

Paola Bozzi*

Rhapsody in Blue. Vilém Flusser und der *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*

The depths of the sea, their obscure inhabitants and their mysteries have always been a rich source of myths and metaphors for authors and philosophers. Fables about giant squids and monstrous octopuses run through the history of literature and culture. The vampire squid is only a small phylogenetic relic, but it provides a useful model for Flusser's hybrid philosophical fiction *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis*. Flusser slips metaphorically into the creature's gelatinous skin in order to speculate on the paradigms of postmodern life, measuring the abyss from the inside and producing a very peculiar, experimental form of thinking and writing. In the present era of virtual reality and computer simulations, we experience fiction as the only reality. According to Vaihinger's definition, fiction is a useful construct that is precisely not real, but enables human beings to create and manipulate their environments. His philosophy of "as if" is perhaps the fullest expression of fictionalism and shows its ambivalent potential.

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* Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy, Paola.Bozzi@unimi.it