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Thinking in Exile
The Nomadic Philosophy of Vilém Flusser

Pensare in esilio
La filosofia nomadica di Vilém Flusser

edited by • a cura di
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ABSTRACTS

EVA BATLIČKOVÁ, *O trauma histórico como ponto de partida do diálogo Flusseriano*

This essay will focus on the modernist traits in the stage play *Saul* written by Vilém Flusser in Prague, in 1936. The exacerbated sensibility in despair tones of protagonists discloses expressionist features together with monologues that substitute dialogues, moans and cries, scenographic games with light and darkness and breach of poetic metric in favour of a rhythm that changes according to sentiments and thinking of the characters. A tragedy about the unfortunate human condition on the eve of The Second World War in a delirious atmosphere, demonstrates, in various respects, its relatedness to emblematic dramas of modernist vanguard.

CHRISTOPH ERNST, *Rootlessness and the Social Imaginary – On Vilém Flussers Understanding of Tacit Knowledge*

The text discusses the notion of “tacit knowledge” in the works of Vilém Flusser. It is argued, that in Flusser’s works tacit knowledge is discussed in relation to his notion of “rootlessness” which serves as a metaphor for the loss of what is called the “background” or the “tacit dimension” in other philosophies (e.g. Michael Polanyi). As an analysis of the essay *Taking Up Residence in Homelessness* shows, Flusser connects this with a cultural philosophical reflection on the special perspective of migrants. The perspective of the migrant reveals “tacit knowledge” as a category of a shared “common repertory” of social “imaginaries” (Charles Taylor).

ERICK FELINTO, *Oceanic Medium: Technology, Identity and Maritime Imagination in Vilém Flusser*

This paper aims at investigating the imaginary of the sea and its marine creatures in Vilém Flusser’s thought, especially in his most peculiar book, *Vampyroteuthis*

Infernalis. This essay uses the ocean as a poetic metaphor to express the universe of digital technologies and its contemporary technical flows. The paper's goal is not only to show the radical originality of Flusser's book, but also to demonstrate its actuality and almost prophetic dimension by means of a dialogue with other contemporary themes and authors in the field of cultural theory. According to the reading suggested here, *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis* represents a fundamental philosophical reflection on the theme of identity in connection with technological devices and digital culture.

RAINER GULDIN, *Bodenlosigkeit: Living between Rootedness and Uprooting*

Bodenlosigkeit, groundlessness, is possibly the central notion of Vilém Flusser's philosophy. It is a complex and ambivalent concept, a metaphor for the definitive loss of all previous attachments and the forfeiture of any absolute certainty, a metaphor for exile and the abyss of nothingness. At the same time, it is a promise of a new form of freedom, the freedom to invent one's life again and again by choosing new attachments and giving a sense to the absurdity of life. Exiles are uprooted from their origins and this initial experience determines their existence. They cannot get back to where they came from but are caught in between the constant urge to uproot themselves and to strike new roots again.

DANIEL IRRGANG, *Improbable Image: Traces of Information Aesthetics in Vilém Flusser's Image Theory*

Vilém Flusser's concept of technical image is often attributed to a rather late period of his work, starting with the 1980s and focusing, in large part, on media theoretical questions. However, the roots of the Flusserian "techno-image" date back further, to Flusser's interest in cybernetics, information theory and, related to the powerful contemporary discourse of these fields, the emergence of a new aesthetics. This paper argues that the principles of Flusser's concept of techno-image were strongly influenced by the back then new discipline of "information aesthetics", independently developed by Max Bense in Germany, to whom Flusser unsuccessfully tried to establish a working relationship around 1970, and to Abraham A. Moles, who shared an intellectual friendship with Flusser which was only interrupted by the latter's sudden passing in 1991.

CAMILA MOZZINI-ALISTER, *Cutting Tongues: Friendship and Parrhesia in the Letters Exchanged by Vilém Flusser*

Based on the experience of reading the letters exchanged between Vilém Flusser, Milton Vargas, and Dora Ferreira da Silva, the present article aims to analyze said writings using the notion of parrhesia as proposed by Michel Foucault in his last course titled *The Courage of Truth*. To that end, we will extract from the episode

“Vicente Ferreira da Silva” excerpts that allow the tailoring of the friendship experience as the condition of possibility to the frank and candid speech which, in its crudity, puts in risk the very relation of friendship that made such dialogue possible.

FRANCESCO RESTUCCIA, *Conversations on the New Man: Flusser and the Dialogue With Italian Thinkers*

Starting from a reflection on the concept of *conversation*, the article reconsiders the role of Flusser’s relationships with some Italian thinkers he met before, during and after his stay in Merano, both from a biographical and a theoretical standpoint. The analysis of his correspondence with Ernesto Grassi, Luigi Bagolini, Bernardo Bagolini and Angelo Schwarz allows us to recognize a turning point in his thought: the development of an anthropology of communication, based on the concept of *homo novus*. This anthropology of post-history can be conceived as the common background to his reflections on imagination, dialogue, gestures and codes.

VILÉM FLUSSER, *Exile and Creativity*

In this essay Flusser proposes to view exile as a challenge to creativity. Since exile is an ocean of chaotic information, it is uninhabitable. In order to be able to live there, the expellee must first transform the information swirling about him into meaningful messages. This data processing is synonymous with creation. Flusser speaks of creation as dialogical process, through which not only the world but the settled inhabitants and expellees as well are transformed creatively. Every form of exile is a breeding ground for creative activity, for the new.

VILÉM FLUSSER, *In Search of Meaning (Philosophical Self-portrait)*

In Search of Meaning is an autobiographical essay written by Flusser in 1969, in which he vividly traces his life and his intellectual career, marked by his exile from Europe to Brazil. Flusser summarizes the fundamental coordinates that identify the genesis of his thought, the influences that marked the different phases of his production, the decisive encounters that imprinted his philosophical life. The theoretical and existential connection between the problem of language, the concept of game and the practice of translation characterizes its philosophical form of life understood as an inexhaustible search for meaning.