INTRODUCTION: RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL ASPECTS OF EMBODIMENT AND DISEMBODIMENT

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The articles in this focus section are based on papers originally presented at the panel "Embodiment and Disembodiment in Religion and Ethics" of the EUARE 2023 conference in St. Andrews (June 2023) and the panel "Disembodiment in Religion, Ethics, and Law" at the 23rd International Roundtable for the Semiotics of Law (IRSL) in Rome (May 2023). The authors approach the overarching theme of embodiment and disembodiment from different disciplinary perspectives: philosophy, religious studies, sociology and theology.

Paolo Costa's *Embodiment, Disembodiment, and Overembodiment* is a philosophical reflection, in dialogue with Maurice Merleau–Ponty, Michel Foucault and Augustine, on how the body influences the formation of personal identities. Taking human sexuality as a paradigm, Costa develops his take on the question of what is at stake when people attribute particular value to sexual intimacy.

Valeria Fabretti's contribution *Room for Otherness* explores how and to what extent urban spaces characterized by cultural, religious and non–religious diversity can function as training grounds for fostering mutual respect. She develops a sociological account of respect in terms of embodied and spatialized performances, thus shifting the focus from

respect as a cognitive attitude towards respect as enacted through practices of physical encounter between persons. Using religious diversity as a case in point, Fabretti outlines a series of questions for further research.

In her article *Disembodied Souls and Embodied Selves?* Lucia Galvagni starts out from the observation that recent debates in bioethics and healthcare are characterized by a renewed interest in questions of spirituality and the notion of the soul. She argues that concepts traditionally rooted in religious beliefs and practices are appropriated, transformed and reemployed in debates about novel (bio–)technologies, leading to spiritualized representations of the technologically enhanced human body.

In her article *Tengri Calling*, Sara Hejazi introduces central elements of Tengrism and discusses its revival in present–day Kazakhstan. Hejazi shows how Tengrism can function as a multi–level identity marker, in particular among young urban Kazakhs. She sets out similarities and differences between Tengrism and New Age spiritualities, highlighting how features of local heritage, ecological awareness and Islam are intertwined in the revival of Tengrism in Kazakhstan.

Debora Tonelli's article *With All My Whole Being'* addresses the question of whether the use of imagination in spiritual exercises may generate experiences that are comparable to immersive experiences mediated by digital technologies of virtual and augmented reality. She pins down similarities and differences between the two.

The focus section concludes with Shannon Craigo–Snell's "Acting Out and Acting In", which sheds light on how the digital mediation of practices of worship affects the bodily and sensory participation in liturgy. From a theological vantage point based on the idea of epistemic humility, she carefully weighs pros and cons of digitally mediated participation in liturgical practices and opposes the binary framing of the relevant issues in terms of simplistic "good or bad?" questions.