

2. The accurate explanation for our world is objective and moves beyond mere facts.

Our world is what it is, the grand historical artifact, presented to each of us. The first facet of reality that we have to acknowledge is that it is fundamentally fixed; it exists completely independent of our ideas about it. It does not change in response to human feeling, intuition, or reason. It does not flex to suit anyone's ideas about it. It exists as it is regardless of what is believed about it.

"REALITY IS THAT WHICH, WHEN YOU STOP BELIEVING IN IT, DOESN'T GO AWAY."

Philip K. Dick

The fundamental truths of our world cannot be seen with the eyes; they cannot be directly accessed with our senses. They are largely veiled—not only by time, involving both past and future events, but also by our perception, which is not equipped to confirm or deny the existence of a supernatural dimension, for instance. Just as the full story of a crime exists beyond the body of evidence, our worldview answers exist beyond what we can presently and personally observe in our universe. In other words, our universe *is* the mystery, so the explanation for our universe must clearly involve elements beyond the universe itself.

A fact is a piece of information that is indisputable and based on *direct* observation. A single fact can invalidate an entire theory or testimony. The facts—pieces of information that are *directly* verifiable via the senses—should serve as the *basis* for judging the reliability and explanatory power of truth claims, testimonial evidence, and scientific theories. Photos and video evidence can be fabricated, doctored, or misinterpreted. Consider whether the information is able to be directly verified by a large number of people or only a privileged few. If only a privileged few or a single source, then such evidence must be categorized as testimony.

Inferences, interpretations, claims, theories, and testimonies are fallible and easily incorporate error. If a person uses any of these as the “ground floor” when evaluating truth claims, he will be attempting to discern what is true on the basis of information that may very well be false, an exercise in futility. Only when facts are used as the ground floor can objective criteria be properly applied (logical consistency, coherency, external correspondence, explanatory power).

One common counter-argument is that science has proven certain theories; therefore, these theories should be counted as factual. In reality, all conclusions that are reached inductively, such as those reached via the scientific method, are falsifiable. In inductive reasoning, the conclusions move beyond the information that is contained within the premises. This presents an impassible hurdle to proof. First, it cannot be guaranteed that all relevant evidence has been gathered and weighed. Second, it can never be guaranteed that existing evidence has been properly interpreted. To come closest to this goal, the investigator would need to avoid common pitfalls such as bias, conflict of interest, faulty assumptions, fraudulent data, and simple human error. Inductive reasoning is helpful for generating ideas and hypotheses, but lacks the capacity to prove those ideas/hypotheses. Proof is not a currency of science. Proofs are only possible within closed systems such as math and logic.

Some examples of facts: Celestial bodies move. Humans congregate. Living organisms reproduce and eventually die. Humans experience pain and pleasure.