The choosing of the subject of a history leads the student face to face with an infinite number of facts, which have no order of priority unless taken from a particular point of view.

The historian of a national state seeks to establish facts from the period under study and their relation to one another as a way of seeking an answer to some question, such as "what helped the development of constitutional government?", "was the rising price of bread a main factor in urban discontent?" or even "How great was Napoleon?".

Looking at "life histories" written by laymen or students we soon see that they are built around some implicit question such as "How did this poor man become rich?" "Was this man unhappy?" "Why did she turn out so differently from the rest of her family?" and that these unspoken queries operate as criteria for selection of facts. The histories projected as part of the present programme are undertaken to bring out the commonly characteristic features of certain kinds of situations in these societies, or as a way of checking on guesses made previously about the society, seeing the way in which institutions are "used" etc.

Suitable types of "histories" would be:

The history of an individual who moves rapidly up or down the social scale. The history of an association from the point of view of internal conflict, or the type of leaders it has had, and the way they received their leadership. The history of a new settlement of people from the point of view of the mutual relations they enter into to secure common ends, or of a traditional family craft enterprise from the point of view of its adaption to changing economic conditions. Or of a Creole-Indian family from the point of view of the "do's" and "don'ts" applied to its members from two different cultural milieux.

7 MONOGRAPHS ON MATERIAL OBJECTS 1)

By this is meant an investigation of physical and social reality contingent on a particular man-made object (and type of object), but is not confined to a single level of thinking. The method recommends itself particularly on educational grounds, since it confronts the student on the threshold of his study with the task of exact observation and description of physical reality, where he is likely to find a far firmer "point d'application" than in trying to handle some of the abstract concepts familiar to social sciences. Similarly the relation between a particular physical object and say, the regional "type" of the object is grasped more safely than for instance the relation between an attitude, expressed in certain words by a particular person, and a pattern or type of attitude which different kinds of people will use different sets of words to express.

The first stage therefore must be the observation and exact description of the selected object, with its raw materials identified and named and its mechanical effectiveness accounted for. This stage leads on to the description of the motor behaviour involved in the process of making and in the use of the object.

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