



Jakob K. Hellstenius made this observation in his MA-thesis: “For readers that had spent their lives immersed in the semiotically rich and materially poor reading culture of the first half of the 19th century, the transition to the material abundance of the second half could be a shock.” What follows?

The linguistic code was, as it were, [less elaborated and more restricted](#) than the semiotic code. Going back to [Mediaeval](#) times this is perceptible in the relation between *writing* and *illumination*. In the above passage, the issue would appear to hinge on the nature of how the *material* is defined.

That is, what a book is from the *semiotic* and *linguistic* vantage points, that indeed what appear in *vectorial* relation: [sign; speech]. Thus, defined by *superposition* rather than in linear extension. Prone to the workings of *intra-action* and *entanglement* according to different ratios, or “logics” perhaps.



The question of *progress*—relating to Bruno Latour—is part of a larger one: do those who presently wish to care for planet earth, have a model of *change*? That is, a model of change that does *not* entail an *alienation* of all things *presently* human? A change not limited to what can be [held](#) in books.

If books are—in Latour’s language—like the moon: a “pole in the field” that marks the *end* of the terrestrial and the *beginning* of the universe, the finite *before* the infinite, how do we reap ‘a call for change’ in what we read, and incorporate it into our own life-form? How do we write to this effect?

Perhaps we can start with this: the call for a *total* transformation of human being (a metamorphosis) *cannot* be real; as the call for change is *readable* to a creature/us who have *not* yet changed (that should change, that is in want of changing, needs to...)? There is an blatant contradiction here.

Hence the accusations of *extremism* currently directed to those who call for change: it may have done with all forms of current beliefs—like Bruno Latour—and still remain millennial in its scope. So, how can we propose a model of *partial* change, that will be one *effective* in its scope *and* real.

Featuring a *difference that will make a difference* to the earth? Granted that the call for total transformation, or metamorphosis, *cannot* deliver such change. And given that the compound of human *traffic*—gathered under the practices of *communication*—needs to be scoped as *part* of the life-form.

A life-form part of the human *œcumene* but *not* completely. And forms of communication that partake of the human traffic, but *differently*. This is the concrete challenge of the Warburgian case-story. Extending into the question of whether our present period of confinement is structurally similar.

A way of approaching this possibility is to claim that the hit-and-impact of all *causes* on planet earth are the ones that *partially* transform ‘universal laws’ (to which natural science, to this point, have laid their claims on). That is, the earth and its terrestrials are ones to *transform*, not apply, these laws.

Perhaps this is Latour’s most fruitful intervention/innovation: on planet earth—or, the [critical zone](#)—the universal laws somehow become redrawn; mitigated as by Latour’s efforts at redrawing the *terrestrial*. The problem therefore is to understand how universal law is “*aged*” on planet earth.

Because it is, first and foremost, the realm of [occasional cause](#): the realm where universal causes are transformed (always *partially*). It is therefore the realm of actor-networks. It is semiotic *before* it is causal. Conversely, the emergence of *causal* understanding and of *discourse* are co-generative.

But there is *no* turning back. So, the question of *progress* is: how do we proceed from here? What can come *in the wake* of the causal-discursive life-form of which we may currently experience the demise? A practice of *communication* that includes *forces* may be a possible *next step* for us.