

Technoscience and the Transhumanist Technocultural Imaginary

The earlier duality of “representing” the world as it is (pure science) and “intervening” with it to suit human purposes (technology/applied science) is being increasingly replaced by a kind of unity represented in the concept of “technoscience,” which refers to a synergistic relation between science and technology. This postmodern turn towards a unified technoscience is already foreshadowed in the early-modern Baconian association of knowledge and power. Emphasizing the intimate connection between science and technology—the interplay of *representing* and *intervening*—Bruno Latour uses “technoscience” as shorthand for and a fusion of science-and-technology, claiming thereby that technical intervention is presumably a necessary condition for all knowledge production in modern science, which implies that all knowledge production is structurally technoscientific.

In this talk, I shall discuss the new epistemological and ontological imports of post-modern technoscience as a way of highlighting radical changes in contemporary technocultural practice. The discussion will bring to the limelight

- (a) the epistemological contrast between “epistemic” (or propositional) knowledge of classical science—born of testing scientific propositions against objective evidence—and “working” (or practical) knowledge—produced by technoscientific practice such as nanoscale research)—of how things work together in a working order, and
- (b) the ontological contrast drawn in classical science between objects that are sharply demarcated as either natural/organic or artificial/mechanic, and a set of objects of technoscientific research that blur the natural/artificial boundary, hence demanding the recognition of a conceptual framework of ontological hybridity.

This completes the first part of the talk. In the second part, I shall bring to the fore the futuristic ideology or vision of transhumanism as inspired and triggered by phenomenal progresses in contemporary technoscientific convergence of frontline researches, the synergy of especially of Nanotechnology, Biotechnology, Information Technology, and Cognitive Science including Neurotechnology (abbreviated as NBIC). This futuristic vision of a postbiological, posthuman civilization is designated as “technocultural imaginary,” which has already found its strong cultural manifestation in literature and philosophy and other domains of cultural studies.