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Humanities? -- 1 Questions of Humanism and the Humanities -- 2 The End in Rabelais's Cinq livres / Five Books -- 3 Bembo's Walking Knowledge and the Limited Outlook -- 4 The Turnings of Self-Study as Humanism's Physics and Metaphysics -- Bibliography -- Index.

Sommario/riassunto

In *Before Enlightenment: Play and Illusion in Renaissance Humanism*, Timothy Kircher argues for new ways of appreciating Renaissance humanist philosophy. Literary qualities - tone, voice, persona, style, imagery - composed a core of their philosophizing, so that play and illusion, as well as rational certainty, formed pre-Enlightenment ideas about knowledge, ethics, and metaphysics. Before Enlightenment takes issue with the long-standing view of humanism's philosophical mediocrity. It shows new features of Renaissance culture that help explain the origins not only of Enlightenment rationalists, but also of early modern novelists and essayists. If humanist writings promoted objective knowledge based on reason's supremacy over emotion, they also showed awareness of one's place and play in the world. The animal rationale is also the homo ludens.
