

Philosophy Colloquium

Spring 2024



“Embodied Vulnerability as a Paradigm for a Public Ethics of Care: Adriana Cavarero in Dialogue with Judith Butler”

Valentina Moro: Valentina Moro is Marie Skłodowska-Curie postdoctoral fellow at the University of Verona. She was visiting scholar at DePaul University in 2022 and 2023 and at Brown University in 2016 and 2017. After earning her doctoral degree at the University of Padua, she obtained two prestigious postdoctoral fellowships at the Center for Advanced Studies of Southeastern Europe in Croatia before joining the Philosophy department in Verona. Her research in feminist philosophy adopts an interdisciplinary approach, intersecting classical antiquity and continental political philosophy. Her first book, titled *Il teatro della polis. Filosofia dell'agonismo tragico* (The Theater of the Polis. Philosophy of Tragic Agonism), has just been published by ETS Pisa. Valentina Moro has authored articles and book chapters in English, Italian, and French, exploring feminist perspectives on tragic agonism, sexual difference and post-structuralist feminisms, critical theory, politics of care, and ancient philosophy. Currently engaged in a three-year research project titled *Choreographies of Vulnerability: Toward a New Public Ethics of Care*, she seeks to establish a foundation for a public ethics of care rooted in a philosophical understanding of vulnerability. While being a dedicated activist within the Italian chapter of the Ni Una Menos (Not One Less) transfeminist movement, she has actively contributed to the Italian Society for Women in Philosophy (SWIP) and served on the organizing committee of the Hannah Arendt Circle annual meeting.

Abstract: Adriana Cavarero’s methodological approach uniquely bridges the ethical and the ontological perspectives; such intertwinement becomes particularly evident along the three axes of plural uniqueness, narratability, and vulnerability. Her dialogue with Judith Butler has intensified after the events of 9/11 when, with reference to Emmanuel Levinas’ work, both thinkers delved into the concept of vulnerability as an ontological connotation linked to embodiment. This paper revisits their recent works, highlighting vulnerability as a pivotal category for interpreting relationality, encompassing bodily exposure, reciprocal appearance, and the narratability of the self. At the same time, the notion of care plays a crucial role in the way both theorists address political mobilizations, collective bodily performances, and the very idea of democracy. Cavarero’s formulation of a postural ethics of inclination provides us with a paradigmatic model of action inspired by care, instead of power or even violence; a model of vulnerability and dependency that dares to be structurally asymmetrical. In Butler’s perspective, conceptualizing equality in radical democratic terms necessitates a political comprehension of life as inherently embodied, enmeshed in networks of relationships with other lives and the environment, and upheld by social and material infrastructures.

February 6th

4:00 pm

Harriman Hall 214

Dinner To Follow

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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