

Objective and Methodology of Natural Science and Its Limitations to Deal with Environmental Problems

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My questions are how natural science has become an effective system to understand nature and why natural science or natural scientists cannot satisfactorily deal with many of the environmental problems today. I review the development of Western natural history, which finally led to the theory of evolution, as an example of natural science with the main focus on Linnaeus's works and the criticism of his methodology to understand the objective and methodology of natural history and its change. An example of ethnobotanical knowledge, based on the data collected during my fieldwork with the Penan Benalui people of Borneo, is also shown to discuss similarities and differences between natural science and local knowledge. Finally I point out the limitations of natural science to deal with environmental problems and suggest how social science can bridge natural science and the public to solve the problems.