

Summaries

The Idea of ‘Alienation’ in Rousseau’s Thought

CSABA OLAY

It is generally agreed that Rousseau gave one of the most fierce critiques of modern civilization and society in general. He is often claimed to have accurately described or at least anticipated what later on was termed as ‘alienation’, even if he himself did not use this expression. In my paper I examine what might be regarded as a precursor of the concept of alienation in Rousseau’s work.

In order to highlight theoretical differences and presuppositions, I shall also discuss Marx’s theory of alienation. I shall argue that what we find in Rousseau can only be labelled as alienation in a broader sense, since the semantic core of alienation, i.e. becoming strange to someone, is not the basic problem in Rousseau’s description. A closer reading of Rousseau’s second discourse on inequality will serve as a point of reference in interpreting the term ‘alienation’. The treatise essentially claims that (1) human beings under conditions of civilization are unnoticed slaves, and (2) that this slavery to one another was brought about by a socio-cultural development leading to a loss of authenticity. I point out that there is a general scheme of alienation that might be described as possession – disappropriation – reappropriation, and I shall claim with regard to Rousseau that he has but a shorter version of the scheme, i. e. in the form of possession – disappropriation.

Towards a Rational Reconstruction of Historical Materialism

MIKLÓS SZALAI

The study surveys the debate about the rational core of the Marxist theory of history. This debate revolved around G. A. Cohen’s book, *Karl Marx’s Theory of History: A Defence* (1978). According to Cohen, the Marxist theory of history is based on technological determinism: the development of the productive forces is an all-compassing and autonomous tendency of human history, and social systems rise and fall according to their functional role in the development of production. Thus class struggle and relations of production have only a secondary role in history. The paper surveys various Marxist critiques of Cohen’s book, and arrives at the conclusion that a Cohen-style technologi-

cal determinism is untenable. However, this does *not* imply that the vicissitudes of class struggle (or social conflicts in general) are the only determining force of history, for the capacity of developing the productive forces means a competitive advantage both for the classes and the other social groups in the social conflicts.

From the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* to the Critical Theory of Late Capitalism

JÁNOS WEISS

The paper investigates what may be regarded as the aspects or consequences of Adorno's thought in the early 1960s on sociology. It presents Adorno's views on western society, i. e. on 'industrial society' and 'social market economy', which the author elaborates by relying on the twin concepts of differentiation and integration, as well as objectification and personalisation. It also addresses Adorno's views on whether the essential difference between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has really been overcome in the late capitalist order, his views on the tasks of critical theory and utopian consciousness, and also the general question as to whether the approach of the critique of civilisation taken in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, may or may not be appropriate for sociological analysis.

Axel Honneth and the Social Reconstruction of Individual Freedom

László Gergely Szücs

In the article I reconstruct Axel Honneth's argumentation for the necessity of a third, 'social' concept of freedom besides the two well-known concepts, those of negative and positive freedom. I suggest that this reconstruction can be successful, if we examine it in the context of classical tradition of political-philosophical argumentation. The concept of 'social freedom' was formulated by Honneth in his debates with Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, Habermas, and Isaiah Berlin, where he used the arguments of his counterparts very innovatively to show the limits of their theories and to support his own conception. However, it is very difficult to reconcile a theory of freedom using a wide range of classical arguments of political theories with Honneth's programme to connect critical theory to the realistic analysis of society in the context of 'normative social reconstruction'.

Political Action and the New Mass Society. The Construction of the Political Community and the Political Subject in Jacques Rancière's Philosophy

ZSOLT BAGI

The paper examines Jacques Rancière's political philosophy and argues that in a contemporary situation of crisis of the political action it offers a constructive alternative. According to Rancière not only the subject of political action has to be constructed dur-

ing the political action itself, but also the political community has to be re-established. A political action is always based on an 'invisible' wrong and to render it visible it has to construct a new plane of equality. That is to say there is no 'natural' equality. Equality itself has to be constructed.

Žižek and the Dialectics of Revolution

ZSOLT KAPELNER

In this paper I present a critique of Slavoj Žižek's theory of revolution. His aim is to provide a philosophical grounding for the idea that, *pace* Adorno and Horkheimer, revolutionary action can create a radically new social order. He does not believe, however, that revolutions can create perfect societies without contradictions, violence, and oppression; instead he holds that revolutionary violence and oppression *radically differ* from their pre-revolutionary counterparts. I argue that this latter view is not well-supported in Žižek's theory. His ideas rest on two theoretical cornerstones which I call *the negative theory of totality* and *positive dialectics*. He formulates these in such a way that, on the one hand, they make possible the replacement of the present order with a new revolutionary one, but at the same time, contrary to the author's intention, they also render the revolutionary order problematic *in the very same respect* as the pre-revolutionary one. For this reason Žižek's theory fails to establish the possibility of *radical* social change by means of revolutionary action. The revolutionary order ends up suffering from the same shortcomings as the pre-revolutionary one.

The History of the Revolutionary Non-Subject (The Rejection of Identity as a Critical Strategy of Late Capitalism)

DÁVID BALOGH

My paper focuses on the issue of 'subject' in the anti-capitalist theories of the second half of the twentieth century. I discuss the anti-individual tendency in Henri Lefebvre's critique of everyday life and the 'hermeneutics of the subject' in the late works of Michel Foucault. The former presents the Marx-based analysis of the commodity society, which contributed, through the mediation of ultra-leftist groups such as the Situationist International, to the 1968 insurrections in France, the latter was seen as a criticism of the post-68 societies' subject, shaped by the lifestyle-industry and therapeutic self-building approaches of the era. This reading of Foucault's echoes the post-anarchist interpretations of his work. In the last chapter I briefly discuss the problem of the self in contemporary late-capitalist society, under the circumstances of skill-based wage-labour, part-time jobs and online social networks.

The Logic of Truth. Kant on Formal and Transcendental Logic

TAMÁS HANKOVSKY

Kant differentiates between transcendental logic and the so-called general logic by claiming that the latter is only a negative touchstone of truth, while the former is “a logic of truth. For no cognition can contradict it without at the same time losing all content, i. e., all relation to any object, hence all truth”. In the paper I first suggest to distinguish between two fundamental types of truth in order to make the Kantian distinction more precise. Thus, formal truth concerns the forms of cognitions, truth in the sense of correspondence their contents. Further, the distinction between empirical and transcendental content allows for a claim that transcendental logic may be the logic of truth in the sense of correspondence, because it is logic with content. Finally, relying on these results, I examine briefly whether it is true that transcendental logic is not able to present general criteria of truth, a claim Kant have already proved concerning formal logic.