

# Humanistic Psychology: Beyond the Scientific Method

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However, some psychologists' argue that psychology should not be a science. There are alternatives to empiricism such as rational research, argument and belief. The humanistic approach (another alternative) values private, subjective conscious experience and argues for the rejection of science. The humanistic approach argues that objective reality is less important than a person's subjective perception and subjective understanding of the world. Because of this, Rogers and Maslow placed little value on scientific psychology especially the use of the scientific laboratory to investigate both human and other animal behavior. A person's subjective experience of the world is an important and influential factor on their behavior. Only by seeing the world from the individual's point of view can we really understand why they act the way they do. This is what the humanistic approach aims to do.

Humanism is a psychological perspective that emphasises the study of the whole person. Humanistic psychologists look at human behavior not only through the eyes of the observer, but through the eyes of the person doing the behaving. Humanistic psychologists believe that an individual's behavior is connected to his inner feelings and self-image.

The humanistic approach in psychology deliberately steps away from a scientific viewpoint, rejecting determinism in favour of freewill, aiming to arrive at a unique and in depth understanding. The humanistic approach does not have an orderly set of theories (although it does have some core assumptions) and is not interested in prediction and controlling people's behavior - the individuals themselves are the only ones who can and should do that. Miller (1969) in "Psychology as a Means of Promoting Human Welfare" criticises the controlling view of psychology, suggesting that understanding should be the main goal of the subject as a science, since he asks who will do the controlling and whose interests will be served by it?

Humanistic psychologists rejected a rigorous scientific approach to psychology because they saw it as dehumanising and unable to capture the richness of conscious experience. In many ways the rejection of scientific psychology in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s was a backlash to the dominance of the behaviorist approach in North American psychology.