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34²⁰¹⁵

polylog

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR INTERKULTURELLES PHILOSOPHIEREN

Gerechtigkeit und oder Versöhnung

Mit Beiträgen von FRANZISKA DÜBGEN, JAMES OGUDE, UNIFIER DYER,
JOSEFINA ECHAVARRÍA ÁLVAREZ, NAOKO KUMAGAI, URSULA BAATZ,
JAMES GARRISON und anderen



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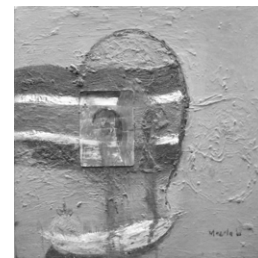
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ANKE GRANESS

Versöhnung und/oder Gerechtigkeit?

Einleitung zum online-Supplement

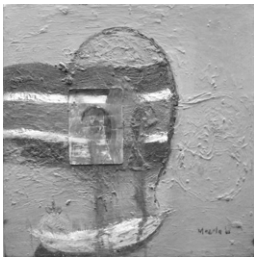
Dies ist eine Premiere, nämlich die erste online-Ausgabe unserer Zeitschrift POLYLOG. Sie ist das Ergebnis des 5. *Interkulturellen und Interdisziplinären Kolloquiums des Forums für Interkulturelle Philosophie* (www.polylog.org) zum Thema »Versöhnung und Gerechtigkeit«, das im Mai 2015 in Kooperation mit unserer Zeitschrift, sowie der Wiener Gesellschaft für interkulturelle Philosophie (WIGIP) und dem Forum Scientiarum der Universität Tübingen am Institut für Wissenschaft und Kunst (IWK) in Wien stattgefunden hat. Nachdem im Dezember 2015 bereits die Printausgabe des POLYLOG Nr. 34 unter dem Titel »*Versöhnung und/oder Gerechtigkeit*« ausgewählte Beiträge des Kolloquiums veröffentlicht hat, erscheinen nun hier weitere Beiträge dieses Kolloquiums. Neu ist in diesem Zusammenhang nicht nur der freie Zugang zu den Beiträgen über das Internet, sondern auch, dass die Beiträge in verschiedenen Sprachen erscheinen, nämlich auf Deutsch oder auf Englisch. Während unsere Printzeitschrift weiterhin auf Deutsch erscheinen wird, werden wir in Zukunft auf unserer Website vermehrt Bei-

träge in anderen Sprachen veröffentlichen. In diesem Sinne wird unser POLYLOG in den nächsten Jahren auch polyphoner.

In dieser online-Ausgabe finden Sie nun Beiträge von Francesco Ferrari (Universität Jena), Sergej Seitz (Universität Wien), Thaddeus Metz (Universität Johannesburg), Jonathan Chimakonam (Universität Calabar), Christine Schliesser (Universität Zürich) und Gail Presbey (Universität Detroit Mercy).

Die beiden Beiträge von Ferrari und Seitz beziehen sich auf zwei der großen europäischen Denker von Konzepten der Versöhnung, nämlich Paul Ricœur und Emmanuel Levinas. Während Ferrari sich in sehr detaillierter Weise mit Ricœurs Begriff der Versöhnung und der Frage, inwiefern Vergebung eine konstitutive Dimension von Versöhnung darstellt, auseinandersetzt, nimmt Seitz sich dem derzeit aktuellen Thema des Umgangs Europas mit der gegenwärtigen Flüchtlingssituation an. Dabei verweist er darauf, dass insbesondere die Trennung zwischen humanitären und politischen Fragestellungen sich im Hinblick auf den Umgang mit geflüchteten Menschen

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*Die Ästhetik der Macht
Ein Überblick*

u.a.

als problematisch erweist, da im Zuge einer Fokussierung auf das eigene Gemeinwesen die ethischen Ansprüche Geflüchteter als nachgeordnet betrachtet werden. Mit Levinas argumentiert Seitz, dass die Bereiche des Humanitären und des Politischen keineswegs als getrennt, sondern vielmehr als ineinander konstitutiv verwoben zu verstehen sind.

Die folgenden Beiträge fokussieren nun vor allem auf Fragen nach dem Verhältnis von Versöhnung und Gerechtigkeit, wie sie sich heute im afrikanischen Kontext stellen. Thaddeus Metz unternimmt in seinem Beitrag den Versuch, auf der Basis von traditionellen afrikanischen Vorstellungen von Gemeinschaft eine Ethik nationaler Versöhnung zu entwerfen. Anhand von Fragen der Wahrheitsfindung, Vergebung und Amnestie, wie sie sich im süd-afrikanischen Kontext stellen, wird dieses Konzept dann einer Prüfung unterzogen.

Chimakonam setzt sich kritisch sowohl mit afrikanischen als auch »westlichen« Konzepten von Versöhnung und Gerechtigkeit auseinander und entwirft einen alternativen theoretischen Ansatz unter dem Begriff der Sequenztheorie. Dabei betont er die Notwendigkeit, Fragen der Gerechtigkeit und der Versöhnung in Postkonfliktsituationen gleichrangig zu betrachten.

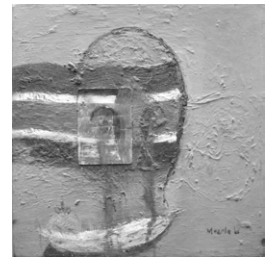
Ähnlich kritisch setzt sich auch Christine Schliesser mit der Spannung zwischen der Frage nach Gerechtigkeit und Prozessen der

Versöhnung auseinander, und zwar anhand der Politik der nationalen Versöhnung in Ruanda nach dem Genozid von 1994. Auch sie betont, dass ein Vorziehen von Versöhnungsprozessen vor Gerechtigkeitsfragen, ebenso wie das Vernachlässigen einer grundlegenden Auseinandersetzung mit Stereotypen von Tätern und Opfern, nicht zu einem nachhaltigen Frieden führen kann.

Gail Presbey nun widmet sich in ihrem Beitrag dem interessanten Vergleich zwischen Konzepten der Bestrafung und Vergeltung des kenianischen Philosophen Henry Odera Oruka, der afrikanische Entschädigungstraditionen den Formen europäischer Strafgerechtigkeit vorzieht, und dem Versöhnungskonzept Mohandas Gandhis und eröffnet damit eine weitere Dimension interkultureller Vergleiche und Theoriebildung, die ein fruchtbares Feld für zukünftige Forschungen bilden kann.

Die hier versammelten Beiträge bilden eine Ergänzung und Erweiterung des Prozesses eines kritischen Hinterfragens des Versöhnungsbegriffs und seines Verhältnisses zu Fragen der Gerechtigkeit aus der Perspektive verschiedener Kontexte, wie er bereits in der Printausgabe des polylog 34 begonnen wurde.

Unser Dank gilt hier allen Autorinnen und Autoren, die durch ihre Beiträge die Debatte bereichert haben, sowie Lara Hofner, die einen Großteil der editorischen Arbeit übernommen hat.



ANKE GRANESS

Reconciliation and / or Justice?

Introduction to the online-edition

This is the launch of the first online-edition of our journal *polylog*. The edition is the result of the 5th Intercultural Interdisciplinary Colloquium of the Forum for Intercultural Philosophy e.V. (www.polylog.org) under the title „Reconciliation and Justice“ at the Institute for Science and Art (IWK) in cooperation with Viennese Society for Intercultural Philosophy (WiGiP), Institute of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, and Forum Scientiarum at the University of Tübingen in May 2015. The first part of the proceedings of the colloquium was published in our print issue of *polylog* No. 34 in December 2015 under the title »Reconciliation and /or Justice«. In addition to the printed issue, the online edition publishes now those excellent papers of the Vienna colloquium which have not been included in the printed issue due to the limitation of space.

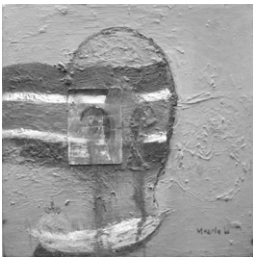
New in this context is not only free access to all articles, but that the articles are not published exclusively in German (like in our print issue) but in different languages, this time in German or in English. While the printed issue of *polylog* will continue to be published in

German only, the online edition will publish articles in different languages, and in this, our *polylog* will become in the coming years also more polyphonic.

Our first online edition includes contributions from the following scholars: Francesco Ferrari (University of Jena), Sergej Seitz (Vienna University), Thaddeus Metz (University of Johannesburg), Jonathan Chimakonam (University of Calabar), Christine Schliesser (University of Zurich), and Gail Presbey (University of Detroit Mercy).

The contributions of Ferrari und Seitz refer to two great European thinkers of the concept of reconciliation, namely Paul Ricœur and Emmanuel Levinas. While Ferrari explores in a very detailed way Ricœur's concept of reconciliation and the question if forgiveness is a constitutive dimension of reconciliation; Seitz turns to the currently topical issue of Europe's attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers. Seitz argues that the prevailing separation between humanitarian and political issues turns out to be problematic, for a focus on the own com-

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et al.

munity excludes the ethical demands of refugees as secondary. With Levinas he argues that the humanitarian and the political cannot be conceived as separated, but rather as constitutively interwoven.

The following contributions focus on issues of the relationship between reconciliation and justice in the African context of today. Thaddeus Metz undertakes the attempt to conceptualise on the basis of traditional African ideas of community a new ethics of national reconciliation. Moreover, he applies the new theory to burning issues in South Africa, such as truth-telling, forgiveness or amnesty. Jonathan Chimakonam takes a critical approach to African as well as Western conceptions of reconciliation and justice and suggests as an alternative theoretical approach a theory which he calls »sequence theory«. He argues, that in a post-conflict situation, issues of justice and reconciliation have to be considered in an equal way. A similarly critical approach takes the analysis of processes of reconciliation in

post-genocide Rwanda by Christine Schliesser. Schliesser pronounces that to favour reconciliation over issues of justice, and to neglect a confrontation with persisting stereotypes and animosities, cannot lead to a sustainable peace. Gail Presbey analyses in a comparative way concepts of punishment and retribution of the Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka, who favours African forms of compensation to forms of European criminal justice, with the concept of conflict resolution and reconciliation of Mohandas Gandhi. In doing so, Presbey opens a new field of intercultural comparative work which promises to be a fertile field for future research.

All articles contribute to a critical questioning and conceptualization of concepts of reconciliation and justice - a process which will hopefully be continued in the future.

Our thanks go to the authors who have enriched by their contributions the debate, and to Lara Hofner who was responsible for much of the editorial work.

FRANCESCO FERRARI

Memory, Identity, Forgiveness¹

Archaeological and Teleological Perspectives of Reconciliation from Paul Ricœur

*Guilt is not the discriminating factor
but rather [it is] reconciliation
which places its final stamp on the
entire series of mnemonic operations.*

(Paul RICŒUR, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*)

This paper reconstructs and presents the efforts of French philosopher Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) to understand reconciliation.² It deals with three central issues in reconciliatory processes, including memory, identity, and forgiveness. They are presented as actual forces, working through two interconnected and inseparable movements: an archaeological movement directed towards the past, and a teleological one aiming towards the future.³

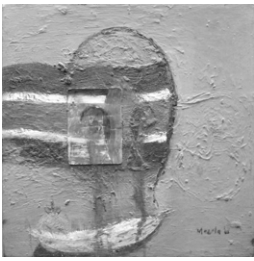
FRANCESCO FERRARI is a post-doc researcher at the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies of the Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena. His current research focuses on the role of forgiveness in reconciliatory processes according to different authors from the Jewish moral philosophy of the XX Century. francesco.ferrari@uni-jena.de

FIRST REMARKS

¹ This research was supported by funding from the German Research Foundation for the project “*Hearts of Flesh-Not Stone*” (DFG LE1260/3) – a transdisciplinary collaboration of Tel Aviv University, Ben Gurion University, the Wasatia Academic Institute, and the FSU Jena. Concerning the Hearts of Flesh-Not Stone project, cf. Dajani Daoudi/O’Malley 2015; concerning the Jena Center for Reconciliation Studies (FSU) approach to reconciliatory issues, cf. Flämig/Leiner 2012; Leiner 2016.

² Through his reflection on the most fundamental issues of Western philosophy, such as language, symbol, ethics, history, and evil, Paul Ricœur (1913–2005) can be hailed as the most prominent representative of French hermeneutics. He called his own method the »long way« of joining hermeneutics and phenomenology, through a wide comparison with structuralism, theories of language, psychoanalysis, and philosophy of religion.

³ For the dyad constituted by »archaeology« and »teleology«, (see Ricœur 1965); (English transl. see



Conditio sine qua non of forgiveness is a misdeed that tears apart two human beings or two social groups into factions: that of the victims and that of the perpetrators. This division, a fundamental focus of reconciliation studies, nevertheless threatens to obscure a more original dualism: that of the Same and the Other.

I show their intertwined action to be a constitutive dimension of reconciliation. The paper shows how a merely archaeological dimension of memory necessarily faces a host of contradictions and how this may even lead to an intolerant identity. From the other side, it shows how a teleological dimension of memory can establish a *juste mémoire* [just memory] (see Ricœur 2000a); (English transl. see 2004a, 68), that configures our identity as an *identité narrative* [narrative identity], which can lead towards reconciliation with oneself and with the Other. Finally, the paper culminates by examining Ricœur's reflection on forgiveness.⁴ Although directed to the past, forgiveness is as an act occurring in a real, present moment, with consequences capable of shaping the future, potentially moving on a path toward reconciliation.

Ancient Roman myth and religion offers the image of a two-faced god, looking toward the future and toward the past: Janus. He is the god of beginnings and transitions, and consequently of gates, doors, and endings. Janus even presides over the beginning and ending of conflicts, i.e. over war and peace. When it comes to beginnings, transitions, endings – and even conflicts, let us keep Janus' image

4 In the period from *Finitude et culpabilité* (Ricœur 1950) to *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (2000a) Ricœur devoted constant and increasing attention to this issue. See also (Ricœur 1986); (Ricœur 1967); (Ricœur 2004a) in particular its epilogue: *Difficult Forgiveness* (2004a, 457–506).

in mind. It guides us through these pages as we attempt to understand the two-faced nature of the dynamics involved in reconciliatory processes. Forgiveness deals with the past (in many cases a terrible one); it happens in a real, present moment; and it offers a healing effect, opening to and allowing for future (see Arendt 1958, 237–247; in particular §33 and §34) and (see Tutu 1999, 206–230; in particular chapter 11: *Without Forgiveness There Really is No Future*). *Conditio sine qua non* of forgiveness is a misdeed that tears apart two human beings or two social groups into factions: that of the victims and that of the perpetrators. This division, a fundamental focus of reconciliation studies, nevertheless threatens to obscure a more original dualism: that of the Same and the Other.

MÊMETÉ, IPSÉITÉ: TWO KINDS OF IDENTITY

The relationship between *le Même* [the Same] and *l'Autre* [the Other] lies at the very core of the last century of French philosophy (Descombes 1979). Paul Ricœur, starting in the mid-Eighties with his Gifford Lectures *On Selfhood, the Question of Personal Identity* (1985–86) that he would then develop into the ten studies of *Soi-même comme un autre* (Ricœur 1990); [Oneself as Another] (English transl. see Ricœur 1994; in particular its introduction: *The Question of Selfhood*) and going all the way up until his last philosophical work *Parcours de la reconnaissance* (Ricœur 2004b); [The Course of Recognition] (English transl.



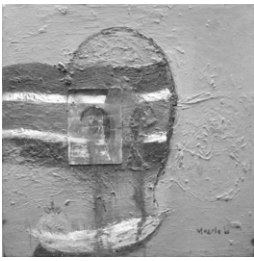
Saying who we are seems to be increasingly difficult in our age, such that we ourselves do not know what to say anymore, and we try to supplement this perturbing extraneity through belonging to a group-identity. At the same time, this coherence configures itself through a violent rejection of the Other.

see 2005; in particular the 3rd study: Mutual Recognition), articulates his position on the issue time and time again. Facing the concrete reality of massive migrations in the Mediterranean, relevant in the Nineties, and inevitable nowadays (Ricœur 1996) and (1998), he recognizes how the Other, in differing from us, reveals to us how each identity is a relative one. The perceived extraneity of the extraneous, the apparent strangeness of the stranger (the French word *étranger* encompasses this fruitful semantic ambiguity), leads us to discover the Other that lives inside of us. Saying who we are seems to be increasingly difficult in our age, such that we ourselves do not know what to say anymore, and we try to supplement this perturbing extraneity through belonging to a group-identity. At the same time, this coherence configures itself through a violent rejection of the Other. A similar reaction also has a conspicuous amount of bad conscience in it: the refusal to recognize the fragility of one's identity, i.e. the otherness at the deepest core of the sameness. And it is only by encountering the Other that I can learn the fragility of my sameness, i.e. of my identity.

In *Soi-même comme un autre*, Ricœur establishes a basic distinction between the two forms with which we shape and understand our identity: *mêmeté* [sameness] and *ipséité* [selfhood]. With *mêmeté* he means a configuration of identity concerned with remaining the same subject over the course of time, trying to escape the experience of everlasting transformation and becoming what the Greek philosopher Heraclitus understood in terms

of the motto *Panta Rhei* (everything flows). *Mêmeté* configures identity as a conservative, defensive effort towards an »idem«, i.e. a »same«, a previous or even original condition. Identity as *mêmeté* is based on the presupposition of an immutable, unshakable, eternal core – out of time. This core is believed to remain idem, *même*, the same – forever. Identity as *mêmeté* is the scene of a vicious circle as well as of a widespread misuse that surrounds the word »identity« today. The more the Other is perceived as dangerous, the more the self falls back on itself searching for its sameness, asserting its identity as *mêmeté*, in a defensive, strict and often intolerant manner. From the other side, we can configure our identity as *ipséité* (selfhood), focusing on the permanence of our selfhood through the constant experience of the otherness. Identity as *ipséité* is reflexive: it faces and encounters the Other, ready to reshape oneself through it. As Ricœur himself declares, the acknowledgment of identity as *ipséité* actually implies the recognition of oneself as another: »Oneself as Another suggests from the outset that the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the Other« (Ricœur 1994, 3).

In the following paragraphs I will show how Ricœur would define his identity-model as a narrative identity, without eluding the dialectic between *mêmeté* and *ipséité*, ascribing it, on the contrary, to the deepest core of our self. As we will see, a similar model of identity may have a significant impact on reconciliatory processes.



ARCHAEOLOGY OF MEMORY BETWEEN REMEMBRANCE AND OBLIVION

Ricœur's distinction between *mêmeté* and *ipséité* reveals how a central issue behind the identity question is actually the question of time, i.e. of human existence as a temporal one. Recall the aforementioned god Janus. Similarly, identity develops through a double movement: an archaeological one, configuring the self as *mêmeté*, and a teleological one, configuring it as *ipséité*. The dichotomy between identity as *mêmeté* and identity as *ipséité* is founded on two different ways of integrating past, present, and future, i.e. of shaping the present, present as »heritage of the past« and »starting point for the future« at the same time. The present, even considered in its aporetic essence as perpetual flow from the »not yet« of the future to the »not anymore« of the past, is the real locus of the encounter with the Other as well as of reconciliatory processes. From the first volume of *Temps et récit* (Ricœur 1983); [Time and Narrative] (English transl. see Ricœur 1984)⁵ to his study *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Ricœur devotes a significant amount of attention to the lived and puzzling experience of time – in particular of the present. He consistently refers to

its enigmatic dimension (for instance: »how can time exist if the past is no longer, if the future is not yet, and if the present is not always?« (Ricœur 1984, 7)), and he confronts it by re-conducting the triad constituted by past, present, and future to lead to the core of the present itself. Here, Ricœur follows (and debates) the tripartition set forth in Augustine's *Confessiones: Memoria* [memory], as the present of the past; *Contuitus* [vision], as the present of the present; *Expectatio* [expectation], as the present of the future (see Augustine of Hippo, Book 11, 14.17 and 20.26). Augustine's triadic structure allows Ricœur to reinterpret the complex character of the present, so that the present too, comprehended in this way, conjoins an archaeological force with a teleological one.

Memory, as the present of the past which allows the archaeology of reconciliation, is the first force at work in such a tripartition. Ricœur warns his readers that, since memory is not a mere deposit of impressions and passed moments, it is instead an active force. The nature of remembrances is not that of water (transparent, still, without any color, taste, or odor), rather is similar to that of wine (see Bodei 2004, IX) (if not that of vinegar!): indeed, remembrances ferment, and constantly change their configuration. Identity, according to Ricœur, is grounded in memory, which guarantees the continuity and persistence of the self (considered not as sameness, but rather as selfhood: identity as *ipséité*). At the same time, memory is nourished by remembrances, which are something fluid and in perpetual

⁵ Ricœur starts the first volume of *Time and Narrative* with the following topic: *The Aporias of the Experience of Time. Book 11 of Augustine's Confessions* (see 1984, 5–33). Because of his meditation on the issue of time Ricœur will acknowledge Augustine as the initiator of what he names the »Tradition of Inwardness« (see Ricœur 2004a, 96–102).



Ricœur warns his readers that, since memory is not a mere deposit of impressions and passed moments, it is instead an active force. The nature of remembrances is not that of water (transparent, still, without any color, taste, or odor), rather is similar to that of wine.

movement, as well as by memory's nature being a selective one (and similarly: what is our identity, if not a selection?). In other terms: we cannot remember everything; something gets lost (but how and why?); something remains (but in which form?); something, finally, cannot be forgotten. Since no selection is an innocent one, how can the claim of memory to be faithful – as well as the claim of history, grounded in such a memory, to be truthful – be a legitimate one? Since our narratives are rooted in our remembrances and since our identities (in particular, if intended as *memeté*) are based in our memory, these are serious matters. Memory can be blocked, manipulated, or commanded; imagination can confuse, rearrange, and contaminate remembrances. All of these facts might not be underestimated, since they are concrete obstacles for reconciliatory processes.

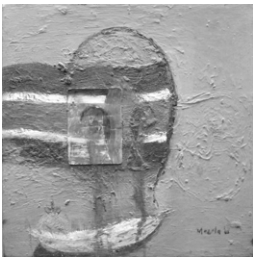
Nevertheless, we cannot understand how memory works if we ignore its counterpart par excellence: oblivion. In *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* Ricœur acknowledges how a reasonable use of oblivion is always implied in the work of memory and he describes five different forms of it (see Ricœur 2004a, 412–456). The first is constituted by so-called »passive oblivion«: if the activity of memory as such is related to traces, passive oblivion, deep and inevitable, is what happens when these traces are deleted in the regular course of time. From the other side, we have three forms of oblivion that sound quite more sinister: »traumatic oblivion« (related with painful memories, still actually working in subconscious rumination),

»evasive oblivion« (intentional escape, avoidance strategies, deliberate attempts to forget), both accredited by Ricœur to Sigmund Freud (Freud 1946), and »active manipulating oblivion« (often with political connotations and related to censorship; it leads to misuses, or better, to so-called »abuses of memory« (Todorov 2004)). Last but not least, Ricœur identifies a happy form of oblivion. He names it »active and freeing oblivion«, and he defines it as the capability to bracket one's own past and feel unhistorical for a while (Nietzsche 1999).

All of these considerations show us how memory is nothing neutral: its faithfulness to the past is neither a fact, nor a pious fraud; rather a wish. A purely archaeological dimension of memory seems to consign us a bankruptcy, which might drive us to an open skepticism. To overcome it, it is necessary to take into account the second movement involved in memory, i.e. the teleology of the process of memory.

THE HERMENEUTICAL DIMENSION OF MEMORY: IDENTITÉ NARRATIVE

The teleology of the process of memory implies coming to terms with the hermeneutic dimension of memory; it means, according to Ricœur, making an effort toward the establishment of a *juste mémoire* [just memory], without neglecting all of the aforementioned difficulties. Binding memory and identity, aware of the constant presence of oblivion and of many other »abuses of memory,« Ricœur gives us a new key insight into understand



identity in writings that span from the conclusions of the third volume of his *Temps et récit* (Ricoeur 1985); (English transl. see Ricoeur 1988; in particular Conclusion) to the central studies of his *Soi-même comme un autre* (Ricoeur 1994, 113–139; 140–168). He names it *identité narrative* [narrative identity].

An identity that configures itself as a narrative one does not mean an either/or relationship between identity as sameness (*mêmeté*) and identity as selfhood (*ipséité*), instead it means the possibility of a fruitful dialectic between them.⁶ It conceives of the self as a »synthesis of the heterogeneous,« i.e. as a complex of singular moments (and their related remembrances) that finds its unity in the continuity of the self over the course of time (see Ricoeur 1994, 141f). It is in this manner that narrative identity allows for understanding identity as the tale of a life-story; put into a similar perspective, a person, comprehended as a character in a story, this narrative identity cannot be divided from his or her lived experiences. With the author's words:

»The person, understood as a character in a story, is not an entity distinct from his or her experiences. Quite the opposite: the person shares the condition of dynamic identity peculiar to the story recounted. The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what

can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character« (Ricoeur 1994, 147f)

The notion of narrative identity can be particularly fruitful when approaching dramatic (if not traumatic) lived experiences. Whereas in these cases a life can appear as a random, meaningless or absurd sequence of episodes and circumstances, or be torn violently into a »before« and an »after« that find no possible conciliation, narratives as such draw together disparate and often discordant elements and narrative identity intends to overcome all the disintegrating and unempowering events, allowing for these to be read as constitutive elements of a plot, kept together despite everything (actually: considering everything), by virtue of a so-called »narrative cohesion« (see Ricoeur 1988).

As a synthesis of the heterogeneity provided by the power of narrative cohesion, narrative identity assumes identity as a configuration, i.e. as an interpretation of events over the course of time. This configuration can grant our life a consistency, a unity, a meaning, even beyond the aforementioned disintegrating events. Indeed, narrative identity articulates itself as a resilient plot that works towards a progressive integration of the traces of the events that we encounter in the course of life, even the most traumatic ones. In this sense, together with Paul Ricoeur, I consider the teleological force of narrative identity to be a fundamental element, insofar as establishing a *juste mémoire* can lead towards reconciliation with oneself.

⁶ Ricoeur is quite explicit about this issue: »the genuine nature of narrative identity discloses itself, in my opinion, only in the dialectic of selfhood and sameness« (Ricoeur 1994, 141) – a dialectic which implies that the *mêmeté* dimension of identity as well as its *ipséité* dimension cannot be eliminated.

We cannot understand how memory works if we ignore its counterpart par excellence: oblivion.

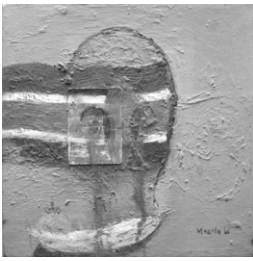


An identity that configures itself as a narrative one does not mean an either/or relationship between identity as sameness (*mêmeté*) and identity as selfhood (*ipséité*), instead it means the possibility of a fruitful dialectic between them.

Even if narrative identity has been considered in these very last pages as the key to a teleology of memory, its archaeological dimension must not be forgotten. In this sense, Ricœur reconnects his reflections to authors like Reinhart Koselleck, Raymond Aron, Wilhelm Schapp and Maurice Halbwachs, a profoundly varied group of thinkers and intellectuals (the first was a historian, the second a political philosopher, the third a jurist, the fourth a sociologist), but they were nonetheless concerned with the same issue: man as a historical being. According to the author of *Vergangene Zukunft* [Futures Past] (Koselleck 1979), history should be understood within a polarity between the legacy of the past, i.e. a certain »space of experience« (*Erfahrungsraum*), and the future, a »horizon of expectation« (*Erwartungshorizont*). Ricœur reconstructs Koselleck's reflection and joins it with his own thesis where narrative identity possesses a retrospective (archaeological) as well at the same time as a prospective (teleological) character. Aron's (1938) *Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire* [Introduction to the Philosophy of History], nevertheless, warns Ricœur of the schema of the so-called »retrospective illusion of fatality.« Looking back to our past, this ingenious mechanism, that is the retrospective illusion of fatality, interprets the present state of things as the result of a necessity. Every singular event, consequently, when integrated into a plot, would have contributed to create our present in a decisive way, as a constitutive element of predestination. Even if its *telos* is the understanding of a meaningful life devel-

oped as a synthesis of its mostly heterogeneous moments, narrative identity must not be confused with the aforementioned »retrospective illusion of fatality« in any case. We, each of us, are our own story. But our own story is always immersed in the flow of history, i.e. in the sequence of those generations who preceded us (and those that will follow us), while also always being situated and constituted through the stories of »our Others«, from our closest community to the wide spectrum of the society. Our story is not only part of history (even if an infinitesimal one, it is nevertheless unique); rather our life as such is, as Wilhelm Schapp (1953) already recognized, in *In Geschichten verstrickt* [Entangled in Stories]. Ricœur himself, no less inspired by this book than by Maurice Halbwachs' (1950) *La mémoire collective* [On Collective Memory], explicitly recognizes how narrative identity is anything but a private affair. Our memory, our identity, our story are not built independently, solely by us. If a purely individual identity cannot exist (as identity is always shaped and reshaped within a social frame, even when it is conceived as a narrative one), individual memory cannot exist either. Narratives developed and transmitted from one generation to the other shape a collective memory that contributes in an essential way to establishing a collective identity. Their content is often a traumatic one: as Ricœur recognizes, there is no group identity that is not grounded in a story of violence (*violence fondatrice*) (see Ricœur 1998, 99f)⁷, with the result that many nation-

⁷ With a phenomenological and anthropologi-



alists can recall those narratives, in a biased, distorted, and tendentious perspective. Fighting such abuses of memory which lay at the foundation of distorted narrative identities is a pressing ethical task in reconciliatory processes.

COPING WITH TRAUMA AND DEALING WITH GUILT: VICTIM AND PERPETRATORS

Originating from violent wrongdoings, trauma interpretations show their perturbing and wicked persistence as disintegrating agents, i.e. as forces that can break our life into a »before« and an »after,« obstructing the way to reconcile and integrate those events within a coherent narrative identity, i.e. impeding reconciliation with oneself. By mentioning Freud's theories, a permanent feature through Ricœur's works from *Freud and Philosophy* (1970) to *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004a), as concerns *Wiederholungszwang* [repetition compulsion], *Erinnerungsarbeit* [work of memory], and *Trauerarbeit* [work of mourning] (see Freud 1946), Ricœur defines as pathologies of a »wounded memory« (see Ricœur 2004a, 69). The father of psychoanalysis emphasizes the

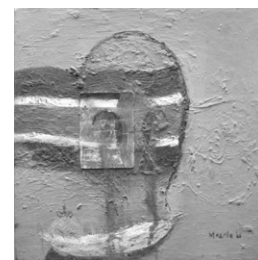
cal approach, we can see (even in our time) how many groups define their identity through a specific received violence, i.e. through the demonization of the (former) enemy. It happens when IS speaks about Western people as »crusaders«, when neo-Nazi groups march to Dresden, place (according to them) of the wounded German pride, or even when (October 2010) some »ultras« of the Serbian national football team wrote on many walls in Genoa »1389«, referring to date of the Battle of Kosovo.

healing effect of reconciliation with what has been repressed by the patient. Following his thought, Ricœur acknowledges how the work of mourning and that of memory are deeply interconnected, stating that not-reconciled identities are grounded on not-reconciled memories. From the other side, he specifies that what he called a »just memory« is actually to be understood as a happy, peaceful, »reconciled memory« (Ricœur 2004a, 496).

Wrongdoings wound (even tearing apart) one's life and the web of human coexistence. Let us call to mind the connection between »brechen« (to break) and »Verbrechen« (crime) in German as well as the link between fraction and infraction in English (and in many other languages). Hegel already theorized in his *Jena Writings* a point that culminates in his *Phänomenologie des Geistes* [Phenomenology of Spirit] (on this issue see Honneth 1992, 20–53), namely that each wrongdoing constitutes a rupture that fractures the social web into two groups: victims and perpetrators. If victims perceive the received wrongdoing as a violation, the consequences of which they may have to cope with as a trauma, perpetrators have to deal with their fault and with their new role as the »guilty party.« From Paul Ricœur's reflection on justice we will learn how not only the experiences of trauma (from the side of the victim), but also of guilt (from the side of the perpetrator) are equally crucial and relevant in reconciliatory processes. Only an effort to empower both parties will make such processes possible.

»The person, understood as a character in a story, is not an entity distinct from his or her experiences. Quite the opposite: the person shares the condition of dynamic identity peculiar to the story recounted. The narrative constructs the identity of the character, what can be called his or her narrative identity, in constructing that of the story told. It is the identity of the story that makes the identity of the character.«

Paul Ricœur



The assignment of being the »guilty party« is only the last step of a complex process. As Ricœur argues, in order for guilt to be ascribed to us, we have to be considered to be an »accountable« subject, i.e. a subject »imputable«⁸ for all his or her actions, and therefore »responsible« for them. This is everything but a clear, obvious fact. First of all, in order to be addressed as »guilty« the perpetrator has to be regarded as the genuine author of his or her acts, i.e. as somebody who acted deliberately and voluntarily in his or her wrongdoing.⁹ More precisely, the perpetrator has to be regarded as a subject who possesses »free agency«. It is only by virtue of this that he or she can be held accountable, imputable, and responsible. Many objections can be raised at this precise moment. When the judges of the Nuremberg Trials had to deal with their defendants, for instance, it was not unusual to find counter-arguments like: »I do not feel guilty of any war crimes, I have only done my duty.«¹⁰ Can we still speak of »free agency« in similar cases? Is this »guilt« – and in which sense?¹¹

8 Ricœur adopts in this case the terminology of Strawson (see Strawson 1959).

9 This problem can already be found in (see Ricœur 1950); (English transl. see Ricœur 1966).

10 This statement, given at the Nuremberg Trials by Ernst Kaltenbrunner is reported in (McKale 2012, 136).

11 In *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004a), Ricœur would shortly engage in dialogue with the German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers, who would be driven by the horrors of the Nazi dictatorship to meditate on the issue of guilt in his lectures on *Die Schuldfrage* [The Question of German Guilt] (1946), distinguishing between four forms of guilt (criminal

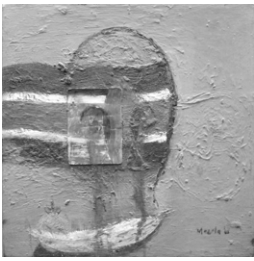
Ricœur's hermeneutics show their strength in combining reflections from both philosophical and theological perspectives. As recounted in several myths and religious concepts, the question of guilt has to be related to the problem of evil: since evil is a constitutive and inescapable dimension of human being, the experience of guilt will shape one's existence, such that the human nature has to be understood – and Ricœur does – as fallible. Nevertheless, as I will show in the next paragraphs, the fallible nature of human beings is not the last word in the writings of Ricœur.

ACROSS (AND BEYOND?) RESENTMENT, VENGEANCE, AND JUSTICE

Undergoing a wrongdoing (perceived as an injustice) or committing one each triggers a wide range of reactions and emotions in the victim as well as in the perpetrator (from shame to guilt, from fear to anger, all the way up until trauma). How they play out seems to configure three fundamental scenarios, which have to be taken into account as interdicting or furthering reconciliatory processes: resentment, vengeance, and forgiveness. Not

guilt, political guilt, moral guilt, and metaphysical guilt), to which he added a so-called *Kollektivschuld* (collective guilt), i.e. a kind of guilt, which would have involved the entire German population during the Nazi age. Refusing the idea of collective guilt (2004a, 470), Ricœur would nevertheless articulate the first two paragraphs of its *Epilogue* in *Memory, History, Forgetting* through Jaspers' aforementioned four forms of guilt (see Ricœur 2004a, 459–478).

We, each of us, *are* our own story. But our own story is always immersed in the flow of history, i.e. in the sequence of those generations who preceded us (and those that will follow us), while also always being situated and constituted through the stories of »our Others«, from our closest community to the wide spectrum of the society.



What is most remarkable in resentment is how it takes place without a visible, concrete action by the former victim. In this sense, resentment acts without acting, as a rumination of the past, carrying a dis-empowering, overwhelming effect for the present.

opposed to them, but rather across from them there nevertheless lays the issue of justice.

There is almost no need to argue how and why resentment and vengeance are obstacles on the way to reconciliation. Similar to contempt and anger, resentment can be described as a persisting negative feeling directed toward the Other, who is still perceived, despite the course of time, his or her possible change of mind, or even his or her plead to be pardoned as the perpetrator that he or she has been. Resentment does not believe that the former perpetrator can change: it identifies a person with his or her (evil) singular deed, inseparably and irreversibly (see Arendt 1958, 237). Consequently, it imbues and shapes a climate of stagnating mistrust, where the former perpetrator is still perceived as an offender, a threat, an enemy. What is most remarkable in resentment is how it takes place without a visible, concrete action by the former victim. In this sense, resentment acts without acting, as a rumination of the past, carrying a dis-empowering, overwhelming effect for the present. Because the experienced injury appears as insurmountable, it becomes impossible coping with the past, acting in the present or planning a possible future. Despite all of its dreadful (let us even say »aneconomic«) consequences, non-willingness to reconcile has to be regarded as a moral choice, which deserves our careful consideration and respect (see Améry 1966) and (see Brudholm 2008). Even less prosocial than resentment, vengeance represents a disposition to answer suffered harm with new harm to the perpetrator.

Even if vengeance can be read as an attempt to gain empowerment by the former victim, to overcome the pain caused by the suffered wrongdoing (often perceived as an injustice) (see Murphy 2003), in the end it remains nothing but a re-active force à la Nietzsche (see 1999), that keeps everybody bound to the misdeed. In all these senses, it is clear how resentment and vengeance are everything but desirable hypotheses in reconciliatory processes.

If vengeance may be considered – as Hannah Arendt wrote – »the exact opposite of forgiveness«, justice might be thought as its alternative, »but by no means its opposite« (Arendt 1958, 241). Ricœur's reflection on justice-related issues (developed in the same years he was collecting materials for his *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*) positioned himself as a strong critic of a retributive paradigm of justice. In the essays that compose the volume *Le Juste* [The Just] (see Ricœur 1995); (Englisch transl. see Ricœur 2000b), Ricœur aims at showing how the idea as well as the practice of justice is vulnerable to a certain failure and denounces what he calls the intellectual scandal of punishment, as it occurs within retributive frameworks. Indeed, instead of achieving justice, punishment often only succeeds in increasing social suffering. Arguing that retributive justice quickly degenerates into an institutionalized form of vengeance, in *Le droit de punir* [The Right to Punish] (2002), Ricœur pleads for a form of restorative justice which empowers former victims as well as former perpetrators and aims at the reconstruction of



injured social bonds. Only a triple reconciliation, encompassing reparation for the victim, rehabilitation of the offender, and restoration for the broken law, appears to him to offer a genuine justice.

FORGIVENESS

After having reflected on the role of memory and identity as archaeological as well as teleological forces, and having directed my attention to the moral scenarios of vengeance and resentment, including the roles of guilt and justice in reconciliatory processes, finally now the following paragraphs will be devoted to the act that, according to Ricœur, can prove to be a decisive input leading to reconciliation: forgiveness.

Like memory and identity, forgiveness possesses two faces à la Janus: one directed to the past, the other to the future. The act for forgiving operates with wounded memories (and identities), and in many cases it possesses a healing effect.¹² First of all, however, the act to forgive someone for something happens in a real, present moment – in a unique »here« and »now.« It is articulated through an archaeological movement directed to a past (marked by a wrongdoing that can leave its traces even as

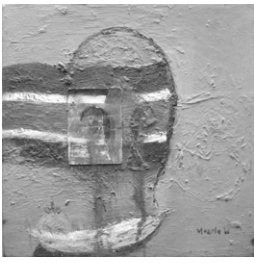
a trauma) as well as a teleological movement, aiming towards the future, where the victim (as well as the perpetrator) need to be released from the dreadful, sometimes even paralyzing consequences, of that wrongdoing. Having recognized the pardon as a force with the potential to restore agency is not yet Ricœur's main contribution to understanding forgiveness. In her *Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt underlined already the close relationship between forgiveness and a renewed capability to act and showed the cathartic effect of the act of forgiving.¹³ Ricœur's greatest achievement in his hermeneutic effort in *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* is that he sets forgiveness at the core of a philosophical anthropology that defines the human being both as fallible and as capable. Through this duality Ricœur emphasizes a constitutive disproportion of the human being, that he calls a »vertical disparity between the depth of fault and the height of forgiveness« (Ricœur 2004a, 457).

Concerning the depth of fault, Ricœur considers the issue of the unforgivable. Wrongdoing can be irreparable (on the side of the effects), imprescriptible (on the side of justice), and then unforgivable (on the side of moral judgment). Jankélévitch's *Pardonner?* (1971) represents the best example of this. Aggrieved and dreading a so-called »legal oblivion« in

Indeed, instead of achieving justice, punishment often succeeds in increasing social suffering only.

12 Far from being merely interesting for theologians or philosophers, forgiveness exhibits therapeutic implications, such that it has become, in the last two decades, a recurring topic in several psychological studies, e.g. (Enright 2001); (Enright 2012); (McCullough 2008); (Worthington 1998); (Worthington 2005).

13 »Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capability to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever« (Arendt 1958, 273).



Ricœur's greatest achievement in his hermeneutic effort is that he sets forgiveness at the core of a philosophical anthropology that defines the human being both as *fallible* and as *capable*.

form of a statute of limitations for the French crimes of collaboration with the Nazi regime, Jankélévitch deems unforgivable those crimes that constitute not only something outrageously cruel, but a profound »metaphysical injustice«, qualifying them as crimes against humanity because they are directed towards the »human« in the human being. What makes those crimes even more enormous is the lack of an admission of guilt, i.e. a formal request for forgiveness raised by the perpetrators. According to Ricœur, this is a crucial moment for the issue of forgiveness: given that the victim held the power to forgive, how much does forgiveness depend on the perpetrator's repentance? Jacques Derrida faces similar challenging questions as he argues that, even if Jankélévitch's position is understandable, he makes forgiveness dependent on a prior request and thereby deprives it of its primary characteristic: its unconditionality. True forgiveness, or unconditional forgiveness does not wait for a request from the perpetrator, and as such has to be beyond any linear, economic, or retributive logic. Consequently, and not without a significant amount of paradox, Derrida argues how unconditional forgiveness, if it exists (*il y a*), is an act that forgives the unforgivable. Unconditional forgiveness is something aporetic, unpredictable, uneconomical and even impossible: all of those elements make it a central aspect in a deconstructive way of thinking, beyond the dialectic of requesting and granting, that the author of *De la grammatologie* names »hyperbolic logic« (Derrida 1999); (see also Derrida 2005).

The apex of forgiveness resides, according to Ricœur, in this unconditional and hyperbolic character, which shows the superiority of forgiveness to any do-ut-des circle, i.e. in the »gift« that forgiveness is, to which the word »for-giveness« testifies in many languages (for instance: to *for-give* in English; *par-donner* in French; *ver-geben* in German). The apex of for-giveness is actually related with the apex of *charis* (*grace*) and then of love, in its most extreme form: love for enemies, for offenders, i.e. for perpetrators, beyond any Lex Talionis or retributive principle. Ricœur qualifies the apex of forgiveness as the fruit of the *logique de surabondance* [logic of superabundance] (Ricœur 2004a, 480), which configures forgiveness as a *don sans retour*, a free gift independent from any dialectic of reciprocity. Ricœur knows, however, how such a *don* [gift] is something rare, taking into account Marcel Mauss' (1923) *Essai sur le don* [Essay on the gift] and his observations on the asymmetry of power that the gift creates between donor and recipient, and the problematic issue of counter-giving that *le don* [the gift] creates in a communitarian or social environment. The act of giving obliges the recipient to pay back what creates inequalities in the form of a position of condescending superiority on the part of the givers, and a gift-debt which has to be paid back on the side of the recipient.

These last considerations concern not only *le don*, but also *pardon* [forgiveness], and show how the risk of pseudo-forgiveness cannot be ignored. In *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* Ricœur adds some important remarks to the topic of



True forgiveness, or unconditional forgiveness does not wait for a request from the perpetrator, and as such has to be beyond any linear, economic, or retributive logic.

forgiveness and its relation to reconciliation. There is no real forgiveness unless forgiveness remains on a merely formal level. It is clear upon consideration of a historical fact like the sale of indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church, or even in our everyday life, when we quickly forgive in order to stop thinking about the offense that we have received, being convinced to erase it with a simple »forgive-and-forget.« One cannot call it forgiveness when the forgiver enjoys him- or herself in a mode of condescending self-satisfaction, or when the ethical and existential relevance of guilt (and punishment) is underestimated. Here the question of legitimacy and representativeness occurs: Is it only the offender who is in a position to ask for forgiveness (and vice-versa)? (see Wiesenthal 1976). On what authority can a political or religious leader ask for forgiveness by the victims? These questions introduce us to more difficult cases, where forgiveness becomes a political principle. Concerning the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Ricœur (see 2004a, 483–86) recognizes a number of problems. Thus, he points to the risk of turning forgiveness – which is not a juridical category (see Ricœur 2000b, 131) – into something normative, normal, and normalizing (see Ricœur 2004a, 469), which may deprive forgiveness of its unconditional character by extending it to the social and political level. On the other side, the South African TRC was inspired by the idea that justice remains at a merely formal level if it is not accompanied by reconciliatory processes (by forgiveness) be-

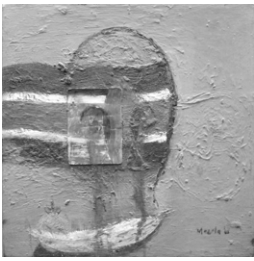
tween the involved social groups. In this sense, for Ricœur it represents an unprecedented example of guidance through memory and mourning (see Ricœur 2004a, 483). Nevertheless, some ambiguities manifest themselves in Ricœur's work: even though the positive benefits of forgiveness in therapeutic, moral and political aspects are undeniable, it is still difficult for Ricœur to assert that the South African TRC produced genuine forgiveness. He cannot ignore how amnesty and amnesia are closely related to each other. Moreover, he noticed a certain calculated theatricality that pervaded all scenes of penitence and contrition in front of the commission and resonated publicly.¹⁴

CONCLUSIONS. THE CAPABLE HUMAN BEING IS THE RECONCILED HUMAN BEING

Conscious of all of the aforementioned ambiguities, Ricœur nevertheless expresses his praise for forgiveness. He appreciates its force to engender reconciliation with oneself and reconciliation with the Other.

Through its archaeological movement, forgiveness allows gathering and integrating the past into the present. Being released from the

¹⁴ This represents, according to Derrida's previously mentioned writings, a *mondialatinisation* (globalization) of the scene of forgiveness, testified by an increasing amount of scenes of repentance, confession, of forgiveness and, excuse-making, in the media arena, mostly from a unilaterally Christian perspective.



paralysis of a traumatic past does not mean getting rid of it in terms of oblivion, rather, according to Ricoeur, it means being able to integrate it into the »narrative cohesion« of a whole, reconciled life.

Through its teleological movement, which shows that some events are irreversible but not their moral-interpretations, forgiveness bestows on both parties, victim and former perpetrator, the grace of a new beginning, which, unbinding them from their dreadful past, leads them to the present – the real time of the initiative, of beginnings, of the exercise of the power to act – and it allows them to plan and to live an open future.

Forgiveness redeems both, doer and sufferer, from the consequences of their past deeds, and it restores the capable character of the human being. With their fallible nature, human beings can harm others, provoke evil, and become guilty; on the other hand, with their capable nature, human beings can assume their own guilt as responsibility, designating themselves as the authors of their acts (free agency), ask for forgiveness, and open themselves (and their Other) to the future.¹⁵

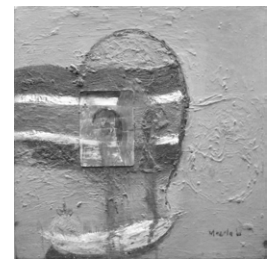
¹⁵ Hannah Arendt saw a remarkable correlation between the act of forgiving and that of promising. If forgiving deals with the *irreversible* character of the past, promising deals with the *uncertain* character of the future. Forgiving acts by undoing deeds of the

The archeology and teleology of reconciliatory processes come to fruition time and time again in the capable human being (in reconciliation with oneself) and then furthermore between the capable human being and his or her Other.¹⁶ In the end, healed in his or her memory and in his or her identity, the capable human being is no one other than the reconciled human being.

past, i.e. by providing us *freedom*; promising acts by setting up continuity, durability, reliability, i.e. *security*. Through the faculty of forgiving we are »released« (from the past); through the faculty of promising we are »bound« (to the future) – and through both we can live out our present.

¹⁶ The thesis that reconciliation with oneself might lead towards reconciliation with the Other (or might even be a prerequisite for it) is still to be discussed and demonstrated, as well as one last open question: after the act of forgiving, what kind of relationship will exist between former victims and perpetrators? Expecting »fraternity« would in some cases be too demanding, whereas pleading for »normalcy« would be more suitable (see Kodalle 1994), even if it might somehow be too vague. Former victims and perpetrators may even choose to take different routes, but this is not possible in every case. Often, they have to live together and cannot ignore each other. Only a moral emotion that shows openness to the future and commitment to the present at the same time is then able to show us that reconciliatory processes between these parts are developing on their own accord in a fruitful direction, as happens, for instance, with *trust*.

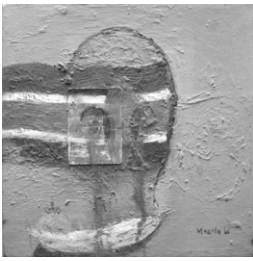
One cannot call it forgiveness when the forgiver enjoys him- or herself in a mode of condescending self-satisfaction, or when the ethical and existential relevance of guilt (and punishment) is underestimated.



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Narratives developed and transmitted from one generation to the other shape a collective memory that contributes in an essential way to establishing a collective identity.



Through its archaeological movement, forgiveness allows gathering and integrating the past into the present. Being released by the paralysis of a traumatic past does not mean getting rid of it in terms of oblivion, rather, according to Ricœur, it means being able to integrate it into the »narrative cohesion« of a whole, reconciled life.

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