Call for papers

Special issue edited by Vincent Hirtzel, Victor A. Stoichita, Valentina Vapnarsky & Emmanuel de Vienne

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Abstract

Recent research has pointed to the duality inherent in the concept of “voice”, which can be, understood both as an acoustic and bodily phenomenon and as a metaphor for self-affirmation in contexts marked by power and domination. Attention, however, has primarily been directed towards the second, metaphorical meaning. This special issue, by contrast, focuses on the acoustic, phonic and embodied qualities of the voice, as well as on its pragmatic effects across a range of situations and cultural contexts. To this end, we use the term “vocality” to capture the material and agentive aspects of vocal sounds, their complex entanglements with speech, and the concrete interactions within which they take shape. We propose to explore how various dimensions in the production of spoken and sung sounds (prosody, rhythm, timbre, breath, voicing, cries, etc.) and modes of listening are socially and culturally arranged, so as to build relationships, frames and imaginaries, which in turn enable specific forms of action and communication.

Cross-cutting or joint perspectives drawn from the anthropology of language and music, as well as the performing arts, possibly in dialogue with other traditions, such as acoustics or cognitive science, will shed light on different cases and analytical approaches, with their contrasting premises, methodologies, questions and analytical scales.

We suggest a number of ways into this general problematic:
First, we are interested in the double movement by which voices are produced and received. The aim here is to avoid a kind of vagueness that often results from an excessive focus on the intention which underlies vocal acts ("voice does this/that", when in fact this is merely the utterer’s hope). Vocality is not determined by, or reducible to, vocal production; rather it is situated at the interface with modes of listening. The same vocal act can generate a range of varying experiences in different people or contexts. Building on research about the diverse modes of sonic attention, contributors might explore how speakers seek to guide listeners towards particular outcomes, and how these outcomes impact the relational and pragmatic effects of the voice.

We are also interested in the alienation and manipulation of the voice, when speakers deploy bodily techniques to alter it, when it is auto-tuned, amplified, stored in hard-drives or in the cloud, or when it is disembodied and perhaps lent out or even stolen... How do these vocal changes reconfigure the interactional setting? The question is particularly salient when the express intention is to transform the situation by altering the voice. Such transformations often have names. Words like “chanting”, “singing” and “declaiming”, for instance, describe particular, socially recognized uses of the voice, which shift it away from everyday speech. Particular attention will be paid to ritual settings, and to the ways in which the manipulation of vocal production (in terms of articulation, voicing or breath) can be used to make more-than-human others audible or to give them presence. Altered vocalities may also be used to communicate, identify, or modify – in specific and unusual ways - participants' perceptions of space-time, from the body to the cosmos.

Defining "alterations" of the voice in contrast with its more "ordinary" uses comes with new problems however. Indeed, daily and ordinary uses of the voice are themselves socially and culturally constructed.

A third angle therefore will explore the (always local) theories and ideologies of voice. We propose to attend to the different ways in which people learn to give and to receive voice, ranging from everyday childhood learning to the specific techniques and apprenticeships of vocal specialists, such as shamans, ritual or funerary wailers, singers or actors.

Finally, we are interested in the relationships between vocality and writing, and in particular how ritual writing produces specific forms of oralisation, through the scripturalisation of vocality and a diverse range of ritual pragmatics. We encourage contributors to consider the portfolio format for this theme.

Publication formats

In addition to academic articles (up to 45,000 signs, including spaces), the issue will include "portfolios" conceived as short essays built on a corpus of images. Finally, short narratives
(4,000 words), in the form of descriptive vignettes, will report on events documented in archives or directly observed in an ethnographic field.

Instructions for authors can be found here, and examples of the different formats here.

You can contact the coordinators or the editorial team at any time for further information on formats, the call or any other question: terrain.redaction@cnrs.fr

Calendar

Proposals for contributions should be sent in the form of an abstract (approximately 300 words) by June 30, 2024 to the editorial board of the journal Terrain: terrain84.voix@gmail.com

Full papers should be submitted by January 6, 2025 to the editorial board of the journal Terrain: terrain84.voix@gmail.com

Carnet de Terrain - linked to issue 84

The blog “Carnets de Terrain” also publishes short texts (2000 words) aimed at an informed but non-specialist audience. Blog posts can also be used to showcase multimedia content. For further details, please consult the instructions for authors. Proposals should be sent in the form of a summary (300 words) to the coordinators of the “around the issues” section by September the 1st, 2024: Clara Duterme et Cécile Guillaume-Pey.

Evaluation process:

After an initial review by the editorial board, the submitted papers are peer-reviewed in a double-blind process: two external reviewers and one internal reviewer. Instructions for authors can be found online: https://journals.openedition.org/terrain/16256

Members of the editorial board: https://journals.openedition.org/terrain/16253