

Introduction

Philosophical Anthropology and Social Analysis

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It is my pleasure to present to you the fourth issue of *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* (ERRS). The conception of the issue has been to a great extent inspired by the International Conference on Ricœur Studies “New Perspectives on Hermeneutics in the Social Sciences and Practical Philosophy”, which I had the honor to co-organize at the National Research University Higher School of Economics in Moscow on September 13-16, 2011. The conference united the international community of Ricœur scholars by including sixty speakers from eighteen different countries of Europe, North America, Latin America, Africa, and other parts of the world. A large portion of the conference presentations were devoted to the intersection of Ricœurian hermeneutics with practical philosophy and social sciences such as sociology, history, economics, political science, law, and psychology. While a few of those presentations are included in this issue, the call for papers for this special issue was open to all and solicited articles that focused especially on the impact of Paul Ricœur’s oeuvre in the domains of social ontology and cognition. This issue thus hopes to build on existing debates over social theory, actions and events, the anthropology of capable man, theories of recognition, the role of social institutions, and memory studies. Through dialogue with other approaches in sociology and social philosophy, this issue examines the extent to which Ricœur’s philosophy can contribute to the study of social phenomena, showing both the advantages and limitations of his analyses. The mixture of different research backgrounds of the authors represented in this issue further underscores the interdisciplinary dialogue affirmed by the journal’s mission.

It should be noted that not many works of Ricœur are addressed directly to the social sciences. There are, of course, the collected papers that constitute *From Text to Action*, in which Ricœur examines the contradictions in the theory of social action and debates on the dialectics of explanation and understanding in social sciences. There are also his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, in which the philosopher explores the problem of ideology together with K. Mannheim, J. Habermas, M. Weber, and C. Geertz. We might also include here his speech at the opening ceremony for the “Humanities at the Turn of the Millennium” in the University of Århus, in Denmark in 1999 (the philosopher himself preferred speaking about the human sciences than the social sciences). Nonetheless, it is safe to say that Ricœur has never been a central figure for the social sciences, and what is more, in the 1970-80s there was even a real hostility toward Ricœur’s oeuvre within the social sciences, influenced by Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault.

One of the reasons for this underappreciation is that Ricœur’s dialogue with the social sciences is rarely presented on the surface of his texts, apart from the examples above. It is dispersed across the length of his research, especially in the period starting from the 1980s until 2004. This is why we will need the work of interpretation to uncover his valuable thoughts for social cognition. Such work is difficult but worthwhile doing. For instance, social scientists who deal with the problem of social action, its interpretations, and public manifestations will discover important resources in Ricœur’s semantics of action in *Time and Narrative* and *Memory, History, Forgetting*. The latter work also serves as a very important theoretical basis for memory studies. Convergences between interpretative sociology and Ricœur’s anthropology can also be found in *Oneself as Another*, while *The Just* is a good resource for current debates over justice and problems

of multiculturalism. *The Course of Recognition* is both the definitive form of Ricœur's anthropology and practical philosophy as well as a valuable contribution to contemporary discussions on recognition theory. The potential of Ricœur's relevance for social sciences cannot easily be exhausted. For, as Marc Breviglieri shows in his article in this issue, there are even fruitful ideas concerning human and social nature to be found in the early philosophy of the will.

In spite of the slow acceptance of Ricœur's heritage, there has been a recent interest in the social sciences toward his work. This has taken place, for instance, in the so-called "Narrative" and "Pragmatic" turns in the social sciences. This centrifugal movement of literary and linguistic modes of inquiry toward social theories and methodologies as well as toward the objects of social studies can be seen in the numerous studies on narrative and narrative identity that appeared mostly in English-language literature throughout the eighties and the nineties. Ricœur's works on narrativity have been received as a valuable contribution in that domain. We have also seen a growing interest toward Ricœur in the social sciences in the United States. The reception of Ricœur has been to a large extent stimulated by the works of Richard Kearney and George Taylor. An event celebrating the relevance of Ricœur's oeuvre to the social sciences has been the recent publication of *Ricœur across the Disciplines*, edited by Scott Davidson. The book provides a fruitful insight into the interconnection between Ricœur's philosophy and law, history, political theory, women's studies, education, African American studies, and musicology.

In France the "Pragmatic turn", which exploded at the end of the twentieth century, is associated with social scientists who have been more sensitive to philosophical issues and focused their attention on the agent and his/her action within an environment. The creation of the journal *Raisons Pratiques* and its first volume *Les formes de l'action*, edited by Patrick Pharo and Louis Quéré, manifested this theoretical shift. One of the most significant events of the "Pragmatic Turn" was the roundtable on "Ricœur's effect on human sciences", organized by *Esprit* in 2006. Among the participants of the round table were sociologists Laurent Thévenot, Luc Boltanski, Patrick Pharo and Louis Quéré, historians François Dosse and François Hartog, and philosopher Michaël Foessel. The participants vividly displayed that Ricœur's oeuvre holds great potential for the social sciences. To borrow the words of Patrick Pharo, "Ricœur holds the same position for the social sciences in France as does John Rawls in the USA and Jürgen Habermas in Germany." A significant contribution to the reception of Ricœur's oeuvre in the social sciences has been the publication of the books *Paul Ricœur: une philosophie de l'agir humain* and *Sociologie du soi: Essai d'herméneutique appliqué* by Johann Michel.

Ricœurian philosophical anthropology provides the social sciences with a methodology of reflection aimed at questioning their objects of inquiry and methods of explanation. At the same time, it offers a philosophy of *human action* that aims to define and understand action and human nature at a quite deep level. Following François Dosse, "Ricœur is one of the rare philosophers who managed to work not *on* human sciences but *with* them."

The contributions that constitute the thematic portion of this issue analyze Ricœur's stance on social analysis from very different angles. The issue opens with two articles presenting a dialogue between eminent sociologists Laurent Thévenot and Marc Breviglieri. Their articles provide a sociological interpretation of Ricœur's philosophy dealing with the problems of justice, authority, recognition of human capacities, and their vulnerability. The first article, Laurent Thévenot's "Des institutions en personnes: Une sociologie pragmatique en dialogue avec Paul Ricœur" addresses the problem of institutions. Starting with debates on the meaning of justice, Thévenot demonstrates Ricœur's contribution to understanding the act of judgment and the

recognition of authority. The author points out how a fruitful dialogue with Ricœur can advance the sociology of engagements, elaborated elsewhere by Thévenot. Speaking about the relationship between one person and *another* person or an institution as a third party, the author emphasizes the importance of Ricœur's "dialectics of the socius and the fellowman" (le *socius* et le *prochain*). While sociological approaches - based on ethnomethodology, social phenomenology, sociology of practice, and interactionism - often underestimate the consideration of experience of relationship of a close proximity and intimacy to the world, Thévenot finds that Ricœur goes beyond the notions of role, habitus, typification or function and introduces a "hypersociological" vision based on "mutuality between a person and his vis-à-vis." Thus, with the support of Ricœur's philosophy, the sociology of engagements can consider various modes and durations of engagement with other persons and institutions. Thévenot's argument, presented in this article, is followed by sociological analyses that display the transformations affecting institutions of civic solidarity and public services.

The second article, Marc Breviglieri's "L'espace habité que réclame l'assurance intime de pouvoir", considers two sociological approaches in relation to Ricœur's anthropology of capable man. The first approach scrutinizes the concept of human capacity from the perspective of Ricœur's philosophy. The author shows how Ricœur's anthropology enriches sociological inquiry on human capacities by analyzing what human beings are capable of or not. This implies focusing attention on the four fundamental capacities of a capable man to engage the world, proposed by Ricœur in *Oneself as Another* (I can speak, act, narrate, and impute). The second approach elaborated here aims to study the fundamental phenomena of the practical sphere exposed in his early philosophy of the will. The problem of capacities is raised to another level, where primitive sensitive experiences are carried out and human beings are still considered to be dependent on vital functions. Following Ricœur, Breviglieri attempts to understand fundamental conditions of humanity and the reasons why just being alive is not a sufficient condition for being a human. His reflection is carried out on the interpenetration of a simple environment (*simple milieu ambiant*) where life is supported and protected, and a familiar inhabited space, where the body is attached to the world and becomes sensitive to humanity. The question the author wants to pose is no longer the question of the environment preserving life but an inhabited space which makes possible an intimate assurance of being able to be capable (*assurance intime de pouvoir se rendre capable*). The study, presented in the article, allows for a critical illumination of social policies currently focused on the development of individual capacities.

The third article, Alain Loute's "Identité narrative collective, critique sociale et lutte contre les résistances", extends the reflection on the problem of human capacities, such as the capacity to narrate. It deals with critical intervention, based on Ricœur's thoughts on narrativity, on the issue of the dispossession of actors' power to narrate their actions in the situation of suffering. Loute shows how modern transformations of the capitalism such as stress, stigmatization, de-affiliation cause the incapacity of actors to recount their actions themselves. The author demonstrates that the theoretical critique of these sufferings, suggested by Emmanuel Renault, is relevant for the analysis of ideologization of narrative identity, although it is not satisfactory for addressing "internal" resistances to the emplotment of self. Ricœur's study of analytical and psychoanalytical practice emphasizes that these resistances cannot be lifted by a mere intellectual understanding and that the narrative restructuration of the personality must sometimes take the form of real *work*. What is also important in Alain Loute's paper is that it questions the work of collective emplotment and its foundations in individual responsibility.

A methatheoretic reflection on Ricœur's contribution to social thought is provided by Gonçalo Marcelo's article "Making Sense of the Social: Hermeneutics and Social Philosophy". The objective of the paper is to demonstrate how Ricœur's hermeneutics could serve as a starting point for social philosophy. That means, according to the author, that it could offer either a comprehensive framework and clarification of the historical traditions of the social or the impetus for positive changes to social praxis. Although Ricœur has never positioned himself as a social philosopher, Marcelo attempts to trace the aspects of social philosophy in Ricœur's oeuvre, in particular, considering Ricœur's thoughts on the problematic of suffering and a diagnosis of the present time, established with the analysis of the concept of crisis. By juxtaposing the reflections of the leading representatives of the project of social philosophy - Michael Walzer and Axel Honneth - on the three possible paths of social criticism, Marcelo shows that it is possible, using the philosophy of Paul Ricœur, to ground social philosophy in hermeneutics.

A quite different perspective on Ricœur's contribution to the social sciences is proposed in the article by Sergey Zenkin, "Social Action and its Sense: Historical Hermeneutics after Ricœur". The article provides a discussion of Ricœur's proposed homology between text and social action. As Zenkin shows, despite the fact that the "paradigm of the text" disappeared from Ricœur's later argument and gave way to a paradigm of narrative, this paradigm of action as a text could be very fruitful in history or social history. It is in history that the interpretation consists in assigning to actions (generally to practical reactions, but not only) new meanings, in reintroducing them into new semantic structures. A new hermeneutics of social meanings can be founded upon it, enriched by the methodological experience of structural semiotics. The article is supported by two limit-cases - the case of "remote-model behavior" by Yury Lotman and the case of "sense-suppressing action" by Georges Bataille - to show that hermeneutics should be renewed and enriched by the methodological experience of structural semiotics.

Quite apart from the problems of human action and human capacities, "Events and the Critique of Ideology" by Iain MacKenzie provides a reflection of the contributions of Paul Ricœur and Gilles Deleuze together. The author attempts to discover the common lineage and trajectory in their philosophies that has not been fully understood up to now. MacKenzie puts Ricœur's and Deleuze's arguments into debates about ideology and its critique and discovers that both of their approaches are post-critical of the strong correlationist variety. According to MacKenzie's argument, these debates imply a consideration of the notion of event. The analysis of events is the second contribution of the paper. By juxtaposing Ricœur's and Deleuze's conceptions of event, he suggests enriching the discussion about the narrative encasement proposed by Ricœur and the dramatic liberation of event suggested by Deleuze, by involving a third party, namely, Alain Badiou's philosophy of event.

The thematic session of this special issue ends with a contribution from David Leichter "Collective Identity and Collective Memory in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur". The author begins by identifying the tension between the "individual" and "social" components of memory. In order to find a compromise between them, Leichter argues that while memory belongs, in each case, to individuals, individual memory exists and is shaped by a relationship with others. Furthermore, due to the fact that individuals are temporally constituted and act through intersubjective associations, the notion of collective memory ought to be understood through the networks of relations among individuals and the social communities to which they belong. Leichter adds that Ricœur's thoughts on collective memory help us to consider the interrelation between memory and space or places we inhabit.

Before inviting you to start reading the journal, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have been involved in preparing this special issue. First and foremost, my deep acknowledgment goes to Johann Michel and Scott Davidson, who prepared the volume with me. Their professionalism, attention to detail, and patience have been precious. I would like also to thank all the members of the Editorial Committee who helped in the reviewing process. On behalf of our editorial team, I thank the University of Pittsburgh Library for their technical support and the authors of this special issue for fruitful collaborative work and remarkable contributions.

Anna Borisenkova

Guest editor