



Political Liberty in Jeanne Hersch (1910–2000)

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From the 1950s, Hersch considers that the human being is not only freedom but also a body, so she has essential biological needs and she must use her force to achieve an end. Hersch (1982) thus reflects on the *outer conditions of liberty* that can safeguard the subject's *inner freedom*. On the one hand, the negative way of politics preserves a void space for inner freedom, leading to *political liberty*. On the other hand, the positive way of human rights enhances better possibilities for inner freedom, leading to *responsible freedom*.

In *Idéologies et réalité*, the *practical antinomy* (De Monticelli 2017), namely the need to use force to reach the end of inner freedom, introduces evil in the human reality, as the possibility to use force against someone else's freedom: "It is evil that makes politics necessary. [...] It is the need to keep evil under control" (Hersch 1956: 94). Resorting to Kant's and Machiavelli's theoretical paradigms, politics is made up of *success* and *moral*, so in politics "succeeding is an obligation, a moral obligation" (Hersch 1956: 98).

Hersch distinguishes between different uses of force: the animal uses force deterministically, without asking itself what it wants; on the subjective level, *some power* emerges, as the ability to use force in view of an end; on the intersubjective level, the possibility of evil leads politics to use *the power*, namely a force that must succeed in preserving the moral value of citizens' inner freedom (Hersch 1978: 88-89). Political liberty is the moral obligation through which politics *educates* force and citizens' *some power*. It is a negative way to the enhancement of outer conditions of liberty exactly because it cannot act positively, but only as "the possibility of a free presence. [...] The consecrated form of the void that is indispensable to the other" (Hersch 1956: 164-165).

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