

THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

Science and philosophy are both principal human intellectual pursuits. Both pursue knowledge, understanding of the reality that we experience, in which we exist.

Science pursues that knowledge through an iteration of observational experience and deduced hypothesis to account for the observations, the cycle repeated until satisfaction with the validity of the ultimate hypotheses is achieved or until an insurmountable observational barrier postpones further such research until other developments remove or overcome the barrier. Science is in general fundamentally physics.

Philosophy pursues that knowledge through rationality and logic applied to each issue. That pursuit is fundamentally metaphysics although attention must be paid to reality and common sense.

Science supplies knowledge of the material, physical world and means to control or use it. There being only one material, physical world there can be only one valid science. Science seeks to ultimately develop a consensus with regard to each issue and modern science has achieved many such consensuses. [Of course, later information and developments may overthrow a prior consensus and replace it with a new one.]

Philosophy addresses not the means of the material aspect of life that science treats, but, rather, the ends, the objectives, rules, values for both the material and the abstract aspects of living. Consensus is seldom achieved in philosophy mostly because the issues that it treats are relatively untestable and “hard” “Euclidean geometry like” proofs can seldom be developed. However, that is an advantage, not a disadvantage. Non-consensus leads to development of new and broader philosophical ideas, concepts, and theories.

Science helps us to materially exist, and that in increasing comfort and ease.

Philosophy helps us to understand what and how to do with our lives and how to do so in conjunction with our fellow humans and environment.