

Arts, Sciences, and Economics

Tõnu Puu

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A Historical Safari

With 54 Figures

 Springer

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Preface

This book has a rather long-winding history. It is not like anything else the present author ever wrote, as all the rest is theoretical economics in a distinctively mathematical dress.

For the emergence of the following pages, there are several people, except the author, who are to have the credit, or perhaps the blame. Around 1985, the department of economics at Umeå University in the North of Sweden was visited by *Professor William Hendon*, Editor of the *Journal of Cultural Economics*. In my capacity of chairman of the department I invited him to a social lunch. We soon realized that we did not have much in terms of common research interests to talk about. However, somebody at the department later informed him that I also used to make copies of historical musical instruments during my free hours, so, once back in the US, he asked me to write an article for his journal, comparing the making of mathematical models to the making musical instruments. I thought the idea was absolutely crazy, but could not help start thinking about it now and then, so five years later I actually contributed a paper called "*On the unity of the arts, crafts, and sciences*".

By that time I met *Professor Gianfranco Mossetto* from the University Venice, who was about to start his institute for the study of the economics of "beni culturali" (ICARE), and he asked me to join in the scientific council for the institute. For a few years I attended their regular meetings and had the chance to meet a number of interesting cultural economists, though I never became one myself. From that period dates an article "*On progress and perfection in the arts and sciences*" published in *Ricerche Economiche*.

Meanwhile, my very good friend and former colleague, *Professor Åke E. Andersson* became director of the *Institute for Futures Studies* in Stockholm, and developed it into an interdisciplinary international melting pot

that nobody would have expected from its, to say the least, humble prehistory. He convinced me to start writing this book.

I also tried my hands on the practical production of culture through founding the "*Nordic Baroque Music Festival*", whose director I remained for the period 1987-2001. From that experience I also learned about the precarious existence for all such enterprise.

My interest in the philosophy of science has a different background. When I finished my thesis in 1964, I felt a need to think a little about what I was doing when I did "research", so I asked the department of philosophy at Uppsala University to give me an outright course reading list. I then wrote a few papers in this field, and, fortunately, came in touch with *Sir Karl Popper*, then at the London School of Economics. He was most supportive, and also used some of my papers in his teaching. As economics was not yet as quantitative then as it is now, back in Sweden I was accused of dissipating a "physicalistic" science ideal among my fellow economists. Ever since I retained an interest in these issues.

The first drafts of the present essay were circulated among a few colleagues, and I am very much indebted to *Professors Åke E. Andersson, Martin J. Beckmann, and Karl-Gustaf Löfgren*, for valuable comment. I also delivered a preliminary draft, but by then my good friend Åke had left the institute, and his successor was not interested, so I put the manuscript in the drawer. The institute, by the way, dropped back to its humble original state very soon after Åke left.

Then I found the manuscript a few years later, and, upon rereading, thought that perhaps it after all was worth finishing. To have an independent opinion, I sent a copy to *Professor Ian Stewart*, author of some of the best popular science books I know of. I am grateful for his reading and for being most supportive. So in 2000, I was invited by *Professor Yuij Aruka* to deliver a plenary lecture "*Economic Development in the Arts, Crafts, and Sciences*" at the yearly conference of JAFEE, the *Japan Association for Evolutionary Economics*. The outcome can be retrieved in Professor Aruka's "*Evolutionary Controversies in Economics - A New Transdisciplinary Approach*" (Springer Tokyo 2001). Some formal analyses, grown out from my occupation with these issues, concerning public utility location, and evolution seen in terms of catastrophe theory, also found their way into my own books "*Mathematical Location and Land Use Theory*" (Springer-Verlag 1997, 2003), and "*Attractors, Bifurcations, and Chaos - Nonlinear Phenomena in Economics*" (Springer-Verlag 2000, 2003).

So, as Åke entered a new large scale project on the economics of culture at the *Swedish Institute for Studies in Education and Research (SISTER)*,

and asked me to finish the manuscript for this project, I did no longer hesitate.

I was most honoured when some time ago *Professor Mohammad El Naschie*, Editor-in-Chief of one of the most exciting and successful journal publishing ventures (Elsevier) I have ever been involved in, suggested to publish this essay in parts in the shape of articles, though I naturally prefer the present connected publication form. I am also most grateful to the staff of Springer-Verlag for invaluable help with foremost the copyright issues in which I am completely inexperienced.

Umeå, May 2006

Tönu Puu

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