Declinazioni del nulla.
Non essere e negazione tra ontologia e politica

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INDICE DEGLI ABSTRACT

ABSTRACT – In this contribution, I illustrate the reasons for which Fredegisus of Tours' *Epistula de nihilo et tenebris* not only plays a prominent role in the history of philosophy, but also represents an invaluable tool to address contemporary philosophical inquiries into the status and the nature of 'nothing'. Firstly, I analyse the logical and theoretical main arguments and characteristics of the *Epistula*; secondly, I illustrate the problem of the conceivability of nothingness in the light of contemporary discussions. In conclusion, I argue that a re–appraisal of the link between the 'nihilistic' roots of European philosophy and the vocation to open critical discussion is able to provide elements for re–thinking the European model of cultural and political integration.

KEYWORDS – Fredegisus of Tours; *nihil*; Conceivability of Nothingness; Europe.

ABSTRACT – The essay explores and outlines the forms and meanings of nothingness in Martin Heidegger's thought. The first form of nothingness is represented by the «existential nothingness», that characterizes *Being and Time* (1927). The second form of nothingness is the «differential nothing», developed in the *Beiträge zur Philosophie*. These two conceptions represent the essential moments of the evolution of the concept of nothingness in Heidegger, a concept that escapes the traditional identification with the dimensions of deprivation and lack. While the existential nothingness shows a subjectivist and anthropocentric profile, the differential nothingness expresses an ontology of absence, still actual and worth of being resumed by contemporary thought. In the end, the essay argues that Heidegger's solution, starting from the *Beiträge*, to the ontology crisis is original and rich of positive developments for the future, because while it does not appeal to the absolutisation of subjectivity, it also proposes to rethink the *Grund* as retreat of being.

KEYWORDS – Heidegger; Nothing; Western Ontology; Negative; Metaphysics.

ABSTRACT – Adorno's critique of Hegel goes beyond the terms of a facile opposition between a positive and reconciled formula of dialectics and a negative version that insists on unresolved conflict. It should not be simplistically placed under the sign of reiteration of the negative. On the contrary, one could say that what is damaged by Adorno's philosophical proposal is precisely the negative in a radical sense affecting the fate of dialectics tout court. This is because the deeper meaning of Adorno's reference to the non–identical appears, precisely, as an instance of suppression of dialectical thinking as such. That is to say, the non–identical can reveal its face only to a gaze that, paradoxically, does not consider it mainly from the point of view of negation.

KEYWORDS – Dialectics; Non–identical; Expression; Difference; Conciliation.

ABSTRACT – Thomas Aquinas was a major representative of a new ontological idea of nature, which was shaped in accordance with Christian theological notions in the context of medieval Aristotelianism. The crucial assumption of this idea was the concept of creation, which determined a radical rethinking of the autonomy that featured order and finality of the Aristotelian *physis*. Conceived of as a creature, that is, made from nothing in order to be an instrument of the Providence, nature was rooted in and contained by the divine power, upon which not only its existence, but also the realization of its potentialities, ultimately depended. The "nothingness" of the creature (namely, the fact that it was no more than nothing per se) implied a constitutive ontological and moral precariousness: nature could find stability and foundation only in the Godhead, from which it derived its origin and subsistence. Any claim of autonomy not only was improper and weak–willed, but represented a nihilistic act of annihilation of the self, preferring its nothingness and the nothingness of the sin rather than God. Like in Augustine, the nothingness of the creature represented the metaphysical ground of the analogy between creation and redemption, as it brought nature back to the full and unconditioned availability of its Creator.

KEYWORDS – Thomas Aquinas; Medieval Aristotelianism; Nothingness, Nature, Grace.

ABSTRACT – The «table of nothing» occupies a prominent role within the *Critique of Pure Reason*, since it is there that Kant brings into play the very meaning of transcendental philosophy. However, even though the Kantian conception of nothing marks the peculiarity of critical philosophy, the

vocabulary that expresses it inexorably invokes the tradition in which Kant works. The text, in fact, unveils its deep bond to Baumgarten's *Metaphysica*, to Wolff, as well as to Medieval Scholastics. Such a bond marks Kantian philosophy in a twofold way: it pushes it beyond and at the same time it keeps it anchored to the philosophical tradition of its time. The analysis of the «table of nothing», therefore, will offer us the opportunity to both see to what extent the multiple senses of 'nothing' are the privileged place in which Kant grounds the specificity of critical philosophy, and examine the deep bond between Kant and the philosophical tradition.

KEYWORDS – Kant; Baumgarten; Nichts; *nihil privativum*; *nihil negativum*

p. 99, Fabio Ciracì, *Metafisiche del nulla: Schopenhauer, i suoi discepoli e l'inconsistenza del mondo*

ABSTRACT – Schopenhauer's metaphysics leads to a double nullity of the world: as a phenomenon, d.i. fleeting appearances, and as noumenon, because the Wille has to be redeemed by *Nichtsein*. Schopenhauer's disciples (Hartmann, Bahnsen and Mäinlander) will give the *Nichtsein* an absolute ontological value, as a principle of redemption or metaphysical essence of reality.

KEYWORDS: *Nichtsein*; *Nichts*; Hartmann; Mainländer; Bahnsen.

p. 115, Pietro Gori, *Volontà del nulla e volontà di verità. Una riflessione sul realismo di Nietzsche*

ABSTRACT – The paper explores the few occurrences of the expression «will to nothingness» (*Wille zum Nichts*) in Nietzsche's writings, and its relationship with the notions of 'will to truth' and 'ascetic ideal'. Aim of this research is to show that these notions are mutually related, and that they outline the objectives of Nietzsche's late thought. The investigation will focus in particular on the concept of "realism" that appears in Nietzsche's late writings, and that can be interpreted as an existential attitude towards life that contrasts pessimistic nihilism.

KEYWORDS – Nietzsche; Nihilism; Morality; Revaluation of Values; Realism.

p. 127, Roberto Garaventa, *Equivocità del nulla in Karl Jaspers*

ABSTRACT – This paper analyses the various meanings the word 'nothing' assumes in the work of Karl Jaspers: the nothing of nihilism, that is the absence of a horizon of meaning able to give substance to life and activity of man; the nothing of death, which arouses horror and resistance in

the concrete individual; the objective nothing, which is unthinkable by man like the simple being; and the nothing of the authentic, transcendent being, which unfolds itself to man in borderline situations and offers him the freedom to exist in an authentic way and the opportunity to give his life a precise identity, direction, orientation.

KEYWORDS – Jaspers; Nothing; Nihilism; Death; Transcendence.

p. 141 Marco Simionato, *How to Account for Nothing(ness)*

ABSTRACT – Graham Priest, Alex Oliver with Timothy Smiley, and Alberto Voltolini have proposed respectively three different accounts of the phrase 'nothing', by arguing that there are sentences where it cannot be reduced to a negative quantifier phrase. In this paper I show that a more preferable account of nothing(ness) is given by the notion of an absolutely empty possible world (i.e. a world that represents no objects at all), rather than Priest or Oliver–Smiley's accounts, since the use of the empty world allows us to avoid some disadvantages that occur in Priest and Oliver–Smiley's accounts. In particular, in order to consider nothing(ness) without reducing it to a quantifier phrase, Priest's commitment to a contradictory object will appear unnecessary. The paper also show how the empty world's account is able to satisfy two desiderata that characterize Voltolini's conception of nothing(ness).

KEYWORDS – Nothing; Empty Possible World; Empty Term; A. Oliver and T. Smiley; G. Priest.

p. 151 Simone G. Seminara, *Agamben e la nozione aristotelica di «potenza»*

ABSTRACT – Aristotle's philosophy plays a preeminent role in Giorgio Agamben's thought. It might be said that the whole enquiry on the nexus between metaphysics and politics that Agamben develops in *Homo Sacer* is grounded on a critical analysis of the Aristotelian concept of dynamis (potentiality). While in Sovereign power and bare life the relation between constituent and constituted power is said to depend on the way by which one reads the existence and the autonomy of potentiality, in *The use of bodies* the concept of use is defined as an internal principle of potentiality, able to prevent that potentiality runs completely out in actuality. In this paper, I will analyse Agamben's reading of potentiality as essentially defined by the possibility of its non–exercise, which, extensively formulated in the paper "*The potency of thought*", represents the necessary premise for the project of political archaeology at the core of Homo Sacer.

KEYWORDS – Potentiality; Actuality; Privation; Impotency; Modality.

p. 167, Tom Rockmore, *Lukács, Heidegger and Reification*

ABSTRACT – Sometimes very different positions overlap in unsuspected but significant ways. Lukács and Heidegger are important, but dissimilar twentieth century thinkers. Lukács is a Hegelian Marxist, and Heidegger is a post–Husserlian phenomenologist. They share a superficial similarity in their respective predilections for political dictatorship, Lukács for Stalin and Heidegger for Hitler. Yet there is a deeper link since, as Lucien Goldmann pointed out a half century ago, Heidegger's phenomenological ontology is apparently intended as a response to Lukács' Hegelian Marxist conception of reification (see Goldmann 1982). This paper will explore this link. I will be suggesting that both propose unacceptable views of human flourishing as lying beyond the reification, or again alienation, typical of modern industrial society.

KEYWORDS – Lukács; Heidegger; Authenticity; Reification; Ontology.

p. 179, Emmanuel Barot*, Sartre face à Hegel et Trotsky : les fins et les moyens du socialisme révolutionnaire. Idée du socialisme, « Sittlichkeit », institutions de la liberté et morale révolutionnaire à partir des* Cahiers pour une morale

ABSTRACT – Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* states that Hegel, in the Master–Slave dialectic, had an «ingenious insight» against solipsism, while asserting that each self–consciousness depends, in its very being, on other consciousnesses. However, against him, Sartre claims that the separation of the For–itself remains the insurmountable «scandal», and that collectivity can exist at most as a «de–totalized totality», but never as a Subject. The *Cahiers pour une morale* extends the analysis, in a true comparison with Hegelian Sittlichkeit, to the historical modalities of mutual recognition of liberties, which Sartre, in spite of everything, does not renounce while calling for a «concrete moral» that must be «revolutionary socialist», and centered, above all, on the «dialectic of the ends and means of the revolution». The *Critique de la Raison Dialectique*, finally analyzes, through the lens of Marxism, the living core of the Objective Spirit, and reaches its apex in the dialectic of society and State. Since sovereignty (including revolutionary) can never be the embodiment of a fictitious Subject, even when it represents the object of an irrepressible aspiration that gives rise to authentic forms of collective subjectivities strategically unified, Sartre occupies a very special position between Hegel's *Elements of Philosophy of Right* (1820) and Marx's *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (1843). His *Cahiers pour une morale*, in particular, represents a fulcrum around which it is possible to articulate a comparison between Sartre and Trotsky's *Their Morals and Ours* (1938).

KEYWORDS – Revolutionary Moral; Strategy; Marxism; History; Situation.

p. 197, Stefano Bracaletti, *La Teoria della scelta razionale. Applicazioni e problematiche*

ABSTRACT – Rational choice theory represents the basic model used by economic theory – in its neoclassical form - to account for human behavior and it has recently found some applications in sociology. Rational choice theory "translates" the naïf language of beliefs and actions in the language of choices under constraints. It explains human action in terms of some minimal elements: the choice of the best way to attain a specific result, given the beliefs and the desires of actors (information and preferences) given a set of possible choices and given, eventually, a principle – usually utility maximization – that enables the actor to pick up, among various alternatives, the actually preferred one. The essay, after a short exposition of rational choice theory and of its philosophical premises, focuses on awkward aspects of the model connected in particular to axioms used in economic theory of rational consumer behavior and to preferences formation. It also discusses the limits of rational choice theory as a model of human behavior applied to empirical social research in sociology.

KEYWORDS – Rational Choice; Limits of Rationality; Non-rational Preference Formation; Rational Choice and Empirical Research.