

**paradosso**

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2022/2

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# **esuli del pensiero**

la dimensione dell'esilio

nella filosofia ebraica contemporanea

a cura di

lorenza bottacin cantoni, jacopo ceccon,

laura sanò



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ILPOLIGRAFO

# Abstracts

DANIELLE COHEN-LEVINAS

*Exile of Language and writing.*

*Passing through Levinas, Celan, Derrida, Scholem and Rosenzweig*

With the question of exile, we are confronted with a borderline experience, which philosophy fails to consider in its existential dimensions. It is true that philosophical discourse claims the possibility of standing outside the system, as if it were surveying threshold zones, outside time and space. We propose to explore the concept of exile through the thought of Emmanuel Levinas, Derrida and Celan, positing that exile is not just an interior experience, a geography of the soul that requires a speculative homeland without territory. It is also, and essentially, a lived experience, in the phenomenological sense of the term as well as in the biblical sense, referring back to an original situation that never falls back into an ontological category. From then on, this lived experience becomes an irreducible philosophical and poetic idiom.

*Keywords:* Experience, Existence, Survival, Deliverance, The Ethos of Exile, Writing about Exile.

FRANCESCA NODARI

*Epochization of the Self and felix culpa*

The aim of our essay is to show how the reflections contained in Levinas' *Carnets de captivité*, which constitute a novum, despite the awareness of immense literature on the Holocaust and its implications. So, if on the one hand his sui generis 'tale' comes close to many eyewitnesses' testimonies of humanity, on the other it is characterised by the fact that a philosopher, by the very means of philosophical reflection, attempts to give an account of human existence. Here perhaps, we have the loftiest exemplification of what we call Levinas' embodied thinking. That is, not only of a thought that goes beyond being, not only of a thought that is careful to continually undo what is said so that it does not fall into the trap of the intentional consciousness of the timeless subject, but also of a thought that knows how to take time and the Other seriously, reaching in the darkest hour of its existence the

application of the husserlian method of phenomenological reduction to the temporal and finite 'I am'. An 'I am' that reveals the ultimate foundation of its humanity in that unlimited responsibility that is the very fact of Moi and refers to that theologian understanding in a pre-Christian key: the *felix culpa*.

*Keywords:* Levinas, *Felix culpa*, Existence, Shoah, Moi.

LORENZA BOTTACIN CANTONI

*A sojourn without place.*

*Writing, wandering outside and the exile of the word in Maurice Blanchot*

The paper aims to examine Maurice Blanchot's (who was not descended from a Jewish family) complex relationship with Judaism. In his youth, the thinker had sympathized with the French right-wing political proposal of Maurras and Action Française; however, the outbreak of World War II and the first warning signs of the racist escalation of Nazism led Blanchot to reconsider his ideological position. Thanks to his friendship with Emmanuel Levinas, Blanchot first came into contact with the categories of Jewish thought as well as their dynamics. The critical reading and careful examination of Kafka's work along with the intense dialogue with his Jewish friends as Levinas, André Neher, and Jacques Derrida, provide Blanchot with a peculiar experience of Judaism and its influence on thought. As an outsider, always coming from the outside, Blanchot questions the pivotal relationship between exile and exodus, which are two ways of "being chased out" and movement to "the outside." The passive exile is transformed into an active mode of wandering (the exodus) by a word that binds the chosen people together and brings to life a truth of exile. Exodus and exile share the same ex- prefix that marks existence: Judaism testifies to the call to movement that challenges any ultimate possession and opens to another modality of existence.

*Keywords:* Blanchot, Exodus, Outside, Neher, Levinas.

JACOPO CECCON

*Jacques Derrida. Between "marranism" and the Phantom of exile*

This essay aims to highlight the inescapable relationship that links deconstruction to the singular biography of Jacques Derrida. Born in El Biar near Algiers in 1930 to a Jewish family with a Sephardic mother, the young Derrida was deprived of his French citizenship by the Vichy government, expelled from school and forced to live in the city ghetto without ever having shown any particular religious vocation or interest in Judaism, which he perceived more as a mark of infamy than as a religion of belonging. It was precisely his sense of belonging neither to the French language nor to the Jewish community that gave rise to the author's need to think of himself as one of the most marginal figures in Jewish history: the Marrano, the one who hides the visible marks of his Jewishness in the secret of his name and, paradoxically, for this reason, turns out to be the most faithful to the Abrahamic creed.

*Keywords:* Derrida, Jewishness, Abraham, Deconstruction, The Other.

ENRICA LISCIANI-PETRINI

*Jankélévitch and “The Pathos of Exile”*

This essay begins with a comprehensive overview of the relationship between French philosopher Vladimir Jankélévitch and his culture of Jewish origin. After an initial phase of relative distance, since 1940, with the tragic events linked to the Shoah, this relationship gradually became more intense and significant for Jankélévitch's own philosophical reflection. The essay then goes to the heart of the matter. Jankélévitch not only recovers the fundamental vision of Judaism – completely different from that of the Western tradition, based on the invisibility of the being of the real – but also frames it within his own ‘meontology’, of Bergsonian derivation but extended by various influences, based in turn on the ineffability and insubstantiality of such being. A vision, therefore, which explains the state of ‘wandering’ – and exile – of the Jews in the first instance, but which, on closer inspection, ultimately constitutes all human beings. This is so even if they generally tend to conceal or remove it, convinced that they live in a secure ‘homeland’ and on solid ground. A conviction that the Jew, by his very “being”, dismantles from the ground up, thereby becoming a problematic principle of disquiet. This is what makes him, for all his similarity, dissimilar and radically different, the bearer of an insurmountable otherness. Hence moreover, according to Jankélévitch – a relentless denunciator of the crimes of the Shoah – the rejection of the Jew and the associated persecution which devastated Europe in the last century.

*Keywords:* Jankélévitch, Judaism, Ontological Ineffability, Otherness, Shoah.

GIOVANNI GURISATTI

*Exodus from the aura. Walter Benjamin and early 20th century avant-garde art*

Benjamin was a thinker of exile: his life demonstrates it. In fact, as a communist Jew in 1933, he was forced to leave his hometown of Berlin and enter exile in Paris. In his Parisian writings, however, he never addresses the issue of exile itself, nor does he explicitly reflect on the subject. However, his mystical-apocalyptic political theology has an anarchic, rebellious, and antinomian character that implies that exodus, exile, uprooting, and wandering can be reversed into chances for salvation and redemption. This paradoxical dialectic grounds Benjamin's choice to go for a technological art. It is indeed «in exile» itself, being different from the art of tradition and from any aura, which implies the rooting of the work in a hic et nunc. Precisely because of such «exodus from aura,» photography, film, architecture, etc., can contribute to the aesthetic-political mobilization of the masses that is the prerequisite for their active militancy in revolutionary struggle.

*Keywords:* Nihilism, Messianism, Aura, Technoart, Revolution.

FRANCESCA R. RECCHIA LUCIANI

*«Amo te esse»: The sentimental ontology of exile between Hannah Arendt and Günther Anders*

In the lives, literally swept away by history, that G. Anders and H. Arendt were forced to live by the terrible circumstances of the 1920s and 1940s, they shared one of these lives, al-

though it lasted only a few years, first as colleagues and friends, then as young married couples, and soon as separated fugitives forced by tragic world events to experience the eternal condition of statelessness and “pariah” shared with the people to which they belonged by birth, namely the Jewish people. The syntagm “sentimental ontology” was intended to focus, by way of antinomy, precisely on the relativity of the affections to which they were exposed due to their difficult biographies continually abandoned to daily survival. Love, with all its changing manifestations, is, then, in the existential experience of Anders and Arendt, also a way of experiencing exile, a lens, at first microscopic and then magnifying, to find the possible measure of their own being-in-the-world.

*Keywords:* Arendt, Anders, Love, Sentimental Ontology, Exile.

CARLO ALTINI

*Philosophy as Alien Wisdom. The Condition of Exile in Leo Strauss's Thought*

Leo Strauss lived almost always in exile, between very different cultural worlds (Germany, France, England, and the United States), without ever feeling comfortable in any of these, and spanned the great events of contemporary history: from the Great War to the Weimar Republic, from the rise of Hitler to the Shoah, from the Second World War to the consumer society. This essay emphasizes the fact that Strauss's existential and intellectual trajectory addressed the great themes of philosophical and political thinking (the crisis of modernity, the role of religion in public life, and the affirmation of social sciences), but in particular discusses the relationship between the philosopher and the city. For Strauss, the philosopher is always a foreigner in the civic community to which he belongs and in which he lives since his function is to question the beliefs and prejudices that come from the political, cultural and religious heritage. Precisely because of this peculiar position, the philosopher cannot express himself freely. If he did, he would be persecuted and condemned to death, as happened to Socrates in the classical Athens, since his ideas are too much at odds with the beliefs of the city. The truth of philosophy is not compatible with the always different and unstable opinions of the inhabitants of the city. For this, the philosopher (as much of antiquity as of the modern age) must devise effective strategies to dissimulate his ideas in such a way as to escape persecution and condemnation by his fellow citizens. Therefore, this essay presents Leo Strauss as a philosopher who escapes any attempt at classification, who lived constantly in exile between theory and practice, philosophy and politics, immanence and transcendence, and who considered philosophy the most important critical exercise of human reason, always “out of date” and always “out of place”.

*Keywords:* Leo Strauss, Wisdom, Exile, Modernity, German Philosophy.

LIBERA PISANO

*The Community of Time. Philosophy of Exile in Gustav Landauer and Margarete Susman*

At the time when the völkisch ideology and nationalistic ideas were gaining strength in the German-speaking world, there was a generation of German-Jewish thinkers who drew on the reserve of Judaism as a heterodox element to rethink politics and history. This generation includes the anarchist Gustav Landauer and the poetess Margarete Susman.

In this essay I will analyze the role that the exile plays in their philosophical and political reflections. While for Landauer the *galut* is the anarchic means by which the Jewish people show humanity an alternative to the nation-state, for Susman the exile is the pillar for re-thinking the illusion of nationalism, the specificity of Judaism, and the human condition in a particular historical period. These two last witnesses of a German-Jewish symbiosis can still provide us with a strong critique of autochthony based on a theological-political conception of exile.

*Keywords:* Exile, Gustav Landauer, Margarete Susman, Jewish Contemporary Thought, Anarchy.

SILVIA MOCELLIN

*Schmuel Trigano: a postmodern exile?*

There are different ways of understanding and experiencing exile, but, according to Trigano, “exile befalls everyone like a sudden storm”. However, this is Trigano’s original thesis, exile offers also the opportunity to perceive the human condition in a new light: as a creative freedom which transforms the passivity imposed by separation into an opening towards the future, a “beginning in the uprooting”, i.e. a different way to confronting the suffering inherent in every existence. This experience, without a doubt, resonates more than ever with the human condition in the fragmented, precarious, ‘liquid’ postmodern society. Then, for the lost man of the global era, it is a matter of grasping the positivity of this condition, in order to comprehend that, in reality, man is a foreigner everywhere. However, one can embrace this fact with a sentiment that is neither tragic nor defeatist, as it is precisely through the extraneousness that the presence manifests itself.

*Keywords:* Exile, Extraneousness, Presence, Creative Freedom, Postmodern Society.

DAVIDE BIZZINI

*The Limbless Torah:*

*Exile as the Negation of Judaism in the Early Thought of Yeshayahu Leibowitz*

After providing a concise summary of the religious and political dimensions of Yeshayahu Leibowitz’s mature thought, for which he is most well-known, the article turns to Leibowitz’s activity as a Religious Zionist militant activist in early 1930s Germany. By presenting the public dispute that took place in 1930 between Leibowitz and Erich Rosenblüth, this article aims to display the centrality of the notion of Exile in Leibowitz’s early conception of *Torah*, *Halakhah* and the national life of the Jews.

*Keywords:* Yeshayahu Leibowitz, Jewish Philosophy, Zionism, Exile, Halakhah.

CARLO SCILIRONI

*Thinking exile*

The essay carries out three thoughts on the theme of exile: the first on today, the second on the root, the third on exile in perspective. Today is brought back to a deepening of

Zionism, distinguishing “owned” Zionism from “foreign resident” Zionism. The root is highlighted through the distinction of exodus, exile and diaspora, highlighting the complexity and implications of the exile-guilt relationship. The future is envisaged in the light of the exile-promise knot, the clarification of which leads to a clear distinction, albeit in proximity, Christianity and Judaism.

*Keywords:* Exodus, Exile, Diaspora, Guilt, Promise.

CLAUDE CAZALÉ BÉRARD

*Rachel Bepaloff e la questione ebraica nel contesto intellettuale francese*

Rachel Bepaloff, who arrived in Paris after the First World War, had the opportunity to discover the consequences of the Dreyfus Affaire and the French political alignments in a climate of growing anti-Semitism. His exchange of correspondence with Daniel Halévy, a well-known exponent of the assimilated Jewish bourgeoisie, on the “Jewish question” (1938), reveals painful contradictions between the desire of some intellectuals – such as Halévy himself – to make people forget their origins, and the commitment of others – like Rachel, as a worthy daughter of Daniel Pasmanik, one of the first Zionist leaders – to claim them in the name of fidelity to their traditions, to their own culture and to the people capable of civil conscience and of respect for the nation in which they live, even though exposed to the cruelest prejudices.

*Keywords:* Bepaloff, Halévy, Origins, Discrimination, Jewishness.

LAURA SANÒ

*Rachel Bepaloff. In search of a Nomos*

If we review the major influences on Rachel Bepaloff’s life, we see that the most significant, in its ability to sum up the entire tone of her experience, is undeniably that of *exile*. She sees herself as an *exile*, a woman without a country, a refugee, ever and always condemned to *wander*, always seeking a *promised land* that is constantly denied her, remaining distant and inaccessible. Bepaloff stands out for the mirroring between her approach to philosophical inquiry, and the course taken by her life and the history and destiny of the people she acknowledged as her own.

*Keywords:* Bepaloff, Exile, Uprooting, Jewishness, Promised Land.

FRANCESCA RIGOTTI

*Job’s cry, Priam’s silence, Achilles’ music: Rachel Bepaloff between philosophy and grace*

The essay summarizes the Author’s central thought on Rachel Bepaloff. The paper evokes Judaism, with the cry of Job (but Bepaloff does not expect divine justice from the God of Israel); her condition of exile, with the silence of Priam (the silent pain of the father who goes to Achilles, confirming himself in the rites of supplication, in order to be able to get back the body of the son Hector); the grace of music and dance, with Achilles’ lyre. Sing on the lyre the feats of heroes, Achilles, like Arachne wove on the loom scenes of abuse



and deception by the gods towards mortals. These three conditions, Judaism, exile, music, are joined by a fourth factor, as if to offer to the whole, completeness, meaning, harmony, grace: i.e. philosophy.

*Keywords:* Judaism, Exile, Music, Grace, Philosophy.

MONIQUE JUTRIN

*The two Andromaque or the liberty of refusal*

Commentary of a short text, who appears to be fundamental for Bespaloff's thought. It constitutes a synthesis of her reflexion on History, Tragedy and Art. Focused on the notion of liberty, it treats the relation between tragical and ethical thought and compares two figures of exiled women: the first in the Iliad, the second in the tragedy of Jean Racine. Andromaque's refusal to betray Hector is her expression of ultimate liberty. We can also read it as a self-portrait of Bespaloff, who prefers suicide rather than the loss of liberty.

*Keywords:* Liberty, Refusal, Existentiel, Bespaloff, Andromaque.