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Who are technoscientific Objects?

S.Net Twente

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Roundtable with

Simone van der Burg, Kevin Elliott, Sacha Loeve,
Colin Milburn, Alfred Nordmann

<http://www.goto-objects.eu>



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Technoscientific Objects

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GENESIS AND ONTOLOGY OF TECHNOSCIENTIFIC OBJECTS

A Cooperation of



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GOTO - Genesis and Ontology of
Technoscientific Objects

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Welcome to GOTO

The GOTO project aims at developing the philosophy of technoscience through a focus on the objects of technoscientific research. How do researchers envision the furniture of the world – as elementary particles and ultimate constituents of matter, or as quotidian things that sustain innovation and have the potential to become solutions to pressing problems? This is an ontological question which suggests that the ontology of the technosciences differs from that of modern science. Moreover, this difference deserves attention.

Science - Identity of Distance



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Philosophers view
on scientific knowledge:
It is truth-oriented and follows a
strong emphasis on objectivity.
This is achieved by creating and
maintaining the right distance.

Why is this distance such important?

Because only then the scientist is
able to identify relevant factual
relations that reveal the nature of
things
(e.g. their regular exhibition of
dispositional behavior, scientific laws)

Manual for researchers in the context of science:



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- look from above - God`s eye view
- trust in words and sentences (propositions),
in laws and conservation principles
- theory comes first
experimental practice follows
(mainly in the context of justification)

Most important rule of the "standard scientist":
keep your distance - don't become involved, no empathy



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What about Objects?

Quite successful strand of philosophy of science -
it has to say a lot about truth and representation,
hypothesis building and the power of mathematical language -

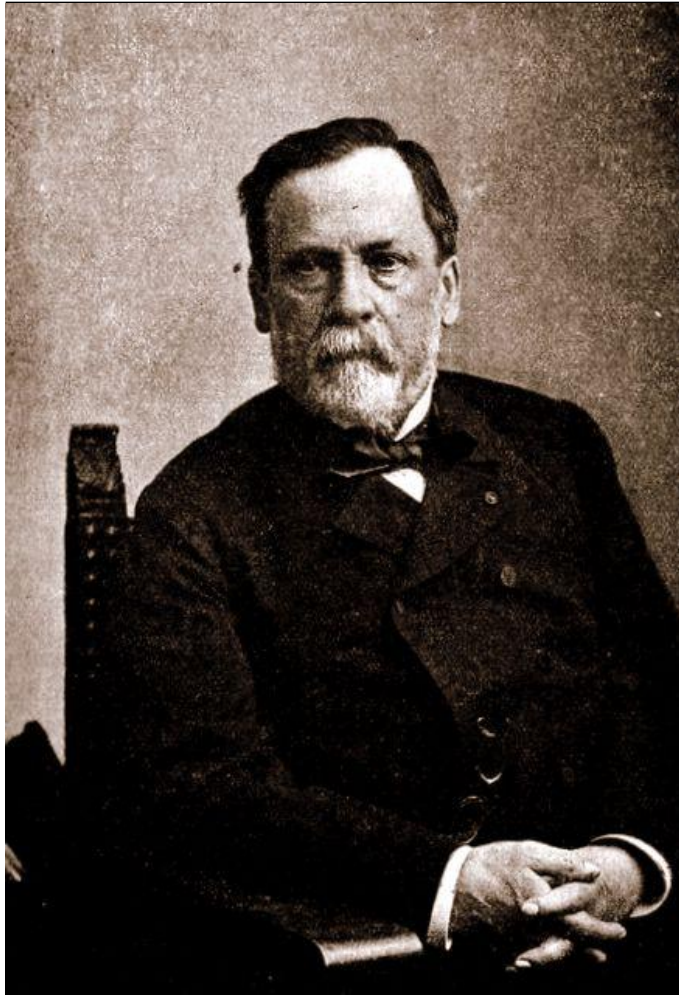
BUT

it has little to say about scientific research practice
- that seeks to control phenomena and to master complexity
- that emphasizes the making of objects and what they afford

Philosophy of technoscience wants to offer a vantage point
that allows to describe things from a less high and "cold"
position and that accepts involvement/relatedness

A Game of Identities

Science - Technoscience



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Technoscientific objects afford another type of knowledge



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Important claim:

theory and practice are on a par

- the role of experimenting
- the entanglement of science and technology
- the hierarchy between applied and pure science/
natural sciences and engineering sciences



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Who are technoscientific objects?

Mixed Identities – Multiple Personalities

- Part of nature AND culture (thus given and produced)
- theoretical knowledge AND practical control of complex situations
- socially invested
- intervention into the living world and also in everyday life

Technoscientific objects are attractive, malleable, potent, interconnected, relational, transgressive, performative, and of course „etc.“

Who are technoscientific objects? How to characterize them



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- 1) Unbounded productivity of nature and technology
(transgenics - quasi-object carbon)
- 2) Plasticity and totipotency
(stem cells – wetlands, disorder in children’s behaviour)
- 4) Affordances (instead of dispositions)
(photoactive surfaces – sand heap)
- 3) Cooperation instead of recalcitrance
(graphen/nanotubes – frictionless surfaces)
- 5) The power of attraction
(semi-conductors – play station network)

Who are technoscientific objects? How to characterize them



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- Sacha Loeve
 - quasi-object carbon
(Unbounded productivity)
- Simone van der Burg
 - disorder in children's behavior
(plasticity and totipotency)
- Kevin Elliott
 - wetlands
(plasticity and totipotency)
- Astrid Schwarz
 - sand heap
(affordance)
- Colin Milburn
 - play station network
(the power of attraction)
- Alfred Nordmann
 - frictionless surface
(cooperation instead of recalcitrance)