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ISSN : 2609-2484

Éditeur : Université de Lille

15 | 2025

Verità e Politica. Il desiderio di Kierkegaard

Truth and Politics. Kierkegaard's desire

 <https://www.peren-revues.fr/revue-k/1613>

Référence électronique

« Truth and Politics. Kierkegaard's desire », K [En ligne], 15 | 2025, mis en ligne le 17 janvier 2026, consulté le 26 février 2026. URL : <https://www.peren-revues.fr/revue-k/1613>

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TEXTE

- 1 The hypothesis guiding the composition of this issue is that Kierkegaard's philosophy introduces an almost inhuman trait into the history of thought, adopting figures and situations that are explicitly incomprehensible and located beyond language. For this reason, dealing with Kierkegaard means first and foremost a radical stripping away of any logical persuasion, dialectical safeguards and cultural precautions. Kierkegaard, rather, pushes thought to think what cannot be thought; to come to terms with the unthinkable, to conceive of the human as an exception to the rule, an almost unheard-of event with many, manifold names. To put it another way, in Kierkegaard's philosophy, contradiction remains contradiction; divisions and separations are without solution.
- 2 Truth in Kierkegaard is beyond our reach if we remain human; only if we become something other than what we are, if we become inscrutable, if we are ready for anything, then even the impossible can happen, namely, that what we love is not what makes us no longer desire to love.
- 3 Of course, Kierkegaard knows this well: every human community is founded on an ethical bond, where we attempt to distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil. But for this alliance to be tolerable, without stifling the prerogatives of singularity surrendered to the hegemony of the universal, it must have the impossible behind it, be willing to suspend its own validity so that the universal is not the representation of a granite-like totality where difference no longer makes any difference, and desire is nothing more than a form of compulsion to repeat, committed to satisfying, and therefore annihilating, desire itself.
- 4 At this point, our hypothesis is that in Kierkegaard's philosophy, particularly thanks to the figure of Abraham (*Fear and Trembling*, 1843), there lies a tension capable of expressing the political value of the inconceivable; that is, when, while apparently remaining ourselves, we actually become unrecognisable, first and foremost to

those who know us very well. In Kierkegaard, then, there would be an ultra-political charge linked to the complete suspension of any Law, even ethical ones. We would simply call this gesture the event of the impossible; if this happens (but can it effectively happen?), it causes the deflagration of everything that we are, even of our own name, or perhaps especially of our own name; everything, even the most loved and desired things, lose their weight and value. Philosophy, customs, desires, priorities, religious norms, good manners, ethical aspirations are thrown away when we are called to take a leap that pushes us towards a form of radical clandestinity: we become unrecognisable to everyone.

- 5 Abraham, writes Kierkegaard, is “an emigrant”: one who takes leave of principles, of the law, of the universal. Even more radically, if possible, Abraham expatriates from himself, experiencing another human experience: “He speaks no human language”. Kierkegaard’s Abraham does not speak, he is silent, no one can understand him. He goes where, free from all moral bonds, from all hendiadyses, including that of good and evil, no rule has (any) value (anymore). His language is *other* language, that of someone who is no longer human, who suspends humanity for a greater duty.
- 6 The Kierkegaardian religious dimension appears almost ineffable; it is an incommunicable experience: there is nothing to say. Abraham has nothing to teach; he is silent: he reaches the limit of an experience that is, indeed, inexplicable. More precisely, he adopts a paradoxical, absurd gesture, released from everything. Ultimately, this is the reason that drives Kierkegaard to conceive of philosophy as an experience that has no name; or rather, that has many names. Having many names is the condition for philosophy to reveal its greatest, most classic imposture: that of claiming to tell the truth.
- 7 Who is speaking? And in whose name, on whose behalf? Who can tell the truth? Can the truth be told? The philosophical problem of who tells the truth in Kierkegaard takes on extraordinary urgency, because it concerns the most essential core of human being. Because who dare to know and to say what the truth is is not coming to terms with life, evading its most mysterious and concrete feature, which, for Kierkegaard, coincides with an unspeakable remnant, even difficult to think about. For this reason, Kierkegaard’s writing appears

tormented, almost haunted by a ghost that undermines its consistency: non-writing. Non-writing is Kierkegaard's greatest desire, a desire that goes beyond any object, consumption, beyond any (aesthetic) vocation of the subject: that of demolishing everything it touches/desires. Non-writing is a radical departure from the *thing*.

- 8 But Kierkegaard writes. Why? Probably to bear witness to non-writing: Kierkegaard decides to inhabit the antinomy of writing, taking on the deception that all writing brings with it. Here, after all, lies the angst linked to every form of desire: the angst of repetition; the condition capable of unleashing the greatest desolation and, at the same time, the only condition capable of guaranteeing the emergence of what has never happened (the repetition in repetition coincides with the event; with what has never happened).
- 9 In Kierkegaard, there is a systematic – systematic so-to-speak – attack on the work, the author, and the persistence of any form of sovereignty. At this point, it is perhaps a misunderstanding to argue, as it is often written, that in Kierkegaard there is an overlap between work and life; rather, it is life itself that works only when it discards all works. In this gesture – a gesture that, in operating, dispenses with all works, taking leave of the interference of every object (and therefore of the hegemony of the subject), even the desired one –, perhaps Kierkegaard's greatest secret and desire is hidden: the realisation of a philosophical life.