Predicting the Future

Reason’s ultimate purpose

The First Question we ask:
WHY ?

"Why" - is the most frequent word children use

when asking about the world.

Research(1) on the subject reveals that the word "*Why*" emerges from child's inherent desire for

justification or understanding of what is observed,

and demanding to know **the "reason".**

Seeking "reason" and making sense of reality

is an inherent tendency.

Domains of Reasoning

- **Logic**

Deduction: ⟹ establishing a certain conclusion,

Induction: ⟹ exploring possible outcomes.

- **Psychology**

Studying the effect of past mental events on future behaviour,

- **Law**

Examining a motivation for a crime

or a justification of individual's behaviour in civil matters

Reasonable & Unreasonable behaviour

Reasonable behaviour is strongly associated with the capacity to envision the consequences

of one's causes of actions.

Ask anyone from the prison population whether they would have changed their past causes of actions, which led to their imprisonment.

The Law is strict and uncompromising about cases of unreasonable actions.

Usually, it is shortsightedness and emotionalism that affect the process of correct reasoning in daily encounters.

Predicting the Consequences

Reasoning has the capacity for shedding light
on the unknown future, revealing various possibilities:

A website for lawyers emphasises on the necessity for:

"Predicting future emotions" -
a process referred to as "affective forecasting"—
is therefore central to the way
we evaluate and choose
among alternatives". (2)

The Mental Function of Future Prediction

Science suggests that deciding about the future

is affected by a variety of factors,

such as past memory and the individual's clarity of thinking.

Predicting our future feelings is a most valuable process in which various sections of the brain are involved:

"Neuroscience research suggests that memory is not just about recalling the past, but also about predicting the future.

The brain uses past experiences and current information to construct models that anticipate what will happen next...

This predictive function is crucial for efficient movement through environments, survival, and goal-directed behavior". (3)

Objections!

The idea that we can form reasonable scenarios
of future events clashes with two objecting trends of thoughts:
scepticism and **beliefs in fate**.

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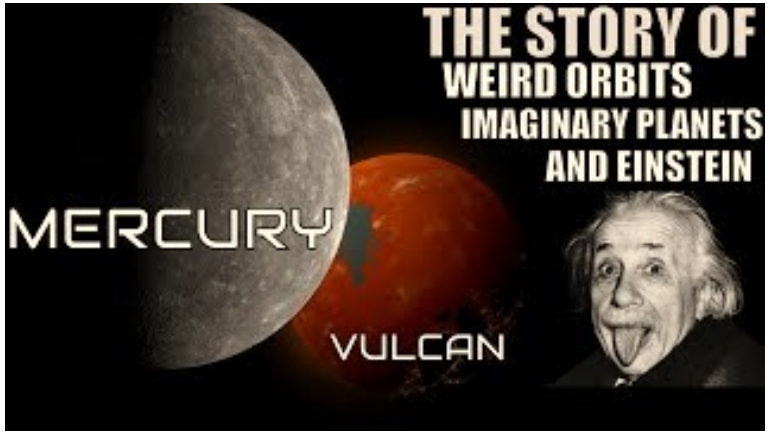
At odd with science,
philosophy harbours many views of doubts and scepticism.

Some philosophical views even deny the possibility of prediction of simple physical phenomena,

let alone the vastly complicated prediction of *feelings* or *behaviour.*

One of the most outstanding achievements of science was Einstein's prediction of the deviation of planet Mercury's trajectory around the Sun, calculating the shift in orbit **well before** it took place:



"Einstein's Theory of General Relativity predicts exactly the amount of perihelion advance seen in Mercury" *(4)*

Note that Einstein's theory is highly mathematical;

a product of 'pure reasoning'.

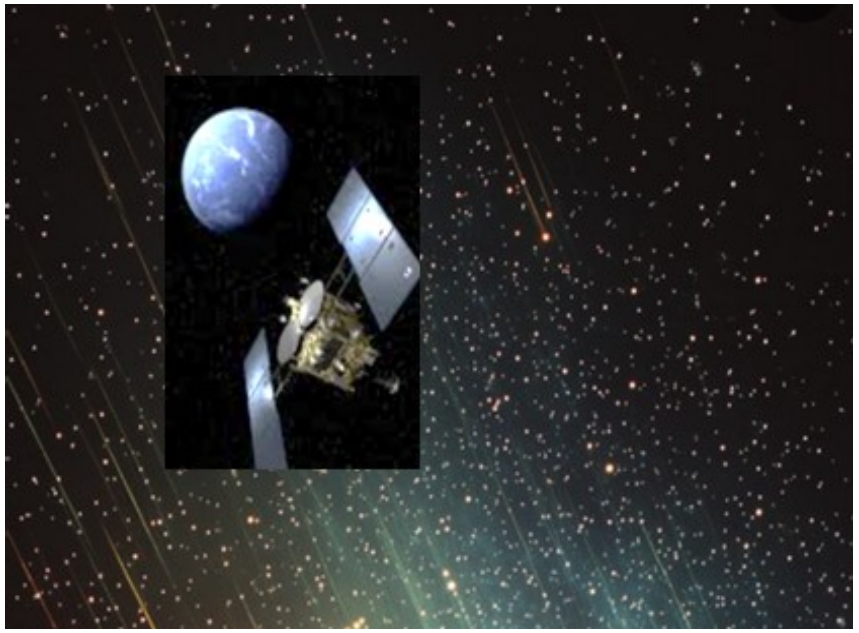
Reason can be proven correct if it produces such a prediction that observation in the physical world confirms its validity.

Reality is the ultimate judge of the quality of one's reasoning, whether in the field of science or social behaviour.

The Capacity of Reason for Predicting Future Events

In contrast to the thousands of philosophy articles arguing about two small billiard balls on a flat table –

let's consider the example of two bigger masses approaching other: a satellite and an asteroid.



- In 2011 a Japanese team successfully sent spacecraft Hayabusa in a **7-year** journey to land on asteroid Ryugu in 2018, which is distant from earth by **290 million** km, and which was spinning at great speed. The spacecraft landed **exactly as predicted**, with extreme precision, collecting samples from the surface of the asteroid. (5)

Skeptics' unreasonable assumption

Science is based on the **Principle of Uniformity of Nature**,

which implies that the **laws of reality are objective**; not conditioned by *our calendar.*

According to Science: (6) Einstein

"The distinction between the past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion."

According to Sceptics: (7)

"David Hume's philosophical problem of induction argues that we cannot logically prove the future will resemble the past... even though the sun has risen every day, we cannot be certain it will rise tomorrow, as our belief relies on an *unproven assumption* that past patterns will continue".

But dividing time into three phases is a man-made concept.

To use anthropo-based or man-made concept of time

in an argument about non-man-made natural laws

assumes that **the working of nature is conditioned by OUR timescale.**

This assumption is not logically justified; hence it is unreasonable.

Sceptics misunderstanding of the bond between Cause & Effect

Why a Cause can lead to different Effects ?

The whole objection to the Uniformity was based on Hume's following statement:

"… it is possible to clearly and distinctly conceive of a situation where the unobserved case does not follow the regularity so far observed"

True, but **WHY**?

Isn't the role of philosophy to inquire about **the reason for this irregularity?**

Why would nature sometimes follow regularity but at other cases does not?

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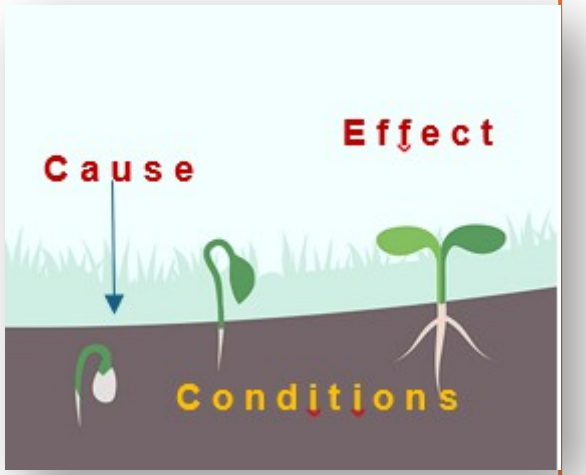
For example, seeds of plant successfully produce saplings one year, but fail another.

Farmers explain that the **Effect** depends not only on the **Cause,**

but also, on **Conditions** of soil and moisture.

The **Initial Conditions** of any system are involved in any process of its change. Science explains that:

Cause + Condition = Effect



Cause + Condition = Effect

Hume failed to see the role of **initial conditions** of a system subjected to change.

Today, a secondary school student can explain the example Hume depended on.

The billiard balls movement for Kids

Billiards and Pool for Kids: Cue Ball Control

www.euroschoolindia.com/blogs/billiards-and-pool-for-kids-cue-ball-control/

Elementary physics teaches that *the Effect* of ball movement is fully predictable and that it depends not only on *the Cause* of impact, but on the *Initial Conditions* (being applying the same *force* and hitting at the same *angle*)

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Another example: Applying heat to water (**cause**)

results in boiling at 100* (**effect**) - at sea Level (**condition**).

At top of mountain the effect of boiling is different: it occurs

at less degrees because of the **different condition** of air pressure.

The Law of Cause + Condition ⟹ Effect

applies to physical events and psychological relationships

Even in relatively simple events, finding the 'true cause' of an event becomes difficult.
Confusion occurs between 1 the *real cause* of the event - on one hand –
and 2 *conditions* (necessary but not sufficient) for the effect to take place.

Japanese educator Josei Toda (1900-1951) suggested the following example: (8)
*"A problem, no matter what kind, is an effect produced by a combination of inherent **causes** and external **conditions.***

*Here is a glass of water. Let's suppose that there are some sediments at the bottom of the glass. If you stir the contents the water will become murky in **effect.** In this case, the sediment is the inherent **cause** and the act of stirring is the external **condition**".*

In disputes among people, one side in a dispute may blame the other side - of being "*the cause*" of a problem. For example, one accuses another that the act of "stirring the situation" was **the cause** of developing **the effect** of a tense state (like creating the state of murky water). But the *cause* (of the tense situation) was dormant within the affected person, and the stirring only offered a **condition** to bring it up.

Yes, Nature can change its course!

But changes can be predictable.

Climate Change is an example of how misusing resources, deforestation etc, (**Cause)** persistently over time (**Condition**) accumulated in global warming (**Effect**).

Nature can change its course. But the changes are not random.

Our ignorance of the Law of Cause and Effect can lead to disastrous consequences.

Thus: avoiding bad consequences is possible through understanding the Law,

of how nature (and all phenomena) – operate.

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In the material field of physics predictability approaches certainty.

In the psychological or social field of patterns

predictability becomes a measure of probability.

Scepticism's dangerous implications

If the human mind is incapable of predicting future course of even a simple physical events,

how can we predict the future effects of the impact of our personal actions in the highly complicated field of human relations and feeling?

Skepticism contradicts the essence of philosophy

Philosophy is about wisdom, and wisdom allows for predicting

the impact and effect of our causes of actions,

to avoid problematic consequences.

The only ***certainty*** offered by skepticism is our ignorance about the future!

And: if it is beyond the capacity of Reasoning to predict future possibilities then **humanity is condemned to ignorance, and our knowledge is unreliable!**

Conclusion

Reason can be defined as the process of Correct Thinking.
Correct Thinking leads to results matching the flow of the laws of reality.
Reasoning is a mental power
aimed at making correct causes of actions
leading to beneficial effects,
for self-and-others.

A firm philosophical background of the bond between
causes, conditions and effects
is indispensable for giving reason its factual capacity
and role in making life better.

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