

Bruno Latour e la semiotica Greimasiana.

"I have said enough to make you understand why I sank my teeth into semiotics like a mouse into cheese after I had the chance, in San Diego, to meet Paolo Fabbri. Scientific texts could be analyzed in the same way as biblical scriptures, but with another key. The view from nowhere could be folded back into an exegetic practice that left objectivity in its wake — or not — just as the exegesis of a biblical text generated salvation — or not. Algirdas Greimas (1917-1992) was just as important for me as Harold Garfinkel in social theory and for much the same reason: one never allowed ideas to leave narration, while the other grounded social concepts in locally produced ethno-methods.

Funnily enough, the systematic study of texts in this French tradition became what was imported into an American context as "Theory." While on this side of the Atlantic, I took it as exactly the opposite of "theory": as the chance to acquire an empirical method so as to avoid the flight of concepts into anything like "thought". Just like exegesis, semiotics grounds thought in figures that can be described and studied step by step. The continuity of agency is no longer obscured by the multiplicity of its figurations. Or to mix semiotic and Deleuzian parlance: actors, that is characters, emerge from actants, that is concepts.

In a move that I now recognize as typical of my emerging form of empiricism, I never took (Greimassian) semiotics as being limited to texts, but as a formidable toolbox for providing a handle on ontology. This is what opened up an access to science and technology that had rarely been facilitated before, to put it mildly, by the various brands of philosophy or literature. Hermeneutics could move out of texts, to things, to knowledge, to techniques and, finally, to the world".

da Bruno Latour "*Life among conceptual characters*", A letter to conclude the special issue of *New Literary History* on 'Latour and the Humanities', Paris June, 1, 2016