

Per Aage Brandt (April 26, 1944 - November 10, 2021)
From the blue waters of the Baltic and Kattegat to the Red Sands of Burgundy
by
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On Thursday, November 18, 2021, at the “Sables Rouges” cemetery in the charming French medieval town of Villeneuve-sur-Yonne near Sens, the funeral of Professor Per Aage Brandt, who died on November 10, took place. He was one of the most important specialists of the language of his generation, linguist and semiotician, poet and musician, scholar and humanist, a strong academic personality in Denmark, France, the United States and Latin America, Dane and citizen of the world. He lived in Burgundy for 10 years. In the presence of his French wife Maryse Laffitte, whom he met in 1980 in Copenhagen, his family, colleagues (including several from Denmark) and friends of Villeneuve, a moving ceremony paid him many tributes.

Per Aage was a friend with whom I shared much of my scientific life. We had many common interests in several fields and I have always been amazed by its extraordinary human and spiritual richness, as much semiotic as philosophical, cultural and artistic. These few lines would like to evoke the many talents of this exceptional personality.

Deeply attached to France, P.Aa. Brandt was awarded the *Grand Prix de Philosophie* of the Académie Française in 2002 and, the same year, was elevated to the dignity of Officer of the Order of Arts and Letters.

Born April 26, 1944, in Buenos Aires to a Swedish mother and a Danish father, he spent his childhood and a large part of his life in Copenhagen. Very early on, he was passionate about poetry and music and proved to be exceptionally gifted. This creativity accompanied him throughout his existence. In 1969, he published a first collection *Poesi* followed by a regular production in poetry

(about thirty volumes), philosophical and meditative, melancholy tinged with irony, making him one of the greatest Danish poets and earned him the Aarestrup medal in 1993 and the Danish Academy medal in 2009. His wife Maryse translated some of his poems into French, some published and others read in Villeneuve during “poetic concerts”. Several were also translated into English by the American poet Thom Satterlee in the collection *These Hands* (2011). American critics praised “the musicality, the charm, the elegance, the compactness, the subtlety, the intelligence”. In 2014, Satterlee (also author of the metaphysical thriller *The Stages* (2015) on an assassination linked to the disappearing of original manuscripts by Kierkegaard) published *New and Selected Poetry of Per Aage Brandt* which was presented as: “Long considered one of Denmark's most distinguished poets and scholars, Per Aage is writing his best poetry today, in the twilight of a long and prolific career. His poems take the reader on a lyrical journey through a mind that is constantly probing, questioning, remembering, reflecting, indicting.” Then in 2017 came another noticed collection: *If I were a suicide bomber & other verses*, about which Joanna Trzeciak said : “Smart, impish, and spare, Per Aage Brandt finds the physical in the metaphysical, and the fizz in the physiological.”

Confirmed jazz pianist, P.Aa. Brandt created in 1963 a trio. A true specialist in the history and technical specificities of this art, initiated into its mysteries by the pianist and composer Finn Savery, he had, among other things, the privilege of playing with the saxophonist Albert Ayler (whom John Coltrane considered as his successor) during his stay in Copenhagen. Ayler often played with trumpeter Don Cherry, another jazzman loving the Nordic countries (Stockholm). His career is well summarized in his interview “La vie en bluesy and free” in November 2020 with Didier Robrieux. In his beautiful home in Villeneuve, he had transformed the cellar into a large studio where he could play and record with his partners. Saxophonist Karsten Vogel, his lifelong friend, with whose quartet he won in 1966 the award for best Danish jazz group and with whom he recorded *Cry!* in 2016, performed one of his compositions in front of the coffin.

Note also that P.Aa. Brandt starred in the documentary *Talk Like Whales* by Vibeke Vogel (1993) on the Atlantic journeys of the whales and he himself made a documentary *Five Pairs of Shoes* on the neo-expressionist painter Anette Abrahamsen (2005), member of a movement also including Erik Frandsen and Inge Ellegaard who illustrated the cover of certain collections of his poems. He organized several seminars with Stig Brøgger and Hein Heinsen, professors at the *Academy of Fine Arts* influenced by Jean-François Lyotard.

But it was above all the theory of language and mind that led P.Aa. Brandt to his international fame substantiated by a bibliography of a dozen books and about 250 articles (some are available on the *Academia* site). In the course of half a century of reflection he tackled all aspects of the morphogenesis, diegesis, modalization and aesthetics of meaning. “In short, *semiotics* in all its states” as he says in the excellent interview he had with Amir Biglari (*Entretiens sémiotiques*, 2014) and offers a perfect summary of his career.

Also theoretically very precocious and brilliant, P.Aa. Brandt dedicated himself with an irresistible and inexhaustible passion to the study of the multiple dimensions of meaning. After the turmoil of May 1968, he defended a PhD in 1971 in Copenhagen entitled *L'analyse phrastique – Introduction à la grammaire* where he took up the notion of *stemma* from Lucien Tesnière (1893-1954, the *Éléments de syntaxe structurale* appeared in 1959), a notion referring to the graph structure of phrases, essentially centered on the verbal node and the verbal *valence* (analogous to the valence in chemistry).

In 1971, he also made contact in Paris with the seminar of Algirdas Julien Greimas (1917-1992) at the VIth Section of the École Pratique des Hautes Études de Paris (now, since 1975, EHESS, the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales). Structuralism had been booming there since the end of the 1950s. He was already familiar with Greimas since, in 1967, he had introduced structural semantics in the journal *Poetik*, of which he was the co-founder.

As a young Danish linguist and semiotician, P.Aa. Brandt was particularly able to immerse himself in this intellectual adventure mixing multiple theoretical traditions. Indeed, by its geographical position and its history as a cultural area, Scandinavian thought is open to both continental (French, German, Italian, Spanish), Anglo-Saxon and Slavic traditions of thought.

The Danish linguistic tradition is considerable. It is dominated by the legendary figures of Viggo Brøndal (1887-1942, one of the fathers of linguistic structuralism) and Louis Hjelmslev (1899-1965, the father of glossematics) who in 1931 created the Linguistic Circle of Copenhagen. Their links were close with Russian and Czech formalism, the Linguistic Circles of Moscow (active between 1915 and 1922) then of Prague (from 1928) led by Russian exiles just as legendary as Roman Jakobson (1896-1982) and Prince Nikolai Troubetzkoy (1890-1938, father of structuralism in phonology but anti-Saussurean and anti-universalist as regards the relations between languages and cultures).

This generation of the founders of formalism, structuralism and functionalism (one can never separate structure and function) itself had close links with two major advances of the previous generation: on the one hand, the phenomenology of Husserl (1859- 1938) and Gestalttheorie, on the other hand the theory of the sign of Saussure (1857-1913).

Brøndal aimed at a universal grammar conceiving the relation between thought and language as a “geometry” transforming the world into meaning. For him, the organization of meaning went through categorizations functioning as systems of contrasts either irreducible or mediated by neutral or complex terms.

For Hjelmslev, every semiotics was biplanar and articulated a plane of expression (the Saussurian “signifier”) and a plane of content (the “signified”), each plane being itself articulated by the duality of syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations between its units. The “matter” then organized by the “form” (that is the structure) becomes a “substance”. This hylemorphism is characteristic of such theoretical approaches.

P.Aa. Brandt was an heir to these masters. To celebrate them, in 1987 he organized the Symposium *Linguistics and Semiotics. Actuality of Viggo Brøndal* (Travaux du Cercle linguistique de Copenhague, 22, 1989) then later the Symposium of the Centenary of the birth of Jakobson (*Acta Linguistica Hafniensia*, 29, 1997, the Journal of the Linguistic Circle).

In Paris, Greimas had completely overhauled the two dual dimensions, syntactic and semantic, of narrative studies from a strongly theoretical structuralist perspective. On the one hand, there was the dimension of deep syntactic structures, actantial structures identified, studied and classified by specialists in folklore and popular tales such as Vladimir Propp (1895-1970), a Russian of German origin whose famous treatise *La Morphologie du conte* (published in Leningrad in 1928) applied to tales the principles of Goethean Morphology taken up by the Russian formalists. Under the infinite diegetic variations of their superficial manifestations, be they figurative (sets, places, landscapes, eras, etc.) or discursive (the characters involved in more or less complicated plots), operate deep *actantial* structures making subjects manipulated by “destiny-makers” interact with each other and overcome trials and defeat anti-subjects by means of adjuvants until they are rewarded in a gratifying way with marks of recognition. From tales and legends to the current techniques of “storytelling” through the critical analysis of literary, plastic or musical artworks, scholarly studies

on narrative structures are innumerable and their rich structural syntax has been studied with the same refinement as the syntax of natural languages.

It should also be noted that at the level of linguistic sentences there is also an actantial structural syntax as we find in Hjelmslev with his masterful analyzes of so-called casual structures (subject, object, sender, addressee, instrumental marked in some languages by prepositions), then with Lucien Tesnière, or even later with American linguists such as Charles Fillmore (1929-2014) or Ronald Langacker.

On the other hand, drawing inspiration in particular from Brøndal and Hjelmslev, Greimas had also theorized, in duality with narrative syntax, a fundamental semantics made up of categorical “values” (constituting paradigms of opposed contents) which circulate between the actants, a bit like monetary values circulate in the circuits of economic exchanges.

Claude Lévi-Strauss (whose controversy with Propp in the mid-1960s was important) had shown in his analyzes of myths that narrative structures had the fundamental anthropological function of psychically and socially metabolizing irreducible conflicts (in a way “dialectical contradictions”) between opposing categorical values. The dynamics of narrative plots generally lead from an unstable initial situation of conflict or lack to a quest for values which ends with a final stabilized situation where the conflict is dialectized, the lack remedied and the sought-after values achieved. It is the structure of the paradigms of values (meaning, semantics) that is crucial, more than the narrative adventures (syntax).

P.Aa. Brandt immersed himself in a dynamic and innovative way in this theoretical context, while maintaining the dialogue with other approaches to symbolic activities, be it the semiotic currents inherited from Peirce or the more cultural one from Umberto Eco (1932-2016) in Bologna, or linguistic theories like those of Noam Chomsky or Jerry Fodor (1935-2017). His activities and academic participations in these fields were innumerable and made him one of the masters of his generation. His theoretical skills were fully manifested in this multidisciplinary and international context and enabled him to weave deep cultural links between Europe, North America and also Latin America, Argentina to which he remained deeply attached, and also Brazil (São Paulo, Belo Horizonte) and Colombia (Bogotá).

He worked on virtually all strata of linguistic and semiotic systems. On the expression side, the

stratification “phonemes → phonematic chains → prosody → intonation” ; on the semantic side, the stratification “semantic → schematic semantics → syntactic semantics → sentence semantics → enunciation → communication” ; on the functional side, the stratification “morphemes (closed classes of conceptual schemes, the ‘syncategorematic’ part of language) → lexemes (categories centered on prototypes, the ‘categorematic’ part of language) → syntagms → sentences → texts → literary genres.

For each conceptual issue, he brought theoretical innovations. An example is given by his deepening of the Greimassian notion of veridiction in “Quelques remarques sur la véridiction” (*Actes sémiotiques*, 1982). In classic tales and myths, the truth and falsity of values are guaranteed by transcendent destiny-makers (divine, religious, royal, etc.) and their truthful status and their axiology are therefore “decidable”. But once what Hölderlin called the “categorical turn” of “God's retreat” has been accomplished, there is no longer any absolute and / or natural guarantor of values. The missing destiny-maker becomes an “Other” in the Lacanian sense and the subjects then need to believe some “supposed-knowledge” which come to occupy the place of veridictory guarantor. The objects-values that the narrative and existential adventures circulate are no longer objects invested by values possessing a decidable veridictory status but rather objects selected by a marking. The marking is carried out through what Lacan called “signifiers”. In his text, P.Aa. Brandt surprisingly intersects two semiotic triangles, one, Saussurian, binding signifier (in the Saussurian sense), conceptual signified and referent (empirical denotation) within the framework of a positive logical semiotics where veridiction is decidable, the other binding signifier (in the Lacanian sense, signifying a marker coming from the Other), signified (transcendent dialectical Ideas that cannot be conceptualized) and referent (objects of desire) within the framework of a negative metapsychological semiotics where the veridiction is undecidable.

In Paris, P.Aa. Brandt immediately came into contact with Jean Petitot of the EHESS who was working on the applications to Greimassian semiotics of the new dynamic models of morphogenesis proposed by René Thom (1923-2002) at the end of the 1960s. This hylemorphic “dynamic schematism” of structural connections made it possible to formalize, in an original way, first the mereological principle according to which the terms of a structure are defined between them by reciprocal differences as parts of a whole, and then the fact that these reciprocal differences are dynamic. In a word, the structure is described globally by a family of dynamics (in the mathematical sense) defined on an “internal” space whose attractors represent the terms. These attractors are in dynamic competition and separated by repulsive thresholds, and as long as the

family of dynamics is parameterized by an “external” space, the latter is broken down into domains, each domain being the one where one of the attractors is dominant. We thus obtain a “categorized” external space (a paradigm) where the paths unfold in as many syntagmatic chains. The structural syntax elements then become dynamically describable. Thus were developed a “morphogenesis of meaning”, a “physics of meaning”, a “semiophysics”, a “phenophysics” (neologisms seeking to name the invention of a morphodynamic and naturalistic approach to meaning).

With Wolfgang Wildgen of the University of Bremen who was the first linguist to have worked on Thom's linguistic models (his reference work, *Catastrophe Theoretic Semantics. An elaboration and application of René Thom's theory*, was published in 1982), P.Aa .B. and J.P. have formed a semio-linguistic modeling group which was at the origin of several publications (articles, books, collections), conferences, and seminars. In this context, P.Aa. Brandt in 1987 at the Sorbonne defended a thesis *La Charpente modale du Sens* in which he dynamically interpreted Greimas' theory of actantial modalities. The thesis was published in 1992 and closely followed by *Dynamiques du Sens* (1994) and *Morphologies of Meaning* (1995).

Morphodynamic semiotics remained one of his privileged themes. For example “Forces et espaces : Maupassant, Borges, Hemingway” (2014) offers a dynamic interpretation of narrative structures in terms of forces : “Agents operate in spaces presenting particular dynamic properties, insofar as the latter unfold characteristic forces, determining acts and facts. (...) Forces are (...) causal or intentional. Causal forces are either banal (or) “fatal”). Intentional forces are agentive (volitive and embodied in agents) or magical (supernatural and non-agentive, but always volitive). The dynamically invested spaces, which frame the situations, are linked by a canonical diegetic order, allowing the forces to have prospective and retroactive effects. ”

In 2005 he co-organized with W. Wildgen at the University of Urbino a Conference *L'héritage sémiotique de René Thom*, published in 2011 under the title *Semiosis and Catastrophes. René Thom's Semiotic Heritage*. And from 2016 he regularly participated in the seminar *Actualité de René Thom* organized by Isabel Marcos and Clément Morier.

From the 1980s, P.Aa. Brandt found himself in a favorable academic position allowing him to develop an institutional base. In 1988 he created the *Center for Semiotics* at the University of Aarhus where he was a professor. This 28 Finlandsgade-based center of excellence obtained significant public support for several years and became the most important international center for

structural semiotics with Paris (Greimas) and Bologna (Eco). Young researchers like Svend Østergaard or Peer Bundgaard took part. There was an enthusiastic, innovative, studious atmosphere and numerous events specializing in mathematics, semio-linguistics, cognitive sciences, aesthetics, and phenomenology were held there, in particular recurring *Winter Symposia*.

From 1999, P.Aa. Brandt edited by Peter Lang with W. Wildgen and Barend van Heusden the *European Semiotics* series of “semiophysical” inspiration. He defined its goal as follows: “This approach, which has its origins in Phenomenology, Gestalt Theory, Philosophy of Culture and Structuralism, views semiosis primarily as a cognitive process, which underlies and structures human culture.”

P.Aa. Brandt was also one of the founders of the group of semio-linguists *Sigma* which brought together, from the teams of Jean-Claude Coquet and J.P. in Paris, Umberto Eco in Bologna and himself in Aarhus, most of the representatives of European semiotics of his generation. In this context, he organized a conference north of Aarhus. Other *Sigma* conferences were organized by Omar Calabrese (Bagni di Lucca), Herman Parret (Rockefeller Foundation, Bellagio), Jean-Pierre Desclés (Paris).

P.Aa. Brandt actively participated in the Cerisy Conference *Au Nom du Sens* co-organized in homage to Umberto Eco in 1996 by Paolo Fabbri and J.P. He gave a talk on “Le Mystère de l'Interprétation” which analyzed the antinomic status of the interpretive chain Author → Text → Reader, that is to say the multiplicity of meanings of a text both on one side empirically given and objectively structured and on the other side indefinitely reconstructed by its interpretations. How to avoid the interpretive loop (the “hermeneutic circle”) if the part / whole mereology of the empirical text comes from an interpretation that is supposed to be the only process able to constructing the text? P.Aa. Brandt asked the question: “How can [the reader] compare as two distinct totalities the interpreted text and the uninterpreted text, if it is through interpretation that the text becomes a whole [cut into parts]? This is not possible. (...) It is therefore necessary that the text can be divided [structured] before any interpretation. We need a proper *bona fide* structuring that is “prior” to the reader and, as the philosopher of Gestalt and Husserlian mereology Barry Smith insists, is based on “boundaries” and “drawing lines”. This discussion converged with semi-realistic and naturalist theses turning away from the semiotic demiurgy of certain idealisms to study the objective pre-semiotic structures on which semiotizations are built.

As Eco said, it is a question of “moderating” “the purely cultural conception of semiosis”. In “Il riferimento rivisitato” (1996) and in *Kant e l'ornitorinco* (1997), Eco asserts that “whatever the weight of our cultural systems”, “there is something in the continuum of experience which imposes limits to our interpretations”. “Language does not construct being *ex novo*”. There is always “something already given (but already given does not mean already finished and complete).” There is a “zoccolo duro dell'essere”. Let us quote it in Italian: “Nel magma del continuo ci sono linee di resistenza et delle possibilità di flusso, comme delle nervature del legno o del marmo che rendono più agevole tagliare in una direzione piuttosto che nell'altra.” We can see that, as stated by P.Aa. Brandt in his conference, “The big question here is obviously that of knowing how the empirical text, for its part, in its “internal coherence”, as Eco says, controls and commands the semantic construction (...) apart from all hermeneutics dialectic”. And it is here that structural hylemorphism – whose evolution we can follow from Lessing, Kant's Critique of Judgment and Goethean Morphology to Russian formalism and structuralism as well as to its morphodynamic models and its neurocognitive incarnations – finds all its operativity: it reveals the pre-semiotic morphological organization of the artworks which can trigger their semiotic interpretations.

The relationship of P.Aa. Brandt with Eco was old. In 1973 he had invited him to Roskilde University and later, in Bologna, he had discussed with him the application of morphodynamic models to semantic categorizations. Later, in 2017, in *Umberto Eco in His Own Words*, he published a tribute “Umberto Eco, la gaia scienza” supplemented by a technical discussion “From Mirrors to Deixis. Subjectivity, Biplanarity, and the Sign” concerning the very particular status as signs possessed by icons, deictics or mirror images.

In its many facets, semiotic reflection was for P.Aa. Brandt inseparable from a philosophical self-reflection oriented towards the philosophy of science. His work in this field earned him, for example, being named to the jury of the “International Prize for the Philosophy of Science” that the Portuguese government created with the Gulbenkian Foundation in honor of the eminent philosopher Fernando Gil (1937-2006) after his passing. This allowed him to strengthen his links with the school of F. Gil in Lisbon (in particular concerning the aesthetics and the organization of living beings in Kant and Goethe).

During the 1990s, P.Aa. Brandt more and more extended structuralism towards the cognitive sciences. He focused on the one hand on American cognitive linguistics and cognitive semantics and on the other hand on the overhaul of structural semiotics in terms of (neuro) cognitive sciences.

In cognitive semantics, structures are no longer, as in formal grammars à la Chomsky and in cognitive psychology à la Fodor, logico-combinatorial structures but rather iconic, topological, geometric and dynamic *image-schemas*. In cognitive neuroscience, neural networks syntactic models are based on the notion of attractors of neural dynamics (cf. the “attractor neural networks” by Daniel Amit, 1992). The convergence is therefore very deep – 20 years later, the time to cross the Atlantic – with the Thomian morphodynamic models of the 1970s.

The first convergence was with the eminent linguist Len Talmy (SUNY Buffalo) who played an essential role in his transition from dynamic models to cognitive science. Talmy worked in particular, from the 1980s, on the way in which language semantizes and grammaticalizes the major frameworks of perception and action as, for example, the structuring of space, the dynamics of forces and their causal action, or “targeting” (the cognitive-linguistic system of referentiality grouping together anaphors and deixis). For this he developed a cognitive semantics based on iconicity, image-schemas and Gestalts interfacing perception, action and language. An important international conference *Topology and Dynamics in Cognition and Perception* was dedicated to him, to make his work better known in Europe, in December 1995 at the Umberto Eco Research Center at the University of San Marino. P.Aa. Brandt also referred to the work of Eve Sweetser (Berkeley) on iconicity, modalities, metaphor and mental spaces. In 1996, he wrote a review of “From etymology to pragmatics”. A good reference on these themes is his article “Sens et modalité dans la perspective d’une sémiotique cognitive” in *Actes Sémiotiques* (117, 2014).

P.Aa. Brandt then forged close relations with Gilles Fauconnier (1944-2021), French logician and linguist based at the University of San Diego, as well as with George Lakoff (Berkeley). The latter had completely overhauled the theory of metaphor by showing that it was, well beyond the usual local poetic analogies, global conceptual constructions architecting thought. With his colleague Mark Johnson, he had explained as early as 1980 in *Metaphors we live by* that the syntactico-semantic organization of a concrete domain could be used to structure another much more abstract domain (just think of the many accounts describing the existential adventures of a life in terms of journeys, of navigations in various steep or marine spaces, or even of the description of a discussion of ideas as of a military battle). Close to Lakoff, to his own colleague from San Diego Ron Langacker, and to Eve Sweetser (with whom he edited *Spaces, Worlds, and Grammar* in 1996), Fauconnier developed the theory of “mental spaces” (1984) then, with Mark Turner in *The Way We Think* (2002), the notion of conceptual integration (“conceptual blending”) explaining how conceptually organized scenes belonging to

very different semantic domains can nevertheless transform, partially merge, serve as reciprocal models. and be composed, by bringing out original *meaning effects*.

P.Aa. Brandt worked at Stanford University in 2001-2002 at the *Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences* and, from 2005 to 2011, was professor of cognitive science at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland where he established the *Center for Cognition and Culture* and the *Laboratory for Applied Research in Cognitive Semiotics* (LARCS). In 2005 he created the journal *Cognitive Semiotics* which later became the official journal of the *International Association for Cognitive Semiotics* founded in Aarhus in 2013.

He then published among others *Spaces, Domains, and Meanings* in 2004 where he took up and continued to develop on new bases his “stemmatic grammar” introduced in *L'analyse phrastique* of 1971. As he explained: “it builds on the discovery that the semantics of syntactic nodes is schematic and canonical: a short list of semantically informed nodes form canonical cascades that allow recursion and thereby establishes our capacity to spontaneously create and immediately grasp even very complex syntactic networks as meaningful. ”

Regarding these themes, we can refer to “Sémiotique, cognition et sémiotique cognitive” available on the *Academia* site) where he develops “a new interpretation of the concept of sign, of the functioning of metaphor and metonymy, and of blending in theory. mental spaces”. His text “La deixis langagière” (2014) aims to renew “the functioning of deictics in language (...), namely the demonstratives, the articles and the shifters or ‘ embrayeurs’ ”.

He continued to work on many other favorite themes: enunciation, prosody, diegesis, modal schematism. And also poetics: let us quote for example in *The Shakespearean International Yearbook* of 2004, his analysis “Metaphors and Meaning in Shakespeare's Sonnet 73”, a famous sentimental sonnet on the topic of the age where the poet conjugates as in a vanity the classic metaphors of autumn and its yellow leaves, the passing day, sunset and twilight, and also the ruins of symbolic places. He also led with his daughter Line a number of works on metaphor and blending in literature: *Cognitive poetics and imagery* (2005), *Making sense of a blend* (2005).

On the level of the foundations of language sciences, he insisted on the fact that the neurophysiology and neuropsychology of the mind cannot succeed without including a theory of meaning consubstantial with language, thought, action, communication, social and cultural practices. *Homo sapiens* is a political (cf. Aristotle) and symbolic species. From a semiophysical

and neurocognitive perspective on the naturalization of sense, mind and consciousness, P.Aa. Brandt was interested in the way in which biological evolution had been able to make emerge, during the hominization, processes of categorization, schematization, agency and linguistic reprogramming of pre-linguistic cognitive resources. Recent theories of the semiogenesis of *homo sapiens* radically transform the traditional separations between natural sciences and cultural sciences. P.Aa. Brandt referred in particular to the works in evolutionary cognitive semiotics of the neuro-anthropologist Terrence Deacon (Harvard, Boston, Berkeley) whose *The Symbolic Species. The Co-evolution of Language and the Brain* (1997) had a big impact. He ardently defended these scientific advances and equally ardently criticized the deconstructionist drifts of contemporary human and social sciences.

During these decades, all these theoretical reflections also allowed P.Aa. Brandt to come back to his artistic practices, both poetic and musical. He was very interested in *translation* and in particular in untranslatable poetics where the signifiers of the expression are part of the semantic content and where therefore the content is no longer independent of its expression. He himself translated works by Molière, Sade and Bataille into Danish, as well as the *Cantabile* collection written in French by the Prince Consort of Denmark Henri de Laborde de Monpezat (1934-2018). This translation was adapted into a symphonic suite by the composer, organist and pianist Frederik Magle.

In 2011, settled in his house in Villeneuve, he continued his research. He published in 2019 *The Music of Meaning* on signs, symbols, icons, metaphors in music and poetry. Finally he published in 2020 *Cognitive Semiotics. Signs, Mind and Meaning*, which he described as follows: “this book discusses the understanding of meaning and mind through four major dimensions: mental architecture, mental spaces, discourse coherence and eco-organization. (...) Cognitive Semiotics outlines several bridges between ‘continental’ and ‘analytic’ thinking in the study of semantics, pragmatics, discourse and the philosophy of language and mind. ”

In March 2021, he published the first article, “De la chorématique. The Dynamics of Lived Space” of the new journal *Acta Semiotica* (University of São Paulo) of which he was a member of the Editorial Board.

And all this while continuing to record several musical pieces, for example the Scandinavian lyrical pieces of *Souffle Nordique* in 2019 with his Trio Njörd, and giving “poetic concerts” in his house.

A cosmopolitan scholar, child of European Enlightenment, but also a romantic and bluesy artist, always inspired by the luminous spectrum of his country of origin, from Niels Bohr to Søren Kierkegaard and Karen Blixen, vivified by the blue waters of the Baltic and the Kattegat, heir to one of the most eminent genealogies in the sciences of language and culture, P.Aa. Brandt, whom Greimas paternally called his “Danish genius”, now rests in the Red Sands of Villeneuve-sur-Yonne.

Paris, November 21, 2021