

# Re: The Intellectual Origin of Positivism

**Source:** <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.cognitive/2004-07/0246.html>

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**From:** Lester Zick ([lesterDELzick\\_at\\_worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick_at_worldnet.att.net))

**Date:** 07/15/04

Date: Thu, 15 Jul 2004 22:03:01 GMT

On Thu, 15 Jul 2004 20:19:50 GMT, "Abakus" <[abakus@ntlworld.com](mailto:abakus@ntlworld.com)> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:

>  
> "Lester Zick" <[lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net)> wrote in message  
> news:40f54d9f.6541670@netnews.att.net...  
>> On Tue, 13 Jul 2004 20:05:49 GMT, "Abakus" <[abakus@ntlworld.com](mailto:abakus@ntlworld.com)> in  
>> comp.ai.philosophy wrote:  
>>  
>> >  
>> > "Lester Zick" <[lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net)> wrote in message  
>> > news:40f3fc31.60344270@netnews.att.net...  
>> >> On Mon, 12 Jul 2004 20:08:30 +0000 (UTC), Neil W Rickert  
>> >> <[rickert+nn@cs.niu.edu](mailto:rickert+nn@cs.niu.edu)> in comp.ai.philosophy wrote:  
>> >>  
>> >> >-----BEGIN PGP SIGNED MESSAGE-----  
>> >> >Hash: SHA1  
>> >> >  
>> >> >[lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net](mailto:lesterDELzick@worldnet.att.net) (Lester Zick) writes:  
>> >> >  
>> >> >> Science has no interest in the speculative, whether metaphysical or  
>> >> >> philosophical in nature.  
>> >> >  
>> >> >This is clearly mistaken. There has long been a significant  
>> >> >component of speculative theorizing within science.  
>> >> >  
>> >> >Scientists take a great deal of interest in speculative theorizing.  
>> >> >Science – the bottom line – does not.  
>> >> >  
>> >> >Regards – Lester  
>> >> >  
>> >> >This opinion seems to stem from a rather obsolete and long deceased view  
>> >> >of  
>> >> >how science operates. It is obvious to anybody who's done science that  
>> >> >science most of the time involves a two-step process. First a certain  
>> >> >hypothesis is concocted. Then the hypothesis is tested. The generation of  
>> >> >a  
>> >> >testable hypothesis involves a lot of speculation, imagination,

>> >*inventiveness and ingenuity. It is not uncommon to see that many*  
>*scientific*  
>> >*papers end up by saying things along the lines of "it can be speculated*  
>*that*  
>> >*[...]"*. And this speculation on the present results tends to end up being  
>> >*the embryo for a hypothesis which is the basis for a following paper.*  
>>  
>> >*So what? The bottom line in science is still the science and not the*  
>> >*speculation.*  
>  
>*You are not trying to understand. The speculation is an integral part of*  
>*science.*

I never said or suggested that speculation is not a necessary part of the practice of science. And if you want to learn about the practice of science, you have to learn about speculation. If you want to learn about the science itself, you study validated results of speculation and not speculation itself. You learn geometry the same way by learning the axioms, theorems, and proofs of Euclid and Pythagoras and not the speculations they used to arrive at their insights.

Obviously you consider the practice of science the same as science and draw no distinction between them. If you think I'm not trying to understand your position it's only because I see a valid distinction between what is known and how it got to be known.

Regards – Lester