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autonomia e vulnerabilità

a cura di
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Abstracts

LORENZA BOTTACIN CANTONI

Defending Fragility. From Vulnerability to Autonomy between Levinas and Ricœur

Ricœur and Levinas, in a conversation dating back to 1985, reflect on the subject and its intrinsic exposure to the other, questioning the Kantian notion of freedom. Starting from this common assumption, the two philosophers diverge on a decisive point: while for Levinas the Other remains insuperably transcendent to the ego, for Ricœur the otherness is part of the ego. In this perspective, the essay retraces the stages of the confrontation between the two authors on the theme of justice. The exercise of justice towards each other means to establish a symmetrical and comparative relationship in which the others are considered as if they were equivalent. For Levinas justice is constituted through language, for Ricœur every subject is such in the narrative dimension, consequently also justice is configured as a knot in which different stories are harmonized. Vulnerability, therefore, becomes a pivotal element since it reveals the fragility and exposure of individuals, but it is also a condition of possibility for establishing a righteous form of autonomy for each and everyone.

Keywords: Levinas, Ricœur, Justice, Third party, Self and other.

ALBERTO GIACOMELLI

Compassion, Autonomy and Vulnerability. Considerations on Nietzsche's "Ethics" starting from Martha C. Nussbaum

The paper aims to focus on Nietzsche's conception of pity, compassion, empathy and mercy. In the essay, these notions are intertwined with those of vulnerability and autonomy. I have shown how these notions are intrinsically linked to those of vulnerability and autonomy and how Nietzsche's thought takes up and reformulates, in relation to these themes, some important concepts from the ancient Greek world. In order to shed light on Nietzsche's complex reflections on autonomy and vulnerability, I have widely referred to and reworked some essays by Martha Nussbaum. Taking up passages from Homer, Plato, Aristotle, Seneca and the Stoics, Nussbaum shows how already in the ancient world compassion was considered a harmful sentiment and an unbalanced relationship that creates

deteriorating forms of dependency. What emerges from these perspectives is that for the most part in the ancient world the repudiation of compassion has nothing to do with insensitivity, brutality or tyrannical behaviour: if anything, it is compassion itself that is the source of anger and cruelty. I also intended to interpret the figure of Zarathustra in the light of some fundamental Stoic virtues (independence, freedom, detachment, clemency, magnanimity). In conclusion I have shown how in the Genealogy of Morals compassion comes close to the Christian psychological feeling of shame.

Keywords: Compassion, Mercy, Pity, Autonomy, Pain.

WANDA TOMMASI

The Risk of the Relationship

The essay analyzes the concept of vulnerability, connected to those of dependence and relationship. The contribution of feminism is highlighted in the idea of the relational subject, as opposed to the autonomous and atomistic subject of modernity. In feminist reflection the relationship, which binds the subject to others, also entails dependence and fragility towards them, but also involves the need to be responsible towards them. The paper also examines the effects of the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic on the notion of vulnerability.

Keywords: Relationship, Addiction, Vulnerability, Feminism, Sexual difference.

BRUNA GIACOMINI

Vulnerability and Not-Chosen Cohabitation: The Conditions of the Political Existence in Judith Butler

The essay focuses on the conditions of political existence in Judith Butler, conditions connected to the concept of vulnerability. For the American philosopher, vulnerability means that the relation to others is the fundamental requisite at the base of the subject and the “not-chosen” cohabitation or, in other words, the necessity not to discriminate anyone who is living with us on the planet. The diasporic existence that characterizes the history of the Jewish people to which she belongs constitutes the foundation of a way of understanding sovereignty that excludes the prevailing of one people over another. The task of politics becomes to protect the plurality of heterogeneous peoples by excluding the domination of one over the other and guaranteeing everyone an equally livable life. In this perspective the only autonomy admitted is the one which leads every single person to recognize vulnerability as the pivot of a life lived with others and for others.

Keywords: Vulnerability, Not chosen cohabitation, Plurality, Autonomy.

SILVIA DADÀ

The Notion of Vulnerability in Bioethics: between Universality and Particularity

In this article I focus on the concept of vulnerability in the bioethical debate. Both in international bioethical documents and in the discussion among experts, this notion has been used in two main ways. On the one hand, many have highlighted the *particular vulnerability* of cer-

tain groups or individuals, especially with regard to the field of research and experimentation with human subjects. On the other hand, more recently, a more *universal aspect of vulnerability* has been emphasised. Both perspectives, if considered separately, present some problems: particular vulnerability, in fact, if associated with the idea of an autonomous and independent subject, risks favouring forms of discrimination and paternalistic attitudes towards specific groups of subjects. The universal concept, on the other hand, risks remaining too vague and therefore not useful from an ethico-normative point of view. I believe that an integration of the two senses of vulnerability is both more accurate in describing our human condition and more fruitful as a guide to ethical action. To prove this, I will first analyse some international bioethical documents to highlight how vulnerability is understood within them; I will then analyse the relationship between vulnerability and the principle of autonomy. Finally, I will propose an integration of the two dimensions, following the *Layers model* developed by Florencia Luna.

Keywords: Vulnerability, Bioethics, Relational Autonomy, Layers Model, Care.

RITA DAILA COSTA

Protection of Vulnerability in the Legal System. Relevance of the Concept in the Fields of Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants

The legal system started to use the word “vulnerability” to provide protection in cases of abuse or need. Understanding the double face of vulnerability, as both universal and individual, may lead us to overcome the traditional liberal paradigm and its idea of individuals independent and autonomous, and finally embrace an idea of legal subject based on his inherent vulnerability. The differences between these paradigms are evident in the fields of migration and human trafficking. This paper proposes to rethink the approach to migration starting from vulnerability.

Keywords: Vulnerability, Autonomy, Consent, Human trafficking, Migration

EUGENIA STEFANELLO

Empathy: a Possible Bridge between Autonomy and Vulnerability

Autonomy and vulnerability have long been considered as opposites. In contrast, drawing from Catriona Mackenzie’s work in which she proposes to reconcile autonomy and vulnerability through a relational concept of autonomy, I will argue that empathy could be a suitable tool to detect and address the vulnerabilities of other people. However, I will show that empathy – if understood as a particular kind of perspective-taking that limits the other’s agency, or as independent from the sociocultural context or as an individualized and depoliticized trait of character – could be unable to promote a relational concept of autonomy and, therefore, it could hinder the reconciliation between vulnerability and autonomy. I will conclude that the account of empathy proposed by Elisa Magri could be the ideal candidate to overcome these issues in virtue of its use of both Darwall’s notion of recognition respect and a phenomenological approach to empathy.

Keywords: Vulnerability, Autonomy, Empathy, Respect, Agency.

FEDERICO ZILIO

The Vulnerable Autonomy. A Phenomenological and Ethical Analysis of the Ill Body starting from Jean-Paul Sartre

Human experience can be conceived as a constant activity of manifestation of the world in different spatio-temporal modes, aspects, meanings, and references, where the body acts as a necessary centre of orientation. This prereflective condition of embodied-being-in-the-world becomes uncomfortable and complicated when the world-body relationship is disrupted (as, for example, in illness), revealing the delicate interconnection between vulnerability and autonomy concerning corporeality. In this essay, I will first outline the different manifestations of corporeality through Jean-Paul Sartre's phenomenology; then, I will link the three dimensions of corporeality (body-for-itself, body-for-others, body-for-self-for-others) with the concepts of illness, disease, and sickness. Lastly, the autonomy-vulnerability dyad will be analysed to formulate the conditions for rethinking the relationship between the two concepts in terms of duality in tension rather than radical opposition.

Keywords: Body, Illness, Disease, Sickness, Autonomy, Vulnerability.

SILVIA TUSINO

Respect and Care: a Proposal for an Integration based on Vulnerability

The liberal conception of autonomy has drawn many criticisms, especially because of the underlying representation of the subject as a rational, independent individual. Within care ethics, several authors have proposed a more relational concept of autonomy, based on the acknowledgment of the crucial role of vulnerability for human existence. However, the potential of this alternative anthropological view – based on the idea of vulnerability – could go beyond its capacity to highlight the limits of liberal ethics and be of interest also for an ethics of respect for persons. This paper aims at exploring that potential by focusing on the implications that the category of vulnerability could have on the way we conceive the fundamental ethical attitude of respect. Building on the analysis offered by R.S. Dillon, the paper suggests that vulnerability can play a crucial role in describing a form of respect capable of integrating moral concerns related to the care perspective.

Keywords: Autonomy, Vulnerability, Respect, Care, Ethics.

CHIARA PELLEGRINI

Rethinking Autonomy and Vulnerability. A Global Perspective

Vulnerability and autonomy are challenging notions. They are a crucial component of the philosophical thinking, and they are closely related to the social, economic, and political contexts of modern society. This interdisciplinary aspect is even clearer nowadays, after the global pandemic experience and the climate crisis. The Covid-19 pandemic has raised several moral questions: the relationship between autonomy and vulnerability cannot be overlooked anymore if we, as a society, are going to have any chance to overcome the

global challenges that the world is facing. At the same time, the climate crisis constantly reminds us how vulnerable we are and how much damage we have caused to the planet. Starting from a relational perspective, this work aims to investigate the role of autonomy and vulnerability in the private life of individuals, in the public sphere, and to rethink their place in a globalised world.

Keywords: Autonomy, Vulnerability, Global, Justice, Bioethics.