

Introduction

Beyond the Self: Crisis of Disembodied and Individualistic Paradigms

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Ethical, social and political analyses debate whether there are grounds for the reconstruction of the notion of self: the main focus is the broad discontent with the individualistic tradition where the rational agent, or independent self, is considered the fundamental atom of social life. Considering the new understandings of dynamic and distributed processing in our brain, several relevant philosophers of sciences, psychologists and neuroscientists are exploring a similar topic, criticizing a disembodied view of the Self.

In particular, over the last three decades the emphasis in philosophy of science on embodied cognition has started a process of rethinking personal identity, mainly to overcome the vestiges of Cartesianism.

The new paradigm describes the ontogenetic and ontological function of the body, as the perceptive and affective structure that interconnects with intersubjectivity and environment. Thus, political theories and philosophy of science, despite separate developmental trajectories, are suggesting a revision of the individualistic and rationalistic accounts of subjectivity in terms of a social ontology with an emphasis on the embodied and situated nature of cognition and agency.

The first part of the issue converges into what can be defined as an *affective turn* in which consciousness of body, rather than a pre-reflective self-consciousness, is an effective pre-condition of Self-consciousness as psychological Self (Marraffa, Vistarini); second person recognition is

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constitutive for the first person (Garfield); original and well-founded experiences such as pregnancy are an essential part of the constitution of the Selves (maternal and foetal) (Miglio).

The second part of the issue advocates a conceptual framework of *situated and extended affectivity* in which the passage takes place from embodied Self to the embodied person, where the person is the bearer of an *expressive style* (Forlè); the role of external environment and of the motivational character of emotions leads to an extension of the Self beyond the organic boundaries (Piredda, Candiotto) and the radical overcoming of a subjectivist and private account of expression (Guidi).

The third part of the issue explores the *intersubjective and ethical dimensions* of the Self, starting from the fundamental character of the interpersonal relationship and the consequent crisis of the individualistic paradigm (Urban, Koubolová); the recognition of social relations as constitutive, within a so-called *cumulative network model* of the Self (Wallace); a new look at the empathic relationship in the light of the phenomenological eidetic reduction (Eidetic of Empathy, De Vecchi); an extension of the concept of lived body to all living beings and a biocentric explanation for intersubjectivity (Cianferoni); and, as case studies, the relevance of the therapeutic dialogical attitude (Open Dialogue) in the psychiatric approach, with particular reference to schizophrenia (Galbusera, Kyselo).

One of the goals of this special issue is to show how these different approaches could be seen as mutually informative.

Such an alliance appears more necessary in the current scenario in which the relationship with body, emotions, the others and social context, along with everything that helps to constitute embodied Self, are faced with a revolutionary process of digitization.

Our proposal, once we admit the profound mutation that digitization operates on the Self, with particular reference to the emotional sphere (Liberati), is that digital interaction requires both bodily extension and the incorporation of objects as complementary processes (Buongiorno). This confirms, once again, the irreducibly incorporated, affective and extended nature of the Self.

The aim is that this collection of interdisciplinary studies may serve to develop a more refined and integrated conceptual framework of the Self as embodied and relational. The authors consider this step as important and urgent to address the scientific and ethical challenges of our time.