2173 Cummington Road
Cleveland Ohio
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Dr. R. A. Fisher
Rothamsted Experimental Station
Harpenden, Herts

Dear Dr Fisher,-

Thank you ever so much for your kind letter and for the pains you took in reading my rather lengthy paper.

I re-thought your general objection to classifying the domain of different sciences on the bases of the subject matter.The objection is perfectly valid,and that's why I so cordially disagree with it insofar as Statistics is concerned.

Statistics as a science of method has a sui generis subject matter in no way similar to Biology.The basic relation between "method" and "fact" in Statistics is altogether different from that in Biology. A "fact" for the science of Statistics is a methodological entity,an attitude toward or approach to a datum supplied by the extrenal world.It is, in my understanding, a science of the abstract ways and means of dealing with data.The method of elaboration of the Statistical Theory is thus a "second degree abstraction" from the abstract entities. To bring Statistics to the level of the principles underlying the present classification of biological sciences means,for me, extracting it from the realm of the second degree abstractions(leaving this realm for logic and mathematics) and establishing firmly the bases of the classification of the primary approach to and attitude toward the factual reality.The tendency to make Statistics a pure

normative science appears to me a detrimental tendency.

Our disagreement is due;perhaps,to the differences in the backgrounds.You are trained in the field of exact and semi-exact sciences,while I am starting my training in sociology.(Talking about disagreement I disregard for the time being my lack of training!).

I feel now in the same position in which the propounders of the experimental method found themselvesa century ago. When your fathers--stalwart empiricists as they were--developed the inductive logic,as the basis of the experimental method,they tackled the problem from two angles:the induction as the base of the process of thinking, and the induction as the base of the method of study the nature.They fixed the precise canons for its use and abuse. In developing Statistics their children--empiricists still-seem to overlook the problem of canonization. Statistical method when applied in the field of the traditional exact sciences finds in common sense and intuition of the students an adequate guide.But in sociology(and for that matter,in psychology, too,)the common sense does not appear to be infallible.Canonization seems to be indispensable for some time to come.This process of canonization and the problems which arise in the applications of the canons are within the domain of Statistics and are to be treated in some way.One objection will be raised immediately,namely, that the root of trouble lies in sociology,and that therefore let sociology deal with it,leaving Statistics alone.I may return only one consideration:

Statistics can not refuse to deal with the problems arising from its applications,unless it wants to become a purely normative,formal science and thus..commit suicide as method.

For the time being it is fairly difficult to visualize where the attempts at opnonization will lead to. Well, so was it with Bergsonian concept of "duration",or Minkowski's space.It is quite inarticulate now,but it seemsx to be a promising field for work in the near future.

I realize that you are too much occupied to be distracted from your work or to spend your leisure time in carrying on this discussion.It is perhaps as annoying to you, as advising our undergrads of the advantages of using the mean, median etc in any particular situation is to me.Glad as I am to browse on the subject which may turn to be my work for next few years,I feel I must forgo it in deference to your time.Please, do not trouble yourself to answer this letter,unless you think it is worth your while.

As for me,

dixi and animam levavi

Yours sincerely,

Marek Fisher