

PATOLOGIE SOCIALI

PERCORSI NELLA TEORIA CRITICA CONTEMPORANEA

(a cura di Giorgio Fazio)

INDICE DEGLI ABSTRACT

- p. 15, Roberto Finelli, *L'estenuazione democratica della Scuola di Francoforte. Note critiche su Axel Honneth e Rahel Jaeggi*

ABSTRACT: The essay intends to present critical considerations on some limits and fragilities of the thought of Axel Honneth and Rahel Jaeggi, respectively. The Author maintains that the abandonment of the dialectical tradition, which is fully apparent in both authors, produces remarkable theoretical problems. Their strong exposure to the influence of American pragmatism and the acceptance, especially by Jaeggi, of Helmuth Plessner's anthropology of indeterminacy, leads to an excessive emphasis on *intersubjective* relations and to a too simplified view of the *infrasubjective* complexity of human individuality. The result is a theory of individuation that is too weak to effectively counter contemporary processes of alienation and current forms of social pathologies that Honneth and Jaeggi have, anyway, the merit of grasping and describing in a precise and in-depth way.

KEYWORDS: dialectical tradition; american pragmatism; psychoanalysis; intersubjectivity; infrasubjectivity.

- p. 43, Rahel Jaeggi, *Patologie del lavoro*

ABSTRACT: Considering "pathologies of work" in the context of a historico-normative reconstruction of the meaning of work as social cooperation, the paper intends to establish a connection between a number of different problems. These include the continued existence of exploitation and alienation as well as the precariousness of work and long-term unemployment. Borrowing a phrase from Hegel, work is conceived as "sharing, participating or partaking in the universal resources of society", where "resources" include wealth as well as competencies. The above-mentioned pathologies of work can then be understood as different ways of refusing or preventing participation in these "universal resources".

KEYWORDS: work; meaningful work; alienation; precariousness; social cooperation.

- p. 61, Martin Saar, *La forma del potere. Immanenza e critica*

ABSTRACT: Foucault's analysis of power is still a key topic in contemporary social-political discussions. Insofar as power is inherent in every field of society, it permeates and shapes every social relationship. Consequently, freedom, the possibility of action and subjectivity can no longer be conceived as independent of power and opposed to it, but rather they turn out to be intrinsically connected to power. The aim of this article is to show that Foucault's analysis and critique of power (understood as a theory of the "multiple forms" and of the "immanence-character" of power) does not rule out the possibility of action and freedom. Action and freedom are instead conceived of as arising from power itself, and thus they do not require the

full dissolution of power. For these reasons, Foucault's idea of critique parallels the notion of immanent critique.

KEYWORDS: Foucault; power; freedom; subject; immanent critic.

p. 77, Arvi Särkelä, Arto Laitinen, *Tra normativismo e naturalismo: Honneth sul concetto di "patologia sociale"*

ABSTRACT: Axel Honneth has revitalized the notion of "social pathology" as a critical concept for social philosophy and Critical Theory; he has even defined the task of social philosophy in terms of pathology diagnosis and that of Critical Theory as a diagnosis and therapy of social pathology. Social philosophy is then oriented towards a "deeper" layer of reality, a "higher" order of wrongs or the "society itself". This level, which marks the jurisdiction of a distinctively *social* philosophy, would not be reached by the vocabularies of moral and political philosophy and its characteristic evils would in some relevant sense resemble or even *be* "pathologies". In this article, we will try to show that in different texts, Honneth has appealed to several conceptions of a social pathology. First of all, Honneth has understood 'social pathology' as a kind of "umbrella term" for social-philosophical wrongs, and, with qualifications, supported Christopher Zurn's analysis of social pathologies as second-order disorders. Secondly, Honneth has appealed to an organicistic conception of social pathologies as "diseases of society". Thirdly, he has – at least implicitly – given expression to an idea of social pathology as stagnation of social life. The first view holds that socially pervasive wrongs that meet certain further conditions count as pathologies. We will call this view "social-philosophical normativism". The other two views hold that diagnosing something as a social pathology sheds light to how it is wrong, or what the "wrong-making" features are. We will call this view "social-philosophical naturalism".

KEYWORDS: Honneth; social pathology; normativism; naturalism; organicism.

p. 103, Corrado Piroddi, *Patologie della società e filosofia sociale: nuove prospettive dalla Finlandia*

ABSTRACT: The main aim of the paper is to illustrate the distinctive features of the Finnish school of critical theory and social philosophy. In this respect, it will provide a concise description of the philosophical work of some of its members: Onni Hirvonen, Heikki Ikäheimo, Arto Laitinen and Arvi Särkelä. In the first part, we will try to describe the ways these scholars have reinterpreted Axel Honneth's paradigm of recognition. In the second part, we will clarify how the Finnish theoreticians have discussed Honneth's reflections on the theme of social pathology. In this regard, first we will seek to show how the *leitmotif* of Finnish scholars consist in the critique of two conceptions of social pathology that Honneth has explicitly endorsed in recent times. The first one is Christopher Zurn's idea of pathology as second-order disorder. The second view is the organicist conception of social pathology that Honneth himself has exposed in the essay *The Diseases of Society: Approaching to Nearly Impossible Concept*. Furthermore, we will explain why the criticisms of Laitinen, Ikäheimo, Hirvonen and Särkelä are, in any case, consistent with Honneth's philosophical perspective.

KEYWORDS: critical theory; Finland; Honneth; pathology; recognition

p. 127, Emmanuel Renault, *Critica sociale e conoscenza*

ABSTRACT: In the first generation of the Frankfurt School, critical theory was promoting a strong interconnection between social critique and knowledge of the social world. Just as Marx considered that a critique of capitalism was impossible without a systematic knowledge of its laws, transformations and contradictions, so too Horkheimer and Adorno were convinced that social critique should be grounded on social theory. It is simply a fact that in contemporary critical theory, such a conviction does not play a role anymore. Critical theory has not only subjected itself to the division of intellectual labor in separate disciplines, becoming more and more a philosophical sub-discipline distinct from the social sciences. It has also conceived itself more and more as belonging to the genre of inormative political philosophy', focusing its efforts more and more exclusively on the issue of normative foundation of social critique. and consequently, it has lost interest in epistemological discussions. The purpose of this article is to cast doubt on this broad consensus about the legitimacy of such a divorce between social critique and knowledge. In order to work toward this goal, I proceed in four steps. In a first step, I recall the ways in which the philosophical debate about social critique is currently articulated and how it disconnects social critique and knowledge. The three other steps consider the two main justifications for a disconnection between social critique and knowledge. In fact, critical theory focuses on the normative foundation of social critique by virtue of two main reasons. The first one relates to a vision of politics as consisting mainly in a conflict between normative principles, notably between conceptions of social justice. I criticize this vision of politics in the second step of this paper. The second reason relates to the criticism of the naturalist fallacy. The knowledge of the social world cannot play a decisive role in a discussion concerning the legitimacy of competing conceptions of social justice, so the argument runs, since the *is* should not be confused the *ought*. In the third step of the paper, I try to show that this argument run the risk of worsening epistemic injustices, and in the fourth step, I elaborate a conception of normativity that bridges the gap between the *is* and the *ought*.

KEYWORDS: critical theory; social knowledge; normative foundation; epistemic injustice; pragmatism.

p. 153, Jean-Philippe Deranty, *Una materialità rimossa: recuperare il materialismo nella teoria del riconoscimento di Axel Honneth*

ABSTRACT: This paper attempts to accomplish two related tasks: a genealogical, exegetical one and a programmatic one. The genealogical reconstruction of Axel Honneth's theory of recognition serves the aim of making a few propositions for the continuation of the project of a critical theory of society. The first task is guided by the purpose of highlighting the materialist background against which Axel Honneth's ethics of recognition grew. The beginnings of the theory of recognition lie in the assumption that historical materialism could be salvaged if it was re-grounded in anthropological materialism. In the course of its development, however, the ethics of recognition has tended to focus more and more on intersubjective interactions understood narrowly, and to repress the material mediations with which these interactions are implicated. My argument in conclusion will be that this was a misguided development and that retrieving these material mediations might allow a more substantive model of critical theory. I attempt to give an example of what such theory could look like with the paradigmatic case of work.

KEYWORDS: Honneth; materialism; work; recognition; interaction.

p. 181, Marco Solinas, *Teleologie senza Spirito? Sui deficit politici della filosofia della storia di Honneth*

ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to show that Honneth's philosophy of history is teleological in a narrow sense. This teleological character is problematic for the theory of the struggle for recognition, for the conception of history as such, and for the methodology of the normative reconstruction. In particular, the teleological conception gives to the theory of recognition a historical form that points out a unilateral character. Furthermore, the teleological neo-Hegelian methodology of normative reconstruction seems to adopt a too stark trust in the progress of human societies faced with the problem of social, political and cultural regressions.

KEYWORDS: teleology; Axel Honneth; philosophy of history; regression; critical theory.

p. 201, Giorgio Fazio, *Dalla critica ricostruttivo-immanente della modernità alla genealogia del neoliberalismo. Axel Honneth e i problemi di una teoria critica della società oggi*

ABSTRACT: The article reconstructs Axel Honneth's attempt to reformulate the original model of immanent critique of the first generation of Frankfurt's School. Moving from the lesson of Habermas, Honneth clarified the socio-theoretical, philosophical and political problems that underlied this model of social criticism, but he also defended it as a valid alternative to other models of social criticism, which are prevalent today. The attempt to reformulate an immanent critique of society leads in Freedom's Right into the innovative methodology of normative reconstruction, on which is based the ambitious program to renovate Hegel's *Rechtsphilosophie*. This model of critique fails, however, when it has to describe adequately the normative innovations introduced by the "neoliberal revolution". To analyze this historical discontinuity Honneth is therefore forced to change methodology and to take a genealogical approach, like in his sociological writings dedicated to neoliberalism. Here Honneth focus on the contradictions and the paradoxes of capitalism, giving an other meaning to the immanent critique and testifying the nonautonomy of a reconstructive model of critique wich is based on the presumption of normative potentials within the capitalist economic system.

KEYWORDS: critical theory; immanent critique; social pathologies; paradoxes of capitalism; neoliberalism.

p. 231, Luca Micaloni, *Habermas, Honneth e il problema di una critica immanente del lavoro*

ABSTRACT: This article offers a critical reconstruction of Axel Honneth's arguments for an immanent critique of labour. After giving an outline of the significance, in regard to Honneth's social theory, of two crucial distinctions set forth by Jürgen Habermas (namely, that between work and interaction and that between *System* and *Lebenswelt*), the Author shows how Honneth's conception has shifted from the initial search for a 'critical notion of labour' focused on the characteristics of working activity to a critical view of the division of labour that hinges on the normative claims that are deemed to be inherent in modern labour market and that are conceived of as immanent and universal normative criteria. In the final section, the Author offers some critical remarks on Honneth's analysis of the labour market and suggests that its normative criteria could prove to be neither immanent, nor universal.

KEYWORDS: Honneth; labour; market; capitalism; immanent critique.

- p. 255, Federica Gregoratto, *La passione della critica. Considerazioni dialettiche su patologie sociali, distopia e amore*

ABSTRACT: It seems that the idea of social pathology has recently become unavoidable, within the Frankfurter tradition of critical theory, to pinpoint the wrongs of the socio-historical present. In this article, I would like to frame this new keyword not as an absolute negative, which has to be conceptually sharply separated from the healthy state, but rather as a negative that serves as disruptive, and thus critical and transformative element in a social order conceived of in organicistic terms. The following considerations rely mostly upon Adorno's dialectical method, which urges us to reflect on the connections between health (or normality) and illness, as well as on the difficulties that are inherent in the attempt to tell them apart. Adorno's dialectics is reread on the background of a dystopian representation of reality, and in particular of the dystopia outlined in *The Handmaid's Tale*, that I consider here both as the novel published by Margaret Atwood in 1985 and as the recent TV show. In this context, I discuss the possibility to conceive of passionate love, characterized by the intertwinement between activity (or agency) and passivity, as a pathology that has revitalizing, beneficial effects.

KEYWORDS: social pathology; dystopia; oppression; love; passion; agency.

- p. 279, Matteo Gargani, *Axel Honneth e i presupposti della reificazione*

ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to deal with some aspects of Axel Honneth's reading of reification faced in his 2005 *Verdinglichung. Eine Anerkennungstheoretische Studie*. To this purpose, I critically analyse the interpretation of Marx by Lukács as it is expressed in *Reification and the Consciousness of the Proletariat*. Secondly, I claim that Lukács' fetishism analysis is grounded in a significant misunderstanding of the core issue of Marx's Critique of political economy. Furthermore, I suggest that Honneth's reification concept uncritically accepts, to some extent, the main theses on Marx as they are outlined in Lukács' text. I conclude by arguing that the Marxian heritage advocated by Honneth is methodologically more deeply linked to Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* than to Marx's *Capital*.

KEYWORDS: Honneth; Marx; Lukács; reification; fetishism; method.