure at least. It is true that historians study the past for its own sake, not for any light the study may be expected to throw on the future course of events. To this question Professor Karl R. Popper replied
that "we cannot predict the future course of human history". This means that we must reject the possibility of a theoretical history; that is to say, of a historical social science that would correspond to theoretical physics. There can be no scientific theory of historical development serving as a basis for historical prediction. On this point historicism argues that "social prediction must be very difficult, not only on account of the complexity of social structures, but also on account of a peculiar complexity arising from the interconnection between predictions and the predicted events. Suppose, for instance, it were predicted that the price of shares would rise for three days and then fall. Plainly, everyone connected with the market would sell on the third day, causing a fall of prices on that day and falsifying the prediction. The idea, in short, of an exact and detailed calendar of social events is self-contradictory; and exact and detailed scientific social predictions are therefore impossible."

However, Prof. Kopper analyses the possibility of social prediction in the following way: "The argument does not, of course, refute the possibility of every kind of social

64. Karl R. Popper, The Poverty of Historicism, Preface, p. VI.
65. Ibid., pp. 12-14.
prediction, on the contrary, it is perfectly compatible with the possibility of testing social theories — for example, economic theories — by way of predicting that certain developments will take place under certain conditions. It only refutes the possibility of predicting historical developments to the extent to which they may be influenced by the growth of our knowledge.66.

The last question is the notion of objectivity in history. "The concept of historical objectivity is so complex that it demands a chapter to itself. Every reputable historian acknowledges the need for some sort of objectivity and impartiality in his work: he distinguishes history from propaganda and condemns those writers who allow their feelings and personal preconceptions to affect their reconstruction of the past as bad workmen who do not know their job. If the point were put to them, most historians could be got to agree that theirs was a primary cognitive activity, concerned with an independent object, the past, whose nature they had to investigate for its own sake, though they would doubtless add that our knowledge that object is always fragmentary and incomplete.

In this connection we can only suggest to a candid

outside observer that "the claim to scientific status often made for modern history at least is one which cannot be sustained, since historians have conspicuously failed to develop what may be called an historical 'consciousness in general', a set of agreed canons of interpretation which all who work at the subject would be ready to acknowledge." The best way for dealing with the problem of historical objectivity is to assimilate historical thinking in this respect to the thinking of the artist. The artist is not content only to have and express his emotions: he wants also to communicate what he takes to be a certain vision or insight into the nature of things, and would claim truth and objectivity for his work for that very reason. History might then be said to give us a series of different but not incompatible portraits of the past, each reflecting it from a different point of view.

Besides these arguments, the historians who maintain that history can never become an exact science have the following reasons to give.

History deals with the thoughts and actions of human beings and not with dead inert matter, as in the case of the physical sciences. Human beings are both physical and

68. Ibid., p. 23.
psychical and they have freedom of will. In fact, freedom of
the will constitutes the very essence of the individual's
history. There is also another important non-scientific
element in history. A good historian approaches his subject
with a sense of feeling for the material, a genuine sympathy
for the men whose history he surveys because of the identity
of nature between them. The scientist can claim no such
feeling for the material he handles or the phenomena he
investigates. He can only perceive no activity in the things
and processes he deals with. The historian has also to take
into consideration the motives, very often complex in character,
that are responsible for the events taking place.

Further, historical events are past events and hence
they cannot be known in the way in which present events are
known. They are also non-repeatable. But in the sciences,
particularly in the physical sciences, processes can be repeated
any number of times under the controlled conditions of the
laboratory. It may be that such experimentation is out of
place in history because history is concerned more with the
sequences of events forming patterns or systems than with
uniformities and repetitions. Still the fact remains that
historical events are quite unlike physical phenomena in being
non-repeatable. The historian has also to deal with
contingencies with reference to when and where they occurred. "The continuities with which the historian is concerned are not repetitions of processes but sequences of significance in the succession of different events." One of the distinctive characteristics of history is its temporality. All the historical experiences take place in time. The historian looks at the present only as a product of the past. So the significance of the events and ideas in history can be fully understood only in their historical setting. They have thus a certain relativity.

Though history is generally included among the social sciences it is distinguished from other social sciences in being the discipline which integrates their findings. Thus it is much more generalised than the other social sciences. In this respect it resembles philosophy which aims at giving a coherent picture of the universe. History is far removed from the sciences which have no such unifying function to perform. Of course, science also seeks unity in one sense, viz. the unity of particulars by bringing them under a general concept, but this is very much different from the work of integration which the historian seeks. "The unity he seeks is not that of subsuming particulars under a general concept of the relations..."

of different factors in a more or less systematic pattern. The historian may affirm some probabilities as to future history with consideration of the conscious efforts of individual, singly or in groups, for the attainment of similar value-experiences. The concepts employed by sciences, have a more or less precise definitions, that is to say their meaning can be expressed in exact terms. No doubt history also uses concepts as in the case of science, but historical concepts like "Reformation", "Enlightenment" etc. are really broad generalizations and as such different from scientific concepts.

"History, unlike sciences, is often a record of values and ideals pursued by man both individually and collectively. And the deeper significance of history can be understood only in the light of these values. Such values may be either instrumental or intrinsic. It should be clear that we are primarily concerned with intrinsic values. Physical, economic and political values are instrumental and they cannot reveal the full significance of history. It is the intrinsic values - the intellectual, moral, aesthetic and religious values - that convey the inner meaning of history. These values are beyond the purview of the natural sciences. All continuities in history have relation to one or more of these values and

so history cannot do without them.  

Methods of History and Scientific Method

Having known that 'past' is the object of historical research, let us see the nature of tools and implements that History engages to achieve its ends. "Empiricism as is known has doubted the possibility of any knowledge of past. It is suggested that in the absence of the past events it is problematic to believe that any sense can be attached to distinctions between truth and falsehood of historical judgements," unless they can be so interpreted as to entail a future empirical collaboration. On such restriction of all possible knowledge to what can be deduced by actual or possible sense experience, much that history stands for, shall become falsehood or at best a collection mere personal opinions and affections, lacking any authenticity. Others have, however, rightly pointed out that "empiricism ought to see its own limitations". Inference, and imagination, construction and vision are equally instruments of historians to understand an age that is past, people who are dead, values that have grown obsolete in time.

73. C.E.M. Joad, A Critique of Logical Positivism, pp. 58, 59.
But, in spite of this gulf that divides the historian from his period of study, it is the methodological faith in the foundational oneness of life and its intelligibility that is working below the surface heterogeneity that helps him to approach his task with these forlorn and by-gone periods of history and makes him rise above his scepticism and overcome apparent chaos of his data. If this is not granted to history then such hieroglyphics of tablets, edicts of rocks or relics as past leaves, will not enable historian to reconstruct the fabric of human development.

No historian can forget that howsoever chaotic may seem the events one is generally led to believe that order and reason may be discovered in all existence. But this is not to be misconstrued to negate the richness of diversity of existence. Rejection of the 'Concrete-Historical' may result in accepting history to be an unfoldment of Idea74, or it may unfairly condemn anything in a historical personage that is incomprehensible to any single contemporary consciousness.75 The historian ought to keep in mind the solemn words of Professor Butterfield who remarkably suggests that "history would be for ever unsatisfying if it did not cast a wider net

74. Hegel's Philosophy of History, p. 56.
for the truth; for if in one aspect it is the study of change, in another aspect it is the study of diversity. The historian like the novelist is bound to be glad that it takes all sorts of men to make a world. Like the novelist he can regret only one kind - the complete bore - and take care not to describe him with too great Verisimilitude. For the rest, all is grist to his mill. His greatest limitation would be a defect of imaginative sympathy, whether it were the refusal to go out to understand a Scotsman or the refusal to put all his humanity into effort to understand a Jesuit, a tyrant, or a poet.\textsuperscript{76}

Collection and analysis of data of various kinds, documents, coins and seals, archaeological traces and lastly the amorphous legends and rumours are most preliminary stages of investigation. It is such datum that is to be purified to build any true picture of past. Analysis may give us learned corpus of inscriptions, bibliographies of state documents and chronicles but history rightly so called is a little more than this.\textsuperscript{77}

It must evince an insight to be History. It ought to penetrate the obscurity of time by saving light of historical imagination. Bradley and Collingwood rightly assert that unillumined by such imaginative light a history is an unnatural

\textsuperscript{76} H. Butterfield, The Whig Interpretation of History, pp. 95-6.
yoking of ill-digested record, unsavoury details, an inventory of senseless information that fails to offer any idea of the events of which it claims to be the herald. History is not what Collingwood calls merely "Scissors-and-Paste" affairs.

According to Collingwood, history for Scissors-and-Paste historian means repeating statements that other people have made before him. Hence he can get to work only when he is supplied with ready-made statements on the subjects about which he wants to think, write, and so forth. It is the fact that these statements have to be found by him ready-made in his sources that makes it impossible for the Scissors-and-Paste historian to claim the title of a scientific thinker. It follows that scientific history contains no ready-made statements at all. So history is not Scissors-and-Paste affair, it is an effort of thought to bring back life to dead skeleton of facts.

Croce as usual has emphasised the importance of a problem in proper historiography; that which alone makes mere chronicles and philosophical accumulations historically significant. He has shown that unless a problem is present to the guidance of the historical reconstruction the findings of history shall not gain any feature of integration, there may

be details of information but they shall not enlighten us about any problem\textsuperscript{79}. As Professor Dharmendra Goel points out that "the real value of History is not judged in mere huddling of information but in ascertaining the inner complexion of happenings that presents the necessity of regarding 'interpretation' as more important amongst its methods"\textsuperscript{80}. Thus a historical reconstruction (as essence of history) is a re-enactment; i.e. it is based on projection of a system of ideas organised in the historical mechanism of correlation and later mounted on the frame-work of space-time units.

"All thinking is critical thinking; the thought which re-enacts the past thoughts, therefore, criticizes them in re-enacting them"\textsuperscript{81}. "The historian not only re-enacts past thought, he re-enacts it in the context of his own knowledge and therefore, in re-enacting it, criticizes it, forms his own judgements of its value, corrects whatever errors he can discern in it. Thus re-enactment is not a passive surrender to the spell of other's mind; it is a labour of active and therefore critical thinking"\textsuperscript{82}. Unless he knows that he is thinking historically, he is not thinking historically\textsuperscript{83}. "Historical

\textsuperscript{81} Collingwood, Op.Cit., p. 216.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 216.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 289.
thinking is always reflection; for reflection is thinking about the act of thinking, and all historical thinking is of that kind.\(^\text{84}\) "This criticism of the thought whose history he traces is not something secondary to tracing the history of it. It is an indispensable condition of the historical knowledge itself.\(^\text{85}\)

Construction, thus is a necessity of historical knowledge. But the elements of conjecture ought to be clearly delineated in construction. There has been a confusion about the exact role of 'projection' in thinking about the methods of historical knowledge and its structure. Bradley has illegitimately identified this operational character of the process of "projection" with actual ontological dependence of historical events on the mind of the historian. He remarks, "We have further shown that although this experience is not always personal in the sense of that which we can immediately verify for ourselves, it yet is personal in the sense that upon the observation and judgement of our own mind it ultimately depends.\(^\text{86}\)

Michael B. Oakeshott in a slightly different form has come to similar conclusion. Towards the nature of 'realities' outside the enwrapping consciousness his criticism is on general idealistic lines. He asserts that any experience is for


consciousness and beyond the ken of consciousness any conception of an isolated "reality" is a contradiction in terms. "History is experience, the historian's history is experience as a whole, conceived as a system of past events. From this point of view Oakeshott develops a brilliant and penetrating account of the aims of historical thought and the character of its object. He begins by showing that history is a whole or a world. It does not consist of isolated events. This involves him in a vigorous and triumphant attack on the positivistic theory of history as a series of events external to one another, each to be apprehended (if indeed anything can be thus apprehended) in isolation from the rest. 'The historical series', he concludes (Op.Cit., p. 92), 'is a bogey'. History is not a series but a world which means that its various parts bear upon one another, criticize one another, make one another intelligible. Next, he shows that it is not only a world but a world of ideas87. "Historian's world of ideas is conceived as recalling what has happened, nevertheless it is a gross fallacy to suppose that recalling is something less than a form of experience to suppose that we can recall anything but ideas88.


"Collingwood has found out the true instrument of this form of historical experience and believes it to be nothing short of Copernican revolution in the correct apprehension of the devices of historical consciousness. Throughout the course of his work the historian is selecting, constructing, and criticizing; it is only by doing these things that he maintains his thought upon the Sichere Gang einer Wissenschaft. The historian selects from his authorities what he thinks important, and omits the rest; he interpolates in them things which they do not explicitly say; and he criticizes them by rejecting or amending what he regards as due to misinformation or mendacity. By explicitly recognizing this fact it is possible to effect what, again borrowing a Kantian phrase, one might call a Copernican revolution in the theory of history: the discovery that, so far from relying on an authority other than himself, to whose statements his thought must conform, the historian is his own authority and his thought autonomous, self-authorizing, possessed of a criterion to which his so-called authorities must conform and by reference to which they are criticized.

We have to understand properly the significance and value of the statements of such idealistic thinkers when they

suggest that history is a species of thought, and that involves a comparison and unification of experience without which it is dumb.

"Thus it is generalization and inference wrought on the observed and observable data that it is taken as the historical method. Poetical license surely is not for a historian. His labours and aims are not amusement but veridical analysis of past events. Hence fancying or mentalising are rather imatical to historical reconstruction. The historian should allow the shadows of events that are struggling to get concrete shapes in the consciousness of the present to have their natural concretion. Historian's reconstruction is not addition of materials, ab-extra, but rather a discovery of meaning from within, his available evidence."20.

Besides these methods, let us now compare and contrast the methods of science with those of history as explained by Rickman21. The different views on the methods of history range from the conviction that history can - and must be respectable - avail itself of the methods of the physical sciences, to the belief that - because of its subject matter, it has to use methods all its own. On this issue, too, Dilthey strove for a

broadly based, intermediary, position which would do justice to what merit the extreme views contained.

History, like the physical sciences, is an empirical discipline and shares with them many methods of inquiry such as observation, classification and the framing and testing of hypotheses. Observation may, for instance, take the form of discovering and studying some old documents. These may be classified as records of business transactions and the hypothesis that a form of capitalistic enterprise flourished in a particular city at a particular date may be framed. This may suggest further lines of investigation by means of which the hypothesis can be tested. Again, the historian may use methods which are analogous to those of comparative anatomy. As the anatomist reconstructs an animal from a few bones, so can the historian reconstruct the life of a monastery from the ruins of a building, the tools and broken pottery found on the ground and perhaps a list of monies paid out by the monks during a certain period of time. Or the historian may throw light on an institution by placing it into an evolutionary series as the biologist does a species of animal. The historian may also use quantification and statistical methods to deal for example with economic changes or the rise and decline of classes.

There are, of course, differences in this sphere. Human
affairs appear to be more complex, less easily analysable, less accessible to quantitative and precise presentation, than physical states of affairs. Experimentation is largely excluded by the nature of the subject; can only be used marginally for the testing of the genuineness and plausibility of evidence. (Is this document really 500 years old? Could heavily armed men really have marched from A to B in 10 days? These are the types of questions which can be settled experimentally). But these differences are, on the whole, a matter of degree and do not raise questions of principle. Yet there appears to be a significant difference between history and science. The former deals with sequences of events, each of them unique, while the latter is concerned with the routine appearance of things and aims at generalizations and the establishment of regularities governed by laws. This, too, seems to be more a matter of emphasis and focus of interest than a fundamental distinction. In the courses of his work the scientist must give account of individual experiments and, sometimes, elaborate descriptions of sequences of individual events such as the origin of the solar system or the evolution of man, though his main concern is with the regularities involved in them. The historian, on the other hand, must deal with types of events which recur again and again, wars, revolutions, the founding of empires and struggles for power - though he must be concerned as much with their unique
qualities as with the similarities between them. If, therefore, we distinguish sharply between historical method - the presentation of series of unique events - and scientific - the systematic grasp of regularities, we have to conclude that the actual disciplines of history and the sciences avail themselves, in different admixtures, of both methods.

Even though history is a record of unique events, it should not be taken as a mere chaos. We can discern some kind of regularity and order in history. We can also discover certain trends or directions in history as it has been shown by Hegel and Karl Marx. Hegel holds the view that history shows a continuous and orderly development and that it has got a distinct method of its own. This method called the historical method, he thought, could replace or at least supplement the methods of analysis and generalisation. Hegel also speaks of historical necessity which is nothing but a law of synthesis inherent both in the nature of mind and in the nature of objects. He invented a special apparatus for the study of history. This apparatus, he called the dialectic. It is the logical law of thesis, anti-theses and synthesis. This law, he regarded as the supreme law of history. History thus presents us with a rational process. Hegel even went to the extent of saying that 'the real is the rational, the rational
is the real'. Thus if we take the term 'scientific' in the sense of 'rational', we can very well say that, according to Hegel, the historian must be a scientist. Moreover, as conceived by Hegel, the historical process is a process of development. This makes it very much like the idea of biological evolution and this also entitles the historian to be regarded as a scientist.

Scientific approach is the most appropriate in certain areas of history. When we study the physical and the geographical or of the economic and social aspects of history, scientific methods alone can yield accurate results. The genetic method which tries to understand things by studying their growth and development, can also be successfully applied in historical research and thereby make it truly scientific.

In spite of difference between science and history, one remedy to heal the rift is to promote a profounder understanding of the identity of aim between scientists and historians; and this is the main value of the new and growing interest in the history and philosophy of science. Scientists, social scientists, and historians are all engaged in different branches of the same study: the study of man and his environment, of the effects of man on his environment and of his environment on man. The object of the study is the same: to increase man's
man's understanding of, and mastery over, his environment. The presuppositions and the methods of the physicist, the geologist, the psychologist, and the historian differ widely in detail.