

# abstracta

*Linguagem, Mente & Ação*

## Editorial

This is the first *special issue* of ABSTRACTA. It should be the first of many. Our *special issues* will be primarily dedicated to symposia in which a number of distinguished invited authors discuss some of the most relevant books published in Philosophy in recent years. Occasionally, when the relevance of the work justifies it, we might publish symposia on older titles. This is, in fact, the case with our present *special issue*. We are honoured to open our series of *special issues* by publishing the proceedings of a symposium that celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of publication of Eric Olson's book *The Human Animal* (Oxford University Press, 1997).

Since its publication, the book has been the object of a heated debate, with its controversial solution (revisiting Aristotle) to the problem of personal identity. The problem can be put in the form of the following question: Given the existence of a person at one time, and the existence of something at another time, what are the necessary and sufficient conditions for that something to be identical to that person? In very broad terms, Olson's solution is to say that these two things are identical if and only if there is the right sort of biological continuity between them.

Ten years after its publication, the debate over *The Human Animal* has persisted to the point that an Author-Meets-Critics session of the Pacific Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association was dedicated to a discussion of the book. The session took place on the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, in San Francisco, California. Commenting on the *Human Animal* were three of the most distinguished contemporary philosophers working on personal identity: Lynne Rudder Baker (University of Massachusetts Amherst), Ned

Markosian (Western Washington University) and Dean Zimmerman (Rutgers University). Eric Olson wrote a précis of the book, and replied to all their comments.

The papers presented at this meeting had not been published up to this moment. We are proud to publish them, and thank Eric Olson, Lynne Rudder Baker, Ned Markosian and Dean Zimmerman for allowing us to do so.

THE EDITORS.

22<sup>nd</sup> February, 2008.