

Introduction: Dialogues between Continental Semiotics and Linguistic Anthropology

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Abstract: In this introduction, we elaborate on the theme of this issue and its aim: to provide a bridge between the semiotic traditions of North American linguistic anthropology and European continental semiotics. We provide a brief overview of these different, heterogeneous traditions, noting their points of convergence and divergence. While each shares a sustained critical engagement with and movement beyond linguistic structuralism, and thus a number of common bases dating to the mid-century, the two traditions have been in little to no contact for the last half-century, each independently developing its own unique theoretical discourse and approach to semiosis and signification. Despite their differences, however, linguistic anthropology and continental semiotics are built on shared foundations. They continue to be concerned with similar issues, and, in various areas, have developed convergent solutions. To demonstrate this, we identify a cluster of points of contact (among many others, to be sure): enunciation and entextualization; enunciative praxis and enregisterment; embodiment, qualia, and affect/passions; semiosphere, cultures of circulation, and emanation; and the semiotics of practice, interaction, and actantial theory. We conclude with discussion of the larger project from which this issue arose.

Keywords: continental semiotics; linguistic anthropology; enunciation; entextualization; enunciative praxis; enregisterment; embodiment; qualia;

passions; semiosphere; circulation; emanation; practice; interaction; actantial theory

This thematic issue of *Semiotic Review* aims to create a space for dialogue across continental semiotics and linguistic anthropology, that is, the semiotic traditions that emerged in post-war Europe in the wake of structuralism and, in North America, the branch of anthropology that emerged from the Boasian tradition of situating language in culture. These distinct approaches to theorizing and analyzing meaning-making are themselves internally diverse and heterogeneous, characterized by different schools, internal debates, as well as their own dialogues across adjacent approaches and disciplines, from linguistics and philosophy, to cognitive science and psychology, sociology and ethology, literary studies and art history, among others. To speak of “continental semiotics,” thus, is not to homogenize a diverse set of overlapping and diverging strands which we often indicate through the proper names that are used to caption them: Barthes, Eco, Greimas, Hjelmslev, Kristeva, Lotman, et cetera. Similarly, linguistic anthropology is a field with distinct centers and schools—historically and mainly, but not exclusively, in North America—comprising different approaches, ranging from those focused on face-to-face interaction to the ethnography of communication and ethnopoetics to sociolinguistics, from Peirce-inspired semiotic anthropology to phenomenological practice theory, from documentary anthropological linguistics to critical discourse analyses of power and ideology. Many scholars do more than one of these. Our aim in this introduction does not, and cannot, aim to survey, reduce, or summarize this diversity or its intellectual histories. Rather, our primary aim is to point out a gulf between these complex thickets, these lively networks of semiotic thought, and to open a channel of communication between them, a space for contact and cross-fertilization for our ships to do more than pass each other in the night.

Indeed, it is striking to us that despite co-existing for the last sixty years, we find contact between North American linguistic anthropology and continental semiotic traditions so limited, with the exception of key early connections and, more recently, a few intrepid explorers (see, e.g., Danesi 2013; Leone and Parmentier 2014; Padoan and Sedda 2018; Ponzio, Yelle, and Leone 2020; Murphy 2021; Leone 2024; Dondero 2024). This is despite the fact that they share mutual histories and concerns. Among other genealogical connections, one common point of reference was laid by the revolution of linguistic structuralism—in particular, Ferdinand de Saussure’s (1857–1913) 1916 *Cours de linguistique générale*—and its legacies.¹ Structuralism was a major crucible for theoretical advances in both continental semiotics and linguistic anthropology, even if and especially as structuralism’s impasses came to propel new ways of thinking the problem of meaning

by both traditions, not by wholesale rejecting structuralism but by continuing to think through, and thus beyond, it.²

Despite common landmarks and conversations (e.g., between Benveniste and Jakobson; Jakobson and Levi-Strauss, Sebeok, and Hymes; Lotman and Sebeok; Benveniste's engagement with Americanist linguistics [e.g., Sapir] and, later, the writings of Peirce [Benveniste 2019(2012)]), North American linguistic anthropology and continental semiotic traditions quickly diverged in the second half of the twentieth century and remained siloed from each other since. This is not only in their theoretical discourse or their methodological preferences. Today, they stand geographically, disciplinarily, and linguistically apart. Continental semiotics in its many varieties, for example, is often situated in European and Latin American departments of philosophy, literature, media and communication, or visual arts, while linguistic anthropology predominantly finds itself in North American departments of anthropology, as well as schools of education, linguistics departments, and area studies departments. Their conference circuits and professional associations do not much overlap. Linguistically, continental semiotics is presented and published largely in Romance languages (primarily French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese), while the latter circulates predominantly in English.³ While translations exist, many important works in both traditions are untranslated.

Yet for all this, an inspection of recent developments and ongoing problematics in these fields reveals profound overlaps, shared concerns, and convergent approaches to questions of meaning and value in social life. Convinced that these commonalities provide fecund ground for conversation, collaboration, and scientific progress, this issue is devoted to traversing the proverbial pond and closing the distance between our fields. Our aim is to provide a scholarly contact zone, indeed, to show how despite our differences, we dwell in the same problem space, oriented to similar issues and having evolved complementary solutions, ones from which both traditions can mutually learn and grow. The challenges of conceptual translation and disciplinary sensibility and methodology, as well as languages of publication and scholarly networks, are real; just as are the risks of false equivalences or talking past each other. But so, too, are the benefits from engagement, to expand our communities of inquiry and interpretation.

Common Destinations, Convergences, and Future Conversations

The issue emerges out of a particular working group involving linguistic anthropologists from Chicago and Paris and semioticians from Paris, Liège, Turin, Cork, and Cagliari (see the final section on a short history of the issue). Our initial bridge-building focused on making connections between so-called Paris School, or (post)Greimassian, semiotics—particularly, the question of enunciation—and the linguistic anthropology influenced by

Jakobson, Hymes, and Silverstein—in particular, regarding indexicality, metapragmatics, and entextualization. While we might point to general differences between these specific traditions—for example, among linguistic anthropologists, the insistence on the ethnographic study of real-time semiotic events, the stress on the cultural diversity of semiosis (as revealed by ethnographic inquiry), or the importance of Peirce and American pragmatism (in particular, the category of indexicality); or, by contrast, in Paris School semiotics, the importance of narrative structural semiotics and literary textual analysis originally developed in the wake of Saussurean semiology, the centrality of the question of subjectivity and enunciation, the emphasis on nonhuman agency in studying visual and material culture, a focus on European cultural materials,⁴ and concerns with modeling tools and methods coming from the analysis of non-linguistic sign systems (e.g., pictorial semiosis)—these broad generalizations find easy exception.

Rather than summarizing these traditions wholesale (an impossible task in a single article) and then specifying the differentia (which some of the articles in this issue helpfully do in a limited way), in what follows we discuss what we see as fecund points of convergence and complementarity, offering a non-exhaustive list of areas where our fields overlap or have already begun to turn towards each other (if unfortunately, still, like ships passing in the night).⁵ The topoi traversed are skewed to the kinds of semiotics and linguistic anthropology that came together in the working group from which this collection first emerged, largely Paris School semiotics (though with influences from the Italian traditions of Eco and Fabbri, Tartu cultural semiotics of Lotman, and the work of Latour) and Peirce-inspired linguistic anthropology (though also with critical French sociolinguistics and the ethnomethodologically influenced linguistic anthropology associated with the University of California, Los Angeles). Yet despite whatever biases these reveal, we hope that these semiotic topoi will provide impetus for scholars to continue to explore these, and other associated, traditions in the hope of creating further sea lanes across the waters that separate and connect us.

We begin with the concepts of *enunciation* and *entextualization*, both because this was the initial basis for this project and because it offers a “proof of concept” that such a dialogue is both possible and fruitful. We then proceed to more briefly gesture to a series of other topics that we believe provide further areas for dialogue (and which we hope scholars will take up in their work, and in this issue!): enunciative praxis and enregisterment; embodiment, qualia, and the passions; semiosphere, circulation, and emanation; and practice, interaction, and actantial theory. These are indicative and non-exhaustive, of course, and there are certainly more points of contact that exist between our various traditions, and many more that we hope are to come.

Enunciation / Entextualization

One important point of contact between North American linguistic anthropology (in particular from work centered at the University of Chicago) and French-based traditions of semiotics (the so-called “Paris School”) is the point from where they both diverged: the problem space denoted by the terms *enunciation*, *indexicality*, and *entextualization*.

Both the concepts of **enunciation** (in Paris School semiotics) and **entextualization** (in linguistic anthropology) denote *processes* by which a certain semiotic transformation takes place. In a major departure from early structuralist theories inspired by Saussure, Émile Benveniste (1971[1956, 1958, 1966], 2014[1974]) defined *enunciation* as the activation or appropriation of language through an act of use, namely the “process by which natural language (Saussure’s *langue*) is turned into discourse” (Greimas and Courtés 1982:103). In a similar departure, by building on Jakobson’s focus on the speech event and welding it with an earlier Boasian (1911) concern with the link of language and forms of cultural conception, linguistic anthropologists such as Dell Hymes turned to usage in cultural context as the primary site to ground the study of language and communication. Michael Silverstein and colleagues (Silverstein and Urban 1996), by building upon Jakobson’s speech-event model (Jakobson 1953; Silverstein 1976) and, more specifically, his notion of the poetic function (Jakobson 1960[1958]; Silverstein 1993), refined this focus on the eventuality of semiosis through the notion of entextualization. Critiquing structuralist accounts of signification, but also symbolic anthropological notions of culture as “text,” *entextualization* theorizes the process by which an unfolding array of token-signs cohere with each other (and thus are differentiated from their surround, their con-text) to form a composite, iterable type, a “text(-in-context).” Signification, on this view, is an emergent process, embodied in social interaction, whose product, or precipitate to use a metaphor from chemistry, is a “text,” a by-degrees stable configuration of signs that can be decontextualized and recontextualized across events (Hanks 1989; Bauman and Briggs 1990; Briggs and Bauman 1992).

Both enunciation and entextualization, importantly, involve what Peirce called an indexical relation between signs and their event of happening, that is, a “real connection” (CP 2.287) between a token-instance of the sign and its object (Silverstein 1976; Nakassis 2018): in enunciation, this is evident in deictics (indexical signs that refer to elements of the speech situation such as personal pronouns, tense, demonstratives, etc.), that part of language structure that anticipates and thus enables the conversion of *langue* into discourse.⁶ In entextualization, the coherence of signs qua text turns on indexical relations of juxtaposition *between* signs (qua co-text) that itself creates an indexical relationship between a text and what it projects as its context. For both concepts, this further involves a **meta-indexical** (or “metacommunicative” or “metapragmatic”) dimension (Lee 1997;

Urban 2006), wherein what is denoted or figured in discourse shapes that very indexical connection.

Note that if enunciation is the passage from a virtuality (a “system” or “code”) to an actuality (a realized instance of discourse; Fontanille 2006), entextualization is the reverse passage, from an actuality (a real-time flow of signs) to a virtual (achronic) “text.” Putting them together, we might say that entextualization is the real-time emergence of relations *between* instances of enunciation (of individual signs) which cohere to configure a text (a “signifying whole,” as Fontanille [2006] calls it) which itself, at a higher order, enunciates (what Asif Agha [2007a] has called “text-level indexicality”). Both are attempts to get at what Deleuze and Guattari (1987[1980]) have referred to as “haecceities,” “impersonal” enunciations through which subjectivities and various performative effects are generated (also see Paolucci 2020, 2021, 2022).

Here, it is worth pausing on the distinct, but ultimately commensurable, notions of **text** in these different theoretical discourses. Various strands of continental semiotics have theorized the notion of text through Louis Hjelmslev’s expansion of the Saussurean concept of the sign. For Hjelmslev (1969:39), *text* denotes a semiotic process, a syntagmatic chain of signs composed by an *expression plane* of signifiers and a *content plane* of signifieds. Both planes are constituted by a *form* (or organization), and by the material and conceptual *substance* which has been organized, so that each text or linear chain of signs will be characterized by a certain *form of expression* (a way of organizing signifiers) in correlation to a *form of content* (a way of organizing signifieds) (Hjelmslev 1969:47–60).⁷ This interpretation of text, which was expanded upon by Greimas, understands text as a semiotic *token*, a material instance. This differs, at least on the surface, from the linguistic anthropological notion of text as a *type*, a virtual product of a concrete process of entextualization; for linguistic anthropologists, text, while emergent from token-signs, is an iterable, decontextualizable pattern that is distinct from its material realization as a “text-artifact” (Silverstein and Urban 1996). Yet these are perhaps simply different lenses onto the same concern of how semiosis functions as token and type, process and product.

Here, the concepts of **shifting-in** (French: *embrayage*) and **shifting-out** (French: *débrayage*) from Paris School semiotics (Greimas and Courtés 1982; Latour 1988; Marrone 2022) are useful to understand the process of entextualization.⁸ The precipitation of text from a real-time flow of semiosis is a “shifting-out” — the displacement from the here-and-now of semiosis into a bracketed not-here-and-now — a de-contextualization that decenters semiosis from the event of its happening/enunciation. But as linguistic anthropologists have insisted, the co-ordinate process of entextualization is **contextualization**, the always already re-centering of a text within an envelope of activity

figured as “external” to the text, a “shifting-in” where a text is leveraged to performatively reorder its instance of enunciation (Bauman and Briggs 1990; also see Duranti and Goodwin 1992).⁹ If enunciation, thus, is this movement of shifting-out and shifting-in, we might understand this as always also a movement of *de*-contextualization and *re*-contextualization.¹⁰ But where the linguistic anthropological notion suggests a binary and iterative process, shifting-in and shifting-out highlight the recursive and relational quality of this movement, perhaps closer to Goffman’s (1974) notion of **framing**, the Russian-doll like layering effects of semiosis that can lead to complex “shadow conversations” (Irvine 1996) and “indirect” indexicalities (Ochs 1992).

Pushing the comparison further, linguistic anthropologists have distinguished three kinds (or dimensions) of texts that are precipitated by entextualization processes (which we might now also call as types of “text-level enunciation”): **image-texts**, **interactional texts**, and **denotational texts**. The first, *image-texts*, are coherences of iconic signs based on their palpable qualia: “figures in sound” as Jakobson (1960[1958]) called them after Hopkins, images drawn in discourse (the “form” of discourse, its poetics or aesthetic texture, in any and every modality; Nakassis 2019, 2023b, 2025). The third, *denotational texts*, are precipitated by the coherence of symbolic signs qua information structure or narrative, the “content” of “what is said” or represented in discourse. The second, *interactional texts* (Silverstein 1993), which linguistic anthropologists have emphasized most heavily, are coherences of indexical, pragmatic signs. These are diagrams of social action, the “what is done” in and by saying, representing, or depicting something. Interactional texts correspond closely to the focus in continental semiotics on how an *énoncé* (utterance, text) virtually figurates its own actness (Fontanille 1989; Padoan 2014), sketching out its actants and their relationships (of manipulation, persuasion, etc.) with respect to some actional target or “**object of value**” (Padoan 2024), and following emerging programs of action (Latour 1999a:178–80, 309) and sets of narrative transformations (Greimas 1987a, 1988).

An important point in both traditions is that through enunciation and entextualization, speakers situate both themselves and others, constituting their reciprocal positions. Via the notion of enunciation, Benveniste expanded the function of language beyond simply a way to represent a particular state of affairs. Language, rather, is instead an action that transforms that state, modifying both producers and receivers at the same time (Greimas and Courtés 1982:104; Fabbri 2005:24, 54), a view that linguistic anthropologists such as Hymes, Gumperz, Goffman, and later Silverstein, and philosophers such as J. L. Austin were also arguing in the same period. In both continental semiotics and linguistic anthropology, thus, enunciation and entextualization are not simply processes that transform signs (from the virtual to the actual, or vice versa). More importantly, they are transformations in the relations between communicative partners, reconfigurations of the

world of interactants, precisely because there is no separation between discourse and reality—again, because discourse is not just a representation of reality.¹¹ Here, we suggest that the continental dissecting of enunciation (into actants, narrative programs, etc.) can lend a helpful analytic vocabulary to think about the organization of interactional texts, just as linguistic anthropology can help push the abstract narratological focus of Paris School semiotics towards interactional pragmatics in actual events of communication (on which, more below). Similarly, the distinction of types of textual coherence and texts (qua image-text, interactional text, and denotational text) as interlocking and mutually implicating dimensions of entextualization is useful to expand on the semiotic notion of enunciation (qua enacted simulacrum of action) to empirically study and theorize how performative effects (Austin 1962) are semiotically organized and achieved.

How so? That is, how can we analyze this particular semiotic domain called enunciation and its entextualization in performative events of interaction? Here, again, the question of indexicality and meta-indexicality are key. On the one hand, we have to look at what Gregory Bateson (1972[1955]) defined as *metacommunication* (cf. Silverstein 1993 on *metapragmatics*), namely that level of communication whose aim is to create and modify the relations between the parties inscribed in the communicative process—the interchangeable *roles* of producers and receivers called by Greimas *enunciators* and *enunciatees* (Hammad 2006:342–43; Latour 1999b).¹² While this level may be realized in explicit metapragmatic discourse (such as deictics like personal pronouns or performative verbs), an important point from Bateson and Silverstein is that this reflexive dimension is also *emergent* in and *immanent* to the very texture of semiosis (exactly what Jakobson [1960(1958)] called the “poetic function”), that is, entextualization (in each of its dimensions: aesthetic/imageistic, interactional/pragmatic, symbolic/narratological) is itself metacommunicative, is itself enunciative.

That is, if we follow the linguistic anthropological insistence that every entextualization is also a contextualization in some embodied event—that is, that every enunciation is always residually shifted-in (i.e., “reflexively calibrated” to a here, now, us [Silverstein 1993, 2021])—this leads us to ask how such interactional texts are projected into and transformative of the events of their enunciation. Since entextualization is an emergent real-time process that unfolds by being distributed across participants to it, linguistic anthropologists have talked about such a projection as a **dynamic figuration** (Silverstein 2004). *Dynamic figuration* denotes the way in which the poetic form of semiosis (as image, act, and narrative) figurates what it enacts. When successful, the effect is performative (even if an explicit performative utterance is absent): what is said or depicted comes to pass as an action done, a social fact accomplished, a world (re)founded (Stasch 2011; Nakassis 2023a).

Dynamic figuration can be usefully compared to the Greimassian notion of **semi-symbolism** (Greimas and Courtés 1982:290; Thurlemann 1989; Floch 2000:46). If the structuralist's *langue* is a symbolic ground for signification in natural language, most semiosis, as continental semioticians and linguistic anthropologists have both pointed out, is distinct in that its signification is due to other semiotic dimensions: in the Peircean idiom, iconic and indexical grounds (Harkness 2021), in Eco's terms, *ratio difficilis* (Eco 1976). The notion of semi-symbolism captures the play of signification (*qua langue*) outside of *langue*, through contrasts in material, plastic form that correspond to (analogic) contrasts of meaning (Greimas and Courtés 1982:290; Padoan 2014). Dynamic figuration, from this point of view, names the evenemential emergence of semi-symbolism in and across events *and* its shifting-in (the conversion of its poetic iconicity into indexical force, what Ball [2014] calls *dicentization*, adapting the Peircean concept of the dicent).¹³

For a concrete example of semi-symbolism as a type of iconic indexical signification, consider the semiotic textuality of the Thai villager's house (*baan*), as famously analyzed by Tambiah (1985) and discussed at length by Silverstein (2004) as an example of cultural concepts cued in events of entextualization that dynamically figure worlds of belief. In this example, the *expression plane* would be made up by *material substances* (mainly wood, straw, metal components, etc.) arranged into an *architectural form*. In the Thai house, a sleeping room (*huan yaai*) is divided into the parents' section on the east (*haung phoeng*) and a section for the daughter and her husband on the west (*haung suam*); further divisions include the guest room (*huan nau*), the wash place (*haung naam*), the kitchen (*khrua*), the entrance platform (*saan*), the roof, the pillars, and the threshold located on the top floor; below, a house ladder (*kan dai*) leads to a ground-level undercroft, where there are separate sections for buffalos, pigs, chicken and ducks, but also a weaving room, a room for tools and baskets, and for firewood; outside the house but within the space circumscribed by the compound fence are found the lavatory, the water jar, and other animals' pens. For the Paris School semiotician, these would be all considered as different architectural signifiers that make up the expression plane (the iconic representamen) of the Thai house.

But what about the *content plane*? The form of expression just outlined (how the signifiers are arranged) corresponds to the content plane of signifieds. This includes not only particular ideologies—e.g., marriage and sex rules applied to different categories of people according to the zone of the house they are allowed to enter, but also eating rules applied to different animals according to the section they inhabit—but also social action itself, as discussed below. From this analytic perch, the content plane of the Thai house involves the specific way the *substance of content* is arranged into a *form*, that is, the multiple ways in which the human and nonhuman actors who inhabit or circulate within the house (parents, daughter, son-in-law, children, other family members, visitors, the

Buddha enshrined on the altar, different edible and inedible animals, various objects like water pots and kitchen utensils etc.) are supposed to interact in that space (in both ordinary practices and rituals like nuptials, funerals, ordinations, and the like) (Tambiah 1985:180).

Importantly, this spatial semiosis is oriented in a gradual and tensive (i.e., gradient) way, indexically starting from a sacred *origo*, the sleeping room in the parents' section as a place of maximal intensity—where the Buddha's statue is also enshrined on the northeast corner, inaccessible to people except for the parents and the married daughter (but not the son-in-law)—and progressively articulating itself in extension, southward into the rooms away from the *origo* (first, those of the closest relatives, who are in the center of the sleeping room; then more distant ones, who are in the guest room; and finally visitors, who are on the external platform) (Silverstein 2004:634–38). More significant, this tensive structure is replicated on the ground floor, such that there is a spatial correspondence between the different rooms inside the house and the different animal dwellings below it; based on this analogic relation, animals like the buffalo, who are located right below the parents' sleeping room, are subject to more eating restrictions, while animals spatially distant are considered edible; the dog and cat, by comparison, are completely inedible, as possible equivalents to the incest taboo, due to their freedom to roam even in the sacred locales of the house (Tambiah 1985:184).¹⁴

Here, the indexical integuments of this *form of expression* (the tensive spatial arrangement of the house) reciprocally presupposes, by serving as an icon of, a *form of content*, doubly defined as the degree of kinship determining access to the rooms on the top floor, and as the various forms of edibility characterizing animals on the ground floor. The spatiality of the house is a “map,” a diagram of relations of a people (viz. kinship/sexuality) and relations of edibility that does not only represent those relations but orders them; that is, this cultural conceptualization (a virtual order of semiosis) is materialized in the here-and-now. The result is a complex semi-symbolism, a “signifying set” which is dynamically figured and continually enacted in ritual events and everyday life.¹⁵

Enunciative Praxis (Modes of Existence) / Enregisterment

One of the longstanding limitations of both structuralism and interactionist “micro” approaches to the speech event have been the linked problems of historical change and semiosis beyond and across the event. In Paris School semiotics, this problematic has been productively theorized through the notion of **enunciative praxis / *praxis énonciative*** (Greimas and Fontanille 1993; Bertrand 1993; Floch 2000; Fontanille 2006, 2017; Frisone 2023; Dondero 2024).¹⁶ By defining enunciation as a praxis, Greimas and Fontanille stressed that this domain not only mediates the conversion from a virtual *langue* to a

realized *parole*, but also from *parole* to *langue*, showing how the historical and cultural practice of every verbal and nonverbal semiotic system can change the system itself, as “it also engenders forms that become fixed, transformed into stereotypes, and directed ‘upstream,’ to be in a way integrated into *langue*” (1993:xx). Moving beyond the binary of the virtualized and realized, Paris School semioticians have described two coordinate movements: *actualization* (the movement from virtualizations toward realizations of discourse) and, in reverse, *potentialization* (the movement from realized instances to virtualizations).¹⁷ These “**modes of existence**” (virtualization, actualization, realization, potentialization) chart out the ways in which not only are virtual norms convoked and presented in particular events, but also how in being realized and re-virtualized (rendered spectral), enunciations transform those very virtualities.

In a related spirit, linguistic anthropologists have in recent decades turned their attention to semiosis beyond the speech event (Agha and Wortham 2005), to **interdiscursive** processes that link events to each other (Silverstein 2005; Wortham 2006) and to perduring media (or “substrates”) of interaction (C. Goodwin 2017; see Dondero 2024). The mechanics of such processes are themselves implied by the dialectic of entextualization and contextualization discussed above. While, as noted above, entextualization implies the bounding off or cutting out of text from what is figured/projected as its context, because texts never exist outside of *some* context, every entextualization (as a de-/trans-contextual perdurance) implies further moments of *re-contextualization*, that is, the iterability of text (Derrida 1988; Nakassis 2013a); every such re-contextualization actualizes/singularizes/embeds the text in some wider, novel configuration of signs (some co-text) that exceeds its own enunciation.¹⁸ It is such always singular and potentially novel texts-in-context wherein creative pragmatic meanings are generated, where new folds and bindings of text become possible, realized, and, if repeated, regularized (i.e., made virtual). Every contextualization, thus, is a moment of transformation of the text, a catachresis, a *re-entextualization* that may incorporate elements of its singular, novel context *into* the future iterations of the text.

In the linguistic anthropology literature, scholars have discussed this *praxis énonciative* in various ways: for example, Silverstein’s notions of the **total linguistic fact** (1979, 1985) and **indexical order** (2003a; also see Ochs 1992 on **indirect indexicality**), as well as Asif Agha’s (2007a) discussion of **enregisterment**.¹⁹ The first refers to the non-resolving dialectical relation between linguistic structure, usage or practice (which actualizes and, in so doing, refracts structure), and ideology (users’ conceptualizations that interpret, reanalyze, and rationalize the structure–practice nexus); here, structure mediates practice (in speech events), which mediates ideology, which itself, in turn, mediates practice, which mediates structure across speech events (i.e., across historical time). Relatedly, the notion of indexical orders captures the process by which the entextualization/contextualization of

any n-th order indexical sign gives rise to contextualized, innovative n+1st (text-level) indexical meanings which, as construed and typified through ideological consciousness, may themselves, across events of semiosis, become regularized or institutionalized as the default value/meaning of the index itself (and thus compete with or replace earlier forms).

Perhaps most relevant, however, to the notion of enunciative praxis is *enregisterment*. *Enregisterment* names the historical process through which cultural models of pragmatic meanings—the non-referential (social) indexicalities linked to “ways of speaking” such as dialects, speech registers, and so on²⁰—get articulated to repertoires of sign forms which can thus enact such “ways of speaking” and the stereotypes they indexically invoke in their use, in effect, serving as the conditions of the (interactional) entextualization of semiosis. Yet as virtual models (or “norms”), registers, as Asif Agha (2007a) has argued, only live in the events in which they are invoked and realized; and yet every such entextualization of necessity involves co-occurrence relations with register tokens that exceed the register in question (i.e., contextualizations with signs of other registers), giving rise to what Agha calls “tropes” on register norms which can, over historical time, resediment as (higher-order) indexical norms (that is, new registers).

To take a simple and well-known historical example, consider the social indexicality of pronominal address in 17th-century England. By the second-half of the century, the use of *thou / thee* (2nd person singular) was already passing out of favor in polite society, having become enregistered as a “rude,” regional way of speaking; by contrast, *ye / you* (2nd-person plural) was preferred among the urbane as a way to address a single person. In addition to its first-order indexicality of address, such contextualized uses functioned as tropes of honorificating addressee and, further, at a third-order, as indexing speaker as themselves polite (Bauman 1981; Silverstein 1985). Among the Protestant sect of Quakers, however, this usage (having become a norm among the elite) was reanalyzed according to religious ideologies of egalitarian leveling and humility before God. Quakers came to view (i.e., enregister) a range of signs indexing deference entitlement (2nd-person plural pronoun usage, status terms like “master,” doffing the hat) as arrogant, vainglorious, and impious (stereotypes not just of signs, note, but of their users), given their view that all men are equal before God and subservient only to Him. Here, the Quaker insistence on *thee* as both theologically sound, but also referentially “true,” produced a new indexical order, wherein the pronoun came to be imbued with a stereotype of its user (i.e., of something of the form’s context of use—speaker’s religious identity as Quaker—came to be part of the form’s normalized indexical meaning). This ideological association, carried through events of entextualization like interpersonal interaction, amplified the already in-process enregisterment of such pronominal usage as stigmatized (qua rural, rude), leading to the increased avoidance of the form by non-Quakers (at the level of realized

practice) and its eventual disappearance from the virtualized/actualized structure of the language itself.

As this example evinces, norm and trope and orders of indexicality are entangled in the dialectic process of an enunciative praxis, which is made up of processes of entextualization and enregisterment in and across semiotic events (i.e., text-level enunciations), implicating structure, practice, and ideology all at once.

As with enunciation and entextualization, bringing together and exploring enunciative praxis and enregisterment as cognate theoretical concepts serves as a fruitful site for further exploration and conversation between our fields.

Embodiment, Qualia, and the Passions

One of the central advances in continental semiotics has been the integration of phenomenology with the study of semiosis. Structuralism was long accused—rightly or wrongly—of being overly idealist, excessively focused on the abstract and decontextualized, and eschewing questions of materiality and the concreteness of experience. Through a series of important works in conversation with, in particular, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, continental semioticians have worked to ground semiosis back into the sensing, perceiving, and acting body, linking the problem of meaning to embodied experience (e.g., Greimas 1987b; Greimas and Fontanille 1993; Fabbri 2005; Landowski 2004, 2005; Fontanille 2004, 2008, 2011; Coquet 2007; Sedda 2019[2003]).²¹ Jean-Claude Coquet (2007), for example, in advocating for a “subjectal” semiosis, argued that focusing solely on the logical organization of text structures is insufficient to account for the semiotic link between what he called “somatic predicates” (non-subjective assertions linked to bodily experience and to the perceptual production of meaning) and discursive acts (assumptions of responsibility leading to the construction of subjectivity; see Padoan 2021a for more discussion). Similarly, according to Jacques Fontanille (2006:2, 16–7), the body is the interlocking element between *signifiers* and *signifieds*, between the two faces of the sign function. The body thus occupies the place of semiosis, the empty slot (*case vide*) of the apparatus of enunciation, located between the sensory world on the *plane of expression*, and cognitive, affective, as well as pragmatic meanings on the *plane of content* (ibid.:11–13, 38). A performing body (human or non-human, individual or collective—Deleuze and Guattari 1987[1980]:80–81) takes position (i.e., enunciates) in the world and thus becomes the origin of a process of signification as action.

In a different vein, but to similar ends, the linguistic anthropologist William Hanks (1990, 1992, 2005) has placed linguistic anthropology on a phenomenological basis, unifying linguistic anthropology, the writings of Karl Bühler, the phenomenology of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Alfred Schutz, and the practice theory of Pierre Bourdieu. Working with

Maya speakers in the Yucatán, Hanks significantly advanced the study of deixis by wedding ethnographic analysis of referential practice with the phenomenological question of the sensing, encultured body in an interactional, intersubjective world of experience and meaning. Like Coquet and Fontanille, here, too, the body is critical to signification (also see, e.g., M. Goodwin 2017 on “haptic sociality” and C. Goodwin’s [2017] work on perception and semiosis), most obviously as constituting the field of accessibility within which deixis (and thus acts of reference) is anchored and organized. Departing, however, from Merleau-Ponty, Hanks critically resituates the individualistic focus of much phenomenology by centering intersubjective interactions in their historical and cultural milieu (also see Russell 2025). The individual body, Hanks argues, is too narrow and limited a view, and requires we think in terms of “fields” within which are embedded events, acts, and bodies.

Hanks is not the only linguistic anthropologist to engage phenomenology in recent years, with other linguistic anthropologists also engaging the thought of Merleau-Ponty (e.g., M. Goodwin 2017; Russell 2025), Husserl (Duranti 2009), Heidegger (Kockelman 2006; Duranti 2023; Edwards 2024), German neo-phenomenology (Eisenlohr 2024), and Fanon’s existentialist phenomenology of racialization (Smalls 2020). Here, philosophical traditions of phenomenology offer a possible bridge between distinct traditions of linguistic anthropology and continental semiotics.

Similarly, work on both sides of the Atlantic has more and more turned to the affective and passional nature of semiosis (Greimas and Fontanille 1993; on affect in linguistic anthropology, see, e.g., Besnier 1990; McElhinny 2010; Graber 2023; Costa 2024; Eisenlohr 2024). In continental semiotics Paolo Fabbri, drawing more extensively on the semiotics of Deleuze and Guattari (1987[1980]) for his reflections on body and perception, argued for a reinterpretation of narrativity as “assemblage of actions and passions” situated in social interaction, rather than only literary texts, while proposing a Spinozian redefinition of signs as performative and affective forces, namely “the effects of actions on bodies, bodies acting on other bodies” (Fabbri 2005:97; Padoan 2021b; cf. Costa 2024). Eric Landowski has also focused in his work on the collective and semiotic dimension of affect. Inspired by Goffmann’s sociology of interaction and in resonance with Durkheim’s concept of effervescence, Landowski (2004) particularly stresses the corporeality of the social by analyzing phenomena of affective contagion that also connect to what he defined as “passions without a name,” whose nature is nevertheless deeply semiotic.²²

In linguistic anthropology, a significant literature has recently emerged around the concept of **qualia** (experienced qualities) and the Peircean notion of the **qualisign** (qualia functioning as sign-vehicles) (Chumley and Harkness 2013; Harkness 2013, 2015, 2020, 2022; Chumley 2017; Gal 2013, 2017). Linguistic anthropologists have shown how qualia

come to be subject to cultural conventionalization and semioticization, where the “softness” of Soju or a particular “grain” of the voice are given semiotic meaning and intensive indexical force (Kockelman 2022; Carruthers 2023) in social life. Susan Gal and Judith Irvine (2019) have further interrogated the ideological processes through which semiotic grounds are “iconized” or “rhematized,” that is, the process by which cultural essences of particular sorts are enregistered, wherein abstract qualia come to be linked to types of speakers via particular indexical signs.

Recalling that Peirce often called his semiotic a *phanerosopy* (a term he preferred to phenomenology)—that is, a science of experience—we see many possible conversations concerning, on the one hand, the phenomenology of semiosis and, on the other, the semioticization of experience, perception and the sensing body, and affect and the passions.

Semiosphere, Cultures of Circulation, and Emanation

An important concept developed by Juri Lotman and the so-called Tartu School of semiotics—also sometimes referred to as “cultural semiotics” (see Lotman 1990; Sedda 2012, 2015; Lorusso 2015; Lorusso and Sedda 2022)—is the **semiosphere**. This notion attempts to theorize the topological organization of cultural formations, the heterogenous “space” within which texts are dialogically generated and circulated in sociohistorically contingent (i.e., culturally particular) ways. Organized around centers and peripheries, with edges and overlaps with other centers, this concept has recently been linked in French and Italian semiotics to allied notions, such as “**forms of life**” (Fontanille 2015), which we might also link to the concept of style (Floch 2000; Nakassis 2016). According to Greimas’s (1993) original formulation—who modified this Wittgenstenian notion to reframe different lifestyles emerging as “semiotic beings” in the social domain—forms of life are ways of being in the world characterized by a certain plane of expression (like some recurrent visual, bodily-perceptual and material traits), modes of action, and certain rhythms of life (an “aesthetic” plane of expression) associated with a philosophy of life and transformative purpose (an “ethical” plane of content).²³ Generally speaking, “forms of life” are considered by continental semioticians as occupying an intermediate position between forms of textuality and semiospheres (within which multiple forms of life co-exist). Linguistic anthropologists, in a similar way, have also taken up Wittgenstein’s concept (see, e.g., Duranti 1994; Goodwin and Goodwin 1996; Murphy 2015:13; Sidnell 2021; Hansen 2024) to frame the intrinsically situated relationship between language, as a kind of practice among others, and everyday life.

Here, a recent engagement between French semiotics and contemporary French and Brazilian anthropological (post-)structuralism—“*anthroposémiotique*” (anthropo-semiotics; Fontanille and Couégnas 2018; Fontanille 2021)—raises intriguing possibilities for situating

the place of cultural and ontological difference within semiotics. Yet how to relate concepts like semiosphere and forms of life to anthropological notions of culture (or ontology; Padoan 2019:83–84) requires careful thought, particularly in light of the intense critique that the culture concept was subjected, in particular in American anthropology, in the 1980s and 1990s; within linguistic anthropology, alternate notions such as **language ideologies** or **semiotic ideologies** came to fill the void (just as, we might also suggest, “forms of life,” did as well). The concepts of language ideology and semiotic ideology problematized the presumption of systematicity and orderedness, internal coherence, and sharedness associated with the culture concept, instead emphasizing the situated and interested, heterogeneous and contested nature of signification, seeing sharedness and coherence as the tenuous *effect* of semiosis, not its precondition (Woolard 1998; Keane 2003, 2006, 2018; Gal and Irvine 2019; see Stano 2023 and Leone 2024 for engagement with the concept of “semiotic ideology” in continental semiotics). One critical space for future dialogue concerns how to think this series of distinct, yet cognate concepts in their family (dis)resemblances: ideology, semiosphere, forms of life, and culture.

Another convergence here concerns notions such as **translation** and **circulation**. A key point regarding the notion of semiosphere is that every textual circulation is a form of translation, and every translation involves the production of new meanings (on the question of translation in linguistic anthropology, see Silverstein 2003b; Hanks and Severi 2014; Gal 2015), the setting off of a chain of interpretants, an **interdiscursive** process that reverberates through cultural “space” as dissemination of texts, concepts, and their effects. For Lotman, it was the “necessity of the other,” and therefore the fact of semiotic heterogeneity, that produces the circulation of texts as a dynamic, dialogic process (Franciscu Sedda, personal communication). Linguistic anthropologists have explored this intrinsically dialogic process by arguing that circulation (as a metaphor that problematically frames semiosis as akin the movement of physical objects) is an imaginary that is effectuated/effective in and across events of semiosis (Silverstein 2005; Handman 2025). Here, we might link the concept of semiosphere with work in linguistic anthropology on the semiotics of interdiscursivity/circulation (e.g., Urban 1996, 2001; Silverstein 2005; Handman 2025), the constitution of “publics” (e.g., Cody 2001; Graan 2022), and “cultures of circulation” (Lee and LiPuma 2002).

In his later work, Michael Silverstein (2013, 2022) began to write about larger topologies of circulation as, in a way similar to Lotman’s semiosphere, organized around “tiers” and “nodes of **emanation**,” sites where forms of value were ritually produced and disseminated through social space. While Silverstein emphasized ritual as central to (and a center of) the production and emanation of value, Lotman placed great emphasis on the role of “**metatexts**,” which stabilize semiosis by generating power/value. We see an important bridge between cultural semiotics and linguistic anthropology in precisely how

to rethink the question of semiosphere and emanation, value and interdiscursivity via empirically tractable semiotic processes (viz. entextualization and enunciation, enregisterment and enunciative praxis) operating at multiple scales.²⁴

Semiotics of Practice, Interactionalist Approaches, and Actantial Theory

At a first glance, one might discern that linguistic anthropology and continental semiotics fundamentally differ in terms of *method*: as earlier noted, that the former is focused on questions of the everyday through long-term ethnographic, field-based analysis of actual social interactions while the latter, emerging out of analyses of literature and allied fields (art history, film studies, etc.), is focused on analyses (“descriptions” of internal relations) of texts. While true in an aggregate way, field-based methods and attention to empirical events of interaction and social practices have appeared in a number of works of continental semiotics (e.g., de Certeau 1984[1980]; Latour 1999a; Hammad 2002[1989], 2006; Cooren 2008; Marsciani 2017[2007]; Sedda 2019[2003]; Padoan 2019, 2024; Frisone 2023), just as linguistic anthropologists have themselves studied literary texts of various sorts (e.g., Friedrich 1977; Webster 2016; Masquelier 2018; Braudel 2020; cf. Lucey 2022). Nevertheless, an important, open question is to what extent the theoretical programs of both traditions have been enabled and constrained by their methodological commitments and habits; and relatedly, how much dialogue between linguistic anthropology and continental semiotics requires not just theoretical translation but attunements of methodological sensibility (e.g., to the openness to contingency, serendipity, and alterity that is cultivated through ethnography).

The Italian tradition of “ethnosemiotics” pioneered by Francesco Marsciani (2017[2007]; cf. Padoan 2021b), which incorporates ethnography into semiotic analysis by focusing on the reflexive role of participant-observers in the co-production of semiosis as it emerges from relational fields of practice (including the ethnographer's and informants' own entextualizations), is an important point of possible contact with a linguistic anthropological insistence on ethnographic analysis as the basis for semiotic theory.

In recent years, Jacques Fontanille (2008) has also turned to questions of “**practice**,” that is, away from the traces left by semiosis (qua finished text) and towards practices of production and reception that produce, or “textualize” (Dondero 2017)—or perhaps we should say entextualize—those traces (Fontanille 1998), processes wherein signification is generated in the course of its happening.²⁵ In this work, Fontanille is concerned with theoretically integrating a semiotics of practice into a “generative” scheme of different levels, from minimal semiotic elements (signs or “figures” and their relevant formants and sensible features) all the way up to forms of life (see above), with a critical mediating level being practices. Here, we see a ripe connection with how Bourdieusian “practice theory” has been taken up in linguistic anthropology (see, e.g., Hanks 1987, 1990, 2005), as well

as with interactionalist approaches that have focused on the situated, embodied activities that make up social life (e.g., C. Goodwin 2017; cf. Dondero 2017:6n4). As Hanks writes: “a practice approach to language focuses precisely on the *relations* between verbal action, linguistic and other semiotic systems, and the commonsense ideas that speakers have about language and the social world of which it is a part” (2005:191; emphasis in original). Such approaches (of Hanks, the Goodwins, and their students and colleagues) ethnographically center semiotic processes and relations of actual, in vivo practices while, in Hanks’s case in particular, theorizing how practices are “embedded” in, and themselves embed, various “fields” (e.g., semantic fields [viz. *langue*] and deictic fields embedded in social fields [genres, institutional structures, etc.] of various sorts). Here, important questions are raised regarding, on the one hand, how to adequately study practices (in particular, as involving purposive, concrete historical actors in actual situations of activity to which they are reflexively oriented; cf. Dondero 2017:6) and, on the other hand, how to theorize how practices relate to other semiotic processes and relations (e.g., how we might adequate Fontanille’s “integration” of levels in a generative scheme with Hanks’s “embedding” of fields in a sociohistorically dynamic world or with Goodwin’s focus on interaction vis-à-vis, on the one hand, substrates and media of various kinds and, on the other hand, the language games they participate in).²⁶

Here, the Italian semiotician, Paolo Fabbri’s encounters with and incorporations of the work of Erving Goffman in the 1970s are also important to highlight,²⁷ for it is through this that interactionalist and ethnomethodological approaches entered into certain strains of continental semiotics, continuing on into engagements of semioticians with linguistic anthropologists such as Marjorie Goodwin and Charles Goodwin (see, e.g., Padoan and Sedda 2018; Dondero 2024). Fabbri’s collaborations with Bruno Latour (who was independently engaged with ethnomethodology) resulted in the incorporation of elements of Greimassian semiotics into Latour’s field-based approaches to scientific practices (Latour and Fabbri 1977; Latour 1988; see Dondero 2018; Padoan 2021c). This is a link ready to be taken up, insofar as linguistic anthropologists, for other reasons, have turned to Latour’s work, for example, in explorations of scale (Carr and Lempert 2016; Gershon 2019) and materiality (Hull 2012; Nakassis 2013b; Bucholtz and Hall 2016; Shankar and Cavanaugh 2017; Inoue 2018, 2024). While American anthropological engagements with Latour—like other European “post-structuralist” thinkers (e.g., de Certeau, Deleuze)—have not read him as a semiotician, Latour’s actor-network theory owes a deep debt to the concept of actants developed within continental semiotics by Greimas, Fabbri, and others. How, then, we might link actantial theory in continental semiotics and actor-network theory to the anthropological study of social interaction is an important question worth pursuing.

In Paris School semiotics, **actants** are defined as syntactic positions occupied by every human or nonhuman *actor* that can receive or perform an action, namely, any being or thing “which accomplishes or undergoes an act” (Greimas and Courtés 1982:5).²⁸ We can fruitfully compare this notion to the idea of Secondness in Peirce, or more specifically, to his definition of “reaction” as a “sense of acting and of being acted upon,” which “essentially involves two things acting upon one another” (Peirce 1998[1894]:4–5). This notion of actant as anything that acts and is acted upon was initially elaborated by Greimas (1987a:106–20) into a small number of roles: the Subject of action, the source of action (called “Sender”), its target (called “Object of value”), its evaluator (called “Final Sender”), and some possible aids (called “Helpers”)—all possibly counter-acted by some other Anti-Subject, Anti-Sender, and so on (Padoan 2024). While Greimas’s actants bear their origins in narratological analysis (the protagonist on its quest, encountering and overcoming obstacles, etc.), he expanded these to theorize more diverse types of communicative practice. This is perhaps reminiscent of Goffman’s dramaturgical approach to social interaction and, in particular, his typology of “**figures**” and his notions of **production format** and **participant framework** (1974, 1981), which deconstruct and partition the notion of speaker and hearer, respectively, into role fractions; for the speaker/sender: animator (who enacts a swatch of semiosis), author (who composes it), principal (whose position is staked out by it); for the addressee/target: ratified addressee, bystander, eavesdropper, audience, et cetera.

The notion of actant has been productively expanded by Fabbri (Fabbri and Sbisà 1980), Hammad (2002[1989]), Landowski (2005), and Latour (1999a, 2005) in conversation with Goffman and ethnomethodological traditions to analyze semiotic contexts of interaction, where communicative roles (or “actants of enunciation”) are produced, taken up, multiplied, and renegotiated from the bottom-up by human and nonhuman actors. An important point in both traditions is that such communicative roles are not decided *a priori* nor are they finalizable, a point that Judith Irvine (1996) stresses in discussing the “indeterminacy of participant roles.” Such participant roles (viz. actants) are dynamically inhabited by actors; they are constantly shifting across social contexts, and even turn by turn within an interaction. While at times an individual may inhabit multiple roles at once, they are just as often distributed across different actors (as when an announcement on behalf of a politician [the principal] is animated by a spokesperson while being authored by their aides), or different actors may collaboratively inhabit some such role (as with commercial films, which are animated and authored by collective assemblages of actors).

A comparison with linguistic anthropological analysis reveals generative convergences. In a memorable work on shamanic practice among the Maya in Yucatán, William Hanks (1996) pointed out how the shaman, his patient, altar, a religious icon, noxious whirlwinds, and a whole cohort of spirits (including the Archangels), all play a role in the “polycentric

space” of ritual performance. At the beginning of the ritual session, God the Father (*Diós Padre*) and God the Son (*Diós Mehenb*) are directly evoked as the “canonical addressee,” playing the role of a (dual) Sender as the highest authority in place, who creates the condition for the Subject (the shaman) to operate on an Object (the patient, who maintains a passive role for the whole ceremony; Hanks 1996:181–82). But this actantial role of Sender is then taken up (i.e., animated) by the shaman himself, who through this participation framework acts upon a wide range of spirits now considered as Subjects, namely, earth spirits and agricultural spirits playing an active role in driving away the Anti-Subject (the harmful whirlwind), from the body of the patient.

The crucial moment is when the Archangel Michael uses his sword to destroy the evil wind with lightning. However, as explained by Hanks (1996:192), “the subject of this action is the biblical swift sword of Michael the Archangel,” shifting the actantial role of Subject from the divine being to his weapon, whereas the Archangel temporarily takes up the role of Sender from the shaman, by acting upon the magical sword. At the same time, the spirits of the town guardians and the jaguars, once evoked, merely assist the whole performance as Helpers, “to assure that none of the dangerous winds breaks free” (ibid.:190). The performance ends with what Greimas calls a semiotics of “sanction” (Greimas and Courtés 1982:267), when the Final Sender, “God” decides upon the destiny of the patient, but also when the shaman evaluates the condition of the patient in a negative way (calling him “grinning death,” Hanks 1996:196).²⁹

As Hanks’s analysis suggests, actants/participant roles (Subject, Object, Sender, Helper, Anti-Subject, etc. qua animators, authors, principals, and figures) have a simultaneous narrative and communicative dimension (i.e., they contribute to the entextualization of both a denotational and interactional text) that can be played out by both human and nonhuman actors, sometimes with a same actor shifting between several roles, or sometimes the same role played by several actors, at different times or even in the same moment (i.e., as a “collective actant”).

Both traditions, thus, move between and blur the relationships between interaction and the dramaturgical, narrative and action. While Greimas analogized concepts used for the analysis of narratives to the analysis of social action, he refused, as already noted, to draw a sharp divide between discourse and reality, society and nature, humans and nonhumans (Latour 1992, 2014), the former consonant with linguistic anthropological approaches which have also listened for the dramaturgical “voices,” motifs, and narratives (e.g., Hill 1995; Ochs and Capps 2001; Agha 2005; Perrino 2019, 2020) that make up the very stuff of everyday social interaction.

Many more points of connection exist than we can discuss here (e.g., questions of material semiotics, post-human approaches to semiosis, questions of ethics and “forms of life”), to say nothing of topical overlaps (religion, mass media, images, branding, artificial intelligence, political discourse, etc.). What we hope, however, is that this cursory discussion has whet the appetite of you, dear reader, and encouraged you to explore the many dialogues that might exist between our different ways of doing semiotics (some of which are pursued in the articles that follow).

A Natural History of This Discourse

This issue emerges out of a series of chance encounters between scholars trained in continental semiotics and linguistic anthropology³⁰ who, equally inspired and perplexed by the conversations they struck up, came together to engage in a year-long working group. Consisting of French and Italian semioticians and French, Italian, and North American linguistic anthropologists, this working group, entitled *Entextualization/Enunciation: Bridging Linguistic Anthropology and Paris School Semiotics*, began meeting online in the Spring 2023. Using the concepts of *enunciation* and *entextualization* to focus our discussions, we set off by first reading classic works from each other’s traditions, laboring to conceptually translate across the divides we encountered. While it was not easy (though it was always informative), our aim was to commensurate and differentiate our traditions so as to bridge the gap and stage a rapport. The group continued from Fall 2023 to Summer 2024, supported by a grant from the University of Chicago’s Paris Center, with online meetings turning into a series of in-person, all-day workshops in Paris and Turin, where members of the group circulated works-in-progress (many of which have since been revised as articles in this issue)—oriented and inspired by our ongoing conversation—that were then intensively discussed. (We include the reading list and schedule of this working group as an [appendix](#) to this introduction.) This intimate working group, numbering around ten core members, proved to us that not only is such a dialogue possible but absolutely necessary for the continued intellectual growth and dynamism of our collective, now common projects. While the background of this group shaped its biases (as to what is linguistic anthropology, what is continental semiotics, and thus what are their possible points of contact), it also shows the fruitful nature and possibility in these kinds of dialogues, their challenges and their payoffs, and the much-needed collaborative work that is required for their progress.

With this issue, we now open up this conversation to a wider scale while also providing a non-fleeting trace, a record, a collection of texts and intertexts for expanding circles of readers and, we hope, future co-participants. Like all issues of *Semiotic Review*, this issue is open, in perpetuity, to new submissions. We welcome you to [submit your own work to the issue](#), to join the dialogue, bridge the gaps, and expand its vision of the study of semiosis.

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Endnotes

1. The relevant structuralist legacies we have in mind include: Émile Benveniste (1902–1976), who was deeply influential in French semiotics and linguistics, and beyond; Roman Jakobson’s (1896–1982), whose influence stretched from Europe to, later, the United States, where he deeply influenced the shape of American linguistics and anthropology (Silverstein 2017), in particular, the work of Dell Hymes, Thomas Sebeok, Paul Friedrich, and Michael Silverstein among others; Louis Hjelmslev (1899–1965), whose glossematics influenced both structural linguistics and semiotics across Europe; Roland Barthes (1915–1980), whose literary semiotics circulated structural models into cultural studies and anthropology; Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908–2009) whose cultural structuralism drew on Jakobson and Boas, and which influenced Algirdas Greimas (1917–1992), who himself synthesized a number of the above strands in creating what has today come to be known as “Paris School” semiotics (Parret 1989); Juri Lotman (1922–1993), whose cultural semiotics found reception in various continental traditions and continues on in importance as part of the “Tartu school” of semiotics; and Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) whose critiques of structuralist linguistics and whose concepts of dialogism, voice, chronotope, and genre have been deeply influential in literary studies and linguistic anthropology. ↩

2. The anthropological study of language in the American(ist) tradition has a longer history than that of Saussurean structuralism, of course, and certain structuralist discoveries were independently developed in it (e.g., Sapir’s work on the phoneme); in North America, the modern science of language (what we today called linguistics) largely emerged out of anthropology departments (though also in dialogue in philosophical logic, philology, and the study of literature), and the major linguists of the time were also anthropologists. Franz Boas (1858–1942) and his students, most notably A.L. Kroeber (1876–1960) and Edward Sapir (1884–1939) (and his students: Benjamin Lee Whorf, Mary Haas, Kenneth Pike, Harry Hoijer, Charles Hockett, and others), pioneered work that situated the problem of language in the problem of culture, and vice versa, primarily through field-based projects in native North America. Here, language was early on seen both as a central element of culture and its diversity—and a privileged locus for its study (Boas 1911)—insofar as it functioned as a systematic (structural) mode of classification that evinced differences in time and space, and

thus conceptual thought (viz. culture). This line of work on the mutual mediation of language and culture was pioneered by Boas and continued most (in)famously through Sapir and Whorf. The American reception of Saussure, however, first by Leonard Bloomfield (1887–1949) and later with the arrival of Roman Jakobson, marked out the gradual splitting of disciplinary linguistics from anthropology (exacerbated with the later emergence of generativist linguistics) and thus, as well, the emergence of the field of linguistic anthropology in the breach between them. It was only in 1964 that the (sub)field was baptized by Dell Hymes (1964) as “linguistic anthropology.” This post-War period saw a new set of confluences between Jakobson’s semiotics (in particular, his introduction of Peirce into linguistic anthropology), Hymes’s ethnography of communication, Gumperz’s work on multilingualism, Labovian variationism, and Goffman’s interactional sociology. In a series of essays in the 1970s (Silverstein 1976, 1979), Michael Silverstein offered a bold synthetic reanalysis (and critical reformulation) of a number of these threads in a novel approach to language in culture through a Peircean focus on indexicality and metapragmatics that left a lasting impression on the semiotic direction of the field in the years that followed. Similarly, work at the intersection of ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and the ethnography of communication pioneered by scholars such as Marjorie and Charles Goodwin, Elinor Ochs, and Alessandro Duranti has opened equally important perspectives on the place of interaction in social and cultural life within linguistic anthropology.↵

3. On the dissemination of Greimassian semiotics, see Broden 2021.↵

4. See Sedda 2022 for discussion of some differences on this point between cultural semiotics and social anthropology.↵

5. In addition to those points of contact discussed below (under “Convergences”), we might point to the influence of Bakhtin, a literary theorist, in contemporary linguistic anthropology (as in the work of scholars like Oswald Ducrot); the centrality of Peirce in the work of Eco and his students (of the “interpretive” school), and so on.↵

6. Deictics, among other indexical sign processes, work to establish a common spatial frame of reference for semiosis, a certain temporality, and most importantly such signs act on, by situating, the time, space, and persons involved in interaction (Hanks 1990, 2005). (Here, in addition to the question of indexicality, there is an obvious connection between enunciation and what linguistic anthropologists [e.g., Agha 2007b; Wirtz 2014; Perrino 2019] have discussed using the Bakhtinian [1982] concept of “**chronotope**.”) Beyond deixis, according to Benveniste (2014[1970]:79–88), such interactions also involve signs that put into play acts of interrogation, intimation, assertion, and the like, as well as linguistic modalities that express obligation, volition, power, knowledge, or belief.↵

7. As argued by Deleuze and Guattari (1987[1980]:39–74), this double articulation of textuality formulated by Hjelmslev incorporates reality itself, understood as a multiplicity of semiotic strata where every plane may become the expression (a regime of signs—i.e., a collective assemblage of enunciation) for a different content (a regime of bodies—i.e., an assemblage of actions and passions), and every plateau of intensity may be translated into the next one by an operation of *transduction* (Simondon 2020[2005]).↵

8. While the terms *disengagement* and *engagement* are used in the English translation of Greimas and Courtés's (1982) *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary*, we adopt here the terms *shifting out* and *shifting in* as employed in Latour 1988 and Marrone 2022:66–69. These terms are closer to Jakobson's (1984[1957]) usage, after Jespersen (1922:123–24), of the term *shifters* (in the Danish original, *skiftere*; Jespersen 1916:122–24) which inspired Greimas to further characterize enunciation as a two-way process of projection “out” and incorporation “in” (following Ruwet's French translation of Jakobson's *shifter* as *embrayeur*, Greimas and Courtés 1982:89); *shifting* was the preferred English translation suggested by the authors of the *Dictionary*, but then dropped by the translators (ibid.:ix). Note that the metaphor of (dis)engagement refers to engaging the gear mechanism of a manual-transmission automobile, the “gear shifter” (as it is sometimes in English), the *embrayage* in French.↵

9. We might see this semiotic process of contextualization in relationship to Landowski's (1989) call for a “semioticization” of “context,” or more recently, Fontanille's (2008) turn to the “situation.”↵

10. We can further expand the binary of shifting-in and shifting-out via the triadic distinction of dimensions of metapragmatic calibration: *reflexive*, *reportive*, and *nomic*. Reflexive calibrations are where the *énoncé* (utterance) is calibrated to the event of its own enunciation; what Benveniste (1971[1966]) called *discours* is characterized predominantly by such a calibration type, where “I” indexes speaker of the token-instance *I*, a maximally shifted-in sign. Reportive calibration and nomic calibration correspond to what Benveniste called *histoire*, shifted-out semiosis characterized by the dis-embedding of the *énoncé* (in its own self-presentation, at least) from the event of its enunciation. A reportive calibration involves the event of enunciation and the event it metapragmatically indexes being non-coincident (hence non-reflexively calibrated) but co-eval, that is, embedded in some shared spatio-temporality, as with “shifted” indexes in reported speech (e.g., “He said ‘I ...’”). Nomic calibration, by contrast, involves both non-coincidence and non-coequality, as with universal statements (e.g., “Saying *I* is a sign of ...”), transcendent ritual, explicit performative verb phrases, and the like. See Silverstein 1993, 2021; Nakassis 2020. Other expansions of the shifting-in and shifting-out operations developed in Paris School semiotics include the differentiation between enunciative (French: *énonciatif*, i.e., focused on the level of enunciation) and enuncive (or “utterative,” French: *énoncif*, i.e., focused on the utterance, Greimas and Courtés 1982:88, 101–2), between actantial/spatial/temporal shifting-in and shifting-out (Padoan 2021a), and between their cognitive, pragmatic and affective (“thymic”) dimensions (Fontanille 1989).↵

11. For Greimas, the “reality” or natural world itself may be analyzed as a particular cluster of nonverbal languages or sign systems, while subjects are shaped and defined by the communicative processes they themselves manipulate, circulate, and interpret.↵

12. An example from everyday conversation is the sentence: “I have no crayfish,” pronounced by a young brother to his elder sister among Kaluli people in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea, as studied by Steven Feld (2012). This strategy of talk among Kaluli, following the format “I have no X,” is called *gesema* (“make one feel sorrow or pity”), and is used in particular between siblings when younger brothers want something owned by their sisters. Elder sisters are, in fact, expected to take on the moral responsibility for the care of their younger brothers, often spoiling them and complying with their small requests (Schieffelin 1984). Whereas at the denotational level of the *utterance* this sentence might sound as a mere description of a state of affairs, at the level of its *enunciation*—the interactional framework inscribed in the text—the fact that X is not included among the speaker’s possessions carries out a series of metapragmatic actions (Silverstein 1993), including stating that: (a) “You obviously have something that I don’t have”; (b) “I want some of it and believe that I have rights to it”; (c) “You should not only give some to me, but feel sorry for me because I have none” (Feld 2012:25–26). In the particular case of “crayfish,” the sentence is also regimented by a *collective assemblage of enunciations* located at the mythical level and indexically shifted-in the present situation of speaking—since in the Kaluli story of “The boy who became a *muni* bird,” the refusal by an elder sister to comply to such a request causes her brother to turn into a fruit dove and leave his family forever, entering the realm of the dead (ibid.:20–24).↵

13. We might further link this nexus of concepts—entextualization, enunciation, dynamic figuration, semi-symbolism—to the interest in **diagrams** in Peircean semiotics (Stjernfelt 2007), linguistic anthropology (C. Goodwin 1994, 2017; Ball 2014; Murphy 2015; Nakassis 2023b), Deleuzian philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1987[1980]), and Paris School semiotics (Fabbri 2015; Montanari 2016; Dondero 2023, 2024). On this view, dynamic figuration is the drawing of a diagram of social life that depends on and produces a semi-symbolism. Following Peirce’s conception, a diagram is not a figurative representation per se; it is a zone for experimentation, discovery, and creation in real-time interaction; that is, in being drawn, a diagram is a collaborative and distributed space for the exploration, manipulation, and further transformation of the diagram and, potentially, what it stands in for. This “experimentation” produces affects (image-texts), social facts and lines of force (interactional texts), and conceptual knowledge (denotational texts) in various domains of life, from face-to-face interaction (Goodwin and Goodwin 1992; Silverstein 1997) to religious and secular ritual (Silverstein 2004, 2012, 2022; Stasch 2011; Leone and Parmentier 2004; Padoan 2021a; Frisone 2023) to scientific inquiry (Latour 1999a; Dondero and Fontanille 2014) and beyond.↵

14. Moreover, this complex microcosmic semiotic text is translated into a wider macrocosmic one, through an operation of transduction of intensities that redistributes the various degrees of eating prohibitions

starting from the deep forest as the place for the most inedible animals (monkeys, tigers, bears, elephants etc.)—thus considering the natural habitat as the indexically oriented replication of the house starting from an inner origo in the deep forest, or better, understanding the cultural habitat of the house as replication of the natural one in the wild (see Oehler 2020).↵

15. Both planes will be subject to variations over time, and incorporate elements from other semiotic texts, so that our house is to be considered as a *dynamic, open, and multi-layered process of communication and signification*. However, it is important to stress that textuality is never produced from nowhere, but always from a multiplicity of situated points of view. In the abovementioned case, for example, the textual organization of the Thai house is the result of ethnographic investigations, trying to grasp the point of view of both its inhabitants and occasional visitors, describing the way they might mutually negotiate or disagree about the form of content of this place—and very likely, as it often happens in good ethnographies, allowing the recalcitrance of our participants and co-authors of the text to disrupt and modify our initial models and hypotheses (Padoan 2021b).↵

16. We might argue that this notion was anticipated by Michel de Certeau (1984[1980]), who in his highly influential *The Practice of Everyday Life* worked through Greimas's reconceptualization of enunciation—whose seminars he used to attend, in addition to many of the workshops organized by Paolo Fabbri in the 1970s and 1980s at the Center for Semiotics and Linguistics of Urbino—to formulate his notion of enunciative “tactics” as inventive, bottom-up subversions of the top-down calculated “strategies” implemented and imposed by institutions, in the form of procedures, rules, and expectations.↵

17. An example about how to use these categories might be taken from the domain of objects. If we see a new pair of shoes that we would like to purchase on the Internet or in a shop, such an object, even when *realized* in front of us, is also *virtualized* insofar as it pertains to our “volition” (or “obligation,” if they are part of some uniform required by our employer at work). However, the same object may become *actualized*, as soon as we are aware that we also have the purchasing “power/capacity” to buy the shoes by using our credit card (or the “knowledge” to do so by following the online procedure). Once we come into possession of the pair of shoes, this object turns into full *realization*, and as we start wearing them, we may also embody those values and cultural concepts previously inscribed into them by its designers and the fashion culture (thus performing a summer “smart casual style,” if this is a pair of moccasins we choose to combine with a specific outfit recognized as such), or by some form of authority (if the shoes are required by our employer). Finally, if we stop using them after some time and we bring them to some second-hand shop, the shoes may become *potentialized*, as their significance may be temporarily lost or ignored, until when someone else sees them and becomes interested in them, thus *virtualizing* the shoes again.↵

18. No enunciation can totalize its context of happening except to the extent that all co-occurring phenomena are non-contravening of its figuration; and yet, even in such cases, the issue isn't that the text completely encompasses its context of happening, but only that its co-text is consonant with the text's own figuration of its happening. This is what we often mean by the "literal," default, or normative meaning of a sign (Agha 1996; Hanks 2005). Denotational literalness, from this point of view, is one mode of the performative efficacy of texts, which, as Silverstein (2004:626, 2022:2, 12, 29) pointed out, "get across" a "message" to their audience by *projecting* a context, with the effect of reshaping social relations, thereby dissolving any hard separation between text and context, language and the body.↵

19. Following Dondero's (2024) adequation of Goodwin's work (2018) with the notion of enunciative praxis, we should also mention the dialectic theorized in linguistic anthropology between contextual interaction and media/substrates (instruments, tools, diagrams; of which we can also include *langue* and *habitus*; Hanks 1990), wherein each reciprocally marks *and* affords the other.↵

20. By "non-referential" we mean indexical meanings that do not contribute to propositional meaning (as with deictics' referential content; see Silverstein 1976). Registers like youth slang, medical jargon, and regional dialects are composed of signs that are coherent with each other insofar as they similarly indexically invoke (metapragmatic) stereotypes that characterize elements of their occasion of use; such stereotypes are not denoted by these signs (hence they are non-referential indexes) but are enacted by them. The process by which this indexical link is forged is what the term *enregisterment* denotes.↵

21. The notion of enunciative praxis relates to the idea of embodied action and the phenomenological dimension of discourse (Fontanille 2007; Parret 1989, 1993:173). It is important to notice that most late and post-Greimassian semiotics, from the 1980s onwards, has shifted its attention to the close interconnection between the *semantic* and the *somatic*, *sense* and the *senses* (Greimas 1987b). These considerations led to a radical rethinking of signs as semiotic acts, as forces creating and transforming situations, as actions produced by and on bodies (Fabbri 2005:37, 97).↵

22. Similarly, see Franciscu Sedda (2019[2003]), whose analysis of ritual dance in Sardinia brings together an ethnographic case study with Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the structuralism of the Paris School, and the cultural semiotics of the Tartu School. His analysis shows how bodily contact, the management of space, the dialogue with musical rhythm, the embodied metaphors, and the verbal gestures mobilized during the dance become a site of intersubjective communication—where social values are (re)produced, personhood is affirmed, and worldviews, along with the historical transformations of a given form of life, are made legible. See also Newell 2018 for an anthropological discussion of the affective power of symbols.↵

23. For example, Padoan has explored how Japanese ascetic practitioners in the Katsuragi mountain area constantly engage with walking and praying as a mode of action and rhythmic practice, performed with a distinctive bodily attire, equipment, and aesthetic sensibility as recurrent traits on the plane of expression, while embodying particular cosmological values and salvific purposes on the plane of content, namely an ascetic form of life aiming at the construction of ethical subjects (Padoan 2021b; Padoan and Sedda 2018:55–57).↵

24. Franciscu Sedda (personal communication) notes that this difference between Silverstein and Lotman's respective focus on ritual (and iconic indexical entextualization) versus metatexts (and "grammars") is due to Lotman's focus on cases where written language dominates, whereas Silverstein's focus is broader, including cases where orality is dominant.↵

25. In this work, Fontanille's account of practices remains abstract and, from the anthropologist's point of view, problematic; as Dondero (2017) points out, Fontanille uses literary accounts of practices as his primary data rather than turning to empirical analysis of actual, in vivo practices.↵

26. A useful comparison may be drawn at this point, between the semiotics of practice, on the one hand, and ethnosemiotics and linguistic anthropology, on the other. Both focus on the study of "semiotic practices," but while the former theorizes them starting from literary examples (see note 25 above), the latter elaborate their models from the analysis of ethnographic settings and situations; while the former argues that practice cannot be fully understood in terms of textuality, the latter advocate more comprehensive notions of text that do not reiterate post-Enlightenment divides like text/practice, language/world, and mind/body (Padoan 2021b:85–86; see also our discussion on entextualization and textuality above), also trying to take into account the texts produced and analyzed by the ethnographers themselves (notes, transcripts, videos, etc.). One way to move this debate forward, in particular between the semiotics of practice and ethnosemiotics, might be to open up the notion of textuality by focusing on enunciative frames and their interconnected networks, produced by human and nonhuman actors in their actantial movements, as argued by Latour (1999b, 2005; more on this in the main text below). Another move might be to take on board some of the semiotic insights developed by Deleuze and Guattari (1987[1980]), who used Hjelmslev's concept of text to describe the semiotic stratification of reality into different plateaus of intensity. Each plane is arranged into forms and substances of expression (regimes of signs), acting upon forms and substances of content (regimes of bodies), which in turn, by transduction of intensities, become the expression for another plane of content, and so on (Fabbri 2005). The debate is still open, but despite their mutual differences, all these approaches tend to reaffirm the semiotic nature of the world, and of its becomings.↵

27. <https://iass-ais.org/paolo-fabbri-17-april-1939-2-june-2020/>↵

28. The concept of actant originally comes from the linguistic theory of Lucien Tesnière (Tesnière 1959; see Cooren 2008).↵

29. We might further add that this semiotics of sanction includes when, finally, the ethnographer interprets the cultural logic of this ritual, producing a scientific “interpretant” out of it in the form of a publication.↵

30. A postdoctoral fellow from Switzerland (Alain Perusset) working on brands and trained in Greimassian semiotics contacts in 2021 a colleague (Constantine Nakassis) at the University of Chicago, who, as a linguistic anthropologist, had also written on the semiotics of brands; later, in 2022, Perusset visits Chicago as part of a postdoctoral fellowship; in the same year (2021), a cultural semiotician from Sardinia (Franciscu Sedda) spends a semester at Harvard University as part of the Roman Jakobson Symposium, collaborating with the linguistic anthropologist Nicholas Harkness; meanwhile, an Italian semiotician and anthropologist based in Ireland (Tatsuma Padoan) applies to join a panel at the World Semiotics conference (2022) organized by Nakassis (and including, as well, Meghanne Barker, Andrew Graan, and Elina Hartikainen) at the encouragement of the Perusset; Padoan was familiar with linguistic anthropology from his teacher, Paolo Fabbri, as well as from participating in ELAN (the EASA Linguistic Anthropology Network), and, in 2011, taking part in a late summer school in Bulgaria where he attended lectures by Michael Silverstein on the recommendation of another Italian semiotician (Massimo Leone). Leone had invited Silverstein to the summer school (and published one of his lectures there as Silverstein 2012) and later became a member of the editorial board of the journal *Signs and Society*, edited by Silverstein’s student, Richard Parmentier, with whom Leone also collaborated in writing (Leone and Parmentier 2011). In Spring 2022, a French linguistic anthropologist (Bertrand Masquelier), having rediscovered Greimas’s seminar in Paris recommends to Nakassis that he include the seminar’s organizer (Maria Giulia Dondero, herself familiar with the work of Charles Goodwin through Paolo Fabbri) in a linguistic anthropology reading group and workshop on the semiotics of perspective organized online and then in Paris (2022–2023; Nakassis and Costa 2025). Following this, a 2023 Erasmus summer school in Cagliari, organized by Sedda, brings together Padoan, Nakassis, and Dondero, among others, further thickening this emerging conversation that came together as an online reading group (in Spring 2023) and later a year-long workshop (from Fall 2023 to Summer 2024) that is the basis of this issue. In parallel, the SENSE Lab (Laboratory of Semiotics, Ethnosemiotics, Nonfictional Studies and Audiovisuality), co-directed by Tatsuma Padoan and Laura Rascaroli at University College Cork, begun in 2022 to build connections between Paris School semiotics and linguistic anthropology, running seminars and lectures involving linguistic anthropologists based in the US (Constantine Nakassis, Nicholas Harkness), Canada (John Leavitt), the UK (Rupert Stasch, Meghanne Barker, Yazan Doughan), and Ireland (Steve Coleman, Lijing Peng), and semioticians from France (Denis Bertrand) and Italy (Franciscu Sedda, Alvisse Mattozzi, Francesco Marsciani, Piero Polidoro, Federico Montanari, Francesco Mangiapane, Paolo Sorrentino), culminating into the Wenner-Gren workshop “Aesthetic Communication: The Role of Senses in Social Interaction, Across and Beyond the Human,” held

on 11–14 June 2024 in Cork. All of these collaborations have continued to grow into further events and collaborations, one of their tendrils being this special issue.↵

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Appendix

Entextualization/Enunciation Working Group (Spring 2023, Fall 2023–Spring 2024), organized by Constantine V. Nakassis and Tatsuma Padoan; participants: Christopher Ball (Spring 2023), Denis Bertrand (Fall 2003–Spring 2024), Felix Danos (Fall 2023–Spring 2024), Enzo D’Armenio (Fall 2023–Spring 2024), Maria Giulia Dondero (Fall 2023–Spring 2024), Aurora Donzelli, Ilana Gershon (Spring 2024), Mariem Guellouz (Fall 2023–Spring 2024), Bertrand Masquelier, Alvis Mattozzi, Federico Montanari (Spring 2023), Urmila Nair (Fall 2023–Spring 2024), Constantine V. Nakassis, Tatsuma Padoan, Franciscu Sedda, Shu Takeda (Fall 2023–Spring 2024).

Spring 2023

April 14, 2023 (online), *Enunciation*, 1

Reading session:

- Fontanille, Jacques. 1989. Preface and Première Partie (chapter 1). In *Les espaces subjectif*. Paris: Hachette.

Background/classics:

- Benveniste, Émile. 2014[1970]. The Formal Apparatus of Enunciation. In J. Angermüller, D. Maingueneau and R. Wodak, eds. *The Discourse Studies Reader: Main Currents in Theory and Analysis*, pp. 141–45. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Benveniste, Émile. 1956[1971]. The Nature of Pronouns. In *Problems in General Linguistics*, pp. 217–22. Coral Gables, FL: University of Miami Press.
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- Jakobson, Roman. 1957 [1984]. Shifters, Verbal Categories, and the Russian Verb. In L. Waugh and M. Halle, eds. *Russian and Slavic Grammar: Studies, 1931–1981*, pp. 41–58. Berlin: Mouton.

April 21, 2023 (online), *Enunciation, 2*

Reading session:

- Bertrand, Denis. 2000. Chapter 3. In *Précis de sémiotique littéraire*. Paris: Édition Nathan HER.
- Thurlmann, Felix. 1989. Fictionality in Mantegna's San Zeno Altarpiece Structures of Mimesis and the History of Painting. *New Literary History* 20(3):747–76.

April 28, 2023 (online), *Indexicality and Entextualization*

Reading session:

- Silverstein, Michael and Greg Urban. 1996. The Natural History of Discourse. In M. Silverstein and G. Urban, eds. *Natural Histories of Discourse*, pp. 1–17. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Silverstein, Michael. 2022. Introduction, Lecture 1. *Language in Culture: Lectures on the Social Semiotics of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bauman, Richard. 1996. Transformations of the Word in the Production of Mexican Festival Drama. In M. Silverstein and G. Urban, eds. *Natural Histories of Discourse*, pp. 301–27. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

May 19, 2023 (online), *Entextualization and Enregisterment*

Reading session:

- Silverstein, Michael. 2022. Lectures 2–4. In *Language in Culture: Lectures on the Social Semiotics of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

November 10, 2023 (online)

Reading session:

- Fabbri, P. and P. Perron. 1990. Foreword. In *The Social Sciences: A Semiotic View*, pp. vi–xii. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Greimas, A. 1990[1976]. Towards a Topological Semiotics. In *The Social Sciences: A Semiotic View*, pp. 139–59. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

November 24, 2023 (online)

Reading session:

- Fontanille, Jacques. 2006. Foreword (pp. xvii-xxi), From Sign to Discourse (pp. 1–21), Discourse (pp. 45–93), Enunciation (pp. 183–207). In *Semiotics of Discourse*. New York: Peter Lang.

December 8, 2023 (All-day, in-person workshop at the Paris Center of the University of Chicago)

Reading session:

- Casetti, Francesco. 1995[1983]. Face to Face. In W. Buckland, ed. *The Film Spectator*, pp. 118–40. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Reading session:

- Metz, Christian. 1987[1995]. Impersonal Enunciation, Or the Place of Film (In the Margin of Recent Works on the Enunciation in Cinema). In W. Buckland, ed. *The Film Spectator*, pp. 140–63. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Paper session:

- Nakassis, Constantine, “Actness of the Image: Notes on Entextualization and Enunciation.” (Discussant: Tatsuma Padoan)



Figure 1. Entextualization/Enunciation Working Group, Paris Center of the University of Chicago. 8 December 2023. Left to right: Franciscu Sedda, Aurora Donzelli, Maria Giulia Dondero, Urmila Nair, Tatsuma Padoan, Felix Danos, Bertrand Masquelier, Shu Takeda, Alvisa Mattozzi, Mariem Guellouz. Screen shot by Constantine V. Nakassis.

December 22, 2023 (online)

Reading session:

- Agha, Asif. 2003. Social Life of Cultural Value. *Language & Communication* 23(3–4):231–73.
- Agha, Asif. 2005. Voicing, Footing, Enregisterment. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 15(1):38–59.
- Agha, Asif. 2007. Reflexivity. In *Language and Social Relations*, pp. 14–55. Cambridge Cambridge University Press.

January 19, 2024 (All-day, in-person workshop at the Paris Center of the University of Chicago)

Reading Session:

- Bauman, Richard and Charles Briggs. 1990. Poetics and Performances as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19:59–88.

Reading session:

- Silverstein, Michael. 2004. “Cultural” Concepts and the Language-Culture Nexus. *Current Anthropology* 45(5):621–52.

Paper session:

- Padoan, Tatsuma, “Ritual as Enunciative Praxis: Some Reflections from Katsuragi, Japan.” (Discussant: Felix Danos)



Figure 2. Entextualization/Enunciation Working Group, Paris Center of the University of Chicago. 19 January 2024. Left to right: Felix Danos, Mariem Guellouz, Enzo D’Armenio. Photo by Maria Giulia Dondero

February 9, 2024 (online)

Reading session:

- Hanks, William. 2005. Explorations in the Deictic Field. *Current Anthropology* 46(2):191–220.
- Hanks, William. 1987. Discourse Genres in a Theory of Practice. *American Ethnologist* 14(4):668–92.
- Hanks, William F. 1996. Three Phenomenologies of Language. In *Language and Communicative Practices*, pp. 118–38. New York: Westview Press.

February 16, 2024 (online)

Reading session:

- Marrone, Gianfranco. 2009. Chapter 1 (pp. 11–23), Chapter 4 (pp. 97–126). In *The Ludovico Cure: On Body and Music in A Clockwork Orange*. Ottawa: Legas.

March 8, 2024 (online)

Reading session:

- Greimas, A.J. 1979. On Games. *SubStance* 8(4):31–35.
- Lotman, Juri. 1990. Three Functions of a Text (pp. 11–19), The Text as Process of Movement: Author to Audience, Author to Text (pp. 63–80). In *Universe of the Mind*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

March 22, 2024 (All-day, in-person workshop at the Politecnico di Torino)

Paper session:

- Franciscu Sedda, “ENUNCIA(C)TIONS: Body, Culture, and Meaning in the Light of Sardinian Dance.” (Discussant: Constantine Nakassis)

Reading session:

- Leroi-Gourhan, André. 1993. Language Symbols. In *Gesture and Speech*, pp. 187–216. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Fontanille, Jacques. 1998. Décoratif, iconicité et écriture. Geste, rythme et figurativité: à propos de la poterie berbère. *Visio* 3(2):33–46.

Paper session:

- Aurora Donzelli, “On the Making of Signboards: Corporeal Inscriptions and Material Transpositions of the Writing into the Written.” (Discussant: Maria Giulia Dondero)



Figure 3. Entextualization/Enunciation Working Group, Politecnico di Torino. 22 March 2024. Left to right: Felix Danos, Denis Bertrand, Franciscu Sedda, Mariem Guellouz (computer screen), Alvise Mattozzi, Tatsuma Padoan, Enzo D'Armenio, Aurora Donzelli. Photo by Constantine V. Nakassis

May 17, 2024 (online)

Reading session:

- Valle, Andre and Allesandro Mazzei. 2017. Sapir-Whorf vs. Boas-Jakobson: Enunciation and the Semiotics of Programming Language. *Lexia: Rivista di semiotica* 27-28:505-25.
- Dondero, Maria Giulia. and Fontanille, Jacques. 2014. Chapters 1-3. In *The Semiotic Challenge of Scientific Images. A Test Case for Visual Meaning*. Ottawa: Legas.

May 31-June 1, 2024 (All-day, in-person workshop at the Paris Center of the University of Chicago)

Friday, May 31, 2024

Paper session:

- Maria Giulia Dondero, "Enunciative Praxis in Artificial Intelligence Image Analysis and

Generation.” (Discussant: Aurora Donzelli)

Reading session:

- Silverstein, Michael. 1979. Language Structure and Linguistic Ideology. In R. Cline, W. Hanks, and C. Hofbauer, eds. *The Elements: A Parasession on Linguistic Units and Levels*, pp. 193–247. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.

Paper session:

- Urmila Nair, “The Secret (*gsang ba*) in/on the Sign’s Eye View: Studying an Esoteric Buddhist Ritual at an Exile Tibetan Monastery.” (Discussant: Enzo D’Armenio)

Saturday, June 1, 2024

Paper session:

- Enzo D’Armenio, “Semiotic Identities between Experience, Enunciation, and Communication.” (Discussant: Constantine Nakassis)



Figure 4. Entextualization/Enunciation Working Group, Paris Center of the University of Chicago. 31 May 2024. Left to right: Adrien Deliège (computer screen), Alvise Mattozzi (computer screen), Aurora Donzelli, Maria Giulia Dondero, Enzo D’Armenio, Urmila Nair, Tattsuma Padoan, Denis Bertrand, Ilana Gershon. Photo by Constantine V. Nakassis

June 21, 2024 (online)

Reading session:

- Latour, Bruno. 1999. Petite philosophie de l'énonciation. In P. Basso and L. Corrain, eds. *Eloquio del senso. Dialoghi semiotici per Paolo Fabbri*, pp. 71–94. Milano: Costa & Nolan.
- Martine, T., B. Brummans, and F. Cooren. 2020. At the Junction Between Subsistence and Reference: A Pragmatist Take on Interaction Analysis. *Journal of Communication* 70(1):90–113.

June 28–29, 2024 (All-day, in-person workshop at the Paris Center of the University of Chicago)

Friday, June 28, 2024

Paper session:

- Alvisé Mattozzi, “Circulating Enunciations, Regimes of Enunciation, and Modes of Existence: The Case of the Image of the Sleeve of Joy Division's Unknown Pleasures.” (Discussant: Urmila Nair)

Reading session:

- Kockelman, Paul. 2017. Enemies, Parasites, and Noise. In *The Art of Interpretation in the Age of Computation*, pp. 27–53. New York: Oxford University Press.

Paper session:

- Felix Danos, “Chronotopic Dissonance, and Para-sites of Ideological Work: The Situated Noising Out of Linguistic Variation in Rural Central France.” (Discussant: Alvisé Mattozzi)

June 29, 2024

Paper session:

- Denis Bertrand, “Further Comments on ‘La générativité est-elle soluble dans le sensible ? Réflexions topologiques et énonciatives « au cœur » du parcours génératif’.” (Discussant: Franciscu Sedda)



Figure 5. Entextualization/Enunciation Working Group, Paris Center of the University of Chicago. 29 June 2024. Back row (left to right): Bertrand Masquelier, Mariem Guellouz, Franciscu Sedda, Alvise Mattozzi, Tatsuma Padoan; Middle row: Aurora Donzelli, Ilana Gershon, Felix Danos; Front row: Enzo D'Armenio, Maria Giulia Dondero, Denis Bertrand, Urmila Nair, Constantine V. Nakassis.

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