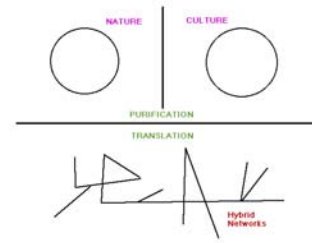
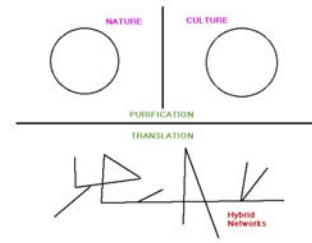


Some Key Aspects of ANT (Actor-Network Theory)



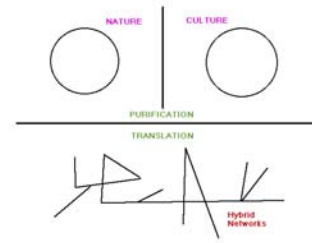
- Actors
 - can be anything(anyone)
 - have choice
 - have scripts to promote (agenda)
- Network
 - actors develop a program to promote a script by conscripting other actors
 - scripts need to be translated by other actors
 - the network reflects the relative strengths of mutual influence among actors
 - the network is dynamic

Some Key Aspects of ANT (Actor-Network Theory)



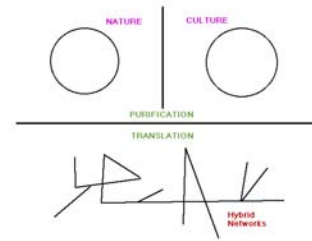
- Symmetry
 - even-handedness
 - similar explanations for "opposed" outcomes
- Applies to many "dichotomies"
 - humans and non-humans
 - success and failure
 - macro and micro
 - nature and culture
 - change and stability
 - among actors
 - system and environment
 - past and future?

Three Flavours of ANT



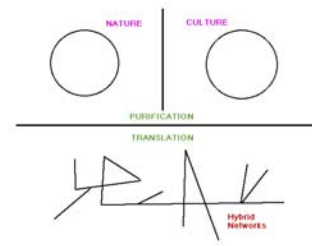
- Bruno Latour
 - (early) emphasis on scripting and (micro) translation - actors interpreting scripts
 - emphasis on hybrids (nature-culture)
 - narrative explanation - follow the actors
- Michel Callon
 - development of programs (projects?)
 - four stages
 - often used to study adoption
- John Law
 - stability of networks (black boxes)
 - ability to be used in different contexts

Use of ANT in IS

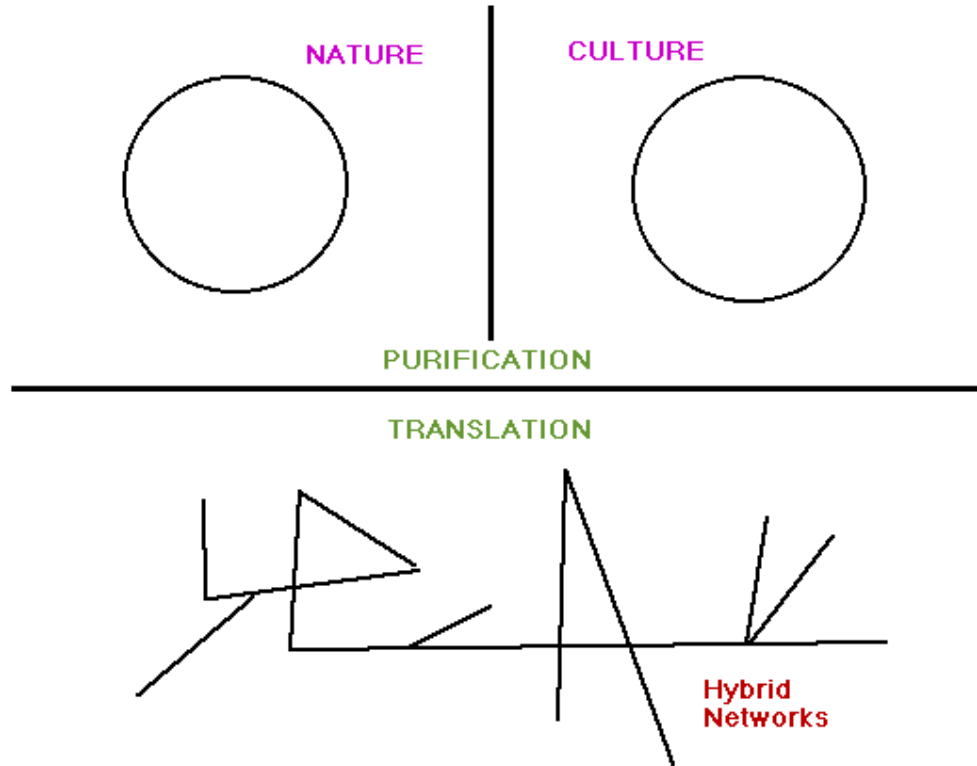
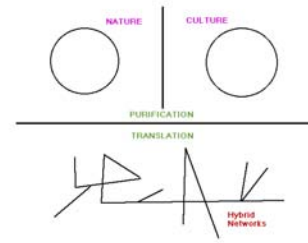


- Steve Woolgar
 - participatory design, IT support
- Ole Hanseth et al
 - adoption of standards, ERP
- Tom McMaster, Richard Vigden
 - theory of adoption, due process
- Brian Bloomfield
 - the dominance of technical discourse in IS design

Using ANT

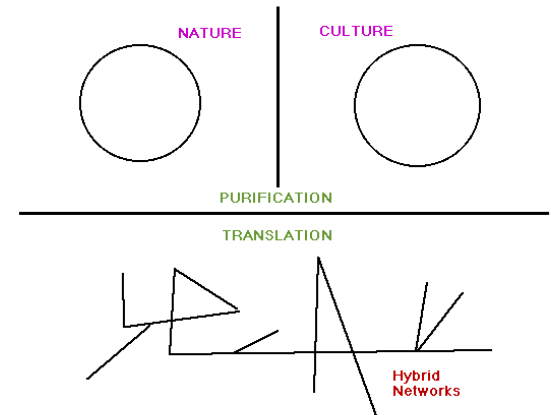
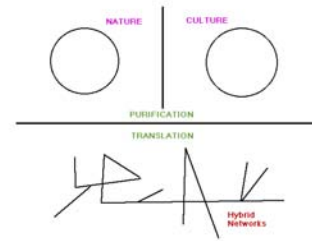


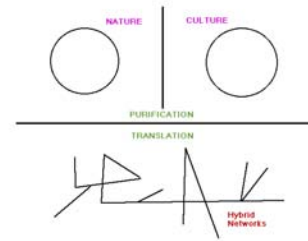
two practices for building meaning



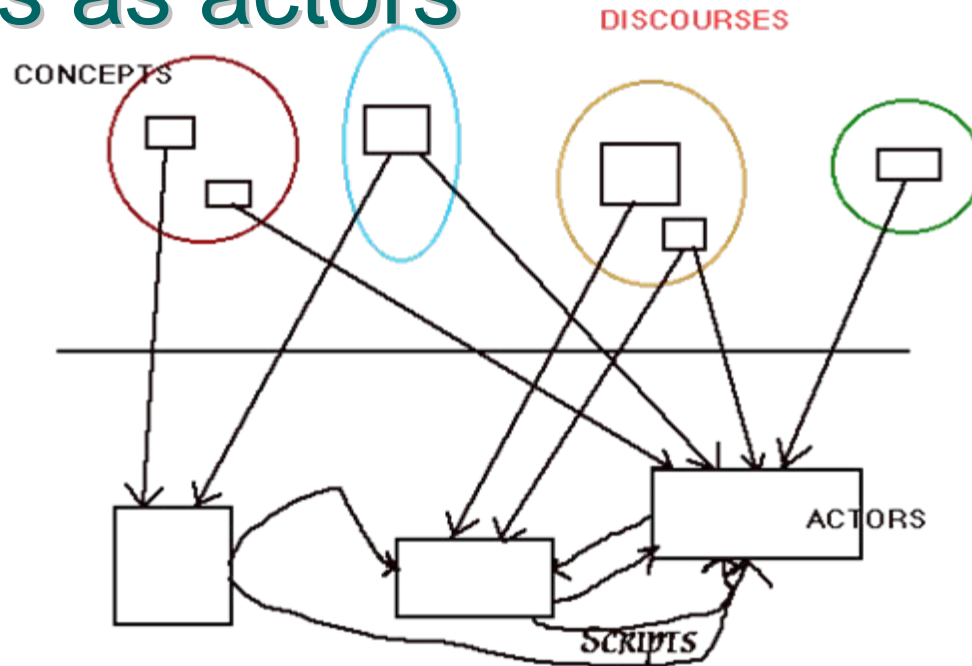
two practices for building meaning

- the dichotomy between nature and culture prevents us from discussing hybrids
- the dichotomy between purification and translation allows us to build hybrids
- experience with hybrids generates ideas about culture and nature
- For IS
 - computer science represents nature
 - social sciences represent culture
 - the hybrids are the systems we build
- the dichotomy between purification and translation broke down when the hybrids became too numerous to ignore
- this leads to the breakdown of the dichotomy between nature and culture, because we don't know where to put the hybrids
- in IS we have always learned about hybrids through building them, but we keep seeking an “underlying theory”

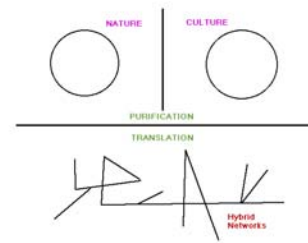




concepts as actors



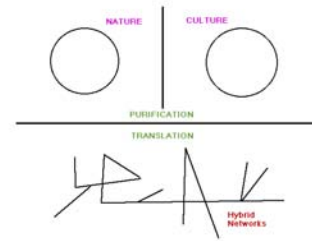
- actors draw on one or more discourses
- concepts as actors send but don't receive scripts
- different concepts from different discourses may have the same sign
- “concept signs” may become detached from external discourses and become part of a local discourse



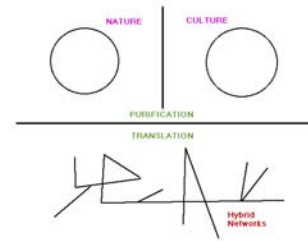
what use is it?

- description of current systems or projects
- sensitivity, facilitation
- slowing down
 - “we are going to have to slow down, reorient and regulate the proliferation of monsters by representing their existence officially”

what use is it?



- theoretically
 - the general is constructed from the particular
 - “we too have to go down and approach the places where the mixtures are made that will become – but only much later – aspects of Nature or of the Social”
 - and hence understand the impacts on technology and society?



further work?

- can we build a methodology?
- can we build a curriculum?
 - ANT studies often avoid theory
 - encourages us to draw on many discourses
 - eventually must confess irrationality and relativism
- authentic cynicism
 - we accept each discourse without believing it