

The Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences
has the pleasure to invite you to the international conference

Transformation, degradation, disappearance of scientific objects

that will be held in Prague, Czech Republic, June 14-15, 2016
(Jilská Street 1, Prague 1)

In the course of the 20th century, the history of science has been emancipated from the scheme of linear progress which would inexorably bring the scholars ever closer to the truth of reality. At the time of their introduction in the epistemological discourse, the concepts of *paradigm* and *scientific revolution*, just like that of *épistémè*, for example, thus testified to the emphasis placed onto the ruptures affecting the history of scientific knowledge. Surprisingly enough, the readings investigating the complexity of the abandonment of ‘scientific objects’ and yielding to a new science, are rare. Thus, at the time when the ‘inventions’, the ‘constructions’, the ‘genealogies’ of objects, classifications, practices and scientific problems appear at the heart of numerous current scholarship in history and philosophy of science, we would like to draw the attention to a marginalized phenomenon, not to say a neglected one, which is the process of the ‘disappearance’ of ‘scientific objects’.

We suggest that the notion of ‘scientific objects’ can be understood in a twofold way. It includes not only what a knowing subject aims at, i.e. the object of scientific thought in the strict sense, the one that the science strives to know when answering the questions which organize it. The notion also comprises various elements of science’s architecture, fed by knowledge it produces: the experimental devices, the method, the forms of expression, the criteria of verification, etc. (it seems appropriate to call ‘epistemic objects’ these elements of science in order to distinguish them from the ‘objects’ the scientific thought examines).

We invite therefore to explore the ‘fine structure’ of the dynamics of science, while insisting on the assertion that the disappearance of scientific objects is not reducible to their pure and simple absence. Even if proven inadequate, obsolete or null, the outmoded scientific objects do not faint purely and simply from the scientific practice. Consequently, we intend to

study their shifts and transformations and examine the frequent prolongation of their efficiency.

Thereby we offer a hypothesis that trajectories of ‘scientific objects’, extremely varied as they are, find themselves fashioned by the transformations of these objects, the oscillations of their status, their progressive deformations, etc. These alterations establish various modalities of a process of disappearance, which is in fact only rarely achieved abruptly. We thus raise the following questions: How does knowledge abandon its objects? What transformations do the latter undergo? What degradations are they prone to? Is there some logic of disappearance affiliated either to the structure of the reality or to the nature of the discipline that deals with it? These questions take on particular importance for disciplines in which profound breaks and scientific revolutions are blurred, as it is the case for the social sciences. Yet it seems appropriate to address them in the natural sciences as well in a hope of a renewal of their philosophies.

Invited speakers:

Prof. Theodore Arabatzis (National and Kapodistrian University of Athens)

Prof. Amy Dahan Dalmedico (Centre Alexandre Koyré, CNRS, Paris)

Prof. Ladislav Kvasz (The Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)

Prof. Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin)

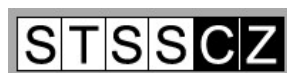
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8 papers altogether will be presented within two days (30 minutes per presentation + 20-30 minutes for discussion). To submit a paper, please prepare an abstract (1 page) before 28 March 2016.

A thematic issue of the journal *Theory of Science* on the conference topic is projected. See the independent call for papers here (the journal does not restrict the range of its contributors to the conference participants): <http://teorievedy.flu.cas.cz/>



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