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le sfide del perdono

a cura di
orietta ombrosi e laura sanò

Abstracts

CLAUDE CAZALÉ BÉRARD, LAURA SANÒ

*On forgiveness facing history: Vladimir Jankélévitch.
Derrida and the aporias of for-giveness*

1. Vladimir Jankélévitch (1903-1985), a Russian-born Jew, was a French philosopher, a member of the resistance and an impassionate musicologist. In several books, articles and speeches, he deals with the problem of forgiveness (*Le Pardon*, 1967), which remains, for him, rooted in the historical context of the Shoah and involved with the very question of evil. Throughout the development of his thought, then, he consistently addresses the “Difficulties of Forgiveness” and its contradictions with the intention of de-theologizing the issue, which remains anyway an insurmountable aporia confined to the realm of ethics. [CLAUDE CAZALÉ BÉRARD]

Keywords: Forgiveness, Others, Becoming, Responsibility, Unforgivable, Imprescriptible.

2. Forgiving and gift-giving are embedded by an inherent correlation which can be observed in a range of conceptual and verbal similarities. Moreover, while referring to common conceptual parallels, the two terms imply each other. The act of gift-giving indeed is part of the act of for-giving the other, as much as gift-giving shares a common pattern with for-giving and it always refers to forgiveness itself. Nevertheless, some substantial differences still remain between gift and forgiveness, not less important than the similarities and referring especially to some crucial events of the twentieth century. Jacques Derrida makes explicit reference to these events, drawing a distance from the position expressed by Vladimir Jankélévitch and in particular from the fact that the latter argues that it is impossible to forgive actions taken in the concentration camps. The gravity of the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis exceeds the limits of humanity. On the same point, namely on the attitude to be taken toward the Shoah, conceived as a “figure” of what Jankélévitch judges to be radically unforgivable, is to a certain extent opposite Derrida’s approach. In fact, the Author states that forgiveness is granted only as an exception of the law of the possible, as the infinite patience of the impossible, to the point that it is possible to claim that the only thing that can really be forgiven is the unforgivable. [LAURA SANÒ]

Keywords: Forgiveness, Gift, Imprescriptible, Responsibility, Unforgivable.

GABRIELE VENTICINQUE

Wearing the contradiction. For a coherence of the jankélévitchean forgiveness

On the question of forgiveness, the thought of Jankélévitch is considered one of the most original and key contributions in the contemporary philosophical scenery. Formalized after the horrors of the last war and of the Shoah, his proposals have been treated as a reference point as well as they have been accused of many contradictions by Derrida in particular. What is here proposed is a path which, after having proved the groundlessness of such accusations, will lead to the hearth of the jankélévitchean forgiveness, revealing the key role played in it by the structurally contradictory dimension which forgiveness itself assumes in the experience.

Keywords: Forgiveness, Contradiction, Axiology, Jankélévitch, Derrida.

JACOPO CECCON

Between economy and vertical dissymmetry: geometries of a “difficult” forgiveness in Paul Ricœur

The aim of this essay is to reconstruct the complex issue of forgiveness in Paul Ricœur's thought. As an eclectic thinker who cannot be classified only as a “philosopher”, Ricœur's studies range from the historical inquiry to the field of law. The Author distinguishes two different kinds of forgiveness: an easy way and a difficult way. “Easy forgiveness” is still too tied to the economical pattern of supply and demand and it should rather give way to an exceptional forgiveness that comes directly from the very interiority of the individual, from the heart of the «agency». Indeed, difficult forgiveness requires the ability to separate the guilty person from his action in order to condemn the latter and to pardon the first. To do so, for Ricœur, we must certainly turn to Kantian thought and to the possibility that every human being is oriented to the Good by his or her good will.

Keywords: Ricœur, Justice, Agency, Easy forgiveness, Difficult forgiveness.

EDOARDO POLI

«An affirmative answer that is painful each time!»:

Emmanuel Levinas and Jean Améry between Forgiveness and Ressentiment

The relevance of forgiveness in Emmanuel Levinas's philosophy is underestimated due to the lack of a significant presence of the term in his works. Nevertheless, especially in his juvenile ones, forgiveness fulfills an important role: it is the same structure of the being or what constitutes the time itself. The aim of this paper is to recreate the way in which this concept is developed in Levinas's thought and show how it is useful in order to outline an ethics of forgiveness. Moreover, I will compare these theses to Jean Améry's considerations about torture and the loss of trust in the world: the extreme loneliness he experienced in the death camp of Auschwitz led him to nurture a sentiment of *ressentiment* that makes forgiveness unthinkable. Finally, I will show how Levinas's ideas found what we commonly call “forgiveness” and how they aim to an ethics for the future: to forgive is nothing but asking pardon for the uncertain consequences of our choices.

Keywords: Levinas, Améry, Ressentiment, Death camp, Loneliness.

JOSEPH COHEN

Guilt. Forgiveness. Justice. On E. Levinas

Throughout this article, we seek to develop the significations E. Levinas attributes to guilt, forgiveness and justice, most particularly in the latter's *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* (1974). Indeed, we intend to reveal, through a confrontation between Levinas's "Ethics as First Philosophy" and Heidegger "Fundamental Ontology", how and why the "guilt of surviving" the death of the Other awakens, in the subject and before the constitution of its autonomy, a singular form of responsibility diachronically – that is, anterior to the "call of the Other" and yet responding too late on the Other's commandment – purporting its irresolvable infinitization and incessant excess ethically overflowing the forms of duty and debt supposed by universalist moral systems as well as the contractual intersubjective relations with the Other and the structural economies of donation which coordinate the representations of established sociality. This diachrony at work within the infinite responsibility of the ethical subject puts forth a novel configuration of the question of forgiveness and, in this sense, dismantles the logics of recognition and reconciliation by interrupting the actuality of forgiveness and opening towards the possibility of an irreducible idea of justice ceaselessly requiring the further testimony, beyond truth, of singularity.

Keywords: Responsibility, Guilt, Forgiveness, Surviving, Justice.

NICOLAS DE WARREN

Atrocity Exhibition. Satan and the Unforgivable in The Brothers Karamazov

Dostoevsky deals with problem of evil and forgiveness throughout his writings: this paper focuses specifically on Ivan Karamazov, whose narrative of suffering and despair ends when he leaves the tribunal of reason and justice due to its incoherence. Ivan cannot be fathomed in isolation since he can be paired with two "doublings" – Smerdyakov and the Devil. The character exemplifies an eclipsed subjectivity of evil. Within this Jankélévitchian-Schellingian configuration of evil the concept of wickedness is related with the notion of love. The paper develops both the philosophical exploration of Vladimir Jankélévitch's thought (in the shadow of Schelling) and the very reflection on *The Brothers Karamazov* in order to sketch a more comprehensive engagement with forgiveness and the unforgivable, animated by what André Malraux identifies in his "anti-memoires" *Lazarus* the search for that crucial region in the soul where fraternity hangs in the balance/stands in conflict with absolute evil.

Keywords: Evil, Forgiveness, Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Satan.

CRISTINA GUARNIERI

The kiss of forgiveness in Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor

This article investigates the issue of forgiveness through one of the most celebrated works of international literature: Dostoevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* and in particular the poem contained within it *The Grand Inquisitor*. Faced with the question of Evil, of the unjustified suffering of the innocent raised by Ivan Karamazov, forgiveness seems to be

an impossible and senseless gesture. But the question of meaning lapses before an act that disrupts all logic of signification. The truth of Euclidean reason as represented by Ivan Karamazov and the Inquisitor of Seville is put in check by the kiss of Christ, an act that discloses a „beyond meaning“, a truth of a different order, and that refers back to an ethics linked to the contingency of life that makes possible a forgiveness otherwise impossible.

Keywords: Forgiveness, Christ, Truth, Meaning, Act.

ORIETTA OMBROSI, CATHERINE CHALIER

“The work of forgiveness”. In/a dialogue with Catherine Chaliier

After having contextualized and identified the reasons for coming back to the theme of forgiveness, in the footsteps of the 1965 collective volume entitled *La conscience juive face à l'histoire: le pardon*, we wonder about the moral, then religious, then theological meaning of forgiveness. This, referring to some passages from the *Talmud* and the Jewish Bible, but always attempting to actualize their borders. Matters concerning forgiveness, which in our opinion are essentials, thus re-arise: does forgiveness have to do with God, with the other or with oneself? Does forgiveness concern single individuals and their personal relationships, or can we also speak of forgiveness with regard to communities or groups of people, for example, as precisely happened in the past, after the Second World War, between Jewish and Germans?

In other hand, which is the difference between forgiveness and reparation? And where does it fit into? For those who guarantee justice?

Moreover, is it possible to forgive through the intermediation of another person or is it necessary, as dictated by the Jewish tradition, a direct request of forgiveness to the offended person? Does forgiveness include a prior request, namely to know and to question, or is it possible to grant it independently from the acknowledgement and the awareness, and therefore from speech, by him or her who wish to receive it? In other words, can the request of forgiveness go beyond words or can it only be formulated into the language, and specifically, into human language? Does this mean that in silence there is no forgiveness? Finally, or *in limine*, but certainly on the limit, can dead forgive?

Keywords: Forgiveness, Reparation, Justice, After Shoah.