

Introduction

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Introduction

It is my pleasure to present to you the second issue of *Études Ricoeuriennes/Ricœur Studies* (ERRS). I had the honor of being invited to serve as a guest editor for this issue, after having co-organized the International Symposium *Reading Ricœur Once Again: Hermeneutics and Practical Philosophy* (Lisbon, July 2010). The symposium had more than one hundred participants, including Axel Honneth who delivered the final keynote address. More than a dozen presentations on the topic of recognition were made, and a few of them are included in this issue. Consequently, this special number should not be taken to be a mere publication of proceedings, as both the call for papers and the tight selection procedure attest. The issue contains contributions from Ricœur scholars as well as recognition scholars. The mixture of different research backgrounds underscores the interdisciplinarity and dialogue affirmed by the journal's mission.

If it is true that we can find in Ricœur's writings a practical philosophy or, to borrow the words of Johann Michel, a "philosophy of human action," then we must consider his redefinition of the concept and practices of recognition as a fundamental part of that philosophy. And if it is true that Ricœur always showed, both in his philosophical anthropology and in his more directly political writings, a deep concern for the fragility of the human being and a bright hope for the development of human capacities, it must also be said that it was in the later period of his production, starting from the 1990s until 2004, that this specific emphasis on practical philosophy came to the fore.

As such, *The Course of Recognition* assumes a particular status. This book did not have a reception as enthusiastic as *Time and Narrative* or *Oneself as Another*, nor as polemical as *Freud and Philosophy* or *Memory, History, Forgetting*. In fact, seven years after its publication, it seems as if scholars are still trying to figure out what status to grant it. Is it a minor work or the final masterpiece that changed the core of Ricœur's philosophy? I won't subscribe to either of the above alternatives here. This issue is born of a wager: that even if *The Course of Recognition* could certainly have had a different form and could have been clearer in some of its claims, it is nonetheless both the definitive form of Ricœur's anthropology and practical philosophy (in the way it radically expands his list of capacities) and a valuable contribution to contemporary discussions on recognition theory. It is, as with Ricœur's other works, an original and thought-provoking book whose claims should be put to the test in a rational-critical debate.

By inviting us to think about the "rule-governed polysemy" of the uses of the word "recognition" and by bringing together so many different philosophical constellations (after all, what could Kant's *Rekognition* and Hegel's *Anerkennung* have in common?), Ricœur urges us to *think more*. Ricœur is showing us that there is more to be said about recognition than we usually acknowledge. For our philosopher, the debates concerning mutual recognition or the politics of multiculturalism are only a small moment in the big picture of recognition. As a consequence, his account of the radical potential of human action and the prospects of a decent society is unique. The wager is that his redefinition of the concept and practices of recognition are still valuable to understand how we could, theoretically speaking, arrive at a society whose members are duly recognized.

Consequently, if this claim is correct, *The Course of Recognition* would contain important elements both for understanding recognition from a philosophical standpoint – including the moments of recognition as identification and recognition of oneself often disregarded in the elaborations on mutual recognition – and for reshaping the practices of mutual recognition, namely, by adding the possibility of a peaceful recognition in his famous “clearings” of recognition.

The contributions that constitute the thematic portion of this issue analyze Ricœur’s stance on recognition from very different angles. The first pair of articles focuses on the significance of recognition. The first article, Jean-Luc Amalric’s “Affirmation originaire, attestation et reconnaissance: Le cheminement de l’anthropologie philosophique ricœurienne” places recognition at the heart of Ricœur’s philosophical anthropology. Reconstructing three different phases of this anthropology (from the fallible man of the 1960s and the capable man of the 1990s to the way attestation transforms itself in recognition in 2004), Amalric’s article has the merit of showing a certain continuity in Ricœur’s anthropological project, by arguing that attestation and recognition are ultimately rooted in a growing comprehension and deepening of Nabert’s notion of “original affirmation.” Showing a remarkable knowledge of Ricœur’s philosophy and its evolution, Amalric helps us to understand the way Ricœur redefines the unstable equilibrium between identity and alterity, of which his reflections on recognition are a decisive stage.

The second article, Arto Laitinen’s “Ricœur’s Surprising Take on Recognition”, focuses directly on the argument presented in *The Course of Recognition*. Given Ricœur’s earlier contributions to the development of thick identities and their intersubjective character, Laitinen undertakes a detailed discussion and an evaluation of the merits of this last book. In this thought-provoking article, we are reminded of the aspects that Ricœur didn’t fully develop in *The Course of Recognition* (such as, recognition as validity) and, in a very interesting manner, the author tries to show what other paths the *Course* could have taken. While assuming an overall critical stance towards the book and trying to respond to Ricœur’s main claims, Laitinen nonetheless also emphasizes its merits and its uses for the construction of our own recognition-theoretical models.

The second pair of articles - Sebastian Purcell’s “Recognition and Exteriority: Towards a Recognition-Theoretic Account of Globalization” and Silvia Pierosara’s “Asking for Narratives to be Recognized: the Moral of Histories” - each try to redefine Ricœurian recognition. In his highly original contribution, Purcell tries to redefine recognition in spatial terms, in order to address the concerns of those who inhabit the “underside of modernity.” Purcell claims that it is possible to use Ricœur’s account of recognition to sketch a framework for the amelioration of those who are the underprivileged of globalization processes. With the help of the claims of Enrique Dussel, Purcell addresses complicated problems such as the redistribution of recognition but also poses interesting questions to a standard theory of recognition, such as: are the conditions of development of social esteem necessarily impaired for those who inhabit the less privileged spaces of globalization and, *eo ipso*, do the people who inhabit the “center” automatically enjoy a higher degree of social esteem? If this is the case, Purcell’s paper certainly summons us to define the new imperatives of the redistribution of social recognition in transcultural and non-Western terms.

Pierosara, on the other hand, draws a connection that is implicit but unexplored in Ricœur’s work. As is well known, one of the main features of the Ricœurian account of ipseity is its narrative character. In this paper, Pierosara argues that claims for recognition and social

visibility are intrinsically narrative. She claims that narratives have an inherently teleological character that constitutes the search for meaning. The claim for social esteem will therefore be narratively mediated; whoever gives an account of him or herself is implicitly trying to be legitimized in his or her values, choices, life stories; in a word, in his or her thick identity. Pierosara goes as far as stating that narrativity is our specific way of life; she eventually fleshes out the moral content of the claims for recognition, and connects it with the social actors' quest for significance.

The third pair of articles is comprised of Marianne Moyaert's "Between Ideology and Utopia: Honneth and Ricœur on Symbolic Violence, Marginalization and Recognition" and my own "Paul Ricœur's Utopia of Mutual Recognition". Both of these contributions compare the recognition-theoretical models of Ricoeur and Honneth, in addition to highlighting the utopian nature of Ricœur's approach. Moyaert's paper, however, focuses in particular on the link between multiculturalism and the struggle for recognition, that is to say, on the struggles of minorities calling for cultural recognition in the public sphere. Her claim is that Honneth's model loses much of its emancipatory power when applied to the struggle for cultural recognition. She forcefully argues that the prevailing standards of evaluation in a multicultural society should become intercultural and shows that struggles for recognition will not be successful if the symbolic order of society remains unaltered, because the law itself is not symbolically neutral. The law is ideologically embedded. She goes on to argue that the normative goal of the cultural struggle for recognition ought to be a difference-friendly society; but in order to do so, as she brilliantly shows, the ideological discourse of the majority must be denounced as such, and the symbolic order must therefore be changed. Ultimately, she emphasizes, as does Pierosara, the narrative character of struggles for recognition and the need for utopian counter-narratives to break up the dominant ideological discourse. Minorities must be able to regain authorship of their identity and to enter the public sphere with their story told from their perspective, which recalls Nancy Fraser's notion of "subaltern counterpublics."

My own article reconstructs the debate between Ricœur and mainstream recognition scholars, as well as with the other figures, such as Boltanski, Thévenot and Hénaff, who had a direct influence in the way Ricœur fleshed out his alternative conception of recognition. It is argued that by connecting recognition with Ricœur's notions of ideology and utopia, we are able to uncover a major blind spot in the standard model of recognition, and to help to get ourselves rid of ideological and reified forms of recognition. The claim is that both Honneth and Ricœur are aiming at societies whose members are duly recognized, but in radically different manners. Whereas Honneth has the most complex and powerful recognition model, one that must be, according to this interpretation, politicized in order to become relevant to social change, Ricœur offers a pure ethics of recognition, thereby aiming at social change, if only indirectly, in a different way.

The last contribution to the thematic portion of this issue is an interview I conducted with Emmanuel Renault, "Reconnaissance, critique sociale et politique", during the month of May, 2011. Renault is a leading scholar on the topic of recognition. Adopting a Marxist-Hegelian standpoint, he is actively engaged in the analysis of social reality in terms of recognition. In this interview, he gives a detailed account of the development of the paradigm of recognition over the last few decades as well as the role of Axel Honneth within this development. He also touches on many other topics, from the current social crisis to the politicization of recognition. Together, these different contributions make up an issue that far from being seen as an ending point, rather

pictures itself as one of the starting points for the debates around Ricœur and recognition. In its diversity, it aims to be as provisional and open to dialogue as any philosophical effort inspired by Paul Ricœur.

I would not like to end this introduction without expressing my debt to all those involved in preparing this special issue. First and foremost, my objective acknowledgment goes to Johann Michel and Scott Davidson, who prepared the whole volume with me. Their comments have been invaluable and their work tireless. I must also thank all the members of the Editorial Committee who helped in the reviewing process, choosing which papers should be included in this issue, and to Emmanuel Renault, who kindly accepted to offer his valuable insights and expertise on the topic of recognition. Last but not least, I would like to express my subjective recognition, in the form of gratitude, to Marta. From the hard work put into organizing and hosting the Lisbon symposium, to the encouragement needed to finish up the work for this special issue, her contribution has been precious all the way through. I would like to dedicate this issue to her.

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Guest editor