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Memorandum for File:

Subject: Historical Reasons for Publishing under Pseudonym.

Yesterday I was looking for some old notes in my attic and ran across my notes on my paper of nineteen years ago (File s 4691 and 6110, SEP II-A) in Professor Morton's electrical engineering seminar at Berkeley. I recall that L. D. Stevens was at that session of the seminar, May 26, 1947. The title of my paper was "The History of Electromagnetic Theory." My paper was not what Prof. Morton expected, in that I examined both the technical and sociological developments in the history of electricity and magnetism which led up to Maxwell's development of a sound mathematical basis for electromagnetic theory.

This short review from my post office box on what resulted from the interdisciplinary concepts explored in that old seminar paper is consistent with a policy I formulated back in 1948 to keep my hobby of interdisciplinary studies of the history and philosophy of science separate from my basic engineering work.

At that time I had the approval of the U.C. Graduate Division to include some interdisciplinary research in the economics dept. as part of my work for the M.S. in electrical engineering. When the work in Economics 291 was completed, however, it could not be published, because a representative of the U.S. Dept. of State applied pressure on the University of California to withhold publication. As a result I saw that interdisciplinary research could easily go in directions where results might be too controversial or might be classified as confidential, so I decided I had better stick to a more narrow field of engineering for the rest of my graduate work.

Another factor was that I was concerned over the mistakes I felt the National Association of Manufacturers were making at that time, both from an ethical viewpoint, and from the viewpoint of maintaining the stability of the capitalist economic system. If our capitalist economic system gets too unstable, we run into the danger of our democratic political system being destroyed.

I argued some with the N.A.M. on the ethical questions, but felt I was not enough of an expert on economic stability to argue that issue. I soon left the ethical questions to the Federal (or National?) Council of Churches of Christ in America, when I found that they were alert to the N.A.M. activities.

One week in 1947 in Economics 291, the professor devoted some time to the then recent controversy between IBM Corp. and the N.A.M. Mr. T. J. Watson, Sr., had doubts as to validity of the N.A.M. program. However the NAM pulled a dirty trick on Mr. Watson. The NAM arranged to have a vice-president of one of IBM's largest commercial customers call upon Mr. Watson and ~~said~~ that if Mr. Watson didn't contribute to the NAM program, he would consider switching future orders to IBM's principal competitor. The professor said that since IBM couldn't afford to lose this customer, Mr. Watson reluctantly agreed to financially support the NAM program.

At about the same time a group of scientists with whom I was participating in the Econ 291 class had a paper on the production of electricity from atomic energy accepted for publication in Chemical and Engineering News. The presidents of Pacific Gas And Electric Co. and Standard Oil Co. of California tried to suppress the paper. The editor refused to back down, but did publish the article anonymously so the article could not erroneously be identified as representing the policy of any of the organizations for which the scientists preparing the report worked.

I learned from these experiences plus others back in 1946-1948 that really important problems for the survival of democratic types of societies have to be kept separate from one's job for pay, so that one has the mobility to publish important interdisciplinary research work in non-standard ways such as in informal reports, obscure journals, anonymously, or under a pseudonym.

In the years since these events, I have as a hobby on my own developed a few concepts important to the history and philosophy of science. I have presented two papers at national meetings of the Society for General Systems Research affiliated with Section L - History and Philosophy of Science of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, plus five at local meetings. I have also presented talks for laymen at Unitarian Churches, the American Humanist Association, and at a conference arranged by the Jesuits. Also I have presented a paper at the International Congress for Social Psychiatry and a brief paper at a Scientists On Survival (S.O.S.) meeting.

For a list of such meetings see my file of SEPR's.

At present IBM has rules on 'scientific and technical books and chapters,' based on the assumption that books published commercially and written by IBM employees, and identified directly or indirectly with IBM, may have considerable influence upon the company's reputation and scientific standing. Therefore IBM Corp. has defined procedures to be observed to ensure that all scientific or technical manuscripts which relate directly or indirectly to work done within the company, or in which the author will be identified as an employee or an associate of IBM (even though the manuscript may not relate directly or indirectly to work done within the company), are of the highest level of professional quality, competency and accuracy, and consistent with company policies.

It has been my experience that IBM review procedures for papers in the area of history and philosophy of science end up without any decision, because they cannot agree on who is an acceptable authority on the particular subject. Therefore the book must not be identified with IBM. Then since the press can easily determine that Frederick B. Wood works for IBM, the publication will easily become identified with IBM unless something further is done to make it clear that it is not IBM sponsored. The only clear way to do this appears to be the use of a pseudonym. It is assumed that the press will still find out who wrote the book, but the use of the pseudonym will make it clear that it is not IBM approved, and therefore cannot be interpreted as representing IBM policy.

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