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### An answer to the editors of Science Tribune

M. Apostol

Department of Theoretical Physics,  
Institute of Atomic Physics,  
Magurele-Bucharest MG-6,  
POBox MG-35, Romania  
email: apoma@theor1.ifa.ro

Sirs,

Thank you for reediting my article Neurasthenic Science for Science Tribune. In the following I try to answer your questions as good as I can.

You say you made so drastic changes to my article "in defending" my "point of view"; I did not know that my point of view is already under an attack; is it? Up to now I feel no attack. You wish to say probably that it will give rise to attacks, once published; is not this one of your interests as independent (presume you are) publishers? People would reply to my article, would tell their own opinion about matter, they might even say, for instance, that my point of view is unbalanced, etc, and we should have a nice talk. You say that I would have "gone rather overboard". This probably means that it is too much what I said; usually people say of something be too much when they do not like it. The question is therefore whether or not you like it. Certainly, you do not like it very much. But if something is true, like it or not, we have to have it, havent we? Let us better see whether what I wrote is true or not. (I hope we shall not enter some philosophical questions as of what would be the truth, etc).

You chastize me for "piling up the criticisms with few constructive comments". Criticisms or not, question is whether they are true. And "constructive comments" is a phrase that make me despair. Everybody wants to have "constructive" suggestions, comments, advice, etc. They make errors after errors, pile up mountains of wrongdoings, and thereafter ask for "constructive" suggestions. But in order to be constructive you should first demolish their erroneous "construction". Would it not be better to "construct" nothing, would it not be better to have nothing to correct? Is it not much more profitable not to distort first the things just to need straighten them up at the end? Would it not be better not to construct anything? Just let the things be as they are, according to their own nature. I do not want to construct anything in my article, I just want to describe the bad-taste show the scientific research is performing today. And afterall, my proposal of taxing the scientific byproducts for directly supporting the research is not a "constructive suggestion"?

I am through, I see it now, your first 4 lines.

Why to "tone" my article "down"? Is its tone high? In what sense? What would it mean a high tone for a written text? Perhaps uncomfortable for some? And what? I do not write comfort I only try to write honestly. Is it insulting for someone? I did not mean it, and I do not think it is. The question here is whether I am or am not sincere. Do you feel that I believe in my statements?

Or does my text show that I was writing it by someone else command, serving disguised interests? The only care of an (independent) editor should be the text sounds sincere, and be free of insults.

Your points:

1. "Neurasthenic science" is the massive production of irrelevant publications under the name of science, full of errors, as well as all the inappropriate practices described in my article; I view all this activity as being very similar with that of a "mentally disordered" organism. When such an organism just reacts to external stimuli in virtue of its biological functions, without giving attention to what is correct, and what not, what should be answered and what not, when to talk and when to keep silence, then we are in the presence of an illness, a mental disorder, called neurasthenia. My opinion is that the activity which passes today under the name of scientific research is precisely such an illness, a social illness. I think the title very appropriate, even a catching one, and my "constructive suggestion" would be to keep it.

2. I can not refrain myself of suspecting that you do not believe me. Look please for the program "Chaos Data Analyzer", by J. C. Sproot, 1991. It is not exactly what I describe, but close. Afterall, what is more important in my point is the sense, the slope, the tangent, and not the exact, actual situation. Afterall, could you be sure that such a program would not be written? I can imagine very well such a program, and I could write one, for instance, with my coworkers. Is not the exact situation what should be of interest here, but rather the point where we can take the activity of publishing "scientific papers", with the aid of the modern technology. My statement could not be exact but it is certainly true, because what I said, whether not yet in use in its precise details, is verosimile, it "could be"; and is much more important what we could become than what we are; I think that you agree. People are not afraid of reality, they are afraid of their own imagination.

3. You do a logical mistake, with all due respect. If they call themselves peers we should accept that they know better what they are, and they call themselves so because they are so. What do you want to say? That they call themselves peers but actually they are scientists? Then why call themselves peers? Just for fun? You remember me of a nice Romanian joke, I shall try to render it in English. The story goes that the Romanain ex-leader Ceausescu paid once an official visit to Israel (where live many Romanians, I mean Jews who once lived in Romania); and the local hosts took Ceausescu to the Monument of the Unknown Hero. There he found himself in the front of a nice grave plate with the name Isaac Schlomo, say, inscribed on it, born in Bacau (a small, province town in Romania), of profession taylor, all this information inscribed on the plate! Well, said Ceausescu to his hosts, you say the Unknown Hero, but I see that you know the name of the guy, his birth place and his profession, all his identity. How it comes? This is precisely the point, was the answer: all people thought that Isaac Schlomo was a taylor from Bacau, nobody knew he was a hero! He was therefore an Unknown Hero! The same with the peers, when it is useful for them they call themselves peers, when the other way around is useful to them they call themselves scientists, and so on. Would they be Unknown Heroes?. Let us stick with the proper meaning of the words, just for the sake of getting understood with each other.

I may agree that only a "true" scientist could actually act as a peer, but only to the extent to which he is actually doing science when reviewing it. I mean that the act of reviewing a scientific paper is inseparable from that of doing, or redoing the scientific contents of that paper, which however is not the case with our peers. I have seen scientific papers rejected on the ground that the referee did not know the atomic units, on the basis that "he does not believe" in that paper,

on the ground that he was not at all familiar with the most elementary notions, not in the field, but of the general curriculum of physics, etc. How could you call all these scientists? Doesn't matter that they wish to call themselves scientists, they act like peer reviewers, and have not the slightest notion of science. You might say that there are a few, not many, but I, as a practitioner of science tell you that they are the vast majority of today, and this is why I wrote the article, to bring testimony of what I have seen in the "field" of the practices of the so-called scientific research of today.

In connection with this I want the joke about the policeman and the mirror be restored in my article. It is a very proper joke for the situation, and it makes sweeter the rather grave atmosphere. The reader must laugh in order to understand, there is no genuine understanding without joyfulness, is it? I insist to keep it.

4. It is not my criticism of bibliometricians facile, it is their activity facile. My "criticism" is only a true description of their activity, hence your confusion by contamination of planes, or of angles. Do they do anything else of what I have described? You say that they do not pretend to judge science. Then why they measure it? Just for fun again? Funny, very funny! You say that they would aim at describing the "structure of the scientific world". Since when the length of a paper is structure of scientific world? Are you sure you do not play the words? What would be the meaning of "structure of scientific world"? There is only one scientific world, and it consists of the scientific ideas put forward during science history. Are the bibliometricians and the scientometricians dealing with scientific ideas? They declare they are not. They count the number of papers, citations, etc, all these items that are only accidentally related with the "scientific world". What would be the use of all these countings? Is it not a waste of time, money, and what's worse, a misleading para-, or pseudo-scientific activity? It is well-known that the food ingurgitated by an author is also a scientific-related matter, because an author must eat in order to be able to produce a scientific paper. Shall we witness soon scientometric studies relating the "scientific contents" of a "scientific paper" to the quality of food taken by the author? Is not this grotesque, is not this too biological? Sure, you will say that they do not do that, then what they do? What is it their purpose? What would be the scientific relevance of the length, citations, etc of a "scientific paper"? What would, in general, be the relevance of the accidentals? Believe me, look with fresh eyes to all this activity and you will see that it is only a non-sensical movement. Look up the 5-6 Kg annual reports Ron Kostoff issues every year, or twice per year, and ask him why is he doing that? He would tell you that he is doing that because that is a possible activity, too. Is anything possible meaningful? I do not think so, and this is why I wrote the article: to say that not anything which is possible is also meaningful. As you see, we are in a much more sur-realistic world that we could have expected. You say that "this, in itself, can not be criticized"; I tell you that anything can be criticized, and if something is not criticized then it is not scientific. Science is the exercise of the critical thinking. And it comes from Descartes, for one instance. You say that someone else took the bibliometricians work and uses it in wrong purpose. I tell you that their work lends itself to be used to wrong purposes, just because it deals with accidentals, it is adulterous, by its very nature their work creates new, wrong purposes. My "diatribes" against bibliometricians, scientometricians, (and other morticians), against peers, against the priests of the New Look Science, are only descriptions of their activities, seen through the eyes of someone who is used to think critically. Is nothing personal, nor injurious I hope, just a critical exercise upon a social activity which grows tremendously.

5. You say that my "conclusion" etc is "weak", compared with the force of my "diatribes". But there is no conclusion, my article has only an end, as any other writing. I did not intend to be a moralist, I did not intend to teach anyone anything. Had I have teaching, I should sell it, and

would be a teacher; but I am only a professor, and I professes, *i.e.* I only try to give personal examples, at most. You see, is very comfortable to sit down and ask someone: "Convince me please of the rigteousness of your position, by the force of your arguments. Please, convince me, look, I sit down here very comfortably in this armchair, and you please do your best and convince me!" Convince means to conquer something together, this is the ethimological meaning of this word. So, if someone wants to be "convinced" of my point of view, that person should try by himself to see whether my description is appropriate, confront his own experience with mine, and try to be aware of a point of view which is not entirely his, but could become.

You say that "it is a shame to combat all this "New Look Science" just by "blind faith". Since when would the faith be blind, why would the faith be blind, could you please tell me that? On the contrary, I found faith very enlightning, when sincere, and a proof of this is precisely my article, too. Leaving aside that I do not think that I combat something, I just want to answer some possible questions that would be raised by my text. Nowhere in the text did I distinguish between "true" science and scientists and "false" science and scientists. I said everywhere, simply, science and scientists, and peers, reviewers, bibliometricians, etc. We have enough proper words for all what we want to say, no need for additional, "constructed" syntagms. In my opinion is nothing to combat here, the neurasthenic science is a social phenomenon, and as such there would be no way to oppose it, to demolish it, etc. People will come more and more to science and scientific research, and will do it worse and worse, including an entire world of para-scientific activities, like publishing garbage, and bibliomeasuring it!. It is a disease, a social disease, for which there is no cure, since transforming the things into their contraries is in the human nature. I am not in a crusade, like the old prophets, I like to look at myself as to a humble, keen observer of the world, and I do not feel ashamed of the weakness of my "arguments". On the contrary, I feel myself extremely content that I wrote what I have seen, and lied not. I was very attentive, through all the text, not to put something which I would not believe in, and I hope that I succeeded in being honest in this writing. This is why I feel myself very content, and secure, because I am pretty sure that I was sincere. Yes, to answer your question, I firmly believe, and, contrary to your suggestion, I am not ashamed of this, that science is from God, that the scientific method is belief in God, that our world is a matter of belief. And I think that everyone might be led along this way, providing he would pay more attention to our world and exercise the critical thinking. In all humility I do need, contrary to Laplace, the God hypothesis in my discourse. You ask me to "leave aside faith and God" because your journal is one of science and technology; when in our nowadays world there are left very few taboos, it is at least curious to hear someone requiring not to talk something, be it faith or God; are you sure your requirement comes not from a certain "blind faith" in certain "gods"?; and while you talk for these "gods" you would not allow me to talk about one, only one?. Are you very sure that science and technology have nothing to do with God? Then you would be able to tell both what is one and what another. Are you?

You say, curiously, that I wouldnt have any consideration for humanists, etc. Why? I do have. Of course, not in the first place for their telling us what would be science, but for telling us what would be their own field. Ironically and sufficiently, you ask me to tell more about the fostering of "true science and scientists". Seriously and amicably, I tell you that you should know that both science and scientists are born not made. And once born they need not be fostered by anyone, they foster by themselves.

I still can not understand your motivations for editing so drastically my text, changing so much in it, and raising so many points, and telling me so many of your own ideas and views. I thank you for all of them, of course, and to return the favour, let me suggest that, instead of having written me so much, instead of having worked so hard on my article and rewritten it so thoroughly, you

might have written an article of yourself. Or, would you like, perhaps, to coauthor my article? Do you think that, by doing so, would it get higher bibliometric and scientometric scores?

If I would accept, perhaps, some of your editorial recastings, I fully disagree with your turning the sense into its contrary in almost all the essential points. Please, preserve the sense in my article, if you still want to edit it. I must tell you that I do not write for the sake of writing, or getting published, or getting coauthored. I write, when I write, because I believe in what I write. Sincerely.