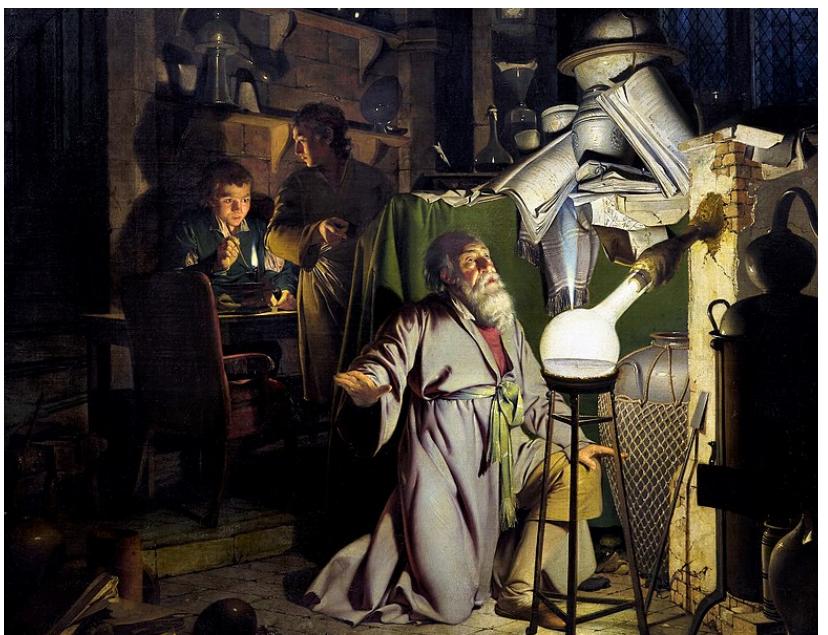


# Alchemy or Chemistry?

The word chemistry originates from the word alchemy, which originates from the Arabic word (al-kimiya). The origin of the Arabic word is from Greek (khemeia) which refers to the alloying of metals.

Alchemy is often seen as the precursor to modern chemistry. Alchemists were concerned with effecting transformations between substances, most famously in transmutation of metals into gold, and with the creation of an elixir of life. The scientific rigour behind Alchemy varied with practitioners, but it gradually diffused into what we now call chemistry.



**Left:** An 18th Century impression of an alchemist searching for the Philosopher's Stone, but instead discovering Phosphorus.

**Right:** A depiction of an *ouroborus*, or a snake biting its own tail. This is an ancient symbol associated with eternal life. Alchemy trod a line between the scientific and the mystical

