

Latour's Analogies (taken from: *Reassembling the Social*, 2007)
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Note: Latour uses analogies in crucial ways throughout his text. We've chosen only some and tried to focus on the ones crucial to his larger intervention into the social sciences (leaving out, for example, those he uses for smaller logical maneuvers). We probably even left out a few that we meant to include.

Glue: "In the alternative view, 'social' is not some glue that could fix everything including what the other glues cannot fix; it is *what* is glued together by many *other* types of connectors." (5)

Ants: "An ant writing for other ants, this fits my project very well!" (9)

Relativity in physics: "A more extreme way of relating the two schools is to borrow a somewhat tricky parallel from the history of physics and to say that the sociology of the social remains 'pre-relativist', while our sociology has to be fully 'relativist'." (12)

Travel guide: "In some ways this book resembles a travel guide through a terrain that is at once completely banal – it's nothing but the social world we are used to – and completely exotic – we will have to learn how to slow down at each step." (17)

How-to book: "It is directed at practitioners as a how-to book, helping them to find their bearings *once* they are bogged down in the territory." (17)

Learning to drive: "As we are going to see, there is as much difference in the two uses of the word 'social' as there is between learning how to drive on an already existing freeway and exploring for the first time the bumpy territory in which a road has been planned against the wishes of many local communities." (22-23)

Cartography: "And yet this shift [to an increased level of abstraction] is comparable to what a cartographer does in trying to record the shape of a foreign coast on a piece of paper." (23-24, this continues)

Geology: "Now that geologists have accepted the notion of cold and rigid continental plates floating freely over the hot, molten seabed that seeps out of deep oceanic rifts, are they not, so to speak, on 'firmer ground'?" (24)

Disclaimer: "Metaphors borrowed from cartography or from physics break down very fast, however, once the range of uncertainties to be swallowed by sociologists of association begins to be deployed...Be prepared to cast off agency, structure, psyche, time, and space along with every other philosophical and anthropological category..." (24-25)

World-making: "'World-making' would be a fine word...were it not for the conception of 'making' that goes with it and the definition of the 'one world'." (24-25)

Cartography, version 2: "Using the example of our cartographer, it is as if she has to deal not only with multiple reports coming from many travelers but also with multiple projection grids, where each point is requesting its own ad hoc coordinates." (25)

Angels & ants: "Sociologists of the social seem to glide like angels, transporting power and connections almost immaterially, while the ANT-scholar has to trudge like an ant, carrying the heavy gear in order to generate even the tiniest connection." (25)

Travel: "...my advice is to pack as little as possible, don't forget to pay your ticket, and prepare for delays." (25)

Credit: "[The word social] is not the common measure of all things, like a credit card widely accepted everywhere." (36)

Stage: "It is not by accident that this expression ['actor'], like that of 'person', comes from the stage." (46, this continues)

Jesus: "Like Jesus on the cross, it is of the actor that one should always say: 'Forgive them Father, those know not what they do.'" (46-47)

Prince of Denmark: "Even to detect Polonius behind the arras that became his shroud, the Prince of Denmark needed to hear the squeak of a rat." (53)

Puppetry: "Sociologists are often accused of treating actors like so many puppets manipulated by social forces. But it appears that puppeteers, much like sopranos, possess pretty different ideas about *what* it is that makes their puppets *do* things." (59)

Pool: "A billiard ball hitting another one on the green felt of a billiard table might have exactly as much agency as a 'person' directing her 'gaze' to the 'rich human world' of another 'meaningful face' in the smoke-filled room of the pub where the tables have been set up." (61)

Sex during the Victorian period: "Much like sex during the Victorian period, objects are nowhere to be said and everywhere to be felt." (73)

Prince Charming: "Would it be too childish to say that ANT played the role of the Charming Prince's kiss tenderly touching Sleeping Beauty's lips?" (73-74)

Castle in ruins: "They [insurmountable divisions between humans and non-humans] should rather be ignored and left to their own devices, like a once formidable castle now in ruins." (76)

Fog: "...if we interrupt our fieldwork at each relay by focusing only on the list of already gathered connections, the social world would become immediately opaque, shrouded into those strange autumn fogs that leave visible only tiny and unpredictable smears of the landscape." (78)

Religious soul/lawyer/haute couture seamstress/cult follower (see bottom of 92 into 93)

Torero: "After all, there is a lot to be said in favor of red flags in the hands of clever toreros as they might, in the end, allow one to tame the wild beast." (93)

Adam's sin: "In the same way as church fathers celebrated Adam's sin as a *felix culpa* (a fortunate fall from grace) because it had triggered Christ's redemption, I could say that the failure of a social explanation on science has been the great chance for social theory." (97)

Zeno's paradox: "This introduction to ANT begins to look like another instance of Zeno's paradox, as if every segment was split up by a host of mediator's each claiming to be taken into account." (121)

Sauce: "The thick sauce of 'objective style' cannot hide for long the lack of meat. But if you have the meat, you may add an extra condiment or dispense with it." (127)

Fish nets: "You can hang your fish nets to dry, but you can't hang your actor-network..." (132)

PCR amplification: “If anything, [deployment] looks more like a PCR amplification of some small DNA sample.” (136)

Safe sex: “Much like ‘safe sex’, sticking to description protects against the transmission of explanations.” (137)

Blindness/ants, version 2: “It is not because the sociologist cannot occupy the place of the all-encompassing and all-seeing God of social science that he or she has to be imprisoned blind in a cellar. We, the little ants, should not settle for heaven or hell, as there are plenty of things on this earth to munch our way through.” (140)

Pencil/shape: “ANT is more like the name of a pencil or a brush than the name of a specific shape to be drawn or painted.” (143)

Windowpane: “. . . [the PhD thesis is] not just a transparent windowpane, transporting without deformation some information about your study.” (149)

Painting frame: “It’s true that frames are nice for showing: gilded, white, carved, baroque, aluminum, etc. But have you ever met a painter who began his masterpiece by first choosing the frame?” (143)

Food: “But if you let the elements that have been bundled together pass their ‘sell by dates’, they will begin to rot. If you persist in ingesting them, they will lead to complete paralysis.” (160)

Phantom/Leviathan: “Only now does the Phantom become a ghoul, the Leviathan turned into a behemoth.” (163, this goes on)

Leviathan, version 2: “Whatever the solution, it remained stranded like a whale, yes a leviathan, beached on a seashore where Lilliputian social scientists tried to dig it a suitable abode.” (163-164)

Reception: “Interactions do not resemble a picnic where all the food is gathered on the spot by the participants, but rather a reception given by some unknown sponsors who have staged everything down to the last detail – even the place to sit might be already pre-inscribed by some attentive keeper.” (166)

Signpost: “Such a direction [the turn towards ‘frameworks’] has been so solidly entrenched by one hundred and fifty years of social science that it now appears as some mass migration along large freeways built at great expenses and guided by huge bright signposts on which is written: ‘Context, 15 km, Next Stop.’” (167)

Horse intuition: “Just as a horse might sense a cliff earlier than his rider, the intuition of the sociologists should be followed, but not the solution they have offered with their mistaken definition of the social.” (171)

Cat: “Without some equipment brought in, human actors would remain, even in the midst of the best-designed frame, unable to interpret what is given; they would remain as unconnected to the meaning of the site as a cat prowling on the Acropolis.” (206)

Pyramid: “Interiorities are built in the same complicated way as Horus’s chamber in the center of the pyramid of Cheops.” (213)