

## Social imagination, abused memory, and the political place of history in *Memory, History, Forgetting*

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### Abstract

In this paper we intend to show that in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Paul Ricœur articulates memory and history through imagination. This philosopher distinguishes two main functions of imagination: a *poetical* one, associated with interpretation and discourse, and a *practical and projective* one that clarifies and guides our actions. In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, both functions of imagination are present, but are associated with different aspects of memory. The first one is present especially in the phenomenology of the cognitive dimension of memory; the second one is developed in the analysis of the abuses of artificial memory, while their convergence is described in the section on the abuses of natural memory. Besides the similarities in the way these functions of imagination operate in *Oneself as Another* and in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, we will show some important differences between these two works and we will propose reasons for these differences.

*Keywords:* Poetical Imagination, Practical Imagination, Abused Memory, Ideology, Utopy.

### Résumé

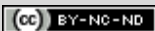
Dans cet article nous souhaiterions montrer que, dans *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, l'imagination productrice est ce qui permet d'articuler la mémoire et l'histoire. Ricœur distingue deux principales fonctions de l'imagination: l'une, *poétique*, associée à l'interprétation et au discours; l'autre *pratique* et projective, qui éclaire et oriente nos actions. Dans *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, ces deux fonctions de l'imagination sont présentes mais elles sont associées à des aspects différents de la mémoire. La première est surtout présente dans la phénoménologie de la dimension cognitive de la mémoire, la seconde apparaît dans l'analyse des abus de la mémoire artificielle, et l'articulation entre ces deux fonctions se trouve enfin décrite dans la section concernant l'abus de la mémoire naturelle. Outre les similitudes dans la façon dont ces fonctions de l'imagination opèrent dans *Soi-même comme un autre* et dans *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, nous essaierons de montrer qu'il existe cependant certaines différences importantes entre ces deux œuvres en tentant d'en expliciter les raisons.

*Mots-clés:* Imagination poétique, imagination pratique, mémoire abusée, idéologie, utopie.

Études Ricœuriennes / Ricœur Studies, Vol 5, No 2 (2014), pp. 35-47

ISSN 2155-1162 (online) DOI 10.5195/errs.2014.249

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## The productive imagination and its place in history in Ricœur's work of the 1980s

The problem of imagination is present in much of Ricœur's work. As Richard Kearney explains, "while his early works—*Freedom and Nature* (1950) in particular—conformed to the descriptive conventions of eidetic phenomenology, the publication of *The Symbolism of Evil* in 1960 introduced a 'hermeneutic' model of analysis which opened up the possibility of a new appreciation of the linguistic functioning of imagination."<sup>1</sup> Some interpreters suspect that one of the reasons for Ricœur's move from phenomenology to hermeneutics was his decision to adopt the Kantian concept of productive imagination. Most of the considerations around the imagination are found in works of the mid-seventies and early eighties, among which we find *The Rule of Metaphor, From Text to Action* and *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*. Despite his interest in this subject, "in Ricœur's published work we find only scattered references to this topic and no comprehensive development on this subject so apparently central to his thinking." (Taylor, 2006, 93.)<sup>2</sup> One possible explanation for this absence is that the philosopher was interested in the role of imagination and not its contents, subordinating its treatment to other issues related to functions of the imagination.

Beyond their specific differences, an important part of *Time and Narrative* and *Memory, History, Forgetting*, was devoted to the study of the role of the imagination in history. In what follows we will highlight the articulating role of this capacity in the latter work, especially linking the phenomenology of memory to the epistemology of history. We agree with Jean-Luc Amalric that the "phenomenology of the capable man developed in *Memory, History, Forgetting* and *The Course of Recognition*, represents a final attempt to sift ever more precisely *the limits of the extremely complex imaginative activity* which lies at the heart of all human subjectivity."<sup>3</sup> We will use the distinction between the two senses of the productive imagination in Ricœur, developed by George Taylor and Amalric.<sup>4</sup> According to these interpreters, our philosopher recognizes two main functions of imagination: a *poetic* one, associated with interpretation and discourse, and a *practical* and projective one, which clarifies, directs and energizes our actions.<sup>5</sup> The first, inspired by Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, emphasizes the schema of imagination, that is, the synthetic ability to establish a connection between intuition and concept; the second, on the other hand, is linked to the *Critique of Judgment* and emphasizes imagination's freedom from rules.

Taylor suggests that in his works of the seventies and early eighties, and notably in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, Ricœur emphasizes the projective function of imagination, whereas from *Time and Narrative* onwards he accords a priority to its synthetic capacity.<sup>6</sup> We do not share this assessment. We believe, on the contrary, that the two functions of imagination are present in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. In what follows we will analyze how the two kinds of imagination work in this book. We will take as our starting point Amalric's proposal regarding the dialectic of imagination in narrative identity. According to Amalric, narrative identity is "like a poetic practice mix that mediates and renders dialectical two distinct functions of imagination:

on the one hand, what I would call a *poetic function of imagination*, that is, essentially a *representation function* based on interpretation and discourse, and, according to Ricœur, a *practical function of imagination*, that is, a *projective function* of imagination able both to clarify, guide and make our action dynamic."<sup>7</sup> Although we take this as our starting point, we will also try to demonstrate certain differences in the way the two functions of imagination are articulated in *Oneself as Another* and in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. While in the first book the dialectic of imagination occurs within the self, in the second work it is related to the figure of the historian, whose work is contrasted with the operations of memory.

## 1. The relation of memory and imagination at the cognitive and practical level

Ricœur analyzes the relationship between memory and imagination in the first two chapters of the first part of *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Each takes as its axis one of the two aspects of Aristotle's *Peri mnemes kai anamneseos* or, according to the Latin translation, *De memoria et reminiscencia*, that is memory in either its cognitive dimension or its practical dimension: "The remarkable fact is that these cognitive and practical approaches overlap in the operation of recollection; recognition, which crowns the successful search, designates the cognitive side of the recollection, while effort and work are inscribed in the practical field."<sup>8</sup> Each of the chapters emphasizes a different function of imagination, the first, the poetic and the second, the practical.

Almost the entire philosophical tradition acknowledges one definition of memory, namely: *to be an image of something that "has been" but "is not" now*. This definition is present from the Platonic metaphor of the wax block to Husserl's phenomenology, and sums up the idea that the one who remembers is affected by something in the past and retains a trace of this event in the present. The tradition also recognizes the proximity between memory and imagination, and since the very beginning of philosophy the relationship between the two has been a topic of study. Ricœur suggests that the disadvantage of taking this kind of approach is that it involves a misconception. He says that, from the start, the question that guides philosophy has taken no account of the defining aspect of the mnemonic capacity. Thus, since the time of Plato a priority has been accorded to exploring the adequacy of the image in its capacity to represent the original event, whereas the defining feature of memory, its ability to assure the perseverance of the past image over time, has been neglected.<sup>9</sup> Even Husserl fell into the same trap in his fruitless search for a criterion for distinguishing memory from fiction. In this regard, he engaged a number of strategies. They ranged from his attempt to define memory as a modification of perception to his attempt to link memory to a world of shared experiences.

In order to establish what memory is, the French philosopher begins his analysis with the concept of *recognition*. Following Kant and Bergson,<sup>10</sup> Ricœur defines memory as a synthesis of two different capacities: memory and imagination. On the one hand, Bergson posited the existence of a pure memory that did not correspond to images; on the other hand, memory was said to operate through images, even though the image could not be identified with memory. A virtual, pure memory had to be rendered material or had to become effective through the imagination. According to this thesis, the feeling that accompanies recognition of the "already seen" arises from the fusion of pure memory and image. Our philosopher uses the term "configuration" to characterize this fusion and he refers us back to his considerations on Aristotle's *Poetics* in *mimesis II of Time and Narrative*.<sup>11</sup> This allusion might lead us to suppose that the imaginative synthesis in memory has the same nature as narrative configuration, but I do not think this is the case. With regard to memory, we have a pre-reflexive, and even a pre-narrative

synthesis, as seems to follow from Ricœur's conclusion that memory is a kind of belief.<sup>12</sup> Only at the level of the narrative configuration of history do we find a narrative synthesis. The reference to *mimesis II* does not refer therefore to configuration, but to the ability of the imagination to make something visible, that is, to the *opsis*.

The fact that the productive imagination works as synthesis, does not exclude the possibility of producing images that allow us to see. As Kearney explains, "if the productive imagination were confined to a purely verbal innovation, it would cease to be imagination."<sup>13</sup> On at least two occasions in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, where the relation between readability and the seeing-as (*opsis*) is highlighted, the visualizing component is present in the treatment of the poetic imagination. The first reference is in chapter one, where the visualizing function of imagination is introduced by means of an analysis of the *Poetics* of Aristotle, and the second is found in the third chapter of the second part.<sup>14</sup> Seeing-as, however, is not just an image, but it is the fusion of an image and a concept. As *The Rule of Metaphor* states regarding the integration of saying-as and seeing-as:

Thus, "seeing as" quite precisely plays the role of the schema that unites the *empty* concept and the *blind* impression; thanks to its character as half thought and half experience, it joins the light of sense with the fullness of the image. In this way, the non-verbal and the verbal are firmly united at the core of the image-ing function of language.<sup>15</sup>

The synthetic imagination does not produce the image, but this intuitive presentification is engendered by the reproductive imagination, and the poetic imagination carries out the synthesis of pure memory and this image.

From this cognitive characterization of memory as synthesis in recognition, Ricœur infers the ideal to which memory should aspire. Because of its synthetic nature, it cannot aspire to truth considered as an adequate representation of past events, as the philosophical tradition would have it. Moreover, the weakness of memory is a constant possibility, in the sense that we may lose it or, owing to the fragility of the synthesis, it may deceive us.<sup>16</sup> The constant presence of this suspicion indicates to us that the belief accompanying memory is not an epistemic belief, such as that characterizing other kinds of knowledge, but belief as "attestation" as Ricœur terms it in the introduction to *Oneself as Another*. The ideal to which memory should aspire is, therefore, *faithfulness*, in the sense of a continuity between memory and the initial experience from which it arose: "We then feel and indeed know that something has happened, something has taken place, which implicated us as agents, as patients, as witnesses. Let us call this search for truth, faithfulness."<sup>17</sup>

Following Bergson, Ricœur proposes a kind of scale that would have, at one extreme, pure memory and, at the other, hallucination. In the middle of the scale we find the memory image, just mentioned, which is the visual component of imagination, and fiction, with its capacity for derealization. The hallucination is produced when the imagined reality is believed. Our philosopher warns us against what he calls the pitfall of the imaginary which is the product of the confusion between the functions of the imagination: "inasmuch as this putting-into-images, bordering on the hallucinatory function of imagination, constitutes a sort of weakness, a discredit, a loss of reliability for memory."<sup>18</sup>

While the cognitive analysis of memory focuses its attention on recognition, the pragmatic analysis is based on remembrance. The transition from the first to the second approach enables him to work this issue into the framework of the "phenomenology of the capable human."<sup>19</sup> In this pragmatic approach, the practical function of imagination, that is, the projective

function that directs our work is the most important one. Although references to this function are sporadic, we shall see that they are crucial in establishing the guidelines to determine when the use of memory becomes its abuse.

Memorization techniques provide the means to increase the capacity for memory retention. As long as they are consistent with the aspiration of *happy memory*, Ricœur considers this practice as a use of memory.<sup>20</sup> At this point, we will not enter into a more detailed analysis of the concept of "*happy memory*." Let us provisionally define it as follows: "It is important, in my opinion, to approach the description of mnemonic phenomena from the standpoint of the *capacities*, of which they are the 'happy' realization."<sup>21</sup> Ricœur's hypothesis is that the passage from the use to the abuse of memory occurs when it is "denatured." It is for this reason that the *ars memoriae* of Frances Yates will have a prominent role in the characterization of abused memory.

Using Bergson's vocabulary, memorization is described as a shift from memory as recollection that allows us to relive again what was once experienced, to memory as habit, which is a memory incorporated in the body that has no temporal component linking the initial experience to the present. A typical example of this second type of memory is the lesson that is learned. One retains the lesson but not the moment when it was learned. Mnemotechnics claims to go beyond this kind of practice in order to overcome the limits imposed by oblivion. In order to achieve this goal, mnemotechnics redefines the bond between memory and its traces. As explained in the previous section, Ricœur conceives the mnemonic representation as the product of the synthesis between a pure memory and an image. Memory consists of two components, a passive one, a product of being affected by an event in the past, and an active one produced by the imagination. The artificial memory developed by the mnemotechnics lacks the first component. Thus, "from this denial of forgetting and of being-affected results the preeminence accorded to memorization at the expense of remembering (*rememoration*). The overemphasis on images and places by the *ars memoriae* has as its price the neglect of events that astonish and surprise."<sup>22</sup> The use of memory ceases to be such and becomes abuse when, in order to achieve the ideal traditionally associated with memory, one distorts the elements that characterize its quest for truth and defines memory as such. Truth as mnemonic aspiration is a practical ideal that is opposed to faithfulness, as defined in the previous chapter.<sup>23</sup> However, while faithfulness is the product of the projective function of the above mentioned practical imagination, truth is an imposition that has no relation to the capacity of memory.

## 2. The introduction of the dialectic between poetic and practical imagination

The dialectic between poetic and practical imagination appears in the analysis of the abuses of natural memory (and forgetting), especially in the section on manipulated memory. The section dedicated to blocked memory refers laterally to the psychic expression of a drive elicited by the imagination in terms of sublimation in the work of mourning.<sup>24</sup> However, since this type of abuse results only from suffering rather than from any attempt at manipulation, we will set it aside in our analysis of this dialectic. It must be signaled, though, that at the end of this article, we will reformulate this dialectic as it is presented in the grieving process. The obligated memory, on the other hand, exceeds what we might characterize as a "phenomenology of the imagination." Its analysis pertains to the moral debate concerning the modes of resolution of these abuses. The work of mourning, justice, forgiveness and amnesty are developed at the end of this book.

Manipulated memory concerns an identity claim that memory sustains and is directed toward the rationality of ends. The projective imagination is related to this last attribute. Ricœur believes that in addition to the above-mentioned cognitive difficulties, the main cause of the fragility of memory is found in identity problems, both personal and collective. These problems are associated with time, contact with others, and an original act of violence. In each of these cases, ideological manipulation is intended as a way to overcome the problem.

*Memory, History, Forgetting*, provides no original elaboration of the theme of ideology but reference is made to the previous treatment of this theme in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*.<sup>25</sup> At the very beginning of this book, the philosopher states that both ideology and utopia are functions of the imagination: "My purpose is to put these two phenomena, usually treated separately, within a single conceptual framework. The organizing hypothesis is that the very conjunction of these two opposite sides or complementary functions typifies what could be called social and cultural *imagination*."<sup>26</sup> In his opinion, they should both be characterized as processes rather than states, and he rejects the assumption that they have only a negative connotation. In this sense, Ricœur agrees with Clifford Geertz that, prior to the deforming function of ideology, there is a constitutive function.<sup>27</sup> Each has a role of its own (ideology has an inclusive function where utopia is projective and unmasking) and its pathologization arises from an excess of compliance. While ideology becomes dysfunctional through concealment and distortion, the eccentric function of utopia leads to schizophrenia.

In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, our philosopher holds the three-level distinction of ideology that he proposed thirty years earlier. The deepest level is the symbolic mediation, which assures the difference between the motivations of human action and genetic structures of behavior. Against the Marxist tradition, Ricœur believes that this level is constitutive of all humanity, and that the distorting effect of manipulation and the critique of ideology are based on it.<sup>28</sup> The second level is that of the legitimacy of power, where the manipulation of memory occurs.

Ideology, when all is said and done, revolves around power [...] Ideology, we may presume, arises precisely in the breach between the request for legitimacy emanating from a system of authority and our response in terms of belief. Ideology is supposed to add a sort of surplus value to our spontaneous belief, thanks to which the latter might satisfy the demands of the authority.<sup>29</sup>

The final level would be the distortion of reality.

Narrative configuration is of crucial importance in this process of ideological manipulation, as it appears particularly in the analysis of the manipulation of oblivion, the counterpart of manipulated memory. There Ricœur explains that "the ideologizing of memory is made possible by the resources of variation offered by the work of narrative configuration. The strategies of forgetting are directly grafted upon this work of configuration: one can always recount differently, by eliminating, by shifting the emphasis, by recasting the protagonists of the action in a different light along with the outlines of the action."<sup>30</sup> In the work that concerns us there is only one isolated reference to the configuring process of imagination,<sup>31</sup> in contrast to its more detailed treatment in the first volume of *Time and Narrative*. This latter book presents extensive analysis of the role of imagination in poetic *mimesis*, which is explicitly compared with the Kantian schematism. As for Kant, imagination unites understanding and intuition by means of the schematism, "emplotment, too, engenders a mixed intelligibility between what has been called the point, theme, or thought of a story, and the intuitive presentation of circumstances,

characters, episodes, and changes of fortune that make up the denouement. In this way, we may speak of a schematism of the narrative function."<sup>32</sup>

The most interesting contribution of *Memory, History, Forgetting*, lies in the discussion of the manipulator of memory. According to our author, it is not power that shapes these "official histories" ("foundation stories," "stories of glory and humiliation"), but this depends on a third party, named by Ricœur simply as "sophists."<sup>33</sup> Although in these considerations Ricœur never identifies this "sophist" with the historian, this is implied by references to Marin's reference to the historian's use of imagination as a means of appealing to authorities in power to obtain a subsidy for his work:

The "Project for a History of Louis XIV" in effect is a quite extraordinary text in that it presents to its reader's eyes the stratagems of a yet to be written history, along with the barely concealed plan of enticing its ultimate addressee, the king, to fall into the trap of providing a royal subvention for it. The stratagem for writing history thereby laid bare comes down to a cunning use of the prestige of the image used in service of rendering praise.<sup>34</sup>

What is not clear is the extent to which one can speak here of a dialectic between the poetic and practical imagination, as both kinds of imagination do not converge in the same figure. Indeed, the poetic imagination lies in the historian's work of configuration, while the practical imagination is associated with those who hold power, as they confine this narrative within a dialectic of collective remembrance and anticipation in the framework of educational institutions and commemoration acts:

At this level of appearance, imposed memory is armed with a history that is itself "authorized," the official history, the history publicly learned and celebrated. A trained memory is, in fact, on the institutional plane an instructed memory; forced memorization is thus enlisted in the service of the remembrance of those events belonging to common history that are held to be remarkable, even fundamental, with respect to the common identity.<sup>35</sup>

In the analysis of the uses and abuses of natural memory, memory is described as passively manipulated by ideology and seems unable to react. On the contrary, in *Time and Narrative* Ricœur concurred with Gadamer on the possibility of breaking with tradition. In effect,

with the idea of research, a critical moment is affirmed, one that comes second, it is true, but is unavoidable; this is what I call the relationship of distanciation, and from here on it will designate the opening for the critique of ideologies. It is essentially the vicissitudes of tradition, or, to put it a better way, rival traditions to which we belong in a pluralistic society and culture—their internal crises, their interruptions, their dramatic reinterpretations, their schisms that introduce, into our tradition, as one instance of truth, a "polarity of familiarity and strangeness on which hermeneutic work is based."<sup>36</sup>

We think that the difference between these two works is first announced in the article "The Mark of the Past" published two years before *Memory, History, Forgetting*. In this paper, Ricœur reconsiders the link between the present and the past. He argues that historical representation should not be based on the logic of the *eikon* but that it must be conceptualized on

the basis of historical testimony. Our philosopher also recognizes that when he wrote *Time and Narrative*, he was still very close to the *eikon* logic.<sup>37</sup> As Barash has shown, due to the re-elaboration of the concept of representation, Ricœur introduces an ontological and epistemological caesura between the historical event and historical fact.<sup>38</sup> The historical event is the referent of historical discourse, indicating what happened in the past. The historical fact, on the contrary, is its propositional reconstruction. Thus, it would be accurate to say: “the fact that this happened.” The philosopher characterizes this distinction as follows: “the fact as ‘something said,’ the ‘what’ of historical discourse, as distinguished from the event as ‘what one talks about,’ the ‘subject of...’ that makes up historical discourse.”<sup>39</sup>

An evaluation of all the changes that this distinction involves would exceed the objectives proposed by this article. Since memory is associated with an event in the past, we will simply mention that it remains tied to this past. As the past event is not a proposition, then memory is neither true nor false, and this is another reason why it must aspire to faithfulness and not to truth. While memory belongs to the past, history is constitutively distanced from it. This gap between history and the past is produced by the archivist when he records historical testimonies. As history constructs historical facts, it does have a critical view of the past. These two different ways of making connections to the past, create a special relationship between memory and history that Ricœur summarizes as follows:

Having arrived at this extreme point of the historiographical reduction of memory, we allowed a protest to be heard, one in which the power of the attestation of memory concerning the past is lodged. History can expand, complete, correct, even refute the testimony of memory regarding the past; it cannot abolish it. Why? Because, it seemed to us, memory remains the guardian of the ultimate dialectic constitutive of the pastness of the past, namely, the relation between the “no longer,” which marks its character of being elapsed, abolished, superseded, and the “having-been,” which designates its original and, in this sense, indestructible character. That something did actually happen, this is the pre-predicative—and even pre-narrative—belief upon which rest the recognition of the images of the past and oral testimony [...] This protest, which nourishes attestation, is part of belief: it can be contested but not refuted.<sup>40</sup>

In other words, memory is unable to “distance” itself from the past, in order to make explicit the ideology that configures its relation to the past. The historian, on the other hand, is the one who, at the behest of those in power, is able to manipulate memory. But he also seems to be the only one capable of disassembling such manipulation. Agreeing with Marin’s investigations, Ricœur acknowledges that “what is surprising is that the author of this historical project dared to spring the trap by stating it—to the great happiness of the contemporary historiographer.”<sup>41</sup> The historian can also help with blocked memory, particularly in the work of mourning that the traumatized memory must undertake. The question that still remains open is, then, that concerning the ideal of imagination that guides the actions of the historian. A first clue is given to us when Ricœur recognizes the importance of happy memory for the historian with these words: “On the horizon of this work: a ‘happy’ memory, when the poetic image completes the work of mourning. But this horizon recedes behind the work of history, the theory of which has yet to be established beyond the phenomenology of memory.”<sup>42</sup>

In *Time and Narrative* Ricœur has already pointed out the absurdity of critiques of ideology that claim to base themselves in reality or in absolute knowledge. In his opinion, the only way to undertake such criticism is in relation to a project or interest.<sup>43</sup> If we refer to his



analysis in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, this signifies that criticism of ideologies must be undertaken from a particular utopian standpoint. “This is my conviction: the only way to get out of the circularity in which ideologies engulf us is to assume a utopia, declare it, and judge an ideology on this basis. Because the absolute onlooker is impossible, then it is someone within the process itself who takes the responsibility for judgment. It may also be more modest to say that the judgment is always a point of view—a polemical point of view though one which claims to assume a better future for humanity—and a point of view which declares itself as such.”<sup>44</sup> Interestingly, in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, there is no explicit treatment of utopia. The only reference made to this concept contrasts it with the unconfessable character of ideology.<sup>45</sup> We are of the opinion, however, that the absence of the analysis of utopia in this book does not mean it lacks significance for its argument but, on the contrary, that utopia as such has great operational importance.

In order to establish what the operational utopia of *Memory, History, Forgetting*, is, we must return to the third volume of *Time and Narrative*, where Ricœur presents the characteristics that utopias must have to function as such. There he observes that, firstly, they must be anchored in experience, in order to generate relatively modest commitment. Second, a utopia must include all of humanity as a collective singular.<sup>46</sup> This characterization of a desirable utopia supports our hypothesis that happy memory is the utopia of this book. Indeed, happy memory fulfills two conditions: it is a relatively modest ideal, rooted in experience, and it also affects humanity as a collective singular. Happy memory is characterized as “the lodestar of the entire phenomenology of memory.”<sup>47</sup> Happy memory is an ideal that contrasts with the blocked memory and orients the social work of the historian as a social psychologist and critic of ideologies. Happy memory also incorporates the disruptive component of an alternative conception of the social order, which is characteristic of utopia. The concept of happy memory also accounts for Ricœur’s adoption of Todorov’s opposition between literal and exemplary memory, even if he does not fully agree with his thesis that the mission of the historian is to select historical facts in virtue of the good and not of truth.<sup>48</sup> Finally, happy memory is the framework wherein the philosopher compares forgetfulness and forgiveness, and eventually brings him to prefer the latter.<sup>49</sup>

We must observe here the hermeneutical circle that exists between the eidetic description of mnemonic phenomena and the prescriptive character of happy memory. First of all, happy memory arises as a product of phenomenological analysis of memory, depending on the three-step rhythm: describing, narrating, and prescribing.<sup>50</sup> But, on the other side, as already stated, this phenomenological analysis is guided by the ideal of happy memory.

## On the relationship between memory and history

Throughout these pages we have established the importance of the productive imagination in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Following Taylor and Amalric, we have pointed out that, in this book, Ricœur uses the productive imagination in the two ways proposed by Kant: poetic or synthetic, and practical or free. We have also relativized Taylor’s hypothesis that in *Lectures of Ideology and Utopia* free imagination is prioritized, while, from *Time and Narrative* on, the synthetic function is the one that predominates. In the first part of this article, we associated each of the functions of imagination with different approaches to memory. The poetic, synthetic imagination was linked to the cognitive analysis of memory, based on the process of recognition. Meanwhile, the practical imagination was associated with the practical dimension of memory. The convergence of both kinds of imagination was highlighted in the chapter on the uses and

abuses of natural memory, and specifically in the processes at work in overcoming grief and in the criticism of ideologies. This conjunction of the functions of imagination is embodied in the figure of the historian, in contrast to the case of the manipulation of memory where the historian's poetic imagination is subordinated to power, which is closer to practical imagination.

The productive imagination closes the gap that the archivist opened between memory and history. We mentioned that the distinction between event and a historical fact established an ontological and epistemological caesura between memory and history. Had this gap been maintained throughout the entire work, memory and history would have operated in parallel. Memory could neither have been manipulated through bad faith in historical analysis nor liberated from such manipulation through criticism of ideologies. In the analysis of mnemonic recognition and of historical representation, the philosopher repeats what he affirmed in *The Rule of Metaphor*, namely that the *saying as* provided by the productive imagination also evokes an image, allows us to *see as (opsis)*. "On this point, what unavoidably comes to mind is the final component of the *muthos* that, according to Aristotle's *Poetics*, structures the configuration of tragedy and epic, namely, the *opsis*, held to consist in 'placing before the eyes,' showing, making visible."<sup>51</sup> Because of this double component of imagination, memory and history are able to interact with each other.

As we have seen, there are a number of connections between *Oneself as Another* and *Memory, History, Forgetting*, with regard the articulation of the practical and the productive functions of imagination. There are grounds, then, for agreeing with certain conclusions proposed in Amalric's analysis of imagination, even though his work was based on *Oneself as Another*. Having said that, we did find an important difference between these two works with regard the development of Ricœur's approach to the question of how the historian might deal with abused memory. In the analysis of identity, in *Oneself as Another*, there is a superimposition of the object on the subject of identification, in other words, the person whose identity is in question is the same one who, on the basis of imagination, synthesizes his narrative identity. However, we have also shown that in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, this superimposition is explicitly excluded. The one who remembers is not the same one who, through the productive imagination, synthesizes memory: the first of these is a collective person and the second is the historian. This difference cannot be accounted for in terms of the above-mentioned redefinition of *representation* developed in "The Mark of the Past." Although the conceptual modification occurred between these two works, it only concerned the semantic problem of reference. Another reason for the difference between these two books, it might be argued, lies in an ontological difference that distinguishes collective subjects from individual subjects. In *The Course of Recognition* there is at least one reference to this theme: "Still, however close to 'the practice of history' the 'history of practices' wishes to remain (according to the title of Lepetit's programmatic essay), reflection on collective identities cannot elude a higher order of sophistication than the identity-ipseity of the individual subjects of action. The kind of explicit recognition that actors on the societal level expect for their individual capacities calls for a second-order reflection in reconstructing them."<sup>52</sup> Although this may be true in the case of identity, we cannot equate identity with memory. In his phenomenology of memory, Ricœur postponed the question about *who* remembers in order to show that it makes no difference whether the subject of memory is collective or individual. We think that the reason why, in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, the dialectic of imagination does not take place within memory itself is that this memory is an abused, traumatized and incapable memory. A traumatized individual would also require the assistance of the imaginative capacity of a third person. In his texts on

psychology, Ricœur indirectly associates psychological illness with an incapacity of the imagination, when he describes it as the impossibility of narrating one's life: "the patient is not capable of creating an intelligible and acceptable narrative of his life. The symptoms appear as fragments, scraps of narrative that it is impossible to coordinate in a coherent narration. In this case, may we consider the analytical cure as an entrance into language, communication, truth...?"<sup>53</sup> Since a coherent narrative can be created neither by the individual nor through his imagination, he requires help through the imagination of another. In a case like this, he must turn not to the historian but to the psychoanalyst.

- <sup>1</sup> Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-Modern* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 134-5.
- <sup>2</sup> George Taylor, "Ricœur's Philosophy of Imagination," in *Journal of French Philosophy* 16: 1- 2 (2006), 93.
- <sup>3</sup> Jean-Luc Amalric, "L'imagination poético-pratique dans l'identité narrative," in *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 3: 2 (2012), 112.
- <sup>4</sup> Cf. George Taylor, "Identidade prospective," in F. Nascimento and W. Salles (eds.), *Ética, Identidade e Reconhecimento* (Rio de Janeiro, Loyola, 2013), 130
- <sup>5</sup> Amalric develops this distinction relying on Ricœur's article "Imagination in Discourse and in Action," in *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991).
- <sup>6</sup> Cf. George Taylor, "Identidade prospective," 127: "Minha hesitante tese é que, na transição entre o texto sobre a imaginação e 'Tempo e narrativa,' a ênfase que Ricœur conferiu ao tema da identidade prospectiva foi atenuada, em parte por conta da trajetória biográfica do autor, em parte, em função de uma mudança na temática predominante de sua pesquisa e em parte por uma alteração metodológica. Esta última razão é de especial interesse para mim, pois está mais relacionada à filosofia de Ricœur do que à sua biografia."
- <sup>7</sup> Jean-Luc Amalric, "L'imagination poético-pratique dans l'identité narrative," 110.
- <sup>8</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 56.
- <sup>9</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 17: "This conjunction between (external) stimulation and (internal) resemblance will remain, for us, the crux of the entire problematic of memory."
- <sup>10</sup> The synthetic nature of recognition in Kant is mentioned in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 39. But a more extensive treatment is done in Paul Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, trans. David Pellauer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005), study I, chap. II, in the framework of the theory of judgment.
- <sup>11</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 52: "On this point, what unavoidably comes to mind is the final component of the *muthos* that, according to Aristotle's *Poetics*, structures the configuration of tragedy and epic, namely, the *opsis*, held to consist in 'placing before the eyes,' showing, making visible."
- <sup>12</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 498: "That something did actually happen, this is the pre-predicative—and even pre-narrative—belief upon which rest the recognition of the images of the past and oral testimony."
- <sup>13</sup> Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-Modern*, 151.
- <sup>14</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 262: "What I previously called die 'fictionalization of historical discourse' can be reformulated as the interweaving of readability and visibility at die threshold of the historian's representation."

- <sup>15</sup> Paul Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans. Robert Czerny with Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (London and New York: Routledge, 1977), 253.
- <sup>16</sup> Jean-Luc Amalric, "Affirmation originaire, attestation, reconnaissance. Le cheminement de l'anthropologie philosophique Ricœurienne," in *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies* 2: 1 (2011), 16.
- <sup>17</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 55.
- <sup>18</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 54.
- <sup>19</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 26: "It is to these instances of knowing-how that, among the vast panoply of uses of the word 'memory,' we apply one of its accepted senses [...] This vast empire covers forms of know-how on very different levels: we encounter first corporeal capacities and all the modalities of 'I can' which are considered in my own phenomenology of the 'capable human being': being able to speak, being able to intervene in the course of affairs, being able to recount, being able to ascribe an action to oneself by making oneself its actual author."
- <sup>20</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 58: "But the process of memorization is specified by the methodical character of the ways of learning aiming at an easy actualization, the privileged form of *happy memory*." (Cursive is mine.)
- <sup>21</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 21.
- <sup>22</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 66.
- <sup>23</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 56-7.
- <sup>24</sup> On the synthetic character of pre-representative imagination in Freud, cf. Paul Ricœur, "Image et langage en psychanalyse," in *Écrits et conférences 1. Autour de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 2004), 132. Cf. also Jean-Luc Amalric, "L'imagination poético-pratique dans l'identité narrative," 114.
- <sup>25</sup> Although in the third part of *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, there is a development on ideology and utopia, in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricœur only recognizes the developments done in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*.
- <sup>26</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 1.
- <sup>27</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 143.
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 84.
- <sup>29</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 83.
- <sup>30</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 448.
- <sup>31</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 269: "Imagination decides everything; it creates the beauty, justice, and happiness, which is the world's supreme good."
- <sup>32</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative. Volume 1*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 68.

- <sup>33</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 85: "Domination, we have understood, is not limited to physical constraint. Even the tyrant needs a rhetorician, a sophist, to broadcast his enterprise of seduction and intimidation in the form of words."
- <sup>34</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 265.
- <sup>35</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 85.
- <sup>36</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative. Volume 3*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), 224.
- <sup>37</sup> Paul Ricœur, "La marque du passé," in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale 1* (1998), 16.
- <sup>38</sup> Cf. Jeffrey Barash, "[...] le tournant heideggérien dans l'interprétation de l'histoire chez Paul Ricœur," [youtube.com/watch?v=0WRUTY62WRA] (2014). The article will be soon published in English and Portuguese.
- <sup>39</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 179.
- <sup>40</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 498.
- <sup>41</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 266.
- <sup>42</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 77.
- <sup>43</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative. Volume 3*.
- <sup>44</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 172-3.
- <sup>45</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 82.
- <sup>46</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative. Volume 3*, 215-6.
- <sup>47</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 494.
- <sup>48</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 86.
- <sup>49</sup> Cf. Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 412 ff.
- <sup>50</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 20.
- <sup>51</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 52.
- <sup>52</sup> Paul Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, 140.
- <sup>53</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Écrits et conférences 1. Autour de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 2008), 285.