NanoCulture: The New Technoscience and its Implications for Literature, Art, and Society,
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Preface by Roy Ascott)

A pioneering work, NanoCulture is the first book-length critical study of the
relation of nano-technoscience to literature, art, and culture. NanoCulture
transverses disciplinary boundaries to explore the intricate and complex ways in
which nano-technoscience becomes a cultural production and the modes by
which culture appropriates and transforms what the technoscience means. The
book is published in collaboration with the Nano exhibit, opening in December
2003 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and created by an
interdisciplinary team of artists, scientists, and humanists led by Victoria Vesna,
James Gimzewski, and Katherine Hayles in a setting designed by the
architectural firm of Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee.

Exploring the relation of the Nano exhibit to changing concepts of museum space
is Adriana de Souza e Silva’s “The Invisible Imaginary: Museum Spaces, Hybrid
Reality and Nanotechnology.” Carol Wald’s “Working Boundaries on the Nano
Exhibition” is an ethnographic analysis of the process of creating the exhibit and
its implication for collaborative process.

Another group of essays explores the relation between nano-technoscience and
science fiction. Colin Milburn in “Nanotechnology in the Age of Posthuman
Engineering: Science Fiction as Fiction” argues that nanoscience, in establishing
its legitimacy, both embraces and rejects science fiction, its complementary
other. Brooks Landon in “Less is More: Much Less is Much More: The Insistent
Allure of Nanotechnology Narratives in Science Fiction” suggests why
nanotechnology uniquely fulfills the requirements of “science fiction thinking.” Kate Marshall in “Atomizing the Risk Technology” observes that nanotechnology is mostly a technology of the future and relates this temporality to the technology of risk assessment and reflexive modernity. In “Dust, Lust, and Other Messages from the Quantum Wonderland,” Brian Attebery argues that nanobots are not only creations of the future; they are already us.

A final group of essays explores relations between nano-technoscience and literature. In “Needle on the Real: Technoscience and Poetry at the Limits of Fabrication,” Nathan Brown argues that the scanning tunneling microscope can be understood as a writing instrument and relates its techniques to the ethical and artistic explorations of poets who also work at the “limits of fabrication.” Jessica Pressman in “Nano Narrative: A Parable from Electronic Literature” argues that narrative is essential to the emerging field of nanotechnology and shows its influence in Erik Loyer’s Chroma. Susan Lewak in “What’s the Buzz? Tell me What’s A-Happening: Wonder, Nanotechnology, and Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” identifies wonder as a central component of nanotechnology’s popular appeal and relates its focus on scale to Alice in Wonderland. Together, these essays demonstrate that nanotechnology does not stand above culture but rather is deeply implicated in cultural processes and significations; it also shows that contemporary culture is increasingly understanding its future and therefore its present in terms of this powerful new technology.