

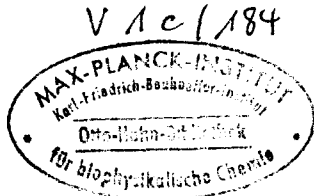
# We Have Never Been Modern

**Bruno Latour**

translated by Catherine Porter



New York London Toronto Sydney Tokyo Singapore



*Nous n'avons jamais été modernes* was first published  
in French by Editions La Découverte  
© Editions La Découverte, 1991

This translation © 1993 by Harvester Wheatsheaf  
and the President and Fellows of Harvard College

First published 1993 by  
Harvester Wheatsheaf  
Campus 400, Maylands Avenue  
Hemel Hempstead  
Hertfordshire, HP2 7EZ  
A division of  
Simon & Schuster International Group



© La Découverte 1991

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be  
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted,  
in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical,  
photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior  
permission, in writing, from the publisher.

Typeset in 10/12pt Sabon  
by Pentacor PLC, High Wycombe

Printed and bound in Great Britain by  
BPC Wheatons Ltd

---

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

---

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 0-7450-0682-5 (hbk)  
ISBN 0-7450-1321-X (pbk)

---

1 2 3 4 5 97 96 95 94 93

# CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	ix
<b>1 CRISIS</b>	1
1.1 The Proliferation of Hybrids	1
1.2 Retying the Gordian Knot	3
1.3 The Crisis of the Critical Stance	5
1.4 1989: The Year of Miracles	8
1.5 What Does It Mean To Be A Modern?	10
<b>2 CONSTITUTION</b>	13
2.1 The Modern Constitution	13
2.2 Boyle and His Objects	15
2.3 Hobbes and His Subjects	18
2.4 The Mediation of the Laboratory	20
2.5 The Testimony of Nonhumans	22
2.6 The Double Artifact of the Laboratory and the Leviathan	24
2.7 Scientific Representation and Political Representation	27
2.8 The Constitutional Guarantees of the Modern	29
2.9 The Fourth Guarantee: The Crossed-out God	32
2.10 The Power of the Modern Critique	35
2.11 The Invincibility of the Moderns	37
2.12 What the Constitution Clarifies and What It Obscures	39
2.13 The End of Denunciation	43
2.14 We Have Never Been Modern	46

<b>3</b>	<b>REVOLUTION</b>	49
3.1	The Moderns, Victims of Their Own Success	49
3.2	What Is a Quasi-Object?	51
3.3	Philosophies Stretched Over the Yawning Gap	55
3.4	The End of Ends	59
3.5	Semiotic Turns	62
3.6	Who Has Forgotten Being?	65
3.7	The Beginning of the Past	67
3.8	The Revolutionary Miracle	70
3.9	The End of the Passing Past	72
3.10	Triage and Multiple Times	74
3.11	A Copernican Counter-revolution	76
3.12	From Intermediaries to Mediators	79
3.13	Accusation, Causation	82
3.14	Variable Ontologies	85
3.15	Connecting the Four Modern Repertoires	88
<b>4</b>	<b>RELATIVISM</b>	91
4.1	How to End the Asymmetry	91
4.2	The Principle of Symmetry Generalized	94
4.3	The Import–Export System of the Two Great Divides	97
4.4	Anthropology Comes Home from the Tropics	100
4.5	There Are No Cultures	103
4.6	Sizeable Differences	106
4.7	Archimedes' <i>coup d'état</i>	109
4.8	Absolute Relativism and Relativist Relativism	111
4.9	Small Mistakes Concerning the Disenchantment of the World	114
4.10	Even a Longer Network Remains Local at All Points	117
4.11	The Leviathan is a Skein of Networks	120
4.12	A Perverse Taste for the Margins	122
4.13	Avoid Adding New Crimes to Old	125
4.14	Transcendences Abound	127
<b>5</b>	<b>REDISTRIBUTION</b>	130
5.1	The Impossible Modernization	130
5.2	Final Examinations	132
5.3	Humanism Redistributed	136
5.4	The Nonmodern Constitution	138
5.5	The Parliament of Things	142
	<i>Bibliography</i>	146
	<i>Index</i>	154