

Abstract Submitted
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Heisenberg: Paralleling Scientific and Historical Methods CALLA COFIELD — Werner Heisenberg is an important historical subject within the physics community partly because his actions as a human being are discussed nearly as often as his work as a physicist. But does the scientific community establish its historical ideas with the same methods and standards as its scientific conclusions? I interviewed Heisenberg's son, Jochen Heisenberg, a professor of physics at UNH. Despite a great amount of literature on Werner Heisenberg, only one historian has interviewed Jochen about his father and few have interviewed Werner's wife. Nature is mysterious and unpredictable, but it doesn't lie or distort like humans, and we believe it can give "honest" results. But are we keeping the same standards with history that we do with science? Are we holding historians to these standards and if not, is it up to scientists to not only be keepers of scientific understanding, but historical understanding as well? Shouldn't we record history by using the scientific method, by weighing the best sources of data differently than the less reliable, and are we right to be as stubborn about changing our views on history as we are about changing our views on nature?

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