

In reality, goals are absent.

Nietzsche

Rivalry is only a spectacle; it is the state of appearance. Equilibrium is phenomenal, and the distance is real. The law of opposition belongs to phenomenology; the law of irreversibility or of falling downstream is real. Behind all representation.

Michel Serres

A Genealogy of Modern Science

Science appears to begin with the Greeks: somehow, somewhere, a resentful pre-scientific impulse begins to criticize the unity of life and culture. Some say that before this interruption, there must be an alien infiltration (the arguments for Oriental contributions to Greek culture,) but ultimately the “true” source is irrelevant, for it is this real criticism, this faithful engagement with the material culture, with everyday life, that is at once of the greatest importance, that is the authentic germ of enlightenment (Greek or otherwise.) For this criticism already contains a larval critique of creativity, of society, and most important for the development of a scientific instinct, a criticism of divinity and images. By Plato and Aristotle, science will separate itself completely from creativity, from works of the imagination and from art. Plato’s criticism of images (what we would call “advertising”) is well-known; Kant’s rejection of the empirical as a source for truth reproduces the same critique in reverse. In short, it is by rigorously separating life and culture that science discovers itself positively (i.e., as this objective dissociation, this symmetrically dis-sociative personality.)

Thus has discovery has been the dominant tone of scientific research for thousands of years. Science becomes a game of discovery, of exploring the infinite folding and unfolding of symmetry patterns; but it would still have yet to realize itself as a creative, affirmative power as in the healing intuition behind the Greek enlightenment. Even the “great crime” of institutionalization, the Greek incarceration of science’s chaotic (a-cultural) discoveries back into an associative hierarchical (living) series, was a necessary phase of development.

Particular scientific apparatuses are anomalies, since it is not the self-organizing ‘system’ of science which matters, but the willing behind science, that peculiar instinct of the Greeks, which is already the entire point: creative joy is the real power behind science, the light by which we understand it and communicate it. Observation and experimentation open exchanges through which generative flows may coalesce. But science has not realized its own creativity, is still young enough to feel ashamed of itself as a half-formed creature. Science has yet to have reintegrated creation as one of its proper modes (though of course discovery already demands a great deal of creativity — in timing and problem selection, for instance.)

Modern scientism refuses re-association with the divine; but in order to proceed, rather than choose pure (‘logical’) refusal, *it must finish dissociation*, it must finally destroy the fission between life and culture. Here our human fascination within symmetry is perhaps our greatest

blind spot. The persistent image of a secret truth behind events, a spark of the divine, seems always to lie in wait to lure us away from a clarified scientific ontology.

Creativity is one of the lures of symmetry; thus, such an ontology would necessarily dissociate creativity, in order to (continually) produce a more creative conception of science (that truly has no need of divinity, or even images.) Thus science proceeds on an extra-imaginary path towards an enlightenment which it never possesses. Not light, but science itself moves in the ethereal.

What is the ethereal? A space of transformation, a gradient. Science dares to diagram black holes. Science moves towards infinite darkness, towards null singularity, the ethereal object of scientific critique. And it is much rather us, our machines and our history, the scientists' themselves, which are the 'dirt' to be transcended, the material objects of science's critique. Clearly, dissociation is not this (more-or-less artificial) distinction between the ethereal and the material; rather, it is the actual trans-individuation of the material into the ethereal and back. In other words, a critical transcendence instead of a theological transcendence. The return to the material, the implementation or diagnosis is the most powerful moment of affirmation in science; a diagnosis or theory must be arrived at creatively, but it is also a demand upon creativity to respond to the diagnosis, to test the theory. Transcendence occurs only by anomaly, by creativity. Hence we must first-away affirm (as soon as we hear some 'call' to a divinity to guarantee stability, integrity, probability, etc.) there is yet a second lure to a clearer science — the image of the future war machine. The two lures are the same, or rather, they are part of the same machine. This asymmetrical war machine is the spark of untruth flashing in between regimes of scientific "truth." With a hard eye for anti-symmetry, for counter-symmetries, we have the beginning of a truly modern science.

Information and Noise

There is no irreducible ontological division between noise and image, between information and form, only spaces of transformation between noises and images, between forms and information. This fluent, morphogenetic convergence remains intractable to a solid, clumsy-fingered science; the apparent series are related genealogically, and their law of participation evolves with them. Every age, every language has taken stock of this 'primordial' divergence in its own unique way. Yet with science a new thought awakens, one capable of rending this hasty division in twain. Out of the depths of division, we begin to reach for the heights of multiplicity, of chance. The void is not sutured to itself, it folds in upon itself; the point of connection is the space of the fold, the ontological division but the line of the fold.

Anomalies tell stories. Their birth, their generation differed; they remind us that difference is the force of history, that matter naturally combines and integrates forces, but at differing speeds giving rise to all kinds of different forms and processes. Creativity is a power resting ultimately in matter itself; matter is itself productive of new forms.

A joyous and revolutionary science doesn't liberate from war; it liberates from fascism, from the force of habit and from lack of creativity. Science inspires creativity, it awakens us to the creativity already embodied within us, within matter — in many ways this is its highest and proudest achievement.

If science could learn to affirm probability, at all scales and in infinite dimensions, (that probability interpenetrates space,) it would still then have to learn the epic resistance requisite for the refusal of enlightenment.

To resist is to bring about difference through stability, through remaining unchanged, unmoved, undifferentiated. Revolution is pure difference, pure anomaly, pure capacity. Science is first about discovering what resists revolutions (always advantageous for the war machine) but later it can pause and ask a second, stranger question — but in what do revolutions resist?

This second question aims at my point: revolutions exist only as pure symmetry. From the standpoint of the state, they are pure chaos. As more perspective is gained, their disorder appears to contain a secret order no less complex than that the state, perhaps even moreso because it is tactically organized to outrun and escape the state.

A complex network is a symmetry group: it is pure information.

A revolution is a miniature signal-sign network, a tiny parasite. The transmitted image of the state gets blurred, stretched, distorted; it becomes a dangerous call to disorder, an anomalous signal disturbing the delicate balance of the heterogeneous multiplicity. It induces and precipitates crisis, but it is already a crisis.

It threatens (further) symmetry-breaking, it demands a reevaluation. Science evolves through revolutionary refusal; reevaluation never lasts. Revolution takes time to foment but it breaks loose in an instant. The flash of lightning governs the universe. First this way...

Revolution takes place immanently, it is the opening up of a field of political intensities, the arrival of a counter-organization. Why is the social war-machine so often a religious one, centered around a name, a sign, a sacred place? But what is important are the exceptions: social movements without a cause, or with conflicting and impossible demands, which rupture the state space and invite new machines to explore new spaces.

Scientific revolution is needed to break with the war machine — but always in order to produce new war machines! When science becomes positive, when it dissociates itself from life, when it dissociates life from culture, it thereby ungrounds the state, creates or taps into deep and turbulent forces rumbling beneath surfaces and through the earth. We still do not yet know of what a body is capable; science's most secret prayer is that it never will, this is its primary dissociation, its logical revolt or refusal of mysticism. The scientific spirit becomes awakened through the rejection of negative transcendence, through the positive transcendence of radical critique — but this smooth revolutionary space is not enough, new machines must be created, they must dig into the new earth. Science lives beneath utopia, as though separated only by the thinnest pane of glass (just as the scientific perspective itself is at many points only minimally separated from everyday life.)