

***Knowing Humanity in the Social World***  
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Exploring the interplay between scientific knowledge and humanity remains important since scientific knowledge remains one of the most powerful forces for improvement of the world and humanity. Scientific knowledge based on nanosciences, synthetic biology and computer technology is changing humanity. Here, ‘humanity’ designates the quality that makes humans distinct from non-humans. Steve Fuller’s social epistemology addresses the shifting dynamic between scientific knowledge and humanity.

Taking up the uniqueness of Fuller’s social epistemology, my current research adds to the discussion in *Legitimizing Scientific Knowledge: An Introduction to Steve Fuller’s Social Epistemology* (LSK, 2003). My book focuses on normative issues of how scientific knowledge should be organized and legitimized compared to philosophy of science and SSK. My research covers Fuller’s recent focus on the university, traditionally as the premier site of knowledge production, and its struggle with neoliberal forces. I also cover the changing boundary conditions of the knower due to threatened changes in humanity coming from nanosciences, synthetic biology and computer technology. On this host of issues, Fuller’s concern includes knowledge policy and epistemic justice.

On scientific knowledge, Fuller’s criticizes STS for providing a descriptive account of science and not a normative account. STS, particularly the Edinburgh School, demystified the account of scientific knowledge given by philosophers of science. While STS is the discipline with which he is most generally associated, Fuller condemns STS’ lack of knowledge policy and relativism. In terms of his defense of humanity, Fuller responds to discussions initiated by Latour, who argues for removing the distinction between humans and non-humans both in matters of research and of policy.

Fuller argues that STS has not developed its own goals and is increasingly client-driven in these neoliberal times. With the impact of neoliberalism, a period when clients can strongly influence how academic knowledge is produced, Fuller defends the university, which is a social technology, as the premier site for knowledge production for the public good. On the basis of epistemic justice, Fuller recommends the classical Humboldtian notion of the university that emphasizes both research and teaching.

My research also focuses on the changing boundaries conditions of the knower. The knower now is not the same as the knower of the future in which humans can be enhanced through biotechnology, genetic engineering and synthetic biology (i.e., humans 2.0). *Humanity 2.0* can be considered a milestone in Fuller's later work since it brings together his discussions in other works on the foundation of the social sciences (*The New Sociological Imagination*) and the intelligent design debate (*Dissent over Descent*). As Fuller's social epistemology concerns the social transformation of knowledge, the exploration of the changing boundary conditions of the knower is critical. With the enhancement of humanity through biotechnology, genetic engineering and synthetic biology, the knower's identity and social epistemic status can change. With the advancement of computer and digital technology, avatars can be created and, thereby, the identity of the knower extended. The interface between the knower and the world has

changed because the knower can be changed through either human enhancement or avatars.

As biotechnology, genetic engineering and synthetic biology change humanity, what does it mean to be human? What is the distinctiveness of humanity? As humanity is the locus of the social sciences, this book focuses on the changing boundary conditions of biology (race) and ideology (religion) for humanity. With the welfare state as the location of the battle between biology and ideology on humanity, Fuller defends the distinctiveness of humanity. He diagnoses the problem of humanity to be a bipolar disorder between our animal nature (biology) and our search for transcendence of nature (ideology). Are we closer to animals as advocated by Darwinism, or are we closer to God as advocated by Christianity? In current debates, the positions can be portrayed as between the poles of Peter Singer's animal liberation or Ray Kurzweil's spiritual machines.

For Fuller, humanity (which is moral) is the social sciences' central project and consists of socially organized resistance to the natural selection and natural forces through collective projects such as Christianity, the university and the state. Participation in large-scale projects allows humans to control or even reverse the effects of natural selection. Fuller finds that the classical sociologists — Durkheim, Marx, and Weber — concur with his characterization of the project of humanity. Essential to Fuller's concept of the project of humanity is the redistribution of wealth through the state. Fuller recognizes Foucault's notion that the human sciences, as a body of knowledge, was created in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the 20<sup>th</sup> century, man has died — human sciences, as a body of knowledge, are in question. Fuller connects humanity to transhumanism — the view that humanity can be enhanced or redesigned through technology. With converging technologies, biotechnology, nanotechnology and computer technology, humanity can be transformed to an enhanced version of humanity — humanity 2.0.

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