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from: Professor Peter K Smith

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Prof Mario Bunge
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March 3rd 1992

Dear Professor Bunge

Thank you for your reprint 'A critical examination of the new sociology of science, Part 1'. I found it very refreshing and agreed with the great majority of your arguments. I would much appreciate Part 2 when it is available.

Thank you also for 'A skeptic's beliefs and disbeliefs'. Again I am in sympathy with much of this. Two comments:

1) Applications of games theory.

Would you apply your strictures to the applications of games theory to animal behaviour, e.g. the work of John Maynard Smith ('Evolution and the Theory of Games', CUP 1982; Beh. & Brain Sciences, 1984) and others? I would argue that the approach has stimulated ethologists to get 'real numbers' (e.g. costs of fighting in red deer - Clutton Brock) and that some of the more sophisticated models of animal conflicts (going beyond the over-simple 'hawk-dove' model) are useful models incorporating sensible data.

2) Human sociobiology.

(I felt you got away lightly with this in the commentaries!)

Sociobiological theories can certainly encompass gene-environment interactions and learning, adaptability, plasticity. Indeed they would have to, to have any relevance to most non-human species. And it seems as though sociobiology provides the dominant paradigm at the moment for explaining non-human (social) behaviour.

So, I don't feel that your argument on p.142 para 2 is convincing.

paras 3 and 4 suggest that there are other processes going on in human behaviour, and human

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behavioural evolution, than in non-human species, i.e. cultural evolution. I would agree, but argue that rather than discarding human sociobiology, it needs to be part of a more comprehensive theoretical framework that embraces genetic and cultural evolution (see also Barkow in *Beh & Brain Sciences*, 1991). Just because there is more to human behaviour than genetic evolution, doesn't mean we should discard the insights that human sociobiology can give us. I expressed some of these views in a BBS commentary on Kitcher's 'Vaulting Ambition' (1989), enclosed (I'm sorry about the poor quality of the reproduction).

I would be interested in your thought on these matters if you have time; and would be grateful to be put on your list for sending future reprints on these topics.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter K Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P' and a stylized 'S'.

Peter K Smith

Professor of Psychology

