

On the Elective Affinity of “Critique” and “Crisis” in Sociological Theory

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The purpose of this paper is to reflect about the relationship that exists between the notions of critique and crisis in social theory as forms of codification-description of social and political conflicts from within society. The main argument I would like to address is that the value of these notions as theoretical ideas relies on their togetherness, that is, in Max Weber’s terms, in their *elective affinity*. The basis of this affinity as a model of analysis goes back to Hegel’s philosophy and, specially, to Marx’s social theory, in which “critique and crisis” presuppose each other as two moments referring to something ‘taking place into the world’ (I). However, I also call the attention of the *categorially devaluation* that “crisis” and “critique” have experienced in social sciences (specially in sociology), whose most visible manifestation is the uncoupling of these notions. I illustrate this situation looking at two of the most visible symptoms: the “normalization of crisis” and the “domestication of critique” (II). Then, I briefly discuss the case of Jürgen Habermas as an attempt of reconstruction of this conceptual affinity and re-introduction as useful sources within a theory of society (III).

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