

Referee Report on the paper,  
entitled “Science and Ideology in Economic, Political and Social Thought”  
by Claude Hillinger

I read this with interest as my professional career overlaps with his. I began my Ph.D. studies in economics 3 years later than that of the author. Lionel Robbins was still being read by economics students and business cycle theory had not yet fallen out of fashion. I enjoyed reading portions of this as it brought to mind many issues that dissenters (of our generation) from the Chicago School have in common. Does the interest that one reader has for the intellectual biography of an age-mate justify publication?

Section 5 leans quite heavily (I would say excessively) on Leeson. To publish that many long paragraphs would surely require copyright clearance (which isn't necessarily a problem); the paucity of other voices in this section is more of a concern.

Section 7 is too brief and largely focuses on a critique of Mankiw. Section 6 & 7 might more effectively have been combined.

Section 8 leans too heavily on Amadae. Here, too, one feels, as in Section 5, that one would be better served in reading the original (Leeson in 5 and Amadae in 8). Page references for several of the long quotes are missing. Most or all of this section should be deleted or published as a separate article (elsewhere) following more detailed research on the period covered.

Steve Fuller's work on the 'strong sociology of knowledge' approach and his critiques of Thomas Kuhn's basic support for 'big science' might usefully be consulted by the author.

Sections 5 through sections 8 could be combined and most of the Leeson and Amadae quotes should be left out, with perhaps one lengthy footnote for each author summarizing their contribution. The emphasis should be on ideology and/or politics driving analysis. (This is what Steve Fuller calls the strong sociology of knowledge hypothesis – "scientists" in the service of interests). Leaving 5 & 8 out entirely means that certain theories / techniques of analysis would disappear from the discussion.

I have looked at section 7 again (which I still find to be a very brief anecdotal aside): without going on about Mankiw, his peculiar distinction between economists and engineers can be woven into Hillinger's more general critique of economists as something other than scientists. And yet, as Kuhn tells us, scientists of every stripe laboring within the framework of a dominant paradigm, can be incredibly hostile to heresy – our equivalent of burning at

the stake is being exiled to the academic-professional wilderness or being exiled totally from working in one's chosen domain.

There is so much written about Friedman that suggesting yet one more reference seems pointless, but there was an interesting appreciation/critique of him written by Paul Krugman in the NY Review of Books

The New York Review of Books

February 15, 2007

<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/19857?email>

Who Was Milton Friedman?

By Paul Krugman

I presume that if a shorter version is published the working paper remains on the site. We can have his cake and it eat it, too – both versions of the paper would be available to the reader and Hillinger could refer the reader of the e-journal article to the working paper for the fuller discussion that would have been truncated by revised form