

## ENGLISH VERSION

CfA – Call for Abstracts *Esercizi Filosofici*, 12(II), 2020

### On Becoming Immaterial

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This special issue of *Esercizi Filosofici* aims to set up a transdisciplinary reflection around the question of the immaterial and its relation to materiality. This topic represents an unavoidable issue within the human phenomenon, which continuously faces processes of dematerialisation under multiple aspects of its existence. Furthermore, and more specifically, the urge to take up again this question – which belongs to the philosophical debate as early as the Nineties, when attempts were made to define new theoretical coordinates to describe post-Fordism – resides in our epoch's paradoxical epistemic conjunction. Nowadays, the more cognitive capitalism and digital revolution take hold, the more the speculative need to state the material object's importance is vindicated: New Realism and Object-Oriented Ontology, for instance, go hand in hand with the so-called "Material Turn" within Media Studies and with the almost total dismissal of the term "immaterial" in contemporary philosophical vocabulary. Likewise, the so-called "hard sciences" advocate for the priority of the empirical, that is observable and measurable datum, while political debate as well as marketing propaganda frequently refer to the concreteness of the subjects' basic needs and to the immediateness of their elementary drives: all of this testifies of the stress and confusion experienced when facing the perspective dematerialisation of the lifeworld, which seems to stand rarefy and lose its consistency.

As early as 1990, while describing the shift from Foucault's disciplinary society to control society, Deleuze would point out the progressive coming together of the couple signature-serial number, that is the transition from the valorisation of a subject's singularity and individuation within a crowd to the mere possibility of accessing an information (opening a door, crossing a boarder, authorising a medical treatment, providing a loan). This would also underline the direct correlation between the new kind of society and the dismissal of the physical money in favour of monetary fluxes, as well as contemporary technologies' specificity (from the mechanical lever to computational modulation). In 2008, Macho echoes him by caustically underlining that «if you want to be an individual today, you have to be able to memorize numerical sequences». On the other hand, Lazzarato, who elaborates on the concept of "immaterial labour" in 1997, soon gives up on using this term, pointing out its risk of collusion with forms of economism. The latter would be unable to grasp the consequences – in terms of power relations on a libidinal as well as on a limbic level – that the shift from the material to the immaterial – as exemplified, for instance, by finance capitalism – operates within our relation to temporality: from the optimisation of the here and now to the opening of a future horizon dominated by the illusion of credit and, consequently, by its unavoidable reversal in debt (as the economic crisis of 2007-2008 would suggest).

Starting from this first, preliminary review, we are able to raise some questions: what is the relation between material and immaterial? Shall we reduce the latter to a derived and dependent form of the former, or does it advocate for an autonomous dimension, symptomatic of a difference of nature? Should we understand material and immaterial as a couple of opposed concepts, or can we establish between them a contamination and co-belonging of sort? Which benefits may a reflection

emphasising the immaterial dimension of matter offer? And which meaning would immaterial have today? This special issue aims to collect proposals inquiring the nature of this relation, with special reference to the contribution a reflection around the immaterial may provide today. In order to safeguard this relation's complexity, we preferred to raise the question of the immaterial as analysis of a process rather than as definition of a concept. The immaterial, together with its standing tendency to hypostatisation, gives therefore way to the "becoming immaterial", namely that transformative issue which, without separating from it, overlaps and dubs the determinate series of matter in a non-symmetrical half.

We therefore welcome contributions concerning, but not exclusively limited to, the following topics:

- a. Becoming immaterial as human structural dimension:
  1. Death as becoming immaterial of the body, and the revenant as residual and threshold entity, analysed through anthropological, ethnological and historic-anthropological inquiries;
  2. Symbolic behaviour as becoming immaterial of the sign in the meaning, starting from both semiotics (for instance, Meillassoux), and genealogy (for instance, Sini);
  3. Subconscious as becoming immaterial of experience and its mnestic sedimentation, as well as its reappearing in dreams and lapsus, as inquired by psychoanalysis;
  4. The relation between mind and body, understood as the becoming immaterial of the psychic starting from biological corporeality, through multiple perspectives such as analytic philosophy (mind-body problem), cognitive science and theology (immateriality of the soul);
  5. The becoming immaterial of empirical experience as the question of the subsumption of the datum, which is rendered theory and concept, inquired from both historical-philosophical and scientific-epistemological perspectives.
  
- b. Becoming immaterial as hermeneutical perspective in order to understand our epoch:
  1. The digital revolution within the socioeconomic system, understood as the becoming immaterial of the capitalistic process, as it turns to be limbic (Courtwright), cognitive (Fumagalli), attentional (Crary), informational (Castells);
  2. Becoming immaterial of economy as the taking hold of finance and the related dematerialisation of money and commodity;
  3. Becoming immaterial within contemporary physics' paradigm, which shifts from a mechanicalistic and physicalist theory to a conception of reality's substrate as undecidable aggregate of corpuscles and waves;
  4. Becoming immaterial of contemporary arts, exemplified by installations, body artists and immersive structures;
  5. Through the raise of social media, the becoming immaterial of interpersonal relations, expressions of feelings and elaborations of subjectivity, which increasingly take place on these platforms.
  
- c. Becoming immaterial as expression of the difference of nature between the material and the immaterial, and of its potential for emancipation and counter-effectuation:
  1. The immateriality of the datum within the theory, in so far as the macrostructure, that is the epistemic context, preconditions the way according to which the data – the elements building up a theory – are acquired;
  2. Becoming-immaterial as becoming minoritarian (Deleuze), its potential for emancipation and subversion, in so far as it vindicates an autonomous processual dimension, neither dependent nor derived from the material, but rather able to escape its hierarchising structuration;

3. Becoming immaterial of biopolitics (from Foucault to Rancière), including the compulsory and indiscriminate collection of data concerning the body, up to its total dissolution, as well as the becoming numeric of every form of experience toward an hyper-materialist paradigm (Stiegler) and a new form of psycho-politics (Byung-chul Han) based on the overarching influence on private life of the data shared online;
4. Becoming immaterial of the infrastructures through Building Information Modelling (BIM), together with the unavoidable persistence of a materiality of sort even within the digital realm;
5. Becoming immaterial of the subjects' concreteness through user profiling (Zuboff) and algorithmic governmentality (Rouvroy & Berns) of the individuals, as well as the attempt, by hackers and cyber-activists, to rework these information technologies from a subversive and resistant perspective.

Contributions can be submitted in Italian or English, and should present the results of original inquires, theoretical or historical, within the field of philosophical studies broadly understood. They should not have been published before nor being under revision by other journals.

Participants to the call should submit an abstract (max. 3.000 characters, spaces included), in .docx format, to the issue's editors Emilia Marra ([emiliamarra91@hotmail.it](mailto:emiliamarra91@hotmail.it)) and Marco Pavanini ([marco.pavanini1@gmail.com](mailto:marco.pavanini1@gmail.com)), together with a short biobibliographical note, within the **01/02/2020**. The issue's editors reserve the right to select the abstracts considered as suitable and to inform their authors within the **15/02/2020**. The authors of the selected abstracts should then submit their anonymised paper (max. 40.000 characters, spaces included, footnotes and bibliography included), in .docx format, together with an abstract in Italian and English and five keywords, within the **01/06/2020**. All submitted papers will undergo double blind peer review. The result of the review procedure will be communicated to the authors within the **15/09/2020**. The outcome of this procedure will state that the contribution: (I) can be published as it is; (II) can be published with minor revisions; (III) can be published with major revisions; (IV) cannot be published. In case revisions will be required, the contributors shall resubmit their papers, accordingly revised and conform to the journal's formatting guidelines, within the **15/10/2020**. The issue will be published the **15/12/2020**.

The Editors of the Special Issue,

Emilia Marra  
Marco Pavanini