

## Space of Experience, Horizon of Expectation Spatiotemporal Metaphors, Philosophical Anthropology, and the Flesh

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### Abstract

Paul Ricœur's recourse to the metahistorical categories, space of experience and horizon of expectation, invites an inquiry into geography's role as the guarantor of history. The ontology of the flesh provides the first indication of how one's body is implicated in the sense of one's place in the world. In turn, narrative inscriptions of events on the landscape transform the physical topography of a place into an array of sites where memories of ancestral wisdom and historical traumas endure. By anchoring historians' representations of the past in the places and locales in which events took place, geography constructs a third space analogous to the third time of history. The aporias engendered by the phenomenology of time, however, have no equivalent in the phenomenology of space. The dissymmetry between the dialectic that informs the discourse of space and the one that informs the discourse of time thus keeps in place the reciprocal relation between geography and historiography.

*Keywords:* Body; Flesh; Geography; Historiography; Phenomenology; Space; Time.

### Résumé

Le recours de Paul Ricœur aux catégories métahistoriques d'espace d'expérience et d'horizon d'attente invite à s'interroger sur le rôle de la géographie en tant que garante de l'histoire. L'ontologie de la chair fournit la première indication concernant la manière dont le corps de l'individu est impliqué à travers la place qu'il occupe dans le monde. À leur tour, les inscriptions narratives des événements dans le paysage transforment la topographie physique d'un lieu en un ensemble de sites où perdurent les souvenirs de la sagesse ancestrale et les traumatismes historiques. En ancrant les représentations du passé des historiens dans les lieux et localités où les événements prennent place, la géographie construit un troisième espace analogue au troisième temps de l'histoire. Les apories engendrées par la phénoménologie du temps n'ont cependant pas d'équivalent dans la phénoménologie de l'espace. La dissymétrie entre la dialectique que sous-tend le discours de l'espace et celle qui est sous-tendue par le discours du temps maintient ainsi en place la relation réciproque entre géographie et historiographie.

*Mots-clés:* Corps; Chair; Géographie; Historiographie; Phénoménologie; Espace; Temps.

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# Space of Experience, Horizon of Expectation

## Spatiotemporal Metaphors, Philosophical Anthropology, and the Flesh

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When, in response to the loss of credibility of the Hegelian philosophy of history, Paul Ricœur turns to the metahistorical concepts, space of experience and horizon of expectation, to redress the failure of totalizing ambitions, he marks out a region of discourse in which the force of the present is couched in spatial metaphors. Drawing on Reinhart Koselleck's analysis, Ricœur remarks that the space of experience can be traversed in multiple ways following different itineraries. Correlatively, the horizon of expectation marks out the distance separating the present from as yet unfulfilled aspirations and demands. The present's temporalizing force springs from the ways that social actors preserve the tension between this horizon and experiences that give rise to these aspirations and demands through the initiatives they take. This temporalizing force is accordingly one in which the space traversed in aiming at social actors' expectations brings to the fore the metaphorical references in play.

By asking if the metaphorical character of the metacategories, space of experience and horizon of expectation, harbor an insight into a fundamental feature of human reality, I propose to draw out how the history or histories of which we are a part bear on the geography of the places that we inhabit and with which we identify. Reciprocally, I want also to highlight how geography places its stamp on the history of a locale. I will therefore first rehearse how our mode of incarnation as flesh constitutes the ground of our spatial and temporal experiences. By relating the perspectives we have to the positioning of our bodies, I will turn to Ricœur's philosophical anthropology to highlight the intermediary condition of the being that we are. That we are always already *in medias res* redounds reflexively on phenomenological descriptions of space and time, thereby bringing to the fore a fundamental difference between them. The notion that space can be apportioned objectively independently of the events produced by the actions of those inhabiting it therefore not only eclipses how these events shape the social, political, and cultural terrain, but it also obfuscates the connection between the act of inhabiting a place and human geography. By commemorating incidents and episodes significant to the life of a community, vernacular histories and placenames mark sites of remembrance by inscribing traces of the past on the landscape. This interweaving of a history made, suffered, and endured with the sense of a place attests to the manifest quality of an experience for which our incarnate existence is key. The mode of our incarnation in the world, the *flesh* is consequently the bass note of a phenomenological reflection both on our experiences of space and on our experiences of time. Geography is accordingly the guarantor of history only insofar as the discourse of space and the discourse of time sustain the bond between the spatial order of experience and the temporal character of the events inscribed on the physical, cultural, social, and political landscape.

## I. The Flesh

Experiences social actors have of the places they inhabit and the times of which they are a part provide a first evidence of our incarnate existence as flesh. Every “here” and every “now” bespeaks the position each of us occupies by reason of our bodies. Ricœur cautions that the “central primitive fact of incarnation is simultaneously the first hallmark of all existence and the first invitation to treason”<sup>1</sup> by an objectifying attitude that regards the body as but another object. The “living experience of incarnate Cogito”<sup>2</sup> is therefore irreducible to any system or field of knowledge that treats the body as one thing among others. For a philosophical anthropology for which the notion of being as power and act is decisive, one’s own body is the organ and support of the will, desire, and effort to exist. Accordingly, one’s own body opens each of us to the world “by all it is able to do.”<sup>3</sup>

Deictic references such as “here” and “now” mark one’s position in the world as the zero origin of one’s perspectival opening onto it. The “absolute here” of each of our perspectival orientations, the body “is the landmark for any there, be it near or far, included or excluded, above or below, right or left, in front or behind.”<sup>4</sup> The body is therefore at the same time also the landmark for “those asymmetric dimensions that articulate a corporeal typology that is not without at least implicit ethical overtones, for example, height or the right side.”<sup>5</sup> Grafting the evaluative texture of a symbolic system onto this corporeal typology marks out the cultural dimensions of a field of motivations that manifests itself first in the experiences we have of our own bodies. Moreover, as “an originating mediator ‘between’ [oneself] ... and the world,”<sup>6</sup> one’s body makes one dependent on the things one needs and wants. Desire, Ricœur therefore explains, is “properly a strong inclination to act which arises from the whole body.”<sup>7</sup> Desire thus awakens the body to movement by giving the values that we espouse “the aura of a nascent or suspended movement ... [that] keeps fresh the schemes of action.”<sup>8</sup>

And yet, Ricœur maintains, it is one’s flesh that designates that which “is most originally”<sup>9</sup> one’s own. For him, the ontological concept of the flesh drawn from the distinction Husserl makes between flesh (*Leib*) and body (*Körper*) is the serendipitous consequence of an otherwise impossible enterprise. Ricœur explains that this distinction is strategically positioned in the *Cartesian Meditations* in order to account for a foreign subjectivity. The necessity of formulating the idea of

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature. The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, trans. Erazim V. Kohák (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966), 87.

<sup>2</sup> Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature*, 87.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, trans. Charles A. Kelbley (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 19.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 149.

<sup>5</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 149.

<sup>6</sup> Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature*, 265.

<sup>8</sup> Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature*, 265.

<sup>9</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 324.

ownness in order to constitute this foreign subjectivity lays bare the “phenomenological trait of the flesh that designates it as a paradigm of otherness.”<sup>10</sup> For an ontology for which the otherness of the flesh is indicative of its primordially with respect to our projects, plans, and designs, “the flesh precedes the distinction between the voluntary and the involuntary.”<sup>11</sup> By breaking free of the problematic that shipwrecks a phenomenology of constitution such as Husserl pursues, an ontology of the flesh delineates how one’s flesh founds one’s selfhood through appearing “as a body among bodies ... [so] that I am myself an other among others.”<sup>12</sup>

That one’s flesh is also a body brings to the fore the ontological constitution of the intermediary being that we are. According to Ricœur, the enigmatic nature of one’s own body is the “first figure of passivity-otherness [that] puts into play the referral of phenomenology to ontology.”<sup>13</sup> Persons are also bodies owing to the fact that “each person is for ... [herself her] own body.”<sup>14</sup> Moreover, Ricœur asks how action can both constitute an event and refer reflexively to its author if she “does not [also] belong to the world in a mode in which the self is constitutive of the very sense of this belonging.”<sup>15</sup> By inscribing ourselves in the world through words, works, deeds, and acts, we put our marks on those events. The positions we take in response to questions, problems, and challenges are preceded, as it were, by the givenness of our incarnate existence. As the “organ of desire, [and] the support of free movement,”<sup>16</sup> the flesh thus places its seal on the “here” and “now” of our projects and designs.

The “certainty of the acting self and its contrary ... [, which] is also its complement, corporal passivity”<sup>17</sup> sets the body at the center of a broad field of inquiry in which the otherness of one’s own body figures. Ricœur stresses that articulating speculatively the modality of *otherness* corresponding to the intimate passivity of the experience of the lived body requires that we grant “to the metacategory of one’s own body a fullness comparable to that which suffering gives to undergoing or enduring.”<sup>18</sup> The inclusion of one’s own body in the apprehension of the self as acting *and* suffering reveals different degrees of passivity. The resistance of the body attests to a degree of passivity calling for the effort to move. Furthermore, the effects of capricious humors evince a degree of passivity in that these humors are foreign and hostile with respect to their visceral discharges. Finally, the resistance offered by external objects and things constitutes yet another degree of passivity. Through touching and being touched, we are assured of the certainty of our own existence as much as that of the world and the people and things in it.

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<sup>10</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 324.

<sup>11</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 324.

<sup>12</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 326.

<sup>13</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 319.

<sup>14</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 319.

<sup>15</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 319.

<sup>16</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 324.

<sup>17</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 318.

<sup>18</sup> Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 320.

## II. Position and Perspective

The ontology of the flesh provides a first indication of how one's body is implicated in the sense of one's place in the world. The mediator between the intimacy of the self and the world, the body is the zero origin of a perspective that opens each of us to a range of diverse values. The localization of the flesh by the self is accordingly the ground of a phenomenology of being as power and act. For a philosophical anthropology borne from the effort to raise the *pathétique* of human misery to the level of a rigorous discourse, the ability to change our positions, as when we turn our heads, look up, or move about to gain a different vantage-point is the manifest sign of the way that the self sets itself in place through the capacities that a phenomenology of the "I can" brings to light.<sup>19</sup>

The perspectival orientation given by the positioning of one's body acquires its thematic articulation in this philosophical anthropology, which is informed by an analysis of our intermediary condition. By taking the "originarily dialectical structure of human reality"<sup>20</sup> as a touchstone, Ricœur attributes this intermediary condition to the disproportion between 1) perspective and the truth intention of discourse, 2) character and the totality adumbrated by the idea of the person, and 3) vital desires and happiness. None of the philosophers for whom finitude figures prominently, he tells us, has a non-dialectical concept of it. On the contrary, "all of them speak in one sense or another of the transcendence"<sup>21</sup> of human being. The condition of human finitude is indicative of the restricted nature of the perspective that each of us is by reason of our incarnation *as* flesh. Correlatively, infinitude is the "sign of the *transcending* of finitude"<sup>22</sup> from within. For a philosophy of fallibility that begins "not from what is limited, but from the antinomy of the limited and the unlimited,"<sup>23</sup> the transcending intention that places its stamp on the ontological constitution of human being stands as testament to our power to be.

The perspectives we have, our apprehension of the environs in which we orient ourselves, and the projects we formulate consequently are inextricably linked. The fault line between one's own perspective and the signifying intention that makes language the privileged site of the transgression of every point of view evinces the gap between the finitude of each individual perspective and the truth at which discourse aims. We become aware of our respective points of view only through the movement that reveals their narrowness to us. The word (*logos*) that speaks of meaning, being, and truth accordingly surpasses each of our perspectives. We could ask whether

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<sup>19</sup> See Paul Ricœur, "Ethics and Human Capability. A Response," in John Wall, William Schweiker and W. David Hall (eds), *Paul Ricœur and Contemporary Moral Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2002). We cannot overlook the implications of such a phenomenology for ethics as well as for politics. Ricœur remarks that "[i]f no ontology is available in that field [of ethics], then Emmanuel Levinas is completely right: ethics has to be completed without any ontology. But then we lose, to my mind, the root in a philosophical anthropology, because we are not allowed to use the terms *capability*, *imputability*, and the whole set of ideas around the 'I can'" (284).

<sup>20</sup> Paul Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology. Writings and Lectures, Volume 3*, ed. Johann Michel and Jérôme Porée, trans. David Pellauer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 3.

<sup>23</sup> Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 3.

the schematizing imagination, which at the first stage of his analysis Ricœur identifies as the medial term that vests this transcending intention with its significance and force, is also operative in our experiences of the spaces we inhabit, traverse, and in which we move about. The configuration of these spaces transforms a geometrical system of abstract coordinates into a living arrangement of places, distances, relations of proximity, and the like. Moreover, the perspectives we have are replete with values rooted in diverse cultural systems, as I indicated previously. The placement of desks in a classroom, for example, reinscribes the power differential between instructor and students, only because of the readability of this structured space's symbolic significance. Like language, the symbolism that renders this space intelligible vests individual perceptions with a unity of meaning that exceeds each of them. The transcending intention animated by the schematizing imagination thus has a corollary counterpart in the interpretive texture of the symbolic system in which the space in question is experienced and understood.

The idea of respect, which at the second stage of Ricœur's analysis constitutes the medial term between the limitations of one's character and the totality demanded by reason, relates in an analogous way to the force the present has as regards history's temporalization. The thematic impulse of philosophical anthropology to "reveal the ground of being as act, as energy, as power and not just as form, essence, *logos*"<sup>24</sup> brings to the fore the imperative of respect's bearing on the idea of the person. The representation of the person as an end in herself takes on its practical specificity only through the projects each takes up. "I irrupt as myself,"<sup>25</sup> Ricœur tells us, in projecting myself in acts that are the results of my decisions and choices. The stories we tell recount how, in the quest for identity, we each make *this* life our own through inserting ourselves in the world through our words, deeds, and acts. The power to act in concert, which Hannah Arendt reminds us is the power corresponding to the specifically political condition of human plurality, warrants transposing the capacity to draw together the incidents and events of one's life to the community, whose on-going story shapes the contours and evaluative texture of the history of its struggles, suffering, and successes. Like our stories, these stories continue to emerge because of the efforts of each community and group to preserve the tension between the horizon of a past that has already been surpassed and one illuminated by as yet unrealized demands, aspirations, and hopes.

Does the medial term that at the third stage of his analysis Ricœur identifies with the human heart (*θυμός*) have a comparable place in a reflection on the spatiotemporal character of our experiences? For a philosophical anthropology for which the *pathétique* of human misery is the inexhaustible source, the disproportion that gives rise to the self's conflict with itself reaches its apogee in our affective fragility. Feeling, Ricœur explains, is the "privileged middle zone, the transition zone, between mere vitality and pure intellect."<sup>26</sup> Consequently, the heart is the principle *par excellence* of the intermediary being that we are. By uniting an "intention directed toward the world with an affection of the self,"<sup>27</sup> feelings assure us of our inherence in the world. This assurance constitutes the root of the feeling of belonging to a place, a community, and a history that places its stamp on the landscape. The perspectives we have and the positions we take are

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<sup>24</sup> Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 85.

<sup>25</sup> Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature*, 172.

<sup>26</sup> Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 16.

<sup>27</sup> Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 89.

accordingly manifest indices of diverse socio-cultural systems and practices' rootedness in the ontological constitution of the being that we are.

### III. Stories and Places

That our experiences of the places we inhabit are rooted more radically in the ontological constitution of our intermediary condition raises the question as to how the fact that we are always *in medias res* figures in a phenomenological description of space. Rather than adopt a Cartesian conception that defines place as a function of an abstract system of featureless coordinates, Edward Casey maintains that we experience a place as a kind of event.<sup>28</sup> Through gathering together animate beings and inanimate objects, the flow of generations and the enduring features of the land, family, neighbors and strangers, memories, outlooks, and expectations, places of habitation become the "generatrix for the collection, as well as the recollection of all that occurs in the lives of sentient beings."<sup>29</sup> Heidegger, he tells us, remarks that "spaces receive their essential being from particular localities and not from 'space' itself."<sup>30</sup> Casey accordingly relates the act of inhabiting a place to the performative and transitive character of the word habitation's verbal root, *habère*, which he explains is Latin for "to have, to hold."<sup>31</sup> For him, having and holding is the distinctive feature of the geographical subject's active commitment to the place in which she dwells. Arendt in a related vein points out that our concept of culture stems from the Roman term, *colere*. For her, a world that is fit for human habitation therefore requires a mind that is trained to tend and take care of it (*cultura animi*).<sup>32</sup> Our participation in public affairs, ritual consecrations of historic events, and social and political struggles not only attests to our engagement with the sense of a place but it also implicates us in the way that inhabited spaces are cultivated and maintained. Correlatively, the horizons that bound these spaces place their distinctive geographical and historical contours in relief. Casey emphasizes that for Heidegger, a "boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that from which something begins its presencing."<sup>33</sup> As

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time. Phenomenological Prolegomena," in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (eds), *Senses of Place* (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996); see Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005); Anne Buttmer, "Grasping the Dynamism of Lifeworld," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* vol. 66/2 (1976), 277-92.

<sup>29</sup> Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place," 26.

<sup>30</sup> Heidegger, cited by Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place," 37. See Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 154. Original in italics.

<sup>31</sup> Edward Casey, "Between Geography and Philosophy. What Does it Mean to Be in the Place-World?," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 91/4 (2001), 683-93, here 687; see Seamus Heaney, *Preoccupations. Selected Prose 1968-1978* (London: Faber and Faber, 1980), 133.

<sup>32</sup> Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future. Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1968), 215; see 211.

<sup>33</sup> Heidegger, cited by Casey, "Between Geography and Philosophy," 690; see Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, 154.

limits, these horizons are therefore also the condition of their own surpassing in response to questions, exigencies, and demands arising from the history of a place.

By giving one's perspective its range and depth, a horizon brings one's situation into view. Every situation, Hans-Georg Gadamer reminds us, stands in tension with the horizon with which it moves. Where a situation entails a "standpoint that limits the possibility"<sup>34</sup> of one's vision, the range of that vision includes all that one can see from one's particular vantage point. As the zero origin of one's perspective, every "here" is therefore already more than a dimensionless point on a Cartesian system of abstract coordinates, as I noted previously. Correlatively, every horizon accompanies the perspectival orientation due first to the position of one's own body and then to one's social positioning. This positioning is replete with values, as I also noted previously. The perspective owing to one's position is animated by vital as well as social and cultural wants and needs. The field of motivations that for Ricœur transforms this field's zero origin into the center of the self's adhesion to itself thus makes this "here" the place from which each decides upon the course to be pursued.<sup>35</sup> The ground of the "I want" in which our projects take root, the power-to-do thematized by a phenomenology of the "I can" vests the zero origin of one's perspectival orientation with its dynamic force. The event-like character of a place, which Casey rightly extols, we could therefore say, has its anthropological root in our power to act.

The ability to change one's position by moving one's body is therefore only the first of the capacities that figure in the eventful character of our experiences of space. When, previously, I remarked on the space of experience, I commented on the temporal implications of a space that Ricœur explains can be traversed in multiple ways following different itineraries. Moreover, this space is bounded by two horizons, that of a past that has been surpassed and that of a future that has yet to be made. Through delimiting this space, these horizons place the history or histories of which we are a part in tension with the prospective dimension of a future that has yet to be realized. Just as current social, cultural, and political predicaments call for and even demand reinterpreting the significance of past events that continue to fuel systemic injustices, the task of redressing the social, political, and economic effects of colonialist exploitation and slavery, for instance, marks out the trajectory of a liberatory project aimed at making freedom a reality for all. The tension between the spaces of our experiences and the horizons of our expectations, which Ricœur insists must be preserved if there is to be any history at all, springs from the way that this space is bounded by the horizons from which, paraphrasing the passage from Heidegger cited by Casey, the enduring effects of the past and aspirations fueled by hopes of a different and better future make themselves felt. The present gathers its force in the place and time in which exigencies and demands requiring a response appear. This gathering together of the present's temporalizing force is consequently the analogical counterpart of the generatrix that for Casey is the object of a phenomenological description of the experience of a place.

By producing the events that occasion stories that recount the significance of specific sites and locales, actions place their stamps on culturally significant topographical locations. Stories,

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<sup>34</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989 [1975]), 302.

<sup>35</sup> Ricœur, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 11.

Keith Basso reminds us, are “makers of identity.”<sup>36</sup> On his account, wisdom for the Western Apaches “sits in places.”<sup>37</sup> One story of Old Man Owl (Mú hastiin) inscribes the meaning of the toponym “Trail Goes Down Between Two Hills” (Gizhyaa’itié) on the physiognomy of the local terrain. It was here that two beautiful sisters tricked Old Man Owl, who was always thinking about women. One of the girls went to the top of one of the hills, and called out “Old Man Owl, come here! I want you to rub me between my legs!”<sup>38</sup> After Old Man Owl had climbed half-way up the hill, the other sister called out to him in like fashion. More excited still, Old Man Owl walked down the first hill and began to climb the other one. When he was half-way up, the first girl called out again. Old Man Owl “went back and forth, back and forth, climbing up and down those hills. Then those beautiful girls just laughed at him.”<sup>39</sup> Another story tells how these same two sisters tricked Old Man Owl again. In this story, one girl climbed up a big cottonwood tree and the other climbed to the top of one of the nearby hills. Once at the top, “the girl in the tree lifted her skirt and spread her legs slightly apart. She remained motionless as Old Man Owl walked beneath. Suddenly, he looked up... Now he got very excited!”<sup>40</sup> Old Man Owl piled some grass at the base of the tree and set it alight. The “girl in the tree pissed on it and quickly put it out.”<sup>41</sup> Old Man Owl thought that it must be raining. After several attempts, Old Man Owl abandoned his efforts and “walked away with his head hanging down.”<sup>42</sup> The two sisters then joined each other and laughed and laughed at Old Man Owl.

By transforming the physical topography of a place into an array of sites where memories, stories, and legends endure, the inscription of ancestral wisdom on the landscape weaves the textural significance of particular places into the fabric of social life. Basso emphasizes that “myth, prayer, music, dance, art, architecture, and, in many communities, recurrent forms of religious and political ritual”<sup>43</sup> tie commemorative events to features of the physical terrain. Placenames, which for the uninitiated might be nicely descriptive toponyms, constitute a part of the geographies of systems of thought constructed through native accounts of events and places that give a rhythm to the time of a people’s history. Indigenous perspectives of the physical environs are consequently replete with cultural meanings that suffuse the social topographies of various styles of inhabiting the world.

In acknowledging the wisdom that a place holds for a people, community, or group, we must also keep in view the narrative textures of places that constitute sites of mourning. Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill explains how *dinnseanchas* (place-lore) inscribes the memory of the collective trauma of the Famine experience in Ireland on the land through the “pointing out of the graves and its

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<sup>36</sup> Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places. Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 64; see Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 140-68.

<sup>37</sup> Keith H. Basso, “Wisdom Sits in Places,” in Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (eds), *Senses of Place*, 67; see Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*, 120-1.

<sup>38</sup> Basso, “Wisdom Sits in Places,” 62.

<sup>39</sup> Basso, “Wisdom Sits in Places,” 63.

<sup>40</sup> Basso, “Wisdom Sits in Places,” 63.

<sup>41</sup> Basso, “Wisdom Sits in Places,” 63.

<sup>42</sup> Basso, “Wisdom Sits in Places,” 63.

<sup>43</sup> Basso, “Wisdom Sits in Places,” 57.

delineation of certain spots as ‘hungry grass,’ where famine victims died, and where if you walk on them, you will be overcome by a sudden and overpowering hunger and weakness that might even be lethal.”<sup>44</sup> For her, possessing the land “emotionally and imaginatively without any particular sense of, or need for, titular ownership”<sup>45</sup> through *dinnseanchas* provides a kind of therapeutic response to collective psychic wounds. Imperialist regimes, she emphasizes, ultimately triumph only when they prevent such traumas “from being expressed in the psyche of the colonized.”<sup>46</sup> Guy Beiner similarly stresses that history is not so much written by the victors but forgotten by them. By focusing on “those who fought and lost the Rebellion,”<sup>47</sup> local folklore in Ireland records instances of English brutality and the heroic resistance of Irish rebels by writing it on the landscape. Traditions of folk commemoration, Beiner remarks, authorize “local communities to remember and honor *their* dead”<sup>48</sup> in ways that are often personal. Turning the strategic compact between remembering and forgetting against the victors’ narratives, this inscription on the landscape of sites that commemorate the rightful struggle for freedom and justice once again opens the historical and geographical horizons of the lifeworld.

#### IV. Geography and Historiography

By articulating how the evaluative textures of stories retold are bound up with the sites where events that demand recounting occurred, the hermeneutics of place I outlined above draws out the significance of narrative inscriptions of these events on different cultural landscapes. The ability to move one’s body, which for a phenomenology of the “I can” is the express sign of the powers inhering in the ontological constitution of human being, is among the capacities that we exercise in taking our place in the world. The “settled *ethos* of a particular lifeworld”<sup>49</sup> is indicative of the ways that habits and practices congeal into systems and fields of relations in which social actors assume the positions assigned to them by overdetermined structures of power. For Axel Honneth, the moral indignation inflamed by experiences of disregard, exclusion, and disapprobation motivate struggles that contest and subvert this settled *ethos*. Social struggles, he accordingly tells us, are “formed in the context of moral experiences stemming from the violation of deeply rooted expectations regarding recognition.”<sup>50</sup> We should therefore not forget that the utopias that in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were transposed onto the historical landscape

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<sup>44</sup> Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, “A Ghostly Alhambra,” in Tom Hayden (ed.), *Irish Hunger. Personal Reflections on the Legacy of the Famine* (Boulder: Roberts Rinehart, 1998), 77.

<sup>45</sup> Ní Dhomhnaill, “A Ghostly Alhambra,” 77.

<sup>46</sup> Ní Dhomhnaill, “A Ghostly Alhambra,” 69; see Sean Williams and Lillis Ó Laoire, *Bright Star of the West. Joe Heaney, Irish Song Man* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 73.

<sup>47</sup> Guy Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French. Irish Folk History and Social Memory* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2007), 305.

<sup>48</sup> Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*, 203.

<sup>49</sup> Axel Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition. The Moral Grammar of Social Conflicts*, trans. Joel Anderson (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996 [1995]), 172.

<sup>50</sup> Honneth, *The Struggle for Recognition*, 163.

owe their motivating force to Thomas More's fictive depiction of a distant geographical place to which one might travel.<sup>51</sup>

Experiences of moral harm stemming from the lack or even refusal of recognition call for critical social topographies that account for the vertical arrangement of asymmetrical relations of power, inequitable access to and distributions of social goods, and systemic violations of political and civil rights. Social actors' diverse racial, ethnic, and sexual backgrounds and orientations comprise differential intersectional positionings in this regard. By giving the notion of inscription an amplitude exceeding "that of writing in the precise sense of the fixation of oral expressions of discourse by a material support,"<sup>52</sup> Ricœur shows how memories of places we have inhabited or visited embed the corporeal spaces of different social actors' experiences in that of the surrounding environment. Both the "here and there of the lived space of perception and action,"<sup>53</sup> and the absolute now of the present can be framed by a system of places and dates. Furthermore, memories of having inhabited a house or having traveled in a particular locale immediately link the corporeal space we occupy by reason of our bodies to the environs through which we move. These environs are crisscrossed with different paths, some of which Ricœur remarks are less accessible and others of which are obstructed or well-worn. Corollary with the experience of moving, having moved, or anticipating moving about within them, these environs are not only a mapping of the physical terrain but they also constitute the social terrain on which struggles for recognition as well as improved material conditions are carried out.

The construction of a third space consisting of a "system of sites for the major interactions in life"<sup>54</sup> is the consequent object of a geography for which philosophical anthropology is the ground and support. This third space, Ricœur maintains, "can also be interpreted as a geometrical checkering of lived space, one of 'places,' like a superimposition of 'places' on the grid of localities."<sup>55</sup> The act of inhabiting is accordingly "situated at the boundaries of lived space and geometric space."<sup>56</sup> The "here and there of the lived space of perception and action"<sup>57</sup> can therefore be framed by a system of places constructed between an abstract conception of geometrical space

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<sup>51</sup> See Ernst Bloch's remarks in Theodor W. Adorno, Ernst Bloch and Horst Krüger, "Something's Missing. A Discussion Between Ernst Bloch and Theodor W. Adorno on the Contradictions of Utopian Longing," in *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature. Selected Essays*, trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1988), 3. The transposition of an imaginary place from its geographical location to an as yet unrealized future landscape underscores how struggles for recognition animate the quest for a sense of belonging to a place. Ricœur remarks on how the "feeling of uneasiness—*Umheimlichkeit*—joined to the feeling of not being in one's place, of not feeling at home, haunts us" (Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 149). See also Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, 3 vol., trans. Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

<sup>52</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 147.

<sup>53</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 148.

<sup>54</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 150; cf. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Edward Soja, *Third Space. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Cambridge: Blackwell, 1996).

<sup>55</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 150.

<sup>56</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 150.

<sup>57</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 148.

and the experience of space that we have when, for example, we orient ourselves by moving about in it. Beginning with the phenomenology of place and culminating in geography, the discourse of space thus traces out “an itinerary thanks to which lived space is ... abolished by geometrical space and reconstructed at the hyper-geometric level of the *oikumene* [inhabited universe].”<sup>58</sup>

Maintaining that geography constitutes the “exact guarantor of history”<sup>59</sup> within the order of the human sciences, as Ricœur does, inevitably raises the question as to the relation between them. Giving the “time of history a spatial analogue worthy of a human science ... [requires] elevat[ing] it higher on the scale of the rationalization of places.”<sup>60</sup> In turn, correlating the “moment of localization within the order of space ... with that of dating within the order of time”<sup>61</sup> highlights their mutual connection. The third time of events fixed by a system of dating counterpoints analogically the third space constructed as a system of related places. As the guarantor of history, which takes as its object the past, geography anchors the historian’s representations of it in the places and locales in which events occurred. For Ricœur, the historiographical operation entails three interwoven methodological moments: 1) documentary proof, which stands as testament to the reality of the historical past, 2) explanatory models, which weave together documented evidence following the discipline’s social scientific principles, and 3) the writing of history. This modelling, he emphasizes, is the “work of the scientific imagination.”<sup>62</sup> By the same token, human interactions are amenable to this modeling process only “at the price of a methodological objectification that has the value of an epistemological break in relation to memory and ordinary narration.”<sup>63</sup> Under the aegis of this epistemological break, the “standing for” the past of the historian’s representation is the *vis-à-vis* of geographical descriptions of the places, social topographies, economic systems, and patterns of movement, for example, that inform and impact the styles of various peoples’ modes of habitation.

In view of human geography’s and historiography’s different methodological practices and fields of application, what should we then make of the correspondence between the “dialectic of lived space, geometrical space, and inhabited space ... [and] a similar dialectic of lived time, cosmological time, and historical time”?<sup>64</sup> The first dialectic gives rise to a discourse in which the inscription of lived space in the universe of inhabited places supplants purely geometrical conceptions. The sense of a place owing in part to narrative inscriptions of events here becomes the object of geographical descriptions and analyses of the physical, cultural, and socio-political landscape. The second dialectic puts into play time as we experience it (phenomenological time), a conception of time analogous to that of geometrical space (cosmological time), and the time of the history of which we are a part. The analogical relation between geography and historiography rests on the similarities between these dialectics. As such, this relation depends on the standing of the

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<sup>58</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 153.

<sup>59</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 151.

<sup>60</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 151.

<sup>61</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 153.

<sup>62</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 182; see Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans. Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 182-92.

<sup>63</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 183.

<sup>64</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 153.

third terms—third space, third time—as regards the objects of these complementary sciences. The inscription of lived space and lived time by means of these constructed third terms highlights the affinity between them. Conversely, the similarity that Ricœur specifically marks should also alert us to a fundamental difference between them. We should therefore ask whether the aporias engendered by the phenomenology of time have an exact equivalent in the phenomenology of space. Phenomenological descriptions of space take as their initial object the experience of one's own body as lived. The enigma of one's own body, which I noted previously puts into play phenomenology's referral to ontology, subtends the lived experience of space. Conversely, the aporias engendered by the phenomenology of time inhere in the experience that is the object of speculative descriptions. These aporias in turn call for a solution for which, for Ricœur, the poetics of narrativity is the privileged exemplar.

When, in his closing remarks in the third volume of *Time and Narrative*, Ricœur writes that the acknowledgment of the limits of narrative calls for the "idea of the unity of history,"<sup>65</sup> he sets the necessity of preserving the tension between the spaces of our experiences and the horizons of our expectations against the failure of the Hegelian system of thought. The question of a temporal totality, he emphasizes, reaches its apogee with Heidegger who, having hierarchized the levels of temporality (within-time-ness, historicity, temporality), raises the problem of temporalization as making possible the unity of the three temporal ecstases, "coming towards, having-been, and making present."<sup>66</sup> For Ricœur, the "reply of narrativity to the aporias of time consists less in resolving these aporias than in putting them to work."<sup>67</sup> Opposing the imperfect mediation between the horizon of a past that has already been surpassed and that of a future that is already taking shape to time's totalization in the eternal present places the accent on the force that the present has as the time of initiative. Ricœur reminds us that we make history in circumstances that we did not choose and that we cannot foresee all of the consequences of our actions. Moreover, by preserving the metaphorical structure of the "as" in Leopold von Ranke's formulation of the task of history to "show events as they really happened,"<sup>68</sup> the "mode of truth proper to 'standing for'"<sup>69</sup> the past reserves a place for critical reinterpretations and reevaluations of the ways that our social, cultural, political, and religious heritages weigh on the present and future. The duty of memory to which the truth intention of history adheres is a duty to do justice to those who have come before. The "same project of justice that gives the form of the future and of the imperative to the duty of memory"<sup>70</sup> thus sets itself at the heart of a hermeneutics of liberation for which both historiography and human geography are critical supports.

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<sup>65</sup> Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 274.

<sup>66</sup> Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 255.

<sup>67</sup> Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 261.

<sup>68</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 279.

<sup>69</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 279.

<sup>70</sup> Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 88.

## V. Spatiotemporal Metaphors

The fundamental dissymmetry between the dialectic of geometrical space, lived space, and hyper-geometrical representations of the inhabited universe and the dialectic of phenomenological time, cosmological time, and the time of history finally leads me to ask again whether the metahistorical categories of thought, space of experience and horizon of expectation, provide a point of access to a critical insight into the connection between the spatial order of our experiences and the temporal character of the actions that produce the events commemorated by placenames, for example, that populate the landscape. Drawing on Koselleck's semantic analysis, Ricœur regards these metahistorical categories as genuine transcendentals in service to historical thought.<sup>71</sup> The space of experience, which I noted previously can be traversed in multiple ways, stands between two horizons, that of a past that has already been surpassed and that of the horizon of expectation. This latter horizon, I also noted, always stands in tension with a situation for which the "here" and "now" is the zero origin of one's perspectival opening onto the world. The space delimited by these two horizons is saturated with the temporal features of the traversal that, in crossing this space, preserves the tension between them. Conversely, these temporal features have as their *vis-à-vis* the material specificity of the structured systems in which social actors are caught up and in which initiatives taken by them renew the time of the history of which they are a part along with the senses of the places that they inhabit in response to exigencies and demands.

Language, Gadamer tells us, performs the analysis that the "building up of our world"<sup>72</sup> in it brings about. Metaphors are exemplary in this regard. The new predicative pertinence drawn from the ruins of some initial semantic clash, as in the statement "The peace process is on the ropes," reveals features of our experiences by producing a novel meaning in the thickness of the imagining scene. The metaphorization of the verb *to be* underscores the ontological vehemence of heuristic fictions that redescribe (in the case of metaphor) or refigure (in the case of narrative) our manner of inhering in the world. This metaphorization of the verb *to be*, which Ricœur relates to claims to truth by poetic works broadly conceived, is the *vis-à-vis* of the ontological constitution of the intermediary being that we are.<sup>73</sup> That we live in metaphoricity far from condemns us to the sempiternal play of a deconstructive enterprise aimed at dismantling the metaphysics of presence. On the contrary, the power of thought and imagination at work in response to questions, difficulties, and problems as artists and historical actors apprehend them is the spring of our capacity to begin anew.

Do the metahistorical categories, space of experience and horizon of expectation, illumine in their own way distinctive features of the spatiotemporal reality of human beings that, intermediary between the poles of finitude and infinitude, are incarnate as flesh? The metaphors

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<sup>71</sup> Ricœur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, 208-16; see Reinhardt Koselleck, "Space of Experience and 'Horizon of Expectation'. Two Historical Categories," in *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985).

<sup>72</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, ed. and trans. David E. Linge (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 17.

<sup>73</sup> See Paul Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor. Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny, Kathleen McLaughlin and John Costello (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 248-56.

of a space delimited by the gap between past and future and a horizon that is temporal through and through figure in a discourse in which the geography of social, cultural, economic, and political systems and structures, the critical history of the historian, and the hermeneutics of our historical condition have a part. For this discourse, the transcending intention that in Ricœur's analysis is the emblem of our intermediary condition is the spring of the task of making freedom a reality. The political and ethical implications of the metacategories, space of experience and horizon of expectation, consequently attest that, under the aegis of the idea of respect, this task falls to everyone whose place in the world forms part of the inhabited universe.

We could therefore ask in fine if, as the guarantor of history, geographies of systems and structures of diverse styles of inhabiting the earth presuppose the history of a people, community, group, or nation as their requisite complement. The historicity of the life of the community of a people stands as testament to its will, desire, and effort to endure. Correlatively, only by having a place in the world can members of a community or body politic respond to exigencies and demands in fitting ways. For a phenomenology that takes as its object the experience of space as we encounter it through our placement in the world as living bodies, geographies of the social landscape provide a hyper-geometrical map of the intersectional positions that we occupy. As regards the phenomenology of time, the aporias engendered by the work of speculative thought call for the kind of poetic response that not only in the narrative art, but also in music, theater, film, and dance, for example, refashion the real from within. The dissymmetry between the dialectic that informs the discourse of space and the one that informs the discourse of time keeps in place this fundamental difference. The history of lived spaces and the geography of the places in which the history preserved in memory and explicated by the historian was made are consequently the twin poles on the order of the human sciences of the ontological constitution of the intermediary being that we are.

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