
giustizia e diritti all'altezza della vita

sguardi sulle filosofe contemporanee

a cura di
rita fulco, stefania tarantino



ILPOLIGRAFO

Abstracts

NATASCIA MATTUCCI

Rethinking dignity and human rights with Hannah Arendt

This reflection explores the various meanings of the concept of human dignity and its undeniable meta-juridical value. This value has become the ethical and legal foundation for rethinking human rights and the international community after totalitarianism and the millions of victims of World War II. If this link between dignity and rights is one of the pillars of 20th-century liberal democracies, in the face of the crisis of the fundamental principles of contemporary international relations and the growing fragility of democracies, it seems necessary to rethink the philosophical foundations of this link by exploring other approaches. Hannah Arendt's writings on the critique of human rights and the Nation-State, as well as her reflections on a possible political interpretation of human dignity, may represent a different perspective for rebuilding the bonds between human beings in the name of plurality as the only law of the earth.

Keywords: Human Dignity, Human Rights, Hannah Arendt, Totalitarianism, Plurality

ORIENTA OMBROSI

The Justice of Words and Proper Names.

A Right of Survivors and the Dead in Sarah Kofman's Philosophical Writing

This article offers a reinterpretation of Sarah Kofman's work through the notion of the "justice of words and proper names", arguing that her philosophical writing develops a mode of testimony capable of preserving the memory of the victims of the Shoah without reducing their alterity to a completed or exhaustive form of knowledge. Through a close reading of *Paroles suffoquées* (1987) and *Rue Ordener, rue Labat* (1994), the essay explores the relationship between writing, memory, the proper name, and ethical responsibility, interpreting Kofman's «*écriture sans pouvoir*» as a philosophical practice that restores a voice to the dead and to the survivors without claiming to overcome the unrepresentability of Auschwitz. The discussion further examines the themes of the "true word", testimony, and reading as rewriting, highlighting Kofman's dialogue with Maurice Blanchot, Robert An-

telme, as well as the connection between the Jewish tradition of commentary and deconstructive practice. The essay ultimately argues that Kofman's philosophy finds in writing a form of justice toward proper names, memory, and the other, transforming the aporia of trauma into a lasting ethical demand for interpretation, transmission, and responsibility.

Keywords: Justice, Word, Shoah, Testimony, Memory, Autobiography, Deconstruction

FRANCESCA RIGOTTI

Judith N. Shklar: A Jewish Political Philosopher and Theorist Compared to Hannah Arendt

I face a figure of Jewish thinker, philosopher, and political theorist, a woman working at Harvard but of Lithuanian origin, little known outside the borders of the United States. In particular, I focus on her theory of vices (common, public, and political vices) and that of injustice, which seeks the summum bonum starting from the summum malum. A phenomenon that is also found in the origins of the two democracies, the ancient one in Greece and the modern one in the United States of America, with the slavery. I also look at the comparison between Shklar and Arendt to conclude on the former's positions on liberalism as a political theory and practice that frees from fear.

Keywords: Cruelty, Vices, Injustice, Fear, Liberalism

LAURA SANÒ

The Invisible Hand of Justice: Rachel Bespaloff between Tragedy and Responsibility

At the heart of tragic experience, justice can be grasped as a measure that, while eluding any fixed form, continues to orient the meaning of the human condition. Through her reading of the Iliad, Rachel Bespaloff brings to light a decisive transformation of dike, which gradually shifts from a principle of cosmic order to the concrete dimension of lived experience, where human beings are exposed to suffering, war, and the irreparable. Within this exposure, justice takes shape not as something that precedes existence, but as something that arises within it, in the task of sustaining what occurs without support. The encounter between Priam and Achilles marks the point at which this tension becomes visible, as gesture and silence open a proximity in which the human condition recognizes itself in its shared vulnerability. The "invisible hand" thus designates a discreet presence that, without imposing itself, accompanies the encounter between human beings and preserves its possibility, entrusting each with responsibility for the other.

Keywords: Rachel Bespaloff, Justice, Recognition, Tragedy, Responsibility

VALENTINA SURACE

Lives Unworthy of Mourning: Judith Butler on War

This essay reconstructs Judith Butler's reflections on war by grounding them in an ontology of the body as relational and vulnerable. From the distinction between precariousness and politically induced precarity emerge the frames that confer or withhold recognizability and grievability, distributing life's value unequally. War appears as the effort to minimize

precarity for some while maximizing it for others, normalizing differential mourning and dehumanization. Against this logic, Butler calls for an anti-imperialist rearticulation of human rights, a critique of state violence, and a collective practice of nonviolence rooted in interdependence and the Arendtian-Jewish principle of cohabiting the earth. Grief becomes a moral compass orienting institutions toward substantive equality and the universal interdiction against destruction.

Keywords: Butler, Precariousness/Precarity, Grievability, War, Cohabitation.

STEFANIA TARANTINO

On Universally Human Needs: A Dialogue between Jeanne Hersch and Simone Weil

This contribution brings into dialogue two of the most significant women philosophers of the twentieth century, both profoundly marked by the atrocities of the Second World War, Jeanne Hersch and Simone Weil. It explores what may be understood as genuinely and universally human through an examination of their ethical, ontological, and political thought. Central to both thinkers is a conception of philosophy as a deeply embodied practice, inseparable from lived experience and historical existence. For Hersch, philosophy entails being present to one's own time, engaging critically and morally with reality, and confronting complexity and suffering with lucidity and courage. For Weil, thinking constitutes a form of radical attention to the real, akin to a spiritual and ascetic discipline. Knowledge is never detached from experience, and philosophy becomes a means of inhabiting the world more truthfully. In both cases, thought emerges as a form of inner and outward engagement, oriented toward the good, justice, and the recognition of the other, including what exceeds the boundaries of rational understanding.

Keywords: Jeanne Hersch, Simone Weil, Embodied Philosophy, Justice, Ethics

ANDREA BELLANTONE

From the rhythm of world-history to the justice of the un-figured. A reading of Simone Weil

The factory experience was a decisive moment for Simone Weil. Rereading it, starting from the experience of time (and its duplicity), it is perhaps possible to deconstruct one of the fundamental categories of Western thought: the connection between history and the world (*Weltgeschichte*). In her experience – and in that of the community of workers in which she immerses herself – it is possible to find a resource for sketching the outline of an alternative form of historical life to the usual one: the un-figured, that is to say, those who have no place within historical logic. In the suspensions of temporality dictated by the historical-world machine of the factory, Weil offers testimony to what it means to live a life that does not exist in the external world but which, while remaining invisible to the usual eyes of the chronicle of the ruling powers, lives being to the full. Starting from this decisive experience, the possibility of a new justice opens up, that is, a just and full life for all the invisible. In this way, on the margins of world-history, the testimony of the un-figured appears (paradoxically).

Keywords: Simone Weil, Time, *Weltgeschichte*, Unfigured, Factory

JACOPO CECCON

Susan Sontag, The Aesthetical Justice of the “Sybil of Manhattan”

This article proposes a rethinking of justice through the thought of Susan Sontag, moving beyond normative and juridical frameworks toward an aesthetic-ethical paradigm grounded in the respect for alterity. By examining Sontag’s critique of interpretation and her defense of an “erotics of art”, the paper argues that her work articulates a non-appropriative relation to the other, one that resists conceptual reduction and identity-based categorization. Situating Sontag within a broader philosophical context that includes Derrida and Benjamin, the study highlights how her refusal of fixed meanings and her emphasis on form open a space for a notion of justice rooted in distance, exposure, and irreducibility. Ultimately, Sontag’s thought is interpreted as a decisive contribution to contemporary ethics, where justice emerges not as mastery or recognition, but as the preservation of the other’s singularity.

Keywords: Susan Sontag, Aesthetic Justice, Alterity, Interpretation, Ethics

RITA FULCO

Justice and the Spirituality of Labour: Simone Weil’s Perspective

This essay examines the relationship between justice and the spirituality of labour in Simone Weil’s thought, advancing three central claims. First, Weil’s concern with social oppression – particularly the oppression experienced by male and female industrial workers – does not arise from an ideological stance or from her trade-union militancy alone. Rather, it stems from her radical attentiveness to *malheur*, the suffering produced by both capitalist and communist industrial systems. This sensitivity is further rooted in her own direct experience: in the 1930s she left her position as a philosophy teacher to work in factories, thereby confronting the mechanisms of oppression from within.

Keywords: Simone Weil, Labour, Justice, Spirituality, Oppression

SILVIA MOCELLIN

*Freedom, Capabilities and the Concreteness of Life:
Jeanne Hersch’s Contribution to an Intercultural Pluralism*

This paper examines the limits of abstract universalism in contemporary human rights discourse and proposes a relational reinterpretation of dignity grounded in the thought of Jeanne Hersch. Against approaches that conceive rights as formal and context-independent norms, Hersch’s notion of “embodied freedom” highlights the situated, vulnerable, and intersubjective character of human dignity. The article then engages with Martha Nussbaum’s capability approach as an attempt to translate this insight into institutional terms, while critically addressing the risks inherent in the formulation of a fixed list of central capabilities. Drawing on Seyla Benhabib’s emphasis on the revisability of universal norms, the paper argues for a conception of rights as open to contextual reinterpretation. Finally, through Raimon Panikkar’s notion of “homeomorphic equivalents”, it proposes an intercultural framework in which universality is understood not as uniformity, but as a pro-

cess of translation across different forms of life. Human rights thus emerge as a dynamic and relational practice, capable of preserving the universality of dignity without reducing it to a single normative model.

Keywords: Human Rights, Dignity, Capabilities, Embodied Freedom, Intercultural Philosophy

FRANCESCA SIMEONI

The spirit of justice in Simone Weil interpreting Plato.

Towards a philosophy of hunger and impersonal singularity

This article offers an analysis and interpretation of the expression “spirit of justice” in Simone Weil, based on the four texts in which it appears, between the essay on the *Iliad* and *L'Enracinement*. This interpretation is structured around two main strands: a political anthropology of the impersonal and an ethics of desire that combines hunger and compassion. The basic hypothesis developed is that “spirit of justice” refers not to a theory but to the practice of justice and that it derives from Weil’s original reworking of Platonic psychology made in Marseille. In particular, Weil would take up not so much the idea as the virtue of justice described in Plato’s *Republic*, together with the theory of the tripartite soul that underlies it. The author then grafts onto this ethical anthropology the erotic theory derived from Plato’s *Symposium*, developing the idea of a psychic energy that allows her to combine the metaphysical desire for justice with biological hunger. The psychagogy expressed in *Republic* VII is then transposed by Weil in London into the notion of “transition to the impersonal”, a process of self-transformation that is the basis and condition for the exercise of justice. Added to this Platonic transposition is a philosophy of listening to affliction (*malheur*), which manages to articulate the universalism of the need for justice and the singularity of the victims of injustice. Weil’s original Platonism thus leads to a vision of the practice of justice that offers a potential remedy to the shortcomings of every system of power.

Keywords: Simone Weil, Spirit of Justice, Plato, Hunger, Compassion, Impersonal, Singularity