

# Relationship between philosophy and science



The essence of philosophy lies in “ know thyself” as Greek philosopher Socrates defined his motto of life. Indeed, this search for self identity arose when human race first experienced consciousness in the course of evolution. So, it may be argued that philosophy (which comes from the Greek word, *philein*, which means to ‘ love’) is as old as the very beginning of human civilization. If we analyze the works of great ancient philosophers, for example, Aristotle and Plato, then it will reveal that their scientific attempt was also significant. In fact, they were the predecessors of modern science. Until the medieval ages, the separation between philosophy and science (which comes from a Latin word for ‘ knowledge’) was not distinctive. However, due to stubbornness of the church controlled society in Europe the severe conflict between science and theology was set off, especially during 17th century, when the era of historical unfriendliness between philosophy, and science began. During this time, due to fast development of science, the independence of science from philosophy became clear. Unlike theology both philosophy and science follow logical methods to gather knowledge. However, the methods they use are a lot different. Philosophy naturally highlights on a biased mould in gaining knowledge as it states the importance of an individual in the universe as well as in the society. On the other hand, science concentrates on the realistic world and tries to find out relationships among measurements of various facts in the real world. Science and philosophy are very different things. Science tells us the facts of the universe, where philosophy helps us interpret them. I think that there is certainly a mutual effect between the two, philosophy may help determine what science investigates, and science may support or prove false philosophy with factual exposure, but in many ways they do not have

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-philosophy-and-science/>

common characteristics. A philosophy explanation is based on reasoning and arguments from values, whereas a scientific explanation is based on reasoning from observed facts. I find that philosophy is the reasonable, and sometimes unreasonable, search of the truth. They question what is true, how does one test that something is true, what are good ways to search for truth and how should the truth be structured? The biggest question tends to be, what is? These are all philosophical questions. Science is the study to find how things work, but must assume a certain philosophical basis. First, it must assume that what we observe is real and not imagined. Second, it must assume that what we are observing is objective and repeatable. Finally, science states that all the knowledge it gathers is testable. If I declare that something is true, then I must be able to observe something that can tell me whether or not it is true. The truly interesting fact about science is that nothing can ever be considered really true, just not falsified. Scientific theories are always cautious, and they are always either improved upon or abandoned in favour of new ones. So then I find myself thinking, how come we are willing to live with uncertainty and constant revision in science, but demand some sort of definitive truth from philosophy? Now why is it that so many people take sides on a dispute that doesn't make much sense, rather than be pleased about what the mind can achieve through the joint efforts of two of its most familiar intellectual traditions? I think the answer here is that scientists have been made conceited in recent times by their acquired status and improved financial resources, so that they don't think they need to bother with activities that don't bring in large amounts of money in funding every year. Philosophy, on the other hand, is much harder to define.

Generally speaking, it can be thought of as an activity that uses reason to

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-philosophy-and-science/>

explore issues that include the nature of reality (metaphysics), (The first philosophy (Metaphysics) is universal and is exclusively concerned with primary substance. ... And here we will have the science to study that which is just as that which is, both in its essence and in the properties which, just as a thing that is, it has. (Aristotle, 340BC)) the structure of reasonable thinking (logic), the limits of our understanding (epistemology), the meaning implied by our thoughts (philosophy of language), the nature of the moral good (ethics), the nature of beauty (aesthetics), and the internal workings of other disciplines (philosophy of science, philosophy of history, etc.).

Philosophy does this by methods of study and questioning that include rational arguments. Now, it seems to me that: a) philosophy and science are two distinct activities, b) they work by different methods (observation-based hypothesis testing vs. reason-based logical analysis), and c) they inform each other in a co-dependent manner. Science depends on philosophical theories that are outside the range of experimental validation, but philosophical investigations should be informed by the best science available in a range of situations, from metaphysics to ethics and philosophy of mind. So when some critic for instance defends that science can start an attack on all religious beliefs, they are surrendering too much to science and too little to philosophy. Yes, science can experimentally test specific religious claims, but the best objections against the thought are philosophical in nature. The issue is can philosophy advance by itself, without the support of science? Can science work without philosophy? The answer is even though philosophy and science are now two unique areas, to achieve significant knowledge, mix together the outcomes of both domains is a must. In fact, philosophy and science have always learned from each other. Scientists filter what they

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-philosophy-and-science/>

observe as best they can. They hypothesize, waiting for someone to make a more sophisticated estimate. Scientists consider doubt as a condition they must live with. They can live with mistaken belief. For example, a scientist might see only grey squirrels all his life and conclude that all squirrels are grey. His theory is then destroyed when he sees a red squirrel. There is a difference between science as a method and the philosophy of science. Although the scientific method has origins in philosophy, people are free to use the scientific method which rejects the philosophy of science. The science of biology can be educated in a classroom without teaching the philosophy of science. Science as a method tackles experimental questions, and an individual can work at science without believing in the supernatural. The philosophy of science holds that people should limit their beliefs to that which is experimental, in other words rule out the supernatural. The philosophy of science is sceptical about matters away from the untested. The function of philosophy draws imaginary pictures of whatever we observe or feel. Philosophy should be concerned as much with generating questions as to the finding of answers. Philosophy is biased by nature, but to be biased does not mean to be inferior. Science certainly has its qualities. It is logical and highly organized and it pays attention to the evidential truth. It has produced technological surprises and speeded up the materialistic progress of human civilization. It is also basically whatever can be proved independently. And whatever can be proved without bias, as at first it was known to humans in a prejudiced style. Though science has a major relevance in the world, philosophy is much broader than science. I feel that science is what questions have been objectively answered. Whereas philosophy is what could be the more and more questions and what could be

<https://assignbuster.com/relationship-between-philosophy-and-science/>

all the possible answers to those more and more questions. Philosophy takes priority over science because it is philosophy which has to raise questions and then to propose answers. Science takes only the answers, out of all the proposed answers, which can be experimentally proved by using the accessible experimental procedures. It is often said that philosophers create knowledge by simply thinking, whereas scientists create knowledge by observing. Galileo's experiments about speed of falling objects having different weights as well as about the projectile motion were actually his purposeful attempts to just check the legitimacy of the previously well-known Greek philosophical views regarding these matters. In my opinion, the formation of knowledge is not the role of the scientist. To create new knowledge is actually the role of the philosopher. The role of the scientist is just to extract the objective truths out of already existing ideas. Through experimentation the scientist would bring alterations in many already existing vague philosophical ideas by setting up the exact quantitative relationships between already existing variables. There is a positive role of a scientist. He has to put into operation his advanced theories by discovering and applying new technologies. Science, without philosophical process, turns into no reasonable findings. But, philosophy, without the logical methods of science, results in nonsense. One compliments the other and both are essential to the systematic growth of knowledge. In conclusion, I believe that if a study does not pass the tests of reason, and experimentation, where practical, we have accomplished nothing. Science and philosophy both possess their own qualities and faults in unique ways. Their relationship is competitive at times but neither one would stand at the level of development they have achieved today, without the other.