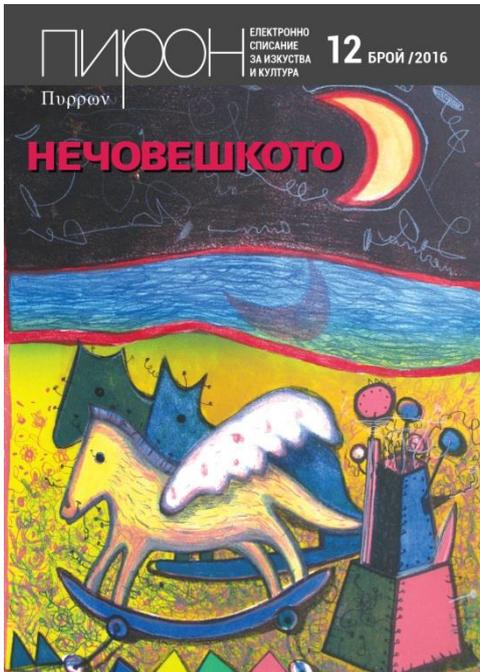


PIRON / VOLUME 12: THE INHUMAN



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ABSTRACTS

BOGDANA PASKALEVA

The Inhuman in Human

The editorial to issue No. 12 of PIRON magazine is an introduction to the various perspectives in which the problem of the inhuman has been considered by the different authors that contributed their research to the present issue. The inhuman proves to be a mode of re-posing the fundamental anthropological question on what is human, a mode characteristic of modernity with its unsolvable inner tensions. Charting the limits of the inhuman, and thus of the human, the present issue of PIRON magazine situates it in different contexts – historical, ethical, political, methodological, epistemological, ontological, the context of literature and art practices, etc. The natural as pre-human and the technological as post-human seem to be the two extremes in this field of thought, but between them a lot of intricate entanglements and intersection points are singled out, demonstrating the complex relations of the human to its other.

BOYAN MANCHEV

Miscreants. Manifesto for Inhuman Theatre

Miscreants. Manifesto for Inhuman Theatre is based on the essay "The New Pandora", *Literary Journal*, 13, 2012 and the lecture *Die neue Pandora, oder begehren und Disorganisation*, Volksbühne, Berlin, January 2013, both developing the theoretical corpus of Ani

Vaseva and *Metheor's* plays *Frankenstein, or The New Pandora* (2012), and *Phaeton: Miscreants* (2013).

The experimental modus of this theoretical and parateoretical corpus functions in the *ad hoc* produced language of the spectacles. It is characteristic of both the self-reflexive method of *Metheor's* work and Boyan Manchev's efforts in the field of "philosophical figurology" or "fantasy".

METHEOR is group of artistic accomplices with inconstant composition, working with stage, visual and textual artistic and critical forms. Besides Ani Vaseva (author, director, theoretician, costume and stage designer), Boyan Manchev (author, dramaturge, theoretician), Leonid Yovchev (actor and co-author) and Georgi Sharov (graphic designer, stage designer, photographer and musician), among the active participants in the work process of *Metheor* in different periods are the actors Petar Genkov and Galya Kostadinova, the artist, costume and stage designer Aglika Terzieva, the costume designer Maitia Cibulka Galvez, the musicians Nino Tiberio Gomez (DataTransporter) and Yana Mancheva, etc.

NAOMI SEGAL

Proxies and Prostheses: Stray dogs from Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1845) to Jane Campion's *The Piano* (1992)

Abstract: This essay compares six dogs who appear in the margins of four texts and two films, examining how they serve in the narratives as proxies or prostheses for plot and character. The first pair are from the two versions of Flaubert's *L'Éducation sentimentale* (1845 and 1869) and feature at key turning-points in the protagonist's life. The next pair are kindly female dogs tricked by their male masters, J. M. Barrie's Mr Darling and André Gide. The last two dogs serve as prostheses rather than proxies; each belonging to the daughter of a couple riven by adultery and supplementing the daughter's activity as mediator and disrupter of desire. How is silence the precondition for the dog's meaning in these texts?

Keywords: Dogs, proxies, prostheses, fictions of adultery, *Fatal Attraction*, *The Piano*, Flaubert, Barrie, Gide

Professor Naomi Segal is Professorial Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London. In 2004 she was founding Director of the Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies. She has served on or chaired numerous UK and European committees, including within ESF and HERA, and chairs the international initiative *Cultural Literacy in Europe* (<http://cleurope.eu/>). She is the author of 86 articles and 16 books, including monographs *Consensuality: Didier Anzieu, gender and the sense of touch* (2009), *André Gide: Pederasty & Pedagogy* (1998), *The Adulteress's Child* (1992), *Narcissus and Echo* (1988), *The Unintended Reader* (1986, repr. 2010) and *The Banal Object* (1981). She has recently translated Didier Anzieu's *Le Moi-peau* into English and has a monograph on *Replacement* at the planning stage. She is a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des palmes académiques, an Academic Associate of the British Psychoanalytical Society and a Member of the Academia Europaea.

GIORGIO AGAMBEN

The Open. Man and Animal (excerpt)

Giorgio Agamben is an Italian philosopher and theoretician. As one of the most influential figures in contemporary political philosophy, Agamben is best known for his notions of “homo sacer”, “bare life” and “state of exception”. His early works are related to literature as well as to the late medieval and renaissance culture. In the 90s he edits Walter Benjamin’s works in Italian. Many of Agamben’s writings, especially those written after 2000, are devoted to the political-philosophical, historical-philosophical and ethical implications of the Abrahamic religions.

The Open is first published in Torino in 2002. In this book Agamben continues his research of the anthropological problems which he began in the 1990s. The main interest in this research is the complex relation between human and animal, which he interprets through different texts – from St. Thomas Aquinas through the great biologists and ecologists of the 20th century to Martin Heidegger. The excerpt published in this issue of PIRON magazine clarifies precisely the notion which inspired the title of the book – “the open”.

The translation of the text is based on Giorgio Agamben, *L’aperto. L’uomo e l’animale*, Torino: Boringhieri, 2002, 44–63.

Translation from Italian: **Bogdana Paskaleva**

GALINA GEORGIEVA

A Possibility for ‘Dzhan’. Transformations of the (In)human in Platonov and Houellebecq

Abstract: The text analyses two fiction novels whose genre is situated between utopia and anti-utopia – Andrey Platonov’s “Dzhan”, written in the beginning of the XX century, and Michel Houellebecq’s “The Possibility of an Island”, written in the beginning of the XXI century. The article explores the possibility of happiness in the conditions of a slavery (the slavery of the mean and primitive residents in “Dzhan”) and in the conditions of a hypermodernity of the beings which have overcome the restrictions and limitations of the human (the human cloning in “The Possibility of an Island”). What happens with the perfect utopic machine and the longing for happiness today, in the context of a fulfilled inhumanity? And how the lack of desire, imagination, and thirst for future horizons (as a main existential of the human) undermines the inhuman itself?

Keywords: Andrei Platonov, Michel Houellebecq, “Dzhan”, “The Possibility of an Island”, utopia, anti-utopia, eternal life, soul.

Galina Georgieva has a PhD-degree in Russian literature. She is a Chief Assistant in Theory of literature at the Institute for Literature, BAS. Author of the book “Avant-garde and socialist realism. The problem of lyrical poetry in Russia, 1917-1934”, and of numerous articles and projects on the topics of socialist realism, avant-garde, theory of cinema etc.

BOZHANA FILIPOVA

Homo ex lingua: The Inhuman Imagination of James Joyce

Abstract: The following text examines different levels of writing of the inhuman in Joyce's works: from the thematic to the experimental and technical. The task is to outline the inhuman as a new form of transhumanism (a term of Miglena Nikolchina's) and to give a possible answer, through a literary illustration, to the Heideggerian question: how to give new meaning to the notion of humanism? With examples from various works of James Joyce, from "Dubliners" to his larger mock-epic experiments, the focus is set on the dissolution of the human and the subject in his environment through the supersensual. I outline a new direction towards the quantum presence of the subject in his inhuman field, as well as the possibilities of his second, projective integration, which remains entirely potential, into a new subjective synthesis.

Keywords: paralysis, objects, supersensual, magical materialism, technical imagination, potential subject

Bozhana Filipova is a PhD in West European literature. Her research interests are focused in the fields of literature and philosophy of the German Romantics, European Modernism, philosophy of art, hermeneutics and deconstruction.

ALEXANDER KIOSSEV

Interning UnGregor

As Gregor Samsa woke one morning from uneasy dreams, he found himself transformed – into what, actually? What exactly is he transformed into? [...]

KRASSIMIR TERZIEV

A Message from Space in my Backyard

Krassimir Terziev (Dobritch, 1969) completed his doctoral thesis in Cultural Anthropology at Sofia University in 2012, and graduated painting at the National Art Academy in Sofia in 1997. His work was shown in international exhibitions and film festivals worldwide. In 2015, East-West, Sofia, published a monograph encompassing his work from 2002 to 2015 under the title "Between the Past that is About to Happen and the Future that has Already Been".

The photo-essay "**A Message from Space in my Backyard**", published here originates from the two channel video installation under the same title, dated from 2008/09, presented at the exhibitions: 2011 – "The Big Bang", Credo Bonum Gallery, Sofia; curator: Svetlana Kuyumdzhieva; 2010 – "Territories of the (in)Human", Wuerttembergischer Kunstverein – Stuttgart; curators: Iris Dressler, Hans D. Christ; "Grenzenloss", Artpoint Gallery, Vienna; curator: Hedwig Saxenhuber;

“Breaking Walls – Building Networks”, Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki; curators: Iara Boubnova, Lydia Chatziakovou, Christos Savvidis, Thalea Stefanidou.

DONNA HARAWAY

A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century

(excerpt)

Donna Haraway is a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research interests concern the relations between science, technology and feminism. She is an author of a large number of works, the most important of which are *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century* and *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*.

A Cyborg Manifesto is first published in 1985 and it is a fundamental text in the field of biotechnologies and gender studies. It introduces the metaphor of cyborg as a hybrid organism – a human *and* a machine. By doing so, Haraway shows that instead of being “resolved”, the contradictions in the feminist theory could lead to new and unexpected connections. Although the manifesto is published in the 1980s, it hasn’t been translated in Bulgarian until now. Because of the length of the *Manifesto*, the excerpt presented here includes only its first two parts which introduce to the reader the main issues and ideas of the text.

The translation of the text is based on *The Cybercultures Reader*, ed. David Bell and Barbara M. Kennedy, London and New York: Routledge, 2000, 291-324.

Translation from English: **Petya Abrasheva**

VASSIL VIDINSKY

Homo Sapiens Technicus and Experiments with Nature (version 1.5)

Abstract: Through the prism of today’s dominant naturalism, demonstrating its internal inconsistency the paper questions whether the machine can think. Instead, a *consistent naturalistic position* should turn towards mediated networks between matter, context, and organic thinking and not only towards the universal and abstract computational algorithms, as it often happens. This is a well known and discussed position. But in connection with it I propose “imaginary machines” that can better *mimic* human beings and can put more sharply the problem of the relationship between us and the machines, and more generally between *sapiens* and *τέχνη*. These intelligent machines are known for their humanitarian non-algorithmic nature and can be found both in artistic works and in scientific articles. It is suggested that understanding the relationship between artificial and natural intelligence should be considered analogous to the idea that *culture is an over-system of nature*. The

paper ends with the asymmetry between thinking machine (*Machina sapiens*) and mechanized man (*Homo artificialis*) but in a more general framework. The framework is the *mastering and reforming of nature*, which is a slow, millennial process that – despite our fears, faith in the sacred or modern catastrophic predictions – is carried out with particular force since the seventeenth century. This trend is the most iconic manifestation of *Homo sapiens technicus*. That means that we finally go beyond the particular case of machines and turn towards the problem of *historical altering of the natural*.

Key words: *Homo sapiens technicus*, over-system, nature, culture, machines, thinking, artificial intelligence.

Vassil Vidinsky is working in “History of philosophy” department (SU “St. Kliment Ohridski”). He is author of *Newton’s Bucket vs. Descartes’ Tree. An Introduction* (2011) and editor of *Philosophia Naturalis. Time, Space, Body, and Motion in Early Modern Times* (2014). Research interests: history of philosophy and science XVII-XX century; contemporary philosophy and culture.

KAMELIA SPASSOVA

Mimetic Machines in the Uncanny Valley

Abstract: *Uncanny valley* (気味 の 谷) is a notion introduced by the Japanese robotics professor Masahiro Mori in 1970. The basic claim of his hypothesis states that the anthropomorphic machines cause uncanny effect due to their imperfect resemblance to the human. Humanoids seem almost like people, but exactly the distance of this *almost* provokes hot debates. There are two trends in robotics, animation, architecture, and computer games. The first trend seeks to overcome the uncanny valley, constructing such an incredible machine that perfectly mimics human actions. The second trend – Masahiro Mori takes this side – consciously constructs non-anthropomorphic machines. The machine’s appearance, structure, shape, proportion of the parts, and motion must be visibly different from the human ones. The term *uncanny valley* appears in a European context soon after its introduction, due to Jasia Reichardt’s translation in 1978. She is an art critic and curator who is interested in the role of cybernetics in art. The joint between the uncanny valley in robotics and the legacy of Freud and Jentsch is established with this translation at the intersection point between aesthetics and science. This link opens new fields to theoretical and aesthetic imagination.

Keywords: *imitation (mimesis), uncanny, uncanny valley, Bukimi no Tani, doubles, mimetic machines, likeness, unconcept, negative anagnorisis, heterogenesis*

Kamelia Spassova has a PhD in Literary theory. She is Chief Assistant Professor in Ancient and West European Literature at Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski” and, since 2009, also editor at “Literary Newsletter”. She is author of the book “Event and example in Plato and Aristotle” which is treating the problem of the tension between the literary example and the exemplary work of art in the discourses of philosophy and theory. Currently, she is working on the notion of mimesis and mimetic theories in the 20th century.

LACHEZAR ANTONOV

The Post-Human Condition in a Liberal-Eugenics Perspective

Abstract: Over the past two decades the issue of the applicability of biotechnology in the processes of the enhancement of human nature and artificial optimization of its main structural components has become an indispensable part of the much larger and important question of what it means to be human in the XXI century. In this text I will try to outline the main contours of a liberal-eugenic answer to this question, reconstructing the meaningful and argumentative horizon in which this question is entangled as well as the critical interpretations to which it is subjected (especially in the realm of discourse ethics).

Key words: liberal eugenics, genetic enhancement, Jürgen Habermas, Nicholas Agar

Lachezar Antonov, Ph.D. is Chief Assistant Professor in Theory and history of culture at the Department of Cultural Studies at the South-West University – Blagoevgrad. His interests are in the field of modern (and postmodern) social and critical theory, the recognition and identity politics, and discourse ethics.

NATALIA HRISTOVA

Drones, Automats, Algorithms Or The Non-human That Therefore I Am

Abstract: The text discusses some of the recent transformations in the vision about the human, which come into existence as a result of the digital era and the ever-expanding ubiquitous utilization of particular digital dispositives. For instance, governing through algorithms, which has been imposed after Big Data and Data Mining analysis aims exactly at suspending definite sources of insecurities as subjectivity, singularity, and imagination for the sake of security, control, and predictability while the growth of generalizing automatization threatens to turn the working individual into a quickly disposable labour market product. In this subordinated to the neoliberal ideology vision of humanity, the educational institution of the school co-participates actively. Under the pretence of rapid accumulation of information and the changing requirements of the labour market it turns out that young people should be provided most of all with definite measurable competences which can be assessed and which will make them capable of adaptable flexibility and repeatable self-recycling. The new murder technologies, e.g. drone attacks, whose control resembles a video game and which according to Gregoire Chamyou put an end to the traditional war by replacing it with „menhunt” are probably some of the most disturbing anthropological consequences of the digital era.

Keywords: Drones, *Algorithmic Governmentality*, Big Data, Education, ICT, Neoliberalism.

Natalia Hristova works as an Assistant Professor in Methodology of Teaching Literature, Faculty of Slavic Studies, Sofia University St.Kliment Ohridski. In her PhD thesis *Literary Education in the Post-modern Situation (a possible design of teaching and learning literary writing)*,

2006, she substantiate the opportunity and necessity to include literary writing in the Bulgarian literary education, by researching the cultural, political and ideological stakes of this scriptural practice. Presently she's research efforts are directed precisely to the pharmacological use of information and communication technologies in the process of literary writing, and to the effects of the spreading market logic on the school institution and literary education.

REZA NEGARESTANI

The Labour of the Inhuman

Reza Negarestani is an Iranian philosopher and writer. His works are related to the philosophical dispositions of speculative rationalism and rationalist universalism. Negarestani is an author of a great number of philosophical articles and inquiries, as well as of the book *Cyclonopedia: Complicity with Anonymous Materials* which belongs to the avant-garde genre of "theory-fiction".

The article *The Labour of the Inhuman* is first published in *e-flux journal*, 52 (2/2014) and 53 (3/2014). The translation presented here is made with the kind permission of the publishers and the author.

Translation form English: **Philip Stoilov**

STILIAN YOTOV

We and They – human and animals

Abstract: The text it an attempt to review the forms and the meaning of the judicial prosecution of animals in Middle Ages, but in the Early Modernity also. It is not fully based but inspired by methodology studying the mentalities of former social actors through their written testimonies; and by this manner – aiming to protect itself from ideological assessment of the past in accordance with contemporary standards of rationality. Firstly, the results are a more detailed picture of those practices, and then, an explanation, in which the trail-searching of guilt doesn't play any role. On this background it raises the question whether its recent abolishment has made a real achievement in the adequacy of our behavior today against the animals which we share our neighborhood with.

Keywords: the "animal" difference: varmints, wild and domesticated animals, beasts; punishment and refurbishing of misfortune through a criminal process; guilt and deviant behavior

Stilian Yotov is professor Modern Philosophy and Philosophy of law at Saint Kliment Ohridski University, Sofia. Among his books are: *Justice and Respect* (2000), *Ethics and Multiculturalism* (2003), *Equality and Egalitarianism* (2004), *Habermas and the Claims of Autonomy* (2006), *Human Dignity and Rights* (2016). He has also translated into Bulgarian works of S. Kracauer, Th. W. Adorno, J. Habermas. Email: yotov@hotmail.com

GERGANA MIRCHEVA

(Ab)normal and (In)human: on Some Usages of the Psychiatric Concept ‘Moral Insanity’ in Bulgaria until the Second World War

Abstract: The article traces certain meanings of the concept of moral insanity that were used, discussed and criticized in Bulgarian culture-historical context from the end of the 19th century to the Second World War. First, key elements of the term moral insanity and its variations within the Western psychiatric discourse are outlined. Next, the analysis sheds light on local constructions of the morally insane as an object of forensic-psychiatric conclusions and medico-psychological critiques of social life in Bulgaria. Through a fusion of biological and social norms, projects for “social defense” and moral hygiene were targeted at the (dis)qualification of individual and collective subjects: the criminal monster, the degenerate social and political elite and the morally underdeveloped people/nation. These figures are interpreted within the framework of a moral “bioconstitution” of the human, that was elaborated in psychiatric terms and linked the extreme and the mild forms of moral deviation in the concept of the abnormal. It is argued that the abnormal called the border between human and inhuman into question. The article examines also the biopolitical potential of the strategies for and the practices of “normalization” (M. Foucault) of moral danger.

Key words: moral insanity, (in)human, social history of (forensic) psychiatry, Bulgaria, mental hygiene, biopolitics, progress and degeneration, cultural identities

Gergana Mircheva has a PhD in Cultural Studies from the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. Lecturer in Medical Anthropology at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski (MA Program in Integrative Bioethics), and Plovdiv University Paisiy Hilendarski (Social Anthropology Program). Her research interests are in the field of social sciences of medicine and eugenics, biopolitics and bioethics, modern Bulgarian cultural history, and urban studies

SILVIA PETROVA

Synthetic, Organic and Transcendent: Facebook’s Eco/Bio Myth

Abstract: The text focuses on specific manifestations of the new myth for eco/bio identity in the context of the social network Facebook, investigated as a technique for detaching from humanity which is associated with the defects of the body – disease, suffering, death. “Healthy” lifestyle (seen as vegetarianism, veganism, raw food) is presented as an attempt to escape from the human body by constructing a more perfect version of itself. Eco/bio myth opposes standardization, synthetics and the power of technology, but paradoxically uses the same strategies and reaches consumers mainly via technological channels of media and social networks. “Healthy” life mixes with New Age into a unified lifestyle based on a new concept of luxury, blurring the boundaries between asceticism and pleasure, natural and artificial, human and inhuman.

Key words: popular culture, mass culture, social media, identity, lifestyle

Silvia Petrova is senior assistant professor in the Department of History and Theory of Culture at Southwestern University “Neophyte Rilski”. Her research interests are in the field of mass culture, media, gender studies.

DIMITAR VATSOV

The Humanizing of Nature after “the Death of Man”. Readings after Nietzsche

Abstract: This text deals with Nietzsche’s late notes (*The Will to Power*) trying to show that the famous Nietzsche’s critique of the subject has a double systematic effect:

On the one hand, this critique leads to dehumanization of the Human: Nietzsche erases the very possibility for an essentialist anthropology laying human agency bare of any primordial image or form. This path of argumentation after the workings of Foucault, Butler and others today is often tagged by the cliché “The Death of the Man”. Here the famous “paradox of the subject” is shortly and critically revisited: laying human agency bare of any primordial image or form does not mean laying this agency bare of any force and power (metaphorically speaking it is not bare of “life”). Hence dehumanization works not on the level of the agency but only on the secondary level of the forms of Human agency.

On the other hand however, Nietzsche’s critique of the subject, on the level of agency, has quite opposite effects: generally speaking *Nietzsche humanizes the Nature*. He makes the radical assumption that every energy (force), even on atomic or sub-atomic level, has the power to interpret: “The will to power interprets”. A general feature of every on-going interpretation inescapably lays down its own “center”, its “subject point”. Even the atom is not a pre-given “bearer” of agency but it is a momentary effect of self-centering. The on-going interaction of forces articulates its immanent tensions centering their “sides” and “poles” as subject points. After Nietzsche an initial sketch of a dynamic ontology – of a “monadology without monads” – is outlined: “Perspectivism is only a complex form of specificity”.

Key words: Nietzsche, force/power, perspectivism, Death of Man, humanization of nature

Dimitar Vatsov, PhD in Philosophy (Sofia University), is Associate Professor of Philosophy at New Bulgarian University, Sofia. He is Editor-in-Chief of *Critique & Humanism*. He is the author of the following books (in Bulgarian): *This is True!* (Sofia: NBU, 2016, forthcoming); *Essays on Power and Truth* (Sofia: NBU, 2009); *Freedom and Recognition: The Interactive Sources of Identity* (Sofia: NBU, 2006); *Ontology of Affirmation: Nietzsche as a Task* (Sofia: East-West Publishers, 2003). He has also published numerous papers in English, Italian, Russian, French, Polish and Spanish. His research interests are in the fields of political philosophy, especially critical theory, and post-analytic philosophy of language.

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FRÉDÉRIC NEYRAT

Homo Labyrinthus. Humanisme, antihumanisme, posthumanisme (excerpt)

Frédéric Neyrat is a French philosopher, a former program director at *Collège international de philosophie* in Paris, a lecturer in comparative literature in the University of Wisconsin–Madison (USA) and an editor in several academic journals. His academic interests are related to political ecology, yet Neyrat also tries to establish a “new existentialism” in the field of contemporary philosophy. He is an author of many monographs and articles, including his research on Martin Heidegger, Antonin Artaud, and Jean-Luc Nancy.

The monograph *Homo Labyrinthus* is published in 2015. In this book Neyrat examines different theoretical versions of post- and transhumanist theories which he interprets as avatars of traditional humanism. At the same time, however, the author proposes a radical critique of this traditional humanism (which is perceived as capitalist) and calls this critique “antihumanism” – a project concerning the thinking of the singular in the plural manifestations of human, natural and technical.

The excerpt published in this issue of PIRON magazine is the conceptual introduction to the monograph. The translation is made with the kind permission of the author and the publisher and it is based on Frédéric Neyrat, *Homo Labyrinthus. Humanisme, antihumanisme, posthumanisme*, Paris: Dehors, 2015.

Translation from French: **Dimitar Bojkov**