

issues about how we know, beyond the communication of history via the new medium. The digitization of history is likely to raise matters of principle that take us beyond the text, image, audio connection and the nature of hypertext history. Just as historians can choose to create history through their narrative-linguistic as well as empirical-analytical epistemological choices how do we deal with the-past-as-history when we digitally de-familiarize the past as we disrupt the narrative, what happens to the nature of representation, if facts were once events under a description what happens when they become digitized events? If you have any thoughts about the future of history on the web then send us proposals and thoughts. As always, we are happy to discuss your ideas even before the proposal stage. For further information contact the editors. There is no strict deadline for this but we would appreciate responses by October 1st, 2004. Professor Alun Munslow UK Editor: Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice, Department of History, Staffordshire University, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 2DE, United Kingdom Or Professor David Harlan US Editor: Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice, History Department, Faculty Office Building 47 Office: 27C, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407, USA Email: a.munslow@staffs.ac.uk and/ or charlan@calpoly.edu

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contributions that discuss such issues at the theoretical level and papers that contain examples of this type of research in the form of specific case studies. Papers that combine these two aspects, such as a theoretical discussion with reference to research experiences/data or case studies containing a rich discussion of methodological premises and implications, will be most welcome.

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Review

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front page illustration: GM crops destroyed in
the UK by the Earth Liberation Front, 2003.

Framing GM Food: Public Participation, Citizenship and Liberal Democracy

by Rob Hagendijk

University of Amsterdam

Nowadays, policy makers consider public participation in innovation policies essential for their success. In the past, opposition to new technologies has often been dismissed as 'luddism', attributed to public ignorance and explained in terms of a 'deficit' in public understanding of science and technology. Such views, although by no means dead, have recently been widely discredited. Public anxieties should be taken into account more seriously. Public participation would encourage people to learn about new technologies. Participation is assumed to legitimate the resulting policies and to build public trust in governance. Technologies have to be 'socially robust' as well as technically sound. A wide variety of recent initiatives in this area are currently assessed and attempts at standardization and benchmarking are underway.¹

Obviously, the recent shift in policy views was inspired by food scandals such as the BSE crises and the controversy over GM food. In Europe it is also closely associated with emerging European regulatory regimes. Prominent members of the STS community paved the way for the change, with studies that showed the 'deficit hypothesis' to be ill founded and deficient. Yet, to claim a final victory for the participatory views advocated by STS scholars would be premature. The reception in the policy bureaucracies have been mixed. "Elitists'" views on public understanding and participation are still at hand, as a close reading of policy documents reveals.²

Instead of becoming overjoyed by its success, STS should be more cautious and critical, and take a closer look at the new participatory initiatives. Are they indeed an improvement? If so why, and where? Or are they yet another form of 'politics as usual', geared to lure the public to accept developments that are already irreversible? Empirical STS analyses and theoretical reflection should address such questions. For that a readjustment the intellectual and political agenda of STS seems required. Below I will present some material about the GM

food debate in The Netherlands to illustrate some of the issues.

The Netherlands' food and genes debate and NGOs: building new forms of public representation

The Dutch debate about GM food and agricultural biotechnology was initiated by parliament in 1999 and took place in 2001. Between 1999 and 2001 the debate was designed in negotiations between stakeholder groups and representatives of the government. As it turned out, the NGOs and government representatives held quite different views on the questions to be asked and the role stakeholder organizations should play. Those in charge of preparations at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Conservancy, and Fisheries were inspired by the new perspectives on participation. They wanted to create as much room as possible for 'ordinary citizens' to learn about the new technology and to express their own views on possible uses. In such a debate NGOs and industry were supposed to be 'supporting actors' and 'facilitators' rather than 'key players' or 'leading actors'. Yet, these representatives of the government also thought that a discussion about the acceptability of biotechnology as such was void and useless. Biotechnology exists as an irreversible fact, they argued, and Dutch politics would have to deal with its consequences for agriculture and food production. NGOs wanted a debate about the acceptability of biotechnology in agriculture as such as well as about alternative solutions to problems in food production. For them the question about whether specific applications of biotechnology would be acceptable and beneficial, should be preceded by a more general debate about food problems, risks and needs.

Preliminary consultations showed that industry and NGOs were keen to participate in a debate, but saw the debate mainly as a platform to put forward their own views. There were few signs that the opposing parties were prepared to reconsider their positions during or after the debate.³ This encouraged the government to limit

the influence of such groups as much as possible. A public replay of a debate between the entrenched would serve no purpose. Instead it was decided that the debate should offer opportunities for ordinary citizens to learn about new products based on bio-technology and to form opinions about the boundary conditions and limits to be set with respect to the introduction of such products.

The NGOs disagreed with this framing of the central questions as well as with the role accorded to them in the debate. Yet, they decided to go along with the debate and to see whether they could redirect it at a later stage. Immediately after its installation, however, the organizing committee made it clear it would not take orders from radical NGOs:

“...I would like to keep it out of the sphere of the ‘believers’. On the one hand there are those who are convinced it will be beneficial to people and on the other hand there is Greenpeace, certain that it will lead us to world destruction. Such people never convince one another”.⁴

In line with the recommendation of a governmental working party that had prepared the debate, the Committee decided to focus activities on a number of already known as well as some imaginary applications of bio-technology. For each of these products arguments for and against would be listed. Participants were supposed to review these arguments and to add arguments of their own. After long deliberations between the committee, the agencies involved and the stakeholder groups, nine examples were chosen. They included: a sustainable tomato, herbicide-resistant corn, a BSE free cow, cholesterol reducing milk, fungi-resistant potatoes, terminator seed, and vitamin A enriched Rice (golden rice).

These products were the starting points for the various debating activities to be organized. A controlled focus group experiment would be at the core of the entire process. Six focus groups of twenty-five people each would be formed in such a way that the results would be more or less representative for the Dutch general public. The focus groups would meet twice. In between the sessions a special meeting would be organized in which the Committee would interrogate experts about questions that had emerged in the first round of focus group discussions. Participants in the focus groups were encouraged to take part in the panel meeting.

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Alongside the focus group discussions a wide range of public debate activities would be organized.⁵ Public meetings at the local level were stimulated and subsidized, provided the organizers would come up with a report. Special lessons at schools were prepared. An interactive website was launched and advertisements and calls to participate were to be published. A limited number of national events was envisaged to get mass media coverage. A specially designed toolbox with information material, a booklet describing the nine examples, survey forms, and a video introducing the debate was put together. Opinion surveys before and after the debate were organized to assess the opinions of the general public about GM food and to assess the effects of the debate. At a rather late stage a special web-based debate was initiated to include voices and views related to the situation in developing countries.

The choice of products to be discussed and especially the information video became crystallization points for pitched battles between the organizers and the critical NGOs. A first version of the video was presented at the public launch of the debate in May 2001. It was immediately rejected by the NGO as biased in favor of GM food. The Committee itself was unhappy with the video as well and ordered a remake. The result was presented after the summer. Once again the NGOs said it was unacceptable. They demanded a more balanced presentation in which non-GM alternatives to solve food problems would be put on an equal footing. They demanded that the current video should be withdrawn from the ‘toolbox’ and the debate. The Committee refused to do this. In response fifteen NGOs walked out and announced that they would organize their own debate. The move was officially deplored by the Committee, but members also made it clear they were fed up with the tactics of the NGOs.

By then the controversy between the critical NGOs and the Committee had become the main topic in the mass media coverage of the debate. It overshadowed and tainted the debate about GM food and would continue to do so. The debate about GM food had become at least as much a debate about the role of critical and especially semi-professional NGOs such as Greenpeace in civic deliberations as it was a debate about GM food. Once the final report had been published with conclusions that were not particularly surprising given the design of the debate, members of the Committee lashed out at the critical NGOs in interviews. For example:

“I am a member of almost all of these
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organizations ... but I never received a letter at home in which we were asked for our opinion. This raises questions about the functioning of such organizations. With their highly ethical and moralizing standpoints they are much more detached from what ... people find than they are willing to acknowledge. They are diehard idealists”.⁶

The Dutch debate and examples of similar debates in other countries suggest that public participation exercises will become a *fifth* form of representation of the public alongside and possibly in competition with already existing forms. If formal elections for parliaments are the *first* form political representation, mass movements and civic groups constitute a *second* form. Professional mass media constitute a *third* form of public opinion and public opinion surveys are a *fourth* form of representing what the public thinks. Government-initiated exercises of public participation should be added to this list as a *fifth* form. Of course, these various forms overlap and are co-extensive, but this should not blind us to tensions and competition between these various forms. Their relations should be carefully assessed and the new form should be analysed in terms of its performativity and civic epistemology, i.e., whether and how a new conception of citizenship is framed and promoted at the level of substantive issues as well as in terms of the attitudes, qualifications and behaviours required from participants.

Configuring citizenship

The information video provides a good entry point to analyze the conception of citizenship implied in the ‘Food and Genes Debate’. Just like literary texts can be said to have an ‘implied reader’, the video has an implied conception of scientific citizenship.

A key role is played by the voice-over. The voice-over is the key narrator and the publics’ representative in the video story. It voices questions and concerns that are supposed to be on the public’s mind. What is at stake in the debate about GM food? What should we - the public - expect? What to make of the contrasting arguments and views? What are the risks involved; what beneficial effects do protagonists expect?

The video is divided into a general introduction and several sections in which the exemplary products are discussed. At the beginning we see people engaged in their everyday business in supermarkets and on farms. We see bottles of

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wine and beer and bread and we are reminded that we have used biotechnology through the ages. But now something has changed. It is now possible to intervene at the level of the hereditary materials themselves in new and radically different ways. An animation video starts and explains the basic principles using images of DNA and RNA floating in empty space and a pair of scissors. Click, click, it is that easy! But should we do it? Is it safe? What are the risks and benefits? Aren’t we playing God?

A white-coated scientist appears in a pop-up window. He looks directly at us and announces that an endless variety of new products is on its way, even though environmental activists cause delays. His pop-up window closes and new ones appear that show us other experts. These experts are in charge of safety regulation. They tell the audience that there are no significant risks, i.e., that these risks are under control. Regulatory frameworks have been sufficiently elaborated recently and although there are still some problems left, the basic framework is solid and adequate. Other experts pop up and tell the audience to be less certain. One key academic expert is an ecologist (no white coat, filmed outside and looking away from the camera). He points out that genetic reproduction is fundamentally uncertain and cautions us. We are only beginning to understand the complexities involved, so we should be careful. When he is finished the voice-over points out that this scientific uncertainty may not apply to all applications of biotechnology, but is associated with quite a lot of them. It is time to become more specific and a new section in the video starts in which the genetically modified tomato is presented as a first product that is already available.

Subsequently, various examples of GM food products are presented in separate sections of the video. There is also a separate section on risk and a part is devoted to a discussion of Golden rice and to food problems in the Third World. Each section repeats the format just described. The voice-over introduces the product or issue and the first questions. Subsequently, experts appear in pop-up windows and address the question as well as other issues put forward. The expert voices include scientists, economists, regulators, representatives from NGO’s (Greenpeace, Consumers Association), representatives from industry, agriculture and an organic farmer. For a single product the majority of experts seem to agree that it makes no sense, but about most of the other GM products opinions are balanced.

Throughout, the focus of the video is on the new products envisaged. Alternatives are only

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presented in relation to the discussed GM product and appear to have their own problems and limitations. Time and again the same questions are raised: What are the envisaged advantages? Is the product economically viable? What are the risks? Will it make the farmers more dependent on agriculture giants and the seed industry? Will products be labeled to guarantee consumer freedom? Will there be a product line of GM free food?

The video is carefully balanced. The space allotted to the protagonists and opponents appearing in pop-up windows is more or less equal. And yet, the entire flow of the argument frames the spectator/citizen as a pragmatist, a consumer and, at least implicitly, as an adherent of the institutional division between state and economy - maybe a skeptical one, but nevertheless... State intervention is almost exclusively associated with issues of health and safety. It is assumed that the fate of food products - whether 'GM' or 'organic' - will be decided at the market. Consumer freedom should be guaranteed, but through labeling and safety regulation Agricultural practices should be allowed unless they conflict with such regulations or endanger the natural environment.

This implicit conception of citizenship is as much encouraged by what is said and presented as by what has been left out. The question, 'Aren't we playing God?', is indeed raised at the beginning but it is never addressed in the video after that. The same goes for other ethical concerns. Only environmental safety and health issues are mentioned. With respect to starvation in the Third World, seed companies will offer terms of trade to farmers that will take care of objections. While opponents and skeptics raise doubts and point out that the new rice strains will not solve the problems, self-confident entrepreneurs radiate a 'can do' mentality and point out their civic respectability.

With respect to political decision making the video is completely silent. The implied citizens are presented as undifferentiated members of the public writ large. Apparently they are Dutch, but no specification is ever given of the polity of which they are supposed to be a part. How that polity is restricted by international agreements and European treaties already in place is not mentioned either. Apparently, the civic debate is to be about products of biotechnology and not about sovereignty, democracy and the global economic order. The latter only surfaces in the form of concerns about the increasing dependence of farmers on big industry. Remedial measures for this are mainly discussed and presented in connection with the farmers in the

Third World.

The way of framing just sketched also has consequences for science and scientific knowledge in relation to citizenship. Fundamental scientific questions are not presented as particularly relevant in a direct way. The technology is presented in a black-boxed version and fundamental questions are side-stepped in favor of a discussion about risks and safety issues in connection with specific products and cross-pollination. Insofar as these are framed as technical risk issues, the citizen is once again framed as an outsider, listening to experts and hopefully well represented by experts from NGOs and by the consumers association. More general political, economic and ethical questions with respect to food are not considered to be topics for extensive consideration and expert commentary.

Conclusion

The Dutch debate about GM food has been inspired by the new ideas about participation that have recently emerged. Yet, it is also clear that the design of the debate also diverged from the principles recommended by prominent STS scholars. Of course, it would be quite naïve to attribute this to a limited understanding of STS analyses. The Dutch debate functioned as a political machine. It promoted particular versions of the problems the political system faces and ignored or deflated other versions. More than in other cases it worked to delegitimize NGOs, but that aspect should not blind us to the fact that public participation exercises will always be selective and will implicitly or explicitly promote certain versions of citizenship and the problems we face instead of others. Claims that we are now given space to 'ordinary citizens' or 'average consumers' do not automatically imply that democracy and public deliberations are indeed enhanced. And neither should a public display of modesty on the side of experts be taken as proof for that.

We have to investigate these new participatory exercises more closely, especially now that policy makers and marketing experts around the globe have started to embrace them. Are we indeed looking at new conceptions of citizenship emerging? Or are we looking at the latest version of 'politics as usual'? Or is it a restyling of existing conceptions of citizenship and economic liberalism to address problems of international economic competition and corporate exploitation of science? Most importantly is the question of how to distinguish more systematically and in an empirically informed manner between these various interpretations?

The research on which this article is based is part of work for the EU funded thematic network STAGE. See: www.stage-research.net. A more detailed and comprehensive analysis of the Dutch debate and its more general implications is in preparation. The author thanks Myrthe Egmond for her support.

Notes

¹ See H. Bantien et al. Governance of the European research Area: The Role of Civil Society. Final report. Benschheim, IFOK, October 2003.

² R.P. Hagendijk, 'The public understanding of science and public participation in regulated worlds', *Minerva*, 2004 (1), 1-19.

³ Rapport Schuttelaar, 2001.

⁴ Interview with the Committee's chair, dr. Jan Terlouw, *de Volkskrant*, 23 February 2001. My translation.

⁵ Initially the plan was that focus group meetings would be public and the representatives of media and stakeholder groups would attend. Later on it was decided that focus groups would meet behind closed doors to encourage that people would feel free to speak up and participate.

⁶ Renate Dorrestein (interview), *NRC Handelsblad*, 10 January 2001, p.2., my translation.

When Public Debate meets Government

by Richard Rogers

A year and a half ago I was on the inside of a Dutch government think tank. The think tank, Infodrome, had as its mandate to inform and inspire governmental and parliamentary officials to take up information society issues. What does government do with the Internet (that it wasn't already doing)?

My position was that the Internet, amongst its other popular manifestations as e-commerce marketplace, library, rumour mill, music swap meet, den of software pirates and paedophiles, and the great conversation ongoing on email and chat rooms - apart from all that, it could also be thought of as a debate space around important social issues. If, however, you entered a social issue into a search engine, including a Dutch search engine - issues like climate change, xenotransplantation, or gm food - the government was absent in the returns. The places people would go to find out about important social issues was not the government, if one considers a search engine a main entry point to the Web. If you wanted the government's view, you'd have to surf government. And who, after all, surfs government, apart from government itself and a previous Dutch Minister without portfolio, called van Boxtel?

I thought that if the government wanted to be more visible in the information society it had to become more present in relevant web spaces.

At the same time government was beginning to learn some insights. It decided to create independent portals, like the health kiosk - gezondheidskiosk.nl. With the health kiosk

initiative, government, via a specially created NGO - perhaps better called a GONGO, a government-organized NGO - was trying to make a popular portal. They wanted to enter the health space on the Internet, because they held the view that the Web was dangerous, or more drastically, that the Web could kill you.

The problem with the health kiosk, however, was that it was run by strict editors. They hardly let anyone post information to the site. And nobody went there anyway, apart from the few folks that were allowed to post.

My view was that the government, instead of authoring these sorts of spaces that disappoint, better first find out what's going on in other more relevant spaces on the Web.

Around the time of this discussion, a 'real' public debate was about to take place, on food safety, with the emphasis on gm food. I was approached by one of the Infodrome staff who said that the issue was heating up. She pointed me to an AVRO TV news program where a number of important Dutch folks came on the show, and put forward their views. The newspapers also were saying that the issue was heating up, indeed that there was a debate underway.

So Infodrome asked me to find that debate, and tell them what it was about. They knew I'd check the stories as well as the Internet.

Here is what I found.

- 1) TV news and newspaper journalists interviewed a number of people in the

issue area, took their statements, and juxtaposed them against one another. Statement juxtaposition in the media was called a debate. Statement juxtaposition, I thought, could also be masking the absence of a debate.

- 2) Next I went to see what organic farmers were saying. They were inviting people to go to agro-tourism events, buy their produce, subscribe to a magazine, look in the supermarkets for their carefully codified labels. Only one of them in this space – the alternative consumers' union – *alternatieve consumenten bond* – was taking positions, trying to debate something – labels. All others were not in any debate at all.
- 3) The *NRC Handelsblad* had a dossier – a file – on their site with all the organizations they thought were in the 'debate'. The debate dossier pointed to particular pages on each of these organizations' websites, where statements are made about their views. Of these sites only 4 of the 20 organizations actually had views. And only two taking positions were Dutch. The Dutch consumers' union argued that gm food requires labels, and those labels should be on all gm food products. And the government had no other position than saying that there should be a debate.
- 4) Intriguingly, two other actors showed up in this Dutch establishment newspaper's space – the EU and the Codex Alimentarius. The Codex, based in Washington, DC, puts forward proposed standards and regulations. They put forward that only those GM products known to cause allergies should be labelled. No other gm products should be labelled. The EU said that that was the policy that would be followed.

So, most importantly – number five – the Dutch food safety debate was taking place outside the Netherlands. Of the establishment parties, only the Consumers' Union, and of the organic folks, only the alternative consumers' union, seemed to be aware of the debate.

Then came the real government-organized public debate – months of it. I'd just like to point

to one crucial event in this debate to make an overall point.

During the public debate, 15 key Dutch NGOs left it, citing distrust in the process and pre-mediated outcomes. Among them was the Alternative Consumers Union.

Many commentators have called these NGOs bad sports, asocial, even anti-democratic. Studies also were commissioned by government to find out what was going on with these NGOs – studies that also found them to be a potential threat to democracy because of their lack of accountability. As Tony Blair and George Bush also said, safely within the red zone at the Genoa G8 summit, these people protesting here are unelected. The real people are at home, in front of the television sets, getting our messages.

I would like to argue that the NGOs were not so much leaving the debate, as leading us to it, bringing us back to where the debate is taking place, if we are willing enough to want to locate it. The debate was not going on in the Netherlands, and if we would like the debate to be going on here, we would have to import it. Interestingly, the 15 Dutch NGOs that left the debate did just that. They set up their own counter-debate in the Netherlands, discussing the issues being debated outside of the Netherlands.

In conclusion I have a methodological point as well as a normative one. Methodologically, if one is to hold a public debate on an important social issue in the Netherlands, one should locate where the debate on this social issue is taking place, and who is in it. What I am saying is that if government wishes to 'author' a national public debate, it should make sure that the terms of the debate are germane to those national actors already in the debate. If the terms are not interesting to them, government comes across as a newbie, as someone who has not read the FAQs, the frequently asked questions.

Normatively, I would like to ask whether government ought to ever 'author' debate? The advice eventually given to the think tank was that government should capture and put on display ongoing social debate. It should subsequently strive to position itself in this ongoing debate, instead of authoring its own.

Finally, instead of inviting the organic farmers to the government building, I proposed that we see them instead at the Saturday farmers' market.

Is It Possible to Oppose a Technology Without Reifying It?

Styles of Reasoning in the Debate on Genetic Modified Organisms

by Rein de Wilde

Maastricht University

No modified genes in our food! The movement against genetically modified organisms (GMOs) has been very successful within the European Union. In many member countries there is a ban on field experiments and the import of genetically modified food from outside the Union on the consumer market has been postponed again and again. Recently the Union agreed to open the market for GM food, yet the proposed regulations make experts doubt that innovations in this field will ever gain momentum in Europe.

The fate of GMOs in Europe seems to be a source of rejoice for the STS community. Not only does it falsify technological determinism, the case also illustrates a new form of supranational politics. Apparently, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Greenpeace can influence the shape of European innovation politics, using new strategies and arguments. Moreover the controversy seems to prove a favorite STS point: in the debate on GMOs 'science' does not play the role of a neutral arbiter, but is enrolled in the battle by both sides.

Yet there is a mysterious twist to the case. It is obvious that we should stop risky technologies. But why oppose efforts to find out what the risks are? That's exactly what the anti-GMO movement wants, however. Starting in the nineties NGOs like Greenpeace have almost continuously set up campaigns for banning field experiments with GM crops. This Greenpeace policy did amaze most scientists in biotechnology and chemistry, to put it mildly. Why oppose something before testing it? That goes against the grain of science.

I have two questions. First, what is the source of this alienation between mainstream natural science and, in particular, Greenpeace? Is it just another example of sloppy science on the Greenpeace side, as in the celebrated Brent Spar case, or are we dealing with a more fundamental difference? Second, Greenpeace markets itself as a science oriented pressure group. But is it really possible to oppose new technologies in a categorical way within a scientific language

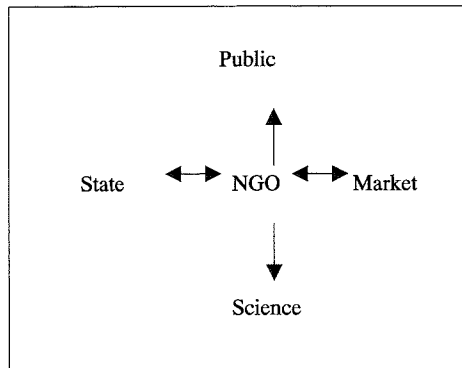
game or style of reasoning? Let's have a closer look at the GMO controversy.

The basic antagonists in the debate are, on the pro-GMOs side, the biotech industry (like Monsanto) but also some public agencies and research groups, and on the anti-GMO's side, environmental NGOs (like Greenpeace), consumer-groups, the bio-food movement, development NGOs, religious groups. The pro-rhetoric tells us that GM Food is nothing new, GM Food is safe, and GM Food has only positive social effects. The Monsanto site sums it up nicely: "Today, biotechnology holds out promise for consumers seeking quality, safety and taste in their food choices; for farmers seeking new methods to improve their productivity and profitability; and for governments and non-governmental public advocates seeking to stave off global hunger, assure environmental quality, preserve bio-diversity and promote health and food safety." The anti-rhetoric counters these claims by saying: GM Food is something completely new, GM Food generates new risks, and GM Food will increase global inequalities. So to each argument pro there is an argument contra, and visa versa. In effect there is not much real debate going on. Opinions are frozen and the frontline of the GMO controversy turns out to be quite static.

From a sociological point of view we can diagnose these states of affairs as elements of a new global complexity or a World Risk Society in which no objective knowledge of the future can be obtained. Yet there is no need to switch immediately to the cynical worldview, according to which arguments carry no weight in themselves. If only power counts, people's passion to engage in arguments is difficult to understand. Moreover within a cynical worldview the special role of NGOs like Greenpeace within the public arena remains unacknowledged. One important reason for their increased popularity is that in an age of industrial incidents and bad functioning governments NGOs succeeded in

cultivating an image of being decent, trustful advocates of the common interest.

NGOs do have much less resources than industries and governments. But let us not underestimate their power. Some of them are able to organize very effective media campaigns. On the GMO issue, in the late 1990's Greenpeace won an important media battle against companies like Monsanto and retailers like Iceland. The so-called Eurobarometer shows its effect till now: the majority of the Europeans don't want GM Food. However, this success generates a dilemma, in particular for NGO's. In order to live up to their image of decency they do not want to be seen as screwed P.R. machines. They prefer to position themselves as independent groups representing the public interest, giving voice to suppressed causes like nature and the poor. In addition they associate themselves with 'science', of which they like to present themselves as 'honest' spokespersons, at the same time demarcating their own public role from governments and companies. In a figure:



Now, this self image, if taken seriously, has consequences for the way NGO's relate to science. Obviously it implies a reverence for truth and facts, but there is more to it. In cases of new technologies we are dealing with the prospective assessment of possible risks. Here we leave the area of hard facts, entering the field of attitudes toward the future: how serious do we take uncertainties, how cautious should we be, where to put the burden of proof, etcetera. The reasons for the alienation between Greenpeace and science should be found in

this second area, I assert. Embodied in science is a very specific attitude toward the future, which Greenpeace won't accept, at least not in the GMO controversy. The problem is that Greenpeace tried to reconcile two fundamentally different styles of reasoning.

In the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Ernst Gombrich defines 'style' as follows: "The distinctive character of styles [...] rests on the adoption of certain conventions which are learned and absorbed by those who carry on the tradition. While certain of these features are easily recognizable (e.g., the Gothic pointed arch, the cubist facet, Wagnerian chromaticism), others are more elusive, since they are found to consist not in the presence of individual, specifiable elements but in the regular occurrence of certain clusters of features and in the exclusion of certain elements." This definition suggests, in our case, to look at specific examples in which NGOs like Greenpeace refer to scientific research. In those examples then we should try to trace (recognizable or elusive) regular features, not of painting but of reasoning. Moreover, in a similar vain as Gombrich did, we try to trace blind spots these styles of reasoning generate.

A representative example of the way Greenpeace reacts to pieces of scientific GM research, is this press message, issued on February 22, 2002 by Greenpeace USA .

London/Washington - The US National Academy of Sciences is expected to release a report later today that criticizes the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for inadequately protecting the environment from the risks of genetically engineered (GE) plants and calls on the USDA to make its review process for the GE plants "significantly more transparent and rigorous." (...)

"This report exposes another example of corporate interests trumping environmental protection and the public interest," said Dr. Doreen Stabinsky, science advisor to Greenpeace. "The USDA has to start doing its own homework and stop turning in work done by the biotech industry. By failing to seriously address the threats posed

by gene-altered plants, the USDA has broken trust with the American people." (...)

The USDA has virtually no special regulations for managing such crops, though dozens of varieties are currently grown. Companies developing such crops merely notify the USDA when planning to grow them in open fields.

"Politicians from the US travel the globe boasting that their regulations are the tightest in the world," said Charles Margulis, Greenpeace USA GE specialist. "But scientists know the truth - the US is more concerned with protecting biotech business than with protecting the environment or the public health."

One regular feature of Greenpeace's handling of scientific papers or reports on GMOs can be found in this text. Through phrases like 'The report exposes another example of...' the expert assessment of the regulatory agency USDA is put in an interpretative frame in which corporate interests oppose public interests. The report was commissioned by the department itself and is not antagonistic in purpose or tone. Yet without any hesitation Greenpeace's own GE specialist Charles Margulis puts the report in the conflicting interest frame.

Furthermore we can ask, in the spirit of Gombrich, is there is some feature in the 'Executive Summary' which is excluded from the Greenpeace text? There is. In the report *Bezeten van Genen*, on which this article is based, the press release is compared with its source - the 16-page Executive Summary of the US National Academy report, published some days before the full study. It contains an extensive argument, concluding that 'the transgenic process presents no new categories of risk compared to conventional methods of crop improvement' (my emphasis). Instead it argues that 'risks must be assessed on a case-by-case basis with consideration for the organism, trait, and environment' (my emphasis). The 'Executive Summary', I conclude, rejects quite clearly a principal or categorical difference between genetic modification and other forms of refining breeding, in the sense that genetic modification can be

connected to a new category of risk. The report of the American Academy doesn't say that genetic manipulation is safe; it holds that it depends in each case on the context.

Although the claim that GMOs generate new categories of risks is central to the Greenpeace case, this finding is not mentioned in their press release. That's no accident: in all their press releases (and other publications too) on the GMO subject we find the same 'stylistic' feature: Greenpeace 'chooses' to ignore to take in account the contextual reasoning on which scientific findings and recommendations are based. This feature, I suggest, is part of the categorical style of reasoning Greenpeace uses in its anti-GMO campaigns. Within the context of that style there is simply no room for contextual arguments.

I call the Greenpeace style 'categorical' after its central claim that there is a categorical difference between genetic and non-genetic modification. Other features are associated with this idea. As soon as you reason in categories, you are inclined to frame single reports as signs of a larger pattern. As soon as you reason in categories, you are not inclined to see much middle ground or options for consensus. Another reason to call Greenpeace style 'categorical' is because it opposes a more contextual style of reasoning which dominates practices of established science. What does 'contextual' mean in this setting? It's a relative term; contextual reasoning is contextual compared to categorical reasoning. To be more precise: 1. In contextual reasoning the (methodological) distinction between potentiality and actuality makes more sense than in categorical reasoning. 2. People who reason contextually more often say 'it depends'. This phrase does not imply that you're not interested in causal relations; it states that in which cases which 'laws' apply cannot be said beforehand. It depends upon 'ceteris paribus factors'. 3. In contextual reasoning the assessment of risks is more closely related to problems of interactive complexity. In contextual reasoning it is relevant to know, as in the National Academy example, where the transgenic gene is taken from, but this information is not decisive. What transgenic mobility means depends upon the whole ecological context in which a 'strange' gene is implanted. 4. In contextual reasoning more

often an inductive approach prevails. This means you go case by case; advice policy makers to monitor things closely, because you cannot predict the future. 5. In contextual reasoning the distinction between scientific values and social values is seen as more important. 6. Contextual reasoning favours a passive tone.

Categorical reasoning has a lot of advantages, especially if you're fighting a decentralized media war on many fronts, as is normally the case in the network society of today. Clear categories of what is right or wrong, risky or not risky can be of great help in coordinating action and creating political momentum. But NGOs like Greenpeace should be more aware of the limitations of this style of reasoning. Categorical reasoning has the disadvantage of creating 'news poverty'. Within the anti GM Food movement, again and again you hear 'the mister Putszai story' or 'the Monarch butterfly story', for instance. More importantly, this style encourages weak reasoning and a tolerance for fallacies like 'pars pro toto' and 'jumping to conclusions'. Finally it forces NGOs to work with an inconsistent philosophy of science and technology.

This last point leaves NGOs with a real handicap. In debating the future in general, environmental NGOs oppose scientific determinism and the belief in technological fixes. 'Yellow rice'? – adding vitamin A to rice, in order to fight blindness in third world countries? Bad idea. The real problem is malnutrition. The philosophy of science and technology in all this is contextual: let us not ascribe, as biotechnological industries do, to inherent (positive) traits of technologies.

At the same time though GMOs are not treated contextually. They should be banned, all of them.

Here the intellectual tension becomes clear - the more a categorical style dominates your discourse, the more you are inclined to focus just on the technology itself, apart from ecological, social or cultural contexts. Science and technology, deconstructed with one hand, is reified with the other. A key difference with the pro-GMO movement should be noticed here. The pro's not only favour GMOs; they also ascribe to science and technology direct beneficial effects. So in their case there is no tension between technology assessment and style of reasoning, as in the case of the contra-movement.

To conclude, the movement against GMOs is not just handicapped because it has less money or less institutional power. An important weakening factor is its inconsistent philosophy of technology. Using categorical arguments in scientific environments alienates scientists (and engineers). Discrediting possibilities of fixing problems with new technologies, assuming that technology has no meaning outside social and cultural contexts, while at the same time fixing or reifying technologies you are critical of, assuming that technology can have a fixed meaning, is a habit that alienates at least one philosopher.

Note

This article is based on Rein de Wilde, Niki Vermeulen, Mirko Reithler, *Bezeten van Genen. Een essay over de innovatieoorlog rondom genetisch gemodificeerd voedsel*, Sdu Uitgevers, Den Haag 2002. This book is published in the Series 'Voorstudies en Achtergronden' van de Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid (V117) and can be downloaded as PDF file from the site www.wrr.nl. References can be found in the original publication.

Joint 4S/ EASST Conference 2004, August 25-28, Ecole des Mines de Paris

Public Proofs – Science, Technology And Democracy

For news on the conference see:
<http://www.congres-scientifiques.com/4S-EASST/>

The deadline for registration for the Conference (reduced fee) is May 1st.
Hotel registration before May 15th.

Recent Dissertation

Bertien Broekhans, *How Dutch environmental science became history: Demarcation of a socially relevant science 1970 – 2000. PhD Dissertation, Catholic University of Nijmegen, 2003* (ISBN 90 5710 155 6).

The main subject of this book is the boundary work carried out by a group of Dutch scientists who demarcate their activities in regard to environmental problems. What is referred to as 'milieukunde' in the Netherlands can be translated here as 'environmental science'. However, according to Dutch practitioners of the discipline, the nature and scope of this field do not really compare to environmental scientific activities done elsewhere. In the past, Dutch environmental scientists claimed that they possessed a rather unique national identity and that they had an internal coherence for their particular field of science. According to them, Dutch environmental science should be distinguished by its holistic and interdisciplinary approach to environmental problems.

As was the case in many other countries during the early 1970s, Dutch scientists from various disciplinary backgrounds were spurred on by the rise of environmentalism to tackle environmental issues. Several scientists shared their concerns in a broad coalition which was aimed at 'improving' scientific activities. It led to the institutionalisation of a field of scientific practices (*milieukunde*) set apart from several other specialized fields such as environmental chemistry or environmental biology, while at the same time also remaining distinct from the field of environmental policy. This demarcation is not recognized in other countries, where the different specialities co-exist as environmental studies or environmental sciences (note the plural). During the period between 1970-2000, Dutch environmental science became demarcated – and eventually de-institutionalised – alongside the rise of new environmental movements and the two new areas of policy, namely 'environmental policy' and 'science policy'. Apart from the environmental scientists themselves, the actors who were either involved in science policy or environmental policy were both to play a crucial role in this demarcation.

Since 1971, social problems were thought to require a new scientific approach in order to overcome the shortsighted disciplinary scope. Moreover, scientific activities first and foremost

were aimed at contributing to the solution of these social environmental problems, instead of the progress and innovation of science. This aim to achieve a societal relevance for the scientific activities conducted, brought on the 'double' boundary work carried out by the new environmental scientists. On the one hand, Dutch environmental science had to be effectively demarcated from other scientific activities and on the other, it needed to be separate from environmental management. The demarcation between Dutch environmental science and other scientific activities implied the scientific legitimacy of Dutch environmental science and the claim to having its own identity compared to other sciences. The boundary work carried out in Dutch environmental science and policy aimed at, paradoxically, autonomy on the one hand and practical utility or policy relevance on the other.

The conceptual framework of the thesis brings together the concept of boundary work from science studies (e.g. Gieryn 1995) and the particular version of discourse analysis, which is used in policy sciences (e.g. Hajer 1995). Story lines (a notion also introduced by Hajer) may be seen as discursive examples of boundary-objects. Environmental science can be seen as a story line mobilised by various scientific and other actors who are trying to define a new shared object of theory and practice, while simultaneously allowing for diverse interpretations of their object in education and research.

Chapter four describes how 'the environment' emerged as a public issue, posing apparently intractable challenges to both science and politics during the early 1970s. Scientists and other civilians recognised the need for suitable knowledge for these societal problems and for a different, less introvert and more democratic, production of knowledge. However, their criticism of science did not undermine their general trust in the academic world's grip on knowledge production. Therefore, when a few Dutch scientists assumed responsibility for the scientific contribution to the solution of environmental problems, they used their established position and reputation in academia in order to initiate Dutch environmental science, by establishing new academic departments of *milieukunde*. In various research programmes and projects they focused on existing local and physical environmental problems. In doing so, they often supported environmental activists and sometimes they underpinned environmental

policy. However, their attempts to understand the causes and structural solutions of environmental problems were not always appreciated by policymakers who were primarily interested in the lessening of effects. These policymakers informed themselves through such experts as (eco)toxicologists, biologists and medical scientists.

Chapter five illustrates how in the early 1980s, Dutch environmental scientists issued an even stronger that their activities were of a scientific and almost of a disciplinary character. They stressed that although environmental science was still a relatively new field, its scientific potential had not yet been fully developed. They reaffirmed their holistic perspectives, but developed a new focus on interdisciplinarity in theories and methods. In a new *Handbook* and elsewhere, a plea was made for a recognisable identity and an interdisciplinary body of knowledge of Dutch environmental science (*milieukunde*).

Interdisciplinarity became the key story line that demarcated and constituted Dutch environmental science. Scientists debated and philosophised about the constitution of interdisciplinary theories and methods, whereas educational and research practices hardly changed. Environmental scientists demarcated and institutionalised the scientific identity in a Dutch language scientific journal and a professional association. They succeeded in securing their own funds from the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO). The Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and Environmental Management became more interested in Dutch environmental science. It invested in research and professional education, in institutes, publications and chairs. With these investments the Ministry indirectly tried to steer the development of *milieukunde*. Chapter six illustrates how attention was paid to the scientific development of Dutch environmental science which finally led to the fragmentation and marginalisation of environmental science. The first time these developments became visible was, quite paradoxically, during the preparation of a research programme in the late 1980s and the early 1990s. The research programme 'Sustainability and Environmental Quality' (SEQ) was formulated. It was explicitly intended to stimulate theoretically fundamental research in Dutch environmental science.

The preparation of the research programme started in the late 1980s in close co-operation

between Dutch environmental scientists, NWO and the Ministry of Education and Sciences. During the preparation, however, the focus shifted from Dutch environmental science to the relationship and cooperation between *milieukunde* and the environmental sciences. However, in the end, the programme erased the story line of Dutch environmental science and instead it categorised and demarcated most of the work of these scientists as 'social science'.

The contents of the research programme clearly referred to environmental policy. The programme used policy concepts such as sustainability and environmental quality, and applied them to similar topics such as material flows and chain analysis. These topics were directly derived from the policy perspectives and ambitions of the first National Environmental Policy Plan, according to the opinion of the scientists involved. However, environmental policymakers found such work to be of limited use.

In the 1990s, interdisciplinarity became obsolete and was no longer used as a demarcation criterion and inherent in Dutch environmental science. The interdisciplinary ambitions of environmental science could be found in the co-operation between practitioners of *milieukunde* and other (environmental) scientists. Methods such as modelling and system analyses were intended to bring the disciplinary contributions together. They cooperated in the area of themes, which were traced to environmental policy, such as material flows in the consumption society. These themes were further selected in the preparation and foundation of the research school Socio-Economic and Natural Sciences of the Environment (SENSE), which brought (part of the) environmental scientists together. The definition of research themes and methods implied the selection of participants among Dutch environmental scientists. In 1994 only four out of ten institutes became a member of SENSE. It was the first time that the Dutch environmental science institutes explicitly went their own way and that they did not form a single closely knitted coalition. In the 1990s the hitherto successful boundary-work concerning a unified environmental science eventually broke down and the notion of a plural collection of different environmental sciences gained ground.

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WTMC Summer school September 2004

Andrew Webster, Key Lecturer

Professor Andrew Webster is the director of the Science and Technology Studies Unit in York (UK) and the director of the prestigious Innovative Health Technologies Programme of the UK Economic and Social Research Council.

Key-themes of the summer school will be science policy and the dynamics of knowledge and (health) innovation.

This summer school is a yearly event organized by the graduate school for Science, Technology and Modern Culture (WTMC). This year's summer school also is labeled as a Prime summer school. Non-members of WTMC who want to attend should be aware that we take applications by the order of arrival.

Ph.D students who are not a member of either WTMC or Prime can apply for an EASST grant for this summer school. To be entitled for such a grant, students have to be a member of EASST. For details see the EASST website or contact Sally Wyatt (s.m.e.wyatt@uva.nl)

The summer school takes place from the 6th till the 10th of September 2004 in Ravenstein (near Nijmegen). Application forms can be obtained from Marjatta Kempainen (U.M.Kempainen@utwente.nl) Deadline for application is 15th of April 2004.

For further information about the summer school, please contact Annemiek Nelis (A.P.Nelis@uva.nl).

Rules for EASST travel stipends

All EASST members are eligible to apply for travel stipends to attend relevant conferences, workshops, summer schools, etc. However, priority is given to scholars from transitional economies, developing countries and to PhD students from all countries.

General rules:

1. Applicants must be EASST members. The application form to become an EASST member is available at <http://www.chem.uva.nl/easst/easst.html>
2. A student may receive funds only once during the course of their study.
3. A senior scholar may not receive funds for two consecutive EASST conferences.
4. For any single event, support will only be given to one senior scholar per institution. (This rule does not apply to students, thus more than one student per institution may apply.)
5. For the EASST conference, an abstract must have been accepted by programme committee before an application for funds can be considered. For other conferences or workshops, a presentation must be made. For

- educational workshops or training activities, this may not be necessary.
6. Full costs are not covered.

Applications should include the following:

1. letter/email to the EASST President explaining why attending the particular event is important for your work
2. copy of abstract if support is for conference attendance
3. confirmation from relevant programme committee or event organisers that abstract is accepted
4. in the case of students, a supporting email is also needed from the supervisor
5. budget (The applicant's own institution is expected to make some contribution. EASST will not cover all costs.)

After the event:

1. submit summary of costs with receipts and bank details to the EASST secretariat
2. send short report (500-1000 words) regarding the event attended to the editor of the *EASST Review* for consideration for publication.

Conferences and Calls for Papers

An Interdisciplinary Colloquium *Security Bytes: Security/Life/Terror* will be held from July 17th – 19th 2004 at the Department of Politics & International Relations of **Lancaster University**.

Security bites. Security identifies 'life' as that which needs securing. But what is the 'life' that is to be secured? And why is it that in 'securing life', life itself is always threatened? From the microbe to the machine to the machinegun, security breeds insecurity. By considering how security bytes, this colloquium focuses attention upon the increasing convergence of digital networks, images, and formats with biopolitical, post-biological, and subatomic 'life'.

Confirmed speakers include:

Brian Massumi, author of *Parables for the Virtual*; Michael Shapiro, author of *Violent Cartographies*; Kathryn Hayles, author of *How we became post-human*; Richard Doyle, author of *Wetwares: Experiments in Postvital Living*

Confirmed panels include:

The Terror, Locating Security, PeaceWar, Society Must be Defended, Aesthetics of Fear, Beyond Security, The Camp

Additional paper abstracts and panel proposals of no more than 400 words are solicited from scholars in *any discipline* whose work creatively engages with these themes. Explorations of how security bytes using digital media (short films, photo essays, small installations) are also welcome.

Additional panel: Culture, Myth and Memory: Constructing Security Identities

Security identities are constructs of how (in)security is managed and perpetuated. Myth and memory play a vital role in building the collective self, yet what is the relation between culture, myth and memory? This panel welcomes proposals that examine how security identities are established, maintained and sustained, with a specific focus on how notions of myth and culture play a role (the use of architecture, exhibitions, art and literature, film, propaganda and imagery).

Please send proposals to Danielle Beswick, Conference Administrator, Department of Politics and International Relations, Lancaster University, Bailrigg, Lancaster, LA1 4YL, United Kingdom. Email:

d.beswick@lancaster.ac.uk. See our website for further information and on-line booking forms at

<http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/politics/rsch/security%20bytes.htm>

Proposal Deadline: 1 April 2004

Booking Deadline: 1 May 2004

18th Century European Thought and the Nature-Culture Problem in Advanced Techno-Scientific Societies, to be held 1- 4 September 2004 at the **University of Helsinki** is an international symposium. Modern industrial society has maintained a double attitude toward nature since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. On the one hand, striving to gain technological control of nature it has produced what Bruno Latour has called technological hybrids: amalgamations of nature and culture. On the other hand, with respect to human life it has maintained a separation between the two spheres. Contradictory from the start, the principle of separation between culture and nature has ended up in a crisis as the result of global techno-scientific advancement. Scientists, clinicians and engineers have successfully "humanised" nature, including human life, to the point where the major practical constraints of its regulation are cost, morality and human behaviour, i.e. the social and not the natural. This crisis is poignant particularly in areas where the technological amalgamation of nature and culture concerns humans themselves. Human life itself can no longer be taken as 'natural', because life-controlling technologies compel us to make choices about it: what kind of life is desirable and what is not. Birth and death are not absolute notions any more, and human genetic engineering is considerably expanding the already wide domain where future life depends on knowledge and decision. We know a great deal about body and mind and about healthy living, and in contemporary society we are constantly faced with the need to make decisions on how to take this knowledge into consideration. 18th century European thought is interesting from today's perspective, because in its course the split between culture and nature was emerging, and the social sciences were still not distinct disciplines. The concept of the state of nature in early modern contract theories, Adam Smith's theories of moral sentiments and the economy, Rousseau's ideas concerning the natural man, and Diderot's holistic materialism are examples of streams of thought that from today's perspective are relevant and instructive in view of our need to reconsider the relationships

of the social and the natural. Still in our contemporary social thought we observe the tendency to demonise nature as the "other" of culture: something raw, primitive or impure - epithets that have been latent in social thought since the Enlightenment. But Enlightenment also gave birth to the opposite idea: the romantic tendency to valorise nature against the deforming effects of society, which is equally important in contemporary social criticism. The symposium aims at bringing to light the freshness and diversity of European Enlightenment thought on pertinent moral and theoretical issues that we are currently facing in social life. The modern dualism of nature and culture is disturbing but also more recent and limited in scope than is often thought. The objective of the symposium is to increase social scientists' awareness of the European Enlightenment tradition and to clarify the perspectives in the intellectual history of social sciences. Professors Ian Hacking (College de France and University of Toronto) and Steve Fuller (University of Warwick) have agreed to participate as invited guest lecturers at the symposium. The international symposium will be organised by the research project "Life Regulation Practices and the Nature-Culture Problem" and hosted by the Department of Sociology, the University of Helsinki. The International Society for 18th Century Studies has agreed to collaborate as a co-organiser of the symposium. The venue of the symposium will be Hotel Vuoranta at the coast of the Baltic Sea near Helsinki. Contact persons: Conference office, Anu Katainen, conference secretary, anu.h.katainen@helsinki.fi; Professor Pekka Sulkunen, chair of the organising committee, pekka.sulkunen@helsinki.fi.

The *The Art of Comparison* is the title of the 6th meeting of the Research Network for the Sociology of the Arts of ESA (European Sociological Association) will be held November 3-5, 2004, at **Erasmus University in Rotterdam**, the Netherlands. The Department for the Study of the Arts and Culture will host the conference on the occasion of its 15th anniversary. The conference programme features keynote lectures, plenary discussions, paper sessions, and workshops. The theme of the conference, "The Art of Comparison", is an invitation to assess critically how the social study of the arts might be advanced through various forms of comparative research (over-time, cross-national, between different art forms, across cultural domains) and how sociologists of the

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arts might take advantage of approaches and insights developed outside of their own discipline, for example, within the fields of cultural economics, art history, or media and communication research. The organizers look forward to seeing proposals for conference papers or for a workshop (e.g. around one or more recently published books, a particular research theme or approach). Topics are invited in the following and related fields: Art and everyday life; Production of culture: networks, art worlds, cultural industries; Artistic professions, practices and careers; Distribution of high and popular art forms; Public, non-profit and for-profit futures of the arts; (New) technology, (new) media and the arts; Change and continuity in the arts and cultural industries; Cultural globalisation and the arts; Cultural policy and national cultures; The arts and the city; Arts audiences, tastes and lifestyles; Consumer society, culture and the arts; The body and/in the arts; Social uses of the arts; Gender, race, ethnicity and the arts; Art, cultural heritage and collective memory; Mediating the arts: arts education, criticism and arts journalism; Role and performance of arts organizations and cultural institutions; Cross-national studies of art worlds and cultural fields; Comparative methodology; and Theoretical and methodological issues in the sociology of the arts and culture. Proposals should be submitted by April 15, 2004. They can be sent by email to: esa.art@fhk.eur.nl

A decision on acceptance will be provided by June 15, 2004. For a proposed paper, please provide a 400/500-word abstract (in English), which gives a clear picture of the contents of the paper. Please include a title, the name(s) of the author(s), institutional affiliation (both university and department), mailing address, and email address. Information updates will be regularly posted on the website of the ESA Research Network for the Sociology of the Arts: <http://www.esa-arts.net>. For more information about the conference, please contact the current chair of the Network: Susanne Janssen (Erasmus University Rotterdam): s.janssen@fhk.eur.nl

Technonatures II - Environments, Technologies and Spaces in the 21st Century is the conference to be held at the Department of Geography and the Environment, **University of Oxford** on June 24th 2004. In an era marked by accelerating environmental change, and deepening battles over eco-technological and biotechnological transformations, the nature of 'Nature' and the

politics of n/Nature is increasingly up for grabs. Overlapping conversations in geography and sociology concerned with 'the production of nature' (Lefebvre, Smith, Castree/Braun), 'contested natures' (Urry/Macnaghten) or 'socio-natures' (Swyngedouw), have drawn attention to the irreducibly cultural and political qualities of contemporary socio-environmental relations and processes. Elsewhere, in science and technology studies and anthropology, Haraway's 'cyborgs', and 'companion species', or Latour's obsessions with 'quasi objects' and 'actants' indicate a new desire to think through hybridity. For others still, (Harvey, Castells, Urry), a defining feature of contemporary times is how political economies of scapes, flows and mobilities criss-cross the globe, reworking space/time, places and technocultures with increased intensity. Whether working through landscapes and townscapes or ecologies and bodies, we appear to be increasingly negotiating our ways through 'technonatures'. If Apocalyptic, Romantic and Malthusian laments or Promethean technological optimism and a shrill scientism appear increasingly inadequate responses to the rise of 'technonatures' what other critical responses are there? How can we map and engage with a world where 'Nature' has become an accumulation strategy for capital all the way down (Katz) yet returning to 'pure nature' is neither possible nor indeed desirable? In 'technological times' are there ways of moving beyond technophobic assertions while still being fully aware of the dangers of a society that now 'takes technological change alone as the model of political invention' (Barry)? What is the most appropriate balance of cultural analysis, political economy and political ecologies that can critically unpack the new 'power geometries' (Massey) of these developments? What are the most effective ways to analyse new battle lines emerging between those seeking to administer, regulate, patent or own emerging technonatures and alternative projects to construct alternative modernities, sustainable technonatures and environmentally just spatial relations? The aims of the technonatures symposia are to create spaces for interdisciplinary conversations between the various critical theoretical traditions which now populate sociology, geography, anthropology and technology studies (e.g: eco/post Marxism, post structuralism and actor network theory; critical ecological modernism, cyborg feminism and political ecology). Technonatures aims to generate an on-going discussion on how we could move and expand debates about 'the environment' beyond ecocentrism and high modernist framings; it

seeks to imagine 'spaces of hope' in unpromising times and anticipate and support a new critical politics of technonatures.

To secure a place at the symposium/obtain further details contact Damian White, Dept of Sociology, and Anthropology, James Madison University, Sheldon Hall, MSC 7501 Harrisonburg, Virginia, 22801 USA whitedf@jmu.edu or Chris Wilbert, Dept of Planning, Anglia Polytechnic University, Bishop Hall Lane, Chelmsford, Essex, CM1 1SQ, UK, c.wilbert@apu.ac.uk.

The 6th International Summer Academy on Technology Studies: *Urban Infrastructure in Transition: What can we learn from history?* will take place in **Deutschlandsberg, Austria**, on July 11 – 17, 2004. It is organized by Inter-University Research Centre for Technology, Work and Culture (IFZ), Graz. Cities are powerfully shaped by socio-technical networks and infrastructures. These organize and mediate the distribution of people, goods, services, information, waste, capital, and energy within, and between, urban regions. The quality of urban life (50% of the world's population live in cities) depends heavily on urban infrastructures and service systems (water, sewage, energy, transport, telecommunications). Achieving sustainable urban infrastructure networks is vital if cities are to thrive or even function in the long term. The Summer Academy 2004 will focus on the transition of urban infrastructure in view of changing framework conditions and new challenges in a historical perspective. A starting point is the contemporary debate about urban infrastructure, in which you hardly can find a reference to historical experiences. This is precisely where the discussions of this year's Summer Academy will raise the following questions: What can historical analysis of the development and design of urban technical infrastructure systems contribute to an understanding of the current transition process? What can we learn from history to manage current challenges for our water, electricity, telecommunications, and transport systems? What can we learn from history for a sustainable design and governance of infrastructure technology networks in the present and future? Participants are encouraged to present a paper. A special grant scheme covering travel costs, accommodation and fees will be open to NIS (New Independent States of the former Soviet Union) Young Scientists. Participants from Central and South Eastern European and

developing countries may also request financial support. For further information or registration form, please visit our web site: <http://www.ifz.tugraz.at/index.php/sumac> or contact: Peter Wilding, wilding@ifz.tugraz.at, phone: (+43) 316 / 81 39 09.

The *European Academy for Standardization* holds the 9th EURAS Workshop on Standardization in **Paris** on May 13-14 2004. For more information about EURAS please see <http://www.EURAS.org>.

The *History of Technology Summer Event* to be held at **University College, London** from 2-3 July 2004, has been held by the Institution of Electrical Engineers for 31 years and addresses the broad area of the History of Electrical Engineering. As 2004 is the centenary of the invention of the thermionic valve by John Ambrose Fleming of UCL and the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Atlantic Telegraph Company the main themes will be the historical aspects of electronics, submarine telegraphy and telephony equipment. For further information see <http://www.iee.org/events/history.cfm>.

The 2004 IEEE Conference on the History of Electronics, entitled *Themes and Transitions in the History of Electronics*, will take place at **Bletchley Park, United Kingdom** on 28-30 June 2004. It also marks the Fleming Centennial. It is the fifth in a series of workshops sponsored by the IEEE History Committee and the IEEE History Center at Rutgers University. The profound role electronics have had in shaping the modern world, from the invention of the Fleming diode to the present, makes this an important topic of historical study. The IEE Professional Network on History of Technology and University College London are technical co-sponsors of the conference. These two organizations have joined with IEEE in a celebration of the centennial of the Fleming diode, which was the first of the radio tubes. Historians often regard this as the starting point of the electronics industry. The IEEE conference will take place at the historic Bletchley Park, the principal location of British codebreaking in World War II from Monday 28 June 2004 through Wednesday 30 June. This is an ideal site for such a meeting with conference facilities in the Victorian mansion and historical exhibits there and elsewhere in the park-like grounds

(including a reconstructed Colossus computer). Bletchley Park is also an appropriate site, as it was there that the transition from electromechanical to electronic computing occurred in the effort to decrypt intercepted messages. Immediately following the IEEE conference, two other events will take place at University College. The first is the University College conference on "The Life, Work, and Legacy of John Ambrose Fleming" and the other is the annual conference of the IEE History of Technology Professional Network. The intention of the IEEE conference is to help build a comprehensive view of electronics history through several dozen papers, each of which investigates some formative development in this 100-year-long history. The developments may include the opening of a new area of application, the invention of a major technique, or the gradual replacement of one dominant technique by another. An important feature of this conference is the participation of people with different backgrounds - engineers, historians, museum curators, avocational historians - that should make discussions particularly fruitful. The retreat-like setting of the conference should stimulate the exchange of ideas also. Conference registration and accommodation information appear at the IEEE History Center website http://www.ieee.org/organizations/history_center.

The *Annual conference of the Association for Israel Studies (AIS)* will be held at the Hebrew University of **Jerusalem**, June 14-16. The main theme of the conference is intended to provide an exciting forum for the presentation of future-oriented research on scientific, technological, social, political, economic, legal, administrative, educational, and cultural developments in Israel in relation to global conditions and trends. The conference invites submissions from scholars in Israel and abroad conducting research on Israel in all spheres of knowledge. Additional information on the conference is posted occasionally on the AIS website: <http://www.aisisraelstudies.org/ais.htm>

The *5th Triple Helix Conference* is to be held in **Turin**, Italy and will be organised by the Fondazione Rosselli. The topics of the 5th Triple Helix Conference will deal with the Forms of Knowledge (Generation, Access and Capitalization of Knowledge). This meeting will represent a work in progress about the questions that have emerged in the past conferences and an appropriate answer to the new demands for

progress. The 5th Triple Helix Conference provides an opportunity to highlight the issues and draw a new group of participants into the research and policy debate. The aim of the conference is to show the different approaches of development research and the interaction between Industry, Government and University at worldwide level. The Conference will host representatives of the Economic, Industrial, Academic and Political sphere, coming from the five continents. The Third World participation is a very important element for the success of the Triple Helix Conference. The Triple Helix Conference will be the opportunity to explain the new forms of development in the different countries both at a regional and national level. During the three days in Torino a few visits to the town, either from a cultural and Industrial point of view, will be organized. Information: Loet Leydesdorff Amsterdam School of Communications Research (ASCoR) Kloveniersburgwal 48, 1012 CX Amsterdam Tel.: +31-20- 525 6598; fax: +31-20- 525 3681, loet@leydesdorff.net

The major international conference, *Nature Enhanced*, will take place on June 22-25th 2004 at the Department of Landscape, **University of Sheffield**, UK. Full details are available on the Conference web site: http://www.shef.ac.uk/landscape/nature_enhanced.html. The aim of the conference is to explore a new contract between nature and culture in the planning, design and management of urban green spaces, and in particular focuses on the visual qualities of 'new naturalistic' landscape vegetation and plantings, and the practical aspects of their establishment and management. The conference builds on the extensive research and practice carried out on this subject in the Department of Landscape at Sheffield and other institutions across the world over the past decade. These new landscapes should be ecologically rich and important for biodiversity, but, crucially, as well as being environmentally-beneficial, must also be attractive and aesthetically acceptable to the average urban citizen. This conference will be the first of its type that integrates ecological, aesthetic and cultural values within the 'nature in cities' agenda, and we hope it will herald a new era of more sustainable, ecologically-rich and culturally-accessible urban landscapes. Conference speakers include the leading thinkers, practitioners and designers in the field

from both Europe and the United States. The conference will be highly valuable to landscape architects, environmental planners, urban regeneration personnel, horticulturists, landscape managers, urban community groups, nature conservation organisations, environmental educators, architects. If you would like to prepare a poster (max size A1) on your practice or research in this field, for display at the conference, please send us an abstract of not more than 200 words by email to j.d.hitchmough@sheffield.ac.uk. Please label your email as Nature Enhanced Poster. The Poster Panel of the Conference Organising Committee will review all abstracts and contact you as to whether your poster proposal has been accepted, and supply guidance on formats. The conference is supported by English Nature, The Royal Horticultural Society, Cabe Space, Eden Project, ILAM, National Urban Forestry Unit, Sensory Trust and Landlife.

The *International Society for the Philosophy of Chemistry* is holding its 8th Summer Symposium at Hatfield College, **University of Durham** on Sunday 15th - Wednesday 18th August 2004. Previous summer symposia of the International Society for the Philosophy of Chemistry have provided a forum for philosophers and chemists to present papers on metaphysical, epistemological, methodological, semantic, logical and historical issues raised by thinking about the subject matter and science of chemistry. The 8th Summer Symposium will continue this tradition. Papers are therefore invited on any topic in the philosophy of chemistry. If you would like to present a paper, please send a title and abstract (of around 300 words) to Robin Hendry, as an email attachment in Word or RTF formats, or (preferably) in the body of an email message. You should also give your postal and email address, and academic affiliation. I will notify you as soon as possible whether your abstract has been accepted. The deadline for submitting an abstract is Saturday 1 May 2004. The deadline for registration for the conference is Thursday 1 July. For further details see <http://www.dur.ac.uk/philosophy.department/general/events/ISPC.html>. Please contact Dr RF Hendry Department of Philosophy University of Durham, 50 Old Elvet Durham DH1 3HN UK, r.f.hendry@durham.ac.uk

Opportunities available

The University of Edinburgh invites applications for two ESRC postgraduate studentships in the field of Science and Technology Studies (STS). These are tenable on a 1+3 basis (i.e. one year taking the MSc by Research in STS, plus three years of PhD study) or on a +3 basis for students who have already completed the ESRC research training requirements. The studentships may be held by UK citizens, and will cover fees, research costs and a maintenance allowance, or by other EU nationals, in which case only fees and research costs are payable. Applications should be made on an ESRC postgraduate studentship application form downloadable from the ESRC website: www.esrc.ac.uk/esrccontent/postgradfunding/studentships2004.asp. Applicants should consult Dr Steve Sturdy, Postgraduate Advisor in Science and Technology Studies, University of Edinburgh (s.sturdy@ed.ac.uk) before completing the form. Completed applications should be submitted to Dr Sturdy at the Science Studies Unit, University of Edinburgh, 21 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9LN, Scotland, UK. The deadline for applications is 31 March 2004. Further information about the University of Edinburgh's postgraduate research degrees in Science and Technology Studies may be found on the programme website at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/gsss/sts/index.html>. Applications are also invited for an ESRC postgraduate studentship (1+3 or +3) on "social studies of finance". Details of the application procedure may be found at <http://www.ed.ac.uk/gsss/newfunding04.html>

The Department of Philosophy at the University of Durham invites applications for this 3-year Wellcome Trust funded PhD studentship, tenable from 1 October 2004, from candidates holding, or being about to complete, a Master's degree preferably in History of Medicine or History of Science, or in History. The successful candidate will carry out full-time research for his/her PhD on the topic "Clinical Science in Newcastle and Durham medical societies, 1848-1914" under the supervision of Professor Andreas-Holger Maehle. The candidate's ability to contribute to the lively research culture of the Department of Philosophy and the University's Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease

(<http://www.dur.ac.uk/chmd/index.htm>) will be essential. The studentship consists of a stipend (£14,247 p.a. in year 1, rising to £15,843 p.a. in year 3) plus £2,940 p.a. towards the payment of PhD fees. For an outline of the project, please see <http://www.dur.ac.uk/a.h.maehle/clinicalscience.htm>. Informal enquiries may be made to Prof. A.-H. Maehle, e-mail: a.h.maehle@durham.ac.uk. Applications including a covering letter, full CV, and two letters of reference should be sent to: Prof. A.-H. Maehle, Chair of History of Medicine and Medical Ethics, Dept. of Philosophy, University of Durham, 50 Old Elvet, Durham DH1 3HN, United Kingdom. Closing Date for applications: 15 April 2004

Applications for Research Studentships are invited by the James Martin Institute for Science and Civilization at the University of Oxford's Saïd Business School. The mission of the James Martin Institute is to initiate and conduct research on significant issues related to science, technology and society. The business school continues to develop major research interests in this field. Current topics include the social impact of new electronic technologies, science and governance, technology and accountability, science entrepreneurship, risk and the environment, evidence, digital imaging, and eScience and eSocial Science. In addition to the James Martin Institute www.martininstitute.ox.ac.uk, it is currently home to the ESRC Science in Society programme [<http://sbs-xnet.sbs.ox.ac.uk/scisoc>] and, until recently, the ESRC Virtual Society? programme [<http://virtualsociety.sbs.ox.ac.uk/intro.htm>]. Applicants will have experience and/or interests in any area of the social dimensions of science and technology, and should indicate how the proposed area of study contributes to issues in the research literature in science and technology studies and/or science and technology policy. They will normally already have some social science or humanities research training (to Masters level) and will register for a DPhil degree. However, in exceptional circumstances, they may be admitted to follow the MSc in Management Research in the first instance. The studentships are to the value of full time home / EU (or overseas) fees plus a stipend towards

living costs. The studentship includes opportunities for some teaching and research assistance. The deadline for applications is 31st March 2004. For further information and application forms please contact Audrey Leishman, Research Degrees Coordinator quoting STS-2004 at audrey.leishman@sbs.ox.ac.uk.

Two Visiting Studentships (Lady Margaret Hall College, Oxford University) and Junior Research Associates (IEG, Oxford University) in the Philosophy of Computing and Information (including computer ethics) are available. Lady Margaret Hall College, Oxford University (<http://www.lmh.ox.ac.uk/>) proposes, if candidates of sufficient merit present themselves, to offer two non-stipendiary visiting studentships in the philosophy of computing and information (including computer ethics), tenable from 1st October 2005 for at least two and preferably three terms (full academic year). The successful candidate will be considered for two non-stipendiary positions as Junior Research Associate of the Information Ethics research Group (<http://web.comlab.ox.ac.uk/oucl/research/areas/ieg/>). The successful candidates will develop their projects in collaboration with Drs Luciano Floridi and Jeff Sanders. It is expected that

News from the profession

The social study of stem cell research
The Danish Social Science Research Council has recently granted funding to a new STS-related project which will aim at investigating the social processes involved in the generation of a new biomedical research field: stem cell research. The project seeks to investigate how the organisational setting of stem cell research is produced within contemporary governance of science; it explores the impact of hopes and expectations in the public and among policy makers; the generation of new 'moral landscapes' as well as experiences of the actors involved, be they lab scientists, health professionals, couples donating fertilized eggs, pharmaceutical companies, politicians.

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candidates will entirely support themselves financially. This includes payment of college fees and accommodation.

Applications can be sent to Luciano Floridi, luciano.floridi@philosophy.oxford.ac.uk and must include 1) a detailed project of research (3000 ws); 2) an updated CV; and 3) two letters of recommendation.

The closing date for applications is Tuesday 1 June, 2004.

The Society for the Social History of Medicine (SSHM) invites submissions to its 2004 Roy Porter Student Essay Prize Competition. This prize will be awarded to the best original, unpublished essay in the social history of medicine submitted to the competition as judged by the SSHM's assessment panel. It is named in honour of the late Professor Roy Porter, a great teacher and a generous scholar. The competition is open to undergraduate and post-graduate students in full or part-time education. The winner will be awarded £500.00, and his or her entry may also be published in the journal, *Social History of Medicine*. Further details and entry forms can be down-loaded from the SSHM's website <http://www.sshm.org>. Alternatively, please contact competition@sshm.org. The deadline for entries is: 31 December 2004.

This implies studying the generation of new cultural significance and processes of establishing new networks of interaction between the clinic, the university laboratory, the company, the legal system and the public. The research group is organized as a core of junior and senior researchers, headed by professor, dr.phil., Lene Koch at the Department of Health Services Research at the Institute of Public Health, University of Copenhagen. The interdisciplinary core group is associated with a collaborating network of international researchers as well as independent clinical and laboratory researchers from other departments and industry. The core group includes researchers from biology, health

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services research, history, anthropology, legal science, and communication studies. We hereby wish to invite interested parties in contacting us for further information and possible collaborations. Claus Emmeche (Cyborgology), emmeche@nbi.dk Birthe Dalsgård (Exposition), birteds@yahoo.dk Mette Hartlev (Law), Mette.Hartlev@jur.ku.dk Klaus Hoeyer, (Storage practices) k.hoeyer@pubhealth.ku.dk Maja Horst (Public communication), mh.jp@cbs.dk Lotte Huniche (Patient organisations), L.Huniche@health.sdu.dk Lene Koch (Biopolitical developments), L.koch@pubhealth.ku.dk Mette Nordahl Svendsen (Donor perspectives), mns@dsi.dk

With the support of a £325,000 Wellcome Trust Enhancement Award, the Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease at the University of Durham and the medical historians at the University of Newcastle have formed a joint new centre for the history of medicine. The activities of the new centre comprise a co-ordinated research programme, a Masters training programme in the History of Medicine, a number of PhD projects, a series of seminars, workshops and conferences, teaching initiatives within the medical curriculum, and a series of public engagement activities. For further information about the centre please visit the centre's website: <http://www.dur.ac.uk/chmd/dnchm/dnindex.htm>

The Journal of the Association for History and Computing needs to expand its roster of book reviewers. If you are interested in the combination of history and technology and would like to assist the Journal and its parent association, The American Association for History and Computing, please contact me off-list with a description of your professional interests. Contact: Julie Holcomb, College and Special Collections Archivist, Pearce Collections at Navarro College, Navarro College Archives, 3100 W. Collin St., Corsicana, Texas 75110, USA, tel 1-903-875-7438, fax 903-875-7593, julie.holcomb@navarrocollege.edu, <http://www.pearcecollections.us>, <http://www.navarrocollege.edu/library/archives>.

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The School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Kent is offering a new MA programme on Risk and Society. This is the first degree of its type in the United Kingdom. The programme provides an interdisciplinary social science perspective on debates over the character of 'risk society'. Students are involved in the critical analysis of risk in relation to developments in contemporary sociology, social policy, health policy and criminal justice. Risk perceptions, attitudes and behaviours are studied in a wide variety of social contexts and institutional settings. If any of your students are interested, please pass on the contact details. <http://www.kent.ac.uk/sspsr/postgrad/marisk.htm>, Dr Iain Wilkinson, School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, Cornwallis Building, University of Kent at Canterbury, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7NF, UK, Tel: +44 01227 824328, Fax: +44 01227 827005/82401, email: I.M.Wilkinson@kent.ac.uk, web: <http://www.kent.ac.uk/sspsr/staff/wilkinson.htm>

Rethinking History: The Journal of Theory and Practice (Routledge) seeks papers or proposals for several issues devoted to the topic 'The Future of the Past'. The editors will not provide examples of possible topics or themes -- it is, after all, the visions and imaginaries of historians in the broadest sense of the word (including academics, filmmakers, novelists, biographers, graphic artists, museum directors, etc) who will create the past in the future. What we wish to encourage is creative, experimental, innovative and unconventional pieces that think, rethink, theorize, and also practice possible future histories. Based on the excellent response to our earlier cfp deadline (end of September 2003) for submitting proposals we wish to extend this second call to January 31st, 2004; the deadline for submitting completed manuscripts is June 30, 2004. The theme will now be addressed over several issues and this will be published during 2004-05. Proposals may be submitted electronically (by e-mail attachment) to either address. Completed submissions should be sent in three hard copies and on pc disk to either editor who are always happy to discuss your ideas even before the proposal stage. For further information contact the editors.

Epistemology and History on the Web, the journal, intends to explore the consequences for our engagement with the past as it is represented in digital form on the web. This raises many

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