

The Philosophy and History of Research

Paper I

General Overview

And

Nature of History

By

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What is history?

- History as happening- in one sense it is everything that has occurred or has been thought from the beginning of time to the last elapsed instant
- It could be biological history which may extend to the last third of the period
- For social history this may be involved since man appeared at the earliest and emerged from barbarism to what he is today

History as record

- This refers to the documented history of man and his society
- This means the proper citation of sources i.e. Bibliography and footnotes

History as a field of study

- What has been preserved from the past
- It is a study of man and his achievements from the beginning of written records to the present time
- It is a major part of higher education that is involved in the chronological study of man from his primitive form to the present

History as literature

- An effective presentation of the unfolding of events
- The historian has the ability to depict the unraveling of fateful events and to portrayt the rise and deterioration of character that ranks it with novels and epic poetry

A vicarious experience

- History incorporates man's unique ability to incorporate into his personal experience based on his recollections.
- Man's thinking is consciously or unconsciously based on the recollection of the past.
- “When experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it” – George Santayana

History as professional training

- The discipline of history offers training for useful and satisfying, although, underpaid employment
- Direct- There has been growing appreciation of history in various fields such as the armed forces, local government, federal government, medicine, etc.
- Indirect – cognate fields and professions recognized that historical study is indispensable to their own proficiency as historians broaden their knowledge about the subject matter

How to study history

- It is important to plot a system in undertaking a historical study rather than desultory reading and last minute cramming.
- Prepare and conscientiously follow a planned schedule of two or three your study periods throughout each week at times when you will be most alert and in a place free from distraction.

Outlines are important

- Academically it is expected to have at least two hours a week to grasp the over-all theme and content
- Reread your work with an eye to factual details and while doing so make a succinct outline in tabulated form of not more than one page for each assignment in the assignment or chapter
- Repeat this process for your notes on each lecture
- Review the outlines and checklists at least once a week being sure that you grasp the relationship between the facts and larger patterns of interpretation by your outlines. You need both sound structural materials and a good blue print to build a satisfactory house.

Make follow-ups


- Reread portions in your book or lecture notes which seem vague to your memory or understanding
- Make out a sample examination on what you are trying to research and revise your answers to make them clearer, better organized, more comprehensive and interpretative
- At the same time make them more brief and up to the point

The Choice of topic

- In selecting a topic for research one must be certain that the subject matter meets the following criteria:
- **Value** – Your topic must be able to shed light on a significant and a universal aspect of human experience perhaps through approaching it as a case study or by demonstrating its connection with a larger movement
- This depends on the treatment- for example a biography of an obscure person or a small community take on a larger meaning as a representative of far-reaching development
- Genealogy and antiquarianism (concerning itself with historical facts in themselves) maybe useful to the historian but not to history


Originality


- **Originality** -The subject must contain new evidence and this novelty must be substantial and significant
- The topic may bring new evidence that is valid and demonstratable
- **Practicality** – The research undertaking must be feasible in respect to the following:
 - a. **Availability of sources** – The researcher must have access to sources without unreasonable inconvenience and with the assurance that you will be able to use them without the owner or the repository attempting to censor your conclusion



b. **Your ability to make proper use of these sources** – the research must be done through your proper ability and resources, training including foreign languages and other prerequisites. These includes the following which is the background of historical scholarship


1. **Practice in articulate and graceful expression** - this includes written and oralability.
2. **Proficiency in reading and speaking one or more foreign languages** – invaluable in historical research
3. **Mastery of a secondary discipline**(i.e. Art, economics, medicine and natural science) makes one a specialist in the history of that field. It becomes feasible as colleges are freed from having to devote much of the freshman and sophomore years to work for which the secondary schools should be responsible

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- Size – The scope of the topic must be suited to the medium you are presenting it i.e. Term paper , seminar report, article, thesis, dissertation, book. The size should be suitable to the deadline you have to meet in the completion of the research. Most topics can be expanded to take in a larger field or contracted to some constituent aspect after you have progressed sufficiently in your research to have a more accurate conception of the nature of your subject and the sources that bear upon it.

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- Unity – Every investigation or research must have a unifying theme or be directed toward an integrating question or proposition that offers you a point of the departure, a direction of progression and the promise of specific conclusion.

Historical scholarship should include the following

- Aside from personal preparation i.e. Reading and speaking proficiency, knowledge of another language mastery of a secondary discipline the researcher should also have the following:
- Equipment for utilizing the aspects of psychology as well as culture
- Imagination or rather understanding – the ability to comprehend a way of life. i.e. Rural life, ethnic qualities
- Differentiation between an antiquarian and the vocation of history – pure antiquarianism tends to history and consequences
- Ability to see the causes and effects and what to do with such information

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- Broad culture – early home training is advantageous in lifetime application of a culture of research
 - Respect for the life of the scholar-teacher – The scholar is also a teacher and is always in pursuit of the truth which can only be gained through research



● THANK YOU