

INTRODUCTION

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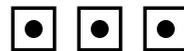
SOMETHING HAD STARTED UNFOLDING IN THE Central European University Gender Studies Department during the winter of 2010-2011. A Foucauldian wind of change was blowing across a couple of master classes. Some people were excited, others bedazzled: who is this new dead white man of French descent, to tell us resistance is the trickster of power and not its undoing? The clamor of being caught in the politics of gendered bodies. Indeed, how to ruin the all-too-human(ist) hopes of persons for so long de-humanized through a historical system of violent inequity, and get away with it too? Nonetheless, where some people could only see threats, others could conceive of promises. Michel Foucault had not merely postulated a “history of problematizations” as a way of thinking the relationship between thought and its objects of knowledge, by means of reconceptualizing the latter as clusters of questions whose historically-, geographically-, socially-, and culturally-embedded

answers could only retrospectively and virtually re-compose the objects of thought. “To one single set of difficulties, several responses can be made. And most of the time different responses are actually proposed. But what must be understood is what makes them simultaneously possible: it is the point in which their simultaneity is rooted; it is the soil that can nourish them all in their diversity and sometimes in spite of their contradictions” (Michel Foucault, “Polemics, Politics, and Problematics” 1994, p. 118).

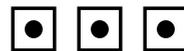


Besides addressing the historical life of epistemic problems, he proposed a new philosophy of power – biopolitics in the parlance of contemporary Continental political philosophy – that would afford “science,” as one historically mobile constellation of truth-statements, and of practices of truth-making, a new type of analytical lens. That is perhaps why Anna Loutfi's 2010 course *Foucault: A Critical Introduction* would fractalize over the years in courses such as *From Biopolitics to Necropolitics – Theorizing Life and Death in the Twentieth and*

Twenty First Centuries (2011/2012) and *Medical Subjects: Disease, Immunity, and Health in the Modern West* (2012). And yet a new perspective would meet the “governmental” approach to medicine, psychiatry, and notions of “care” fostered by Foucauldian scholarship – in 2010/2011 Allaine Cerwonka would return from sabbatical leave to teach *The Human and Post-Human* MA course. It's not the case that Foucauldian nuances are lacking in the “post-humanities,” but the emphasis has shifted to a considerable degree on questions of materiality and ad-hoc encounters between non-human bodies (whether animals, machines, information bits, viruses and bacteria, the external environment or the inner milieu, cash flows and dirt) and human bodies (of whatever gender, race, class, ability condition, sexuality etc).



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This shift, we would like to remark, should not be totally disconnected from the kind of materialization laboratory studies have performed within the historiography of science. One should think here not only of Bruno Latour and Michel Callon – as many surely do – but also of Gaston Bachelard and Ludwick Fleck. The new work generally highlighted (1) the acute need of grasping knowledge-making processes in real time, inside laboratory walls, as simultaneously material, conceptual, and social acts – not in terms of individual work of testing scientific hypothesis against the 'truth' of natural states-of-fact, but in terms of a collective enterprise more fluid and more mediated than originally thought; (2) the importance of rethinking the relationship between theory and fact, between “rationalism” and “empiricism,” and of moving beyond this binary framework; (3) the importance of pluralism in approaching different types of scientific works for assessing their truth-value (disparate methodologies, instruments, criteria for testing, interpreting, and evaluating results, “microrationalities”); (4) the recursion or rectifying movement at the heart of

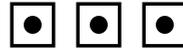
science's own self-authentication procedures; (5) the centrality of technology to the operativity of science, technology which does not merely embody validated scientific knowledge and acts as its application in a specific social and historical context, but which through its mediation-work actually questions, re-orientes, reaffirms or destroys that scientific knowledge. Direct access to truth was a counterfeit promise since truth can only be accessed through a conceptual-technical apparatus that is the materiality of science (the use of instruments, the procedures of experimentation, the protocols for reading and verifying both apparatus' data and its manipulations).



In a sense, the real is not what stands right before us, but the (multiple and convoluted) process through which the real is passed through all the machinery, techniques, and discourses that make it stand before us as if by itself. This recipe would be carried further in Hans-Jörg Rheinberger's work, and in the scholarship of what passes for the Max Planck “school” in history of science.

From these various courses and theoretical frameworks emerged the interdepartmental project of the Science Studies Research Unit at CEU. This research unit has broadened the scope of what were initially individual classes taught by specific professors, and has created a community dedicated to the investigation of science as a method, discipline, and epistemological actor. This journal, as previously stated, offers public access to some of the first works to come out from this unit, and it marks a furthering of the unit's fundamental goals. Our mission, then, has been in part to displace the "soft" sciences from their "canonical" position as "background" voices providing the usual socio-cultural "unmasking" commentary on the politics of the "hard" facts of science. The inherent interdisciplinarity and plurimethodology of gender studies research have been instrumental in fostering the questioning of boundary-making epistemic politics and policies with respect to what counts as "science" from both a conceptual and a practical perspective. Additionally, we have attempted throughout to disrupt thought-automatisms

forging the authoritative antithesis between the humanism of the "humanities" and the "in-humanity" of the sciences.



We wish in the future to focus more carefully, and in more sophisticated ways, on the specificity of material-discursive contexts of practice, and matrices of power in the constitution of "science"; on the importance of collective networks, of different media and institutions for the transmission, reproduction, and 'adulteration' of scientific knowledge; on forms of communication and (non)intelligibility; on the politics of epistemology; on gender, race, class, sexuality, colonialism, and imperialism as historical modulators of knowledge-production; on the dynamics of knowledge-assessment, knowledge-legitimization, and knowledge-dissemination processes; on current debates in critical animal studies, neuroscience, biotechnology and post-genomics, chaos and complexity, etc.

Indeed, one can follow many of these trends as they crystallize in the sections of the journal: a “Foucauldian” section on *Medicalization in a Biopolitical Framework*; a more STS section concerned with *Science and Sense Technologies*; a “post-humanities” section on *Science, Materiality, & New Biologies*. The remaining sections either address broader epistemological preoccupations within history of science, such as boundary-making practices across academic disciplines and dualism in thinking the media of knowledge (*Science & Boundary-Making Practices*) or, alternatively, reinvigorate a more 'canonical' genre in gender/feminist studies of science while attempting to move beyond the types of criticisms usually rehearsed (*Gender, Sexuality, Science*).



The first section, entitled **SCIENCE & BOUNDARY-MAKING PRACTICES**, opens with an investigation into the interstices and divisions between the sciences and the humanities. Alexander Dmitrishin's paper is narrowly focused on the epistemic challenges launched by Charles Snow's argument on

The Great Divide between the “hard sciences” and the “humanities,” during a series of lectures at Cambridge in 1959. It attempts to highlight the historically different, yet persistent ways, of drawing the science/ humanities socio-epistemic boundaries as the local process of unfolding of a broader dialectics, between modes of logical reasoning such as inductivism vs. deductivism; and between epistemological methodologies such as rationalism vs. empiricism.

Moving from the Science Wars to the Great Dualism Debates, Eva Zekany's piece offers insights into current theoretical strands in neo/materialist media archeology (Jussi Parikka & Eugene Thacker) capable of overcoming the intrinsic limits of digital dualism within cyberspace studies. How do we move beyond either the extreme embracing, or the extreme rejection, of an ontological difference between the “real” (offline) and “virtual” (online) spaces of communication? Her paper offers some sophisticated answers leaning in favor of a historicized materiality of media capable not only of highlighting the differences between the variously

interacting media, but – most importantly – the historical relations producing those differences and their dynamics.



The next section, **SCIENCE & SENSE TECHNOLOGIES**, questions objectivity in relation to the operativity of human sensation within experimental and technological contexts. Emily Daina Šaras' paper offers a bold proposition for avant-garde synesthetic reconfiguration of laboratory experimental techniques, methodologies, and codes of perception. Moving away from a canonical visual and ocular-centric epistemology would trigger, in Šaras' view, not only the reconceptualization of the “human” in terms of her or his bodily sensory capacities, but also the rethinking of the meaning of science there where objectivity is displaced and blends with the subjective. A similar questioning of objectivity takes place in Victoria Fomina's piece on the process of truth-production in forensic photography. Using insights from Dason & Galison's *Objectivity*, as well as Roland Barthes, she questions the possibility of separating objective and subjective di-

mensions in the production of images within the specific context of crime scene interpretation.

The third section, titled **MEDICALIZATION IN A BIOPOLITICAL FRAMEWORK**, discloses a Foucauldian governmental perspective on medicalization, either in relation to anti-masturbation campaigns, or in relation to Internet-based practices of self-treatment for diabetes. Ljiliana Pantović's paper focuses on the case study of Serbian anti-masturbation literature in order to demonstrate the intrinsic links between state formation processes, changing governmental regimes, and medicalization of masturbation. Using a Foucauldian perspective, she discusses the pathologization of masturbation in its Eastern nuances, through an interesting comparative lens. Frank Karioris and Ezgican Özdemir's collaborative work alternatively tackles the new forms of biopolitical citizenship activated in processes of internet-based diabetes management and self-treatment by patients.

The fourth section, **GENDER, SEXUALITY, & SCIENCE**, opens with Chris Zivalich's paper

addressing, within the paradigm of the “neurological self” established by Fernando Vidal, the brain-centered research on homosexuality, gender difference, and expression of sexual orientation in the period after the 1980s HIV/AIDS crisis in the United States. Drawing upon the scholarship of Fausto-Sterling, Elizabeth Wilson & recent new materialism, he attempts to historicize the “gay brain” paradigm in scientific research on human sexuality. Frank G. Kariotis continues this discussion of science’s relation to issues of masculinity by seeking to understand the utilization of science as a method in relation to the creation of a specific man and masculinity, looking particularly at Robert Bly’s book *Iron John* to give concrete examples of this practice.



The last section, **SCIENCE, MATERIALITY, & NEW BIOLOGIES**, attempts to imagine new forms of thinking life, whether in the context of the emergence of the “inhuman” as ontological and epistemological agent in Michel Serres'

philosophy, whether in the biotechnological context of transgenic “humanized mice” for human-centered medical research. Manta's paper focuses on Michel Serres' work, where he advances a “chaos and complexity” materialist model of non-teleological cosmic ontogenesis. The concept of life itself is, in this context, de-anthropomorphized, no longer understood through the, “vitalism” of the organism implying particular forms “teleological modes of functioning of closed material systems, but through homeorrhèsis, a material energetism that rethinks materiality and organicity as non-linear, un-formed, yet informing movement. Maria Temmes' paper is concerned with biomedical research - the lab experimental production and investigative testing of humanized mice - and its *material-conceptual potential* in working as destabilizer of the Deleuzian philosophical field: indeed, it asks how the Deleuzian conceptualizations of “science” and of “philosophy” can be seen as entangled in the very practice of creative post-genomic manipulation. ◻