

Latour: *Science in Action* – Concepts, Terms, Definitions

The word **black box** is used by cyberneticians whenever a piece of machinery or a set of commands is too complex... That is, no matter how controversial their history, how complex their inner workings, how large the commercial or academic networks that hold them in place, only their input and output count. (2-3)

By '**rules of method**' I mean what a priori decisions should be made in order to consider all of the empirical facts provided by the specialised disciplines as being part of the domain of 'science, technology and society'. By '**principles**' I mean what is *my* personal summary of the empirical facts at hand after a decade of work in this area. (17)

We call these sentences **modalities** because they modify (or qualify) another one. (22)

We will call **positive modalities** those sentences that lead a statement away from its conditions of production, making it solid enough to render some other consequences necessary. We will call **negative modalities** those sentences that lead a statement in the other direction towards its conditions of production and that explain in detail why it is solid or weak instead of using it to render some other consequences more necessary. (23)

Rhetoric is the name of the discipline that has, for millennia, studied how people are made to believe and behave and taught people how to persuade others. (30)

a **fact** is what is collectively stabilised from the midst of controversies when the activity of later papers does not consist only of criticism or deformation but also of confirmation. (42)

I call **captation** (or captatio in the old rhetoric) this subtle control of the objectors' moves. (57)

I will call this place the **laboratory**, which for now simply means, as the name indicates, the place where scientists *work*. (64)

I will call an instrument (or **inscription device**) any set-up, no matter what its size, nature and cost, that provides a visual display of any sort in a scientific text. (68)

The **spokesperson** is someone who speaks for others who, or which, do not speak. (71)

I propose to call whoever and whatever is represented **actant**. (84)

But something else resists the trials of strength behind the instruments, something that I will call provisionally a **new object**. (87)

The 'things' behind the scientific texts ... are all defined by their **performances**. (89)

Laboratories are now powerful enough to define **reality**... reality as the latin word *res* indicates, is what *resists*. What does it resist? *Trials of strength*.(93)

I will call **translation** the interpretation given by the fact-builders of their interests and that of the people they enrol... As the name inter-esse' indicates, '**interests**' are what lie *in between* actors and their goals, thus creating a tension that will make actors select only what, in their own eyes, helps them reach these goals amongst many possibilities. (108)

A **machine**, as its name implies, is first of all, a machination, a stratagem, a kind of cunning, where borrowed forces keep one another in check so that none can fly apart from the group. (129)

The assembly of disorderly and unreliable allies is thus slowly turned into something that closely resembles an organised whole. When such a cohesion is obtained we at last have *a black box*. (130-131)

I will call this description of moving facts and machines the **diffusion model**. (133)

it is necessary to consider more generally the **mobilisation** of resources, whereby I mean the ability to make a configuration of a maximal number of allies act as a single whole in one place. (172)

I will use the word **technoscience** from now on, to describe all the elements tied to the scientific contents no matter how dirty, unexpected or foreign they seem, and the expression '**science** and **technology**', in quotation marks, to designate *what is kept of technoscience* once all the trials of responsibility have been settled. (174)

The word **network** indicates that resources are concentrated in a few places-the knots and the nodes-which are connected with one another-the links and the mesh: these connections transform the scattered resources into a net that may seem to extend everywhere. (180)

In effect, we have moved from questions about *logic* (is it a straight or a distorted path?) to **sociologics** (is it a weaker or a stronger association?). (202)

By the **Great Divide** is meant the summary of all the accusation processes that are made from within scientific networks against their outside. (211)

the first to sit at the beginning and at the end of a long network that generates what I will call **immutable and combinable mobiles**. (227)

by '**abstraction**' is meant the process by which each stage extracts elements out of the stage below so as to gather in one place as many resources as possible ... by '**theory**' is meant the crossroads that allow the centres to mobilise, manipulate, combine, rewrite and tie together all the traces obtained

through the ever-extending networks (241-242)

devising inscriptions that retain simultaneously as little and as much as possible by increasing either their mobility, stability or combinability. This compromise between presence and absence is often called **information**. (243)

Metrology is the name of this gigantic enterprise to make of the outside a world inside which facts and machines can survive. (251)