

Introduction

Editorial

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RESONANCE: A POWERFUL CONCEPT BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN DISCIPLINES

The present issue of *Linguistic Frontiers* emanates from a Summer retreat—hosted by Prof. Ludmila Lacková Bennett and Eugenio Israel Chávez Barreto at Palacký University, Olomouc, Czech Republic (July 22–28, 2024)—inspired by the fascinating, polysemic, and ambiguous notion of resonance, understood through semiotics. Observed in physics, the phenomenon of resonance—the quality in a sound of being deep, full, and reverberating, especially with regard to the idea of extending vibrations to a neighbouring object—served as a metaphorical lens through which the semiotic processes of meaning-making can be understood. In this epistemic perspective, meaning cannot fail to be intersubjective, thus dialogical; whence, the focus of many papers then, now essays, on the chief communication interface available to mankind, the face-voice nexus.

This question—the relation between face and voice—is not as whimsical as it may initially appear. It opens up at least two significant avenues of investigation. One pertains to the sonic and material dimensions of the voice; the other concerns its linguistic dimension. Indeed, the relationship between voice and face invites exploration into the entire field of “phonognomics”, which is the physiognomic and characterological analysis of voice and speech in their sonic, expressive, and material aspects.

This interpretation is based on the idea that, like any other action, the subjective act of speaking—whether orally or in written form—aimed at transmitting meaning, also contains an expressive component. In this component, the being of the speaker (or writer) is expressed symbolically, as the sound of the word and the form of writing are not only means of conveying meaning but also serve as symbolic mediums of character that are externally manifested. In other words, the linguistic signifier—whether sonic or graphic—indeed conveys an abstract meaning; however, it simultaneously reveals another layer

of meaning that is not linguistic but psychic. The semiotic function of meaning-making is thus intertwined with a psychological dimension (cf. Gurisatti 2006).

Furthermore, this issue raises important questions for philosophical and linguistic inquiry regarding the relationship between voice and language. From a strictly semiotic perspective, it opens the way to studying the place of the voice—along with its nuanced complexities—within systems of signs and its status within the entire history of semiotics. Undoubtedly, this is a rich and longstanding topic that cannot be fully addressed in a few words. Indeed, the physiognomy of the face and the physiognomy of language and speech have a long history of mutual interrelations, not to mention the deep interconnections between language and the human voice.

Resonance has recently become a keyword across humanities mainly due to sociologist Hartmut Rosa’s notion of *Resonanz*, and its pedagogical inflection, *Resonanzpädagogik*. By *resonance* Rosa (2016) designates a responsive relation to the world in which a subject is (1) affectively touched, (2) answers and/or responds, and (3) is transformed by the very encounter; crucially, resonance cannot be guaranteed or engineered; it can, however, be cultivated under conditions that favour it.

Though not coined within semiotics, Rosa’s concept speaks directly to semiotic concerns. This perspective indeed revives a line of inquiry already vivid in the Italian pedagogical reception of semiotics in the 1980s (most notably, due to figures such as Mario Gennari and Franca Mariani), where semiotics was enlisted as a tool for teaching, explanation, and understanding in the delicate environment of the class. Read through a semiotic lens, resonance aligns with several classic frameworks of the discipline. It recalls anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss’s symbolic efficacy (1949) and the performative force of language and narrative; it converses with founder of the structural-generative approach Algirdas J. Greimas’s modalities (1976), the dispositions

that orient doing and being; with narratologist Gérard Genette's transtextuality (1982), in keeping with which no text stands alone; with founder of cultural semiotics Juri Lotman's enantiomorphism (1984), the mirror-inversions that arise at the borders of a given semiosphere; with founder of sociosemiotics Éric Landowski's adjustment (2004), where social sense-making emerges from mutual attuning; but, also, with pragmaticist philosopher, the founder of cognitive-interpretative approach, Charles S. Peirce's unlimited semiosis (1869), the endlessly inferential growth of meaning. In all these approaches, signification is not seen as a closed transmission but as a dynamic, relational process—precisely the terrain where resonance thrives. It is worth to mention at least a couple of proper sonically connoted proposals, too, such as the examination of the “music of the spheres” as discussed by founder of zoosemiotics Thomas A. Sebeok (2000) and—to go even back to the foundations of biosemiotics—the “functional tones” of theoretical biologist Jakob von Uexküll (1957).

As a sonic metaphor, resonance compels us to consider listening both as an analytical object and as a constitutive practice at the heart of any discipline founded on dialogue and interpretation. Pierre Schaeffer's reduced listening (1948), R. Murray Schafer's soundscape pedagogy (1969), Pauline Oliveros's deep listening (1985), and Roland Barthes's reflections on this very practice in the whole range of its psychoanalytic inflections (1975) all articulate modes of attention that transform what is heard and who is hearing. In a parallel tradition, semioethics (2003)—defining semiotics as a practice of responsible listening—strongly resonates with Rosa's pedagogy.

If one radicalizes the very notion of resonance as semiotic paradigm, one is compelled to interrogate it not merely as an analogical transposition from acoustics to discourse, but as a transcendental operator that suspends the ontological primacy of cause as the exclusive ground of agency. Resonance, thus understood, is neither the mere echo of an originary act nor the passive prolongation of force, but a metaxological dispositif that renders the distinction between actantial initiative and structural determination undecidable. In this sense, resonance exemplifies what Greimas would have called a modal neutralization: it brackets the asymmetry that typically configures causality as vectorial ($A \rightarrow B$) and redistributes agency along a plane of immanent co-implication, where the production of meaning no longer obeys the logic of efficient causation but that of reciprocal actualization. This entails a reconceptualization of agency not as domination—where one pole imposes its form upon another—but as co-resonance, a mutual intensification that amplifies both poles beyond their initial thresholds of possibility. The semiotic event becomes, in this view, neither a unilateral transmission nor a mere “effect” but rather a chiasmatic unfolding in which each participant simultaneously becomes sender and receiver, interpreter and interpreted, cause and effect. Resonance here marks the point at which semiotics ceases to be representational and becomes generative, opening a space

where sense is neither pre-given nor externally imposed but co-constituted in the very vibratory interval that links and separates interlocutors. Such a framework invites us to conceive of meaning as emergent from topology of relational fields rather than from an economy of power differentials, thus offering a rare chance to theorize semiosis as a non-hegemonic, non-hierarchical articulation of presence—an articulation that is neither the hypostasis of symmetry nor the obliteration of difference but their incessant negotiation.

To situate resonance at its phenomenological extreme is to encounter it in the very epiphany of the face, where the alterity of the Other calls the subject into an ethical relation prior to any epistemic thematization. Levinas, in *Totalité et Infini* (1961), displaces the face from any physiognomic or merely perceptual register: the face is not an image to be decoded but the locus of an appeal that fractures the economy of the Same, inaugurating a responsibility that cannot be grounded in reciprocity or contract. In this sense, the face is pure resonance—an infinite reverberation of the command “Thou shalt not kill”, which resounds without originating in an act of coercion or domination. Resonance becomes here a figure for the asymmetrical relation that paradoxically precedes power: it is the trace of a voice that cannot be localized, the soundless vibration of an infinite demand that exceeds the horizon of causality. Read through Buber's *Ich und Du* (1923), this resonance is dialogical: it occurs only in the space of relation, where the “I” is not yet substantial but is constituted in the address of the “Thou”. Rosenzweig had radicalized this logic in *Der Stern der Erlösung* (1921), where the event of revelation is neither a unilateral imposition nor a closed totality but a dynamic resonance between God, world, and human—an unfolding star whose rays intersect in the singular moment of speech. Together, these thinkers allow us to construe resonance as the very mode in which the self is called forth: not by force, not by persuasion, but by the sheer vibratory presence of the Other's claim. The face thus stands as the paradigm of resonance: it does not transmit a determinate message but makes the subject resound, compelling a response that is constitutive of subjectivity itself. Such a Levinasian-Buberian conception reconfigures listening not as an epistemic operation but as an ontological exposure, a being-attuned to the resonant demand of alterity that founds ethics as the first semiotic relation.

Against this backdrop, the essays gathered in this issue approach resonance not just as a catchphrase but rather as an operative concept: a way to read, to teach, and to compose relations—between texts, bodies, communities, worlds and faces.

CONTENTS OF THE INCLUDED ESSAYS

Bergman (*Juri Lotman's Cultural Explosion and its Function in Friendship Studies and the Pragmasphere*) revisits Lotman's “explosion” and the semiosphere to argue that culture changes at boundary zones where extra-cultural information raises entropy to a bifurcation, producing

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unpredictable but still system-constrained outcomes. He reconstructs the interplay between semiosphere, sub-semiospheres, and boundary as a dynamic, filtering “third space”, then extends Lotman toward intimacy and friendship by modelling adult relationships as sites of semiospheric exchange capable of triggering “explosions” of identity and shared world-making. To mediate this, he proposes a “pragmasphere”, an interstitial layer through which partners experience, translate, and stabilize resonant relational forms; biosemiotic scaffolding and relevant-noise models help frame how such resonance is selected and reinforced. The piece is primarily theoretical and programmatic, but friendship serves as a case study, re-described with Lotmanian tools to show how recognition, reciprocity, and choice coalesce into cultural reorganization at the micro-social scale.

Giometti (*Soundscapes of Fear: Resonance as a Weapon and the Sonic Warfare Continuum*) stages a dialogue between Schafer’s soundscape, Greimasian narrativity, Goodman’s “sonic warfare continuum”, and Rosa’s resonance to show how sound acts on bodies as pre-linguistic force and narrative frame in warlike environments. She distinguishes “centrifugal” sonic weapons from “centripetal” sonic war machines whose contagiously attractive pull organizes collective affects. The method combines conceptual synthesis with a comparative case: two recordings of Kipling’s poem *Boots*, plus contemporary circulation (e.g. TikTok), to demonstrate how rhythm and framing generate resonant alignment across different soundscapes while producing distinct effects. Resonance thus names a relational mechanics cutting across media, from drones to poetic cadence—less a metaphor than a technology of attunement that can be tactically mobilized.

In her essay *Resonating with the Past: Mediation of Memory in Sound Sculptures*, adopting social semiotics of multimodality (Kress) and acoustic ecology (Schafer), Korniietska theorizes sound sculpture as a multimodal medium of remembrance. Methodologically, she parses “sound objects” and “sound events” to track how sonic affordances re-activate collective memory in public space. The analysis turns to three temporary German installations about WWII: Fontana’s *Distant Trains* (Berlin), Kison’s *Touched Echo* (Dresden), and Kadan’s *The Inhabitants of Colosseum* (Regensburg). In each, carefully situated sounds overlay present urban sites with historical acoustics, producing phantoms that resonate between documentation and affective reenactment; footsteps, echoes, and remote transmissions become mnemonic triggers that complicate local cultures of remembrance and guilt. Sound, here, is both symbolic and indexical—an embodied interface that binds place, past, and listeners into a shared, resonant listening situation.

Losardo (*Resonant Heels and The Devil Wears Prada: Building and Sharing Identity Through Sound*) treats clothing as a semiotic device by advancing the “sounding silhouette” (opposed to a sonic silhouette) and mapping how timbre, rhythm, and intensity of heels become social values through Peircean semiosis, Greimasian

valorisation, and Landowskian interaction regimes. A persona typology (coherent, indifferent, rebel, aesthetic/aesthetic) tracks how subjects accept, reject, or neutralize interpellations carried by these sonic traces. Applying this framework to the film *The Devil Wears Prada*, he shows how heels signal power/willingness, catalyse dialogic interpellation, and circulate via spreadability, while Rosa’s resonance clarifies the fragile balance between being affected by world and actively relating to it (Andrea’s arc as an attunement and eventual break). The analysis grounds resonance in a kind of sartorial acoustics, where materials and social scripts fuse to sculpt identities that are heard before they are seen.

Miccolis (*Between Face and Voice: Semiotic Relationships*) conceptualizes face and voice as symbiotic palimpsests whose mutual referencing generates layered meanings across the dichotomy nature vs. culture. Drawing on semiotics and cognitive science (embodiment, simulation), he argues that listening and looking co-modulate interpretation, with feedback loops that can amplify or contradict. An interlude on Fónagy supports the coupling; the case study, the TV broadcast *The Masked Singer*, leverages the mask to suspend facial cues and force listening as an interpretive practice. Here, vocal timbre, rhythm, slips, and gesture become diagnostic indices while the mask reframes deception as play (para-deception), displacing the uncanny into participatory enigma. The essay reframes resonance as the corporeal co-vibration of face-voice systems and audience inference, showing how identity emerges through patterned, synesthetic attunements rather than fixed physiognomic essences.

In their essay *The Sound Apparatus in Open World Games: Musical Resonance in The Witcher 3 and Red Dead Redemption 2*, at the crossroads of ludomusicology and sociosemiotics, Pizzati & Tito argue that adaptive audio, motifs, and diegetic/non-diegetic shifts mediate a resonant pact between player and the world. Framing with Collins (participatory supplemental connotations), Rosa (resonance: material–relational–temporal), and Nattiez (poietic/neutral/aesthetic levels), they combine theoretical exposition with close reading: *The Witcher 3*’s Slavic-coded soundscape and *Red Dead Redemption 2*’s Morricone-inflected nostalgia. Methodologically, they apply Kamp’s “four ways of hearing videogame music” to show how cues index danger, guide action, and invite aesthetic arrest; analysis details as transitions, instruments, and mixing become indices, icons, and symbols that choreograph arousal and memory. In open worlds game prone to “aimless wandering”, music functions as an interactive monument and temporal map, sustaining immersion through player–audio co-agency.

Across the dossier, resonance names a relational operator binding materials, bodies, and codes: from Lotmanian boundary exchanges in intimacy (Bergman), to tactical affect in war soundscapes (Giometti), to urban memory sculptures (Korniietska), sartorial acoustics (Losardo), the face–voice palimpsest (Miccolis), and adaptive game audio (Pizzati & Tito). Methodologically,

all six couple theory with situated analyses, but their anchors differ: Lotman/biosemiotics for cultural modelling (Bergman); Schafer–Greimas–Goodman for conflictual sound ecologies (Giometti); Kress/Schafer for multimodal memory (Korniietska); Peirce–Greimas–Landowski for embodied identity (Losardo); semiotics–cognitive science for cross-modal embodiment (Miccolis); Collins–Rosa–Nattiez/Kamp for interactive music (Pizzati & Tito). If a common thread is resonance as co-vibration enabling sense-making, the divergences lie in scale (micro-intimacy to macro-urban/military) and medium (museum / public space, cinema/TV, AAA games); as well as teleology: consolation and remembrance (Korniietska) vs. control/contagion (Giometti), individuation via style (Losardo) vs. de- and re-masking of identity (Miccolis), and systemic modelling (Bergman) vs. engineered interactivity (Pizzati & Tito). Together, the essays map resonance as a cross-modal, context-sensitive semiotic mechanism—at once aesthetic, ethical, and operational.