



Philosophische Winterakademie  
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Wettbewerb Philosophischer Essay



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In order to discuss this question finally: Does science need philosophy? For its work: No. As simple as that. But for its role in our society, however, science – or rather we personally as members of society – do need philosophy as a tool to use our skills in appropriate ways and minimising harmful effects we cause unintentionally or due to a lack of wisdom. But the other way round: does philosophy need science? Not in every case and not necessarily as a sort of Positivism, but as fundament of understanding of the world and life, science can be a wonderful fundament for a deeper philosophical look. The model of two stages on the ladder up to wisdom illustrates the role both disciplines perform in our society.

Finally, we have to admit that all four statements (that emerge when both “translations” of the two half sentences of Confucius are lightened up) are somehow correct. 1. Philosophy without science can be meaningless indeed when speculations of sophists emerge without reason. 2. Those philosophical speculations might even become dangerous without science. 3. But also science without philosophy could become meaningless gathering of information we are not able to use. 4. And science lacking philosophy can become dangerous, too, completing the circle.

The question whether science needs philosophy is way more complex than this sentence and only allows an answer more complex than “yes” or “no” (or 42...):

Science and philosophy, somehow, need each other.