Four Conceptions of Social Pathology

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Abstract. This paper starts with the idea that the task of social philosophy can be defined as the diagnosis and therapy of social pathologies. It discusses four conceptions of social pathology. The first two conceptions are "normativist" and hold that something is a social pathology if it is socially wrong. On the first view, there is no encompassing characterization of social pathologies available: it is a cluster concept of family resemblances. On the second view, social pathologies share a structure (e.g. second-order disorder). The last two conceptions are "naturalist" and hold that something is wrong because it is pathological. The third view takes it that society is the kind of substance that can fall ill - an organism. The fourth view operates with the notion of a social life that can degenerate. The four conceptions are compared along six criteria: is the view plausible, is it informative (if true), does it help define the task of social philosophy, does it take naturalistic vocabulary seriously, does it hold that pathologies share a structure, and how does it see the primacy of being wrong and being pathological.

Social Philosophy and Social Pathology

Our aim in this article is to distinguish more clearly four different usages of "social pathology", whose differences have not always been appreciated in the literature. Indeed, a leading theorist, Axel Honneth, in his different writings seems to subscribe to three of these conceptions we distinguish here. We hope that distinguishing these different conceptions (or families of conceptions) will clarify the debates, and hopefully everyone will find a conception that suits their purposes: the anti-theoretical view will appeal to some, whereas others welcome the theoretical structure the other conceptions provide, and so on. The typology we suggest aims to make sense of the usages especially in social philosophy; other typologies for other purposes can use different classification criteria.[i] The second aim is to assess comparatively the four different usages, and to argue against some of the views (especially the second-order disorder-view and the organicist view). These aims are relatively independent: even people who disagree with our comparative assessments can hopefully find the classification useful. In this introductory section we will shed light both on

the tight connection between social philosophy and social pathologies, and on the possible dangers of pathology-talk.

The concept of social pathology seems to pose a dilemma for social philosophers. On the one hand, social philosophers are easily repelled by the transfer of a medical or biological vocabulary on issues regarded as social or cultural. Biological, medical and naturalistic analogies seem not only reductionist but also suspiciously amenable to be used as means of domination (Lüdemann 2004). Not only might the step from a social-critical usage of a pathology diagnostic vocabulary to a racist or sexist discourse of labelling sexual, linguistic, ethnic or religious minorities as unhealthy deviations be shorter than sober social critics would like to think (Honneth 2014, 683-684). The more radical claim could be raised as well that it is precisely the task of social criticism to *denaturalize* social phenomena so as to reveal how something that took the shape of a natural event in fact was a social construction.

Now if this were the only problem that social philosophers have with the naturalistic vocabulary of "societal organism," "social life" and "social pathology," the solution at hand would be simply to drop it. Social criticism could instead be directed by metaphysically more innocent-looking concepts such as "moral injustice" or "political illegitimacy" etc. But the difficulties with the notion of social pathology become more complicated once its concrete role in social-philosophical criticism is taken into account: Social philosophers often use a naturalistic vocabulary, in which the concept of social pathology is to exert an evaluative authority, in order to establish social philosophy as discipline in its own right and to claim critical power to a social criticism, which does not rely on narrowly moral or political standards of validity; the use of the concept of social philosophy is, then, motivated by the ambition to establish an evaluative approach to social reality not reducible to the perspectives of moral and political philosophy (Dewey 1973; Honneth 2007; Fischbach 2009). According to an influential contemporary commentator, social philosophy is oriented towards a "deeper" layer of reality (Honneth 2014b, 791), a "higher" order of wrongs (Honneth 2014a, 86) or the "society itself" (Honneth 2014b, 684). Following such intuitions, social philosophers often ascribe to the idea that social practices or perhaps even the society itself might suffer from evils on a higher or deeper level, which marks the jurisdiction of a distinctively *social* philosophy. This level would, moreover, not be reached by the vocabularies of moral and political philosophy and its characteristic evils would in some relevant sense resemble or even *be* "illnesses," "diseases" or "pathologies." From this perspective, then, the very faith of social philosophy as a discipline in its own right looks tied to a naturalistic vocabulary.

As the naturalistic vocabulary for these social philosophers then becomes the very means of defining social philosophy, the demand to simply drop the concept of social pathology comes to seem unacceptable. The metaphysically more innocent-looking and historically less heavily loaded concepts of "moral injustice" or "political illegitimacy" cannot, on this account, compensate for the loss suffered by the abandonment of "social pathology," as these conceptions do not respond to those deeper or higher or more inclusive or systematic patterns of wrongs, with which social philosophy is supposed to deal. The dilemma of social philosophers regarding social pathology is that the naturalistic vocabulary is difficult to keep but also difficult to drop.

Immanent social criticisms are characterized by the attempt not to rely on prior moral or political standards (Honneth 2000, Celikates 2009, Stahl 2013, Jaeggi 2014, Särkelä 2017a). Sometimes this rejection of prior or external standards for critique is tied to the view of social philosophy as taking a more extensive view of things than moral or political philosophy. For example, Max Horkheimer distinguishes "critical" social theory by virtue of its claim to grasp "the life of society as whole" (Horkheimer 1972, 203) from "traditional" practical philosophies engaged in mere "isolated consideration of particular […] branches of activity" (Horkheimer 1972, 199). Following Horkheimer, then, social-philosophical inquiry is practiced on a conceptual level, which does not allow reduction to any subtending disciplines of practical philosophy. Furthermore, this level is characterized as the "life of society." So even for a seemingly anti-naturalistic social philosopher like Horkheimer, the faith of social philosophy is tied to its naturalistic vocabulary.[ii]

This claim seems to be implicit also in the contemporary debate about social pathologies. There are four variations of the concept of social pathology in that debate. In what follows, we will try to sort out the diverging ontological commitments, metaphysical implications and evaluative aspirations of those four conceptions. All these conceptions of social pathology are committed to a picture of social philosophy as somehow more inclusive a project than "mere" moral or political philosophy. Moreover, in all of them, "social pathology" or some equivalent is made the very negative subject-matter defining of social philosophy. Therefore, the use of the concept of social pathology says a lot of how social philosophy is understood. In a certain sense, each of the four conceptions also casts a specific picture of social philosophy. It is, however, important to sort out the diverging assumptions of these conceptions, not least because one can often find two or more of these incompatible conceptions used by one and the same author. While each approach tries to remain true to one horn of the dilemma (social kinds should not be reduced to natural kinds), they

differ on whether they think it is nonetheless possible or important to retain the naturalistic or medical connotations of the concept of social pathology. [iii]

A leading question to users of the concept is: Is something "pathological" because it is *wrong* or is it wrong because it is *pathological*?[iv] The first two of our four conceptions use the concept of social pathology to denote some social failures that are wrong in some relevant way, and therefore are apt to be called "pathological". These species of pathology conceptions we classify under the genus of "normativism." The last two conceptions, by contrast, use the concept of social pathology to diagnose something as socially wrong. These species of pathology conceptions we sort under the genus of "naturalism."

Social Pathology as an Umbrella Term for Social Wrongs

The first approach regards "social pathology" as a replaceable umbrella term for what is socially criticizable (See e.g. Przemysław Piotrowski 2006, p. x). In this approach, "social pathology" is more or less synonymous with social evils, social wrongs, criticizable social arrangements. (The distinction between first and second order wrongs is not relevant for this approach, cf. Section 3). The approach can be called "anti-theoretical" in the sense in which Gadamer's hermeneutics, Wittgenstein's or McDowell's philosophy of language, Aristotle's ethics or Michael Walzer's and Charles Taylor's views about social criticism are "anti-theoretical" (Taylor 1991; Walzer 1987; Wittgenstein 1953; Aristotle 2004; Gadamer 2004): The best we can do is to have good exemplars of what is socially criticizable, and somehow learn to go on from there case by case. The cases include ideological worldviews, misrecognition, maldistribution, invisibilisation, rationality distortions, reification or institutionalised self-realisation, to anticipate a list of social wrongs that the second approach will discuss as well.

The first approach assumes that there need not be any inner logic or shared structure for these social wrongs – the list is open-ended; and can include any significant topics of social criticism. It seems thus very un-ambitious theoretically speaking, or anti-theoretical. There are however good theoretical reasons for the anti-theoretical approach: according to this view, it would be a distortion to force the phenomena in the strait-jacket of a unified structure, unless the phenomena already contain that structure. If the phenomena indeed constitute a cluster with no common denominator, we have strong theoretical reasons to remain anti-theoretical: the forced structure would be a distortion. A family resemblance may be the best we can have. It would be a mistake to think that

"the social" and "social pathologies" have some universal or essential structure. The only universalistic truth is that the social is historically malleable, and new kinds of wrongs can emerge in new historical settings – they can be social wrongs without sharing any structure. Assuming a shared structure smacks of essentialism to the followers of Gadamer, Aristotle, and Walzer. It will just blind us, and lead us to focus on familiar cases; like the drunkard who was looking for their lost keys under the lamppost; not because that was where the keys were lost but because there it would be easier to find them. Arguably, this anti-theoretical option, even if non-informative theoretically, is the fallback option if other construals fail.

Does this approach enable us to see the task of social philosophy in terms of diagnosis of social pathologies? It may, if it has a story about how social wrongs differ from moral or political ones. On this approach, something is a social pathology, if it is somehow "social", and wrong. How moral, political and social phenomena differ from one another is a contested issue, but at least a negative characterization is readily available for the first approach: socio-ethical questions are not limited to morality in a narrow sense (that concerns how individuals ought to act), and social problems are not limited to political questions of democracy or legitimacy of governance – there are *social* wrongs or evils of social practices, institutions, structures and processes in addition to narrowly moral and political ones. There are for example, Charles Taylor's three "malaises": loss of meaning, eclipse of ends in face of rampant instrumental reason, and loss of freedom or powerlessness under "soft despotism" (Taylor 1991).

The proponents of this first approach may even think there is no real reason to use the term "social pathology" instead of its synonyms, but it is acceptable to use it out of courtesy as it were, when one's interlocutors use it; it is just another word for social wrongs. And it may be that the metaphor of "pathology" has useful connotations, suggesting that we can analyze, diagnose, provide etiology and suggest a cure or therapy, just as in medical cases (Honneth 2007); and in successful cases, healing (Dewey 2015; Särkelä 2017b). If something is *experienced* as a social suffering, then it makes sense to articulate it through a vocabulary of pathology or for example as "malaises of modernity" (Taylor 1991). So maybe there is, on this view, a rhetorical gesture, albeit not a theoretical reason, behind sticking to the term "pathology". It may of course be that these reasons do not override the weighty practical reasons not to use the vocabulary of "social pathology," as in its naïve usage it may have essentializing, naturalizing, biologizing, universalizing, medicalizing, organicistic,

vitalistic, and uncritical overtones that critical thought should avoid. (This was the denaturalization motive mentioned above.)

To sum up, the first approach regards it as more or less hopeless and dangerous to move to positive characterizations from negative ones. Anti-essentialism is, on this view, important concerning the social and the pathological. This will mean that the concept of social pathology cannot really be a guide in the demarcation between social, moral and political philosophy: we must first understand what wrongs are "social" and thereby come to view them as social pathologies. And even more importantly, the first approach is anti-naturalist concerning the social and the pathological. Social phenomena certainly are not natural, biological, vitalistic *etc.* in any meaningful sense. To suggest anything of the sort would sound highly uncritical, for the proponents of the first approach.

The first two approaches share an implicit premise: It is impossible to be critical and non-reductive about social kinds, while retaining the naturalistic overtones of the notion of "social pathology." The last two approaches beg to differ, as we will see. Another key claim of the first approach is: it is impossible to give an informative account of what all social wrongs share, there's at most "family resemblance" – and even trying to find a shared structure will be forcing the phenomena into a strait jacket. All the other approaches, including the second approach, to which we now turn, will try to show that that need not be the case.[v]

Social Pathologies as Non-Natural but Sharing a Structure: Second-Order Disorders and More Encompassing Views

The second family of approaches tries to show that there is more to what social pathologies share, there *is* an illuminating theoretical account to be given after all.[vi] Social pathologies are all alike in sharing a structure, but (against the third and fourth approaches), the structure can be analysed in anti-naturalist terms.

One prominent exemplar of this approach is Christopher Zurn's (2011) interpretation of the tradition of critical theory. Zurn suggests that social pathologies of all sorts, as discussed in the tradition of critical theory and by Honneth in particular, can be conceived as "second-order disorders." These include pathologies of ideological recognition, maldistribution, invisibilisation, rationality distortions, reification and institutionalised self-realisation. What is at stake, in his view, are "constitutive disconnects between first-order contents and second-order reflexive

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comprehension of those contents, where those disconnects are pervasive and socially caused" (Zurn 2011, 345-6).

Think of the myth of personal responsibility for poverty. This myth is ideological in that it fails to note the causes of poverty in social arrangements, and misattributes it to personal failures. The myth also makes the systematic arrangements between the rich and the poor seem natural and legitimate – it produces a failure to critically question whether some other, more egalitarian arrangement should prevail. There is thus a disconnect between what is really going on, and what is comprehended – second-order critical questioning is blocked. And this blockage is socially caused and pervasive.

Rahel Jaeggi's (2014) approach to immanent critique of life-forms (Jaeggi 2014) is different from Zurn's but also conceptualizes social-philosophically relevant disorders as "second-order problems" (*Probleme zweiter Ordnung*); such disorders present systematic structural blockages of social learning processes: A social-philosophical critique of life-forms does not according to Jaeggi simply focus on barriers to a life-form's interaction with its environment (first-order problems), but criticizes distortions within its interpretive framework of practice (Jaeggi 2014, 337).

Such suggestions have been influential in recent debates. For example Axel Honneth, in his *Freedom's Right* approvingly refers to Zurn's analysis of social pathology.[vii]

Unlike the anti-theoretical approach, we really have reasons to support this approach once we have successful analyses, successful theoretical proposals. Is Zurn's proposal successful? There are reasons to doubt that. The cases Zurn discusses do not seem to fit into his characterization of pathologies as second-order disorders.[viii]

One broad class of social phenomena, which the "second-order disorder" suggestions seemingly put aside, are the cases where there's simply something wrong with the (first-order) social reality. It has features, which are unjust, undemocratic, cause suffering, prevent well-being, cause lack of freedom and autonomy, or prevent genuine solidarity. There can be oppression, misrecognition, exploitation, domination and brute coercion of various sorts even though the subjects can reflexively grasp these – the fault need not lie in the disconnect between reality and reflection, but in the social reality itself. (Of course, it may help the oppressor if the oppression is ideologically disguised.)

Typically such first-order phenomena have a connection to socially caused suffering: to "first order" experiences of participants, before critical reflection. Say, cases of invisibilization typically come with "learnt self-invisibilization": the agent taking on the role of being socially invisible.

But one kind of disconnect could hold between social reality and one's first-order comprehension and experience of it. Various cases of anomie, of lack of suitable socialization (see e.g. Durkheim 1895/2014, Honneth 2014) can lead agents to be disconnected cognitively, motivationally or practically from the operative social reality.

Even if the suggestion that all social pathologies are second-order disorders will turn out to be too narrow, there is conceptual room to develop a more encompassing account, still within the confines of the second, anti-naturalist approach. Instead of merely "second-order disorders", a more encompassing structural approach could thematize five interrelated elements[ix]: First, there is (first-order) oppression, domination or misrecognition taking place in the social world. Second, the first-order beliefs (of the victims) contribute to this oppression, domination or misrecognition (e.g. by serving the interests of the elite, by hiding the oppression, domination or misrecognition from sight). This is not so in cases of 'brute, naked power' where the oppression goes on independently of the victims' understandings, but in other cases it holds. Third, at the second-order level (beliefs about the origin of the first-order beliefs), the first-order beliefs are understood as natural, unchangeable, to be taken for granted, rather than created by social mechanisms. Or in other ways, critical second-order reflection of the constitutive first-order contents (both in the social world and in the participants' takes) is blocked. Fourth, the idea may be that the very same social mechanisms both uphold oppression, create the problematic first-order beliefs, and distort the second-order understandings as well, e.g. by blocking reflection on the matter. Fifth, there could be 'third-order' disorders: the pre-emptive social *silencing* of criticism even when critical reflection takes place. Social pathologies can be disconnects between any of these elements.

What is the "third-order" in such a suggestion? Even if the obstacles for critical reflection were removed, there could be further obstacles for effective social criticism. On the side of the subjects (a), there could be motivational or practical obstacles: the agents could be disciplined such that they ignore their second-order reflections perhaps as "naïve" or "utopian," or as fit objects of ridicule. More importantly, on the side of the social reality (b), the situation could be such that effective criticism is pre-empted, critical voices doomed to be silenced in advance, the credibility

or authority of the complaints taken away by default. This is the case where the views of the victims are deemed irrelevant, or the victims have been robbed off a language, in which to express the criticism (cf. Lyotard 1988). This can take various forms from literally labelling some people deranged, or taking some forms of complaints ("naïve" ones) as a sign that the person cannot be taken seriously, to merely ignoring them, making it institutionally the case that they are not being heard, or that their speech acts fall on deaf ears. Again, typically the social world is constitutively tied with the participants, so that socially pre-empting the critique (b) can be internalized in a form of self-censorship (a): as one knows in advance that criticisms will be socially labelled "naïve," the subject may learn to sanction one's critical takes by oneself, so social silencing is not needed thanks to socially created self-silencing. (To use Bourdieu's language, this is just one way in which one's habitus contains the demands of the fields.) This is then in a sense a 'third-order' disorder, as the assumption is that one's second-order reflection is more or less intact and not cognitively out of touch with reality, it is just that one's motivation and possibilities to effectively act on it have been preventively blocked.

It remains to be seen how well such a more encompassing structural account will be able to cover all the relevant phenomena. In this essay, our aim is to characterize this approach to social pathologies *vis a vis* the rival approaches. The second approach agrees with the first in that the starting point are various social wrongs (from misrecognition and invisibilization to the norms of self-realization in late capitalism), and that the naturalistic, medical or biological connotations are to be avoided, but it argues (like the third and fourth approaches will) that such social wrongs share a structure. In Zurn's and Jaeggi's proposals, the structure is that of a second-order disorder, and in more inclusive views, a more complex structure.

On this family of approaches, the naturalist or medical connotations of "pathology" do not seem important. Even if the concept of pathology here is clearly intended as a critical tool for diagnosing social disorders not grasped thoroughly enough by "mere" moral or political criticism, this view of pathologies of recognition is not immediately tied to the wider pathology diagnostic tradition in social philosophy that Honneth traces back to Rousseau in his early essay on "Pathologies of the Social" (cf. Honneth, 2007). One advantage for that tradition is that the concept of pathology seems a handy way of distinguishing the project of "critical social philosophy" from the projects of "political philosophy" or "moral philosophy" that apply standards of political legitimacy and moral rightness on social conditions. An intuition behind this use of the concept of pathology seems to be that it adds a distinct layer of social wrongs or evils to the picture. Under pathological

conditions, the questions of moral rightness and political legitimacy appear as one-sided and do not grasp the specific disorder addressed.

This second approach risks ending up too abstract and it will face difficult challenges both from the side of the first approach, and from the remaining two. Firstly, it is not clear whether such diverse phenomena as ideology, reification, invisibilization, organized self-realisation, etc. can be understood as having one common conceptual structure. Secondly, here, too, the terminology of "pathologies" remains an optional – and perhaps in some sense misleading – way to speak about pervasive forms of ideologically concealed socially caused suffering. There seem to be no compelling reasons why these social evils be called "pathologies." By contrast, in social philosophy, the concept of a pathology has often been employed in circumstances that emphasize either its medical (Canguilhem) or biological (Durkheim) connotations. Such uses might point to disorders that are 'first order,' 'third order' or even render the vocabulary of different orders unnecessary. Therefore, it follows to see if there would be approaches that could remain true to that tradition.

Social Pathology as Disease of the Social Organism: Revitalized Social Organicism

One of our guiding questions has been: Is something "pathological" because it is *wrong* or is it wrong because it is *pathological*? Whereas the first two of our four conceptions use the concept of social pathology to denote some social failures that are wrong in some specified way, the last two conceptions do the opposite: they use the concept of pathology in order to diagnose social life, to identify social wrongs. If the proponents of the first two conceptions use the concept in a predominantly metaphorical way – they *translate* the concept of pathology into a "normative" vocabulary –, the following two perspectives, on the contrary, use a contentful notion of pathology in order to find out what is wrong about the social organism or about social life. In the tradition of social philosophy, naturalistic terminology has also been put to use in a more literal, self-conscious way, and so the concept of social pathology has been used to deliberately produce medical and biological connotations or to articulate the kind of *life* that social practices present.

The third option prevalent in contemporary social ontology is to conceive social pathology on the model of the ill organism. Here, social pathologies present deviations from the reproductive values and ends of society. In the broad tradition of social philosophy, this use of pathology diagnostic concepts is, of course, familiar from Durkheim's diagnosis of anomie (Durkheim 1895/2015, pp. 277-292). Its roots, however, reach back to Plato's *Republic* and have been modernized by Auguste

Comte's *Cours de philosophie positive*. Although Hegel arguably does not directly endorse an organicistic view of society (see below), he does in the *Philosophy of Right* treat the *state* as an organism (Hegel 1821/2008, §§ 46, 258, 259, 267, 269 and 302), which has been a source for a predominantly right-Hegelian line of organicistic social theory. Similarly, in the French tradition, the likes of Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre utilized an organicistic social ontology to criticize abstract principles of liberalism in political philosophy (cf. Spaemann 1959; Fischbach 2009, Ch. 2).

Honneth (2014b) has attempted to revitalize the societal organism for the purposes of contemporary critical social theory. He concludes his recent article by dreading that "without rehabilitating this organic conception that has long since been declared dead (…) the thesis that societies also can be stricken by diseases cannot be justified" (Honneth 2014b, 702). More radically, Franck Fischbach, in his *Manifeste pour une philosophie social*, links the faith of social philosophy with the view that society is continuous with nature in the sense that it "naturally constitutes itself as an organism" (*comme un organisme naturellement constitué*) (Fischbach 2009, 53).

Such approaches to social philosophy conceive their object "society" as the kind of thing that can fall ill – a living organism. If the social is pathological, then the social organism has fallen ill. The idea is that society's institutional complexes can be understood analogically as the "social organs" of the "social organism." These institutional complexes, then, appear "dead," if they fail to serve the ends of the societal whole or if their inter-institutional communication is disrupted, just like a hand as an organ of the human organism is dead, if it does not fulfill the hand-specific functions in the maintenance of the living human being or fails to cooperate with other organs of the body, in which case the organism itself is ill. Therefore, the pathological state of society is here not diagnosed as a disconnect within practical self-reflection, but as the result of an institutional "dysfunction," "misdevelopment," "malformation" or "maladjustment": The institutional organs are displaced from their functions, i.e. the tasks assigned to them by the demands of societal reproduction such that the social organism can be maintained in its current form on a continuing basis (Honneth 2014a, p. 128; Honneth 2014b, pp. 700-702).

An evident advantage of this organicistic conception is that it makes sense of the concept of social pathology as a critical tool in its own right by delimiting it from other social-philosophical projects such as the critique of ideology or the critique of reification on the one hand but also from the more narrowly normative undertakings of moral and political philosophy. In the two above approaches the choice of the name "social pathology" to denote the wrongs criticized was arbitrary

in the sense that the criticized phenomena could just as well be brought under the labels "social evil," "reflexive disorder" or "higher-order wrong." Here, on the contrary, the transference of the word "pathology" from the sphere of organic life and medicine to that of social life and criticism becomes the critical point of the concept's use. It is the idea of pathology that shall help the social theorists to diagnose the peculiar wrongs in the social world.[x] The critical force of the concept lies in the supposition that societal reproduction can fail analogically to the way in which the self-maintenance of a living organism is disrupted when it falls ill. Therefore, there is, on this conception, no distance anymore between the critical claim and the naturalistic vocabulary of the social pathologist.

This conception, then, avoids some of the difficulties of the second-order view: First, there are the difficulties with the projection of a relational second-order structure onto all social-philosophically relevant wrongs in the second-order conception. As the organicistic view takes the biological and medical connotations of the word "pathology" to bear critical weight, it does not target just any wrongs with an adequate second-order relational structure but systematic disturbances in the reproduction of the social whole. Pathology is ascribed to social entities only to the extent that these are of the kind that can fall ill, which is supposed to be the case with "society," as it is taken to present a self-maintaining whole. This conception, then, belongs to a tradition of classical, predominantly sociological, social-theoretical diagnoses of dysfunctions on a peculiarly *societal* level.[xi] Here, social pathologies are neither "socially caused" individual problems nor socially "aggregated" personal disorders but reproductive dysfunctions of the society itself.[xii] The "illness" or "disease" of society is not attributed to the many suffering individuals, not even to the malfunctioning institutional "organs" but only to the social organism.

Accordingly, also the organicistic conception can be used to single out social philosophy as a discipline in its own right by circumventing it from moral and political philosophy. The theorists diagnosing social pathologies have, so goes the argument, their subject-matter on a super-individual, societal level irreducible to single acts, social practices or even collective attitudes. Unlike in the first two views, here the diagnosis of social pathologies is not treated as a critical enterprise *next to* moral and political philosophy. On the contrary, social philosophy has to view morality and politics as societal institutional complexes and thus make the objects of moral and political philosophy its own. Therefore, the theorists working with the organicistic conception cannot leave the first order normative content of the criticized practices untouched. Morality and politics can

conflict with other institutional spheres of the societal whole; they might fail at their reproductive tasks, in which case they will be diagnosed as requiring revision.[xiii]

Yet, this advantage comes to a high prize. Many intersubjective social wrongs that proponents of the first two conceptions often call "pathologies of recognition" risk falling outside the picture. The organicistic conception, although somehow recognition-theoretically constructed in Honneth's works, explicitly targets dysfunctions on such a high macro-level that it becomes difficult to see how they might be conceived as pathologies in the sense of a recognition-theoretical understanding of sociality. As such macro-level dysfunctions need to trickle down through rich layers of social mediation before they affect interpersonal relationships, this might make the organicistic conception unattractive or even useless at least for an encompassing understanding of social pathologies. The intuition of these theorists who stick to the first two conceptions is that social pathologies are somehow linked to the way in which social reality denies adequate recognition to persons (see Canivez 2011 and the papers in Laitinen and Särkelä 2015). For such a research question it is just not helpful to limit focus to a societal macro-level. In contrast to the all too wide umbrella conception of social pathology, the organismic view tends to become too restricted for concrete diagnoses and so to debilitate the critical force of the naturalistic vocabulary it emphatically sought to revitalize.

In this picture, then, the naturalistic vocabulary of pathology diagnosis obtains a critical function. This has important ontological implications. It is namely not anymore the question of structurally characterized wrongs simply labeled "pathology"; on the contrary, social conditions will be exposed as criticizable, *because* they are dead, ill – pathological. It is the contentful idea of pathology itself that lends critical force to the diagnosis by a transference of the concept of illness to social phenomena. From this follows that it is not normatively neutral how the social theorist understands the relation between organic and social life, between nature and society, between the self-maintenance of the organism and the reproduction of society. After all, on this account, the critical force of the diagnosis is conceptually dependent on the ontological commitment that societies belong to the class of entities that can fall ill. In what sense society, in fact, might fall ill or be an organism, depends on how the social theorist conceives the relation between nature and society. This commits the social pathologist to some sort of metaphysics or cosmology, if she wants to clarify the ontological commitments of her diagnostic social criticism, which she probably should. Hence, in a stronger sense than the more "metaphorical" uses of the notion of social pathology above, this view is "metaphysically loaded."

This metaphysical loadedness needs, of course, not be a problem, as long as the pathologist clarifies her metaphysical commitments such that her interlocutors can assess their plausibility and fruitfulness for the project of social criticism. Alas, contemporary social pathologists say very little about the metaphysical implications underlying their critical practices, which threatens to leave the social organism hanging in the air. This might be due to the strong foothold of "post-metaphysical thinking" in critical theory. Nevertheless, there arguably is a shared implicit understanding of the relation between nature and society among contemporary organicistic social pathologists: The third conception of social pathology is namely based on the idea of an *analogy* between organism and society. That is to say, these social theorists take it that there is enough of a *structural similarity* between the biological organism and society. The idea is, then, that although biological organisms and social organisms constitute different kinds of substances, they can still be ontologically characterized so that what appears as a *structural* deficit on the one side of the analogy, also can be conceived as such on the other.

In this picture, furthermore, "social pathology" is a concept that is *first* taken from a biological, medical, natural vocabulary and context to be *then* applied to a social, societal, culturally mediated material. However, if one understands biological organism and society to be structurally *similar* (that is, not *identical*) and social pathology to be an *analogy*, then naturally one must also hold that they are not only similar, but also, importantly, *different*. The organicist social pathologist, like Honneth, albeit thinking that society indeed is a *social* organism, clearly does not think that society is a *biological* organism, it is only in some relevant way *like* (and hence also, *unlike*) a biological organism (therefore, the social organicist does not have to ontologically reduce social kinds to natural kinds, she just constructs an analogy between them). This difference, now, it seems to be assumed, lies in the higher complexity, reflexivity and freedom involved in societal life. The picture is then that there is something *added* to society that is not present in pre-social nature.

A disadvantage of this analogical ontology is that it still makes for a reductionist fallacy once put to critical use: If the social pathologists understand their critical notion to be an analogy from the workings of a less complex pre-social nature and to be used on a more complex societal material, as if in an extra step, they would already at the outset limit their claim reductively, as their evaluative work would always consist in applying the concept of something poorer to something that is by definition richer, that is, conceptually more complex, flexible, freer. Therefore, this conception

makes itself vulnerable to normativistic and culturalistic worries at the outset, such as might be voiced by the proponents of the two previous conceptions of social pathology.

A third problem concerns the ontological assumptions that the organicistic social pathologists have to make for their diagnosis to have critical power. These assumptions are counterproductive in the sense that the organicistic social pathologists seem to end up reproducing the very illness they sought to cure. The worry is that the organism analogy squeezes society into such a static shape that *radical* social critique becomes impossible. The thing made impossible is the critical scrutiny of reproductive ends, the "denaturalizing" of the roots (*radix*) of societal self-maintenance as socially mutable, as social, not natural, kinds. The claim to provide for a more radical, more encompassing and inclusive social critique than moral or political philosophy was what motivated the diagnosis of social pathologies in the first place. It is, however, far from clear whether the imperatives of societal persistence and the successful communication between institutional complexes provide potential for emancipatory social critique. Are not, in this picture of the organism, the reproductive ends simply "given" and so protected from criticism? Criticism of those ends will seem pathological, and not emancipatory.

A fourth and final difficulty regards the implicit ontology of the organism, which provides the structure for the organicistic pathologists' social ontology. The basic ontological commitment of this view is, as has been noted, that society is a kind of substance that can fall ill, and that such a substance is the self-maintaining organism, because of which an analogy must be constructed between the functional structure of the living organism and the mode of existence of societies. Just like in the biological organism every organ and every process is fully coordinated and has a specific and exclusive task to accomplish (one can neither breathe with one's fingers nor digest with one's ears), so in society the different institutional complexes need to be harmonized such that they fulfill their specific tasks in societal reproduction. Now, a skeptic could not only challenge the validity of the inference from the successful functioning of an organism to the fulfilling society, but question the basis of the analogy itself: The ontology of the organism implied here is based on the Aristotelian picture of the purposively organized living being that does not allow for a functional change in one of its parts without the collapse of the entire structure; the organism is conceived of as an ideally planned organization where no part can fail without disturbing the whole. The problem is, however, that organisms aren't like that: Firstly, organisms are products of natural history and individual genesis, both being cases of functional transformation; secondly, organs with analogical function appear in manifold structures – one and the same task can be resolved in multiple ways;

thirdly, organisms are to a very large extent able to maintain themselves despite loss of organs – cats and dogs adapt after losing a leg, humans survive without the spleen, rats go on living their rat-lives even without the cerebrum (Hampe 2006, 210-211). Concisely, with regards both to evolutionary and individual history as well as to conceptual structure, the organic is more plastic than assumed by the organism analogy in organicistic social ontologies. Therefore, the third conception of social pathology not only becomes useless in critical practice and compresses society into an unconvincingly static structure; it also misinterprets the object of the analogy, the organism. Even biological organisms are more plastic, transformative and free than the organicistic pathologists' society, if the underlying ontology is taken seriously.[xiv] Hence, thinking of society as something that can fall ill, does not commit the social pathologist to endorsing the *organicistic* conception of the organism.

Finally, one can, even more radically, question whether stabilizing self-maintenance is a convincing ontological principle of organic life at all. In modern philosophical cosmologies, there has been the contrary tendency to emphasize instability, growth and intensity increase. To quote Whitehead (1929/1971, p. 4): "The art of persistence is to be dead." According to Whitehead, self-maintenance, far from being the characteristic of organisms, is what they "trade off" in exchange for growth: In contrast to inorganic processes which might endure multiple times longer than any biological organism, living beings are characterized by growth: they are processes that grow until they stagnate, fall ill, and, eventually, die.

Social Pathology as Degeneration of Social Life: Naturalism of Growth and Stagnation

This brings us to the fourth and last conception, which, as it happens, is defended, among others, by just these metaphysicians of growth and intensity: Nietzsche, Dewey and Whitehead. Dewey, whose social-theoretical works exhibit a rich naturalistic vocabulary of social pathology (Särkelä 2017b), objects to the organicist conception in his *Public and Its Problems*:

> Human associations may be ever so organic in origin and firm in operation, but they develop into societies in a human sense only as their consequences, being known, are esteemed and sought for. Even if "society" were as much an organism as some writers have held, it would not on that account be society. (Dewey 1929/1988, p. 330)

What is characteristic for human societies, Dewey implies, is that they are not geared to ends of the organic kind. On the contrary, they relate to their ends as "ends-in-view" in the sense that they need to be "esteemed and sought for." In this way, Dewey's social ontology, while still being naturalistic in regarding the social as a *life*-process, takes societal values as mutable social kinds and the social organization as transformable, already at the outset.[xv] The important thing to note, however, is that Dewey explicitly rejects the organicistic social ontology, while remaining a social pathologist of the naturalist genus. This gives reason to speculate that the idea of a diagnosis of social pathology, which locates its evaluative authority and invests its critical force in its naturalistic connotations, might not, after all, be dependent on "rehabilitating (the) organic conception," as Honneth (2014b, p. 702) fears. Dewey namely drops the organism analogy, while sticking firmly to diagnosing social pathologies. Whereas Dewey is far from constructing the object of social ontology in terms of the Aristotelian organism, he, firstly, is clearly convinced that the social constitutes a *life process*, which he calls "associated life" (Dewey 1973, pp. 90-98), and, secondly, proposes a conception of the social philosopher as a "physician who attempts by acting upon what he knows to produce health in place of disease" (Dewey 2015, p. 13).[xvi] Thirdly, Dewey's usage of a naturalistic vocabulary in his social ontology cannot be understood as vague or "merely" metaphorical, as he also happens to be the author of a systematic naturalistic metaphysics (Dewey 1925/2008). Dewey's naturalistic metaphysics, in fact, is a part of his social philosophy, and thus informs his social criticism.[xvii] Therefore, one should not give up all hope just yet for a conception of social pathology, which bases its evaluative authority on its naturalistic vocabulary while avoiding the mistakes of social organicism.

Self-consciously naturalistic yet anti-organicistic, this third conception of social pathology seems also to be implied in the current debate. It has, however, not been systematically developed to date.[xviii] Yet in certain writings where Honneth and Neuhouser leave the organism analogy in the background, they seem to operate with a vocabulary that could perfectly well get off the ground without presupposing organicism (Honneth 2007 and Neuhouser 2016). Therefore, these same authors adumbrate an alternative naturalistic conception of social pathology combining the advantages and avoiding the disadvantages of the second and third views. When they namely switch the perspective from the comparison of society with the biological organism to the description and evaluation of societal processes as "social life," an alternative naturalism for social ontology is vernacularized.

Whereas organicism rests on the conception of the organism as an ideally organized self-maintaining substance and regards this organism as the ontological principle of life, the idea of a distinctively social life, by contrast, is committed to the idea of a *life-process* operating above and beneath the living body and conceives life as irreducible to the organism. This picture conceptualizes the object of the social pathologists not on the model of the diseases of organisms but, more inclusively, as *stagnation* or even *degeneration* of a distinctively social life-process. Social life gets pathological when it stagnates, and degenerates to a genus of life below a distinctively social level of life-process. In conceiving the social in terms of social *life*, it preserves the vitality of the naturalistic vocabulary, but in focusing on the social life-process more generally than on merely "society itself," it rejects modeling the social on the single living being, thus avoiding the problems of the organicistic social ontology.

We claim that this is the most promising of the four conceptions, although it is the least discussed and can be found to be merely implicit in the works of some the protagonists in the contemporary discourse on social pathology. However, even if the authors in the current debate have to a great extent ignored this path, we acknowledge that its basic ontological commitments are far from being new. Although Hegel is often read as a social organicist, one might argue that, for his social ontology, more important than the theory of the state organism, is his conception of the social as "self-conscious" or "sublated" life (*aufgehobenes Leben*) (Hegel 1806/1977, §§ 178-184). The "recognition" (*Anerkennen*) that characterizes human sociality presents a kind of "life" that, however, is "sublated" as life.[xix] Also Nietzsche's "life" of "plastic power", for which history can be of use or disadvantage, is understood as that of a "culture" or a "people" (Nietzsche 2007, 62), yet not modeled as an organism; nonetheless, Nietzsche holds on to his pathology diagnostic claim that it can suffer from "the malady of history" (Nietzsche 2007, 120) and "degenerate" (Nietzsche 2007, 67). In Adorno, again, the "life," whose "damaging" *Minima Moralia* diagnoses, is far from being reducible to the terms of the reproductive dysfunctions of a societal organism (Adorno 1951/2005). Finally, the social-philosophical import of Whitehead's thought is often ignored in both contemporary social ontology and process philosophy, but in more essayistic works surrounding the publication of *Process and Reality*, such as *The Function of Reason* and *Adventure of Ideas*, Whitehead develops an account of the "criticism" and the "decay" of social life (Whitehead 1933/1967, part I).

Also in this conception, there is a cosmology in play that delivers content to the critical concept of social pathology. In the works of some pathologists of social life it remains implicit, but there are also authors, such as Dewey and Whitehead, who made considerable efforts to make explicit the cosmology implied in their naturalistic vocabulary of social critique. A crucial point is here that social processes are conceived as living and dying not by force of an analogy to an allegedly unproblematic conception of life and death in organic life. Instead, these pathologists understand social life and organic life as *homologous*: Social life has *grown* out of organic life, increased in complexity and intensity, evolved into its distinctive form irreducible to organic life, yet remaining a kind of life-process. For this reason, social life can *stagnate* and *degenerate* just as literally as organic life. In fact, a pathologist of social life might argue, as Dewey does, that social practices *live* and *die* in an even more literal sense than organic processes, as they present a higher degree of intensity, depth and freedom (Dewey 1934/2008, Ch. 8). The underlying cosmology then implies a processualized *scala naturae*, consisting of fields or stages of nature, which is simultaneously and importantly conceived as the natural history of social life (Dewey 1928/2008). On this account, one can regard death in organic life as a degeneration onto the poorer stage of chemical processuality; when an organism dies, it dissolves into a manifold of chemical processes. As social life in this picture presents the sublation of organic life, it can become pathological in two ways: It can lose its transformative growth and stagnate to a merely organic process or it can fail at reproducing its form and degenerate into mere inorganic processuality.

Whitehead's and Dewey's important work of explicating such processual cosmologies, which we only briefly hint at on this occasion, can also help to spell out the ontological commitments of diagnosis of social life-processes more generally. Against this background, one can appreciate the critical impetus of Adorno's concepts of the "administered world" (*verwaltete Welt)* or the "socialized society" (*vergesellschaftete Gesellschaft*): What is pathological about such social formations is not primarily their dysfunctional character, but, on the contrary, their self-maintaining functioning itself (Adorno 1953, 1960). Social life literally dies, when it merely maintains its form, because it then degenerates to a merely organic form life. What might still present the form of health for a biological organism, can constitute the form of a pathology of social life. On the other hand, this conception can retain some of the critical intention of organicistic diagnoses: Also social life is life in the sense that it needs to maintain its form in order to persist. Social practices and societies can, therefore, also on this view, die if they fail in their reproductive functions. But importantly, to diagnose such

malfunctions is not the sole task of the pathologist of social life and it is not based on a rigid substance ontology of the organism.

What is common to these social ontologies of growth and transformation is that they situate social critique *within the object* of social critique, that is, within social life: There is, on this view, a dialectical relationship between social critique and social stagnation, or between "pathology" in the sense of a "science of suffering" and "pathology" in the sense of an "experience of suffering." Social critique is part and parcel of the social life-process: It can vivify a stagnating social life or disintegrate its organization. Social life is, then, conceived as the form of life that once in a while kills its reproductive ends, it regards its current form as an "already dead shell" (Dewey 1973, p. 87). These social pathologists of growth and transformation represent social life as a kind of *synthesis of organic and inorganic nature*: In contrast to organic reproduction, social processes need to disintegrate in order to integrate: Critique has, in the social, become a medium of life. This naturalism, then, incorporates the Hegelian insight that spiritual life is a life that lives through and maintains itself in death (Hegel 1806/1977, § 32), because it survives the death of its ends, and vivifies itself ever once in a while by setting new ends that then reintegrate, re-organize "associated life" as a "society." Therefore, social life is reconstructed by the pathologists of social life as a kind of pulsating processual unity of the organic and the inorganic: Just like any life-process, it needs to be maintained, but, in order to be genuinely *social* life, it needs to be transformed as well. Thus in this ontology, social life oscillates between organic reproduction and inorganic disintegration. Social life-processes can fail at both tasks: They can die organically, if they cannot maintain themselves as growing within their form; and they can stagnate socially, if they merely maintain their form.

On this view, the science of social pathology is, then, part and parcel of the phenomenon of social pathology, because social critique can kill reproductive ends and be the societal pathology in disintegrating social life or it can serve to preserve societal values and be the social pathology in blocking transformative practice. The work of the pathologist of social life is, hence, critical in the sense, in which the situation of the physician, whose work can both kill and save the patient, is critical.

But as reflecting and controlling this process of social integration and disintegration by diagnosing and curing the arrhythmia, social life becomes, what Dewey later describes as a

movement of social "respiration": a process of intertwining phases of "construction" and "criticism" (Dewey 1930, 125-144), an "ongoing process of social reconstruction" (Dewey 1973, 80). Social philosophy then aims at reshaping the reproductive and transformative claims of social life by means of self-transformative practice (see Särkelä 2017a). The diagnosis of social pathologies becomes the practice of criticizing the ways of social life to critically relate back onto itself.

Conclusion

As we have seen, "social pathology" is a central concept for social philosophy, linking social ontology and social criticism. Salient candidates for social pathology are such social evils as reification, alienation, invisibilization, ideological social practices (including ideological recognition), distributive injustice, social inequality, economic exploitation and rationality deficits. Do we gain something by thinking of these social evils as pathologies – do we perhaps see them as wrong because pathological? Does the notion of "social pathology" help in demarcating social from moral and political philosophy? And do we presuppose an "organicistic" view of society – and if not, is there some better naturalistic concept involved? The answers depend on what we mean by "social pathology." The four conceptions differ in the answers they give to these three questions.

This paper has mapped four conceptions: first, "pathology" is just a convenient label for what is socially criticizable. We do not recommend this usage for anyone willing to take "social pathology" seriously, considering the heavy historical baggage with which the notion comes. If one wishes to speak of what is socially criticizable in general terms, one can use terms such as "social wrongs," "social evils" or, obviously, "what is socially criticizable." While this usage is *compatible with* distinguishing social from moral and political philosophy, the notion of "social pathology" is not here taken to be *helpful* for that demarcation. Rather, it must first find out what is criticizable, and demarcate social from moral and political phenomena – and only then arrive at what "social pathologies" might be. We do not argue here that that is impossible, but merely note that some other usages of "social pathology" will be helpful in those two tasks: by first getting a grip on social pathology, one may then arrive at what is socially wrong, and what is the task of social philosophy as demarcated from moral and political philosophy. This first approach sees the notion of social pathology as unhelpful in both respects. The first approach also avoids such naturalistic concepts

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as "organism" or "life" – as it thinks that what we have learnt from, say, critical race theory or gender studies are weighty reasons to drop any such "biologicist" hints.

The second view held that, when the social evils share a structure, they are properly all cases of pathology. A much discussed view holds that the structure is that of second-order disorder. This view thus presupposes that one first identifies cases of social evils or wrongs, and only secondly studies which of such wrongs or evils fall under the notion of "social pathology" so understood. We briefly outlined and criticized this view: Zurn's view is in principle compatible with the aim of defining the task of social philosophy with reference to social pathologies – but it seems to be in trouble with accounting for many of the cases that have been seen central to social philosophy in that sense (whereas the less "principled" or "structured" first approach cannot have that problem as it needs not rule any cases out). Zurn's account concerns arguably "reflexive" rather than "social" pathologies, analogously to the difference between reflexive and social freedom. A richer account than Zurn's would be needed, and providing such a richer account of the aspects of social pathology seems, at least first, to be a philosophical exercise guided by the already comprehended cases rather than by a unified understanding of what social pathologies are (that is, it proceeds from cases to general understanding); but nothing rules out such unified understanding emerging from this exercise, and after that guiding new critical social philosophy (from general understanding to new cases). Again, the approach is anti-naturalistic, which can be cheered by some, but for others will mean missing a potential benefit.

A third option is to conceive of a social pathology as an "illness" or "disease" that infects a society as a social organism. Here the medical and biological metaphor comes to the fore: this perspective focuses on deviations from the reproductive values or ends of a society. In the wider tradition of social philosophy, we know this use from classical views such as Durkheim's diagnosis of anomie. This approach invests evaluative authority in the naturalistic vocabulary of pathology diagnosis: the society is conceived of as the kind of thing that can fall ill, an "organism." We argued that this is to be avoided for several reasons. Even if it would be helpful for defining social wrongs, or the extension of social philosophy, and take onboard the idea that social philosophy is naturalistic, it seems to give wrong, implausible answers.

The fourth view considers social pathology not via the model of the illnesses of the organism but in terms of stagnation or even degeneration in the process of social life. It thus preserves the vitality of the naturalistic metaphor by conceiving society in terms of social life while avoiding the static

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model of the social organism. This conception is the most promising of the four for using social pathology as a concept in a critical social ontology as it is not ontologically lightweight or lacking critical potential.

So, to sum up: what do we recommend concerning the four conceptions? We have criticized the organicistic view as implausible, and argued that the view starting from the notion of social life is better in comparison. Both of these views promise to put the notion of "social pathology" to use, for understanding social wrongs and for understanding social philosophy, and both argue that critical social philosophy can be naturalistic. It is just that the social life-view does it better than the more implausible organism–view.

We also suggest that it is a mistake to think that a naturalistic social philosophy is necessarily uncritical, or blind to e.g. how race or gender are not biologically determined kinds – they are indeed socially determined, but that does not show that social life as such cannot be understood as a "field of nature," e.g. as "second nature." So unless there are further reasons to reject naturalism, the social life-view wins our comparison.

But if someone for other reasons is uncomfortable with naturalism, one may want to take the first or second approach. The second approach sees "social pathology" as more informative category than the first one, and therefore runs the risk of providing a characterization that does not capture all central cases of social pathology. Indeed, we criticized Zurn's version for exactly that, and suggested that a richer version would be needed to capture what all central cases of social pathology may share. Or then one can stick to the first approach which does not see the notion of "social pathology" as a very helpful notion at all. But we hope to have shown that that would be a premature conclusion.

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Notes

[i] It is in principle easy to make any typology extensionally exhaustive (e.g. Durkheim's theory versus other theories), but any typology will select certain features for the classification, and leave other features aside; so different typologies and classifications will be useful for different purposes. Our typology is meant to address important, partly unnoticed differences in the tradition of "social philosophy", exemplified by Axel Honneth and the Frankfurt School Critical Theory. This tradition engages in descriptive-explanatory (symptomatology, diagnosis, aethiology) and normative-critical-therapeutic (finding cure) work, and our typology aims to clarify the role of social pathologies in those tasks. We thank anonymous referees for comments on this.

[ii] The "naturalistic vocabulary of social philosophy," which is simply implied by the use of such concepts as "social life" or "social pathology" does not as such imply any ontological, ethical or methodological position under the banner of "naturalism" but is often combined with explicit anti-naturalism. For a detailed discussion of social-critical naturalism with reference to John Dewey's social philosophy see Särkelä 2017b and Testa 2017. For a discussion of the anti-naturalism typical of continental critical theory see Ansell-Pearson and Protevi 2017.

[iii] All of the approaches we discuss are equally critical of, say, homophobic labelling of homosexuality as "pathological". But the first two views argue that as there is nothing wrong with homosexuality, it is not pathological. What is really "pathological", on this first view, is to think of social kinds as biologically fixed. On the third view, social pathology is not attributable to individuals or social groups at all, but only to the society itself. On the fourth view, one might argue that homophobia is pathological, because it tends to stagnate a transformation of a rigid gender hierarchy.

[iv] The question is not whether social pathologies are social wrongs, but rather which has the priority. The relevant sort of wrongness is not *moral* wrongness of individual actions, but what can be called social or "socio-ethical wrongness" of larger social patterns, practices, processes, institutions or structures. Moral wrongness is about the moral impermissibility of individual actions, and about violations of "ought-to-do" –norms. The relevant kind of "socio-ethical" wrongness concerns more structural features: something that ought not be the case, and is unacceptable and socially criticizable. It is a stronger notion than mere "badness". Calling pathologies socially "bad" (while correct in that something of negative value is indeed at stake) does not quite capture the full normative force:

e.g. pain is a bad thing, but sometimes it is acceptable to cause pain (e.g. in medical contexts). What is socially wrong is not merely bad, but is further unacceptable and criticizable. (One can also note that there is a naturalistic use of "wrongness", when describing pathological states: "There's something wrong with my stomach," "you're vomiting, what's wrong with you?" From this kind of usage of wrong, Philippa Foot (2001), for example, derives an ethical kind of wrongness.)

[v] A more complicated view would be that developed e.g. by Paul Ricoeur (1970, 28), holding that a detour via various theoretizations is necessary, even if each theory will prove to be one-sided. That is a less anti-theoretical view, but a view, which aims at "second naivete" by a detour via even the best theories.

[vi] For more details, see Laitinen 2015.

[vii] 'In each case [Zurn] takes me to be dealing with second-order social disorders, because subjects take up false, inappropriate stances toward their relatively intact 'first-order' practices, habits and perceptions. I immediately agree to this surprising and extremely illuminating proposal in the case of my discussion of 'reification', 'invisibilisation', and 'unjust distribution'. These are indeed all higher-level hindrances on the adequate judgement, classification and articulation of everyday practices, yet I have trouble applying this proposal to my attempt to reformulate the concept of ideology in recognitional terms or determine the paradoxes of organised self-realisation. In these cases my descriptions oscillate between observations of first-order and second-order disorders.' (Honneth 2011, 417).

[viii] Cf. Laitinen 2015.

[ix] Thanks to Hans Arentshorst for a related suggestion.

[x] Philippa Foot (2001) has made a similar attempt in ethics. Just like social theorists who often use the notion of pathology to find out what might not be not in order about social life, so Foot uses the idea of "natural defect" to argue that goodness is not something merely "subjective" but an objective quality of living beings.

[xi] One question for any account of social pathology is whether a social pathology is a cumulative sum of socially caused individual pathologies, or whether it is the society that is 'ill' (and individual suffering merely its diagnostic guide) so that perhaps society can be ill without its members being ill. Or, even if a society cannot be ill when individuals are not, the question remains whether social pathology is nonetheless a distinct feature (there could be a sum of individual suffering, from other causes, without the society being in a pathological state). Interestingly, Honneth (2014b) explicitly regards 'social pathology' as a feature of a society, but in his construal of social freedom (2014a) he differs from Neuhouser (2000) in not regarding freedom as a feature of the society or the social whole.

[xii] Paradigmatically: Durkheim 1895/2014, Ch. 1. In the contemporary discourse on social pathology, Honneth and emphasizes that "diseases of society are separate phenomena, to be found solely at the level of society itself, not at the level of its individual members" (Honneth 2014b, 688).

[xiii] Classical examples include Freud's (1908/1959) evaluation of sexual morality and Durkheim's (1928/1958) evaluation of socialist politics.

[xiv] Of course, a social pathologist might talk of social organisms in a more metaphorical manner without ascribing to organicism, in which case, however, she would need to present an alternative ontology of social pathologies. If she aspires to pursue the naturalistic path, she should look to the following conception (section 5); if she, instead, wants to go on case by case, she will be committed to the first, anti-theoretical conception (section 2).

[xv] For detailed views of Dewey's social ontology and its naturalistic underpinnings see Särkelä 2017b and Testa 2017. Särkelä links Dewey's diagnosis of social pathology to his naturalistic metaphysics, whereas Testa reconstructs it against the background of Dewey's habit-ontology. For an account of Dewey's progressivist understanding of how societal evaluative frameworks develop see Laitinen 2017.

[xvi] For an insightful analysis of Dewey's conception of the philosophical critic as a physician see Hampe 2006b.

[xvii] On the social-ontological implications of his naturalistic metaphysics see Dewey 1928/2008, on the social-philosophical motivation behind his metaphysics see Särkelä 2017b.

[xviii] Closest to something resembling a systematic processual account of the pathologies of social life probably come Renault 2016, Särkelä 2017b and Testa 2017.

[xix] Neuhouser 2016.