Allegorie zur Einschätzung verschiedener Forschungsansätze

(aus Rozin, P.: The study of human food selection and the Problems of „Stage 1 Science“, in S. A. Miller th (ed): Nutrition and Behaviour; Franklin Institute Press, 1980) (Lit.10.847)

An Allegory

The Martian Institute or foundation for Furthering Science (MIFFS) Earth Sport Section (MIFFSESS) was convening for its tenth year. up to this time the Research Program had been entirely devoted to a thorough study of one simple were engaged in the enterprise. Thus, it was quite a shock when a few scientists at the ninth MIFFSESS meeting suggested that MIFFSESS support research on the uninvestigated sport of football, at some expense to the tennis program. The tennis researchers pointed out, with some justice, that they had made great progress and now understood the scoring, physics, and other aspects of the sport. yet there were still many problems to be tackled in the microanalysis of the game. There was, for example, the well known “yellow ball problem”. A yellow ball was used on only some occasions, and no one could predict this distinct occurrence. Pigment analyses of the yellow ball were just beginning. “Why”, asked the tennis workers, “commit money to the murky enterprise of football when such good problems remain with tennis?”

One proposal suggested correlating two measurable variables: the number of the player, an incontrovertible datum, and the percent fat, of known biological importance. Other proposals suggested electrical rather than biochemical analyses. One group proposed use of the standard electroencephalogram (EEG) technique. Each player would be wired up, and the total set of generated potentials for all of the players would be measured with a computer. The investigators worried about tripping on wires, but came up with the clever idea of using a blimp over the stadium, from which all wires could be suspended. Yet more clever proposals did away with the individual EEG, and proposed a total integrated reading, taken form the ellipsoidal extremes of the stadium itself. another set of investigators proposed to set up animal models of football.

There was one proposal that was easy to reject. It stood out as the one that failed to follow the basic scientific dicta of objectivity and quantification. The authors (form the fringe of science, at best) proposed to simply observe the general flow of the game, and to supplement and guide these observations with interviews of the players, in an attempt to find out what the game was about. They proposed to ask players such open-ended questions as: What is the purpose of this game? Is the ball important? and Why do the players move toward one end of the field for a while, and then to the other? The Committee unanimously agreed that this approach was not quantifiable, and that it relied on verbal reports, which were of questionable scientific status.

The proposal was rejected.

And so it was that a decade of studies of the arrangement of players in the football huddle was begun, along with an analyses of the biochemical and electrical events underlying this circular event.