

Review of: "Further Chaos and Dysfunction in the Brickyard and the Systems That Support It"

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Obviously, I sympathise with the leitmotif of Mr. Robergs' letter/essay. It is difficult to be a scientific researcher and not be identified with the metaphor of academia as a construction industry, which illustrates so well what has been happening in our field for some time now. In particular, the ideas developed by Oscar Varsavsky in Argentina with his "Science, Politics and Scientism" offered the most interesting alternative view, to my taste, that could be opposed to the kind of perspective so well elaborated and criticised by Robergs, adding to it a colonialist perspective, very typical of the 60s: the imbalance between the scientific systems of the central and peripheral countries, besides blocking the contributions of peripheral science, promotes a cultural and economic dependence that must be identified and combated. Having said that, I would only add a few critical notes for Robergs' work, not in the spirit of a reviewer, since Robergs' essay is not a paper but an opinion article with which I agree practically in its entirety. I do agree that the bricks that the system tends to manufacture nowadays are of low quality, but I would differentiate between bad bricks (of brittle clay, unable to function as a foundation for a building) and the false bricks of pseudoscience. The fact that researchers are forced by the system to resort to such ignoble devices as self-plagiarising or balkanising our ideas in order to publish more work of lesser relative value does not make us astrologers or homeopaths. While both bricks may be equally useless in the long run, the scientist, unlike the pseudoscientist, could be productive if the system were reoriented in a wise direction (i.e. if we were not forced to publish more but to generate more wholesome scholarly products). Not only bricks, but also windows - public communication of science and technology, luminaries - philosophy, and other important building blocks of an extended metaphor). Finally, it is welcome but not surprising that a letter with this message should see the public light of day in a journal like Qeios, whose ethos is, in fact, an existence against the tide of the industry that makes our scientific system function in the discouraging way it does.