

CALL FOR PAPERS

SPECIAL ISSUE

TEXTU(R)ALITIES: SEMIOTICS, BODIES, TEXTS

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In the last couple of decades, our embodied actions with others have become uncircumscribed and the materiality of social life filtered through texts and other semiotic modes that bind people together while keeping them apart. Such a phenomenon has been bolstered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The need for distancing measures and isolation has intensified processes of semiotization that significantly affect how we relate to and communicate with others and ourselves. The ways individuals work, study, exercise, love, party, have sex, protest, etc. have all been reshaped and their relationships with their surroundings have turned even more textually grounded. Such a context necessitates a rethinking of seemingly well-defined phenomena such as corporeality and matter and their relationship with both virtual and physical environments. Making sense of the information we receive through our embodied interaction with our surroundings is not only shaped by a bodily memory of certain stimuli, but also by the way we culturally and socially contextualize those experiences (Di Benedetto 2010: 71-72).

This unprecedented enmeshment of knowledge, bodies, and texts is the focus of this special issue. Of particular interest to our purposes is an interdisciplinary rethinking of the ways individuals phenomenologically and semiotically experience their surroundings through a variety of texts, producing new social and (inter)subjective textures along the way. For the purposes of this special issue, this double-bind is captured by the notion of “textu(r)alities” whereby the idea of texture as something that can be *apprehended* through the senses recalls the capacity to create texts and narratives to make sense, literally, of that experience. Tellingly, “to apprehend” in English means “to seize, either physically or mentally” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary 2021) therefore highlighting the interconnectedness of thought, action, and embodiment through the idea of grasping with the mind and/or the hand.

At this juncture, we invite submissions that aim to tackle the various dimensions of the central questions of the special issue:

- How do individuals find ways to seize (physically, mentally, subjectively, affectively) ever-changing and elusive surroundings and, in turn, how do these surroundings shape individuals' capacity to make sense of themselves in the world?
- How do the interweaving and crisscrossing of bodies, texts, and several modes of meaning-making in highly semiotised societies forge textures that bind people together?
- How do cracks in well-established textures appear and disappear?
- How does the textual warp and weft of social life get established and changed?
- How does matter contribute to (re)shaping semiotic practices and narrative processes?
- How do bodies inhabit or challenge the "social skin"?

Broad in scope, these questions are framed to encompass the ways bodies, minds, and texts get interwoven in people's daily undertakings with others and themselves. The terms 'text' and 'texture' derive from the Latin stem *texere* (for 'to weave'), suggesting the idea of weaving together individual threads to form larger units that take the form of a network, a patchwork, a structure. Texture is precisely what makes a text a semantic unit, through linguistic (or multimodal) features that give it cohesion and coherence and it is also what structures discourse in its different forms: narratives, prayers, sonnets, operating instructions, news, formal correspondence, conversation, films, and so on (Halliday and Hasan 1976: 326). Discourse, in turn, originates from contextualized and embodied experiences. Through the co-articulation of their discreet components, text and body shape meaning-making practices enabling us to think about texture as something stemming out of our phenomenological interaction with our surroundings, through our body's interaction with other bodies, or in general with other objects. In other words, texts help moor bodies to the surroundings that, in turn, (in)form both bodies and texts. Tethering bodies to their surroundings is inherently a phenomenological and semiotic process. As individuals orient to signs-in-the-world, such signs (re)orient their being with others and their understanding of themselves and the contexts in which they act.

Bodies, minds, and texts, of course, are, to different extents, the main concern of (socio)linguists, anthropologists, sociologists, historians, psychologists, queer theorists, philosophers, and literary scholars (to name but a few) who we invite to submit a **300-word abstract** to be considered for inclusion in the special issue. Submissions should also include a **100-words bio** and directly address the questions above. They should be sent to Emilio Amideo (eamideo@unior.it) and Rodrigo Borba (rodrigoborba@letras.ufrj.br) no later than **September 15th, 2022**.