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**Virtuale e trascendenza**  
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## ABSTRACTS E KEYWORDS

Giovanni Filoramo

***La religione virtuale tra realtà e illusione***

(pagine 9-26)

### ABSTRACT

After some introductory considerations on the digital revolution and its effects on real life, and a hypothesis on defining virtual religion, the contribution reconstructs the main phases that from the cyberreligion of the 1980s lead up to the current digital revolution. As some examples highlight, today the distinction between Religion Online and Online Religion appears increasingly overtaken by technological progress. In the new situation typical of digital religion, as demonstrated in particular by the example of online rites, the digital religious experience has its own reality and in its own way allows access to Transcendence.

### KEYWORDS

Digital Religion, Virtual Reality, Religion Online and Online Religion

Pier Cesare Rivoltella  
***Virtuale e ethos della trascendenza***  
(pagine 27-42)

#### ABSTRACT

This essay's aim is to provide a framework for the analysis of limits and chances of religious experience in the Informational Society. The first step is a short presentation of what is today Digital Religion, finding in this research field the point of view starting from which this contribution was conceived: the so called Existential Media Studies. The second step is a definition of the terms of Virtual Reality and Transcendence Ethos: the first term is redefined through a line of thinking starting from Aristotle up to some recent perspectives of the contemporary philosophy; the second one is contextualized into the actual position of man in history. Starting from this, it was possible to individualize three main contexts into which the Transcendence Ethos could express itself: anthropology, ontology, epistemology.

#### KEYWORDS

Digital Religion, Media Education, Media Ethics, Digital Culture and Technology, Media Philosophy

Georg Gasser

***The Virtual as the Real***

***Ontological Considerations on the Real and the Virtual in the Light of Classical Theism***

(pagine 43-60)

ABSTRACT

It is a widespread view that a virtual digitally designed world is less real than ordinary physically constituted reality. In this paper I will defend the thesis that this view is wrong. A virtual world is as real as the material world – the main difference concerns the ontological structure of each world. Another widespread view is that life in a virtual world would be less valuable than life in the material world because life in the virtual world would amount to a kind of illusion, similar to the scenario presented in a movie like *The Matrix*. I will argue that this assumption is also wrong. Life in a virtual world can reach as much existential depth as life in the material world and we can strive for values and meaning in the virtual world as much as in the material world. Thus, living in a virtual reality or living in a material world does not make a crucial difference when it comes to living a meaningful human life. In defending these theses, I follow to a good extent the account of David Chalmers on virtual reality. Finally, I will argue for the thesis that against the background of a classical theistic account of reality, the idea of living in a virtual reality should even be familiar to us. A reality created by God and held in existence by God's continuous creative activity shows structural parallels to a digitally realized virtual world which is held in existence by a powerful computer program resp. the rational beings running such a program.

KEYWORDS

Virtual Reality, Fictionalism, Ontology, Theism

Massimo Epis

***“Poco meno di un dio?”***

***Ripensare la trascendenza nella metamorfosi dell’umano***

(pagine 61-76)

#### ABSTRACT

We need to rethink the notions of “transcendence” and “virtual” with reference to what we identify as “real”, and then in relation to the “experience”, in the depth of its Erlebnisse. The necessary overcoming of the dualism of substances does not legitimize an undifferentiating monism. We should not think human condition originality in opposition to physical nature, but in its specific responsibility. In the immanence of personal subjectivity the transcendence comes to light not as claim, but as constitutive alterity.

#### KEYWORDS

Transcendence, Neuroscience, Determinism, Human Freedom, Consciousness

Adriano Pessina

**Onlife. Trasformazioni dell'esperienza tra immanenza e trascendenza**

(pagine 77-88)

ABSTRACT

This essay describes the transformations of human experience introduced by ICT and corrects the idea that new technologies can be evaluated as “means”, which everyone can freely dispose of. In reality, ICT creates a new cultural and sensory environment, in which different aims are intertwined. The digital world has a causal power over people’s emotional and cognitive lives. New technologies, to which we delegate answers to our questions, are able to reinforce the practical and theoretical immanentism with which experimental sciences have described the biosphere. ICT, in fact, is built through the same deterministic model. For this reason, the artifacts that allow us to transcend the limits of place and time, which tell us what to eat, how to travel, how to take care of ourselves, put us in a new technological immanentism. The interpretation of online life (onlife) as part of the new infosphere reinforces a self-referential conception of reality, increasingly emptied of questions of meaning.

KEYWORDS

Human Experience, Onlife, Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Digital World, Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Nicolas Steeves S.I.

***Virtuale, trascendenza e immaginazione teologica***

(pagine 89-109)

ABSTRACT

This article purports to show how the relation between the virtual, transcendence, and the imagination may receive new philosophical meaning through theological enquiry, made sharper by the global Coronavirus pandemic. Virtuality's rich semantic history through Aristotelian metaphysics, physical optics, and digital technology casts a metaphysical doubt on its relation to reality. The imagination's mediating function, seen in light of the theology of Christ's mediation, can help peaceably overcome the false modern dichotomies that have arisen from a correct, but stymied understanding of reality's complexities.

KEYWORDS

Imagination, Transcendence, Virtual, Mediation, Sacrament, Reconciliatio Oppositorum

Stefano Semplici

***Dal corpo-prigione all'intelletto attivo?***

***Percorsi (e problemi) di trascendenza "virtuale"***

(pagine 111-129)

#### ABSTRACT

*Virtual* as an adjective is ever more permeating our lives. Every day, we are confronted with (we live as part of) virtual communities, virtual interactions with absolutely tangible effects (e-commerce, e-government), virtual *reality*. On the contrary, transcendence (transcendent) appears to be confined to a niche of academic interest and religious experience. This contribution aims at exploring the relationship between the virtual and two patterns of transcendence (transcendent) that are often related to it, that is what we could call a (neo)platonian and a phenomenological approach to virtual reality. As for the first, some possible misunderstandings are addressed, in connection with the idea of a disembodied human sensoria and the ancient dream of "flying to heaven". As for the second, the distinction *real/reell* and the notion of "transcendence in immanence", as elaborated by Husserl, appears to play a pivotal role. Finally, Aristotle's active intellect is introduced as a possible, provocative interpretation of some aspects of the new "reality" we are living in.

#### KEYWORDS

Transcendence, Immanence, Virtual Reality, Cyberspace, Phenomenalism

Ruggero Eugeni

***Realtà estesa, virtuale, aumentata e mixata nella condizione postmediale***

(pagine 131-143)

#### ABSTRACT

In the first part of the article, I propose a typology of contemporary visual and audiovisual media, based on their degree of immersiveness. This typology is articulated by three parameters: the perceived position of the viewers with respect to the images; the degree and ways of perceptual manipulation of the images by the viewers; the degree and ways of manipulation of narrative events by the viewers. In this way, four types of media are highlighted: bystanding, bystanding-immersive, moderate immersive, radical immersive. In the second part of the paper, I analyze the four types of media from a semiotic perspective and in the light of the category of “presence”. I argue that each of them sets a specific regime of presence between the viewers and the surrounding worlds; and that it does so by assigning to the viewers a specific enunciational position: in particular the viewers, from simple recipients of the images, become more and more radically co-responsible of them, through their own gestures and looks.

#### KEYWORDS

Media Semiotics, Post-media Condition, Extended Reality, Regimes of Presence



Luigi Berzano  
***Il religioso smaterializzato***  
(pagine 145-161)

#### ABSTRACT

Everything (social event, person, text, music, community, religious rite), to enter the Internet, must be dematerialized, moving from its analogical nature to the digital nature. This also happens for religious things and, recently, this happened when religious places (churches, synagogues, mosques) were closed for the Coronavirus. What are the effects of this dematerializing revolution on religious worlds? What difference is there between participating in a community celebration and watching an online celebration? These are questions already asked by Guy Debord in *The Society of the Spectacle*.

#### KEYWORDS

Religious, Dematerialization, Digital, Internet, Coronavirus

Roberto Diodato  
***Per una filosofia del virtuale***  
(pagine 163-175)

#### ABSTRACT

Following Bergson, Simondon and Deleuze, the article develops the preliminary concepts of an ontology of the virtual, here interpreted as a new entity which appears in the world thanks to new digital technology. Being an ontological hybrid, the virtual comprises body and image, object and event, internal and external, artificial and living. Furthermore, the virtual entity is the result of the interaction between computer programming and the human body augmented by technological prosthesis and, since this entity only exist in a dimension of interactivity, it shows the priority of the category of relation.

#### KEYWORDS

Virtual, Aesthetics, Ontology, Bergson, Simondon, Deleuze

Roberto Celada Ballanti

***Borges, Leibniz e i mondi possibili***

***Contributo alla storia delle “monadologie letterarie” del XX secolo***

(pagine 177-197)

#### ABSTRACT

The essay aims to investigate the deep consonances between Leibniz and Borges. Indeed, going through the works of the Argentine writer, one of the most profound “literary monadologies” of the twentieth century emerges, which becomes evident in the vision of space and time, in the category of the possible, in the paradoxes of Zeno, up to the idea of writing as creation of unborn worlds.

#### KEYWORDS

Monadology, Time, Space, Eternity, Literary Writing

Manlio Sodi

***Il realismo dell'evento liturgico fra tecnologia e virtualità***

(pagine 199-216)

ABSTRACT

Even in the liturgical context virtual language can be pervasive. An examination of the phenomenon recalls the duty to combine this area of education to a correct use of solutions, so that the products placed on the market do not disorient the transcendent reality proper to devotion. The challenge poses itself at the educational level so that the virtual is at the service of the real, which is constituted by the content of the sacraments, and so that living in the virtual stimulates us to return to the reality of an encounter which, by itself, can totalize the expectations of the person.

KEYWORDS

Devotion, Training, Deception, Liturgy, Virtual

Davide Sisto

***L'immortalità digitale: griefbot e ricordi senza fine***

(pagine 217-233)

ABSTRACT

My paper aims at underlining how the current use of digital technologies is generating new forms of interference in the relationship between life and death. More specifically, as highlighted by the scholars of the so-called Digital Death, today we have a – more or less concrete – possibility to reach some sort of digital immortality, which consists in a survival of information and data gathered and created by the deceased throughout their entire life within different online environments. These information and data tend to become independent from the individual that generated them: to the living who suffer from the loss, this gives the impression that the afterlife is now to be found within the online dimension. In showing the philosophical implications of this particular new situation created by technology, this paper aims at taking into consideration the changes it brings to our relationship with transcendence and religious rituals.

KEYWORDS

Digital Death, Immortality, Death Studies, Holograms

Emilio Di Somma

***Il “cerchio magico” del virtuale***

***Sulla tecnica come forma di pensiero magico e l’esclusione della trascendenza***

(pagine 235-251)

ABSTRACT

Contemporary technological and social development have seen the emergence of debates about the possibilities, and dangers, of “virtual reality”, may it be intended either as a recreational instrument (videogames, movies, etc...) or the attempt to “re-create” our world in ways that are more easily accessible to the population (the numerous digital programs that allow visits to museums or monuments are a good example), or even the possibility to create “new worlds” in which we could live a more fulfilling life. The aim of this essay, in line with the topic of the volume, is to discuss the possibility of a meaningful interaction between “virtual reality” and “transcendence”. By developing a paradigmatic comparison between technique and “magic”, as anthropological frameworks, the paper argues that it is impossible to develop meaningful transcendence with “virtual reality”.

KEYWORDS

Magic, Virtual Reality, Transcendence, Anthropology, Ernesto De Martino

Antonio Pieretti  
***Oltre l'intelligenza artificiale***  
(pagine 253-270)

#### ABSTRACT

We are entering the information age, because of the unbelievable amount of data we have. Big Data Technologies tend to structure the world and humans in order to adapt them to their limited capabilities. Man, because of his intelligence, differs from machines; in fact he has the ability not only to process data, but also to interpret and understand them, therefore to give them meaning. But, in the exercise of this activity, he works as a mean and not as an end in itself. Therefore, his personal identity coincides with the function he performs, that is, with his informational identity. This conclusion, however, contradicts the thesis according to which artificial intelligence is only reproductive as opposed to human intelligence. This, in turn, cannot behave like machines, because it cannot do without the body or the world of life.

#### KEYWORDS

Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Personal Identity, Post-human

Carmelo Dotolo

***Trascendenza e cristianesimo***

***Tracce di una complementarità***

(pagine 271-287)

#### ABSTRACT

The category of “transcendence” is the constitutive dimension of the human being. However, a kind of theoretical frailty affects this category as the guiding principle of human existence and reality. This is witnessed by the digital revolution as the bearer of a *form of transcendence* shaped along the lines of an imaginary shift in the construction of the self. In this framework, the religious experience of transcendence and in particular the *theo*-logical interpretation developed by Christianity, displays a peculiar semantic, as it introduces a difference in the interpretation of humanness and criticizes any simplified understanding of reality. Religious experience and its reference to God represents a heretical perspective also for the interpretation of transcendence itself. Moreover, Christianity suggests that the meaning of transcendence lies in the prophetic relation with the history of the world.

#### KEYWORDS

Transcendence, Online Religion, Theological Semantic, God, Prophetic Relation