

Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science, 2023 (14): 1-2
ISSN 2526-2270
Belo Horizonte – MG / Brazil
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From the Editors

Bruno Latour: A Thinker for the Challenges of Our Times

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In addition to a regular issue on the historiography and the history of science, in its 14th issue, *Transversal: International Journal for the Historiography of Science* presents a special issue on Bruno Latour. Although Latour was not precisely a historian of science, as we know, his thought has provoked reflections on science and technology in recent decades. An author such as Latour is the fruit of the development of the historiography of science after 1960, when the emphasis given to social aspects in the construction of scientific knowledge came to the fore, especially after Thomas Kuhn's *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962). In other words, after the history and philosophy of science emphasized the importance of social aspects in the production of scientific knowledge, the field of knowledge called *Science Studies* rose as a natural way to reflect on science, technology and society.

If the relationships between science, technology and society became increasingly complex – coupled with the epistemological understanding of the great weight of the social in the construction of science – then it became necessary to map these relationships to understand all their implications. However, to carry out this mapping, it would not be the methodological apparatus of history and philosophy that would offer adequate tools, but the field of social sciences with disciplines such as sociology and anthropology. In this path, David Bloor, in his Strong Program, states that “knowledge for the sociologist is whatever people take to be knowledge” (Bloor 1991 [1976], 5) and, in the famous words of Tim Ingold, “anthropology is philosophy with the people in” (Ingold 1992, 696). In effect, the sociological and anthropological approaches are about understanding the real relations of scientific and technological knowledge production with clear implications in society and the citizen's life.

However, these new sociological tools for *Science Studies* were not heir from Merton's sociology of science (Merton 1938) since the new objects and new approaches to science needed not only the methodologies of the social sciences but also an epistemology that was far from the Mertonian ideal and more attuned to what the history and philosophy of science presented. To understand these new relations between science and society, several authors

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sought this reconciliation between a type of socio-constructivist epistemology on the one hand and the methodologies and objects of the social sciences on the other.

Following this road, Latour was a master in the consolidation of *Science Studies*. This special issue is a tribute to him who, with his way of approaching these new relations between science and society, brought new objects of analysis, but above all, warned us about the absolute need to take a stand against the directions that the “politics of nature” has taken. In one of his latest works, Latour orientates a path to be followed concerning the future of our planet. These and other concerns of Latour reflect the interest that his work causes in authors from different parts of the world present here, from Indonesia to Latin America, from the United States to Russia and China. We are very grateful to these authors, without whom our tribute would not exist. Have an excellent read!

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