

# The Philosophy vs. Science Debate

Post by “Pacatus” of November 8, 2023 at 7:32 PM

From the article [Cassius](#) linked in the opening post:

“Your example of homosexuality is a case in point. I agree that the main reasons for thinking it is wrong are linked with outmoded ways of thought. But the way you put it, it is because science shows us that homosexual behaviour "is completely natural", "has no apparent negative evolutionary impacts", is "biologically based" and "not harmful" that we can conclude it is "not innately 'wrong'". But this mixes up ethical and scientific forms of justification. Homosexuality is morally acceptable, but not for scientific reasons. Right and wrong are not simply matters of evolutionary impacts and what is natural. There have been claims, for example, that rape is both natural and has evolutionary advantages.”

This gets at the crux: **the “is to ought” question**. For someone to say that a given action has been shown to be biologically natural and prolific across populations is **an “is” statement** (empirical). To say that that also dictates an “ought” (or “ought not”) **moves from the empirical to the normative** - turning facts like biologically natural and prolific across populations and not harmful into the proper **norms** for ethics. **But that itself is a philosophical move**. It may not be wrong (Epicurean philosophy draws upon what is natural and not harmful) - but it is no longer science.