

## How does Paul Ricœur apply metapsychology to collective memory?

Esteban Lythgoe

### Abstract:

The concept of “abused collective memory” gathers two of Ricœur’s main lines of concern: history and psychoanalysis. The article aims to explain how this convergence was possible, especially, when the transposition of the Freudian metapsychology from the individual to the collective level was hindered by the Ricœurian emphasis on the Freudian libidinal economy. Our hypothesis is that this convergence required two intermediate steps. The first one gathered psychoanalysis and history within the larger framework of otherness as flesh. The second step was a transcendental turn, which would lead Ricœur to inquire about the structures of collective existence that make it possible to apply psychoanalytic categories at that level, rather than considering how this transposition can be done. By taking this turn Ricœur found that a phenomenology of the capable human being was the condition of possibility of a temporal ontology, and then, could describe this ontology as the condition of possibility of his phenomenology.

*Keywords:* twofold expressivity, libidinal economy, flesh, capable human being, temporal ontology

### Résumé:

Le concept de «mémoire collective abusée» réunit deux des principales préoccupations de Ricœur: l'histoire et la psychanalyse. L'article vise à expliquer comment cette convergence a été possible, alors que la transposition de la métapsychologie freudienne de l'individu au niveau collectif était au départ entravée par l'emphase de Ricœur sur l'économie libidinale freudienne. Notre hypothèse est que cette convergence nécessite deux étapes intermédiaires. La première étape rassemble la psychanalyse et l'histoire dans les grands genres de l'altérité, en tant que chair. La seconde étape correspond à un tournant transcendantal qui conduit Ricœur à s'interroger sur les structures de l'existence collective qui rendent possible l'application des catégories psychanalytiques à ce niveau plutôt que sur la faisabilité d'une telle transposition. En prenant un tel tournant, Ricœur découvre qu'une phénoménologie de l'homme capable est la condition de possibilité d'une ontologie temporelle et il décrit ensuite cette ontologie comme la condition de possibilité de sa phénoménologie.

*Mots-clés:* Double expressivité, économie libidinale, chair, homme capable, ontologie temporelle

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# How does Paul Ricœur apply metapsychology to collective memory?

Esteban Lythgoe

## Psychoanalysis for a traumatized collective memory?

In his essay on Freud, Ricœur used the phrase “twofold expressivity” to refer to the dialectic of knowledge and desire in representation, which he explained as follows: “[...] representation obeys not only a law of intentionality, which makes it the expression of some object, but also another law, which makes it the manifestation of life, of an effort or desire. It is because of the interference of the latter expressive function that representation can be distorted.”<sup>1</sup> According to Jean-Luc Amalric, Ricœur’s original contribution in this work was to gather the theory of expression and the twofold expressivity within the framework of an interpretation of human psychism.<sup>2</sup>

Thirty years later, in the 1990s, there took place in the philosophy of history what was known as the “Memory Turn.” Studying the testimonies of survivors of traumatic events, especially the Holocaust, historians began to pay more attention to the effects of these events on the survivors’ communities and their memories rather than describing the past “the way it happened.” As a contribution to this way of considering history, Ricœur applied some of the conclusions of his various works on Freud to this kind of traumatized collective memory. After analyzing historical representation as an expression of the past, mainly in *Time and Narrative* and “The Mark of the Past,” in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, he began to consider memory as a collective capability and mnemonic representation as a manifestation of collective identity. Ricœur studied how traumatic events can affect the development of this capability and this identity and proposed that history could solve all the related problems, by applying Freud’s *Metapsychology* to the community. Ricœur’s idea is to employ metapsychological categories directly to the collective. That means that its application is neither analogical nor metaphorical.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this paper is to establish how Ricœur extended *metapsychology* to the collective sphere.<sup>4</sup> Our analysis is in two parts. In the first part, we will begin by sketching the guidelines for Ricœur’s interpretation of Freud’s theory. Then, we will show that the Instinct Theory, one of the most important contributions of Freudian psychoanalysis, according to Ricœur, is an obstacle to transpose psychoanalytical categories into equivalents in the collective sphere. In Ricœur’s

opinion, Freud's *Papers on Metapsychology* were the most successful in terms of fusing the economy of instincts and language in the so-called "first topography" (unconscious, preconscious and conscious). Although Freud had already abandoned the use of biological language at that stage, Ricœur still thought that since this topography retained a connection with the economy of instincts it was still associated with the individual. That meant that metapsychology was thematized within an isolated psychism, which did not take account of intersubjective relations, and so could not be used to give an account of collective behaviours. In the second part of the paper, we will explain how Ricœur managed to overcome that obstacle. We will argue that he did so in two steps. The first one was taken in the context of "a dialogue" between Ricœur and Freud, which was constructed in the mid-1990s and placed psychoanalysis and history under the same figure of the meta-category of the other: the flesh. The second step was Ricœur's decision to take a transcendental turn and try to identify the structures of collective existence that make possible the implementation of the psycho-analytical categories instead of raising the traditional questions about how to transpose those categories. This transcendental turn involved two different operations: the reduction of psychoanalysis to the phenomenology of the capable human being and, then, the reduction of this anthropology to a temporal ontology. Although the temporal ontology is based on Heidegger's existential analytic, that last reduction would not have been possible had Ricœur not changed his approach to Heideggerian temporality after *Time and Narrative III*. According to our hypothesis, it was this change in his approach to Heideggerian temporality that allowed Ricœur to homogenize the individual and the collective, thus rendering psychoanalysis compatible with Ricœurian hermeneutics and, consequently, permitting the transposition of analytic categories to history.<sup>5</sup>

### Instinctual energy as the limit of collective analysis:

A traditional topic of debate in the reception of Freudian psychoanalysis concerns the object of its application. Does it apply only to individuals or to collectives as well? Neither Ricœur nor other authors, such as Habermas, who worked on psychoanalysis from the perspective of hermeneutics,<sup>6</sup> could evade this discussion. During the 1960s and 1970s, Ricœur thought that psychoanalysis should be applied only to individuals. Thus, in his essay on Freud he explained "moreover, in the Freudian topography that debate is projected onto a representation of the psychical apparatus in which only the 'vicissitudes of the instincts,' within an isolated psychism, are thematized. Stated bluntly, the Freudian systematization is solipsistic, whereas the situations and relations analysis speaks of and which speak in the analysis are intersubjective."<sup>7</sup> The reason for this solipsism lies in the concept of instinct, which Freud describes from a near-

biological point of view as follows: “an ‘instinct’ appears to us as a concept frontier between the mental and the somatic, as a psychical representative of the stimuli originating from within the organism and reaching the mind...”<sup>8</sup>

As Ricœur understood Freud’s development, he did not think that the Austrian psychologist had translated the individual psychological categories into the sociology of culture. Instead, he described that development in terms of a growing complexity in the analysis of the individual psyche, ranging from the first topography, which does not take intersubjectivity into account, to the second where others play a prominent role. This way of characterizing Freud’s development leads Ricœur to the conclusion that “the object of psychoanalysis is not human desire as such— by which we mean wishes, libido, instinct, and eros (all these words having a specific signification in their specific contexts)—but human desire understood in a more or less conflictual relation with culture [...]: for these historical and systematic reasons, psychoanalysis is the theory of the *dialectic between desire and culture*.”<sup>9</sup>

Ricœur highlighted Freud’s recognition of both linguistic and extralinguistic aspects of the human condition. Jacques Sedat recognizes Ricœur’s interest in an “instinctual experience capable of being told,” yet he states that “[...] there is no instinctual experience susceptible of being said. The only thing that can be said is a representative experience. There is no pure instinct that can be said. The only thing that can be said arises from an activity of representation.”<sup>10</sup> We do not think that this criticism should be attributed to Ricœur, who besides distinguishing instinct from representation, stated that they are both articulated by the *productive imagination* in a synthetic operation that functions in a way similar to the Kantian schematism.<sup>11</sup> In a paper written at the end of 1970s, Ricœur described the role of imagination as follows: “My own working hypothesis is that the universe of discourse appropriate for psychoanalytic discovery is not so much a linguistic one as one of fantasy in general. [...] I shall suggest in concluding, however, that a theory of fantasy is perhaps more likely to account for the articulation of both the semiotic and the drive than is a linguistic theory.”<sup>12</sup> In fact, Ricœur rejected those post-Freudian trends, which reduced psychic problems to an economy of instincts. In this regard he agreed with “[...] [Lacan’s] general attempt to break with the biologism and behaviorism attributed to post-Freudian psychoanalysis and to ‘return to Freud’ by situating not only the analytic situation but also the operations of the unconscious operations, which the theory attempts to account for systematically, within the unique ‘field of speech and language’.”<sup>13</sup> However, he rejected Lacan’s view that identifying the symbolic with language was a way of overcoming the limitations of economic explanation. In his opinion, reducing all psychic structures to language<sup>14</sup> simply doubles the economy of instincts at the level of linguistic explanation: “the linguistic

interpretation does not constitute an alternative to the economic explanation; it simply prevents the latter from being reified by showing that the mechanisms that come under economics are accessible only in their relationship to hermeneutics. To say that repression is 'metaphor' is not to replace the economic hypothesis but rather to parallel it with a linguistic interpretation, and thus relate it to the universe of meaning without reducing it to that universe."<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, during the 1970s and 1980s Ricœur turned from a hermeneutics of the symbol to a hermeneutics of the text and narration,<sup>16</sup> and his investigations began to highlight narrative topics instead of issues of instincts. In papers published during that period of time, we can find some attempts to apply a rather narrativist approach to psychological pathologies.<sup>17</sup> The application of analytic categories to non-individual subjects became easier to accomplish thanks to this kind of development.

One of the goals of *Memory, History, Forgetting* was the application of psychoanalytic categories to collective memory, but one of the conditions for its success was to dissociate the traditional identification between memory and the individual. Ricœur appealed to two different argumentative strategies in order to achieve this target, the first one was connected to memory and the second one to forgetting. The first one was a psychic development of Strawson's argument on multiple attribution. In *Individuals*, the mobility of attributions from oneself to someone other than oneself implies three different conditions: 1. the attribution can be suspended or performed; 2. these predicates retain the same sense in two different situations of attribution; 3. this multiple attribution maintains the dissymmetry between self-ascribable and other-ascribable.<sup>18</sup> According to Ricœur, memory fulfills these three conditions. The phenomenology of memory is developed in *Memory, History, Forgetting* in such a way that attribution is suspended, thus satisfying the first condition: It begins by asking about *what* is remembered, then, *how* memory works, and only at the end it is asked *who* remembers. The fulfillment of the first condition makes possible the second one, because after suspending the attribution, it is possible to attribute memory to different subjects without modifying its meaning. Finally, the fact that another different from me is unable to confirm memories in the same way that I do, confirms the third condition, that is, the dissymmetry of ascription.

The second strategy to dissociate the attribution of memory from individual subjects is developed in the section devoted to forgetting. Ricœur accepts the Bergsonian dissociation of the representational memory from the neuronal trace. For both, Ricœur and Bergson, the brain has no function in memory. Since the question about where memories are stored becomes meaningless, so too does the association between mnemonic traces and individuals. The main question about memory becomes how recognition is possible.<sup>19</sup>

After dissociating memory from the individual, Ricœur proposes a hermeneutic concept of memory: "But to speak of memory is not only to evoke a psychophysiological faculty which has something to do with the preservation and recollection of traces of the past; it is to put forward the 'narrative' function through which this primary capacity of preservation and recollection is exercised at the public level of language."<sup>20</sup> As this reduced definition of memory is shared by both the individual and the collective it excludes particularities that traditionally characterized individual and collective memory.

Despite the above mentioned changes, Ricœur's phenomenology of forgetting prevents the proposed direct translation. Forgetting is first explained in Bergsonian terms as a passage from consciousness to unconsciousness. Unlike Freud, Bergson defined consciousness as the willingness to act and care for life, whereas the unconscious no longer acts directly on our lives as it is outside of our everyday concerns and is *powerless*. Since this explanation does not provide a strategy to account for the passage from forgetting to memory, Ricœur appeals to Freud's concept of the unconscious and with this to the instinctual drives.<sup>21</sup> This addition explains memory diseases, linked to forgetting and repetition, as well as the possibility of overcoming them. However, as already explained, instinctual energy despite having lost the biological connotations is still tied to the individual preventing, consequently, the direct translation of metapsychological categories at the collective level.

### Transcendental reduction as the way for a psychoanalytical history:

The transposition of analytical categories to the collective level usually proceeds by analogy. In fact, Barash criticizes Ricœur's interpretation by underlining the negative consequences of employing such analogies between the individual and collective levels. According to Barash, the particularities of collective identity are lost in this process of translation,<sup>22</sup> affecting the use of categories like 'debt', 'duty of memory' and even 'work of memory'. As we explained at the beginning of this paper, Ricœur's strategy is still more drastic than Barash's assertion, since he endeavours to achieve a direct transposition. However, the inclusion of the economy of instincts to explain mnemonic pathologies hinders this kind of translation. *Our hypothesis is that in order to overcome this obstacle Ricœur performs a twostep transposition. The first one, developed before Memory, History, Forgetting, is to establish a common framework between psychoanalysis and history. The second one engages a reductive strategy that takes psychoanalysis back to a more fundamental level,<sup>23</sup> similar to the strategy of the phenomenology of memory just explained.*

Over the years Ricœur modified his interpretation of Freud and, as Busacchi has remarked, this tendency continued after *Oneself as Another*.<sup>24</sup> One of the conditions highlighted by historians for applying the psychoanalytic categories to society is to find a common framework for history and psychoanalysis. This search for a common framework can be seen in the article “Uncanniness Many Times Over,” which was published in 1994. In order to understand how this framework was developed, we must go back to the Tenth Study of *Oneself as Another*, where Ricœur distinguished three types of passive experiences affecting the self-experience: the other as flesh, referred to the internal principle of action that we suffer but cannot master; otherness, indicating what is different from us and affects us; and finally, otherness as consciousness, enjoining us from the moral plane both within and above us.<sup>25</sup> Of these three figures, psychoanalysis was associated in *Oneself as Another* with the third one, due to the role of the superego, developed in “The Ego and the Id.”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, in this book Ricœur does not associate the past with any of these figures. On the basis of *Time and Narrative*, however, we may say that it is in this period that Ricœur considered the past to be the other as otherness. Indeed, historical representation, as *standing-for*, is based on the trace and the trace as it “[...] is left by the past”<sup>27</sup> is something strange for us. Briefly, in this book, history and psychoanalysis did not share a common framework.

In “Uncanniness Many Times Over,” Ricœur returns to his analysis of the experience of the other. Although the triple experience of passivity remains the same, the figure of the flesh becomes more important than the other two. The Husserlian category of the flesh became the articulation point of oneself with the alter-ego. As Richard Kearney explains, the flesh “...is the pole of reference of all bodies belonging to this immanent nature of *ownness*. And it is by pairing one flesh with another that we derive the notion of an alter-ego. But here we return to the deeper paradox: flesh as a paradigm of *otherness*. Flesh is what is both most mine and most other. Closest to me and furthest from me at the same time.”<sup>28</sup> Framing psychoanalysis and history under the metacategory of the flesh he modifies the way of conceiving both of them. Busacchi draws our attention to a modification in the treatment of psychoanalysis.<sup>29</sup> Instead of working on the superego Ricœur studies drives and compulsion, as they were analyzed in “The Uncanny” and “Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through.”<sup>30</sup> Ricœur explains that Freudian uncanniness is caused by the feeling aroused by operations of the unconscious, which is at the same time close and strange. The second of these Freudian papers is associated with the first, and it aims to provide a psychoanalytic explanation of our inability to talk about trauma and indicates both how trauma operates and how it can be overcome.

In “Uncanniness Many Times Over,” Ricœur not only reconsiders the category of the other associated with psychoanalysis he also reconsiders the one associated with the past. If the past is other, it is other no longer in terms of otherness but as flesh. This change is possible because Ricœur replaces the analysis of the past as history with that of the past as memory. Thus, following the reference to “Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through,” Ricœur finds in the double feeling of the familiarity and strangeness of personal memory the meta-category of flesh. Afterwards Ricœur shifts his focus from the individual memory to the historical one, addressing the issue of the Holocaust survivors with the following words: “The paradox [of familiarity and strangeness] is at its peak in the case of the memory of the Shoah in its confrontation with the will not to forget, hence with the duty to recount and recount again, and with the feeling expressed by so many of its survivors of a finally incommunicable and, in this sense, unnarratable character of their memoirs...”<sup>31</sup> Thus, thanks to the movement in psychoanalysis from superego to drives and from history to memory, both disciplines fall within the metacategory of the other as flesh. The uncanny (*Unheimlichkeit*) as feeling still remains present in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, but in this case it justifies, from the historian’s perspective, the impossibility of reducing memory to a story or vice versa.

“Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness,” published in 1997, is another text that is relevant to this process of transferring the metapsychology to the collective sphere, because it is here that for the very first time Ricœur brings “Mourning and Melancholia” and “Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through” together in order to understand what should be expected of translation. Ricœur shows that in these articles Freud developed two different concepts of work: one of them is related to parturition and the other to resignation and acceptance. Linking together both meanings leads Ricœur to argue that the task of translation is consistent and perfectible, although it is necessary to assume the impossibility of achieving absolute equivalence with the original.<sup>32</sup>

In *Memory, History, Forgetting* the articulation of these two papers is really important because it links the anthropology of the capable human being with psychological pathologies.<sup>33</sup> In “Mourning and Melancholia,” melancholy is described as a psychic condition in which self-regard is reduced due to the loss of a loved object. Mourning, on the other side, allows us to untie ourselves from the lost object and leads to a return of self-regard. Thus, Freudian analysis underlines the tension between libido, which ties us to the beloved object, and the reality principle, which forces us to deal with the disappearance of this object. This analysis also adopts the economy of instincts to explain how much energy is required for the libido to obey reality. Although Ricœur recalls significant examples of collective mourning, the economic



characterization of the conception of work given in this paper prevents its transposition to the sphere of collective memory.<sup>34</sup> We think that it is not by accident that Ricœur acknowledges that “Mourning and Melancholia” offers greater resistance than “Remembering, Repeating, and Working-Through to any transposition to the plane of collective memory...”<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, Ricœur highlights “Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through” because of its procedural component, which allows him to defend the thesis that psychoanalytic experience, far from being merely passive, has an active component that is present in all instances. Thus, “[...] the difficulties in question are not only undergone, but ... we are responsible for them, as witnessed by the therapeutic advice that accompanies the working-through.”<sup>36</sup> So characterized, “Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through” cannot only be included in a phenomenology of the capable human being but, due to the absence of any instinctual characterization, can also be transposed to the collective processes. In short, while “Mourning and Melancholia” provides the categories needed to understand psychological pathologies, it still employs an instinctual language that prevents its application to the collective. However, “Remembering, Repeating, Working-Through” refers to human capacities, and in so doing, allows itself to be “reduced” to a phenomenology of the capable human being. Since the article has no instinctual language, its conclusions are transferable to the collective level. Hence, each of these articles needs to be articulated with the other. As in the case of “Translation as Challenge and Source of Happiness,” both articles are linked by the concept of work, and whereas the work of mourning is joined to the work of remembering, melancholy is associated with the compulsion to repeat. This articulation is described as follows: “What makes mourning a normal, albeit painful, phenomenon is that ‘when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again’. It is from this angle that the work of mourning can be compared to the work of remembering. If the work of melancholia occupies a strategic position in the present essay, parallel to that occupied by the compulsion to repeat in the previous one, this suggests that it is as a work of remembering that the work of mourning proves to be liberating, although at a certain cost, and that this relation is reciprocal.”<sup>37</sup>

We think that *this description cannot explain by itself how the articulation of the work of mourning and the work of remembering is possible, because this articulation is not immediate but requires a third moment that catalyzes both kinds of work, something that does not exist in Freudian metapsychology: happy memory.* Happy memory can be defined as the utopian horizon that is established when the work of mourning is completed and the function of memory is properly fulfilled. As Ricœur explains, “Yes, grief is that sadness that has not completed the work of mourning. Yes, joy is the reward for giving up the lost object and a token of the reconciliation

with its internalized object. And, inasmuch as the work of mourning is the required path for the work of remembering (*souvenir*), joy can also crown with its grace the work of remembering (*mémoire*). On the horizon of this work: a 'happy' memory, when the poetic image completes the work of mourning."<sup>38</sup>

Taken together, these two Freudian conceptions of work allow Ricœur to frame analytical solutions to mnemonic pathologies in the perspective of a phenomenology of the capable human being, and since it has no relation to the economy of instincts, it can be applied at the collective level. From this perspective, mnemonic pathologies can be described as incapability, but this description lacks the elements necessary for determining the reasons for these diseases and offering explanations as to how they might be worked through. We think that in order to explain both the work of memory and the reason for mnemonic pathologies Ricœur takes a further step toward temporality as a more essential level of analysis: "I am adopting the guiding idea of *Being and Time* that temporality constitutes not only a major characteristic of the being that we are, but the characteristic that, more than any other, signals the relation of this being to being *qua* being. I have all the more reason to embrace this idea as I hold, moreover, the acceptance of being as act and as power as the one most in keeping with a philosophical anthropology of the capable human being."<sup>39</sup>

The temporal analysis of *Memory, History, Forgetting* is radically different from that of *Time and Narrative*. The latter work described two conflicting traditions of temporal interpretation: a phenomenological and a cosmological one. In Ricœur's opinion, although each of these traditions tried to overshadow its counterpart, neither of them was reducible to the other. As an example of this tension, Ricœur contrasted the Aristotelian conception of world time with the Augustinian time of the soul, Husserl's thematization of time with the Kantian interpretation. Ricœur expressed his close affinity with Heidegger's analytics, since it could integrate temporal moments prior to their separation.<sup>40</sup> Still, he expressed his dissatisfaction with a variety of problems arising from the strategy of gaining access to temporality by overlapping an ontic structure with the ontological level. The ontical component was Heidegger's personal conception of death, which became a structural moment of *Dasein's* being, and most specifically as its ownmost possibility. Since *Dasein's* anticipation of its own death isolates it from others and modifies its way of being, this conception of death maintained the aporetic relation between lived time and cosmic time.<sup>41</sup> Heideggerian resoluteness dislocated any possible dialogue between philosophical discourse related to *Dasein* and history. Despite his identification of being-towards-death as the source of all limits of Heidegger's temporal analytics,<sup>42</sup> Ricœur sought to resolve the tension generated by the existential analytic in *Time and Narrative* by means of his concept of

*narrative time*. This third kind of temporality is the product of an imaginative synthesis of Kantian inspiration, where phenomenological and cosmological time are articulated through some central concepts drawn from philosophy of history, such as calendar time, the succession of generations and the trace.

In his essay "The Mark of the Past,"<sup>43</sup> and especially afterwards in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricœur proposes an alternative way of gaining access to temporality, beyond that of *Being and Time*, and this modification finally defines his general approach to time: death is defined as an irruption alien to human being, it is the end of life.<sup>44</sup> This conception of death, more akin to Sartre and Levinas, does not isolate the individual who faces this event from others and from the world, but maintains an openness to the externality and factuality.<sup>45</sup> This modification allows Ricœur to collapse the distinction between the authentic and inauthentic modes of being, and consequently, the gap between the existential analytic and the factual sciences. The so-called short route of Heidegger, which establishes a direct link between the potentiality of being and mortality, is replaced by another long one, or as expressed by Ricœur, "it is to the phenomenology *open* to futurity that I would like to contribute with the following remarks against the *closed* phenomenology of the being-toward-death."<sup>46</sup> One of the consequences of this change in the concept of time is that memory and history are intertwined, which means that discoveries and stories of history alter memory of the past and, correspondingly, collective memory affects research into the past. In *Time and Narrative*, the link between phenomenological and cosmological time was external to these temporal manifestations.

Ricœur reinforced his concept of temporality with two Heideggerian concepts, in order to explain our relationship with the people who preceded us. The concept of 'generation' arises from the idea that the human condition is not primarily biological but is instituted in a symbolic process of affiliation. In the case of history, the social bond is instituted through the passage of generations. The second concept is that of 'productive repetition' of the past. Inspired mainly by Collingwood's concept of 'reenactment' and Michelet's notion of 'resurrection', Ricœur argues that productive imagination renders past projects present, thereby, linking the past with the future. The idea of debt, as a moral burden with regard the past, is rooted in this concept of productive repetition.

This displacement from an instinctual substrate to a temporal one obliges Ricœur to re-elaborate psychoanalytic categories. Outlining some of them Ricœur relies on Freud's work. After identifying the unconscious memories with those that repression makes inaccessible, and associating them from a pathological perspective with the repetition compulsion, Ricœur explains that "this was even one of Freud's strongest convictions, that the past once experienced is

indestructible. This conviction is inseparable from the thesis that the unconscious is *zeitlos*, timeless, when time is understood as the time of consciousness with its before and after, its successions, and coincidences."<sup>47</sup> This means that whoever is compelled to repeat the traumatic event as if she were present does so because of her inability to discriminate between different temporal levels. Consequently, the cure must also have a temporal component. By means of working-through, the traumatized person becomes aware of repressed memory after articulating it temporally. This is how "the work of mourning definitely separates the past from the present and makes way for the future."<sup>48</sup>

At this point, Michel de Certeau's position about the place of death in history becomes central. In *Time and Narrative*, Ricœur highlighted the importance that Certeau accorded to the debt as a link between present and past, but he did not agree with the emphasis Certeau had assigned to death against life: "By so linking debt to loss, De Certeau places more emphasis than I do on the 'tradition of a death', and underemphasizes, in my opinion, the positive aspect of the life that has been, in virtue of which life is also the heritage of living potentialities."<sup>49</sup> This criticism disappears in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, where Ricœur finally agrees with Certeau in relation to the necessity of incorporating death within narrative, and with his idea of associating the historiographical operation with funerary rites. In his opinion, "the vis-a-vis of the historian is not only the dead for whom she constructs a scriptural tomb; the historian does not only strive to resuscitate the living of the past who are no longer but who once were, but also attempts to represent actions and passions."<sup>50</sup> The funeral rite is crucial in the work of mourning, for, when dead people are buried, it makes place for the living: "Greater still, repetition allows us to complete and to enrich the meditation proposed above under the heading of death in history. This led us to the act of sepulcher by which the historian, providing a place for the dead, makes a place for the living. A meditation on repetition authorizes a further step, following the idea that the dead of the past once were living and that history, in a certain manner, moves closer to their having-been-alive."<sup>51</sup> The historian plays a central role in this work of remembering and grief, helping to think the collective in its link to the past.<sup>52</sup> In this process, the historical plot gives the traumatic event a temporal framework. The different ways in which the plot relates the space of experience to the horizon of expectation, intensifying or relaxing the debt to the past, signals a function of the productive imagination that was not originally contemplated in *Time and Narrative*.<sup>53</sup> In this sense, the following statement is quite enlightening: "If, in fact, the facts are ineffaceable, if one can no longer undo what has been done, nor make it so that what has happened did not occur, on the other hand, the sense of what has happened is not fixed once and for all. In addition to the fact that events of the past can be recounted and interpreted otherwise,

the moral weight tied to the relation of debt with respect to the past can be increased or lightened.”<sup>54</sup>

## Conclusion:

In recent decades, philosophy of history has faced the problem of justifying the mnemonic turn that occurred during the 1990s. One of the most complex issues was to provide a framework of intelligibility for the transposition of psychoanalytic categories to large groups of people affected by violent processes. Although originally associated with survivors of the Nazi death camps, its application was extended to various fields of recent history. One of the objectives of *Memory, History, Forgetting* was to provide a collective framework, but instinctual drive became the major obstacle for its elaboration. Beginning with his first works, Ricœur was interested in both psychoanalysis and history. However, until 2000 Ricœur worked on both issues almost completely in parallel. As an example of this, in *Time and Narrative*, there are only ten references to Freud, and almost all of them are related to the treatment of personal identity. Over the years, Ricœur’s thought on these issues underwent several changes, bringing these two domains closer together and producing a viable articulation between them. We have shown that the dialogue with Freud after *Oneself as Another* had an important influence in this articulation, framing psychoanalysis and history under the metacategory of otherness as flesh. Regarding the transposition of psychoanalytic categories from the individual to the collective sphere, we have argued that the economy of instincts prevented the kind of direct accomplishment of this transposition that Ricœur had envisaged. In fact, we held that in order to achieve such a transposition, Ricœur had to carry out a transcendental turn in his approach to this theme. This turn led him toward a double process of reduction: first, from psychoanalytical categories to a phenomenology of the capable human being, and from there to a temporal ontology.

At the beginning of this article we referred to the twofold expressivity of representation as a means of understanding the articulation between desire and knowledge. When Ricœur developed the concept of representation in *Time and Narrative* and in “The Mark of the Past,” he focused on the epistemological side of this twofold expressivity since the economy of instincts prevented the development of the other side.<sup>55</sup> If in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricœur could articulate both sides of this expressivity, this was because he was able to reduce psychoanalytical categories to a temporal ontology.

- <sup>1</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970), 457.
- <sup>2</sup> cf. Jean-Luc Amalric, "Événement, idéologie et utopie," *Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies*, Vol 5, No 2 (2014), 14.
- <sup>3</sup> cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 78: "We can speak not only in an analogical sense but in terms of a direct analysis of collective traumatism, of wounds to collective memory." Some papers speak of a "metaphorical" application (cf. for example, Rudolf Boutet, "Temps et psychanalyse chez Ricœur. Confrontation de deux perspectives sur le passé," *Ricœur Studies* vol 7, no 1, 156). This affirmation is linked to a sentence in the section "Forgetting and Manipulated Memory," where Ricœur states: "Once the choice of the theme has been made, the justification of the use of the psychoanalytic "metaphor" of neurosis and obsession finds its heuristic fruitfulness in its hermeneutical efficacy." (Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 450). We consider that this is not Ricœur's position, but he is summarizing Henri Rousso's *The Vichy Syndrome*. That is the reason why "metaphor" is in quotation marks and it is referred to page 11 of the *The Vichy Syndrome*.
- <sup>4</sup> The question posed is similar to Amalric's. However, Amalric will propose a correlation between ideology and utopia, as they were developed in his *Ideology and Utopia*, by "events that institutes a constitutive social imaginary."
- <sup>5</sup> Several years ago, Muriel Gilbert proposed a similar strategy at an individual level: "Haven't Binswanger and Minkowski taught us to consider the psychological disorders among others under the angle of their relationship over time? [...] In this sense, it would mean to ask the subject of the possible implications of the above mentioned pathologies about the relation of time with the narrative identity." (Muriel Gilbert, *L'identité narrative. Une reprise à partir de Freud de la pensée de Paul Ricœur*, (Genève : Labor et Fides, 2001), 19.
- <sup>6</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 78.
- <sup>7</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 61. Italics added.
- <sup>8</sup> The quote was taken from Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy. An Essay on Interpretation*, 136.
- <sup>9</sup> Paul Ricœur, *On Psychoanalysis*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), 111.
- <sup>10</sup> Jacques Sédat, "Ricœur, Freud et la démarche psychanalytique" in C. Delacroix, F. Dosse y P. Garcia (dir), *Paul Ricœur, et les sciences humaines*, (Paris : La Découverte, 2007), 99-100.
- <sup>11</sup> In this regard, I agree with Amalric, who explains that "ce qui fait alors l'intérêt majeur de *l'Essai sur Freud*, c'est qu'il conduit cette fois Ricœur à mettre au jour une fonction *productrice de l'imagination* liée au fonctionnement même de l'inconscient et plus *originaire*, par conséquent, que l'imagination reproductrice thématifiée antérieurement. Cette fonction de l'imagination qui correspond à la *production d'une expression psychique de la pulsion*, Ricœur la situe précisément à la flexion de la force et du sens. Selon lui, elle est ce qui rend possible une *manifestation originare et*

*pre-représentative de nos tendances et de nos pulsions au sein de notre psychisme.*" (Jean-Luc Amalric, "L'Imagination poético-pratique dans l'identité narrative," *Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies*, Vol 3, No 2 (2012), 114. The translation is poor. I suggest quoting the original French.

- <sup>12</sup> Paul Ricœur, *On Psychoanalysis*, 108-9.
- <sup>13</sup> Paul Ricœur, *On Psychoanalysis*, 95.
- <sup>14</sup> cf. Paul Ricœur, *On Psychoanalysis*, 94, and Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 320: "...analytic experience unfolds in the field of speech and that, within this field, what comes to light is another language, dissociated from common language, and which presents itself to be deciphered through its meaningful effects – symptoms, dreams, various formations, etc."
- <sup>15</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy*, 396.
- <sup>16</sup> Cf. Vinicio Busacchi "Postface: Desire, Identity, the Other – Psychoanalysis for Paul Ricœur after *Freud and Philosophy*" in Paul Ricœur, *On Psychoanalysis*, 225.
- <sup>17</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, "The Self in Psychoanalysis and in Phenomenological Philosophy," in Paul Ricœur *On Psychoanalysis*, 73-93.
- <sup>18</sup> cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 125.
- <sup>19</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 434.
- <sup>20</sup> Paul Ricœur, "Reflections on a new ethos for Europe" in Richard Kearney (Ed), *Paul Ricœur: The Hermeneutic of Action*, London – Thousand Oaks – New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1996), 6.
- <sup>21</sup> Ricœur, 2004, 445: "On the other hand, Freud corrects Bergson on an essential point, which at first sight seems to render Bergsonism inadmissible with respect to psychoanalysis. Whereas die Bergsonian unconscious is defined by its powerlessness, die Freudian unconscious, through its tie with instinctual drives, is characterized as energy, which encouraged the "economic" reading of this doctrine."
- <sup>22</sup> Jeffrey Andrew Barash, "The Place of Remembrance. Reflections on Paul Ricœur's Theory of Collective Memory, B. TRENOR y H. I. Venema (Ed.), *A Passion for the Possible. Thinking with Paul Ricœur* (New York: Fordham, 2010), 150.
- <sup>23</sup> Something of this nature is sustained by Busacchi when he explains that since psychoanalysis cannot be reduced to hermeneutics because of their incompatibility on an epistemological level, Ricœur goes back to an anthropological level to carry out such a reduction (cf. Vinicio Busacchi, "Entre narration et action: Herméneutique et reconstruction thérapeutique de l'identité" " en *Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies*, Vol 1, No 1 (2010), 23.
- <sup>24</sup> Vinicio Busacchi, *Pulsione e significato. La psicoanalisi di Freud nella filosofia di Paul Ricœur*, (Milano: Unicopoli, 2010), 438.

- <sup>25</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as another*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 317 – 355.
- <sup>26</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as another*, 354.
- <sup>27</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Time and narrative III*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 147.
- <sup>28</sup> Richard Kearney, "Ricœur's Wager of Flesh: Between Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," in *Paul Ricœur in the Age of Hermeneutical Reason. Poetics, Praxis and Critique*, ed. W. H. Savage (Lanham – Boulder – New York – London: Lexington Books, 2015), 179-190. 184.
- <sup>29</sup> Vinicio Busacchi, *Pulsione e significato. La psicoanalisi di Freud nella filosofia di Paul Ricœur*, (Milano: Unicopoli, 2010), 442.
- <sup>30</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 229-30.
- <sup>31</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 241.
- <sup>32</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Sur la traduction*, (Paris: Bayard, 2004), 19. Needless to point out that the otherness of translation imposes similar limits to the otherness of the past, in the sense that the work of the historian is perfectible but never comes to identify with the past.
- <sup>33</sup> Cf. Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 71: "Furthermore, the pair mourning and melancholia is to be taken as one block, and it is the tendency of mourning to become melancholia and its difficulty in extracting itself from this terrible neurosis that will give rise to my subsequent reflections on the pathology of collective memory and the therapeutic perspectives this opens."
- <sup>34</sup> Cf. Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 78-79: "We can speak not only in an analogical sense but in terms of a direct analysis of collective traumatism, of wounds to collective memory. The notion of the lost object finds a direct application in the "losses" that affect the power, territory, and populations that constitute the substance of a state. Mourning behaviors, from the expression of affliction to complete reconciliation with the lost object, are directly illustrated by the great funeral celebrations around which an entire people is assembled. In this way, we can say that such mourning behaviors constitute a privileged example of the intersecting relations between private and public expression. It is in this way that our concept of a sick historical memory finds justification a posteriori in this bipolar structure of mourning behaviors."
- <sup>35</sup> Cf. Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 71.
- <sup>36</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 80.
- <sup>37</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 72.
- <sup>38</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 77. On further information about the utopian place of the "happy memory" in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, cf. Esteban Lythgoe, "Social imagination, abused memory, and the political place of history in *Memory, History, Forgetting*," *Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies*, Vol 5, No 2 (2014), 41-42.



- <sup>39</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 345.
- <sup>40</sup> Cf. Ricœur, *Time and narrative III*, 69: "The passage from the future to the past no longer constitutes an extrinsic transition because "having-been" appears to be called for by the future as "coming-towards," and in a sense, to be contained within it. There is no recognition in general without the recognition of debt and responsibility, once resoluteness itself implies that we ourselves assume the fault and its moment of thrownness (*Geworfenheit*).
- <sup>41</sup> Cf. Ricœur, *Time and narrative III*, 95: "First consequence: when the accent is placed on the two endpoints in this increase in meaning, Being-towards-death and world-time, we discover a polar opposition, paradoxically concealed throughout the hermeneutical process directed against all concealment: mortal time on the one side, cosmic time on the other. This faultline, which runs through the entire analysis, in no way constitutes a refutation of it; it merely makes the analysis less sure of itself, more problematic—in a word, more aporetic."
- <sup>42</sup> Cf. Ricœur, *Time and narrative III*, 67-8: "If we withdraw from mortality the capacity to determine by itself alone the level of radicalness on which temporality can be thought, we do not thereby weaken the mode of questioning that guides the investigation of temporality (Chapter 3). Quite the opposite. If the potentiality of *Dasein* to be a whole – or as we might say, its capacity for being integral—ceases to be governed solely by the consideration of Being-towards-the-end, the potentiality-of-Being-a-whole can once again be carried back to the power of unification, articulation, and dispersion belonging to time."
- <sup>43</sup> Cf. Ricœur, "La marque du passé," 21: "Therefore, one may wonder if it is not necessary to free the *Seinskönnen* - the being-self-ahead - the yoke of being-towards-death, and at the same time the totalization of time imposed by this category. [...] What would need to be explored are the resources of the experience of potentiality of being before being capture by the being-towards-death." and Ricœur, 2004, 357: "Must one not then explore die resources of die experience of die potentiality of being before its capture by being-toward-death?"
- <sup>44</sup> Cf. Ricœur, "La marque du passé," 22: "In this sense Sartre and, as I think I can say, Levinas agree to say that death is not an event likely to be hoped and anticipated." Also cf. Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 361.
- <sup>45</sup> Cf. Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 357: "It is first of all in contrast to the idea of dead as the intimate possibility of one's ownmost potentiality of being that I would like to suggest an alternate reading of the potentiality of dying. In place of the short-circuit that Heidegger makes between the potentiality of being and mortality, I would prefer to substitute die long detour that follows."
- <sup>46</sup> Ricœur, "La marque du passé," 21.
- <sup>47</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 445.
- <sup>48</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 499.

<sup>49</sup> Ricœur, *Time and narrative III*, note 42, 312.

<sup>50</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 384.

<sup>51</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 380.

<sup>52</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 498-9.

<sup>53</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Time and narrative I*, (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 66 – ff.

<sup>54</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 381.

<sup>55</sup> For a further treatment of this dimension cf. Esteban Lythgoe, "Paul Ricœur y la representación histórica" en *Revista Internacional de Fenomenología y Hermenéutica Alea* 9, 77-93.

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