

Foreword

Science in Context wishes to integrate into the discourse of science studies the contributions of scholars unknown to the reader in English. We therefore introduced in former issues “classical” texts in English translation (see the papers by Grossmann in *SiC* 1.1, by Duhem in *SiC* 1.2, by Fleck in *SiC* 2.2, and by Lewin in *SiC* 5.2), and we plan to continue with the publication of such texts in coming issues.

Beginning with this issue, we wish to widen our scope by including little-known contemporary schools and approaches in science studies. Such sections should consist of a presentation by a foremost representative of such an approach, as well as a few papers of related scholars. *SiC* would welcome suggestions for further sections of this sort.

The present section focuses on the contemporary French philosopher and historian of science François Dagognet. Although Dagognet’s background refers to the school of Gaston Bachelard and Georges Canguilhem, there are some convergencies with contemporary trends of research in Anglo-Saxon countries.

Since Dagognet characterizes his work in his presentation, there is not need to summarize it here. We merely highlight some central threads in his thought: the focus on experimental manipulations, by means of which both new materials for practical and theoretical investigation and new scientific objects are being created (hence the comparison between the plastic arts and laboratory work); the emphasis on second-order nature by means of classification, taxonomies, and iconic and graphic representations such as maps, charts, and similar means of representing the world; the importance of internal realism, and thus the rejection of idealist ontology and epistemology; and finally the role of science in shaping both socially coherent and socially influential views on the world (the scientific-political dimensions of cognitive activities).