

Attic Answer #3

Philosophy of Science... Does it Matter?

Are you a scientific realist or nonrealist? What are the main reasons that you take the view that you do? What theological considerations, if any, inform your position on this issue?

Based upon the basic understanding of the realist and the non-realist positions, I would land firmly in the realist camp. Scientific realism is the view that scientific theories properly aim to give us a true account of the physical world. Scientists attempt to observe the world in an objective fashion where experimentation and data collection are practiced from a theory-neutral position. This on the surface seems solid and good, but this concept assumes the possibility of a theory-neutral position to be possible. While this dynamic is a stumbling block to realism it does not prohibit this position from being tenable. The fact that there are theories which enable man to make novel predictions and create new technologies suggest there is something about the world that does indeed correspond to reality. (Key Point) The concept of realism dovetails beautifully with the correspondence theory of truth. The theological considerations dealing with the concept of scientific realism are many. One such important consideration is that God created man in His image. Since man is created in His image, he (man) is endowed with the cognitive, logical, and rational ability to discern and make sense of that which He (God) created. God not only created mankind with the ability to discern all created things, but also that which is not created; God Himself. Since mankind has the capacity for logic and reason it follows that mankind could and would develop proper ways of evaluating the universe. One such way would be through the understanding of scientific realism. While not limited solely to this discipline, true knowledge is capable of being attained whether directly (empirically) or indirectly.