

# AZIMUTH

*Philosophical Coordinates in Modern and Contemporary Age*

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## **The Domain of the Human**

Anthropological Frontiers  
in Modern and Contemporary Thought

## **Il dominio dell'umano**

Frontiere antropologiche  
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SIMONE GUIDI - ANTONIO LUCCI



EDIZIONI DI STORIA E LETTERATURA

## ABSTRACTS

DELPHINE KOLESNIK-ANTOINE, *The Question of the Passions in Regius and Descartes. Initial Interpretative Elements*

Mainly dealing with physiological texts, this essay is dedicated to the question of the problem of the passions in Cartesian anthropology, and particularly the dispute between Descartes and Regius after the publication of the *Meditations*. With particular attention to the physiological details of the question, the article shows where two different interpretations of mechanistic anthropology part company as well as where they may converge.

NUNZIO ALLOCCA, *Man and the Animal Machine. Claude Perrault and the Image of Living Beings in Post-Cartesian Natural History*

In January 1667 Claude Perrault submitted to the Académie Royale des Sciences in Paris a *Projet pour les expériences et observations anatomiques*, a preamble to the *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire naturelle des animaux* (1671-1676) and to the *Essais de physique* (1680-1688), aiming at a radical methodological renewal of physiology and comparative anatomy, based on a clear distinction between 'facts' and 'hypotheses'. This paper considers the relationship in Perrault's theory of living between analytical procedures in the history of animals and hypothetical-deductive method in psychophysiology, for a new, original view of the mind-body problem. By affirming a causal role of the soul (conceived as spread throughout the body) in the functional regulation of all life processes, Perrault frees himself from both the Cartesian hypothesis of living automata and of the Pineal Gland as *siège de l'âme* within the brain. This move is not the symptom of a bizarre and incoherent mixture of animism and mechanism. Instead, it responds to one of the most debated issues in the science of life in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: the need to find a principle of integration and control of the organic processes, which cannot be revealed by simply breaking the body machine down into pieces.

PAOLO LOMBARDI, *Ferine Blood. The Boundaries of the Human in the First Experiments in Transfusion (17th Century)*

The essay takes a look at the debate that arose over experiments in blood transfusion in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (in particular Claude Perrault and Jean Baptiste Denis), highlighting the bizarre anthropological and naturalistic paradoxes arising from the possibility of mixing human and animal blood, creating new species and giving some human individuals some animal characteristics.

FRANCK TINLAND, *Animal Anthropomorphism and Human Animality*

The essay provides a careful reconstruction of the debate (17<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) about the difference between Man and the Great Apes recently discovered in Asia or Africa, indistinctly named Orang-outang (*homo sylvestris*). These beasts, the nearest to human in shape (*anthropomorpha* in the last publications by Linnaeus and perhaps a second species of *homo*, *homo sylvestris*), and the comparison of them with children found in the forest sometimes living among animals (*homo ferus*) call into question the true identity of Man by using criteria and concepts apart from evolutionary theory, but in a way still very interesting for modern anthropology.

RICCARDO MARTINELLI, *The Prudence of Character. Kant and the Two Faces of Pragmatic Anthropology*

The essay investigates the transition from a physiological to a pragmatic point of view on anthropology in the work of Immanuel Kant. The analysis focuses on the concepts of 'prudence' and 'character'. These concepts represent two crucial steps in Kant's anthropological thought in its breaking with tradition and opening the way for later developments.

VALLORI RASINI, *Helmuth Plessner Tackles Kant*

The essay analyses the value of Kant's legacy in the philosophical enterprise and in Helmuth Plessner's analyses of philosophical anthropology. For Plessner Kant represents a constant source of inspiration and a critical landmark for the mapping out of his own route. He seeks to capture its insights and limitations, in particular with a view to an integration of the findings of the sciences into philosophy and the overcoming of the gnoseological dualism.

MARIAPAOLA FIMIANI, *The Human Asleep*

The essay draws the consequences of the break represented by Kant's pragmatic anthropological speculation in 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy, taking particular interest in the analyses by French theorists. In particular a look is taken at the analyses by Michel Foucault (whose studies take Kant's *Anthropology* as their starting point) and Gilles Deleuze, and at the connections between anthropology, philosophy and politics which, through these authors' work starting from Kant's *Anthropology*, have influenced a wide area of contemporary philosophical debate.

MARIA TERESA PANSERA, *The Anthropological Roots of Ethics*

The essay concentrates on the ethical thought developed by the philosopher and philosophical anthropologist Arnold Gehlen. With particular reference to the text *Moral und Hypermoral*, an analysis is made of the anthropological, physiological, instinctual and biological roots that Gehlen puts at the basis of ethical behavior. These are placed in their context in the author's work and in its historical and philosophical setting.

MARCO MAZZEO, *Darwin's Error? Evolution and Natural History*

The essay looks at the current prospects of Darwinism from a philosophical viewpoint within a sideways look at the history of biology. The thoughts set out here take their cue from the text by Fodor and Piattelli Palmarini entitled *Darwin's Errors*. Through a critical analysis of it, thought is given to the insights and limitations of the current Darwinist model of biology and evolution.

FABIO POLIDORI, *The Myth of the Post-Human. From Sloterdijk to Nietzsche*

The essay discusses the concept of 'post-human', analysing its peculiarities and limitations and subjecting it to criticism, starting from the developments that Nietzsche's philosophy brought to 20<sup>th</sup> century thought. In particular it analyses Nietzsche's legacy in the work of Peter Sloterdijk and in the key concepts of 'exercise' and 'anthropotechnics', from a critical perspective.

GIOVANNI LEGHISSA, *The Foundation, the Foundation of the Human, the Post-human. For a Re-reading of the Transcendental Theme from an Anthropological Viewpoint*

The essay discusses the theme of the transcendental in the light of biological, ethological, philosophical and anthropological thought in the 20<sup>th</sup> century from the work of Konrad Lorenz to contemporary neurosciences. The theme of the transcendental is contextualised and placed in its relationship to the sciences, with the aim of opening the way for a concept of the 'post-human' that reflects developments in 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy and science