

## Reviews

Giuseppe Caglioti  
con Tatiana Tchouvileva  
e Luigi Cocchiarella

### **ODI et AMO**

#### **Dalle ambiguità percettive al pensiero quantistico.**

Mimesis

Milano 2020

244 pp.

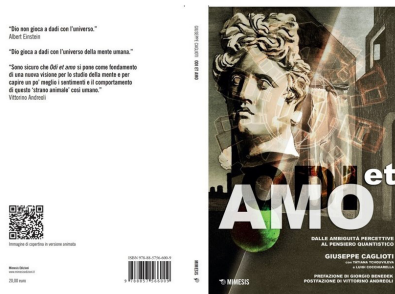
ISBN 9788857566009

It is not so unusual to leaf through a book before reading it, without even being sure to do it later. The accomplished act that summarizes this operation, traditionally considered an instinctive and common belief to many, is often depicted in the iconic paintings concerning the Annunciation of the Madonna. The Annunciation to the Virgin Mary is, in fact, one of the most represented themes in the history of art, and the three characters (Angel, Virgin, and the dove) involved in their meanings and signifiers, always interact within an architectural scene, in which the only accessory present is (almost always) a book. The pose of Our Lady towards this object is, in most cases, that of a pause or a rest, and here the doubt arises: if surprised by the event, she is interrupting the reading, or she is simply leafing through that book.

A different attitude one normally has, instead, when intentionally, by necessity, or upon request, as in this case, the book must be read, and reflections, and perhaps written notes, are indispensable for the review.

I am normally interested, by elective affinity due to my main profession (the draftsman and designer), to almost immediately look at the figures in a book, whether they are graphic or photographic representations. This is a common habit for many people, and even more for the draftsman, I believe. But at this point, I allow myself to appoint the author of this essay as a 'draftsman' as

well, having since the beginning noted the quality of the choice in the plenty of images with which Professor Giuseppe Caglioti was able to graphically give an exhaustive comment, even on the most technical aspects, thus offering not only words by writing but also images by drawing to explain the quantum thought. The main image of every book from which one must be immediately captured is of course the cover image. It is not just and only for commercial purposes, rather, it is a sort of visual attractor towards which the reader must be induced. Referring to the Homeric memory, a sort of siren song. Sometimes my predisposition not to use diminutives, as in this case, would lead to bring the word back to its root: therefore, the word 'cover' should be replaced by the word 'deck', that is, the deck covering the boat! Regarded as the part of the boat constituting its closing element, or rather the cover, thus transforming the book by a metaphor, into a ship capable of taking us to sail endless seas. The seas of science, sometimes threatening and stormy, or, the reassuring and more serene ones, like the seas of fantasy. In the case of the essay *ODI et AMO*, the image of the cover, or, if you prefer, the 'deck' with the fading effect of the title on the figures, is like a sort of eco-graphic, which almost immediately sends you to the back of the cover (of the deck). If the animation upon QRCode, with its technological strength, manages to dynamically involve the curiosity to read



the book, however warning about the scientific attention that the text requires, when turning to the second page, everything returns to reassure the state of soul, encouraging the reading of the main title *ODI et AMO*, which stands out on the graphic space of the page, as if it was an acronym, a sort of logo with latent symmetry, fixed at the endpoints by the letter 'O' that opens and closes the main title.

The perception of the classic literary quote from Catullus is attractive in its Gestalt ensemble and suddenly appears in the *horror vacui* of the blank page, as a symbol; transforming itself from writing into a symbol. Its metamorphic 'appearance' has the evocative effectiveness of the *Delorean Motor Company (DMC)* logo-writing, where the acronym gains strength from the perfect symmetry of its three letters, wherein the initial letter D, the vertical auction has been deliberately eliminated to present it as palindrome to the final letter C, to the perception of our eyes. The elegant, synthetic, and above all, symmetrical brand that baptized one of the most iconic supercars of the 70s of the twentieth century, the *Delorean*, transformed into a 'time machine' for the movie *Back to the Future*, is an example of one of the most sustainable symmetries between brand and writing. In the main title of the volume *ODI et AMO*, we can find this concept, namely that of a writing-logo, almost an antiphon, and an opening introducing its subtitle *Dalle ambiguità percettive al pensiero quantistico*, meaning perceptual ambiguities and quantum thought.

The paratext is structured in eight chapters, with captivating and incisive

titles and subtitles, of which the first enters, as in a guttural commentary the stoic sports journalist Nicolò Carosio would define: "a straight leg". The *Ubiquità dell'Ambiguità*, meaning the ubiquity of ambiguity, that is, the title of the first chapter, becomes the oxymoron with which not only "thinking as with a quantum mind", but also seeing drawings and images surrounding the text... quantitatively. If being able to see is a prerequisite for being able to draw, it can be safely asserted that this essay on Physics has the right parameters to be also welcomed in the disciplinary field of Drawing. The scientific writings of the Professor of Physics are represented by the graphic skills of Luigi Cocchiarella, who, with the itinerant drawings appearing either in the pages of the text, or in the suggestive graphic plates collected at the end, was able to give a structured iconicity to the complex concepts of quantum physics science.

The aesthetic sensitivity of Tatiana Tchouvilleva manages to emerge among the interdisciplinary skills and becomes a cohesive contribution, between the purely scientific aspect described in words, and the equally scientific, but analogically more traceable one, shown by drawings and images. The whole and the union of the whole *corpus* reveal and encourage the reading, precisely because of the shrewd transversality of the concepts. Not surprisingly, and it is often rare, complicated principles are dissected by calling humor/irony into question, and here it will be good to remind what Achille Castiglioni himself wrote, in a sort of decalogue (*L'Espresso* No. 147, 5 April 1992), as a suggestion

for scientific creativity: "begin to train yourself on irony and self-criticism".

If Betty Edwards had accustomed us to "seeing with the right side of the brain", the text with the graphic appendix including the plates allows us to RE-see with both the cerebral hemispheres. *Edgar Rubin's Vase* and the multiple perceptual options for the *Necker's cube* in the simultaneous digital interpretations, find the apex of a perceptual synthesis in the extraordinary and even disturbing three-dimensional views of the ammonia molecule. In the text, the author shrewdly "caresses" the *Schrödinger's Cat* and argues, as well as describes the bas-relief of the parade of pink flamingos on the *mastaba of Saqqara*, elevating the zoomorphic metaphors to the status of simplified versions of complex quantum concepts. Furthermore, the concepts of symmetry and how it can find its compositional and perceptive rigor in chaos and vice versa, seem to find a sharing point in Ludovico Quaroni's compositional concept of "balanced asymmetry". Quantum thinking... symmetrically to perceptive ambiguities, allows our eye to work, and in its saccadic movements, as for the photographer Berengo Gardin, the eye becomes a profession.

Not disavowing that of a book I curiously see the images first, in this first survey, I add that I immediately read the last word as well. Therefore, if God does not play dice with the universe, I believe that it cannot be considered a coincidence that professor Caglioti concluded the essay with the word *cuore* (heart).

Sereno Innocenti

#### Author

Sereno Innocenti, Department of Civil, Environmental, Architectural Engineering and Mathematics, University of Brescia, sereno.innocenti@unibs.it