

At the start of his comments, Professor Mayer writes: "...as usual in refereeing, I have talked only about the points that bother me, not about the points that I like." I think that such stance is neither "usual" nor proper; it is rather the referee's obligation to give a balanced account of what a potential reader may find if she turns to the work in question. However, given the negative tenor of his remarks, I have to doubt that there was much that he liked.

Meyer is dissatisfied with my treatment of the two central concerns, announced in the title, of the roles of ideology and science in the social 'sciences'. He claims that I am using ideology as a bludgeon against anything I happen to dislike and that I have ignored the large literature on this subject.

I am perplexed by this charge. My discussion had four sources: My own work in economics over approximately half a century and the reactions to it that I received. Furthermore, three books that I discuss in detail, each of which deals in much detail with one of the ideologies: Hartley, with the neoclassical ideology, particularly in relation to its use of representative agents in contemporary macroeconomics; Amadae on the Cold War origins of rational choice; Leeson on the Chicago origins of monetarism and American neoconservatism. There is no mention of any of this by Mayer. Instead, he mentions two articles, which if he would kindly supply more precise references, I will look at.

On the subject of science Mayer writes: "Perhaps one should treat ideology as the social science equivalence of a paradigm in the natural science. Moreover, natural-science paradigms, too, might perhaps be considered ideologies. (I am not a post-modernist, but I can sympathize (sic) with a parapsychologist who thinks that science, too, has its ideology.)"

By his own statement he sympathizes (identifies?) with what can also be called the counter culture or '68 Generation view of the philosophy of science, most prominently represented by Paul Feyerabend. This is the view most diametrically opposed to the one I take: That there is a recognizable core scientific method that is shared by all progressive sciences and that is strictly opposed to ideology. Members of the counter culture and evidently also Professor Meyer think that this position is itself an ideology. The claim that there is a scientific method distinct from ideology tends to irritate the members of the counterculture.

One more quote: "The author does not give enough credit to the progress that economics has made in recent years in paying attention to empirical evidence. For example, many more papers now provide robustness tests. We are still a long, long way from physics, but we are slowly digging ourselves out of the mud.

The statement is both defensive and (I cannot help myself!) ideological. Macroeconomists have in recent decades employed endless batteries of tests, but what empirical regularities have they succeeded in establishing? That the use of statistics, or more generally of mathematics, by itself certifies a work as being scientific is just part of the ideology of scientism that I discuss.

Having written this reply, there remains an irritating puzzle: I own two of Professor Mayer's books on methodology. I found them to be down to earth defenses of a commonsense empiricism. Between the views expressed in those books and those expressed in this review I can see no connection.

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