

Potere, senso e sistema Terra

STEFANO VELOTTI

Power, Sense, and Earth System

Abstract: This essay offers a critical discussion of Matteo Pietropaoli's *Filosofia e politica dell'Antropocene*, focusing on his proposal of a "planetary existentialism" as a way to rethink human responsibility in the Anthropocene. Starting from the theme of situatedness in twentieth-century philosophy, the text frames philosophical reflection within the present climate, geopolitical, and social emergencies, where both climate action "successes" and structural failures are obscured by everyday barbarization and media saturation. The essay reconstructs how psychological, political, and communicative obstacles undermine the social uptake of climate science and help fuel climate denial. It then shows how standard tactical responses remain insufficient if they are not inscribed within an overarching transformation of forms of life and shared horizons of meaning. Against this background, the author reconstructs Pietropaoli's convergence with Clive Hamilton around a "new anthropocentrism" that acknowledges both the unprecedented power of humans and the reactive, uncontrollable power of the Earth system. Pietropaoli's central claim is that universal meaning in the Anthropocene cannot derive from any pre-given human essence, but only from what humanity can become by assuming responsibility for the conditions of existence of complex life, that is, the Earth system, hence the proposal of a planetary existentialism. The discussion ends by problematizing the political and affective feasibility of "instilling love" for the Earth.

Keywords: Anthropocene, Planetary existentialism, New anthropocentrism, Earth system, Freedom, Responsibility, Clive Hamilton.

notizie di POLITEIA, XLII, 162, 2026. ISSN 1128-2401 pp. 127-132