



Questo volume è dedicato al tema «Soggettività e assoluto». Si parte dalla constatazione che la crisi che nel Novecento ha caratterizzato il rapporto tra il soggetto e ciò che viene chiamato “assoluto” (Dio, ad esempio, o un qualche principio incondizionato) non ha affatto eliminato la necessità d’interrogarsi ancora su questi fenomeni. Il volume affronta la questione tematizzando il rapporto dinamico tra particolare e universale.

The topic of the current issue of «Teoria» is «Subjectivity and the absolute». A research on the relationship between the subject and the absolute paves the way for a philosophy which devotes its attention to particular and concrete phenomena and at the same time is able to examine the particular in its dynamic relationship with the universal.

Scritti di / writings by: Salvatore Natoli, Ugo Perone, Claudio Ciancio, Adriano Fabris, Iolanda Poma, Maurizio Pagano, Mario Farina, Alessandra Cislighi, Daria Dibitonto, Francesco Paolo Ciglia, Ezio Gamba, Marco Saveriano, Emanuela Magno, Marcello Ghilardi

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Premessa / Preface

Questo fascicolo di «Teoria» raccoglie i risultati di un programma di ricerca d'interesse nazionale (PRIN) avviato nel 2009 e dedicato al tema «Soggettività e assoluto». Il programma ha coinvolto docenti e ricercatori delle università di Milano, Pisa, Trieste e Vercelli. L'ipotesi di partenza muoveva dalla constatazione che – dopo la fioritura dell'idealismo tedesco, in cui il rapporto tra soggetto e assoluto aveva un ruolo centrale – la crisi di questo impianto ha comportato l'abbandono dell'ipotesi fondazionalista, ma non ha affatto cancellato né la domanda sul soggetto né quella su ciò che, con un linguaggio filosofico carico di tradizione, possiamo appunto chiamare «assoluto».

Certo: nel pensiero più recente, dopo la metà del Novecento, hanno prevalso linee di pensiero ispirate da un'affermazione radicale della finitezza, che si è manifestata in diverse forme di storicismo radicale, di relativismo, di individualismo. L'ipotesi di lavoro, ampiamente verificata nel corso della ricerca, è stata però che questa linea finitistica ha fallito. Ciò appare confermato dal vivo interesse che il pensiero attuale rivolge per esempio, da una parte, alla questione dei rapporti intersoggettivi, dall'altra al tema delle relazioni interculturali. Al tempo stesso, poi, la stessa tendenza volta a privilegiare la dimensione dell'individuo appare sempre più criticabile, e sembra opportuno che, per comprendere il soggetto, convenga collocarlo nel più ampio orizzonte della relazione agli altri soggetti o all'alterità in generale o a un orizzonte di senso. A partire da qui si apre allora la strada per una filosofia che condivide con il pensiero antimetafisico l'attenzione per i fenomeni particolari e concreti, ma insieme è capace di pensare il particolare nella sua relazione dinamica con l'universale.

Questo approccio programmatico si è realizzato seguendo due linee, di cui il presente fascicolo di «Teoria» offre un'adeguata esemplificazione. La prima linea è stata quella in cui l'elaborazione teorica è risultata prevalente. La seconda è stata quella in cui l'interesse si è soprattutto concentrato nelle verifiche e negli approfondimenti storico-filosofici che del tema potevano essere compiuti, pur senza che, con ciò, venisse messo fra parentesi un ben preciso impegno teorico.

Ecco allora che i saggi di Natoli, Perone, Ciancio, Fabris, Poma e Pagano discutono alcuni modi in cui la soggettività si è configurata nelle varie fasi del pensiero occidentale, sia in una prospettiva più marcatamente teoretica che da un punto di vista più propriamente morale. Pur nella loro diversità di approccio emerge comunque in questi scritti il carattere strutturalmente relazionale della soggettività umana: sia quando essa rimanda ad altri soggetti che con essa interagiscono, sia in quanto si riferisce a qualcosa di assoluto, sia nella misura in cui si rapporta anche a se stessa, per esempio nelle forme dell'autobiografia. La seconda linea di ricerca propone invece una ben precisa serie di sondaggi storico-filosofici, che privilegiano soprattutto la riflessione moderna e contemporanea, che si riferiscono in particolare ad ambiti religiosi ebraico-cristiani, ma che non trascurano di confrontarsi anche con il pensiero orientale. E dunque gli articoli di Farina, Cislighi, Dibitonto, Ciglia, Gamba, Saveriano, Magno e Ghilardi traggono da una puntuale analisi dei rispettivi temi indicazioni precise per ripensare la soggettività nel mondo contemporaneo e per riconfigurarne il profilo. In conclusione, i contributi raccolti in questo volume di «Teoria» mostrano che, nell'epoca della soggettività globale in cui

viviamo, l'immagine oggi predominante di un individuo chiuso in se stesso e ripiegato a celebrare la propria finitezza si dimostra sempre più inadeguata a definire chi è davvero l'essere umano, la sua dignità, il suo destino.

The current issue of «Teoria» contains the results of a national research program (PRIN) on «Subjectivity and the absolute» started in 2009. It was conducted by professors and researchers from the Universities of Milan, Pisa, Trieste and Vercelli. The working hypothesis was that although the crisis which followed the flourishing of German idealism (a system where the relationship between the subject and the absolute played a central role) led to the rejection of the foundationalist hypothesis, it has by no means put an end neither to the investigation of the subject, nor of what we might call, using a philosophical language deeply imbued with tradition, “the absolute”.

Of course, it is indisputable that the more recent strands of thinking which have marked the second half of the twentieth century were grounded mostly in a radical affirmation of finitude: a process which manifested itself in various forms of radical historicism, relativism and individualism. Yet, our working hypothesis – extensively verified throughout the research – was that this finitistic thought has failed. This finds confirmation, to cite an instance, in the strong interest shown by contemporary thinking towards, on one hand, intersubjective relations and, on the other, towards intercultural relations. What is more, the self-same tendency of privileging the dimension of the individual is increasingly subject to criticism. It seems, in fact, that in order to understand the subject, it is necessary to situate him/her in a wider dimension concerning his/hers relationship with other subjects, with alterity in general, with a sense-horizon. This paves the way for a philosophy which – analogously to the anti-metaphysical thought – devotes its attention to particular and concrete phenomena and at the same time is able to examine the particular in its dynamic relationship with the universal. □

This programmatic approach was developed by following two main directions, which are adequately exemplified by the current issue of «Teoria». The first research direction is mainly characterized by a theoretical framework. What distinguishes the second one is its focus – accompanied by a clearly outlined theoretical stance – on historical and philosophical examination and in-depth analysis of the topic.

The essays by Natoli, Perone, Ciancio, Fabris, Poma and Pagano examine – both from a perspective which foregrounds theoretical aspects and from a specifically moral point of view – the various ways in which morality has been encoded in the various phases of Western thinking. Notwithstanding the different approaches, what emerges from these writings is the structurally relational trait of human subjectivity: it can be observed both when subjectivity is directed towards or interacts with other subjects and when it refers to something absolute, but also when subjectivity is related to itself, as happens in autobiographical forms of writing. The second research direction provides a detailed survey of some historical-philosophical issues: the analysis is mainly focused on modern and contemporary thought and refers in particular to Hebraic-Christian religious traditions, which are brought into a fruitful exchange with Oriental thought. The thorough examination of the respective topics provides Farina, Cislighi, Dibitonto, Ciglia, Gamba, Saveriano, Magno and Ghilardi with accurate explanatory models for reassessing and rethinking subjectivity in the present age. □

In conclusion, the essays contained in this issue of «Teoria» show that today's predominant image of an inward-looking, wrapped up in him/herself individual, who is focused on celebrating

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Scritto da Adriano Fabris

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his/her finitude, repeatedly clashes with the era of global subjectivity we are experiencing and is steadily becoming unable to define who the human being really is, to determine its dignity and destiny.

Adriano Fabris, Maurizio Pagano

Salvatore Natoli

Gnothi seauton. Dal soggetto-fondamento all'ermeneutica della soggettività

pp. 9-26

The chapter begins by noting and exploring some of the great complexity of the uses of the term “nature”. Uses of the concept of nature to characterise “internal” human nature are briefly discussed before the focus turns to social scientific approaches to “external” nature, and to the relationships between human social life and its non-human conditions. The emergence to centre-stage of concern about environmental degradation has challenged tradition sociological dualisms of “nature” versus “culture”. The materialist tradition stemming from the work of Marx and Engels is taken as one important resource for this effort. Some strengths and limitations of the work of Marx and Engels themselves are reviewed, and later work that develops the capacity of the tradition to analyse the relationship between capitalist development and the rest of nature is discussed. Concepts such as “second contradiction of capitalism”, “intentional structure” and “naturally mediated unintended consequences” are outlined.

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Ugo Perone

Rilevanza etica dell'eccezione

pp. 27-38

After outlining the different meanings of ethics and morality and the way they interrelate with one another, the Author suggests to view morality not as the means for establishing universal rules of behaviour, but as the effort to face a double exception: the exception related to the singular agent and to a specific situation. This does not mean that rules are not important. They are the ground we stand on, they generate the sphere in which personal and social experiences take place. And yet, the essential moment of morality, a moment which takes place beyond the rules of ethics, can be captured when these rules are not sufficient and when the creative freedom of a choice is required. At that point morality becomes a practice of bringing truth into the world, i.e. of responding to a situation in a way which pays attention to experience and, consequently, enriches life.

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Claudio Ciancio

Autocoscienza e assoluto

pp. 39-50

The Philosophies of Mind do not take into account the qualitative differences existing between the various representative contents of human consciousness. Yet, the specificity which differentiates it from animal consciousness lies in the fact that it also represents the absolute and freedom. Since these notions represent absolute otherness, they exceed, as such, the capacity of consciousness. The collision with this excess returns consciousness to itself thus setting it free. In this way, it becomes the image of the absolute.

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Adriano Fabris

Il paradosso della soggettività e l'etica della relazione

pp. 51-62

The paper examines the paradox of subjectivity which, in the opinion of the author, arises during the Modern Age and can also be encountered in contemporary thought. In particular, the essay discusses not only Descartes', Kant's and Fichte's, but also Heidegger's and Levinas' philosophies. In its main form, this paradox arises when the subject ("I") is considered not in the first, but in the third person: like something neutral. In the final section of the paper the author develops a philosophy of relationship, which provides a way out from the paradox discussed so far and lays the foundations for new modes of experiencing and performing subjectivity.

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Iolanda Poma

L'assoluto autobiografico. Paradossi e prospettive del racconto filosofico di sé

pp. 63-80

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The studies of autobiographical texts, particularly Rousseau's and Nietzsche's, allow us to identify the subversive force inherent in every authentic autobiography, and involve a reflection on the relationship between the subject and the absolute.

How is the absolute to be approached from an autobiographical perspective? Notwithstanding the indisputably central role played by the subject in the autobiographical text, the writing unhorses his knight and shows a different reality, depicts the subject in a different light, which is truer and fairer. The paradoxes which arise from the act of narrating oneself debunk the myth of the supposed Power of the Ego to write about itself.

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Maurizio Pagano

Hegel: il soggetto e l'assoluto

pp. 81-97

The relationship between the subject and the absolute is a central issue in Hegel's thought. His theorizations represent a fundamental contribution and a decisive point of reference for the later philosophy. In the first part, the essay examines the way in which Hegel's thought was

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formulated and follows its development up to the theory of absolute knowledge advanced in the Phenomenology of Spirit ; in the second part, the paper provides an outline of the theory of the absolute proposed in The Science of Logic and suggests a way in which Hegel's legacy might be rethought from a hermeneutic perspective.

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Mario Farina

Soggettività naturale e soggettività assoluta nell'estetica di Hegel

pp. 99-110

The aim of this paper is to analyze the Hegelian category of «subjectivity» by juxtaposing it with the determination of art. This is the reason why the author stresses the difference between «natural subjectivity» and «absolute subjectivity». The former determines the activity of the producer of art (that is, of the genius), whereas the latter describes the systematic form of the subject as developed by philosophy. In this way the author aims to investigate the specificity of the role played by nature within the process of the definition of art. All the different meanings Hegel attributed to the notion of nature, tend to achieve a sort of reconciliation in the sphere of artistic production, without being able to completely merge with the absolute spirit. In the final part of the paper the author examines artistic nature as a «second nature», that is to say, as a

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spiritual elaboration of sensible nature.

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Alessandra Cislaghi

La soggettività estatica

pp. 111-124

This essay examines the constitution of subjectivity in its apparently oxymoronic relation with the notion of the absolute, even though subject and absoluteness are, as a matter of fact, correlative: the subject is marked by dependence since it is always produced by another subject, whereas absoluteness means identity. The search for and the achievement of oneself are realized by means of incarnation, that is to say, by means of the sensible body. The embodied subject achieves his/her absolute authenticity by discovering the distance from oneself and by realising the not immediate connection with oneself. The ancient myths of Adam and of Narcissus and the difference between the "I" and the "Self" lead us to the analysis of ecstasy, seen as an ontological and originary foundation of the human subject.

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Daria Dibitonto

Dall'intenzionalità pulsionale alla relazione con l'infinito: fenomenologia e metafisica del desiderio

pp. 125-140

This paper examines desire from a phenomenological and genetic perspective as a conscious experience: its origin is to be found in affection and, particularly, in self-affection (Uraffektion), or in what, starting from the late twenties, Husserl called drive intentionality (

Triebintentionalität

). The pre-reflective level of consciousness is viewed in its vulnerability and its strength: on the one hand, affection exposes consciousness to the emotional relation with the world, running thus the risk for consciousness to be wounded; on the other hand, drive intentionality guides the emotional body towards its external environment in search for satisfaction. Emotions are then transcendently differentiated from the stratification of desire. On the level of impression related to drive intentionality, desire is indeed constituted as passive desire, as the lack (

Vermissten

) of a still undefined object, whereas on the reproductive level of imagination desire (

Begehren

) eventually finds an object of satisfaction: the Sartrean notion of "mental image" is used to describe what type of object it is. When experiencing desire consciousness becomes aware of its finitude, particularly when confronted with death: Jaspers' and Levinas' metaphysics are presented as two different ways leading beyond the limits of phenomenology either towards the transcendence of freedom or to the infinitude of alterity.

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Francesco Paolo Ciglia

L'assoluto e l'umano. La strategia teoretica di Emmanuel Levinas

pp. 141-156

On the one hand, the aim of this essay is to address the issue of “subjectivity and the absolute” in the framework of Emmanuel Levinas’ philosophical project and, on the other hand, to examine this self-same philosophical project from the perspective of this binomial pair. What is delineated within this context of reflection is the complex process through which Levinas de-transcends and, consequently, re-humanizes the idealistic and phenomenological husserlian subject. The forms in which Levinas elaborates, in his own way, the issue of the absolute are thus analyzed within the humanistic context delineated in the essay.

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Ezio Gamba

Intersoggettività e assoluto nel pensiero di Michel Henry

pp. 157-168

The problem of intersubjectivity led Henry to examine in depth the issue of the relation between subjectivity and the absolute. It is indeed impossible to lay the foundations of intersubjectivity starting from the I. Intersubjectivity can be grounded exclusively on the link between all the living beings and the absolute Life which generates them and which Henry identifies with the God of Christian religion. Henry deals with these topics in his works on a philosophy of Christianity. In this paper the author retraces the path that led Henry to formulate his theory of intersubjectivity and discusses some questions related to this theory.

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Marco Saveriano

Il soggetto nel contesto culturale della globalizzazione

pp. 169-180

The paper addresses the condition of subjectivity in the globalized era. From the social, cultural and political point of view, the late-modern subjectivity has displayed a series of hypertrophic features, which are based on a continuous growth of the psychological and individual dimension. In the wake of Tocqueville, scholars such as Beck, Bauman and Habermas, to cite just a few names, suggested some of the reasons for the triumph of the individual ego. This essay attempts to analyse the forms of the self in relation to some of the results reached by contemporary philosophy (Husserl, Heidegger, Nancy, Sloterdijk) in the field of founding processes. In this perspective, the subject is brought back to a neutral function and treated merely as a point of reference in the complex network of communications.

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Emanuela Magno

Declinazioni del soggetto dalla metafisica upanishadica alla de-ontologizzazione buddhista

pp. 181-193

The paper analyses the notion of 'subject' from the perspective of Upaniṣadic and ancient Buddhist tradition. It pursues a twofold goal: a) to explore two (soteriologically) analogous but

(ontologically) different approaches to

Reality and b) to test the applicability of Western philosophical categories to the classical Indian framework. 'Subjectivity', 'Ontology', and 'Metaphysics' refer to three highly culturally determined and historically stratified concepts. Therefore, they require a 'contextual' and critical 'translation'.

The idea of 'subjectivity' is analyzed in relation to Upaniṣadic Metaphysics and Buddhist thinking from three hermeneutical perspectives: the gnoseological, the ontological, and the soteriological one. What emerges from the analysis is that in the Upani

ṣadic worldview

the 'subject's self-nature' turns into an Absolute self-identity and that the gnoseological as well as the ontological level of Reality fit in within a broader metaphysical view (to know the

Brahman

means to be

Brahman

). On the contrary, in the Buddhist perspective the gnoseological process deconstructs the ontological status of subjectivity, so that gnoseology reveals itself as a means through which any ontology or metaphysics are suppressed.

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Marcello Ghilardi

The Place of Subject and Absolute in Zen Buddhism

pp. 195-206

In Zen Buddhism the eradication of any substantiality is endorsed and fostered maybe more than in all the other Buddhist schools. The central insight is that what we call or recognize as "experience" does not need a subject, since it would introduce a split, a distinction, a break from the object: rather, it moves beyond the canonical distinction between subject and object. The Self is viewed as a field, i.e. not as an intentional consciousness that defines its object. The so-called "true Self" is neither a substance nor a subject; it should be understood as a harbouring place, a background in which phenomena incessantly happen and change. From this perspective, therefore, we cannot even speak of an "Absolute". Buddhist tradition in general, and Zen Buddhism in particular, are very careful to stress the delusive nature of a personal "I", and also the delusive quality of a universal, or "absolute Self" that could be thought of as a permanent, transcendent Spirit. Since the ultimate goal is the extinction of sorrow and existential craving, from the Zen point of view the aim is to avoid the delusive perspective of dualism between the "I" and the "Thou", between the relative and the absolute, between saṃsāra and nirv

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