

On immersivity. Carte Semiotiche Annali 7th Issue

Italy

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With the advent of digital technologies, the term immersivity is gradually spreading. This lemma, which finds its root in the Latin *mergĕre*, to plunge, refers to the experience of a body completely enveloped by an environment, thus accounting for the shift from a purely spectatorial dimension to an immersive relationship to images (Eugeni 2018).

The immersive effect calls into question the genealogical dimension of the media and the aesthetic experience elaborated within the history of the arts and images. The relationship between devices such as Smart Glasses and VR and the pre-cinematographic optical instruments, cannot be reduced to an evolutionary principle. Both the stereoscope (Crary 1990) and the panorama (Grau 2003), for instance, are examples of immersive strategies in the 19th century; and they share with the most recent technologies the problem of a «channeled aesthetic perception» (Montani 2014). Likewise, *trompe-l'oeil* painting and 3D cinema, baroque chapels and contemporary durational performances, raise questions related to the simulacrum of continuity between the space of the spectator and the space of representation. New technologies conceive an aesthetic experience in which every distance between subject and object seems to collapse.

The milieu in which the immersive experience unfolds deserves attention precisely by virtue of its reorganization of perception. This is crucial for the «competition for the real» at stake in the process of remediation (Bolter and Grusin 1999), where the optical devices and the transparent model of the Albertian perspective are put into question.

Therefore, what we call “immersivity” identifies a stratified field of problems and questions that Carte Semiotiche intends to explore starting from its figures, i.e. from its manifestations: works of art, professional and recreational practices or technical instruments are just few examples of possible areas of investigation.

In this respect, it is above all essential to reflect on the enunciative armour of the representation and the traces responsible for its reflexive effects, as it happens with the transformations, re-configurations and disappearances of the window-frame.

The tension between opacity and transparency typical of the immersive strategies summons two closely related issues: the effects of reality and the regimes of truth on which they depend – semiotically a matter of persuasive strategies responsible for ‘making believe true’; the centrality of the body within the immersive experience, and therefore the efficacy of images.

At the heart of those questions lies the status of the observer, or, better, of the immanent subjective instance that the image co-establishes together with its own object. The sensory experience in the immersive environment is not limited to visual stimuli: the movements and actions of the embodied subject determine the durations and paths of each individual practice. The analysis of

the scopic structure of the immersive device is, therefore, not sufficient to account for the construction of the subject. On the one hand, the prosthetic dimension of immersion requires a reflection on the human / machine relationship along with its semantic and syntactic interfaces. On the other hand, immersion summons a phenomenological body and requires the exploration of the practices that implement and re-modulate the virtual actions and interactions inscribed in the device.

Topics:

- genealogies of immersion: genealogy of immersive effects in various media;
- presentation/representation: illusory transparency and strategies of enunciation responsible for the effects of immersion and efficacy;
- immersive experience of the spectator in contemporary visual culture: cinema, visual and performing arts, the museum and its transformations;
- immersive practices and policies: the role of virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality in the framework of social practices, such as the reconfiguration of urban space, gamification, new didactic practices and cultural mediation.

The Editorial Board invites interested scholars to send an abstract with a proposal of contribution of 2000 characters (500 words) in English, French, Italian, Spanish (please a short bibliography attached) by the 15th of September 2020 to the following addresses:

cartesemiotiche@gmail.com; lucia.corrain@unibo.it; ottavia.mosca2@unibo.it;
mircovannoni@gmail.com.

Summary:

Papers in English, French, Italian and Spanish

Length: max. 40.000 characters (8000 words)

Images: b/w embodied and color (jpg, png; 300 DPI)

Deadline for abstracts: 15 SEPTEMBER 2020

Communication of acceptance of proposal: 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

Deadline for contribution: 15 JANUARY 2021

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