

Culture THROUGH Science : A New World of Images and Stories

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In Europe, information on science came to the public mostly through television. Not only news but also science programmes of which many are excellent across Europe. May be the most efficient way to make science a part of culture is fiction. This trick is as old as science itself. Science and scientists offer opportunities to build attractive stories for many communication media from comics books to grand scale Hollywood productions. Science and Technology provide new settings for classical stories involving emotional situations and also are sources of spectacular images either directly borrowed from laboratories or computed. Science has always been a source of inspiration for novels, science-fiction and fantastic stories [1]. They caught the imaginary and in this way many scientific topics came out of the laboratory to become part of ordinary citizens' conversations or even contribute to create social problems. Over the years the classical image of the mad scientist is replaced by a vision of scientists much more responsible or even heroic characters. Laboratories do cooperate with scenarists and producers to control the scientificity of the shows especially in the medical domain. The always more spectacular capacity to produce scientific images of the very small and of the very large open new ways to see the world as a micro or macro cosmos. In a society dominated by the show business, science fuels the imaginary of people on many sides, including good ones and bad ones, and is entirely part of our present day culture.

1. Paul Caro, "Science in the media between knowledge and folklore", in *The Future of Science Has Begun: The Communication of Science to the Public, Science and the Media*, Proceedings of the Vth International Conference, Milano 15-16 February 1990, edited by Stephano Colonna (Fondazione Carlo Erba, 1996), pp. 111-132.

Paul Caro is a former (retired) Director of Research at CNRS who has worked for many years in inorganic chemistry. He is a rare earths specialist. In the 80's he became interested in science popularisation through newspaper articles (in "Le Monde" and magazines), radio broadcasts (France Culture, Radio Classique, mostly), television shows (TF1), exhibitions in Museums and some books. He was until 2001 in charge of "scientific affairs" at the Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie in Paris. He has served as an adviser for several DG Research European programs in the field of education and is also a scientific adviser for the Portuguese Program "Ciència Viva". He is a Corresponding Member of the French Academy of Sciences and a Member of the French Academy of Technology.