Collective Identity and Collective Memory in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur

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Abstract

Collective memory has been a notoriously difficult concept to define. I appeal to Paul Ricœur and argue that his account of the relationship of the self and her community can clarify the meaning of collective memory. While memory properly understood belongs, in each case, to individuals, such memory exists and is shaped by a relationship with others. Furthermore, because individuals are constituted over a span of time and through intersubjective associations, the notion of collective memory ought to be understood in terms of the way that memory enacts and reenacts networks of relations among individuals and the communities to which they belong, rather than in terms of a model that reifies either individuals or groups. Ricœur's account can show sources of oppression and offers ways to respond to them.

Keywords: Ricœur, Hermeneutics, Collective memory, Intersubjectivity, Narrative identity.

Résumé

La mémoire collective est un concept notoirement difficile à définir. Je fais appel à Paul Ricœur et défends la thèse que ses vues sur la relation du soi à la communauté peuvent préciser le sens de la mémoire collective. Alors que la mémoire comprise au sens strict appartient, dans chaque cas, à des individus, cette mémoire existe et est façonnée par une relation avec autrui. En outre, parce que les individus sont constitués sur une période de temps et à travers des associations intersubjectives, il faut comprendre la notion de mémoire collective en fonction de la manière selon laquelle la mémoire met en place et renforce les réseaux de relations entre les individus et les communautés auxquelles ils appartiennent, plutôt qu'en fonction d'un modèle qui réifie soit les individus soit les groupes. Les vues de Ricœur peuvent dévoiler les sources d'oppression et nous donner les moyens d'y remédier.

Mots-clés : Ricœur, Herméneutique, Mémoire collective, Intersubjectivité, Identité narrative

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Despite its pervasiveness in both academic and political discourses, or more likely because of it, the concept "collective memory" has been notoriously difficult to define. The reason for this stems from its questionable ontological and epistemological presuppositions. For example, Noa Gedi and Yegal Elam argue that the term "collective memory" is problematic because it mistakenly attributes a cognitive function to an abstract generalization.[1] For them, the concept "collective memory" is useful only as a metaphor or shorthand designation for the myths, traditions, customs, or heritages that represent the "spirit" or "psyche" of a group, tribe, society, or nation. Others, such as Eviatar Zerubavel, argue that memory in its social form operates according to a logic distinct from that of personal memories.[2] Because these two positions fundamentally oppose one another, finding a position that does justice to both the social contexts of memory and the fact that remembering is an act performed by individuals has been difficult. How are we to understand the continuity and discontinuity between the individual bearer of experience and the moment when an individual finds herself as part of a community or, better, in conflict with an identity that was imposed upon her by others?

This paper develops an account of collective memory drawn from Paul Ricœur's conception of narrative identity. For Ricœur, narrative identity connects a transcendental model of consciousness with an understanding of human existence as embodied and communal. The resources offered by narratives provide a useful framework for understanding the continuities and discontinuities between time, action, and identity insofar as it is able to disclose how the temporality of an individual's action occurs in community with others. Memory temporally orients an individual to a past, such that recounting one's own past necessarily refers to others. In so doing, remembering articulates further possibilities for acting and offers testimony of actions that have been carried out or suffered, thereby enabling one to constitute a sense of oneself as sharing a common life with others.

Ricœur's account of the constitution of intersubjectivity can meet the challenges posed by the concept "collective memory." More specifically, I argue that while memory properly understood belongs, in each case, to individuals, his or her memory exists occurs as a dialogue with others to make sense of a shared past. Furthermore, because individuals are constituted over a span of time and through intersubjective associations, the notion of collective memory ought to be understood in terms of the way that memory enacts and reenacts networks of relations among individuals and the communities to which they belong, rather than in terms of a model that reifies individuals or groups. My goal is to show how a conception of collective memory based in Ricœur's phenomenological anthropology can identify both the sources of oppression and distortion of the past and the possible strategies for addressing and rectifying violence.

The Problem of Collective Memory

In an essay that diagnoses the problems that materialize in contemporary sociological inquiry into collective memory, Jeffrey Olick argues that there have been two distinct approaches to understanding the social dimensions of memory. He writes, "one…sees culture as a subjective category of meanings contained in people's minds" and "one…sees culture as patters of publically available symbols objectified in society."[3] The former begins with individualistic principles, and suggests that collective memory is nothing but the aggregate of individual's memories. The other approach uses the term "collective memory" to refer to the collective representations that operate according to principles and rules distinct from individuals. Here, collective memory refers to the ways that images, practices, political rhetoric, and objects, such as monuments and memorials, actively shape what is to be remembered. These two positions, Ricœur agrees, "do not oppose one another on the same plane, but occupy universes of discourses that have become estranged from one another."[4] They belong to "radically distinct ontological orders and…require different epistemological and methodological strategies."[5] As a result, the situation has become "intensely polemical" and ultimately impedes new ways to project a life in common. To see how Ricœur's critical hermeneutics offers a way to understand the formation and maintenance of memory as part of the social dimension of human experience, it will be useful to develop each position's underlying presuppositions and implications.

Ricœur describes the tradition that focuses on the experience of memory as the "tradition of inwardness," one which has roots in Augustine's *Confessions*, runs through John Locke's account of personal identity, and culminates in Edmund Husserl's difficult lectures on the constitution of internal time consciousness.[6] Three interlocking claims form the foundation of this tradition. First, my memories of an event are just that, my own. Indeed, a common metaphor for memory is to think of it as a box of keepsakes – something that houses intensely personal artifacts and feelings. This metaphor highlights the way that memories cannot be transferred from one person to another without losing some of its original meaning. Even when two people have memories of the same event, we quickly point out that while the event is the same the perspectives differ. Second, memory helps to secure personal identity over time. To remember an event establishes a link between a past event and the present context of remembering thereby maintaining a temporal continuity between that which is remembered and the act of remembering itself. Third, memory helps to orient an individual in time. It is through memory, and only through memory, that allows us to experience the past.

Beginning with these suppositions, collective memory can be nothing more than the aggregate of individual memories. Amos Funkenstein writes "consciousness and memory can only be realized by an individual who acts, is aware, and remembers. Just as a nation cannot eat or dance, neither can it speak or remember. Remembering is a mental act, and therefore it is absolutely and completely personal."[7] Even if remembering has a social component, we must begin with the claim that it is individuals who are the proper bearers of memory and that the phenomenon of collective memory is intelligible only insofar as individuals actually remember the past.[8] If the experience of remembering is applied to collectives, we risk overextending the legitimate use of the term.

This approach disabuses us from treating collectives as something taken for granted by making it possible to see how memory is produced, practiced, and transmitted by different groups. In so doing, we can see how different cohorts remember the same event by examining

various factors, such as their age when they experienced the event and whether they directly experienced it.[9] Additionally, insofar as a nation's collective memory is often associated with public and ritualized commemorations, this approach can help clarify the relationship between those in power, who are often responsible for enacting and perpetuating such practices, and the ways that localized, and even marginalized, groups actually remember these events. All too often collective memory is shorthand for the memories that the dominant social class takes to be important. By beginning with the individual, such approaches reveal the ways that collective identity and memory is always in the process of being constructed and is thus always contestable.

Nevertheless, beginning with the bearer of memories overlooks the social frameworks, contexts, and symbols that influence how individuals remember the past. Indeed, the claim "we remember" does not seem to be so easily reducible to an aggregate of what each individual of a group remembers. For example, the Jewish belief recounted each year during Passover, "we were once slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt," is captured most fully in terms of seeing oneself as part of a heritage that includes previous generations as well as contemporaries with whom one sits at the Seder table and successive generations for whose sake we recount the story. This complex experience cannot be adequately understood if the collective mode of existing is ignored. In such cases, there is a genuine experience of community that occurs where and when individuals remember together. Memories are experienced as a tie that binds us to one another, and as a claim that others make upon us. The supposition that the locus of memorial experiences occurs primarily and solely within the individual does not seem to adequately account for the properly communal dimensions of such experiences.

In contrast to the individualistic account, some have argued that memories are not to be found in an individual's inner life, but instead operate according to the rules, norms, and logic of a symbolic order for their preservation and transmission. Maurice Halbwachs, in his classic treatment of the issue, argues that memories "are recalled to me externally, and the groups of which I am a part at any time give me the means to reconstruct them, upon condition…that I turn toward them and adopt, at least for the moment, their way of thinking."[10] Insofar as individuals place themselves in such frameworks are they capable of recalling the past. As Ricœur puts it, "the social framework ceases to be simply an objective notion and becomes a dimension inherent in the work of recollection."[11] Groups, in other words, offer definitions, values, and frameworks through which an individual comes to appreciate the meaning of an event. Jan Assmann captures this notion in the concept of "cultural memory," which contains "cultural objectivations" such as language, institutions, cultural symbols, and images.[12] Far from being "within me," "mnemonic traditions" and the "norms of remembrance" are embodied in the ideology, narratives, and rituals that contain and transmit the symbolic order.[13] The upshot of this approach is that we can see how memory works to form a life in common in the first place.

However, an approach that solely relies on the collectivist perspective runs into some theoretical problems of its own. Not only does it risk reifying a set of formal or transcendental structures, but, as Ricœur puts it, the sociological perspective "crosses an invisible line": there would be a society without any social actors, or more specifically, that memories of events could exist without anyone who remembers.[14] The places of my life, including the nooks and crannies in my childhood home, the streets of my neighborhood, the cities in which I dwelt, and the territories that harbor my national and ethnic heritage, contain my memory more than I do. Put

most strongly, these images and symbols remember for me and will continue to do so after I die, thus supplanting the notion that we are the authors of our actions.

The difference between approaches to communal memory is thus rooted in contrasting social ontologies. On the one hand, if we begin with the individual subject of memory, deriving a genuine sense of communal memory cannot occur. Instead, communities are seen as aggregates of individuals and no genuine "we" experience is possible. On the other hand, if we begin with communal frameworks and work backwards to understand the individual subject of memory, we are left with an understanding of memory divorced from the individuals who have them. What resources, then, are there to offer a way through this impasse?

The Constitution of Intersubjectivity and Communal Identity

Ricœur's account of the constitution of intersubjectivity, I believe, offers a productive alternative to this polemical debate. While he often suggests that the narrative identity of individuals and communities share a similar structure[15], this account is intelligible only after understanding how intersubjectivity is constituted. To see what this entails, I first show how his appropriation of Husserl's fifth Cartesian meditation in his essay "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity" steers clear of reifying both individuals and communities. Second, I extend this understanding the constitution of intersubjectivity to clarify how narrative identity can be applied to communities. Central to his approach is the recognition that the experience of community is also an interpretation of it, and, conversely, that the interpretation of community can proceed only from a shared horizon of experience.

In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, Ricœur identifies Husserl's fifth Cartesian meditation as one source for understanding how memory can contributes to social cohesion. He writes:

> The sociological concept of collective consciousness can result only from a second process of objectification on the level of intersubjective exchanges. We then have only to forget the process of constitution that gave birth to these entities in order to treat them, in turn, as subjects in which predicates can inhere, predicates similar to those we ascribe in the first instance to individual consciousness.[16]

On the basis of such "forgetfulness," we can then analogically transfer the sense of memory to these social objects. What, then, does it mean to "forget" the process of constitution of the intersubjective bond, and how does "remembering" this constitution help us recognize new possibilities for communal existence?

Ricœur's essay "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity" develops these ideas by unfolding the "sense-potential" the lived experience of community that is "always already" there, prior to its articulation in language.[17] His method is thus phenomenological in the Husserlian sense: he starts with an already constituted object and then "retroactively, retrospectively, [unfolds] the layers of sense, the levels of synthesis, [and makes] the passive syntheses behind the active syntheses appear."[18] In our pre-reflective, pre-narrative experience, we share a common world. Making this world explicit is not merely a matter of phenomenological description; it is a hermeneutic interpretation (*Auslegung*) of those passive syntheses. The task, therefore, is to understand *how* it is possible that there are others through an interpretation of those passive syntheses make possible intersubjective life.

Following Husserl, Ricœur argues that the passive synthesis called the analogical apperception of another underlies the possibility of a life in common. I experience others as being *like* me. However, to say that another is "like" me does not mean that I come to know the other by way of a logical inference or an argument from analogy. Rather, as Husserl puts it, "the other is a mirroring of my own self and yet *not* a mirroring proper, an analogue of my own self and yet again *not* an analogue in the usual sense."[19] The unusual sense of the analogy arises from the connection between my body and my place and the other's body and her place: "the thought that you see me and hear me can be maintained by imagining that I could be where you are that, from there, I would see and hear as you are seeing and hearing."[20] This does not just mean that I would see an object from a different perspective were I over where you are, it entails that I can never wholly occupy the other's position. To see the other *as* an other means that she "is understood as being a subject for herself and that another's positing of herself is not continuous with my own experience."[21] I can perceive where another person is, and the two of us can switch places; but I can never occupy her point of orientation. Like me, in other words, the other has a particular perspective, can impute motives and actions, and has her own identity, one that cannot be reduced to my own perspective.

This suggests a complexity to the analogical apperception. On one hand, the sense of the other, as other, arises because I recognize her body as a lived body (*Leib*). On the other hand, the other's body as object (*Körper*) allows me to recognize my own as physical body. Self and other are tied together insofar as the other enables the self to recognize itself as a physical body among others, and insofar as the self recognizes the other as another self with her own body as a center of orientation.

The transfer of the sense of selfhood from one to another carries with it an affective dimension. Husserl uses the term "pairing" (*Paarung*) to refer to the association of similar elements to form new configurations of varying complexities. As he puts it, "two data are given intuitionally, and with prominence, in the unity of a consciousness and that, on this basis – essentially, already in pure passivity (regardless therefore of whether they are noticed or unnoticed) – as data appearing with mutual distinctness, they found phenomenologically a unity of similarity and thus are always constituted precisely as a pair."[22] Pairing, in other words, forms an associative chain from one experience to another through an "intuitive" or affective force. The affectivity involved in pairing is a sort of introjection, whereby, as Ricœur notes elsewhere, former experiences are revived, dormant memories are awoken, and meaning flows into various sensorial fields.[23] The analogical, even imaginative, transfer of sense enables me to see the other as another self, and it allows me to see myself as another. The encounter with the other expands my sense of meaning and opens up the possibility for genuine community.

It might appear that since there is a gulf between oneself and another that there can be no genuine experience of being with others. However, if I could fully occupy the other's position and perspective, there would be no difference between the self and the other. The impossibility of having the same experience as another person grounds the very possibility of being with others. Being distinct people does not make us radically different; it makes dialogue and coming to an understanding with another possible in the first place. As Ricœur more technically puts it, "the term *ego*…is transferred analogically from *me* to *you* in such a way that the second person signifies another first person."[24] This means that the function of the analogical transfer of sense from one person to another preserves the significance of the *I* from one person to the other. Another person, in other words, is an "I," like me.[25] Such association brings two egos together

but without reducing one to the other and without creating an unbridgeable distance between the two.

Pairing not only underlies the relationship between self and other. It also extends these associations across time, making it the condition for the possibility of the "historical field of experience."[26] This has several important implications. First, because the "historical" is a "higher order" objectivity, it has an intelligibility that cannot be reduced to the discrete moments of time that comprise it. Second, the categories normally attributed to individuals – project, motivation, imputation, and responsibility – are extended and transformed in their application to past agents, communities, and institutions. Third, temporal distance establishes new connections, possibilities, and meanings and extends them to connect generation to generation. Through it, "the categories of common action make specific relations between contemporaries, predecessors, and successors possible."[27] "*Like* me, my contemporaries, my predecessors, and my successors *can* say I."[28] The succession of generations establishes the rhythms of history "by designating the chain of historical agents as living people who come to take the place of dead people."[29] The categories of predecessors, contemporaries, and successors reveal how the past continues to haunt the present, and it helps to mix together the intimacy of each person's death with a reference to the public and social character of the succession of generations. Together, these points suggest that the succession of generations enables us to recognize the historicity of this life; conversely, to be affected by one's historicity entails a communal experience.

On the basis of the transfer of sense, the constitution of natural and social objects becomes possible. More specifically, it is the "second process of objectification," that allows one to extend "the analogical character that Husserl ascribes to every *alter ego* in relation to one's own *ego*" to personalities of a higher order.[30] It is by way of this analogical transfer, the affective pairing, that legitimates the use of predicates normally associated to memory to the first-person plural, which is to say, to those larger collectivities and interpersonal communities. The higher level of cultural worlds and their distinctive cultural bonds, such as the state and institutions, "the relations of what is one's own and what is foreign, belonging to the very first constitution of the other are repeated" without having to appeal to a distinct entity from the constituting self.[31] The path from individual to community is thus one that traverses from the individual through the experience of the other to be shared in community.

Intersubjective relationships present themselves in a range of degrees, from the intimacy of the we-relationship to the anonymity of impersonal relationships. There is always the risk that the relationships that constitute the historical bond transform "the 'us' into the 'them'," as when social relations are reduced to causal or deterministic laws, when temporal distance makes us forget or remember the past all too effectively, or when the political process actively and systematically excludes or demonizes a particular group.[32] To guard against these possibilities, Ricœur draws several points from Max Weber's *Economy and Society.* First, collective action needs to be understood in terms of behavior – that is "it can be interpreted in a comprehensible manner by its agents, hence in terms of intended significations, whether or not these are alleged."[33] For institutions to be intelligible and legitimate, their policies and regulations must be seen as stemming from motivations that give rise to action. Not only does an account of an act need to mention the agent's motivations, but it also needs to take into account its effects on close relations and impersonal others. While this means that action is mediated by social contexts, norms, practices, and ideologies, we need to understand that such mediation is performed through agents' motivations and desires and not some collective entity. "Even the State," Ricœur writes,

"is no more than a co-action, an acting-with (*Zusammenhandlen*)."[34] Second, in order to combat the tendency to reify either generations or institutions, Ricœur suggests that we attend to the "predictability" or "probability" that they will act in a certain way. By looking at the "statistical regularity" of collective actions, we can understand how certain relations behave like agents.[35] Just as a text can be detached from the author, so too can the coordinated actions of agents be detached to posit the existence of institutions. What is important, however, is to recognize that "collective" entities are relations among actors that behave in predictable ways.

By combining a phenomenological approach to intersubjectivity with Weber's sociological account of the mechanisms to explain behavior, Ricœur offers a way to recognize, on the one hand, how experience constitutes a life in common, and, on the other, the ways such relationships can be distorted by the reification of institutions. The analogizing apperception enables us to pair together self and other to form groups, and to analogously attribute to those groups actions and motives. Importantly, there is no perfect symmetry between the two, and by keeping this in mind there should be less of a tendency to think of a collectivity as having an identity distinct from its members or individuals whose existence comes prior to their existence in community. This suggests that the identity of a community is not to be found in what the community recounts about itself. It is instead the stories that individuals tell to each other about the origins of their life in common. It is a story of who "we" are, and, when done justly, a story of who has been affected by "our" actions.

Narrative Identity and Communities

The relationship between phenomenology and sociology has significant implications for the meaning of identity. The notion of narrative identity refers, on the one hand, to the persistence of the same thing over time, which Ricœur names *idem*-identity, and, on the other, to the ability to be self-constant, which he names *ipse*-identity. To be a self is to be held accountable for who one is. Both forms of identity are realized at the individual and communal levels.

At the level of *idem*-identity, a community is defined by a kind of national character. Character refers to the "set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognized," and designates the point where *ipse*-identity becomes almost indiscernible from *idem*-identity.[36] These lasting dispositions include habits, which are those behaviors or traits "by which a person is recognized, reidentified as the same," and "the set of *acquired identifications* by which the other enters into the composition of the same," which include the "values, norms, ideals, models, and heroes *in* which the person or community identifies itself."[37] *Idem* refers to the habits, *ethos,* or ideology that defines an individual or group.

By contrast, *ipse*-identity refers to the ability to keep one's word over time. This ability "marks the extreme gap between the permanence of the self and that of the same and so attests fully to the irreducibility of the two problematics one to the other."[38] To be accountable implies a "manner of conducting [oneself] so that others can *count on* that person. Because someone is counting on me, I am *accountable for* my actions before another."[39] The self becomes both dependable and capable of having actions imputed to it. Responsibility connects these two meanings of being accountable:

> The term "responsibility" unites both meanings: "counting on" and "being accountable
> for." It unites them, adding to them the idea of a *response* to the question "Where are

you?" asked by another who needs me. The response is the following: "Here I am!" a response that is a statement of self-constancy.[40]

To keep a promise is to respond to and uphold the trust that others put in me, despite change. By keeping my word, I attest to my self-constancy, revealing me as the kind of person I am despite changes in desires, opinions, and habits.

While Ricœur primarily speaks about this dialectic in terms of the individually existing self, his account of the relations involved in the constitution of community extend these forms of identity to collective existence. First, regarding *idem*-identity, one might construe collective identity in terms of the persistence of a particular group in terms of its geographical borders or the persistence of specific governmental, economic, or social institutions. Additionally, at the communal level *idem*-identity can also refer to the specific socio-cultural norms, habits, traditions, and practices through which a community can be identified as the same. Such persistence is only possible, however, insofar as individual people actually identify with them and continue to perpetuate them.

Similarly, a community can be self-constant. *Ipse*-identity at the level of community should be understood in terms the concerted activity of individuals acting together from a heritage with a vision of a shared life. To live with one another, for Ricœur, requires institutions. By this term, Ricœur means "the structure of *living together* as belongs to a historical community…a structure irreducible to interpersonal relations and yet bound up with these in a remarkable sense" that help to ground justice.[41] Institutions extend the *power* of acting in concert and the condition of plurality to impersonal others and give this power a temporal span. Not only do institutions retain vestiges of the past, but they perpetuate themselves through their practices.

The narrative identity of either an individually existing self or community is neither wholly one's own (or ours) nor wholly that of others. The story of each of our lives is "mingled with that of others in such a way as to engender second order stories which are themselves intersections between numerous stories…We are literally 'entangled in stories'"[42] This is possible only because the ability to give an account of oneself "proceeds from untold and repressed stories in the direction of actual stories that the subject can take up and hold as constitutive of his personal identity."[43] If identity arises from untold and repressed stories, it cannot be taken for granted and is always contestable. Just as important, the search for one's past is to also accept responsibility for it. To weave a narrative identity is thus to transform a past that is beyond one's control into a past for which we are responsible, and to recognize the intersubjective nature of that past.

Working Through Communal Memory

Ricœur develops the implications of collective memory in two related contexts. In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, his concern about collective memory stems from the "unsettling spectacle offered by an excess of memory here, and an excess of forgetting elsewhere, to say nothing of the influence of commemorations and abuses of memory – and of forgetting."[44] The "just allotment" of memory "works through" these potential abuses in order to refigure the meaning of community as paying a debt to the past while seeing oneself as being called to remember it justly. The theme of the communal implications of memory is further advanced in

the short essay "Reflections on a New Ethos for Europe." There, Ricœur examines how the exchange of memories can offer a new meaning of community that is appropriate for our times.[45] Given the risks and promises of technology and globalization, new forms of community are needed to configure institutions and, just as important, to recognize the differences among the individuals who are affected by them. How, then, can the work of memory and forgetting form new configurations of communities?

In this section, I defend two claims. First, because the past persists, or exists as having-been, memory enables us to "work through" the past by "working off" a debt to it. Second, cultural traditions are not a passive acceptance of that heritage. Instead, the passivity and affectivity of memory needs to be understood as a response to the otherness of the past and the challenge posed by other community's memories. Memory, I conclude, can make new communities possible by attending to those places that call for remembering.

While memory is central to selfhood, it is nevertheless a complex phenomenon and ought to be understood in at least two distinct senses: it is our only access to the past and that memories are *of* the past. We remember persons we have met, events that have happened, places we have seen, and things we have done. We also remember events that we did not personally witness but have become part of the symbolic order of the heritage with which we identify. Memory is also a faculty we use to search for a past no longer here. It is, in other words, a dynamic ability and process just as much as it names the discrete representations of the past.[46] Each element of memory has significant implications at the level of identity formation, which Ricœur presents from a pathological-therapeutic perspective, a social perspective, and an ethical-political perspective. It is the transition from the memory as an act to the places that motivate memory that allow us to see how and where communal memory can be located.

To show how communities can fall victim to the pathologies that arise from repressed memories, Ricœur connects the themes of two essays by Freud – "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through" and "Mourning and Melancholia." In the former, Freud explains that the goal of analysis is to "fill in the gaps of memory…it is to overcome resistances due to repression."[47] In the case of repressed memories, traces of the past are not forgotten, but instead are made indirectly manifest through a patient's compulsive and obsessive actions, attitudes, or violent outbursts. These memories displace the horizons that constitute identity insofar as they unknowingly substitute a repeated action for the memory of what actually happened.[48] The patient transfers the characteristics of the forgotten past on to the current situation, thus substituting the "compulsion to repeat" for the "impulsion to remember."[49]

In "Mourning and Melancholia," Freud argues that the displacement of memory is "a reaction to the loss of a loved one, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on."[50] In melancholia, the loved object is lost without hope for reconciliation. Instead of divesting one's attachment to the lost object, the melancholic person robs him or her self of "self-regard" (*Selbstgefühl*). By attaching oneself to an absence that can never be made present and without hope of reconciling oneself to that loss, the patient comes to identify itself with the lost object or ideal. It is this identification with the lost object that leads the melancholic to despair.

Working through traumatic memories requires the work of mourning. This work, for Freud, is the process of withdrawing one's attachment to a lost object.[51] Rather than remain attached to the lost object or find a different upon which to project his or her desires, the patient

must "interiorize" the lost object by incorporating it into his or her life story. By doing so, the mourner becomes "free and uninhibited" again and capable of attaching itself to new objects. Of course, it is much easier said than done – the patient needs to have the courage to confront the past, and the analyst needs to patience in uncovering the meaning of the obsessions and refrain from projecting his or her own interests.

As Ricœur puts it "mourning and 'working through' are to be brought together in the fight for the acceptability of memories: memories not only have be understandable, they have to be acceptable, and it is this acceptability that is at stake in the work of memory and mourning. Both are types of reconciliation."[52] The work of remembering recounts and situates the traumatic events into the patient's life. The work of mourning helps to divest the patient of his or her longing for the object. Together, they form process of "working through" (*Durcharbeiten*) the gaps in memory and the compulsion to repeat by coming to terms with the past, making the sources of such compulsion understandable, and offering the patient some control of his or her psychic life.[53] By bringing repressed and traumatic memories back to light and divest them of their power to influence action, the individual participates in the "rewriting" of his or her narrative identity to include those traumatic experiences.

Though Freud's account of the work of memory and mourning applies specifically to individuals, Ricœur extends its work to the communal level. He writes, "what, in historical experience, takes the form of a paradox—namely, *too much* memory here, *not enough* memory there—can be reinterpreted in terms of the categories of resistance and compulsion to repeat, which…leads us to substitute acting out for the true recollection by which the present would be reconciled with the past."[54] Remembering all too clearly the history of suffering, or forgetting all too quickly the violences perpetuated in the name of a community, are "symbolic wounds" in the collective psyche.[55] The excesses of remembering and of forgetting lead to repetition and violently acting out. Those individuals and communities with too much memory lose themselves in the past, obsessing over the details of it and reopening its wounds. Those with too little memory fear being engulfed by the past, instead repressing it and violently act out in structurally similar situations.

The idea that a community has a "psychic life" finds its concrete expression in a community's symbolic and ideological apparatus. Ricœur notes that ideology operates at several levels in the formation of identity. First, it is the structure of social integration in that it provides a symbolic system for understanding action and identity.[56] In this sense, ideology establishes a life in common by integrating individuals into a social group and by configuring a common narrative with moments of significant ethical intensity that define the identity of the people. However, it also can also serve as a force for domination. Ricœur writes, "it is on the level of where ideology operates as a discourse justifying power, domination, that the resources of manipulation provided by narrative are mobilized."[57] Because we want to have an acceptable view of who we are, there is always a temptation to exalt glories and triumphs over defeats, for example to ignore colonialism and imperialism while praising one's cosmopolitanism and philanthropy. Ideology in this case operates to justify and legitimate a system of order or power, which can be used to maintain oppressive institutions and social practices. These strategies include selective omission of disagreeable facts, altering or exaggerating other "facts," blaming others or the circumstances for what happened, or contextually framing the narrative through the omission or emphasis of a certain causal chain of events.[58] By mobilizing and manipulating beliefs to ensure a specific form of social hierarchy, ideology manipulates memory by reviving ancient feuds or obscuring past

wrongs. The result of such manipulation strips "social actors of their original power to recount to their actions themselves."[59] Manipulated memory thus manipulates identity by speaking for and narrating for someone else.

However, the connection between memory and ideology does not mean that all memory is inevitably distorted. Insofar as it is susceptible to distortion, it also harbors within it the ability to remember better. Richard Kearney, who has written extensively on the issue of narrative remembering in Ricœur's work, thus writes, "once one recognizes that one's identity is fundamentally narrative in character, one discovers an ineradicable openness and indeterminacy at the root of one's collective memory."[60] Ricœur suggests that the work of memory and mourning is an "exercise in *telling otherwise*, and also in letting others tell their own history, especially the founding events which are the ground of a collective memory."[61] Through narrating one's identity otherwise, a community can work through its past, have an acceptable understanding of itself, and to justice to others.

Ricœur situates the duty to remember as a relationship between the past, present, and future. He writes, "[t]he duty to remember consists not only in having a deep concern for the past, but in transmitting the meaning of the past to the next generation."[62] The duty to remember is less of a forced or enforceable mandate than an obligation to be responsible to and for the dead. Ricœur thus casts the responsible use of memory in terms of a debt to the past in which we recognize an obligation to preserve and take up the unfulfilled hopes and broken promises that others have made in our name, as well as accept responsibility for our forebears' actions that resulted in the unredeemed suffering of others.[63]

We are responsible both for the tradition that has given us a heritage and we are responsible to those who came before us. Recognizing one's responsibility to the past is part of the work of memory and corresponds to a duty to justice in several interlocking ways. First, "the duty of memory is the duty to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self."[64] We are, first, responsible and indebted to others. However, this other is one who, in the words of W. David Hall, "confronts me as the master of justice *out of* his/her poverty, nakedness, vulnerability, etc.; in short, out of his/her suffering."[65] It is thus the suffering other that calls the sovereignty of the self into question by confronting it with a moral claim to be responsible with memory. In such cases, we must not only remember the triumphs of the past, but also the suffering that we have unwittingly caused.

Second, to recognize one's indebtedness means to recognize that the past is not "over and done with," but rather it continues to exist and press into the present. To recognize a debt to the past means the past is not dead and gone, but that the dead were once alive and thus part of who we are. For Ricœur, this means that "the duty of memory is restricted to preserving the material trace, whether scriptural or other, of past events, but maintains the feeling of being obligated with respect to these others…Pay the debt, I shall say, but also inventory the heritage."[66] By confronting our past horrors and triumphs, we, as heirs, must identify the promises that were not kept and acknowledge promises that we still need to fulfill.

Third, "the moral priority belongs to the victims…The victim at issue here is the other victim, other than ourselves."[67] It is tempting to see oneself as a victim – however, in such cases, this often becomes a strategy to avoid seeing the real victims. Tzvetan Todorov, whom Ricœur approvingly cites, writes that "to have been a victim gives you the right to complain, to protest, and to make demands."[68] Todorov continues, "unless [others] are prepared to break their ties

with you, they are obliged to respond."[69] The recognition of the priority of the true victims enables us to see those whom our actions have affected thereby extending our self-regard beyond the parochial concerns of our own self-interests. Furthermore, the narration of the sufferings of the past helps to reintegrate the fragmented and traumatized self into the community. Where trauma isolates an individual, the narration of trauma helps to reincorporate the individual into community. To be responsible with memory is to respond to the memories of marginalized and oppressed groups. The fruits that this work bears are the work of justice. By revealing the sources and causes of injustice, we learn from the past for the sake of the future.

The works of memory and mourning take place as an exchange of memories. This means that communities depend on the contact with others to complete the process of constituting one's narrative memory and identity. Because it is impossible to rid otherness from the constitution of identity, and because it would be unjust to try to do so, the work and exchange of memory is interminable. The reason for this is simple: to recount one's narrative identity means that others can recount it as well. Narrative identity not only intertwines the first-, second-, and third-person perspectives, but it also implicitly states that others other perspectives can also offer a story of what happened. Here, the exchange of memory combats the abuses of memory. This exchange does not merely establish what happened, but it seeks the salience and meaning of certain facts, and places them in to relation to one another in order to disclose a new, more inclusive and just future: "the unfulfilled future of the past forms perhaps the richest notion of tradition. The liberation of this unfulfilled future of the past is the major benefit that we can expect from the crossing of memories and the exchange of narratives."[70] The exchange of memories is thus caught up in the aims of the good life.

Rather than simply welcoming otherness into identity, the exchange of memory places both self and other into a place where they can encounter one another. Without ever being able to escape this space, the identities of communities are constituted in their reciprocal interaction. As a consequence of the fact that narrative identities can in principle, and often in fact, be narrated by others, communities are made to acknowledge the impossibility of taking one's communal memory and identity for granted or "as read." At the same time, such impossibility opens up the chance for transformation.

How can the exchange of memories take place? I would like to identify one suggestion from Paul Connerton's work, *How Societies Remember.* Connerton suggests that the bodily and performative nature of commemorative ceremonies holds the key to understanding the locus of communal memory. While commemorations reenact the past through rituals, the body "[keeps] the past also in an entirely effective form in [its] continuing ability to perform certain skilled actions."[71] This bodily memory is, literally, incorporated into the life of the individual, even as it retains the marks of a life in common. As Connerton notes, something as simple as postures can convey power, rank, and authority.[72] Such corporeal memory integrates customs, mores, and norms from the past and extends its efficacy into the present.

His account offers a way to understand how the ideological components of memory connect with the body, and resonates with Ricœur's own account of the constitution of intersubjectivity. If rituals are to be effective and meaningful for its participants, "then those participants must be not simply cognitively competent to execute the performance; they must be habituated to those performances. This habituation is to be found…in the bodily substrate of the performance."[73] Such performances are, to be sure, susceptible to ideological distortion. However, they are also just as open to revision if we attend to the connection between body and

place. As Ricœur's account of the constitution of intersubjectivity shows, there is an inextricable bond between body and place. Our embodied existence orients us within a landscape or city. Furthermore, such orientation arises in conjunction with others. This means that my experience of a place occurs with others. Ricœur thus writes, "the transition from corporeal memory to the memory of places is assured by acts as important as orientating oneself, moving from place to place, and above all inhabiting. It is on the surface of the habitable earth that we remember having traveled and visited memorial sites."[74] Just as my lived bodily experience establishes a "here" for me, from which to orient myself, it also suggests that the other's corporeal life "over there" is itself his or her own point of orientation. This suggests that the experience of the place from one's own embodied perspective is made possible because of the intersubjective character of the tie between body and place.

This intercorporeality of the place of our respective perspectives offers a possibility for the exchange of memory. The places we live and dwell contain sediments and habits of a shared life, and can be the site where memories of what happened are recounted, exchanged, revised, and challenged. The places we inhabit reverberate with other times, other perspectives, and other people who once lived there. Communal memory appears to arise through the places we inhabit. The tantalizing suggestion Ricœur and Connerton leave us with is that the work of memory and its exchange is to be found not just in the commemorations that formalize community in ritualistic practices but also between ourselves in the constructed places we inhabit and dwell.

1 Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory -- What Is It?" *History and Memory* 8 (1) (1996): 30-50, 30.

2 See Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

3 Jeffery Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 20. It is not a stretch to say that the field of collective memory studies has exploded in the last three decades making a complete bibliography of this field impossible to include given the constraints of this article. However, a good introduction to the field of collective memory can be found in Barbara Misztal's *Theories of Social Remembering* (Berkshire, England: Open University Press, 2003), contemporary approaches to it can be found in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies,* eds. Astrid Eril and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010). Finally, a recently published of classical sources of collective can be found in *The Collective Memory Reader,* eds. Jeffrey Olick and Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

4 Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. David Pellauer and Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 95.

5 Olick, *The Politics of Regret*, 21.

6 Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 96-119.

7 Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1 (1) (1989): 5-26, 6.

8 Olick, *The Politics of Regret*, 24-25.

9 Barry Schwartz and Howard Schuman exemplify the claim that individuals "alone, as creators and recipients, ascribe meaning to historical and collective objects" in an essay that details the different images of Abraham Lincoln. By examining surveys taken in 1945, 1999, and 2001, they discover several different representations of Lincoln do not always align with perceptions of him. They therefore conclude that "we have no choice but to bring individual men and women into our understanding of collective memory." Cf. "History, Commemoration, and Belief: Abraham Lincoln in American Memory 1945-2001," *American Sociological Review* 70 (2) (April 2005): 183-203, 203.

10 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory,* trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

11 Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 122

12 Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies,* eds. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 110-111.

13 Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 4-5.

14 Ricœur, *Memory History, Forgetting*, 122.

15 In *Time and Narrative*, for example, Ricœur claims that the formations of individuals' and communities' identities share the same structure. Noting the "fruitfulness" of narrative identity for individuals, he

extends it to communities: "individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that become for them their actual history." I argue that this equation neglects the complex intentional modalities through which the relationship between individuals and their communities is established. See Paul Ricœur, *Time and Narrative,* Vol. III, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 247.

[16] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 119.

[17] Ricœur's interpretation of *Auslegung* as explication is one of the ways that he intends to step beyond Husserl's alleged subjective idealism. He writes phenomenology "cannot carry out its program of *constitution* without constituting itself in the *interpretation* of the experience of the ego." Insofar as all experience is marked by intentionality, it is marked by interpretation as much as description. In this way, the process of describing our phenomenological intuitions depends on the explication and interpretation of them. Ricœur thus says "explication is thus midway between a philosophy of construction and a philosophy of description." "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," in *From Text to Action*, eds. Kathleen Blamey and John B. Thompson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 38, 50.

[18] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," in *From Text to Action,* 227-245, 233.

[19] Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations,* trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1960), 94.

[20] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," 238.

[21] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," 238.

[22] Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 112.

[23] Cf. Ricœur, "Imagination in Discourse and in Action," in *From Text to Action,* 173.

[24] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," 239.

[25] Ricœur makes the same point in *Memory, History, Forgetting*: "Ascription to others is therefore found to be not superimposed upon self-ascription but coextensive with it. We cannot do the one without doing the other. What Husserl called *Paarung*, 'pairing,' involved in the perception of others, is the silent operation that, on the pre-predicative level makes possible what linguistic semantics terms other-ascription, attribution to others. What in other contexts is termed *Einfühlung*, that sort of affective imagination through which we project ourselves into the life of others, is not something different from *Paarung* on the plane of perception, nor from other-ascription on the plane of language" (127).

[26] Ricœur, "Imagination in Discourse and in Action," 179.

[27] Ricœur, "Imagination in Discourse and in Action," 179.

[28] Ricœur, "Imagination in Discourse and in Action," 180. Ricœur draws the category of predecessors, contemporaries, and successors from Alfred Schutz's phenomenology of the social world. Schutz's contribution to Ricœur's account of intersubjectivity is important, even though Ricœur does not

develop it to the same extent that he does Husserl's conception of intersubjectivity. Cf. *Time and Narrative,* Vol. III, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: Unviersity of Chicago Press, 1988): 109-116.

[29] Ricœur, *Time and Narrative III*, 109.

[30] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 119.

[31] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," 240.

[32] Ricœur, "Imagination in Discourse and in Action," 180.

[33] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," 241.

[34] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," 242.

[35] Ricœur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," 242.

[36] Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 121.

[37] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 121 (Ricœur's italics).

[38] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 118.

[39] Ricœur, Oneself as Another, 165.

[40] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 165.

[41] Ricœur, Oneself as Another, 194.

[42] Paul Ricœur, "Reflections on a New Ethos for Europe," *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 21 (5/6) (1995): 6.

[43] Ricœur, *Time and Narrative,* vol. I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 74.

[44] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, xv.

[45] Ricœur, "Reflections," 3.

[46] In this way, memory might be viewed through the lens of what some sociologists call the "symbolic interactionist" approach. Broadly speaking, this approach is one that argues that the meaning of objects, events, and behaviors comes from the interpretation that people give them. In this sense, memory is a dynamic, interpretive process. Cf. Olick, "Collective Memory and Nonpublic Opinion: A Historical Note on a Methodological Controversy about a Political Problem," *Symbolic Interaction* 30 (1): 41-55.

[47] Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, Working Through," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, Vol. 12, ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1958), 150.

[48] Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through," 150.

[49] Freud, "Remembering, Repeating, and Working Through," 150.

[50] Freud, "Mourning and Melacholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud,* Vol 14, ed. J. Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1958, 243.

[51] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," 244.

[52] Paul Ricœur, "Memory and Forgetting," in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy,* eds. Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (New York: Routledge, 1999), 7.

[53] Ricœur, "Memory and Forgetting," 6-7.

[54] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 79.

[55] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 79.

[56] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 82-83.

[57] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 85.

[58] See Roy F. Baumeister and Stephen Hastings, "Distortions of Collective Memory: How Groups Flatter and Deceive Themselves," in *Collective Memory of Political Events*, eds. James W. Pennebaker, Dario Paez, and Bernard Rimé (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1997): 277-293.

[59] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 448.

[60] Richard Kearney, "Narrative and the Ethics of Remembrance," in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 26.

[61] Ricœur, "Memory and Forgetting," 9.

[62] Ricœur, "Memory and Forgetting," 9.

[63] The phenomenon of promising can help explain the duty to remember. In making a promise, I assume responsibility for a future possibility and can be held accountable for its getting done or not getting done. There is, however, more to promising than creating the conditions for being held accountable for one's actions. W. David Hall notes, "there is the question of the other who imputes actions to me and, in so doing, holds me responsible." This means that we are not just responsible for those actions that are imputed to us; we are also responsible to another person, group, or community for fulfilling the conditions of the promise. When I make a promise I make it to someone, who holds me responsible for not doing what I said I would do. This suggests that we are responsible not only for the ways we remember the past; we are responsible to others to remember it accurately and faithfully. See his *Paul Ricœur and the Poetic Imperative* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007), 91-92.

[64] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 89.

[65] Hall, *Paul Ricœur and the Poetic Imperative*, 91.

[66] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 89.

[67] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 89.

[68] As cited in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 86.

[69] As cited in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 86.

[70] Ricœur, "Reflections," 8.

[71] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72.

[72] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 72-73.

[73] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 71.

[74] Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 41.