

International Graduate School „Resonant Self-World Relations“

# Resonance and Power

26.-28.02.2020 | Augustinerkloster Erfurt



**UNIVERSITÄT  
ERFURT**

Max-Weber-Kolleg

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# Resonance and Power

Spring Conference of the IGS “Resonant Self–World Relations in Ancient and Modern Socio-Religious Practices”

Augustinerkloster, Erfurt 26 – 28 February 2020

This conference examines the manifold and complex relations between *Resonance and Power*. For the purpose of this conference, we do not understand power as a force that is exercised by the powerful over the powerless. Rather, we seek to analyze ancient and modern societies and cultures by asking what different forms power takes and what the practices of power are.

Therefore, key questions of the conference are how power creates or thwarts resonance, and how power operates *in* and *through* resonant relations. Our basic assumption is that resonant power is neither sovereign nor disciplinary in the first place, but rather governmental and affective. The power of resonance works by endowing those who feel powerless with self-efficacy and by creating a sense of belonging among some people, but also by and through excluding others.

We seek to address the following questions:

- How does resonance among some people interact with the repulsion, exclusion, or oppression of others in ancient and modern societies?
- What are the interdependencies of resonance with gender, race, class, and other categories of difference?
- How are moments of collective resonance triggered in order to achieve certain political, economic, or other aims, e.g. create identification with a certain nation or religion, or enhance economic productivity?
- How do nationalism and racism—for instance the new politics of whiteness—operate through triggering resonant group experiences?
- How does power work in the resonance between ancient and modern cultures?
- How do ancient ritual practices (re)structure or orchestrate power by experiences of resonance?



## Program (September 2019)

Wednesday, 26 February 2020

17.00 – 18.30 h

**Paula Irene Villa, LMU München**

Resonance, affectedness, vulnerability. Thinking through intersectional embodiments

Thursday, 27 February 2020

9.00 – 10.30 h

**Workshops**

**1 Olivera Koprivica / Raphaela Swadosch**

“Naturally... because you’re a (wo)man!” – Power and dominant discourse types

**2 Markus Döller / David Palme**

What (if anything) does the concept of class domination mean today?

10.30 – 11.00 h

*Coffee Break*

11.00 – 12.00 h

**Brigitte Röder, Basel**

Politische Macht versus Schönheit. Gender Bias bei der Suche nach Resonanz in der Urgeschichte

12.00 – 12.45 h

Presentation of the new doctoral projects

**Nancy Alhachem, Erfurt**

Resonance instead of Alienation: The Practices of Memory Among Migrants and Refugees in the German Culture of Remembrance

**Manuel Moser, Erfurt**

Mein Schönes Auto als entdinglichtes Ding? Eine vergleichende empirische Studie zu Auto- und Motorradpilgerfahrten und -segnungen in Mitteleuropa und Bolivien bezogen auf das Verhältnis der drei Resonanzachsen zueinander

12.45 – 13.45 h

*Lunch break*

13.45 – 15.15 h

**Workshops**

**3 Thomas Sojer**

Creative Renunciation – an experimental theatre workshop

**4 Gabriel Malli / Anita Neudorfer/ Anton Röhr/ Stella Rehbein**

Diskurs.Macht.Resonanz

15.15 – 15.45 h

*Coffee Break*

15.45 – 17.45 h

**Experts discussions**

17.45 – 19.00 h

**Rainer Mühlhoff, FU Berlin**

Resonance, affect, and power. Affect theory of subjectivation with Spinoza and Foucault

Friday, 28 February

9.00 – 10.00 h

**Claudia Horst, München**

Antigone – Politics and the need for resonance between the conflicting priorities of different religious systems

10.30 – 11.30 h

Presentation of the new doctoral projects

**D. Malka Wijeratne, Erfurt**

Mos Maiorum, Resonance and Emotion

**João Tziminadis, Erfurt**

Unleashing Life from its Boundaries: The Bioscientific-Cultural Pursuit of Vitality and the Finiteness of the Human

11.30 – 12.00 h

**Wrap-up**

# Abstracts

## 1 Keynote presentations

Claudia Horst

Antigone – Politics and the Need for Resonance between the Conflicting Priorities of Different Religious Systems

“Antigone”, the Greek drama by Sophocles was presumably performed in 443/442 during the Athenian democracy. In the history of reception, Antigone appears as an extremely ambivalent figure. With the decision, to bury her insurgent brother Polynices against the legal prohibition of the Theban king Creon and to accept even death penalty for it, Antigone became a symbol for political resistance. A completely different interpretative approach considers not Creon, but Antigone as a tyrannical figure. By considering her family relations more important than the laws, according to which her brother was a traitor of his country, she threatened the welfare of the polis.

As more recent investigations have shown, the conflict of the tragedy can be understood as resulting from the clash of the elder aristocratic ethics of the Homeric poems, which focus on the individuality of the deceased, and democracy emphasizing political achievements and the replaceability of the deceased.

Antigone too stands in the tradition of an older aristocratic ethics with her categorical and affectively founded wish to bury her brother. This presentation aims to identify which practices of power she employed to enforce her need for resonance vis-à-vis the new legal system.

Rainer Mühlhoff

Resonance, affect, and power: Affect theory of subjectivation with Spinoza and Foucault

In this talk I will introduce the concept of affective resonance, which names a type of affective dynamics of reciprocal modulation in situated or mediated bodily interaction. Resonance arises in a complex interplay between capacities to affect and be affected of multiple things and individuals in environments. It is characteristic of resonance that in this interplay, active and receptive affects are inextricably entangled so that a dynamic of mutual co-constitution arises. Hence, in resonance an individual's power manifests in a certain way that co-depends on all the other things around; at the same time, a resonance dynamic exerts a (weak) form of power (“modulation”) upon all the involved individuals.

I will develop the theory by connecting a dynamic interpretation of Baruch Spinoza's affect theory with a Foucaultian notion of relational and “productive” power. I will also pay tribute to the legacy of the concept in physics and discuss its relation to neighboring concepts in affect studies and developmental psychology. Finally, I will point out that the concept of affective resonance allows for an extended perspective on social structures and subjectivation, taking into account the affective and bodily dimensions of inclusion and exclusion, signification and identification in micro-social spaces. Under the term “immersive power” I will finally point out that there is a contemporary form of governmentality based on controlling affective resonances.

Brigitte Röder

## Politische Macht versus Schönheit. Gender Bias bei der Suche nach Resonanz in der Urgeschichte

Archäologische Themen erfreuen sich in der Öffentlichkeit großer Beliebtheit. Die Hintergründe sind vielfältig und reichen vom Interesse an Geschichte bis zum Wunsch nach Unterhaltung, Abenteuer und Exotik. In der aktuellen Geschlechterdebatte werden weitere Funktionen offenkundig: Die Urgeschichte bzw. „die Steinzeit“ erscheint als eine Referenz dafür, wie das Geschlechterverhältnis „ursprünglich“ und „von Natur aus“ angeblich ist. Sie fungiert als Sehnsuchtsort und liefert Bilder und Erzählungen von einer fernen Zeit, als das Geschlechterverhältnis in geradezu idealer Weise gelingen konnte und stiftet somit Orientierung für Gegenwart und Zukunft. Ein Fall historischer Resonanzerfahrung also?

Der Vortrag nimmt dieses Phänomen zum Ausgangspunkt, um die These zu entwickeln, dass die Urgeschichte in der öffentlichen Debatte nicht als ein Resonanzraum, sondern vielmehr als eine Echokammer (s. Rosa, Resonanz) fungiert, die zum einen die eigenen, für „ursprünglich“ gehaltenen sozialen Konzepte zurückwirft, legitimiert und reaktualisiert. Zum andern verstellt diese Selbstbespiegelung in der Vergangenheit den Blick auf potentiell andere, „fremd“ erscheinende Geschlechterverhältnisse.

Diesen Echokammern entrinnt auch die prähistorische Forschung (noch) nicht, wie am Beispiel des Gender Bias bei der Deutung eisenzeitlicher Prunkgräber vorgestellt wird: Auf Grundlage analoger Befunde werden die bestatteten Männer zu Herrschern, die Frauen zu modebewussten Oberschichtsfrauen stilisiert. Diese Stilisierung findet sich nicht nur in den Fachtexten, sondern auch auf Rekonstruktionszeichnungen, welche die vermittelte Botschaft noch klarer auf den Punkt bringen: Macht ist – und war seit Urzeiten – männlich.

Paula Irene Villa

### *Resonance, affectedness, vulnerability. Thinking through Intersectional Embodiments*

The analytical concept of resonance seems universal, equally valid for all humans beyond social positions such as class, gender, region. Yet, at the same time, all evidence from Social Sciences indicates that not only the capacity to resonate, but also the ways in which resonance is articulated, assessed and acknowledged is highly dependent on socioeconomic structures of inequality and on sociocultural regimes of differences. In this light, my talk seeks to contribute to a multidisciplinary conversation among different ways of conceptualizing ‚resonance‘, giving special attention to how individual ‚affectedness‘ by the world is mediated through socially and culturally shaped embodiments. Intersectionality will be the guiding frame to ask how resonance might be one specific form of a more general logic of ‚being affected‘ and how this thus results in structurally unequal forms of vulnerability. In other words: Do some enjoy and shape resonance more than others, do some suffer resonance more than others? Does the concept of resonance perhaps even obscure the analysis of the empirical dynamics of vulnerability?

## 2 Workshops

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### **Workshop 1: “Naturally...because you’re a wo(man)!” – Power and dominant discourse types**

**Panel participants:** Olivera Koprivica, Raphaela Swadosch

Discourse is part of the social practice and contributes to the reproduction of social structures. If then there are systematic constraints on the content of discourse and on the social relationships enacted in it and the social identities enacting them, these can be expected to have long-term effects on the knowledge and beliefs, social relationships, and social identities of an institution or society.

The efficacy of systematic constraints is evident in the formation of a dominant discourse type which comes to be seen as natural and legitimate. Accordingly, the ideologies embodied in that discourse come to be understood as common sense. Hence, power discourse in patriarchal societies shapes and reaffirms discrimination according to gender thereby shaping resonance for wo(men) in specific ways. In our panel we will present and discuss the topic drawing upon examples of our PhD research studies.

**Panel structure:**

Introduction: *Norman Fairclough’s critical discourse analysis*

Olivera Koprivica: *Case studies in orthodox female monasteries: processes of naturalization and production of discursal common sense disturb or silencing resonance*

Discussion

Raphaela Swadosch: *How patriarchal society is challenged by the Song of Songs: encouraging wo(men) to pursue liberation*

Discussion

Wrap-up

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### **Workshop 2: What (if anything) does the concept of class domination mean today?**

**Panel participants:** Marcus Dölller, David Palme, Luca Pellarin

In *Returning to Reimes* Didier Eribon asks himself “Why, when I have written so much about processes of domination, have I never written about forms of domination based on class?” Eribon answers this question “it turned out to be much easier for me to write about shame linked to sexuality than about shame linked to class.” In the panel we are going to discuss in which way social domination is internally linked to class domination. We want to discuss why it is so hard to talk about class domination, if class domination is internally linked to sexual shame. Is class domination deeper than other forms of gender domination or sexual domination? In which way we can relate class domination to sexual and gender domination? Following Eribon my argument is that class domination is the core of current forms of subjectivation. This means in order to understand sexual domination we have to understand how sexual domination and class domination is internally entangled with each other.

**Panel structure:**

Marcus Dölller: *Presentation*

David Palme: *Response*

General Discussion

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### **Workshop 3: Creative Renunciation – an experimental theatre workshop**

**Panel participant:** Thomas Sojer

This theatre workshop introduces the idea of 'creative renunciation' developed by the French dramatist and philosopher Simone Weil: Violent conflicts can be solved by 'creating' new relations due to an act of renunciation. We address the question of whether this idea is relevant to today's social and ecological challenges by performing and reflecting on parts of Weil's play *Venise sauvée*.

The combination of the philosophical exploration with experimental playing provides a nuanced empirical evaluation of how renunciation can become 'creative' both in a socio-political and artistic context.

Step by step, we will walk through paradigmatic scenes of the play. Following a brief evocation of setting and plot, we then perform and improvise each scene spontaneously and experimentally. Afterward, we ponder on the experienced impressions, discussing thoughts and questions.

**Workshop structure:**

Introduction: the melodrama 'Venise sauvée' (1943)

Performance and improvisation of paradigmatic scenes

General discussion: Collection of impressions, thoughts and criticism

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### **Workshop 4: Discourse. Power. Resonance.**

*On the discursive construction of resonance expectations: Theoretical reflections and empirical findings.*

**Panel participants:** Gabriel Malli, Anita Neudorfer, Stella Rehbein, Anton Röhr

As Rosa argues, resonance expectations are often produced in discourses which constitute certain relationships, practices, events, spaces or objects as "building blocks" for a good life. Constructing images and ideas of successful self-world-relations, such discourses may influence the cognitive-evaluative maps of their recipients and offer templates of resonant subjectivities. Referring to our own dissertation projects, we want to examine different empirical examples of the discursive production of resonance expectations and power effects operating this way. Our contributions deal with the making of resonance desires in the tourism branch, promises of resonance in discourses of different religious fields as well as domestic objects that have come to materialize fantasies of 'the good life'.

**Panel structure:**

Introduction: On the discursive construction of resonance expectations: Theoretical reflections

Anton Röhr: *Exploiting the resonating other? Thoughts about resonance, tourism and capitalism*

Anita Neudorfer: *The model of resonant subjects in popular religious discourses*

Gabriel Malli: *Constructing the modest self. Muslim subjectivities in Cyber Discourse*

Stella Rehbein: *Does it spark joy? – Affective Objects at Home*

Final remarks, followed by General Discussion