

Title: *Responsibility, community and communication: from modern philosophy to contemporary ethics*

Editors of the volume: Giulia Battistoni, Giorgio Erle

The Weberian distinction between “ethics of intention” and “ethics of responsibility” first emerges in the different perspectives of I. Kant and G.W.F. Hegel with respect to moral action, and specifically to the evaluation of the action and the responsibility of the agent. Although the systematic views of Kant and Hegel have been rejected in the past, since the second half of the 20th century, they have provided fundamental categories for conceptualizing human agency and responsibility.

Starting from Hegel, human agency has been interpreted in light of its intrinsically social and responsible character (M. Alznauer, *Hegel's Theory of Responsibility*, 2015) and within the context of social relations, which account for the practices of attribution of responsibility (M. Quante, *Die Wirklichkeit des Geistes. Studien zu Hegel*, 2011). On the other hand, the Kantian transcendental foundation was rehabilitated by K.-O. Apel in his theorization of the ethics of communication, which he conceived in the framework of the linguistic turn in philosophy and the recognition of the performative value of language. In this context, responsibility itself has become a communicative concept, characterized by an element of relationality (A. Fabris, *RelAzione. Una filosofia performativa*, 2016), since it implies belonging to a pre-established normative framework. This has shed new light on the intersubjective and communicative dimensions, overcoming the monological understanding of both thought and language in the process.

Now: Apel's Kantian attempt to provide an “ultimate foundation” for the ethics of communication, understood as an ethics of co-responsibility, while certainly fruitful, also shows some flaws. On the one hand, Apel responds to the need, strongly felt in an age of value relativism, to provide a rational foundation for ethical norms that can guide community action (K.-O. Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie*, 1973; Id., *Il problema della fondazione di un'etica della responsabilità nell'epoca della scienza*, 1988); on the other hand, his theory has the same limitations as its Kantian foundation and indeed any deontological perspective. J. Habermas carries out, in this sense, an important self-criticism of discourse ethics, by putting it to the test created by the Hegelian objections to Kant (J. Habermas, *Moralität und Sittlichkeit? Treffen Hegels Einwände gegen Kant auch auf die Diskursethik zu?*, 1988). In doing so, he raises, perhaps more than Apel, the problem of the consequences of action and of the application of discourse ethics within the socio-political sphere. This leads him to reflect upon a possible form of discursive democracy, in which the concept of self-legislation is realized in its deepest sense by enabling a reconciliation of private autonomy with public autonomy, and of the perspective of the individual with that of the community.

The legacy of classical German philosophy centers the perspective of the dialectical relationship between the individual and the community, which is more timely than ever. However, while seeking to ground an ethics of co-responsibility in relation to history and concrete situations, the discourse ethics formulated by Apel and Habermas does not seem to open a space for responsibility towards *future* generations, who are not actually capable of taking part in the argumentative discourse, nor for the silent appeal of nature. For this further task, Hans Jonas' theory of responsibility proves to be essential (H. Jonas, *Das Prinzip Verantwortung*, 1979).

Emerging from this context, the current issue of “Pòlemos. Materiali di filosofia e critica sociale” aims to investigate the legacy of modern philosophy in contemporary ethics of communication and

responsibility, with particular focus on the legacy of classical German philosophy, with respect to responsibility and the “individual-community” relationship.

The editors invite you to propose contributions on the following thematic areas:

- Modern roots of Apel’s and Habermas’ ethics of communication
- Modern roots of Jonas’ ethics of responsibility
- Ethics of intention and ethics of responsibility: from modern philosophy to contemporary ethics
- Individual and community, private autonomy and public autonomy
- Responsibility, relationality and recognition
- Perspectives on the rational foundation of ethics

Submission instructions

Articles of a maximum of 40.000 characters (including spaces), accompanied by an abstract of 1.000 characters (in Italian and in English), must be submitted by sending them to the e-mail address cfp@rivistapolemos.it by October 3rd, 2022. Please submit articles and abstracts in a single document that has been prepared for anonymous review and is in one of the following formats: .doc, .docx, or .odt. Contributions directly relevant to the suggested lines of research are particularly welcome, but articles concerning areas philosophically connected to the theme will also be taken into consideration. Contributions in Italian, English, French, German and Spanish are accepted.