

Science and Rationalism

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Importance of Philosophy

In response to persistent inquiries on the nature of science, this document brings together a compilation of correspondence on various philosophies of science including those which are consistent with the ongoing work in Common Sense Science. In contrast to modern-day ‘science,’ which is usually uninterested in insights of moral and religious significance, the discipline of Philosophy encourages inquiries about the meaning and importance of “happenings in nature,” the definition of ‘truth,’ and the purpose and meaning of life.

Although there are many who maintain the ruse that ‘real scientists’ don’t have or use any ‘philosophy’ as part of their practice of science, such claims are specious and merely toy with the underlying definitions of ‘philosophy’ and ‘science.’ Philosophies inherently define one’s controlling principles and guidelines in every aspect of life—including one’s work as a scientist. Which thoughts, theories or concepts are ‘acceptable,’ which possibilities can be considered or must be excluded, and how one ‘filters’ the data or perceived evidence are all dictated by one’s philosophies. For scientific endeavors it would seem reasonable to prefer those philosophies that consistently apply logic, non-contradiction, and simplicity, and which minimize assumptions while permitting consideration of and free competition among theories, ideas and concepts.

It is our belief that Common Sense Science has been successful in purely science endeavors because the underlying philosophy contends that truth can be found and understood, that nature is not capricious, and that the universe operates in accordance with the Worldview Principles of *objective reality*, *causality*, and *unity*. Additionally, many physicists accept Common Sense Science because they can validate it by applying criteria of the Scientific Method.

But a surprisingly large number of scientists and theologians object to any dialogue on the foundational philosophies that support their intellectual thought-systems. Worse, they demand all others refrain from comment. This appalling attack on intellectual freedom has been propelled by the embarrassment of scientists and theologians alike over their attacks on Galileo and his scientific discoveries.

History shows that the methods of “modern science” have typically been biased in favor of the dominant or emerging cultural beliefs and the milieu of the ‘intelligencia’ or politically powerful. In the late 19th and throughout the 20th centuries, philosophies drawn from *humanism* and *naturalism* displaced *theism* and began to dominate popular and state-supported scientific endeavor. In the extreme, some scientists even sacrificed intellectual integrity in order to be consistent with ‘preferred theories,’ and thereby secure approval for personal behavior that would otherwise have been unacceptable in civilized society without the ‘scientific’ guise.

In ancient Greece, blasphemy against the gods was illegal, “lest public morality be destroyed.” And natural philosophers assumed that science, religion, theology, and geometry could be integrated into a consistent philosophy established upon a few Worldview Principles. Fragmentation of personal philosophies was *not* a cherished virtue in the cradle of Western civilization. Truth was acknowledged to be a legitimate and rewarding goal and a personal guide for moral behavior.

But the trial of Galileo planted the seeds of destruction for intellectual integrity. Some years before Galileo, Erasmus was promoting *humanism*, *making man the criterion of goodness instead of truth*. Next, the intellectual elite promoted *rationalism* (the human mind is the only source of knowledge) and later *naturalism* (the study of nature is the only source of knowledge). These incompatible philosophies led to a fragmentation of academic disciplines in university departments that became and to this day remain mutually inconsistent. Many now believe that truth in the classical meaning of the word is not possible, and certainly not to be applied consistently into every area of life. Philosophy has deteriorated to such a low level that a recent U.S. President was lauded because of his ability to compartmentalize his life! His defenders, pretending there were no bad effects upon society due to his debauchery, claimed that he governed well even while his private life was in shambles. Can compartmentalization and fragmentation of knowledge produce good science, good society, or personal fulfillment? We think *not!*

The traditional goal of philosophy has been the pursuit of truth, but many today neither seek truth nor think that objective, unchanging truth exists. Absolutes are rejected, and today many “scientists” assume *relativism*. For example, Mano Singham recently wrote in *Physics Today*:

“...scientific theories evolve according to how well they answer, at any given time in history, the immediate questions of interest to scientists. As a result, the present impressive array of theories has developed to satisfactorily answer the questions that interest us now. But that does not mean that that science is goal-directed and thus progressing toward the ‘truth.’ ...Science works—and works exceedingly well—because of its naturalistic approach, predictive nature, and methods of operation. **To be valid, science does not have to be true.**” [1, emphasis added].

The preceding quote suggests to us that some scientists should give more attention to philosophy. The following correspondence on philosophies of science might be helpful.

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