

Alain Prochiantz,
Instinct and intelligence

The essay has the primary aim of redefining the conceptual couple *intelligence/instinct* in the perspective of the recent acquisitions of evo-devo biology. Thanks to discoveries concerning the role played in development and evolution process by Hox genes and other families of regulation genes, in the essay it is shown the way in which in the brain-«building» process of vertebrates such genes allow a wider opening to epigenetic elements of «indeterminateness» that ends by modifying the adaptive strategy of the individual, assigning greater and greater importance to the experience accumulated during a deferred process of «individualization». After defining thought as the adaptive relation binding individual to environment, Prochiantz defines instinct and intelligence as two forms of thought, equally «legitimate» and frequently intertwined: the former grounded on a sort of experiential memory accumulated by the species, the latter grounded on a biographical and historical memory, consolidating in the case of human being by means of the language and other symbolic structures of communication.