

THE TRAVAILS OF SCIENCE

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Abstract

Argument

This paper has the purpose of showing the identity between science and technology from within scientific language. The traditional philosophical argument in favour of this identity is briefly examined, through the work of Heidegger. Then, following Henri Atlan (“Ordres et Significations”. 1979. *Le crystal et la fumée. Essai sur l’organisation du vivant*. Paris: Éd. Du Seuil) the scientific definitions of order and disorder are reviewed; then Boltzmann’s statistical formulation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics is discussed, to show that such a Law could only appear in the context of Modernity and the Industrial Revolution. In fact, the concept of “mechanical work” would be the “missing link” assimilating science to techno-science, to technology.

The paper also discusses the consequences of such an assimilation, and the resistance with which it is usually received by the science community. This resistance arises from the loss of the unconditional character of scientific truth. The concept of the “unconditional”, its genealogy and ethic relevance within Modern philosophical thought, from Spinoza to Kant and Wittgenstein, are discussed. Finally, Emmanuel Lévinas’ Ethics is introduced: for Lévinas, in fact, the recovery of the unconditional character of the ethical (and also, of cognitive truth) requires that the dialogic character of all kind of statements be taken into account.

Keywords:

Science, Technology, techno-science, 2nd Law of Thermodynamics, Atlan, Heidegger, Lévinas, unconditional, ethics.
