SCIENCE AND ETHICS AGAIN

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(1) First of all I may give a short outline of the history of these colloquia. Quite some time before the discussion of the moral code for scientists received the worldwide response which can be observed during the last years and before the topics of the individual, practical, social and political effects of science were discussed in every congress in philosophy of science the idea of an international research project with the general title "Foundations of Science and Ethics" was born. The first step originated in discussions with Ivan Supek during one of the first courses on "Science and Philosophy" in the Institute of Postgraduate Studies in Dubrovnik. So it came about that the Inter-University Center took the patronance of the project. Together with Ivan Supek and Lorenz Krüger I myself was appointed as director to coordinate the program. In a first reaction to such a project, 1976, the Volkswagen-Foundation invited some philosophers to Göttingen, in order to reformulate the first draft of the project. This work was done by Dagfinn Føllesdal, Lorenz Krüger, Karel Lambert, Keith Lehrer, Kuno Lorenz, Günther Patzig, Roland Posner, Ivan Supek, Paul Weingartner, and myself.

The symposia in Dubrovnik started in 1978, the fifth and last one taking place in April 1986. The list of participants contains the following names: Lars Bergström, Myles Brand, Michael Dummett, Ronald Dworkin, Dagfinn Føllesdal, Carol Gould, Risto Hilpinen, David Kaplan, Saul Kripke, Lorenz Krüger, Franz von Kutschera, Karel Lambert, Adrienne Lehrer, Keith Lehrer, Srdan Lelas, Kuno Lorenz, Mihailo Markovic, Ernan McMullin, William Newton Smith, Harald Ofstad, Roland Posner, Marian Przelecki, Willard van Orman Quine, Lothar Schäfer, Ivan Supek, Patrick Suppes, Knut Erik Tranøy, Jules Vuillemin, Marx Wartofsky, Paul Weingartner, Ryszard Wojciecki. Altogether twentyeight who have contributed papers and about a dozen guests participated in these colloquia. Out of the efforts of the group two books have been published. The

(2) What concerns the content of the conference, I shall briefly sketch only a few points which I myself think important and, perhaps not always regarded the perspective from where they are viewed here. I may say the following: In the very center of the first four conferences we find the topic of the rationality of science. Only at the later colloquia, held in 1980, 1981, and 1986, we turned to the moral question, if scientific research may be and should be restricted, and if so, in what respect and within which limits. It seems to me that the way the discussions developed was a natural one. If rationality is the essence of the scientific enterprise then it is clear that first, the questions of the meaning, the conditions and the limits of rationality had to be in the focus of the discussion: How do we describe and how do we have to describe rationality, if rationality is an essential attribute of scientific research and progress? What counts as the rationality of methodological rules and instructions? Which model or models should be used in order to provide an explication of rational decision and doings? And finally, what are the most general goals of science?

In one part of the discussions, two general ways have been confronted: the one which might be called the Aristotelian and the utilitarian way of viewing actions. The first one uses the notion of good reasons in order to bring out the forces which direct the actions. To explain the rationality of an action by giving good reasons, we may rely on such reasons for different ends in a hierarchy of ends or we may pursue an ultimate goal which gives credit to the lower ones. There remains always the evaluation of the reasons in regard to the ends and the evaluation of the respective end.

The other tradition, the utilitarian, does not evaluate the actions of man in accordance or dissonance with good reasons, but with the maximization of the agent’s expected utility. The evaluations which are of concern here, concern the beliefs about the situation on the one hand and the consequences of the different possible decisions. Since the latter methods are calculations and computations, quantitative conceptualisation is a basic requirement