

## ABSTRACTS

### ALESSANDRO DE CESARIS, IMMEDIATE MEDIALITY. THE NOTION OF IMMERSIVITY BEYOND TRANSPARENCY AND ILLUSION

This paper aims to critically analyse of some recurring motifs within the immersivity debate. This paper's underlying thesis is that immersivity is often reduced to a form of transparency or aesthetic illusion. One reason for this confusion is a particular ocularcentric bias, which privileges sight over the other senses and does not allow for the specific features of immersive experience. This paper is divided into two parts: the first part is a commentary on some literary references that are often used in the debate to describe immersive experience. The analysis of these references shows that immersivity is already confused with a form of illusion or transparency. The second part is a critical discussion of some theories of immersivity. In the conclusion, a possible theoretical alternative is proposed, which understands immersivity as a form of 'immediate mediality'.

### JACOPO BODINI, IMMERSIVITÉ ET IMMÉDIATION. POURQUOI ÉCHO PLUTÔT QUE NARCISSE

This paper elaborates a theoretical approach to immersive experiences in order to deconstruct, on the one hand, the ontological dualism often structuring their interpretations, and on the other, the aesthetic privilege of the visual dimension associated with them. At the same time, such operation implies the deconstruction of the 'immersant' subjectivity, of her integrity, her agency, and her *image of thought*. In these pages, we propose therefore an intensive and non-dualistic reading of immersive experiences, based on the notion of *immediation*, to be understood both as our condition of being immersed in media instead of being in front of them, and as a co-extensive process of repression of mediation and its trauma. In this frame, immersive experiences are characterized by a particularly intense gradient of immediation. Thus, instead of conceiving the 'immersant' subjectivity as it's usually interpreted starting from the ambiguous experience of Narcissus – described by a predominance of the visual – we will develop a different paradigm of subjectivity referring to Echo as model. Such paradigm will therefore be supported by the intensive logic of resonance, and in particular of reverberation.

### GIUSEPPE GATTI – FRANCESCO PARISI, GETTING IN, RUNNING OUT, LIVING THROUGH. SOME REFLECTIONS ON IMMERSION AND EMERSIVITY

In this paper, we want to discuss the concept of emersivity as intelligible in the context of mediated audiovisual experiences. Usually, scholars focus their efforts in investigating the ways people get involved into media use: the very notion of 'immersivity' captures this kind of involvement and relies on a spatial understanding of mediated presence. Once 'you are there', this conceptual metaphor alludes, your enaction has geared towards a distal environment, leaving your attention to the local one in a second place. Indeed, this is only one side of the coin. Instead of transporting the user in a distal world, and make it believe, or even sense, of being elsewhere, another media tradition strives in keeping the user in its very place by 'augmenting' its surrounding environment with new affordances and enactive paths. So, if immersion highlights the way we leave our natural world to 'dive into' a virtual one, emersivity acknowledges the physical world rather than eliding it and occurs when the natural environment becomes richer in opportunities through the use of mediators of some kind. Through a comparison between media archaeology, embodied and enactive theories of

cognition, and the pharmacological approach proposed by Stiegler, we explore the emersive opportunities provided by a haptic technology called Sentero.

TOMMASO GUARIENTO, IMMERSIVITY COMES IN DEGREES OF COMPUTATIONAL COMPLEXITY. METALEPSIS, IMPOSSIBLE WORLDS, SIMULATIONS

The main goal of this paper is to provide a narratological and philosophical description of the concept of immersivity. In the first section we will focus on the definition of nine essential properties of immersivity. In the second section we will elaborate on the notion of immersivity from the perspective of the theory of possible worlds, and in the third section we will make a transition from narratology to metaphysics. The utility of such a transition is justified by the hypothesis that immersivity is a feature associated not only with simulations or fictional worlds, but that it is also a property of our 'actual world'. In the fourth section we will review the philosophical literature on model-based science and computer simulations of physical phenomena, showing the conceptual proximity between models and narrative fiction. Finally, in the fifth section we will show how the phenomenon of immersivity can also be present in the case where the world, fictional or actual, is inconsistent.

ANTONELLA POLI – ANAIS BERNARD – PETRUCIA DA NOBREGA – BERNARD ANDRIEU, MÉTAVERSER LA DANSE. UNE ÉMERSIVITE IRRADIANTE

The *emersiology* is the theory that studies the emergence of involuntary movements and emotions inside the body. This paper, after establishing the basis for a theorization of immersive arts and their effects, intends to focus on the impacts of digital devices (headsets, holograms, digital installations, etc.) on the living body, bringing out four different types of interactions between the public and immersive technologies such as: *Interaction, Hybridation, Imsertion, Irradiation*. Each category has been characterized and identified according to its relationship to the techniques used, to the sensations produced on the spectators, to the impacts on the notion of own body. The results lead us to represent a new *aesthesiological* cartography, also amplified by analysis of choreographic works conceived with the utilization of technical devices able to radiate, awake emotions and imaginary landscapes in the spectators thanks to immersive technologies.

CINZIA ORLANDO, L'ESSERE DEL DENTRO: ESPLORAZIONI ARCHITETTONICHE DELL'INNER SPACE

This paper aims at deepening the concept of immersivity starting from a meditation on the theoretical and practical imaginary of inner space: what kind of "inside" are we talking about when we talk about an immersive space? The inner space is explored through the lens of architectural practice and experience, with the purpose of deconstructing the idea that architecture enjoys a constitutive privilege in matters of immersive experience. This supposed privilege would consist in architecture's ability to ensure an encompassing spatial experience, an absolute shift from the frontal relationship with an outside to the immersiveness of an inside that envelops and saturates the gaze. Contrary to this notion of immersivity, referring to the work of the architect-phenomenologist Steven Holl and, more specifically, to his project *The Ex of IN house* (2016) it will be shown how architectural design – without any privilege of principle – presents us with an inside that is immersive precisely insofar as it is not encompassing: an inside of mediation, in which the outside is not segregated but intra-acts (Barad 2007) with the inside.

## FRANCESCA PEROTTO, IMMERSIVITY, INDIVIDUATION AND ART

The concept of immersivity occupies a prominent place in contemporary discourses on art and new technologies, as it is used to describe one of the defining characteristics of these experiences. But its diffusion should be problematized, as it is symptomatic of an onto-metaphysical approach rooted in Western technical and aesthetic culture. The concept of immersivity stands indeed on a distinction between subjects and objects and conceives subjects as absolute while attributing essential proprieties to certain objects. With this text, we will propose how overcoming the subject-object dualism, thanks to the perspective of individuation proposed by Gilbert Simondon, could solve some ambiguities of the current debate on immersivity, allowing to think about a processual continuity between artworks, technologies and human beings, in terms of collectively inhabiting environments. Having proposed to change the metaphysical background, we will then discuss three examples of immersive artworks that do or do not make use of new technologies in order to shed light on their operational mechanisms. The first is *Rosetta Mission 2020* by Luca Pozzi, the second *Sinfonia* by Alessandro Sciaraffa, and the third *DAU Project* by Ilya Khrzhanovsky.

## EKATERINA ODÉ, LES CAVERNES ACOUSMATIQUES. L'ÉCART ET L'IMMERSIVITÉ DANS LA PERSPECTIVE D'ANTHROPOLOGIE DES MEDIAS

Plato's Cave could be interpreted not only as an allegory, but also as the very first description of a media device. Besides, a very similar device could be traced back to the use Pythagoreans did of actual caves, coupled with another media device with philosophical purposes, their famous acousmatic veil. In this paper, we consider immersivity as a thought exercise and explore whether we can establish continuity between contemporary audiovisual immersive processes and those in the caves of prehistory and the age of hominization. To answer this question, we examine the immersive acousmatic devices that we find at the origin of philosophy and contemporary devices, questioning the mechanism of their operation and their impact on our thought processes by referring to the debate that acousmatic theory (Pierre Schaeffer and Michel Chion) has generated. This article argues that immersivity presupposes an act of thinking based on the use of 'natural' or 'artificial' devices that reveal an operational 'gap' or difference between different types of perception (visual and auditory), or even highlight a difference between what we perceive directly and not directly, in a mediated way.

## MICHELE BERTOLINI, RIFLESSIONI SULLO SGUARDO DI GENERE TRA CINEMA E REALTÀ VIRTUALE. *FEMINIST STUDIES* E *VISUAL CULTURE STUDIES* A CONFRONTO

The essay aims at developing a comparison between *Feminist Studies* and *Visual Culture Studies* on the cultural and historical forms of seeing stimulated by the new media (Virtual Reality, World Wide Web, Social Network) and the old media (Cinema). The critical debate, in the last thirty years, has developed – with a touch of over-simplification – two alternative options concerning the perceptual, cognitive, social, and cultural effects provoked by the apparition of the new technological devices. The first option underlines the continuity of the scopic regimes between the old and the new media and the dominant, disembodied male gaze stimulated by the Virtual Reality. On the other hand, the second option aims at promoting a new synesthetic, embodied form of perception connected with the experience of new media. Through the analysis of the Film Theory (Laura Mulvey, Vivian Sobchack), and some experiences of Virtual Reality and Media Environments, the paper problematizes the opposition between the first and the second option, from the point of view of a post-identity gender perspective.

LAURA KATHARINA MÜCKE – TOM POLJANŠEK, CO-IMMERSIONS. TOWARD A POLITICAL CONCEPTION OF IMMERSIVITY

The following paper approaches a political conception of immersion and immersivity. In a dual philosophical and media studies approach, it is argued that immersion denotes a basic condition and dynamic of human's being-in-the-world: We argue that the 'in' of humans being-in-the-world does not refer primarily to a physical or medial 'space'. Rather, it means a phenomenological 'in' of the experience of *situations* in which people find themselves more or less immersed – either alone or together with others. Thus, rather than describing immersion as something characterized by a rupture of everyday experience, immersion refers to any form of experienced being-in: to the microdynamics of a social "being singular plural" (Jean-Luc Nancy) which are much more complex and fine-grained than suggested by the simple binary of 'being-in' and 'being-out' often associated with immersion. To demonstrate this, the paper draws on the concepts of the "political" (Chantal Mouffe), "affordance" (J.J. Gibson), and "frame alignment" (Robert Benford and David A. Snow), as well as Erving Goffman's "frame analysis" to understand how political power, social (micro-)situations, and the individualized sense of immersion are interrelated. The situations figure of an assembly is taken as a paradigmatic example to show how extremely diverse, discrepant, and contradictory the "immersive drives" are that we encounter in our everyday lives.

ANDREA GIOMI, IMMERSION AS IDEOLOGY. A CRITICAL GENEALOGY OF IMMERSIVITY IN DIGITAL ARTS, AESTHETICS AND CULTURE

This paper seeks to provide a *critical genealogy* of immersivity in digital arts, aesthetics, and culture. Within this framework, we argue that while 'immersivity' deals with a set of techniques providing the perceiver with a sense of involvement in the environment, 'immersion' denotes a specific ideological posture embedded in digital technologies and rooted in the early debate about the non-materiality of the virtual. In this context, the technological narrative supported the idea that 'immersion' is a special feature of virtual technologies allowing individuals to access to a world apart, e.g. the illusion of 'being there'. We further consider that such a narration – extensively adopted by artists, new media philosophers, and technologists – have been appropriated over the years by technological corporations thereby becoming a leitmotif of communication strategies concerning any experience that aims to actively involve the audience. By tracing the genealogy of virtual immersivity, this paper expands current philosophical understanding of the ideological content structuring the rhetoric of immersion. To this regard, we argue that the distinction immersion/immersivity remains important not so much for separating subjective experience from material proprieties of digital environments but rather to shed light on ideological apparatuses articulating human-technology interactions.