The Paul VI International Prize in Theology crowns personalities or institutions whom through their work have contributed to the growth of a religious sense in the world. The Prize aims to combine the religious dimension with the cultural and is dedicated to the memory of Paul VI, who profoundly felt the anxieties and hopes of modern men and women – seeking to know and understand their experiences in order to lead them to an illuminating confrontation with the Christian message.

In 2003, Pope John Paul II presented the Prize (which is awarded only every five years) to French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, known for his generous contribution to inter-religious dialogue and for his fruitful research on the relationship between philosophy and theology and between faith and culture.

Ricoeur's contribution to the search for truth and justice are especially relevant in this United Nations International Year of Reconciliation because he demonstrates an awareness that dialogue among opponents from positions of respect and tolerance is an essential element of lasting peace.

Paul Ricoeur's Pedagogy of Pardon

A Narrative Theory of Memory and Forgetting

Maria Duffy

continuum

CONTENTS

~ For all peoples of goodwill who suffer and struggle in the name of Peace
May the Angel of Peace Light the Way ~

French Philosopher Paul Ricoeur, during his long life (d. 23 May 2005) experienced living through two world wars both of which originated on the continent of Europe. It is not surprising that his equally long and distinguished academic career took up the themes of the era; peace, justice and the ethical question of how to heal the wounds inflicted by a violent century.

Ricoeur sought resolution in narrative theory and the simple idea of letting the stories held in memory surface as a first step in the direction of reconciliation. Of course he immediately is faced with the problem of conflicting stories and versions of events that are part of historical memory. The counterweight for Ricoeur lies in the work of evolving a culture of 'just memory' and in efforts to find common narratives. So he challenges post-conflict communities to an ethical discussion about the past. To this end Ricoeur's narrative trajectory could be described as a *pedagogy of pardon*.

It may well be part of life to have conflicts but skill and commitment are necessary to bring those conflicts to the level of discourse and not let them degenerate into violence. Ricoeur's pedagogy offers a way forward.

In July 2003, Paul Ricoeur was awarded the Paul VI International Prize in Theology by then Pope John Paul II. The Prize crowns personalities or institutions that with their work have contributed to the growth of a religious sense in the world while also being attentive to the cultural dimension.

Professor Ricoeur was recognised for his generous contribution to inter-religious dialogue and for his fruitful research on the relationship between philosophy and theology, faith and culture.

Both personalities – John Paul and Ricoeur – shouldered through their own paths, the burdens and legacy of their times and sought to resolve the tensions of memory to find reconciliation for Europe. Ricoeur's ethics take us on a journey through narrative and story which also becomes an adventure through the extremities of being human together. His pedagogy of pardon shows that there is a ray of light even in the world's darkest moments – a promise of the rhyming of hope and history.

Ricoeur's pedagogy also lends itself to particular contexts seeking to come to terms with the past, Northern Ireland included. The Tyrone Crystal Heart by artist Sean Hillen, reproduced in Chapter Four, is the Omagh Bomb Memorial unveiled on the tenth anniversary of the worst atrocity of Troubles which occurred on 15 August 1998. The crystal captures symbolically the challenge of memory and forgetting by gathering up light through glass in a town which paradoxically receives the least sunshine in Ireland. The much-abused symbol of the heart is retrieved and given new significance while gently hinting at optimism for the future. Ricoeur's narrative project of pardon is supportive of that implicit hope.

Maria Duffy
Dublin

". . . the angel showed me the river of the water of life . . .
on either side of the river is the tree of life . . .
and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations."

Revelations 22.1–3

1 Narrative Theory

Narrative theory can be found across the boundaries of the theological communities and has been appropriated by many disciplines: Biblical studies and Ethics to name but two. There is no clear agreement as to the precise meaning of the narrative genre or of its role in theology, nor does it need or have a specific philosophical foundation. There is no obvious 'conversation partner' in philosophy for narrative methodology. That stated Paul Ricoeur has developed the philosophical argument for narrative to a high degree, publishing at least five volumes on various aspects of this wide-ranging topic. As this is essentially a theological and ethical study of reconciliation from the challenging perspective of how to heal the wounds of memory, Ricoeur is insightful because he takes as his ethical starting point the problem of evil – the evil of suffering humanity. In his own words:

> I always speak of man acting and suffering.[.].Events in my personal life and the spectacle of the world have made me sensitive to the fact that there is widespread unmerited suffering. There is a language to be found . . . it is the problem of Auschwitz . . . the problem of memory and forgiveness.[1]

The theology of memory in the contemporary setting arises out of suffering and violence, though it is the recovery of a more ancient wisdom. As a Christian philosopher who lived through two world wars, Ricoeur challenges us to reflect upon where we stand as communities who remember:

> To stand with the memory of the crucified peoples of the world is by no means an easy choice. It demands conversion, solidarity and commitment to those who are history's victims rather than its victors.[2]

Allowing painful memories to emerge can be costly and suppression is one way of coping with the truth. Fear can block and distort the act of remembering as it may be too dangerous to remember, especially if the status quo is unchanged. Therefore can the injustices of the past, at least in part, be redressed in the present? To answer this question we need to attend to narrative methodologies such as Ricoeur offers in order to examine the relationship that exists between memory, identity and the ethics of human action. The work of reconciliation is an exercise of memory in a critical mode, seeking to overcome the tensions that can exist between past experiences and the present official record. For the sake of peace, Ricoeur suggests that it is important to be able to re-open and re-examine the tensions within narrative memories. When this happens healing can begin. The case of European history is an example of the 'extraordinary weight of suffering' that different states have inflicted upon each other in living memory: *"The history of Europe is cruel – wars of religion, wars of conquest, wars of extermination, subjugation of ethnic minorities, expulsion or reduction to slavery of religious minorities – the litany is without end."*[3]

Ricoeur concludes that the unfulfilled future of the past forms the richest part of our traditions. The liberation of this unfilled future is the major benefit that we can expect from the crossing of memories and the exchange of narratives.[4] The European Union can be perceived as a multi-lateral co-operation to resolve Europe's past. The idea of integration is not only on economic lines, but also a deeper communion of 'values' – a 'community of memory'.[5] So the work of recollection, which Ricoeur understands as a form of mourning for the losses of the past, can ultimately lead to reconciliation.

2 Contemporary Praxis: Northern Ireland and South Africa

Ricoeur's ethical wager is that the descent into memory is worth the risk because what is at stake is healing, forgiveness and the chance of a new beginning for collectives as well as individuals. It is a challenge that has received serious consideration in the context of the peace process in Northern Ireland, for example. The province's chief constable, Sir Hugh Orde has called for a truth commission to help clear the backlog of unsolved murders, some 1800 or so, which are a legacy of the violent years.[6] Furthermore, in May 2004, Northern Ireland's then secretary of state, Paul Murphy visited South Africa to learn more about its renowned Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was convened between the years 1996–1998, to help heal that nation after the trauma of a brutal apartheid

regime. His visit preceded the British government's announcement that it was to begin a consultation with victim groups and other organisations to decide how to deal with the aftermath of more than three decades of violence in the North.[7] Reaction to these initiatives has been mixed. While there is a broad consensus that revisiting the past is necessary and of merit, particularly for victims' families, there is little accord as to how to go about it, coupled with a lack of trust in the key political players. Victims' needs must come first in efforts to find an acceptable reconciliation process, upholding their right to 'get to the truth and to expose all wrongdoing – whether by paramilitaries, paratroopers, police or politicians.'[8] The leader of the SDLP party, Mark Durkan, said he was 'acutely conscious' that there were 'countless victims whose stories have never been heard' while at the same time 'so much is being done to allow wrongdoers to forget their past.' His party stands by 'ensuring that all victims can at least remember theirs.'[9]

The British government's consultation process concerns: (a). *Victims* and (b). *Dealing with the Past.* Consultations currently underway include victims groups, academics and representatives of the Churches. In addition Mitchell Reiss, a United States' adviser on the North, put forward a number of ideas for reconciliation, such as recording the story of victims in the same way that film director Steven Spielberg's *Shoah* testimonial of Holocaust survivors has done.[10] Upon his return from South Africa, the Secretary of State suggested that part of the healing process in the North requires us to listen to and collect the untold stories of victims.[11]

The need for what Ricoeur calls 'exchanging memories' was fuelled by the publication of a large hardback volume of *Lost Lives* in 1999. What appears at first sight to be a chronological catalogue of those killed in the Troubles is an unlikely bestseller that is regularly updated. The stories in this book: *"remind everyone of how much has been lost through the conflict; not only the death of loved ones, but lost opportunities, broken communities, lost childhoods, lost futures."*[12]

Ricoeur asserts that a willingness to enter into mourning the past to face the totality of loss is the beginning of healing and an opportunity to retrieve something from the seeming irreversibility of the past. A kernel of hope is there, a horizon of the future, amidst the debris. Sensitivity and skill are necessary in equal measure if the risk of revising the past is not to degenerate into bitterness and hate. Ricoeur's method is of import here as the goal of any official glance backward must be to find 'a shared vision' of the future. The following points are suggested as pre-conditions for dealing with the past:

- First, the conflict must be truly over.
- Second, whatever methods are finally adopted must come from the whole community and enjoy a consensus of support.
- Third, generosity of spirit is required.[13]

Finding a 'shared purpose' between Unionists and Republicans as the basis for any official hearings is essential. This point was underwritten by the Secretary of State's visit to South Africa, where despite the doubts and reservations cast upon it, the TRC held together because of a belief that it was helping to build a new society for all where injustice and violence would be a thing of the past. While sharing stories is not a substitute for reconciliation, let alone justice, and not all those who could, would want to take part in a TRC style enquiry in Northern Ireland, many would like their voices heard. At the very least hearing the stories of the Troubles in an official capacity represents 'a call to conscience' for everyone caught up in past violence:

> I suspect that the consultation now beginning may be difficult and lengthy, but'
> I hope that it will not only be constructive in finding a better way of dealing
> with the past, but may actually become part of the healing process itself.[14]

Talking about how to talk about the past is not to be underestimated: it was, after all, how the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement began. The late Catholic Archbishop of South Africa, Denis Hurley, was reported as saying that the country's TRC was marvellous on truth but not great on reconciliation. The public hearings into the systematic abuse of apartheid were harrowing for participants and spectators on all sides, but did bring 'a measure of healing and even of reconciliation between victims.'[15] One thinks for instance of Nelson Mandela who invited his white gaoler of more than twenty years imprisonment, to his inauguration ceremony as President of the new South Africa. Some are sceptical about the TRC's truth seeking and perceived the hearings as 'self-serving' – facilitating the transfer of power from one elite to another – or as a 'propaganda exercise' to replace one version of history with another.[16] The Sinn Fein party launched its own 'truth document' calling for a focused debate and political engagement with all relevant parties on the timing and purpose of any official 'truth recovery'.[17] Such a process is based on the concept of transition from conflict to peace or from one government to another. At the very least it marks the end of one difficult era and the beginning of a new and better one. For Sinn Fein the British government is also a 'central protagonist' although it fails to see itself as such.[18]

In sum, any official attempt to excavate the past thirty years or so of memories where Northern Ireland is concerned will have its work cut out. No voice is neutral nor is it innocent. It is unlikely that the 'truth for amnesty' clause that coaxed perpetrators to the South African hearings would work in the context of the six counties. This means that if an official forum was eventually convened it is likely to be victim centred with an emphasis on forgiveness, closure and healing. It is such a type that John Bruton, EU ambassador to the United States and former Taoiseach (Prime minister) believes must be set up:

> A commission designed to lead to forgiveness for hundreds of killings committed during the Troubles rather than prosecutions must be set up. Until there is forgiveness and in many cases it will be unilateral on the part of the victim or his/her family, there will be no true liberation from the past. Unless we forgive we will – every few generations – repeat the past.[19]

Ultimately it is the people of Northern Ireland who must want to come together though political leaders can help foster an attitude of conciliation. In South Africa, people had wanted to come together after apartheid.[20]

Ten years after the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, the Peaceline wall in West Belfast has not only, not been taken down it was raised higher. 'The Peaceline' is a crude euphemism for two miles of wall and fence that winds its way through the 'interface area' that separates the Catholic Falls Road community from the Protestant Shankill.[21] It would be a tragedy if the legacy of the peace process for some is 'higher walls.'

Would opening a more comprehensive 'Forgiveness, Reconciliation and Truth Commission' help to break down the 'Peacelines' in people's minds as well as the walls themselves? Renewed interest in such a forum is not only driven by pragmatic concerns about lack of resources to attend to unsolved murders. There is a real concern that 'rising discontent' over past crimes is 'infecting' present peacemaking.[22] Certain crimes such as those against nationalists and those suspected of involving agents of the British government are receiving 'privileged' attention. If 'Bloody Sunday' the complaint goes, then why not the other 1,800?

Some commentators believe the answer is related to an 'asymmetry of responsibility' in that government personnel must be held to a higher standard of accountability than others, not least because the development of peaceful politics depends on the growth of trust in the institutions of law and order.[23] Another 'asymmetry' is the prioritization of victims. It is reasonable to expect that if peace between nationalists and unionists is to grow beyond 'surly co-existence' then 'one side's victims of injustice' must not be deemed 'less important' than the other's.[24]

Since many agree that a renewed police investigation would in most cases be futile, a truth, forgiveness or reconciliation commission is considered as a real option, on two important fronts: first it can dignify victims, survivors or their families who are granted public recognition of their losses; second, public exposure of 'the truth' in all its 'intractable awkwardness' can disturb the partisan histories with which hostile sides stoke their hatreds.' There is at least a chance of symmetry through a process of exchange, in that questions can be raised about whether the 'enemy's story' might deserve more credit and 'one's own less.'[25] Amidst the continuing debate, the Report of the Northern Ireland Victims Commissioner, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, *We Will Remember Them* (1998) addresses the 'Truth Commission' issue in an open-ended way. It helps to highlight the concerns of the local communities as expressed in the following points:

- A South African style TRC would not be appropriate for Northern Ireland without a complete end to paramilitary activities.
- Too much is still disputed to enable a satisfactory 'truth' to be accepted by all parties.
- A Truth Commission might entail some form of amnesty and many have difficulty with that.
- Reconciliation and healing cannot be taken forward before Truth and Justice is achieved.
- Public apologies might therefore be a way forward.
- There must be closure for victims and their relatives first.
- Timing matters as it was suggested that it could take two generations to pass before the rawness of recent events can begin to heal and recede.[26]

The focus of attention to help heal the wounds of the Troubles era is on the North itself understandably, but the ripples of violence have extended beyond the region. For example, families and communities across England, Scotland and Wales, as well as in the Republic, were also impacted, but on a different scale. A study of the needs of victims and survivors outside Northern Ireland suggests that one 'constructive way forward' is to acknowledge the past by 'relating its stories in such a way that injury may be recognised and true healing take place.'[27]

The lesson emerging from the Troubles decades is that it is one thing to negotiate a peace deal on paper and to assign money to rebuild infrastructures but it is not so easy to rebuild damaged lives and communities. In much of the prevailing discussions on the challenge of healing the hidden wounds of the past, few accept that it is not only victims that have been damaged by the violence. 'Victimisers' have also been seriously affected:

As the country moves away from decades of violence, it is vital to enable all those involved in the situation to deal with the past constructively and discover creative ways of living together.[28]

It is easy for those not affected by conflict to dismiss victims and their problems and stories as just more misery but this would be a mistake. We live in a world where violence is all too common. Everyone faces suffering to a certain degree and some have clearly suffered greatly. The message emerging from conflict zones around the globe that have embraced rather than dismissed the hurts of the past is that at a minimum, a degree of peace, healing and self-esteem has been restored for many. Dealing with the past in some official capacity affords hope that the evil of violence need not destroy and that there is the potential, as individuals and collectives 'to turn it around and to use it constructively.'[29]

There is no doubt about the popularity of truth commissions as an accepted mechanism for building sustainable peace in our time. Truth commissions have 'caught the wind of popularity' long before they have been fully understood and there remain several untested assumptions and assertions on the subject of reconciliation and healing.[30] However, peace negotiators and new administrations hardly have time to wait for the results of studies to emerge and cannot be criticized for leaping into the truth commission fire. Truth commissions and hearings are thus turned to with great expectation, though often with little appreciation of the complexity of the process and the difficulty of achieving the much hoped-for ends. This is not to suggest that the results will be unimportant or minimal, but that expectations should be realistic regarding the ability of any short-term process to satisfy 'huge and multi-faceted' demands.

3 The Role of Religion

The conflict in the North is sometimes perceived as a war of religions – Catholic versus Protestant. It cannot be denied that religion is part of the mix in a negatively contrived sectarian way. It is tempting to think that 'bad religion' won out over the good. Because religion is part of the narrative, the question asked by many Irish Christians is: *"How come thirty years of condemnation of violence by the Churches at an institutional level did so little to effect change?"* In hindsight condemnation was a necessary measure to contain the violence, but may not have been sufficient. Engagement, even with those who commit reprehensible acts, is important to secure the peace in the long term.

It is also a phenomenon of our increasingly secular and plural cul-
ture that the traditionally religious language of forgiveness, healing and
reconciliation is being politicized and co-opted into a civilian framework.
Where then does this leave the voice of Christianity? To understand the
challenges that the institutional Churches face and the contribution that
they are making to peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland,
it is helpful to refer to the lectures given by (now) Cardinal Sean Brady
of Armagh and Primate of All-Ireland, at St. Ethelburga's Centre for
Peace and Reconciliation in London, on Wednesday 5 May 2004, and
by (then) Church of Ireland Primate, Lord Robin Eames, three weeks
later.

Cardinal Brady summed up the key to peace as 'the will to embrace'. He
also asserted that without the Churches for all their faults, the period of
the Troubles would have been much worse. While the 'two communities'
are highly segregated in terms of where they live, work or go to school, on
the whole there is more 'civility' between them than there would be with-
out the presence of the Churches. The way forward is to break the cycle of
'blame and counter blame' and a willingness to enter into new covenants
and promises together. Brady cites 'the brokenness of Northern Ireland's
past' as a powerful testimony to the dangers of an uncritical relationship
between faith and identity based on themes of superiority, exclusion and
distrust. Its present is testimony to the healing, restoring power of those
who bring about a new approach rooted in the values of 'forgiveness,
reconciliation and justice.'

Mutual understanding is the key to healing. Referring to the pro-
spects of a truth and reconciliation process being established, Lord
Eames has noted the 'hesitant yet growing-in-confidence efforts of many
in the North to face up to the past.'[31] He asks the nationalists and
Catholics of the province to 'seek to understand the apprehensions' of
the Protestant and unionist community who fear their stability as a
community is being 'eroded' by 'over-attention' on the part of the gov-
ernment to demands from republicanism. Not surprisingly, the most
obvious victim of the Troubles era was 'basic trust' and reconciliation is
essential if any 'step forward' is to be 'realistic and lasting.' That stated
reconciliation cannot be hurried and will require great courage, sacrifice
as well as leadership and forgiveness. As to whether or not the com-
munity is ready to face the consequences of a full enquiry into the past,
Eames is cautious:

> Are we ready to face issues such as immunity from prosecution, acceptance
> of disclosure of details of the past which could easily open up fresh wounds

and protection from community reaction to confessions of the past, which would be essential to any such process? Reconciliation must not be confused with resolving past crimes.[32]

Closing the door on the past will be, he concludes, 'an achievement of immense human endeavour'. It will also demand sensitivity and prior acceptance of risk of high order. But as Brady noted at the same venue: *"the Christian tradition provides the ultimate motive and model for living constructively with difference* [in *the model of the Blessed Trinity]* ... *it enables us to see difference as an opportunity for mutual enrichment rather than as an obstacle."* In the end, the relationship between faith and identity is a struggle between the story of oppression and exclusion and that of liberation, interdependence and trust. Perhaps the powerful metaphor of exclusion and embrace, best describes the hope of reconciliation on the island of Ireland:

> There can be no justice, no resolution to conflict without the will to embrace. My point is simple: to create justice, you must [like the persons of the Trinity] make space in yourself for the other in order to make that space you need to want to embrace the other. If you insist that others do not belong to you and you to them, or that you will have your justice and they will have theirs; your justices will clash and there will be no peace. The key to peace, therefore, is the will to embrace.[33]

Genuine embrace is based on justice and respect for the truth. The vision of 'embrace' is an aspect of love of neighbour. 'Embrace' though is a risk. If we open our arms towards the other, we do not know what the reaction will be, yet the risk also opens the way to surprising encounters, enriching conversations and transformation.[34]

The theology of 'embrace' continues to underpin inter-religious dialogue as the peace process moves forward to another phase with the publication of the Eames-Bradley Report for the Consultative Group on the Past (2009).[35] The principle of 'embrace' was exposed in the ground-breaking work of Croatian theologian Miroslav Volf, who with Ricoeur acknowledges the importance of memory in healing the hurts of the past. Furthermore, as one who suffered war and imprisonment in the former Yugoslavia, Volf argues as Ricoeur does for the 'unconditional' obligation of Christians to 'embrace' their enemies.[36] The implication of a theology of embrace is that there also needs to be 'acceptance' of painful memories so that it is possible to move on from the past. The principle of 'embrace' implicitly speaks of the need to 'help memory become a bridge between enemies instead of a ravine separating them.'[37]

As a consequence of the success of the peace process in Northern Ireland and to celebrate a new era of peace on the island of Ireland, the Carmelite Community of Dublin's Clarendon Street marked the event by placing an Angel of Peace on the bell tower at St. Teresa's Church in the heart of the capital city in January 2008, ten years on from the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

The striking bronze Angel of Peace was made by sculptor Imogen Stewart.

4 *Paul Ricoeur's Pedagogy of Pardon*

Reflecting on what we have just been discussing, it is surprising how little serious work has been done on the human faculty of memory within modern philosophy and theology with 'notable exceptions' such as Ricoeur and Johann Baptist Metz.[38]

Memory is one of the most fragile faculties, open to abuse as well as use, life-enhancing as well as life-diminishing. Because it is fragile it is also one of the most creative of human faculties. Over the past decade there has been a gradual recovery and renewed appreciation of its importance

through the work of Ricoeur as well as the Frankfurt School of Philosophy and renewed attention to the Jewish Holocaust, ecumenical re-visitations of the historical divisions between the churches combined with the striking work, in different continents, of Truth and Reconciliation Commissions as well as psychological research into memory.[39]

In each of these domains, memory has come to the fore and there is a better appreciation prompted in part by the work of Ricoeur, of the duty to remember (*devoir de memoire*). He draws our attention to the reality that history is usually a story written by its victors, often at the expense of victims. By virtue of the 'ontological solidarity' that exists within the human family and in light of the empathy of the human heart with the suffering of others, humanity has 'an ethical duty to remember.'[40] We remember not to be melancholic or sentimental but in order not to repeat the same injustices, sufferings and failings in the future. As such, memory functions to deter future wrongdoing.

Critics might well ask if it makes sense to retrieve the past in the present. Is not the 'perceived view' the right one, namely that what is done is done and cannot be undone? Today, a growing band of theologians appreciate how Ricoeur has systematically answered these arguments by attending to the relationship that exists between memory and personal identity, reason and history, respectively. Narrative thinkers argue persuasively for the rediscovery of reason endowed with memory – that is, *anamnestic* reason.[41]

Furthermore, Ricoeur's attentiveness to the world of the bible as an alternative source of self-understanding made accessible through metaphoric texts, suggests the difference between religious and secular reasoning. Biblical texts remind us of the 'other city' presenting us with a vision of life based on a commitment to history especially the memory of liberation from oppression and of God's promise of a better future.

At the heart of the resolution of the past is the issue of forgiveness which is a task that Ricoeur's narrative ethics takes seriously. Forgiveness precipitates a dialectic tension between memory and forgetting. The trajectory of pardon originates from a disproportionate relationship between wrongdoing and forgiveness. Forgiveness can be difficult to give and difficult to receive. Yet Ricoeur argues that forgiveness is the horizon of the future, the generous gift granted in order to write a new script for communities as well as individuals.

As the peace process evolves in Northern Ireland, to give a topical example, forgiveness is emerging as a political issue beyond its religious domain. Bearing in mind this evolution, Ricoeur helps us to frame the institutional pole of forgiveness as it impacts on law, politics and social

morality.[42] The 'politics of pardon' is becoming a worldwide phenomenon, brought about to some extent by the emergence of the 'truth commission'. Herein lies a challenge for the Churches and Christians, to bring the authentic gospel vision to bear on this development if it is not to become an exercise in pragmatism.

Ricoeur's narrative enquiry into ethical personhood reminds us that the paradox of pardon, of remembrance and forgetting, is situated in the great Abrahamic tradition of repentance and peace.[43] In sum, narrative theory has opened up new possibilities for an appreciation of the richness and authority of religious motifs and language in a secular world.

New conversations are therefore possible between the religions and modern culture through the prism of metaphor particularly. Narrative is a crucial conceptual category for understanding issues of epistemology and methods of argument as well as depicting personal identity and displaying the content of Christian convictions.

Ricoeur's death, on 23 May 2005, marked his place in history as one of the leading phenomenologists of the twentieth century. His work expresses a commitment to humanist and Christian values and he frequently privileges an examination of the sacred and of the narrative potential of the exegetical imagination.[44]

5 Two 'Schools' of Narrative

Two 'schools' of narrative have emerged in recent decades, arising from the scholarship of Paul Ricoeur and David Tracy on the one hand, both of whom have come to represent the 'Chicago school'. The 'Yale School' on the other hand, has emerged from the biblical research of the outstanding exegete, Hans Frei and his colleague George Lindbeck.[45]

The narrative tradition of the Yale School broadly reflects 'post-liberal theology', which emphasizes the pre-eminence of the bible, grace and faith for morality. The Chicago School represents 'liberal ethics' and stresses human capabilities for morality such as reason, the individual, freedom and the role of the human sciences.[46] The Yale tradition is represented nowadays by Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, who have edited an important narrative anthology.[47] It would be a mistake to assume that the two root thinkers of the so-called narrative schools, Frei and Ricoeur, represent the distinct options in narrative ethics, though it is rare if non-existent to find a cross-reference or footnote to the other schools' work.

The outcome of the debate between the schools as to whether or not

narrative is part and parcel of the reconstruction of theology itself, or if its role is merely to display the content of Christian convictions, has yet to be decided. For students of either school of thought, the answers may already be settled but one might expect narrative to serve not only as 'an introduction to the content of Christian faith' but also to offer 'a re-interpretation of that faith' on the basis of an understanding of the content.[48]

Ricoeur provides a substantial archive of research into the appropriation of memory and identity as the impetus for reconciliation, for individuals and collectives. While Hauerwas contributes an impressive apologetics for narrative as the inspiration for Christian witness in the world, he is addressing himself to Christians primarily, and holds that the task of Christian theology is not to tell everyone what they already know, but to bear witness to whom they already know – God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christians are witnesses to a 'story' – because a story describes the particularity of God's redemptive intervention in the world. For some critics, Hauerwas's theology will result in a 'fideistic stance' this Ricoeur seeks to avoid through a dialectics with the world.[49] However, we are not concerned here with re-thinking Christian theology by means of narrative but more humbly on reflecting upon the soteriology of narrative, confronted by the history of suffering. As such Ricoeur is a helpful dialogue partner for religious discussion today, challenged by the landscape of post-modernity, pluralism and unbelief.

6 A Praxis of Peace

The pedagogy of pardon, to which Ricoeur displays great commitment, contributes to Christian ethics especially as regards peace research. On 11 April 1963, John XXIII published his epic peace encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth), addressed to a world in a state of profound disorder, facing nuclear threat and the rise of communism. Despite the wars and rumours of wars, the pontiff discerned that something more was at work in human affairs that looked like the promise of a spiritual revolution.[50] In his research, in the cause of 'just memory' Ricoeur adds to what the late Pope John Paul II nominated as premises of lasting peace: *"the unbreakable bond between the work of peace and respect for the truth"*.[51]

Four months after the dramatic events of 11 September in New York and Washington, John Paul, in his World Day of Peace message on 1 January 2002, posed a persistent question: *"how do we restore the moral and social order subjected to such horrific violence?"* War and conflict can be understood as the failure of peace but violence is never an appropriate way to

resolve problems that arise between states and as John Paul observes: *"violence creates new and still more complicated conflicts."*[52] Ricoeur's narrative ethics then can be situated in the context of *'ius post-bellum'* discourse on justice, forgiveness and healing.

Given that we live in a new era of international tension it is hardly surprising that there is a longing for narratives to help recreate an ordered world and provide meaning and direction for personal and communal existence. In the face of fear, enmity and suspicion, we continue to value human relationships and connectedness. Ricoeur shows that our stories have an outside and an inside face.[53] His narrative pedagogy of pardon assists in reconfiguring for our time the evangelical imperative: *"to love one's neighbour as oneself"*. To 'see oneself as another' permits the risk of exchanging wounded memories convinced that we will find more to embrace than to reject.[54]

SITUATING NARRATIVE: PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

'Man ... a broken unity'

Paul Ricoeur

1.1 Introduction

The genre of 'narrative' or story is enjoying a renaissance in philosophical and theological circles.[1] Generally speaking narrative has been used to explain human action, to articulate structures of human consciousness, to depict the identity of agents, to explain strategies of reading, to justify a view of the importance of storytelling, to account for the historical development of traditions, to provide an alternative to scientific epistemologies and to develop a means of imposing order on what is otherwise chaotic.[2] Paul Ricoeur's three-volume *Time and Narrative* (*Temps et récit*) remains perhaps the most philosophically developed contribution. For Ricoeur, narrative is 'the privileged means by which we reconfigure our confused, unformed and mute temporal existence'.[3]

Within theology, 'narrative' has experienced a renewal as a resource for understanding the role of religion in human experience and as a method for appropriating the basic substance of Christian ethics, which includes biography and even autobiography as a way of displaying Christian convictions with reference to biblical narrative.[4]

There does not appear to be any agreement as to the 'precise' meaning of narrative or its role in theology. Moreover, it is easy to see how '*narrative*' might be perceived as a faddish appeal to the importance of telling stories or conversely as an 'anti-intellectual excuse' for avoiding the need to address 'serious epistemological questions' the like of how narrative claims might be true or false as in: "*you have your story and we have ours and there is no way to judge the truth of either.*[5]"

However, the 'crucial appeal' of narrative, for its leading theological exponents, especially Stanley Hauerwas, lies not in the significance of 'telling stories' but more in the realization that rational methods or arguments and historical explanations have a fundamentally narrative form.[6] Primarily for Hauerwas, narrative is an 'epistemological pre-occupation' in search of the verification of moral and religious convictions which are indispensable

for understanding the moral life in general and Christian moral convictions in particular.[7]

The attractiveness of narrative theory for philosophers such as Ricoeur and theologians such as Hauerwas, amounts to an attempt to provide a 'critical response' and an alternative to the predominantly rationalist Kantian interpretation of ethics which can be 'alienating' if it attempts to free moral judgements entirely from the particularity of the beliefs, wants, convictions and historicity of the community who makes them. According to some scholars, Hauerwas's project is nothing less than a 'methodological shift' in thinking and talking about moral rationality and objectivity, a shift from a systematic-rationalistic account of the moral life to a narrative-based account.[8] In other words narrative represents a shift from 'system to story'.

It is not surprising then, that the study of narrative has become a meeting point and something of a battlefield for these disciplines while simultaneously emerging as a discipline in its own right. Philosophers, theologians, historians, literary critics and theorists all approach the topic from different backgrounds and with different ends in view.[9] However, there is a 'curious consensus' on one important matter, which is the 'relationship between narrative and the real world'.[10] The debate remains open as to whether narratives as portrayed in fiction complete with beginning, middle and end fit neatly into the pattern of real life.

An influential narrative study from 1966 posits that 'fiction degenerates' when we try to ascribe its narrative properties to the real. The notion of 'beginning, middle and end' simply becomes meaningless in the real world.[11] Another critic, Roland Barthes, makes the distinction between art and life explicit when he claims that 'art knows no static'. In human life there is plenty of static while in the fictional world stories are carefully structured so that the 'extraneous' gets eliminated. In other words, real life includes everything and there are plenty of 'scrambled messages' (*communications brouillées*).

If we turn to history and the scholarship of Louis Mink, who has championed narrative history as a mode of cognition in its own right, he invokes the same distinction between art and life as posited by Barthes, namely that 'stories are not lived but told'. Life has no beginnings, middles or ends. Rather, narrative qualities are *transferred* from art to life. In other words narrative at best *represents* life. In 'annals and chronicles' we are presented with paradigms of ways that reality offers itself to perception.[12] According to Ricoeur however, the notion of a 'beginning, middle and end' is the most basic of all narrative structures and is significant because of its 'temporality'. Human action *must* be deployed in time, because there is no other medium

through which it can be realized. Ricoeur likens stories to music. A musical score may have many 'atemporal' qualities but music occurs when it is *translated* into sounds that unfold one after the other.[13] As Ricoeur would have it, the 'music' of story is the beat of life. As long as we are living we are simply 'caught up' (*verstrickt*) in stories.[14] If our stories are not recounted they call out for recounting. Ricoeur says that we tell stories because in the last analysis human lives need and merit being narrated.[15] Furthermore, time becomes *human* to the extent that it is articulated through the mode of narrative.[16]

After all at the most fundamental level, we speak of the interval between birth and death as 'a life story' and yet the task of 'assimilating' life to a story is not that obvious. For Ricoeur though, 'story' is essential to the process of humanizing our lives by providing for us a space of reflection so that we may grow from our experiences by raising our consciousness towards the goal – the ethical goal of pursuing the 'good life'.

In short, Ricoeur shares the Socratic insight that the 'unexamined life is not worth living'.[17] He suggests then that we think of the 'examined' life as a narrated life, characterized by a struggle between 'concordance and discordance' the aim of which is to discover, not to impose on oneself, a narrative identity. This process allows one to develop a sense of being a subject instructed by cultural symbols, rather than becoming a 'narcissistic ego', a theme he subsequently expounds in his work.[18]

Concerning the co-relation of narrative epistemology to reconciliation, Ricoeur's philosophical project expresses a professional and personal interest in human action and suffering – and its resolution.[19] He is in many regards a man of his times, having lived through the Second World War (1939–45), he brought his own life and the experience of his time in history to bear on his narrative project, which is both innovative and challenging in its concern for shedding light on the story of history's victims rather than victors. Indeed, one of the great achievements of his narrative theory is to remind us that the story of victims keeps accompanying or reduplicating the history of victors and as a result, history owes a 'strong ethical debt' to its victims.

Put differently, the cruel legacy of the past twentieth century and all of the suffering imposed on the third world by the rich, affluent countries through colonization, has consequences too in the speculative sphere where there arises the ethical question concerning the problem of victimization, of memory, of forgiveness and of reconciliation.

A further insight into the man, the influences and events that have shaped him as a philosopher are presented now in the following brief

review so as to deepen our understanding of his philosophical quest. It comprises:

- a biographical note and
- a survey of his intellectual journey.

1.2 Paul Ricoeur: Contemporary Narrative Theorist

1.2.1 Biographical note

Paul Ricoeur (Jean Paul Gustave Ricoeur) was born on 27 February 1913 at Valence near Lyon in South-West France. His mother died when he was seven-months old and his father, a teacher of English at the local lycée, was mobilized during the First World War (1914–18) and later declared missing in action, presumed dead. Paul and his only sister Alice (who later died from tuberculosis in her twenties) were raised by an aunt (their father's sister) in Normandy as devout Protestants. Ricoeur was an outstanding student at the University of Rennes where he excelled at Classical Studies. Remarkably he shied away from philosophy, some say because of his devout religiosity. However, one of his professors Roland Dalbiez encouraged him to face that which he feared, so under his guidance, Ricoeur began to study philosophy and later chose it as his life's work.

On 3 September 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany as a result of the German invasion of Poland. Although a pacifist by nature, Ricoeur was called to military service with his regiment of Bretons. On 10 May 1940, the Germans began their invasion of France. Ricoeur's unit was active in fighting until they were surrounded and forced to surrender near the city of Rheims.

One incident during that period had a profound influence, leading him to appreciate the contingency of life. While he was talking on a bridge to the captain of his regiment, they were suddenly fired upon and his colleague was shot dead by a sniper bullet. Ricoeur realized that it could just as well have been him. From that moment on he never took living for granted.[20]

On 7 June 1940, Ricoeur became a prisoner of war and would remain so for five years, along with the rest of the French contingent, in a camp in Pomerania, North-West Germany. He was in a group with other intellectuals and spent much of the war years reading philosophy, especially Karl Jaspers, a German existentialist philosopher, after whom he modelled his first major work, *Le Volontaire et l'involontaire*, published in Paris

in 1950 and later translated into English as *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (1966). He had also met the philosopher Gabriel Marcel in 1934, and was greatly influenced by his ideas, continuing to correspond with him during his internment.

So in the way of paradoxes, the war years were a time of opportunity for the budding philosopher to develop, draft and re-fashion some of the principal themes of his work as it was inspired by the philosophical school of phenomenology – the science of the person – particularly as posited by German thinker, Edmund Husserl. In fact after the war, Ricoeur published a translation and commentary in French, of Husserl's seminal work, *Ideen I (Ideas)*, thus establishing himself as a leading commentator on, and proponent of, personalism.[21]

Indeed, the Catholic 'personalist' movement initiated by Emmanuel Mounier in Paris in the 1930s was an important influence on Ricoeur's intellectual formation. Mounier edited the journal *Esprit,* which was according to its admirers the principal voice for the expression of Christian socialist and pacifist ideas before and after the Second World War. Ricoeur had met Mounier as a university student in Rennes and was attracted by his ideas – both his opposition to totalitarian, collectivist states and their alter ego, bourgeois capitalist states. Mounier instead took the middle ground, supporting the idea of democratic socialism, which combined an existential concern for the individual with a qualified pacifism. Some years after the war in the 1950s, the Ricoeur family joined the intellectual commune of the *Esprit* team in Paris, known as 'Les Murs Blancs', where they lived on a semi-regular basis.[22]

1.2.2 Philosophical journey

Ricoeur's philosophical style has been described as dialectical to the extent that his commentators have observed that where others see 'dichotomies' he sees 'dialectic'. As a philosopher he is reluctant to rule out any opposing viewpoint, rather he aims at engaging texts with his own hermeneutics so as to achieve some kind of new synthesis. This dialectical tension has also engaged his personal life at key moments, one of them being the Second World War, which challenged his Christian pacifist ideals.

Paul's father died in the First World War, for what his son believed was a 'just cause', until as a teenager he learned more from the Christian pacifist movement about France's 'crushing responsibility' for the declaration of the First World War. On an emotional level he then became convinced that the death of his father was meaningless and not for the glory of France.

Subsequently he was left with misgivings even 'deep doubts' about the meaning of the Second World War and had a profound sense of injustice about the war itself: *"I have always been torn between a pacifism rooted in my emotions and a rational, even Hegelian view of the responsibility of states and the necessary use of force."* [23]

He recognized that on a larger scale such hesitancy could lead to non-intervention where intervention might be necessary. In an interview that he gave to his biographer, Charles Reagan in 1991, he retrospectively questioned whether the monstrosities of the Second World War were not the result of 'the timidity, the refusal to become engaged against Hitler much sooner'. In fact the 'pacifist' side found itself an accomplice to Hitler. After his capture by the Germans, he questioned whether pacifist ideals were in large part a reason for France's failure to re-arm itself in the face of German re-armament.[24] In his later philosophical works, he returns to the tensions between war and non-violence, through the mediation of narrative ethics and argues for dialogue with the past, with tradition and history, even when there are opposing views and conflicts of interpretation, in order to find just and lasting solutions.[25]

The tragic experience of the suicide of his son Olivier, in Paris at the age of 39, added a deeply personal dimension to his philosophy. His own 'intellectual journey' had taken him through discussions of the problems of his era: from the question of evil, to a three-volume reflection on time and narrative, to the relationship between the 'self' and the 'other' in community. His journey took 'an unforeseen turn' after the death of his son. He became more concerned with the problem of evil as 'suffering' than as 'sin' and with the 'excess' of suffering in the world:

> Some would say there are many more sufferers that there are culprits. What we do (as philosophers and theologians) adds internal meaning to what is the cosmic individual, and that makes a difference. But this is a private confession. I must say that I am more and more involved for personal or historical reasons in the problem of suffering.[26]

Ricoeur's intellectual concern for the question of suffering is linked also to the sense that 'something is missing' not only in his own work, but in philosophy at large, this being 'an investigation of the field of feelings' and accompanying it, poor philosophical arguments about feelings, emotions and the whole affective life in general:

> We have only 'achtung', Kant's sense of respect. It is not enough. All this sphere of passivity, in fact of human life, from sheer suffering to ethical feelings is being ignored. I am sure this needs much more work.[27]

With hindsight, after many years of academic success, Ricoeur particularly lamented the lack of compassion in intellectual discussion, something that he sought to redress by devoting his later years, strength and health, to writing about affectivity, with the assurance that he would 'never be unemployed'.[28]

If Ricoeur is somewhat critical of the intellectual community for its love affair with rationality at the cost of affectivity, so that the concept of the person and human action suffers a reduction, he is also critical of the lacuna in his own 'philosophical anthropology' regarding its inattention to the 'ethical'. His later emphasis on the ethical dimension of narrative was fuelled by what he describes as 'the state of philosophy in Europe' and the need to construct political theory on a sound ethical basis. His particular concern is the problem of justice which he considers to be the key ethical issue in society today.[29]

1.3 Conclusion

For Ricoeur the fundamental philosophical experience is man as a 'broken unity' which he sought to reconcile.[30] On this point, Ricoeur's biographer, Charles E. Reagan, perceived the philosopher himself as 'an acting and suffering human'.[31]

Somewhat paradoxically, while Ricoeur spent much of his academic life lecturing and writing on issues related to conflict resolution, his personal circumstances and epoch drew him into conflict. He was orphaned by the First World War, imprisoned in the second, a leading voice of the opposition to another (the Franco/Algerian war). Furthermore, his devotion to the peaceful resolution of conflicts 'through reason and good will' was severely challenged by his experience as the Doyen at the University of Paris-Nanterre during the student riots of 1967–68. As his biographer noted, these were not only important periods in his life, they also had an enduring influence on his philosophy as had the suicide of his son, to whom he dedicated an 'interlude' in his discussion of 'tragic action' in one of his best-known works, *Oneself as Another*.[32]

In a 1991 interview, Ricoeur surveyed the problems that still 'haunted' him philosophically. His priority was the question of 'man acting and suffering'.[33] Later on as a septuagenarian reviewing the events of his own life and the spectacle of the world around him, he had become increasingly sensitive to the 'widespread, unmerited suffering in the world' and the need to find a language in which to deal with the problem of 'memory and

forgiveness' which he believes is the unresolved legacy of Europe in the wake of the wars of the past century.

Ricoeur has sought to build a bridge from memory to the future, via 'an exploration of the intersection between the religious, the poetic, the ethical and the historical' which as a unit represents his narrative project. This prolific thinker claims that he has 'paid sufficiently' for the distinction between the religious, the ethical and the historical to have 'the right to say something about their conjunction'.

The following chapters investigate how Ricoeur's narrative methodology contributes to peace research – to social reconciliation – and to conflict resolution. In so doing, reference is made to practical examples of contemporary peace-making in Northern Ireland and South Africa. Both attest to the 'conjunction' of the narrative voices that Ricoeur says bear upon peace-making and keeping: the religious, the ethical, the historical and the political.

In making this introduction to the world and thought of Paul Ricoeur, it is merely doing him justice to say that his philosophy is at heart an unexpected dialectic between his own life experiences and the contemporary thinkers of his time. During his lengthy academic career and life, Ricoeur probed the questions and conflicts of modernity in the hope of illuminating the profound value, meaning and dignity at the core of what it is to be human, despite the deep antagonisms that are encountered on the path.

Both personal experience and reflection create a rich 'fusion of horizons' (to borrow a phrase from German philosopher, Hans-Georg Gadamer) in Ricoeur's *oeuvre* of the world in which we live and the world in which we could live.

From his fruitful retirement (1980) until his death (23 May 2005, Paris), Ricoeur continued to dialogue with the crucial social issues of memory, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice, which he is convinced are the keys to re-creating 'the good life' as it is lived with and for others.[34] His legacy can be understood as a 'hermeneutical circle' of his personal journey and of philosophical enquiry into human action in which he became so intensely engaged.[35]

If we live in a world that seems founded on a refusal to reflect (according to Gabriel Marcel), this criticism could hardly be reserved for his contemporary, Paul Ricoeur, who published nearly 30 volumes and 500 articles on themes of existentialism and phenomenology. His contribution amounts to a formidable response to Marcel's challenge 'that the philosopher (or theologian for that matter), does not have the privilege of abstaining from the crises of the epoch. Ricoeur has courageously faced (in spite of his own misgivings to the contrary) the crisis of the breakdown of

universal values and principles of living, which has plagued modernity despite the great leap forward in other spheres of human endeavour.

Ricoeur's meticulous, even painstaking retrieval and re-envisioning of narrative makes a useful correction to more exclusively rationalist interpretations of human action as posited for example, by Immanuel Kant. As such, 'narrative' can be perceived as a critical response to the scientific ideal of moral objectivity in vogue nowadays. Kant's ethics of 'the view from nowhere' and the 'ideal observer' can be alienating when taken so far that moral judgements get loosed from 'the particularity of beliefs, wants, convictions, history and community of the agent who makes them'.[36]

Ricoeur, while granting Kant's his due respect, also offers an indirect demonstration of the importance of the larger systematic issues of selfhood and practical reasoning – especially where 'conviction confronts choices rendered difficult by contexts of conflict'.[37]

Narrative ethics as portrayed by Ricoeur, invite remembrance that our lives are a story – of concordance and discordance. Whether at the communal or the individual level, we seek to introduce some stay against the discord and dispersal that is around us and to find harmony, unity and meaning that is beyond just functional existence. In our post-modern era of fragmentation and fracture, narrative provides us with one of our most 'viable' means of identity.[38]

Over and against a science of pure reason, Ricoeur sets out to construct a genuine science of 'story' the aim of which is to stimulate a narrative understanding of life and to bring to light the deep structures unknown to those who recount or follow stories.[39] In so doing he alludes to the 'paradoxical quality of narration' and how it can transform contingent events into necessary episodes that link with other events.[40] This insight is one that Ricoeur has learned and re-learned through personal experience, namely 'how fragile and contingent life is'.[41]

Ricoeur's contribution to the retrieval of the essentially 'narrative' constitution of the person, also complemented by Alasdair MacIntyre, Hans Frei and Stanley Hauerwas, to name but a few key figures, is considerable particularly in offering a 'communitarian' supplement to Kant's formalism.[42] Narrative theory seeks to retrieve the unity of the person who is rooted in history, culture and tradition, all of which help to inform the intellect in making its moral commitments.

Put differently, proponents of narrative seek to achieve a more human presentation of the person through an integration of reason and passion (Ricoeur's term: *désir*), as the basis of moral character.

Unfortunately there is both tendency and temptation in our technological and capitalist oriented world to instrumentalize the person to

secure individual or societal survival.[43] Employing narrative, Ricoeur makes the case for a morality that does not operate at the expense of forms of spontaneity often associated with affectivity.[44]

The case for Ricoeur's narrative understanding of human agency is more fully explored now in Chapter 2.

ETHICAL BEING: THE STORIED SELF AS MORAL AGENT

The unexamined life is not worth living
Socrates (apology 38ᵃ)

2.1 Introduction

The central tenet of Ricoeur's narrative trajectory is that stories concern human action 'what people did or suffered either in the real, the historical, or the fictional world'. Human action is connected with our personal identity in the process of 'telling the story of our lives'. According to Ricoeur, in the telling, we both communicate and configure our identity. Moreover it is this *narrative identity* that forms the basis of our ethical life.

Theologian Stanley Hauerwas, agrees that a narrative concept of the person is necessary in order to 'catch the connections' between various historical events and realities which are 'inherently contingent and particular'. For Hauerwas, there is no way that one can step outside of this narrative configuration of human existence. Just as forcefully, Ricoeur poses the rhetorical question: 'do not human lives become more readily intelligible when they are interpreted in the light of stories that people tell about them?' Stories provide a *temporal* space in which experience can be reflected upon and in so doing life (*zoè*) is transformed into a truly human one (*bios*).[1]

So intimate is the relationship between narration and life that Ricoeur connects it to the Socratic maxim: *"the unexamined life is not worth living"*. Ricoeur's narrative theory is pre-figured in Aristotle's *Poetics*, which develops the original philosophical argument for narrative. The art of 'story-telling' defined as the dramatic imitating and plotting of human action, is what gives us a shareable world.[2] It is only when 'haphazard happenings' are transformed into story and thus made memorable over time that we become full agents of our history. The chief characteristic of the specifically human life is that it is of this deeper quality (*bios*) and not just physical, a distinction which lead Aristotle to conclude that our lives are also a form of action (*praxis*).[3] So, the idea of 'story' works at both the communal and the individual level. We recount our present condition in light of past memories and future anticipations and we tend to interpret

where we are now in terms of where we are going. It is through this repeti-
tive process over time that we attain a narrative identity that perdures and
coheres over a lifetime. In short, story is the paradigm par excellence that
'represents reality' as it is humanely lived. Put differently, story is the way
of 'the coming together of a life' (*Zusammenhang des Lebens*).[4]

The art of storytelling goes back over thousands of years and assumes
many genres such as myth, epic, legend folktale, confession, novel and
sacred history. Scholars of story rightly assert that 'narrative is a quintes-
sentially communicative act'.[5] Ricoeur has given Aristotle's 'genealogy of
story' a modern interpretation so as to probe for a contemporary audience,
what it means to live an ethical life with and for others. With this brief in
mind we will first review:

- Aristotle's five narrative pillars (*Mythos, Mimesis, Catharsis, Phronesis
  and Ethos*) and then discuss.
- Ricoeur's use of these pillars, especially those of *mimesis* and *phronesis* –
  these being the keys to his concept of 'the narrative self and 'narrative
  identity'.

2.2 The Genealogy of Story

2.2.1 Mythos

The plot or '*mise en intrigue*' refers to a well-constructed story which can
be repeated or recreated. Aristotle was the first to work philosophically
with the notion that life is enacted in a narrative pattern, in the sense that
we are always 'pre-figuring' our world in terms of our inter-active life with
others. The aim of 'mythos' is to give a grammar to this life of action by
transposing it into a story. Myth, the most common form of early narra-
tive, was a traditional plot or storyline that could be translated from one
generation of tellers to the next. This is true of the great mythological sagas
of the Celtic, Greek, Persian and Chinese cultures to name but a few.[6]
However, mythic narrative 'mutated' over time into two main branches:
historical and fictional; the former developed an allegiance over time to the
reality of past events.

The first historians, such as Herodotus and Thucydides in Greece, strove
to provide narrative descriptions of 'real' time, place and agency making it
seem as if they were telling us the way things actually happened. This
eventually gave rise to the genre of 'biography' and 'case history'. At the
'collective level' history began to be understood as the 'narrative re-counting

of empirical events' (*res gestae*).[7] On the other hand, fictional narratives aim at re-describing events in terms of some ideal standard of beauty, goodness, or nobility, and to tell a story 'as if' it had happened.

Ricoeur searched for a 'fundamental experience' that could integrate these two narrative strands again. He found a solution in the hypothesis that the constitution of a *narrative identity*, whether individual or collective, is the most appropriate 'site of fusion' of these two strands. He holds that the human person finds self-expression and a sense of identity through the reflective space offered by the twofold world of real and fictional stories. Even though Aristotle originally linked mythos specifically to tragedy, the notion of 'mythos' which has endured is that of a story with a 'plot'. The skill of the storyteller is to make an intelligible story out of a myth, chronicle, or account. This brings us to the next narrative pillar, *mimesis*.

2.2.2 Mimesis (recreation)

There is a tendency to translate *mimesis* as the strict imitation or copying of an already existing story or plot. But the meaning that Aristotle had in mind is a creative imitation of events through story (*mythos-mimesis*). For Ricoeur, mimesis is a 'metaphor of reality'. Life can only be properly understood by being *re-told* mimetically through stories, in a triple process of pre-figuring, configuring and re-figuring the narrative experience. Put another way, life is 'always on the way to narrative', but it does not arrive there until someone hears and tells this life as a story.[8] Mimesis has a 'split reference' to history and fiction. However, the reference to history is more difficult to ascribe since the gap between 'reality and representation' is of a qualitatively different sort to that opened in fiction. Historical narratives involve a truth-claim and must tell the past as it was. While history and fiction both relate to human action, they do so on the basis of 'distinct referential claims'. Yet Ricoeur is not content to sit with the distinction of these two narrative paths. He has arduously sought their conjunction so as to provide a richer imaginative framework in which to re-figure and trans- form reality. Mimesis is tied to mythos in the *transformative* action of 'plotting scattered events into a new paradigm'. Ricoeur describes this transformation as 'a synthesis of the heterogonous' – which is more than a simple mirroring of nature. This *synthesis* leads to a creative re-description of the world, such that 'hidden patterns and hitherto unexplored meanings can unfold'.[9] Thus, narrative assumes the role of *mimesis* in order to offer us newly imagined ways of being in the world. It is precisely by inviting us to see the world *otherwise* that we in turn arrive at and experience

catharsis, which is the next pillar in the narrative movement. *Catharsis* is a decisive experience, a moment of conversion which Aristotle has described as 'purgation of the emotions by pity and fear'.

2.2.3 Catharsis (release)

Stories alter us by transporting us to other times and places where we can experience things otherwise and learn what it is like to be in someone else's shoes. Narrative imagination provides us with a certain 'aesthetic distance' from which to view unfolding events, thereby discerning 'the hidden cause of things'. This curious conflation of empathy and detachment produces in us – readers of history and fiction – the double vision necessary to journey beyond the closed ego towards other possibilities. While Aristotle intended this 'cathartic power' to be connected only to fictional and poetic narratives, maintaining that these alone revealed the universal structures of existence, contemporary interpreters such as Ricoeur, contest such a 'schismatic opposition'. He argues for the 'interweaving' of history and fiction because both of these narrative strands are loci of the cathartic power to solicit *empathy* beyond the normal range of family and friends, to those who may be foreign to us. This power of empathy with living things other than ourselves is a major test, not just of poetic imagination, but of ethical sensitivity.[10] Some commentators even suggest that genocides and atrocities pre-suppose 'a radical failure of narrative imagination'. In short, catharsis offers a *vicarious* imagination. It comprises of a double attitude of both empathy (*sym-pathein*) and detachment, both of which are vital to the success of the reconfiguration of narratives. In other words: *"If we possess narrative sympathy – enabling us to see the world from the other's point of view – we cannot kill. If we do not, we cannot love. Consequently, catharsis affords a singular mix of pity and fear whereby we experience the suffering of others as if we were them."* [11]

In Ricoeur's opinion the 'double-take' of difference and identity – experiencing oneself as another – and conversely, the other as oneself, is what provokes a reversal of our natural attitude to things and opens us to novel ways of seeing and being. So whether through the medium of history or fiction, *mimesis* imitates action in such a way that things absent or forgotten can be re-presented. Furthermore, the narrative process of making absent things present can serve a therapeutic or *cathartic* purpose.

2.2.4 Phronesis (wisdom)

At this point, it is reasonable to ask: what can we really know about the world, ourselves or others for that matter, via stories? Are we any the wiser? Ricoeur would agree with Aristotle, that we are, the reason being that there is a type of understanding specific to narrative, whether fictional or historical that corresponds to the fourth narrative pillar, *phronesis*. By *phronesis* we mean a practical wisdom or insight that respects the singularity of situations, yet evokes the nascent universality of human values. By implication, *phronesis* is a moment of practical wisdom, provoking a deeper insight.

The phronetic function of narrative is important in conveying truth. Whether it derives from fiction or history, *phronesis* is a form of understanding which is neither absolute nor relative, perhaps something in between experienced as a 'wisdom moment' that cannot be perceived by any other means. In other words, history is invariably mediated through narrative yet there remains an 'irreducible' quality which we have to claim as 'reality'. In short it is the 'reality check' that distinguishes narrative history from fiction. The latter establishes a 'secondary world' and once we enter it we 'make believe' that what is narrated is 'true' in the sense that it accords with the laws of the world.[12] For Ricoeur, it is the 'criss-crossing' of the narrative elements of history (as the real) and fiction (imagination) that allows for stories to portray 'the essential' truths and wisdom of life. The notion of ultimate 'narrative truth' is not without epistemological ambiguity. In the end 'reality must shine through' even if indirectly.[13]

The necessity of sharing the wisdom of story as *experience* has significance in the resolution of conflicts and facilitating reconciliation, as much in Ireland, which has a deep narrative tradition, as elsewhere. An ethics of narrative implies that the reality and significance of 'catastrophe' will of itself generate the search for new voices to bear witness to the past, through the re-counting of the story. This dynamic lead Ricoeur to the conclusion that 'narrative is a *world-making* as well as a *world-disclosing* process'. The particular texture of narrative wisdom is well captured by holocaust survivor, Primo Levi: *"The need to tell our story to 'the rest' and to make 'the rest' participate in it, has taken on for us survivors, the character of an immediate and violent impulse."*[14]

According to narrativists, the reason for the need to tell and re-tell our stories (*mimesis-phronesis*), is because narrative ultimately brings us to the point of the ethical. In other words, stories make possible the ethical sharing of a common world with others. Stories are a mode of discourse about the ethical, which is the fifth narrative pillar.

2.2.5 Ethos

As we have seen, every act of storytelling involves: a *teller* with something to tell (a story), to *someone* (a listener), about *something* (real or imaginary). The world of the text therefore, derives from the 'referential world of action' and ultimately returns there. This 'two-way passage' between these worlds serves to alert us to the 'indispensable' role of human agency. When we are engaged in a story, we are simultaneously aware of the narrator, narrated characters, and a narrative interpreter who receives the story and relates it back to the life-world of action and suffering. According to Ricoeur, without the interplay of human agency it is unlikely that we could possess a sense of 'narrative identity' to provide us with a particular experience of self-hood, which is necessary to attain any kind of morally responsible behaviour. Every moral agent must have some sense of self-identity which endures over a life-time; past, present and future, as well as a communal history of predecessors, contemporaries and successors, if it is to be capable of 'making and keeping promises'. In other words, a sense of 'selfhood' calls for the 'narrative unity of a life', which derives ultimately from answering the question: who are you? In the 'telling' or 'answering', each of us is being formed or reformed as interactive 'subjects' capable of acting and committing ourselves to others. To put it differently, narrative equips us with an alternative model of self-identity: "*The narrative identity of a person is presupposed by the designation of a proper name and sustained by the conviction that it is the same subject who perdures through its diverse acts and words between birth and death.*"[15]

So the story told by a 'self' about itself reveals the action of the '*who*' in question, and the identity of this '*who*' is a narrative one. The narrative self is one of process and promise (of *ipsé*) as well as sameness (*idem*). If the *ipsé*-self responds to the question 'who', then *idem* responds to the 'what' question of identity. According to Hannah Arendt, who has also influenced Ricoeur's narrative concept of the person, both the '*who*' and the '*what*' aspects of identity are necessary to personal identity. Simply put, 'what a person is' is settled in terms of attributes and qualities, and 'who' one is, speaks to the unique and rich individuality of the self, which is captured by one's equally unique story.[16]

Therefore we can conclude with Arendt and Ricoeur that moral truth and the ethical life are inseparable from the story of the agent. The 'self' both (*ipsé* and *idem*), its moral vision and its claim to the truth, all depend on historical events and realities, on others with whom it happens to share the journey, or who have gone before, and on communities not of its own making, but whose stories and practices it shares. Moreover,

self-identity, moral goodness and objectivity can only be attained within this contingent constellation of events by a conscious struggle against self-deception.[17]

2.3 Summary

(i). It can be concluded from this schematic of the five pillars of narrative that storytelling is something we participate in (as actors) as well as something we do (as agents). In other words, we are subject to narrative as well as being subjects of narrative. We are formed by stories before we ever get around to forming our own. In short, we belong to history before telling stories or writing histories. It is because we are formed by history that we are interested in stories, as opposed to just being informed by facts. According to some contemporary theorists, this quality of 'interestedness' is essentially 'ethical' in that what we consider *communicable* and *memorable* is also what we consider to be *valuable*. Moreover what is worthy of being preserved in memory are precisely 'those values, which rule individual action, the life of institutions and the social struggles of the past'.[18]

(ii). Consequently we come to the realization that storytelling is never 'neutral'. Every narrative bears some evaluative charge regarding the events narrated and the actors featured in the narration. All narratives carry their own weightings regarding the 'moral worth' of their characters and tend to dramatize or heighten the 'moral relationships' between actions and their consequences, which, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle referred to as the 'emplotted relationship between character, virtue and fortune.'[19]

Moreover, as Ricoeur asserts, there is no narrated action that does not involve some response of approval or disapproval relative to the scale of goodness or justice – though it is always up to the 'readers' to choose between the various value options proposed by the narrative. He wagers for example, that the 'very notion of cathartic pity or fear' linked as it is to unmerited tragedy, would collapse if our aesthetic responses were to be 'totally divorced' from any empathy or antipathy towards the character's ethical quality. The strategy of the 'narrator' is to give the reader a vision of the world that is never ethically neutral:

> In this sense narrative already belongs to the ethical field in virtue of its claim – inseparable from its narration – to ethical justice. Still more, it belongs to the reader, now an agent, an initiator of action, to choose among the multiple proposals of ethical justice brought forth by the reading.[20]

It is worth reminding ourselves of the fact that stories are not neutral, rather they try to persuade us one way or another, as to the moral character of the actors and their actions. In turn, we cannot pretend that these stories are not at work in the text's effects upon us, because stories alter our lives as we return from text to action. We always have something to respond to. In other words, stories are not just confined to the mind of the author (teller) alone, nor to the mind of the reader (hearer), nor to the action of actors, rather they exist in the 'interplay between all these three'. Moreover, the outcome of the story is never 'final' because narrative is an 'open-ended' invitation to ethical and poetic responsiveness.[21]

(iii). This presentation of the narrative schema is ultimately an argument for the inescapability of narrative as a category for meaningfully talking about the moral life in general and the conception of moral rationality in particular.

The ancient construction of the human story and its moral vision in the five narrative pillars (*mythos, mimesis, catharsis, phronesis* and *ethos*), interpreted for a contemporary audience by Ricoeur, offers an alternative to the standard 'a-historical accounts' of ethics, and of the moral self.

A narrative understanding of the 'self' its moral vision and its claim to the truth, is not independent of historical events and realities, or of others with whom we happen to share the human journey – those who have gone before us, and communities not of our own making but whose stories and practices we share.

In the final analysis, narrative protagonists wish us to recognize that the 'fortuitous presence of others' who are members of a 'truthful tradition' play the greater part in promoting the quest for moral goodness than does the autonomous decision of the self.[22] Through its encounter with others on the way (understood by Ricoeur as the synthesis of the heterogonous), the storied-self can be freed of self-deceptions and opened up to an experience of connectedness with the community in which it finds its own particular story unfolding, in the quest for the good life.

2.4 The Person as a Narrative Identity

2.4.1 Ipsé and idem

Self-understanding finds in narrative 'a privileged mediation'. Narrative identity is closely associated with the notion of *personal* identity, Ricoeur claims. Narrative constructs the 'durable' properties of character by forming a type of dynamic identity to be found in the notion of *plot* or life-story.

It is here that we find the tensile properties of permanence and change, concordance and discordance, which are also the typology of the person, in other words, his or her *character*.

Ricoeur's 'person' is defined by a notion of selfhood qualified by the twofold characteristics of *ipseité* and *idem*. The self is re-figured by narrative. Ricoeur asserts that the self does not know itself immediately but only 'indirectly', through the detour of cultural signs which are symbolically articulated in the narratives of everyday life.[23] In other words, the storied self turns out to be a *figured* self – which imagines itself in this or that way. The dialectic of sameness and difference are 'internal to the ontological constitution of the person' since *idem* answers to the 'what' of the agent and *ipsé* answers the 'who' that acts. In the unfolding of a story, the dialectic of sameness and ipseité is played out through the instrument of 'emplotment' which forges a unity of characters and plot.

Narrative reveals that 'ordinary life moves between the two poles of the co-incidence of ipseité and sameness and their almost complete dissociation'. Moreover, there must be an acceptance of the interplay of alterity and sameness in human relationships within the private and social sphere, if there is to be respect, freedom and development in society and between peoples.

2.4.2 Phronesis

Aristotle recognized an intelligibility in the 'configuring' of a story in that every well-told story teaches something. He also believed that the story reveals universal aspects of the human condition.[24] In other words, narratives provide us with a form of self-understanding or *phronesis* that is uniquely a 'narrative understanding' which is much closer to 'the practical wisdom of moral judgement than to science' in Ricoeur's view.

If 'emplotment' is the creative centre of narrative, then recounting the story is a rational reconstruction of the events. For Ricoeur, the 'science of narrative' is a 'second-order discourse' because narrative is always preceded by a type of understanding which stems from the creative imagination.[25] Ricoeur's interest is in the explication of *phronesis* in terms of a 'narrative understanding' of the person in history. This stance leads him to the conclusion that the 'phenomenon of tradition' is the key to the functioning of narrative models, and even more significantly, to maintaining tradition as 'a living one'.[26]

2.4.3 Mimesis

An innovative aspect of Ricoeur's interpretation of Aristotle's narrative model is his claim that the 'plot' of a story is not completed in the text but in the reader, this is the condition that makes possible 'the reconfiguration of life by narrative' (*mimesis*). By this, he means the idea that the world of the text and the world of the reader confront one another in a 'fusion of horizons' that fosters the art of understanding. From the hermeneutical viewpoint, that is to say from the view of interpreting experience, the text is meant primarily to mediate the world in a threefold way; to others (*referentiality*), to one another (*communicability*) and to oneself (*self-understanding*).

As such, 'emplotment' is the common work of the text and the reader. This, after all is nothing less than a *mimetic* action since the *act of reading* transforms the story into a *guide* for reading, 'with its zones of indeterminacy, its latent wealth of interpretation, its powers of being reinterpreted in new ways in new historical contexts'.[27] Hence, we can glimpse Ricoeur's perception of how life and narrative can be reconciled to one another. Life, he claims, has a 'pre-narrative capacity' but it will remain a mere 'biological phenomenon' so long as it has *not* been interpreted.

If the fabric of life is a mixture of 'acting and suffering' then it is this very mixture that narrative attempts to imitate (*mimesis*), in a creative way. Aristotle defined narrative as 'the imitation of an action'. Therefore the ethical challenge of story is to look for 'points of support' in the living experience of acting and suffering. The experience of human suffering demands the assistance of narrative and expresses the need for it. Ricoeur then re-iterates the 'pre-narrative quality of human experience' as the justification for speaking of the twofold qualities of life as: (a) a story and (b) an activity (*praxis*) in search of a narrative so that our lives can be recounted, understood, and ultimately provide us with a sense of meaning, hope and purpose. He proposes that the idea of a plot or story provides us with a means of understanding by which we can discover and not simply impose from the outside, 'the narrative identity' which constitutes us.[28]

Narrative identity is a play of what Ricoeur describes as *sedimentation* (the past) and *innovation* (the future) which is at work in every tradition. Accordingly, we never cease to 're-interpret' the narrative identity that constitutes us in light of the narratives proposed to us by our culture.

Ricoeur compares our self-understanding as it is mediated by culture and tradition to the dynamics of understanding involved in a literary (fictional) work. We learn to become '*the narrator and the hero*' of our own story without actually becoming '*the author of our own life*'. We can

become our own 'narrator' in imitation of the voices of fictional narrative, but unlike the world of fiction, in real life we are not the sole authors of our own story because we are born into a history and culture not of our own creation. This is the great difference between 'life and fiction'.[29] It is through an act of *imagination* that we attempt to obtain 'a narrative understanding of ourselves' which in turn contributes to a sense of narrative identity. In other words, *the self* emerges out of the process of instruction by 'cultural symbols' which according to Ricoeur, help to form the unity of a life which is not 'substantial' but narrative.

In the narrative paradigm, the very act of *mimesis* (recounting) detaches us from the action unfolding before us, affording us the distance to grasp it all. The gap opened can move us to 'pity and fear' at the plight of someone other than ourselves. In short, the mimetic function of narrative opens up a space for *catharsis* to happen. The capacity for empathy with living things and with others who are distant or different to ourselves is one of the key elements that constitutes the concept of the narrative person.[30] Moreover, the cathartic power of narrative coupled with a response to the essential question of identity has richly informed many 'conversion narratives' such as that of St. Augustine, author of '*Confessions*', an example dear to Ricoeur. Augustine's conversion story brings home the importance of thinking narratively about individual lives and his message is that to achieve this goal, we must cultivate as primary resources, the faculty of memory and the virtue of hope.

In Book X, Augustine is fascinated with the faculty of mind that has allowed him to relate the events of his early life: How is it, he wonders, that we are able to store events in our minds and retrieve them when we need them or want to do so? Augustine repeatedly professes wonder at the God who has made us with such a capacity. Through memory, he explains that we are able to review our past actions and discern a variety of important themes: we can see when we were moving away from God and conversely when we are moving towards him, hence: "*experience, resting in memory, provides a remedy in the future.*"[31]

In an essay entitled *Mimesis 1*, Ricoeur shows how narratives have their sources in the everyday life of persons in three aspects: the semantics of action (*praxis*), the symbolic character of human events (*convention, custom, and ritual*), and in the essentially temporal character of the everyday (*time*).[32] In reading Augustine's *Confessions*, Ricoeur observed that time and life, without the mediation of narrative, are essentially discordant or '*aporetic*'. The concept of time can only be meaningful for the person in the poetic sense (*faire poetique*), in other words narratively, by means of which the otherwise discordant experience of personhood is transformed into a

temporal concordance through the means of plot and story. As Ricoeur observes: "*The fact that a story can be followed converts paradox into a living dialectic.*"[33]

2.4.4 Metaphor

Aristotle and Augustine helped Ricoeur to understand narrative as 'a synthesis of the heterogeneous' aspects of life. This realization led him to connect his study of narrative to metaphor. Both narrative and metaphor are 'semantic innovations' or something new, as yet unsaid (*inédit*). Metaphor is a linguistic feature that allows for access to a world outside language. Metaphor is the capacity to '*see as*'. Story-telling opens us to the realm of the '*as if*' and to the possibility of *empathy* with others (catharsis), without which narrative essentially fails.[34] Even if Ricoeur admits that this process is imperfect and it would seem 'that the gap between narrative and life is left open', he does argue persuasively for the moral pedagogy of 'story', concluding that: "*Narration is much more than a mode of discourse, essentially it is a mode, perhaps even the mode, of life.*"[35]

2.5 Narrative Sources of Ethical Being

If narrative can be understood as a mode of life, then it becomes necessary to enquire further into the nature of the person who is at the centre of this life. In an essay entitled: '*Approches de la personne*' Ricoeur delineates the sphere of the person as essentially an ethical one and proposes the following definition of the good life as: "*The desire for an accomplished life – with and for others – in just institutions.*"[36]

These three terms (desire for the good, shared in common, and with fair distribution) are of equal importance to ethical praxis. Concomitantly, the narrative being is a mix of: the *speaking* person, the *acting* person (here Ricoeur includes the *suffering* person), the *narrating person,* and finally the *responsible* person. In sum, the 'storied' person becomes an ethical being by pursuing the good life in accord with the following three aspirations:

- To live 'an accomplished life' – an expression of *self-esteem* in a healthy sense, not a form of egotism.
- To be with and for others – expressing a sense of *solicitude* towards the other – a movement towards reciprocity and recognition.

- To participate in 'just institutions' – perceived to be the ideal expression of societal relationships which extends even to anonymous, *faceless* others – meaning all those who are outside our personal social circle. Put differently institutions represent *'everyone'* in the fair distribution of social goods and services.

Ricoeur's ethical person represents a *perichoretic* or harmonious interaction of three virtues: respect, solicitude, and justice. Furthermore, he suggests that narrative is the mediating axis between ethics and praxis. If 'ethos' can be defined as a threefold concern for the self, the other and institutions, it follows that the person is the ethical agent of action.

Essentially the storied self reveals a fundamental 'equivocity' arising from the double-play of sameness (*idem*) identity which has permanence over time and alterity (*ipseité*), the element of personal identity that can change over time. It is this dialectic between sameness and difference that allows for moral development and the growth of character over the course of a life, according to Ricoeur:

> I would say that the first term of the triad of personal ethos, self-esteem, corresponds to the concept of narrative identity, by which I mean the cohesion of a person within the sequence of a human life. Secondly, the element of alterity, which shows up as a second moment of the triad, under the name of solicitude, which has its narrative equivalent in the very constitution of narrative identity in the sense that every life story, far from closing in on itself is entangled with the life stories of those with whom one mixes. In the third place I would like to say that the narrative approach applies just as much to institutions as to persons. Institutions as well can only have a narrative identity.[37]

The most profound ethical request that any human being can grant, in Ricoeur's opinion, is the reciprocity that institutes the other as my likeness and myself as the likeness of the other. Without reciprocity and recognition of the other there can be no shared world. The concept of the other as my likeness is the basis of social relationships, of self-esteem, and solicitude. In those forms of solicitude marked by strong initial *inequality* between the partners, it is the offering of *recognition* to the other that establishes or re-establishes solicitude. Being ethical requires us to recognize the other as our likeness and at the same time as one who is different: *"The relationship between self and other is nothing less than the search for moral equality by the various means of offering recognition."* [38]

2.5.1 Institutions

Relationships to institutions are different to those between friends; in the former, the other is 'everyone' in the system of distribution – 'persons' whom I only join through the channel of an institution. In Ricoeur's model of the person as one concerned for the other as well as self, institutions have their place in the scheme of distribution in which the parts distributed are not only goods and merchandise, but more significantly 'rights and duties, obligations, advantages, responsibilities, and honours'.

For Ricoeur, the notion of justice has become a difficult ethical problem because no society has yet achieved, or has even proposed, an equal distribution, not only of goods and revenue, but also of duties and responsibilities. It is this problem of justice amid unequal shares that has motivated the social teaching and moral philosophy of many theologians and philosophers besides Ricoeur.

Formal societal relations with others, whom Ricoeur describes as the faceless, 'everyone' are mediated by institutions which act as structures of distribution that seek the fair allotment of goods to as many as possible in a society, with particular concern for the least favoured in the system. Ethical institutions must seek to maximize the share of goods for the most vulnerable and incapacitated in society. Politics deals with the distribution of power and goods in a given society. By implication, there is a sharp distinction between the interpersonal sphere and that of institutional relations, which Ricoeur seeks to reduce through the intervention of mercy or charity in the sphere of institutional life, particularly with regard to the principle of distribution.

In sum, the term 'other' has two distinct meanings: in the first instance 'the other' is the person of friendship, the second understanding is the other as 'everyone' in the system of distributions. Together these two distinct ideas constitute an ethos of the person. When there is an abuse of the person, in private or social relations, we are faced with two realities: the failure of relationships and of communities which impacts upon the experience of human suffering.

2.5.2 Acting and suffering

So far we have argued that thinking narratively gives shape and meaning to the whole of our lives, our relationship with self and others, even with institutions. However, persons and institutions are also vulnerable to abuse, to violence, and to distortion. Ricoeur's use of the rather mathematical

term '*symmetry*' and its opposite '*asymmetry*' are deployed to contrast harmonious relations (symmetry), on the one hand, with those that are not (asymmetrical), due to abuse or violence of some sort. It is usually the 'inequality' between agents that poses the ethical problem at the core of unequal structures of interaction. The principle of 'reciprocity' is refused, in the desire to exercise power over another. It is not surprising then, that the potential for violence is present, as Ricoeur explains: "*It is always the inequality between agents that poses the ethical problem at the core of the unequal structures of interaction. There needs to be a certain reciprocity between action and ethics.*"[39]

How then is it possible to assert more equality and balance in our relations and to curb the tendency to violence at the personal and societal level? Ricoeur finds the desired ideal of 'reciprocity' most explicitly in the gospel ideal to love radically, one's friends and one's enemies, to treat others as one would like to be treated oneself, a notion that has been co-opted into ethics by the philosopher, Immanuel Kant, who has recapitulated the 'golden rule' of the Beatitudes to ethics as follows: "*Do not do onto others what you would not want done onto you.*"

The golden rule continues to inspire contemporary ethical arguments regarding the just distributions of social goods exemplary among them is John Rawls's *Theory of Justice*.[40] As a consequence of his reflection on Rawls, Ricoeur suggests that the concept of the person as a narrative identity, capable of answering to the questions: 'who, what, why' must be at the heart of ethics. It is only by linking the quest for justice to the notion of the ethical person as one characterized by: concern for self (*esteem*), for the other (*solicitude*), and for good institutions (*justice*), that we can be fully realized as individuals and collectives.

2.5.3 Love and justice

The gospel commandment to love radicalizes Kant's golden rule. Indeed, the golden rule is surpassed by the command to love because the former, through its demand for *reciprocity*, remains within the parameters of the *lex talionis*, which demands 'an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.' Understood this way, the golden rule places *conditions* on virtue. In other words: "*I give so that you give*" (*Do ut des*).[41]

In Ricoeur's view, the love commandment is a corrective to, rather than a replacement for, the golden rule.[42] In other words, the commandment to love must bring about a conversion of the golden rule from its penchant for self-interest to an openness towards the other, as St. John's gospel so

eloquently expresses: "*I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love another.*" (John 13.34–35). Consequently, the 'in order that' of the *Do ut des*, is transfigured into the '*because*' of the economy of the gift as presented in the gospel: "*because it has been given to you, you give in return.*"[43]

Conversely, the new commandment is helped by the golden rule to protect itself against possible perversions. Taken by itself, the commandment to love both enemies and friends, indicates the suspension of the ethical. From this perspective we could well ask, what rule of justice could apply directly, without a detour via the golden rule, the bare commandment to love one's enemies. To paraphrase Rawls, what distribution of tasks, roles, advantages, obligations, and duties, could result from a commandment from which reciprocity appears to have been excluded? For example, the commandment to 'lend, expecting nothing in return' if applied to economics would have a revolutionary effect on world debt.

Ricoeur argues that the commandment to love is not ethical, rather it is 'supra-ethical' as indeed is the whole 'economy of the gift', to which it belongs. In order to have some chance of influencing the world's institutions, the love commandment must in his opinion re-interpret the golden rule and in so doing, re-interpret itself. This is why the new commandment does not and cannot eliminate the golden rule or substitute for it. Moreover he argues that, what is commonly referred to as '*Christian ethics*' must hold a necessary tension between 'unilateral love and bilateral justice'. This work of mutual interpretation and re-interpretation of love and justice has a practical dimension in everyday life, on the individual plane, the juridical, also on the social and political plane. Moreover, the tenacious incorporation of a supplementary degree of compassion and generosity in all social codes, even the penal and those of social justice, constitutes a reasonable task, however difficult and interminable that may be. For Ricoeur, this admits the primacy of the '*love*' ethic over '*law*' and at the same time, of the need for an ongoing dialectic between the gospel and the law.[44] Christian ethics therefore, aims 'primarily' at the confirmation and healing of true personal freedom rather than our submission to laws that suppress the deepest human desires to love and be loved.[45]

The gospel message of love is transmitted via poetic and metaphorical language, which Ricoeur suggests, has a pre-eminent capacity to signify more than itself and to hint at the rich and expansive qualities of love. In other words, metaphor expresses the 'tropology' of love, which 'resists being reduced to mere ethical principles and analysis'.[46]

Moreover poetic metaphor as in the Song of Songs, the Psalms and the Beatitudes, provide an insight into how the command to love springs from the bonds of friendship, that is from relationships, in this case, between God and persons. The gospel expression of love is 'irreducible' to Kant's imperative to give respect to persons, which manifests itself in paying 'duty to others' as the highest motivation for action. In Kant's view, 'pathological love' as expressed in the bible, has no place in the sphere of ethics. Freud too, in the sphere of psychology, was dubious about the role of 'spiritual love' as a command to action, and claimed that it is nothing more than 'sublimated erotic love' and an expression of the 'tyranny of the superego' over the affective world.

Having considered these arguments in his assessment of whether or not the love command can be a source of moral obedience, Ricoeur directs us to the persuasiveness of biblical metaphors to reveal love as more gift than duty. As such love belongs to what Ricoeur calls 'the economy of the gift'. For example, the 'pressing appeal' of the bride to the bridegroom in the Song of Songs: *'Love me!'* is evidence of love's dynamic and mobilizing power for action which causes effects such as 'satisfaction versus discontent, rejoicing versus distress, beatitude versus melancholy'.[47]

Metaphoric language succeeds in presenting a 'substantive tropology' of love that neither separates it into *eros* or *agape*, but transforms them into a love that can signify the agapaic impulse and give it a voice. To contrast the language of love with the language of justice; the latter is one aspect of the activities of social communication. For example, justice is at issue when a court is asked to decide between the claims of parties with opposed interests or rights. Justice is expedited as part of a system that has the power to impose its decision by means of public force. In contrast to the biblical paradigm, neither the circumstances nor the means of justice are those of love. The characteristics of justice tend to define it as a 'sign of force'. Put succinctly, 'love does not argue but justice does' if one takes the model of the Pauline hymn: *"Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; Love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; It does not take offence, and is not resentful."* (2 Corinthians 13.4–8).

In contrast, justice argues reasons for and against some position or other, and this places it within the 'communicational activity' of society. Yet justice is more than a mere social convention. It even can be opposed to love in certain of its characteristics, which Ricoeur attributes to a longstanding linkage of justice with systems of distribution. Distribution and equality are pillars of the modern notion of justice.

The concept of 'distribution' taken in its broadest extension, confers a moral claim on human action. Ricoeur perceives justice as the regulator of

conflicts – those 'spaces of confrontation between rivals'. The idea of *distributive justice* covers all the operations of the judicial apparatus conferring on them the role of upholding the claims of each person within the limit that the freedom of the one does not infringe on that of the other.[48] In terms of distribution, society does not exist apart from the individuals among whom the 'parts' of the whole are distributed. Justice is the 'undergirding virtue' presiding over this division, guided by the obligation to grant to each one his or her due (*suum cuique tribuere*).

Treating similar cases in similar ways is the principle of equality before the law. However Ricoeur raises the age-old question, how then to deal with the 'notoriously unequal' social distributions of wealth and property, authority and responsibility, honour and status? Aristotle's solution was to distinguish between justice and equality, concluding that a division is *just* if it is proportional to the social importance of the parties involved.

The present-day version of Aristotle's solution, as adapted by John Rawls, is to 'maximize the smallest portion'. Hence 'distribution and equality' are generally held to be the twin pillars of justice in modern democratic societies and form something of a 'moral basis' for praxis. However Ricoeur's criticism of Rawl's system is that, while a certain level of mutuality is inherent, his delineation of justice is too narrow to really promote co-operation, solidarity, and interdependence among the social partners. Rather, the 'feeling of mutual dependence' remains 'subordinate' to the ideal of 'mutual dis-interest'. Such a 'juxtaposition of interests' then hinders the realization of 'true recognition' and 'a sense of solidarity' such that persons feel mutual dependence or indebtedness.[49] Ricoeur proposes that the values of recognition, solidarity, and of mutual interdependence are the 'unstable equilibrium' points within the dialectic of love and justice.

Furthermore, the fragile terrain of 'unstable equilibrium' between love and justice is a place of creative tension, out of which a more compassionate social order can evolve. As to how this might be achieved, in practical terms, Ricoeur proposes a first step, which is to 'build a bridge' between the 'poetics of love' and 'the prose of justice', or put another way, between the hymn and the rule.

2.6 'Hymn', 'Rule' and 'Storied Self'

When 'love' progresses beyond a beautiful idea, to becoming a motive for social praxis, there is bound to be a confrontation with the term 'justice' because in Ricoeur's estimation, both will make a claim on action. Characteristic of his philosophical dialectics, Ricoeur seeks to move beyond the

'dichotomy' of hymn and rule, that is, love and justice, by working out a means of their interaction. The bridge between these two 'living tensions' is to be found in the biblical narratives, specifically in Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and Luke's Sermon on the Plain, where Ricoeur suggests that 'love of one's enemies' and 'the golden rule' are juxtaposed: "*But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. And, as you wish that men would do to you, do so to them.*" (Lk. 6.27–8.31).

How is 'loving one's enemies' connected to the hymn of love? How does the 'golden rule' announce the coming of justice? The matter is somewhat settled for Ricoeur by claiming love as the 'hyper-ethical' expression of the vast 'economy of the gift' which includes creation itself and all created things, which all together are considered 'good' in the eyes of the Creator, (Gen. 1.3).[50] The primordial biblical narrative (Genesis), presents the human being as a radically dependent creature, one who is not to be exploited, but is deserving of 'respect, solicitude, and admiration'. In turn, this hyper-ethical position of dependence, as Ricoeur describes it, is the basis of our relationship to one another and to the law. Moreover, some biblical narratives, for example, Exodus, illustrate the link between love and law as well as their common grounding in giftedness, since both are bound up in the history of liberation from bondage, as the story recalls: "*I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*" (Exodus 20.2).

The concept of 'gift' implies a generosity that transcends mere ethics. Its very radical nature is constituted by the imperative to love, not only friends but enemies, the latter being its 'hyper-ethical' dimension. The answer to the question 'why' we should love radically is summed up in the word, 'since'. In the world of the bible, which is permeated by the imagery of the 'economy of the gift', we are summoned by the exhortation; '*since* it has been given you, give . . .'. In light of the force of the qualification 'since' the gift once accepted, also becomes a source of obligation. At the level of praxis, the economy of the gift translates itself into a 'logic of super-abundance', which is the antithesis of the 'logic of equivalence' that governs the ethics of everyday life. Yet the reciprocal instruction of the 'golden rule' to 'do unto others as you would like them do unto you' expressed in the Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6.32ff.), is akin to the precept of justice which demands that we listen to the other side (*audi alteram partem*). How is it possible to have the two logics in the same context – that of the golden rule and that of the command to love? In Ricoeur's interpretation, the commandment to love does not abolish the golden rule but instead reinterprets it in terms of *generosity*, even to extreme forms, such as loving

one's enemies and doing good to those who hate you, exemplified in such persons as Francis of Assisi, Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, for example. As to whether or not such logic would work as a general rule in life, Ricoeur's opinion is that love and justice need each other: *"In the relation of the living tension between the logic of superabundance and the logic of equivalence (justice), the latter receives from its confrontation with the former, the capacity to rise above its perverse interpretations."*[51]

In other words, the commandment to love helps to correct the utilitarian tendency to bend the golden rule to one's own advantage: I give *so that* you will give (*Du ut des*). While there exists a certain 'kinship' between love and law, there remains a necessary tension between the two logics. Ricoeur even concludes that 'justice is the necessary medium of love' precisely because love is 'hyper-moral' and can only enter the practical sphere under the aegis of justice. Put differently, if it is the style of the parables of Jesus to 're-orient us by dis-orienting us' then the same happens on the ethical plane in the juxtaposing of the new commandment and the golden rule. The biblical parables call us to protect the 'unstable of equilibrium' of the two logics and to live through the 'synergistic action of love and justice in everyday life' however difficult that may be.[52] In his message for the World Day of Peace (1 January 2004), John Paul II stated that true peace implies that justice must find its fulfilment in charity. While justice and love sometimes appear to be opposing forces, they are really just two faces of a single reality, two dimensions of human life needing to be mutually integrated. Justice is not enough without love.[53]

2.7 Conclusion

Central to Ricoeur's ethical thesis, is that human action and suffering are best understood by means of story. Moreover, narrative shapes human identity, the implication being that any discussion of narrative must have as its main concern, the question of the human person, and the nature of its relations to self, the other and society. Furthermore, the axis of this complex network of relationships hinges on a fragile balance between love, respect, power, authority and justice. Ricoeur alerts us to the constant threat of abuse and violence in human affairs. In light of this reality, our lives are a constant dis-orientation from and re-orientation to, the poles of love and justice, which Ricoeur seeks to reconcile in the context of public life.

Narrative theory may also benefit theology in its social reflection. Otherwise public theology can run the risk of being understood as a rather

benign signifier of good ideas and good will on the level of systematic thought while failing in its efforts to offer a transformative praxis for living.[54] Narrative is not only about knowledge (*noesis*) but praxis too. The existential movement that we call 'narrative' is another way of naming the incarnate work of redemption and reconciliation that is ongoing in our world. As such narrative methodology seeks to 'incarnate' theology.

Ricoeur posits that the story of being ethical demands respect for difference and a readiness to engage it in positive ways, which is a moral attitude of fundamental importance to the resolution of conflicts. From a faith perspective, the acknowledgment of difference and efforts to love our enemies, those who have hurt us, by offering forgiveness instead of revenge, is a reflection of God's own attitude.

For some, the essentially narrative identity of being is the 'optimal solution' to the fragility of human affairs. However, the art of narrative is 'subordinate' to just action.[55] Narrative could be described as a quest for a shareable world but it is not 'a total or totalizing' work.[56] Yet to make sense of tragedy and the seeming 'superfluity' of human life, the pre-eminent resources to do so are found in the narrative trajectory because it allows us to 'live the great problems through the body and the mind'.[57]

From this vantage point, we now will reflect on how narrative methodology can facilitate the righting of relationships where whole communities are facing the challenge of reconciliation, forgiveness and healing in the hope of 'narrative re-birth'.[58]

RECONCILED BEING: NARRATIVE AND PARDON

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold

W. B. Yeats

3.1 Introduction

Our concern here is with the principle of *memory* and how it has been interpreted by Ricoeur as a narrative construct that operates within the historical and individual consciousness as an agent of healing. According to Ricoeur, no forgiveness is possible until memory has been dealt with because it is essential to *understanding* and *acceptance*, these being forms of reconciliation and healing in their own right.

Ricoeur situates his discourse on memory in the context of social and national reconciliation and conflict resolution. As such his attention to the moral issues of memory belongs to a deeper trajectory on love and justice as the authentic values of peace.

3.2 Narrative Memory

From Ricoeur we learn that narrative is a bridge to the other and that memory has a positive contribution to make in communities seeking reconciliation. The narrative imagination itself can be interpreted as a 'perichoretic' space of hospitality, extended to us in order to reveal a richer and larger 'self' and 'world'. This world emerges from the imagination through the therapeutic process of *catharsis*, the narrative function that enables us to sympathize with living beings other than ourselves, testing our imagination and our ethical sensitivity. Moments of catharsis represent nothing less than a hermeneutical shift from the horizon of the ego (*moi*) to the authentic self (*soi*). To phrase it differently, we are 'narrated selves' explaining ourselves to others and in the process, hearing the stories of others. Moreover as communities of faith, we are called to move towards our ultimate story – that of the Kingdom and by implication – to more enlightened self-hood.[1] A commitment to the healing of brokenness and the restoration of relationships represents a fundamental step in the

direction of the Kingdom. In this regard, a somewhat overlooked dimension of peace-making is the issue of memory, to which Ricoeur wishes to draw to our attention, because it is a hermeneutical key to resolving the past and unlocking the future. Simply put, 'to remember is to seek to give a context to our hope'.[2]

3.3 Fallibility

Marked by years of captivity during the Second World War, Ricoeur sought to explore philosophically, the most concrete negative experience, that of our fallibility. Simply put, in Ricoeur's opinion, conflicts arise from a failure to recognize the other.[3] When failure to esteem the other or to recognize the right of the other person to exist as a person becomes manifest, there is no further reason to restrain one's strivings by imposing obligations on oneself.

As human beings we make mistakes, fail to accomplish certain tasks, are prone to self-deception and feel like sinners before God. According to Ricoeur, the notions of trauma, of wound and vulnerability, belong to the common consciousness and to ordinary discourse. Our stories of human limitedness and failure are not disconnected but embedded in a broader context and therefore have a certain historicity.[4]

In other words, Ricoeur suggests that in all a human being thinks, does and desires, he or she is a child of tradition, and is therefore linked experientially to the past, present and future. Against the metaphorical backdrop of the 'Fall' story, the human person is presented as one who also experiences finiteness, limitedness, weakness, sin and mortality. The realization that one is 'fallible', prone to lying on the one hand and yet on the other, desirous of just institutions, constitutes a highly pertinent starting point for the analysis of how contemporary human beings think, conduct politics and public life, generally.

In *The Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur examines the phenomenon of human failure and evil in light of the broader destiny of human beings. Furthermore, he pays careful attention to the question of the fallibility of institutions, especially of the need to 'face-up to the multifarious manifestations of evil and the striving for justice'.[5] The point is that to avoid evil and do good is not only a personal matter. It cannot be denied that personal responsibility exists in the 'manifestation of the immoral' and there is always an 'inter-subjective network, a fabric of explicit and implicit evils' which we have woven and in which we 'threaten to suffocate'.[6]

On the other hand, individuals can contribute to denouncing institutional wrongs by bearing witness. Ricoeur is convinced that when

persons talk about their experiences of and in the moral life and speak out about injustice, they 'express the wish to find peace in a society devoid of any dominance'.[7] 'Bearing witness' is an expression of the way in which such persons aspire to live and orient themselves in the world.

3.4 *Memory and Suffering*

Ricoeur and contemporaries such as Gabriel Marcel, shared a common philosophical concern for the human person acting and suffering, for the reality of this broken world (*le monde brisé*) and its possible reconciliation, which some might argue is an ambitious task. Ricoeur has produced an original exegesis of how the human capacities of memory and forgetting are sources of forgiveness and healing and therefore pathways to reconciliation. In so doing, he has made a valuable contribution to contemporary theologies of reconciliation. He poses the thought-provoking rhetorical question, 'what is the meaning of this determination – not to forget' that is evoked in the Jewish exhortation, Zakor! It is also visible in the bible especially in liberation narratives such as Exodus, and usually allied to a yearning for justice.

Ricoeur suggests that we must remember 'victims as well as ancient blessings' because remembering is a *moral duty*. In other words, a 'debt' of memory is owed to history's victims.[8] It may not be given to humans to efface evil, but they can become 'the consciousness of evil'. In remembering and recounting, we become the conscience of memory. If we learn from the Greek storytellers and historians that it is good to recall the 'admirable deeds of heroes' then we learn from others, such as survivors of the holocaust, that the *horrible* – the inverted image of the admirable – needs to be rescued still more from forgetfulness by means of memory and narration. Simply put remembering and telling prevents forgetfulness and more importantly, prevents the life-stories of victims from becoming banal, from being explained away by historical, cultural or social causes. Memory in such cases has a prophetic dimension according to Ricoeur:

> We must preserve the scandalous dimension of the event, leave that which is monstrous, inexhaustible by explanation. Thanks to memory and the narratives that preserve the memory of the horrible, the horrible is prevented from being levelled off by explanation.[9]

Sometimes interpretations of tragic events have a tendency to make the suffering of the victims appear as if it was deserved, a tendency that is not

avoided in biblical faith for that matter, as expressed in the prophet Jeremiah's proclamation: "*Behold the days are coming, says the Lord when they shall no longer say . . . the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge.*" (Jeremiah 31.29–30).

However, this apparent weighting in favour of retributive suffering is corrected in the book of Job and in the Psalms, which oscillate between praise and lament. Ricoeur's point is that a theology of retribution makes the victims and murderers equally guilty, but a spirit of lamentation, as the Psalms express, reveals murderers as murderers and victims as victims. In this way, he suggests that victims can be remembered for what they are: namely, the bearers of a lamentation that no explanation is able to mitigate. If a cry goes up against God in the form of 'why my people' or 'why my child/parents' this is far less Godless, in Ricoeur's view, as it is preferable to ambivalence and not caring at all about God.[10]

For Ricoeur, *Zakor*! is authentic because lamentation needs memory as much as praise does. The implication is that the reminiscence of suffering has just as much need to be felt as the re-memorization of glory. The exchange of memory is a means of identifying with as many fellow-humans as possible – actors and sufferers alike – in order to participate in a common moral sense (*sensis communis*). In this way, narrative imagination can assist in a certain '*universalization*' of remembrance. In Ricoeur's opinion, the holocaust is the example par excellence of memorizing the history of history's victims in our era, testifying to the universality of good and evil.[11]

Although remembering can be paranoid and memorizing even of the holocaust, can be something pathological, there remains a 'truth-claim' within historical memory that must be honoured, especially in terms of holocaust deniers or anyone who would deny the authenticity of evil. Ricoeur brings to our attention the implications of 'remembering' in that we confront problems of historical representation. In turn, this leads to problems of interpretation and to conflicting versions of the same events.

The point of (historical) remembering is to connect the past and the future as an exchange of memory and expectation because a permanent tension exists in relation to the past (as the space of experience) and the future (as the horizon of expectation). The un-resolved nature of the past exists to such an extent that Ricoeur is of the view that the past is 'a cemetery of unfulfilled projects and promises'.[12]

Nonetheless the 'truth-claim' of what has been lives on and this must never be eliminated. In acknowledging that historical events can involve a conflict of several interpretations, something new in the future can arise because it is through the process of sharing conflicting stories that the truth eventually comes. There can be no sense of justice towards the past if there

is no aspiration to seek the truth of events, without which reconciliation is not possible.[13]

The so-called 'revisionist' historians, those who, for example, tend to deny the existence of concentration camps, ignore the problem of 'factual truth'. That is why historical memory is indebted to documentary and archival evidence. In the end, it is sometimes a question of 'doing the body-count and accurately counting the corpses' as well as offering vivid accounts that people will remember. Granted, can narrative re-telling provide a matrix that is both objective and scientific, aside from stimulating imaginative empathy with the past and its injustices?

Ricoeur admits that writing history as memory is a difficult task. Imagination serves as a 'mise-en-scène' of the past that makes history a form of narrative reproduction. Some philosophers, among them Spinoza, have treated memory as a province of imagination and others, such as Pascal have cautioned that memory is a form of imagination to be guarded against. The latter's warning notes are the reason why Ricoeur stresses the reality claims of memory and the ethical importance of remaining faithful to the past. 'Testimony' is the ideal link because it verifies events and it says that: *"I was there. I was part of the story."*[14]

Against the argument that testimonies can be manipulated and distorted to serve certain interests, Ricoeur suggests that the work of good historians and ethicists is to 'enlarge the sphere of archives' by retrieving 'the traces' which the dominant cultural story attempts to suppress. Usually this is the story of history's victims.

By telling the story differently, historians and ethicists 'oppose the manipulation of narratives' and provide a space between conflicting testimonies. Any attempt to ethically reconstruct the past amounts to a critique of power, even though historians, ethicists and sociologists are themselves part of the 'plot' and therefore not completely neutral or indifferent. In spite of this, Ricoeur argues that these critiques are far *less* selective than those of the dominant class and to this end, he agrees with Rawls's demand for a 'reflective equilibrium' between predominantly held beliefs and the findings of the research of other professionals, because it helps to distinguish between 'good and bad history'.[15]

In the final analysis, when we testify to something, we are asking the other to trust that what is being said is true. In other words, to share testimony is to share trust, and beyond this, Ricoeur admits, we cannot go. In reality, most institutions rely fundamentally on the trust they place in the word of another. Yet having stated all the above, there is in the end a fine line between the role of trust and the hermeneutics of suspicion. Ricoeur posits that a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' functions against systems

of power that seek to prevent a confrontation between competing historical arguments. In this regard, he believes that an 'ethic of discussion' is necessary in order to resolve historical differences. This requires that the best argument be given to 'the enemy' in the hope that he/she will then articulate his/her resentment and aggression in the form of an equally plausible argument. Narrative ethicists suggest that only through dialogue will suspicion between opposing interests give way to trust and thereby to 'a certain level of consensus'.[16] In Ricoeur's opinion, 'expression and discussion' are themselves 'ways of healing'. To hear the anger of others, for example, forces us to confront our wrongdoings, and this in itself is a step towards forgiveness. Fostering a culture of dialogue underscores the fundamental ethical conviction of narrative epistemology, namely that language is the preferred weapon against violence. The challenge is to learn to trust in language as a means of conflict resolution. Ricoeur's faith in the mediation of language for healing and forgiveness is anchored in the concept of just memory.

3.5 Healing Memories – Ricoeur's Narrative Model

To speak of healing is to speak of illness but this is not to presuppose that its cure belongs only to the privileged domain of the specialists such as doctors, priests, psychiatrists or psychoanalysts, because hurt, suffering and trauma are part of everyday discourse. It is within the realm of the 'ordinary' that the healing of memories begins. In the 'obscure' terrain of common consciousness, the seeds of forgiveness are sown.[17] The fruit of forgiveness is borne at the *end* of a work that has its genesis in the region of *memory* and its fulfilment in that of *forgetting*. According to Ricoeur, the healing of collective memory deserves special attention in the West after the post-cold war period, because so many peoples and nations have to deal with the reality of integrating traumatic memories of the past from totalitarian eras of history.

Yet, there is something of a contradiction in the way this issue is being dealt with, as it would seem that on the one hand we suffer from *too much* memory, as if some peoples are haunted by the humiliations they suffered in the distant past. On the other hand, it can be argued that certain peoples suffer from a *lack* of memory, as if fleeing from their past. How then can we speak of too much memory in one case and not enough in another?

Ricoeur answers this question by suggesting that it is not just the past that is traumatized by memory, but the whole relationship with time – past, present and future. This is what needs to be healed. He explains his point

in light of the conviction that on the level of historical consciousness, wounded memories cause a rupture between the 'area of experience' (the past) and the 'horizon of expectation' (the future). It is the 'vivid present' that plays the role of mediator between these two spheres – excess and lack of memory. Moreover, memory confers a 'truth claim' and therefore retains a certain vulnerability that leaves it open to abuse. In remembering and re-collecting, we are exercising our memory, which is a kind of *action*. So we can talk of the use of memory and equally of its *abuse*. Therefore Ricoeur rightly draws our attention to the 'ethics' of memory.[18] He delineates three ways in which memory impacts on the personal and social sphere of human action:

- the pathological-therapeutic (individual)
- the pragmatic (praxis)
- the ethico-political (institutional).

3.5.1 Memory and the individual (pathological–therapeutic)

Ricoeur was inspired by Freud's psychoanalytic discovery that patients were healed once they were willing to 'work through' their memories.[19] Memory for Freud is nothing less than 'a work' or a task (*durcharbeiten*), usually associated with mourning something lost. Ricoeur agrees with Freud that the work of remembering is also a work of mourning, which although a painful exercise, can lead to reconciliation, with oneself and one's losses, even if these are abstractions such as ideals or dreams, for example.[20]

Freud also makes a useful distinction between mourning and melancholia. Mourning preserves self-esteem, a sense of oneself, whereas melancholia, which can set in if the work of mourning is not undertaken, produces despair, and a longing to hold onto what is lost instead of peacefully letting-go. Freud argues that the work of mourning – that is accepting one's losses, while painful and difficult – is the right path and a process of reality. Melancholia on the other hand is linked to sentiment, not to reality, and can lead to repetition of the past or to remaining stuck in the past, because no healing has taken place.

Ricoeur's message is that mourning one's losses leads to acceptance and understanding, which of itself is a form of healing: "*Memories have not only to be understandable, they have to be acceptable, and it is this acceptability that is at stake in the work of memory and mourning. Both (understanding and acceptance) are types of reconciliation.*"[21]

3.5.2 Memory and community (praxis)

Working through memories is important at a communal level as much as in the personal sphere. In so doing, repetition of the same is prevented. At the level of the pragmatic (*praxis*), the abuses of memory become more 'conspicuous' for Ricoeur. Memory is subject to abuse because it is linked to identity and 'diseases of memory' are basically 'diseases of identity'.[22] This is so because identity, whether personal or collective, is not fixed, rather it is 'claimed and reclaimed' through life. Indeed the difficulty of preserving any kind of identity through time is a problem that pertains, both to narrative and memory because we have two modes of identity – *idem* and *ipse*.

The former is that part of us that withstands the course of time and events, 'character' being an example of this. Yet flexibility is also required in life, to deal with change and not to deny it; this aspect of identity is represented by the *ipse*. It is usually because of the difficulty involved in dealing with change through time that identity, whether personal or collective is so fragile. Aside from the question of self-identity, there is also the problem of '*the other*'. According to Ricoeur, most people initially feel threatened by others: "*People feel threatened by the mere fact that there are other people who live according to standards of life that conflict with their own standards.*"[23]

The tendency to reject and exclude is a response to this perceived threat coming from the other. An added complication in Ricoeur's view is 'the violence that is a permanent component of human relationships and interactions'. He advances the latter point on the basis that the founding events of any community are more often than not acts and events of violence. Moreover 'collective memory' is a kind of 'storage' of such violent blows, wounds and scars, the reality of which returns us to the question of an ethics of memory.

Ricoeur asserts that it is only through narrative that the 'education of memory' is possible so that its abuse can be avoided. It is narratives that provide the construction of plots whereby the healing of memory may begin. Ricoeur criticizes the 'abuses of memory' that pertain to the excesses of certain 'commemorations and rituals, festivals and myths' that attempt to fix memories in a 'reverential relationship' to the past. The abuse of commemorative festivals is an example of the abuse of memory. However, ethical memory is restored in the good use of commemorative acts, over and against the abuses of ritualized commemoration.

In answer to the question, 'why are narratives helpful in this ethical respect?' – it is always possible to tell a story otherwise. Ultimately the

right exercise of memory is an exercise in *'telling otherwise'*.[24] In relation to founding events, for example, it is important to bear in mind that what is considered a very positive event in one collective memory, may be a wound in the memory of the other.

Ricoeur suggests that we have a choice of two options in dealing with humiliating memories: either we repeat them or we can extract some salutary or exemplary insights for the future. Re-living and repeating the trauma of the past only serves to draw us back permanently towards the past, whereas the path of exemplarity is future oriented and 'regulated towards justice'. Learning from the past and its humiliations involves: "*The power of justice to be just regarding victims, just also regarding victors and just towards new institutions by means of which we may prevent the same events from recurring in the future.*"[25]

In other words, the work of memory is not only directed at the past, it must also move us meaningfully and creatively towards the future.

3.5.3 *Memory and institutions (ethico-political)*

Ricoeur claims that society has a *duty* to remember (*devoir de mémoire*), so as not to repeat the mistakes of the past. The healing of memory involves a twofold tension of remembering and forgetting which has implications at the political level because the notion of having a 'duty to remember' implies that society must reflect upon how the meaning of past is transmitted to the next generation. Learning from wrongs will undoubtedly forge a better future. The 'duty to tell' is mostly future-oriented, as the exhortation of Deuteronomy bears out: *'you will tell your children, you will tell them, you will tell them'*.[26] (Duet. 6.2–7)

Memory therefore is work (*travail*), sometimes a work of 'mourning'. Yet if we have the courage to mourn for what was lost, abused or withheld in the past, the mourning itself is a source of reconciliation and an opportunity for new possibilities in the future. 'Mourning' the past and 'working through' what has happened there, must be brought together in the fight for the 'acceptability' of memories. Put differently, memories have not only to be 'understood' they have to be 'acceptable' since both are *types* of reconciliation.

The notion of reconciliation then is *forward* looking and leads beyond the traumatic character of the humiliations and wounds of history. The 'duty to tell' our story is allied to the general tendency of history to forget the past, its sufferings and its lessons. Ricoeur likens the duty to remember to a fight against 'the erosion of traces' because of the general tendency of

time to destroy more than it constructs.[27] He perceives all of human activity as a counter-trend which endeavours growth to prevail over destruction and 'archives and traces' of the past to be preserved and kept alive through historical memory.

Another ethical reason for cherishing memory is concerned with the twofold action of 'forgiving and promising'. Ricoeur here cites Arendt's claim that to forgive is to be liberated from the burden of the past, to be unbound. Forgiving and promising, tying and untying the knot of memory, represents a very powerful rapprochement, a means of making good the wrongs of the past, in one form or another. Furthermore, remembering is connected to the notion of 'heritage'. We become heirs of the past – we are in a sense 'indebted' to the past. Ricoeur suggests that this heritage spurs us on to 're-activate' un-kept promises. However, the most fundamental reason for cherishing memory is to keep alive and to respect the suffering of our predecessors over and against the tendency of history to celebrate the victors. After all, history is mostly an expression of 'advantage, progress and victory' and what gets left behind is lost. Ricoeur argues for a parallel history of victims that would 'counter' the history of success and glory: *"To memorize the victims of history – the sufferers, the humiliated, the forgotten – should be a task for all of us at the end of this century."*[28]

While arguing strongly in favour of memory, Ricoeur also considers whether or not there is a corresponding *duty to forget*. According to classical Greek practice, the granting of *amnesty* at regular intervals to its citizens actively discouraged the recall of evil memories. The notion of amnesty is present in our time, for example, in the restitution of civic rights at the end of a punishment and in the burgeoning of truth commissions in many post-conflict states, whereby perpetrators are granted amnesty in exchange for owning up to crimes, South Africa being an example. However the institution of *amnesty* does not mean *amnesia*.

In light of this distinction, Ricoeur does not perceive any symmetry between the duty to remember and the duty to forget, because the duty to remember infers the duty to teach, whereas the duty to forget is a duty to go beyond anger and hatred. The two aims are not comparable. However, these two somewhat discordant functions contribute in their own specific way to 'the continuation of action'. In other words, it is necessary that we retain the traces of events, so that we may become reconciled with the past and divest ourselves of anger and hatred. In other words, we remember in order that we might forget.

The dynamic of memory and forgetting brings us back to institutional life, in particular to the institution of justice. At this point in the collective history of Western Europe, there is no more fitting time, Ricoeur suggests

to try and evolve a culture of *just memory*, which would represent a significant contribution to the process of righting relationships between states in the wake of the turbulent history of the past century.[29]

⸱Every memory is selective, every story sieves through events in search of those that seem significant or important for the history that is told. We have learned from Freud of the tendency to repeat instead of recollecting the past. According to Ricoeur, one could 'graft onto this tendency to repetition', the strategy of evasion, of escape, the enterprise of 'bad faith' that turns 'forgetting' into a 'perverse undertaking': "*Do we not reproach ourselves, we who have not been 'just' in the sense of obstinately trying not to know, not to inform ourselves, not to enquire about evil committed?*"[30]

For example, Europe has given in too much to the stubborn will 'not to know', he asserts. The more positive way of 'forgetting' as he has shown, is linked to the Freudian notion of '*the work of mourning*'. In other words, forgiveness is the point of convergence of the work of remembrance and mourning. Therefore forgiveness can be perceived as the opposite of escape – that is the escape of memory. Ricoeur asserts that one can only forgive what has not been forgotten. It is in accord with the logic of remembering (as mourning) that 'forgiveness heals'. The act of forgiveness does not change what took place, the 'traces of which need to be protected' Ricoeur would claim. Rather it has the effect of 'lifting the debt' whose burden paralyzes 'memory' and by extension, he would add, the ability to project oneself in a creative way into the future.[31] Forgiveness does not only look back to the past, more importantly it releases new energy for acting towards the future: "*Forgiveness sets the whole dialectic of the past and the future in motion again, the project drawing from the immense resource of promises not kept by the past.*"[32]

Forgiveness therefore in Ricoeurian praxis, is the fruit of recollection and of mourning. It deepens the character of both the past and the future in the process. Forgiveness transforms the 'work' of mourning into a 'gift' because forgiveness is truly a dimension of 'added value' and of generosity. According to Ricoeur, the primary relation we have to forgiveness is *not* in asking for it, but in being granted it.[33] Moreover, whoever asks forgiveness has to be prepared to meet with refusal because to enter into the realm of forgiveness is to accept a confrontation with the possibility of the unforgivable, since: "*Forgiveness begged for is not always forgiveness that is due.*"[34] It is in the cost of these restrictions that the greatness of forgiveness manifests itself because it brings to light 'the economy of the gift' which arises from the logic of love and of 'superabundance'. The notion of 'gift' distinguishes love and by implication, forgiveness, from the logic of justice. However, Ricoeur does not want to suggest that forgiveness is exclusively

the domain of theology or religion. It belongs to 'the poetics of existence' of which 'religion constitutes the culmination'. Furthermore by virtue of its 'generosity', this 'poetics of existence' exercises an influence over politics. With this in mind, Ricoeur agrees that there is 'a political greatness in forgiveness'.[35] The therapeutic value of healing the past through memory can be observed in the notable examples of European political leaders, such as former German Chancellor, Willy Brandt, and Czech President Vaclav Havel, who both begged forgiveness for the crimes against humanity, committed by their predecessors. This is evidence of the reality that in the political sphere too, it is important to redeem the debt owed to the past, while not seeking to obliterate memory which is: "*the cement between the work of recollection and the work of mourning.*"[36]

3.6 Summary

Ricoeur suggests that we must respect the power of memory while at the same time exercising the critical use of this faculty, which is only possible, he asserts, via the art of narration, because story and language are conduits of memory. We understand story to mean all the art of narration that engages daily life, from historical to fictional narrative and it is on this level that the work of re-collection is 'initially' carried out. Care must be taken to allow for the histories of the past to be told differently and to relate them from the perspective of the other, who could be either my friend or my enemy. The 'modifying' of the past consisting in telling it differently, and from the point of view of the other, becomes crucially important when it concerns the foundations of common history and memory. It is at this level according to Ricoeur, that the 'compulsion to repetition' offers the greatest resistance and equally it is where the work of 'recollection' is the most difficult.[37]

3.6.1 Memory and forgetting

It is within the broader scope of the dialectic between the area of experience (the past) and the horizon of expectation (the future) that Ricoeur situates the dialogue between memory and forgetting and claims them as sources of healing and forgiveness. He challenges the standard 'prejudice' that only the future is 'un-determined and open', while the past is 'determined and closed'. Certainly Ricoeur agrees that past *events* are 'ineffaceable' but nonetheless open to a new meaning:

One cannot undo what has been done, nor pretend that what has happened
has not.
    On the other hand, the *meaning* of what has happened to us, whether
we have actively done it ourselves or have undergone it, is not fixed once and
for all.[38]

In other words, the events of the past remain open to new interpret-
ations. What can be changed about the past is its 'moral load'. There is a
burden of debt from the past that 'weighs' upon the issue, and upon the
present, but the work of re-collection (*durcharbeiten*) opens the way to
forgiveness and to the prospect of 'deliverance from debt' by converting the
meaning of the past:

    This retroactive action of the intentions of the future upon the apprehension
    of the past, finds critical support in the effort to narrate differently from the
    perspective of the other, the basic events of personal experience or that of
    the community.[39]

Moreover, what goes on at the level of individual memory also applies
to the common memory, and even to the history written by historians. So
many projects of the historical past remain unfinished, but their resurrec-
tion, in the shape of a 'utopia' is a kind of forgiveness. All of this is part of
the 'work of re-collection'. In short, narrative re-telling must do justice to
the ethical significance of the memories of real suffering. These are the
memories of those who recount them, wish to have recognized as true.
Such acts of honest recognition are means of mourning and healing. Fur-
thermore, the urgency of ethical memory is re-enforced by instances of
revisionism and negation with regard to the holocaust, for example, as well
as other genocides in history and are timely reminders of the stakes
involved.[40] While revisionist historians may deny the existence of the Nazi
gas chambers, anti-revisionists show just how indispensable the role of
testimonial memory is and they insist that the institution of memory
deserves all the respect and protection it can get because memory is one of
our most precious human assets.[41]
    An indication of just how vulnerable to manipulation memory already
is, can be appreciated from the respectful hearing that 'holocaust deniers'
have had in recent years, despite the mountains of firsthand evidence
provided by many thousands of survivors. Nonetheless it is a fact that
narrative memory is never neutral. Every history is told from a certain
perspective and often from a certain prejudice and can remain an ongoing
conflict in terms of interpretation. The distorting power of stories invites a
critical 'hermeneutic of suspicion' according to narrative commentators

who claim that it is never 'sufficient' to actively forget the past in order to have done with it.[42] Many holocaust survivors, like Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel, have spoken of the need to recount their memories of the Nazi camps as 'an ethical duty' in order to allow others to participate in events that might otherwise be forgotten and in being forgotten, repeat themselves.

The holocaust is exemplary of the need to honour the history of victims. The 'little narratives' of the vanquished have just as much need to be felt as the 'grand narratives' of the victors. Therefore narrative imagination can assist the *'universalisation'* of remembering, whereby memories, both personal and communal are shared and exchanged with others.[43] In Ricoeur's opinion, the 'moral duty' to remember is a means of paying the debt owed to all victims. It is in remembering and telling, that we not only prevent forgetfulness from killing the victims twice, we also prevent their stories from becoming 'banal' in such a way that violent events are deemed to be necessary.[44]

Narrative memory, therefore, serves two functions: it can help to represent the past as it really was, and to re-invent the past as it might have been, as a gift to the future. The discernment of when it is right to remember and when it is better to forget is a crucial hermeneutical task because there can be no doubt that in this age of 'easy forgetfulness' discovering the wisdom of memory requires careful discernment.

3.6.2 Memory and forgiveness

Narrative ethicists argue that forgiveness has a political dimension and is not therefore completely within the sphere of interpersonal relations. Arendt, for example, perceives forgiveness to be 'a form of human activity which belongs to the socio-personal sphere' while Ricoeur has emphasized that forgiveness is, in the first place, something to be begged for, from others, essentially from victims.

Moreover, the question of forgiveness puts 'I and Thou' relationships at stake. The possibility of forgiveness hinges on 'I and Thou' relations for Ricoeur. Granting forgiveness implies that it can also be refused, and by implication, there is a right not to forgive as much as to affirm it. While forgiveness is a gracious and generous act that belongs to of the logic of love not justice, love does not in any way mitigate the need for justice.[45]

For Ricoeur, forgiveness represents a 'healing contact with the past' and symbolizes the success of 'working through' the past in such a way that it frees us from the compulsion to repeat it. Genuine memory, in short,

represents a 'critical coping' with one's past and allows for the freedom to tell the past in a different way, even in a shocking and radical sense, of taking the other's point of view. In sacramental terms, this allows for the assertion that 'repentance, together with confession and atonement' are the pre-conditions of forgiveness.[46] This is a useful juncture at which to appraise some pertinent theological references to memory as they concern our present discussion.

3.7 The Theology of Memory

In his *Summa Theologiae*, Saint Thomas Aquinas, writing about the interior senses, distinguishes between memory as 'the sudden *recollection* of the past' and *reminiscence* – that is 'seeking for a recollection in the past by the application of individual intentions'. (ST.1, Q.78.4) Memory is experienced as an intentional act in the present to recall a particular image from the past. This distinction between involuntary memory and intentional reminiscence can help us to explore how the past makes demands on the present and in so doing opens up alternative features for the present and future, for 'only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past'.[47] In other words, the memory of oppression becomes a stimulus to change history on behalf of those who are being overwhelmed by it. The future is still open and is to be wrested from the power of those who control the present. The demand to redeem the memory of past oppression by changing the course of history is the responsibility of humans who through memory are commissioned with the task of liberation in the name of generations of the downtrodden.

Or in Augustinian language, the ascent from sin to salvation is pre-occupied with the relationship between memory and sin; he makes the point in Book X of *Confessions* that we are able to remember our sins without committing them over again. This rehabilitative character of memory is an indication that memory is a special Gift of God to those who would repent. Therefore Augustine is led to conclude that memory is not simply a passive function – it is not mere 'recollection'. Memory allows us, not only to recall but also to re-structure, to re-interpret past events and to discern a pattern in them that was not visible when they occurred.[48] For Augustine, *memoria* is a constructive faculty that enables us to think of our lives in meaningfully narrative terms. In other words, the whole project of identifying and pursuing a coherent life would be impossible without memory. But if *memoria* is the essential 'retrospective' faculty for the believer seeking to make a coherent Christian life – it is exercised by those who think such

retrospection valuable – meaning those who are *hopeful*. In the Christian context, hope is the virtue that prompts the exercise of memory. Hope enables us to turn from retrospection to prospection.[49]

Ricoeur's contemporary application is that for those who act as the conscience of history, the meaning of history lies not in the inevitability of progress, but in history's 'cracks and fractures', the moments of danger and discontinuity. These historical 'scraps' impinge on the present, rendering their significance through reminiscence and memorial. The memory of past suffering, erupting into the continuum of history becomes an imperative for liberation because 'only for the sake of the hopeless are we given hope'.[50] To put it another way, a reading of history based on the inevitability of historical and technical progress can only be an interpretation of events from the point of view of the 'victors' of that reading, and is based on the 'concealment of the victims' which progress produces. This scenario creates 'a structured amnesia' – a blotting out of the voices of resistance.[51]

The experience of suffering is also mediated by language, and language itself is informed by memory. Suffering may even teach us a new language, not founded on structural amnesia that silences the victims of history, but originating from the immediacy of the experience of suffering itself. Suffering tells its own story, arising from the silence of despair. It creates a new language that uncovers the structures of oppression and resists them. It forms new alliances among those who engage the common memory. The first step towards overcoming suffering is to find a language – one of lament, of crying, of pain, a language that at least says what the situation is.[52] The *cri de coeur* against structures and conditions of oppression carries within it the authority of its own language, simply because to have pain is to have certainty.[53]

3.7.1 *The* memoria Christi

The 'dangerous memory' of freedom wrought in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, confronts the Christian consciousness through the cry of all suffering people. The *memoria Christi* relates to a solidarity with the memory of all concrete historical suffering.[54] This specifically Christian memory gives rise to an alternative 'moral imagination' and insight (*phronesis*), which challenges the prevailing worldview.

We have seen that for Aquinas, human memory operates in receptive and active modes, both spontaneously and intentionally. He also links memory to the 'inner power of the human spirit' like a warehouse, storing

concrete sensible images that are received through the external senses. Aquinas reflects on Aristotle's perception of the human mind as a *tabula rasa* standing in relation to the external world as pure potency ready to be filled with content. (ST.1.79, Q.2) Thus the imagination creates 'our-world' – the world in which we live and identify ourselves, the structure of which is formed and made concrete by the imagination.

For people of faith, it is within the imagination that the 'dangerous memory' of Jesus Christ operates, and where the memory of his death and resurrection creates solidarity with all those who concretely suffer. It is the imagination that allows for the communication of *experience* carried within the narratives of suffering and redemption. The moral message of the gospel is that victory is wrought through suffering and weakness, rather than in military might and political power.

The Christian *memoria*, formed and activated through an imaginative encounter between the apostolic witness and the believer, renders a subject and bearer of history's meaning, one around whom the images of catastrophe and consolation coalesce. In the resurrection encounter, for example, the crucified and risen Jesus is recognized as the content of the eschatological hope of the reign of God.[55] Within this eschatological interpretation of history, it becomes possible to speak of a continuing history of the dead. How can the dead participate in the un-telling of death's claim to be the arbiter of life's meaning? Again the historical encounter between the living and the memory of the dead is mediated through imagination. The Christian memory of the dead relates the image of a crucified and risen Lord to all those who have died, allowing a relationship to develop by which the stories of the dead continue to make their claims on history, in order to restore what has been lost.

In this respect, there is a 'secret agreement' that exists between those who have been silenced by the progress of history and those who remember them in the present. As such, the Christian *memoria* is an anticipatory memory of the future for the lost, the forgotten and the overwhelmed. In the Christian imagination, from the resurrection of the Victim, flow countless unfinished human stories whose lives are given back to them in death, and to those who remember them in the present, a free gift of the risen God. Contemplating and remembering the dead allows their lives to make their claims on the present, compelling us to resist those forces that would keep them silent and forgotten. The memory of Christ's death and resurrection draws us into solidarity with the dead and with all who suffer. According to Ricoeur, 'solidarity' exemplifies itself in memory. Remembering the dead calls us to mourning, through which their stories are 'exercised' in the present towards a future in which they have a place. The true meaning

of the Christian imagination is to prompt Christians to 'pacific imitation' (*mimesis*) of Christ with and on behalf of the contemporary victim.[56]

The Christian work of mourning is never exhausted, but produces new sites of meaning in history. One of those 'new sites' is memory, which calls us to relate the story of those who have died to the ongoing history of humankind. In other words, the dead have their role to play in the revelation of Jesus Christ in history.

The political theology of Johann Baptist Metz, for example, witnesses to the need for the *memoria passionis* of the Christian story to assert its place in political and social decision-making because *Christian* memory is exercised on behalf of those overwhelmed and forgotten by the prevailing systems of rationality. As Metz has noted, it is in the contemplation of what God has done in Jesus that the '*imitatio Christi*' produces the *praxis* of solidarity with all those who are threatened by the concrete circumstances of history.[57]

On the ethical plane, Ricoeur explains how the experience of suffering is communicated in the narrative that emerges from the suffering person, a narrative that expresses a cry from the perspective of the victim. The person moves from the solitary loss of subjectivity through suffering and attempts to re-connect with others through the cry of lament, to the stage of co-operative solidarity with others, to change the structures whether social or political, that cause suffering.[58]

The catharsis of lament or mourning may result, Ricoeur observes, in a rage against God who is meant to have won the victory over suffering and evil, yet it still continues. This rage can eventually lead to a conviction that God too suffers with the suffering. In the final analysis of this thorny question, Ricoeur points to the theology of the Cross which holds that God died in Christ, thereby transforming the meaning of all human suffering and lamentation.[59] The wisdom and insight opened by Christ's suffering with and for others, is representative of the solidarity of all people of good will who struggle against evil in acts of non-violent resistance.[60]

Ricoeur illuminates an oft forgotten reality which the Christian narrative invites us to cherish: though evil and suffering are intrinsic to the human story they need not have the last word. If we can learn to understand and accept the 'scandal of the Cross' then we are lead to a deeper appreciation of the mystery of the person and of his or her universal nature.[61] To put it another way, the Judaeo-Christian story is an interpretive key to the human story in its tragic and heroic totality.

The biblical world engages us in a memorial of hymn and lament, the climax of which is the good news of liberation and ultimate salvation from various forms of oppression.

3.7.2 *Purification of memory*

Memory is open to abuse as well as use and neither is religion exempt from this tendency:

> Religious stories in the Christian, Judaic and Islamic traditions do offer narratives of liberation. The fact however, that we have seen the abuse of those narratives too, in the form of crusades, jihads and witch-hunts in the past, and in our day in the form of political violence, as we have witnessed in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kashmir, for example, show that narrative traditions and religion can be used in a very violent and ideological way. So, on the one hand, we have in the contemporary situation, the example of the young Etty Hillesum, who in Auschwitz, used the biblical narratives to liberate herself in her situation, or Martin Luther King in America, or the liberation theologians of Latin America, or Mahatma Gandhi in India, who invoked religious narratives in a positive way, to liberate their situations. Then there are the countervailing examples, such as Northern Ireland, Rwanda and Bosnia, where religion became entangled in violence and killing.[62]

The difference between the good and bad use of religion is subtle. A basic difference is that in the positive examples, religion is used ethically and in the negative examples, religion is used unethically. Moreover, it seems that we can tell that religious narratives used in the name of love and justice, bear fruit in the *practice* of love and justice, as in the life of Etty Hillesum* for example. On the other hand, religious narratives of freedom, invoked in the European tradition by the Nazis, were not narratives of justice and freedom. So, if someone claims to be interpreting tradition to bring about freedom but then go on to slaughter millions of Jews, Christians, gypsies and homosexuals, then we know them by their works. Narrative may be a necessary condition for ethics, but it is not sufficient. In other words as Ricoeur would have it, action and reason and various other criteria, such as human rights law and jurisprudence, also enter into the adjudication of an ethical situation. Nonetheless, narrative is indispensable.

Too often religions have forgotten that they are narrative in their origins and foundations and take themselves literally. It happens in Islam, Christianity and Judaism – they do not realize that what is being remembered is the *story* of the struggles of one's ancestors. It may be a divine story, even a divinely revealed story, but it has been written down and transcribed by human beings and as Ricoeur suggests, is then subject to interpretation.[63]

The implication of the above is that: "*In the beginning was narrative! Let there be light and there was light . . . and there were seven days of creation.*"

In other words, from the beginning the word of God is narrative . . . and hermeneutic. For example, the Rabbinic tradition is of the view that there is no line in the bible that cannot be interpreted in ten different ways. Christianity has also argued that textual revelation invites and solicits a 'conflict of interpretations'. As soon as religions admit that they are narrative in origin and hermeneutic in operation, the likelihood of that leading to jihad or war is lessened, for some critics. It is when one forgets that one is coming from a certain narrative interpretation and that one's enemies are coming from another type of narrative that difficulties arise. It is precisely when the story is taken as history and differences between the literal and the figurative are ignored, that religious ideology is open to violence.[64]

In concert with the note of caution regarding the interpretation of religious narratives, John Paul II, in his apostolic letter *The Third Millennium* (*Tertio Millennio Adveniente*), written as a preparation for the Jubilee Year AD 2000, acknowledged that: *"preparing for the Year 2000 had become the hermeneutical key of his pontificate."*[65] He emphasized the importance of the Jubilee in light of the profoundly disturbing experiences of the twentieth century, a century scarred by two World Wars, by the experience of concentration camps and by horrendous massacres.

John Paul recognized the need to 'link the structure of memorial with that of celebration' and he called the Church to become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the spirit of Christ and his Gospel, instead of offering the world, the witness of a life inspired by the values of faith, they indulged in ways of thinking and acting which were truly forms of 'counter-witness and scandal'.[66] Consequently, the Jubilee of the Christian *memoria* demanded an attitude of repentance and sorrow to be expressed by publicly acknowledging the sinfulness of the past and by a re-commitment to strengthening relationships with those who bear the consequences of past wrongdoing:

> Acknowledging the weaknesses of the past is an act of honesty and courage which helps us to strengthen our faith, and alerts us to face today's temptations and challenges, and prepares us to meet them. (TMA, NO.33)

In November 1998, the Pope re-iterated his call for an ecclesial examination of conscience. He asked for a *purification of memory* in the Church, calling everyone to make an act of courage and humility in recognizing the wrongs done by those who have borne or bear the name 'Christians'. While the history of the Church is a history of holiness, he acknowledges that history also records events that constitute a counter-testimony to

Christianity. Because of the bond uniting us to one another in the Mystical Body, we though not personally responsible, must share the burden of the errors of those who have gone before us. We too have sinned and have impeded the Spirit's working in the hearts of many people. By acknowledging the faults of all the members of the Mystical Body before God, and before those offended by their actions, Christians are able to confidently await God's mercy and look to the future. For God 'is now doing something new, and in the love which forgives, he anticipates the new heavens and the new earth'.[67]

John Paul II desired that the Church take seriously the notion of purification of memory and personally lead the way through the requests for pardon made on its behalf. His initiative raises many issues both for theological reflection and for pastoral praxis, among them: how Christians relate to historical evidence; how faith is understood and how conscience is formed with regard to the signs of the times; the centrality of *metanoia* to the witness of the Church; the relation of history to the Church.[68] Dealing with the burdens of the past is a task of peace.

All culturally influential institutions and organizations, including the Church and the religions, are necessary to developing a social climate of tolerance and a readiness to dialogue for the sake of peace:

> Dealing appropriately with the shadows of the past remains a fundamental task for civil societies. Responsibility for seeking ways to allow people to live in dignity with the burden of memory is a task to be shared by the Christian community and by 'Christian movements' which are especially suited and committed to 'securing greater peace and justice'. Furthermore, it is seen as a joint responsibility for ecumenical collaboration among the Christian churches.[69]

These theological observations on the Christian *memoria* attest to Ricoeur's thesis that the historical subject is not a fixed identity, but an ever-relating field of identity, held in tension between *idem* and *ipsé* forged in the concrete circumstances of present action and suffering. In Christian understanding, all who have suffered or died violently are not lost to the present, but continue to participate in the rhyming between human history and Christian hope, forged by the resurrection event and mediated through the Christian imagination. As such, this is a 'dangerous memory' to paraphrase Metz, because it confronts the present moment in history and calls it into question through its unfulfilled demands and conflicts. Christian memory is subversive then, in that it identifies with the suffering and injustice borne by history's victims. In bearing witness to the freedom gained by the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians cannot be

absorbed into the history of liberation by revolution.[70] Analogous to Ricoeur's understanding, the Christian memory and imagination is a solidarity that 'runs backwards' to the dead and to all those who have been overcome by suffering and the successes of history, conversely it 'runs forwards' in solidarity towards a future for the oppressed, those without hope and doomed to fail.[71]

Christian identity is rooted in, and dependent on, a yet unfinished narrative. We can say that Christian hope is based not on a repetition of the past, but on the expectation of a future in which God's promises in the past will be consummated in new and unexpected ways.[72]

Therefore Christians look to the future not simply as a repetition of the past, but as the final, yet undisclosed meaning of the past and present. Christian hope is not simply the repetition of Christian memory, but neither is Christian hope discontinuous with, or unrelated to, the past. In other words, Christians look also to the future for the consummation of their narrative identity in the yet unfinished narrative of God's history in the world. To put it another way, Christian identity is ongoingly constructed around the narrative event of the Cross and resurrection.

In Ricoeur's understanding, radical suffering itself becomes the 'initial element' of a 'justified hope'.[73] Ricoeur's narrative pedagogy of pardon deepens the Christian understanding of suffering and sin in light of the ancient principle of faith seeking understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*).[74] Biblical wisdom reveals a God who is on the side of the suffering, the poor, sympathizing with victims and committed to their liberation.[75]

3.8 Biblical Narrative: Source of Christian Memory

Biblical stories present us with the contrasting characteristics of sin and grace, justice and injustice, love and indifference. Just as symbols provide material for further reflection, the biblical story provides clues, by which to orient and judge our own lives.[76] In the New Testament, the gospel message makes an appeal to our liberty and makes us responsible before and for the other. Additionally, the gospel lifestyle is institutionalized and mediated by history, in the life of the community of the faithful. The gospel stories make a fundamental appeal to each person's desire for freedom and autonomous existence and offer new horizons of existence as the reward for answering the call. In responding to God, the person encounters a new world, a new life, a new network of relationships and the possibility of transcendence through the creative work of God's spirit.[77]

3.8.1 Fall and redemption

While Judaeo-Christianity recognizes the positives of life in the Creation and Exodus stories, it also recognizes the symbolic events of the Fall and Exile. Biblical stories narrate the realities of sin and atonement and the 'subsequent experience of a more sober and humble way of self-assessment'.[78] In turn, the 'cathartic' power latent in the biblical drama is a reminder of two fundamental aspects of life; the positive affirmation of freedom and the recognition of unavoidable failure. Once this is assumed, (confession and forgiveness) feelings of guilt will hopefully lead to a deeper awareness of our freedom. The gospels affirm the human story in that we are 'not perfect, but still worthy of love and capable of expressing genuine goodness'.[79]

Christian ethics therefore aims 'primarily' at the confirmation and healing of true personal freedom. The liberating message of the gospel can be linked to the search for self-realization (self-esteem), in Ricoeur's ethics of the person. Moreover, the bible recognizes 'the unavoidably tragic dimension of human existence' and is concerned with offering hope and forgiveness to sinners and mortals, not with the 'exaltation of immortal heroes':

> The original agents of the biblical stories and their readers through the generations, are invited to come to terms with the truth about their lives, recognising their tragic errors, confessing their sins and accepting the biblical story as a medium of discernment.[80]

The second referent in Ricoeur's ethical triad is to those who are 'other' than ourselves, described in the evangelical words as the love of 'neighbour' as oneself. The parable of the Good Samaritan and the Old Testament story of the hospitality of Abraham, for example, illustrate this point. When Ricoeur is discussing the theme of 'our neighbour', he never fails to underline an important aspect of it, namely, the political or public implications of the biblical lifestyle. Our relationship to our 'neighbour' is not just a matter of intimacy or of deep friendship, just an 'I and Thou' affair, rather it represents a 'genuine societal relationship' which easily opens itself up to mediation by a 'third person'.[81] For example, the Samaritan story includes the use of money, medical care, lodging, transportation, credit and repayment, almost in a business-like fashion.

Therefore, neighbourly love is also a 'political virtue' that calls for institutional mediation with reference to the construction of a wider community of people who pay attention to, and care for, each other. The commitment to justice for the sake of the common good is aimed especially at the weak

and vulnerable – those whom Ricoeur calls the '*socii*' – the 'anonymous members of society' who are also the subject of our care.[82]

Biblical narrative proclaims the dialectical relationship between the '*universality*' of the call of love simply because every human being is our potential neighbour and the *eschatological* fullness of the inter-subjective communion of all creatures in history. In Ricoeur's opinion, these two dialectics need to be applied in our commitment to justice in order to move closer to the full reality of love. For, although love has the last word in gospel ethics, justice will always be a constitutive element of true love.[83]

Yet there is a negative at work in the striving for human freedom, which Ricoeur perceives as the abuse of people who become history's victims, suffering the repercussions of agents who experience a deep urge to violate the freedom of the other. The bible depicts different dimensions of human negativity through an illustration of the 'master–slave' relationship at work in salvation history. Yet precisely because of its 'ultimate concern' for salvation, biblical narratives also suggest a possible ending of the cycle of violence through the image of the 'Suffering Servant'.[84] The prophet Isaiah's suffering servant is re-interpreted as the innocent victim who represents all of history's innocent victims, the scapegoat who has projected onto them by society the burden of carrying all the violence, guilt and aggression that sets one neighbour against another. The need for the scapegoat never ends until we renounce our wrongful desires and learn to transcend the rivalry that leads to scapegoating in the first place. A genuinely peaceful society would expose the sacrificial mechanisms at play there and enter the light of 'true fraternity'.[85]

So, the scriptures do not present us with a prosaic report of the facts of history rather they offer us a series of 'poetic' scenarios and complex myths that evoke barely suspected possibilities of existence. The good news is that we can learn to live with our finiteness and fallibility without ending up in chaos and despair.

3.8.2 Metanoia – call to conversion

In the usual exercise of power, two dimensions are at work – authority and violence. The capacity to impose one's will upon others (power) often comes with the consent of the latter (via democratic elections), and sometimes, by invoking the use of violence. The mediation of power and violence is usually in the hands of a society's elected representatives, the politicians. Ricoeur's 'philosophy of hope' founded on narrative, allows that the 'evangelical vision' can 'positively influence' the wielding of power, even in

its institutional and historical effects: "*The ethics of the Sermon on the Mount not only function as a warning signal for the (political) conscience, but also as a suggestion; 'what if we could take a chance and live differently?'*"[86]

To this end, we can again refer to Ricoeur's theme of narrative identity as an interplay of *idem* and *ipsé* and ask; 'how can we live together in community now, without 'denying the other' or giving into the temptation to 'reduce the other to our own identity?' The powers of mutual recognition may overcome the forces of denial, and violent conflict if we are willing to fundamentally adapt our mentality (*metanoia*). A shift in public opinion and in people's convictions will support social reform by popular will rather than through violence. For Ricoeur, a key benefit of taking up the challenge of change is a willingness to enter into the field of memory, to seek and grant forgiveness and to be reconciled.

In summary, Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon offers a contemporary interpretation of 'the evangelical tradition regarding love of one's enemies and forgiveness of wrongdoing' to paraphrase a line from Matthew's gospel (Matthew 6.13). The parables of Jesus are intended to shatter the structural security of the hearer's world and thereby to render possible the kingdom of God, an act whereby God touches the human heart and consciousness. In the telling and re-telling of the stories of Jesus, a transition has taken place: the 'parabler' becomes 'parable'.[87] The Jesus who announced the kingdom of God in parables, was himself announced later on by the primitive church as the parable of the church. Jesus died as 'parabler' and rose as 'Parable'.

The life-giving and life-transforming dynamic of the gospel becomes apparent when, each time the parable is in danger of becoming fossilized and turned into a myth, it subverts its own domestication and breaks the very structures that would contain it. Such is the force of story or parabolic religion to continually and deliberately 'subvert final words about reality' and thereby introduce the possibility of transcendence.[88]

The world of the bible offers Christians a new interpretative framework of reality and a perspective on how to live the good life with and for others in a just social order. The bible is a guide for the Church in its social discernment of 'the signs of the times' in light of gospel values. The bible and the Church – the institution that it has inspired, ideally will serve as a *sacramentum mundi* – a force of inspiration and healing in the concrete history of men and women, who by their solidarity with humanity perpetuate the Christian story. As such, the biblical story and the Church not only condemn injustices they positively proclaim a meaningful new future.[89]

It can be asserted then that the type of imagination generated by the narratives and metaphors of the gospel, enables the Church as a 'community of communities' to develop a semantic vigilance vis-à-vis false representations of reality or ideologies. Simultaneously the moral imagination generated by it, moves the people of God beyond the narrow rationality of mere 'problem solving', which tends to reinforce the status quo.[90] There is a responsibility upon the institutional Church and the religions to set the standards of ethical being by giving credible testimony through institutional life and action. Witnessing to the gospel stories gives impetus to the influence that the world of the bible can exert on social and political institutions because it challenges the dominant root metaphors of culture.

3.8.3 Metaphor – mode of Christian understanding

Ricoeur explains a root metaphor as our primary way of looking at things or experience in a manner that expresses our understanding and insights. Our very notion of what is true and what is meaningful rests upon our underlying assumptions about the nature of reality, without which we would have no way of organizing our perceptions into a coherent whole.[91] A shift of metaphors implies a change in our perception of life and world. For example, the Exodus story is an indication that the status quo can be overturned, that oppression, no matter what form it may take, does not have the last word.

Ricoeur is concerned with the application of metaphor as a living force (*la métaphor vive*) through which novel, emergent meanings come to speech. Put another way, metaphors are a 'logical absurdity' a category mistake, even a 'calculated error' that creates a situation whereby the reader must choose either to interpret the metaphor literally or to attribute to it a new meaning or configuration. In other words, metaphor is a distinctive intellectual operation that involves both reader and hearer. The reader, like the author, has to enter into the creative process itself, because the meaning also needs to be 'actualized' in praxis. Ricoeur claims that metaphors involve 'innovation' in language: they say what they say and what they say cannot be said in any other way. In short, metaphors bring to light 'new resemblances' which the established 'lexicons' prevent us from seeing.[92]

Metaphors engage our imagination. Ricoeur argues that the *productive* imagination is what helps to 'produce' an altogether new imagination. Ultimately, he is searching for a way to describe the process whereby the 'newness' of metaphorical meaning is preserved and not reduced to just a

novel combination of the old. The metaphorical process is a type of *'verbal icon'*.[93] It is principally Ricoeur claims, via language that we come to make sense of metaphors. In other words, we *see* some images only to the extent that we first *hear* them. He would even go so far as to claim that the theoretical models of science correspond by analogy to the extended pattern of metaphors embodied in a poetic text. Just as scientific models organize the elements of a theory around a 'root metaphor' so too a series of metaphors arrange and align themselves around the 'matrix' of the 'verbal icon' which is provided by the schema of the *productive* imagination. So metaphor is in effect, a poem in miniature. It carries within itself the possibility of expanding 'an entire realm or world of metaphorical meanings'. Conversely, a poem is an extended metaphor in that it has its own world. Such is the nature of poetic texts, the bible being an exemplar, to which belong the twin narrative functions of metaphor and imagination.[94]

As Ricoeur sees it, the main point about metaphor is its *mimetic* ability to re-interpret reality. This means that metaphor is a form of language that 'imitates' and 'recreates' reality. By 're-working' the narrative pillars of *mimesis* and *mythos*, Ricoeur seeks to 'bring to expression what is at the heart of reality' as it comes to light in the world generated by the poetic text. Moreover, the 'enabling' quality of the world of the bible is dependent on the ethical use of imagination. Ricoeur says that human action is never 'raw or immediate reality' but finds itself 'always already in a nebula of meaning and tradition'.[95]

The gospel stories and indeed narratives of all sorts, call into question and challenge our understanding of both history and praxis. As such, narrative epistemology enables a re-defining of what is already defined, a re-interpretation of what is already interpreted. In other words, hermeneutics, understood as the art of finding meaning, is not the discovery of pristine immediacy but a demand to mediate again and again 'the already interpreted' in new and more creative ways. Every society possesses, or is part of, a *social imaginary* – defined by Ricoeur as 'an ensemble of symbolic discourses' – literary, scientific, political and religious, all of which mediate human reality.

This chapter has engaged with a question at the ethical heart of narrative – namely human failure, frailty and evil – subsequently of the need for pardon and reconciliation. We have observed that narratives can also project false worlds and evil visions such as racism and Nazism. Ricoeur brings to our attention the danger that 'every configuration of a social agenda' even those with deep historical roots, has the potential to become 'an official doctrine' and to justify the status quo, the ruling classes

and tyrants. He alerts to the need to guard against the *social imaginary* becoming ideology.

3.8.4 The bible as 'root metaphor'

On the other hand, there exists the imaginary of 'rupture' or novelty, which is the biblical imagination that inspires the Kingdom of God as a utopian promise. The word 'utopia' meaning 'nowhere' is an 'extra-temporal' non-place and the vantage point from which to take a fresh look at our reality. According to Ricoeur, utopian discourses pose a formidable challenge to the status quo and perform the function of 'social subversion'. Put another way, the gospel narratives are a means by which to radically re-think the nature of family, consumption, government and religion. Yet, there is always the danger that utopian dreams 'regardless of their noblest hopes' can degenerate into mystification. This happens when 'dreamers, thinkers and social reformers' fail to follow through on the concrete practice that would bring such ideas to reality.[96]

There are then two potentialities of the *social imaginary*; the ideological and the utopian. Ricoeur would have us accept that both are essential to each other because *ideology* is a symbolic confirmation of the past and *utopia*, a symbolic opening towards the future. Both are complementary to each other and by nature both are engaged in an enduring tension. In Ricoeur's view, the best way forward is to preserve the discourse between the two spheres and to participate in the *social imaginary* 'for better or for worse'. To give up on it is to suppress the reaches of the imagination and the potential to think and live differently.[97]

The project of hermeneutics is at once 'disoriented and reoriented' by an encounter with the bible. What makes the bible unique is that it names God. The gospel parables for example, constitute a model for Christian self-interpretation. Just as with any teller of stories, the life of Jesus himself cannot be understood apart from the stories he told. So too the lives of Christians' are intelligible in light of the stories they themselves narrate, which by definition, include references to the story of Jesus. In this way, the whole story of Jesus becomes a parable – rather *the* parable of the Kingdom of God. The story of Jesus provides wisdom and direction for Christians in order to make sense of the world.

The world of the bible and the thought and way of life that it inspires are sources of moral imagination capable of moving people 'beyond the status quo and narrow frameworks of interpretation'.[98] Drawing on its narrative and metaphoric origins, the biblical world and the social reflection that

it stimulates, enable us to look at political and economic realities with new eyes and a new perspective, by opening up a horizon that is different from the prevailing interpretative frameworks of our time. Consequently, the future can be opened continually to new meanings. Put differently, persons who read the biblical 'texts' and appropriate them imaginatively, may undergo a *metanoia* and are radically changed. One might say that 'biblical *poesis*' is a stimulus for new ways of being and acting, illustrating Ricoeur's assertion that 'texts lead to action'. In other words, the bible speaks about what God *enables* and not only about what he requires of human persons in the natural, historical and social conditions in which they live.[99] To put it another way, the bible re-describes reality by deploying *metaphorical* language. Biblical language draws upon the metaphors of poetic language in order to create 'entirely new and original meanings not found latently in language'. As Ricoeur has noted, we tend to re-enact root-narratives that we find compelling, which leads him to the conclusion that metaphors can help us to understand personal and communal identity since metaphor is also the site of the 'clash of sameness (*idem*) and difference (*ipseité*)'.[100]

If there is a tensile relationship of sameness and difference within metaphorical language, this culminates in the form of a dialectic whereby the poles of sameness and difference cannot exist without each other. Difference generates identity and identity is formed through difference. In this way their equality appears. Loss of meaning makes way for the creation of new meanings and so on.[101] This is why biblical metaphors and narratives are so crucial for social and political action and why they challenge the dominant root-metaphors.

One of the most important aspects of root-metaphors is that, in the context of a tradition, they persist because they can invoke a whole network of meanings. They are by no means static and that is what invigorates them with a transformational power to open up new horizons and new ways of interpreting the world in which we live. In other words, metaphors make a deeper understanding of reality possible by shocking us with 'an intentional misuse of language' in order to expand conventional understandings. As Ricoeur would have it, metaphor puts 'kinship where ordinary vision does not perceive any relationship'.[102] In short, metaphors invoke semantic innovation whereby they not only express what people experience, but they also suggest possible new meanings and new perspectives on reality. The discernment process based on 'scrutinizing the signs of the times in light of the gospel' does not only open up new worlds of meaning via *generative* metaphors, it enables Christian communities to criticize perversions of memory and ideological misrepresentations of

reality which block a redemptive transformation of the world. For example, 'the Cross' is a root-metaphor because it opens our eyes to something that Ricoeur has devoted so much energy, the victims of history. 'The Cross' has brought a radical perspective into our world, not only for Christians but for everyone, especially history's victims: "*The Cross enables us to acknowledge that society has to face its victims.*"[103]

The 'dangerous memory' of the Cross urges us to fight against all perversions of memory and ideological deformations of reality. The word of God always arrives in opposition to human expectations and desires and could be described as a 'dialectics of contradiction'. God is identified with suffering and hope and therefore provokes Christians to witness to the future of hope in the memory of suffering.[104]

3.9 Conclusion

Ricoeur claims that in order to re-unite groups of different cultural and ethnic origins, a process of 'translation of each others histories' and 'collective experiences' is a first step. This is so, that people belonging to different cultural communities may overcome the barriers of their respective particularities in order to look for common experiences and themes. The success of 'exchange' relies on both parties 'making an imaginative leap' into the world of the other. This leads on to a second step, the exchange of memories, of evaluations of historical events and of the emotional connotations of lived experiences. The goal of this 'exchange' is an attempt to shift the consciousness of 'stuck' societies and communities. It is by exchanging 'impressions' of our collective memory with one another that we can gradually 'adapt our own tradition'. This process however is not 'self-evident': it presents itself only as a possibility within history. Moreover, if we choose to enter into this process, we can expect difficulties and obstacles along the way. The collective memories of peoples include 'suffering and injustices' often caused by one's own nation, culture or country. More important than forgetting, in such cases, Ricoeur would encourage that we ask forgiveness from others for the grievances they still carry against members of our group, because of the past and its conflicts:

> When confronted with the injuries of the past, we are challenged to move beyond the stage of empathy through the efforts of imagination and exchange: now we are called upon to break down the walls of guilt and debt, to search for pardon. If we are able to ask forgiveness, we are opening up the possibility that we will in turn be invited by the others to offer forgiveness for

the grievances that members of their nation have in the past imposed upon some of our people.[105]

In the final analysis, the practice of reconciliation does not belong to the social domain or even to morality. It 'properly resorts to the works of love' and to the poetics of morality:

> The poetry consists in the capacity to break the law of irreversibility, to change history, not as a chronicle of past events, but by changing its meaning for the people of today. If we are able to ask for pardon and to forgive, then we relieve the burden of guilt which blocks any new start in relationships between people. Thus we are not condemning others to remain closed in their painful past.[106]

Ultimately, what forgiveness achieves is the relief of pain of the past, but it does not destroy responsibility or guilt, because we remain heirs of history. For Ricoeur, 'the wielding of power' does not preclude 'all expressions of true forgiveness'. Citizens might encourage their leaders to initiate more symbolic events whenever groups have trespassed against the authentic freedom of others.

From a faith perspective, Ricoeur's vision of an ethical community is mirrored in the Trinitarian icon of *koinonia* (communion). The quest for right relationship suffers continuously from failure and from falling short of the desired goal. In theological language, the failure to achieve right relationship is traditionally labelled as 'sin' or falling short of the mark (*hamartia*). Sin has personal and social dimensions. The good news of the gospels and indeed of the Cross is that: "*The baggage of sin, deceit and self-inflicted suffering is left behind and the world becomes a place in which God dwells and reaches out in compassion to all creation.*"[107]

The promise of profound change to which the bible lays claim, is not just 'wishful thinking'. The hope of true solidarity is not just a utopian dream. If the twentieth century is strewn with examples of man's inhumanity to man, there are also striking examples of *metanoia* or radical conversion.[108] In short, the biblical texts and stories infused by the dynamics of 'live metaphor' cohere to shape a 'norm' of love.

Wherever there are flashes of insight, compassion and hope for the future of the human community, there are also glimmers of the future city of God, where justice, peace and love provide the guiding principles. It is these moments that hold the in-breaking of the future by providing norms for right relationship today.[109] The story of Christ's resurrection as the 'crucified one' is an identification of the memory and the hope of the future. Easter and the resurrection appearances are not merely 'events' of

the past, they are also events of the future – as yet unfinished – because the 'Crucified One' has taken history within himself, through the cross and resurrection.[110]

Ricoeur's narrative ethics suggests that memorizing the suffering of humanity is not only an act of reparation towards the past, it also anticipates something new and unpredicted for the future. Moreover, it is within the vulnerable institution of 'memory' in its very personal and social dimensions that Ricoeur locates the axis of mercy towards history's victims. That stated he does not hold back from recommending that victims at some point in time, might be able to forgive those who may have harmed them or their loved ones.[111] At some point the act of forgiveness becomes a feature of what happens in the healthy process of the workings of memory over time. Eventually the past, if not its memory, is relieved through forgiveness. Moreover, Ricoeur recognizes the fundamental *generosity* of the act of forgiveness. If memorizing leads to the granting of forgiveness, then it is not always forgiveness that is due. Nonetheless in the light of these restrictions, the greatness of forgiveness as 'gift' – the absolute gift of love over absolute justice, is asserted.

Ricoeur's 'pedagogy of pardon' recognizes that the righting of relationships, whether social or interpersonal, must take account of memory. The bible in turn, is *the* source of 'the imagination of love' because it is the ultimate re-enforcement of 'the institution of the person'. This is reason enough to seek more 'compassionate and innovative' ways of relating to each other in community.[112]

Now we turn in more detail to the *praxis* of memory in the service of reconciliation aided by two examples of contemporary conflict settlements: South Africa and Northern Ireland. Both speak to how peace is connected to the challenge of dealing appropriately with memory.

PEDAGOGIES OF PARDON IN PRAXIS

In the deserts of the heart let the healing fountain start
                                                    W. H. Auden

4.1 Introduction

As a Christian philosopher Ricoeur offers conceptual clarification of what is at stake in resolving community hurt caused by violence as well as a model for structuring the path to reconciliation. Memory is a key intermediary in the trajectory of justice, which is a process that involves three movements; *sanction* (someone is condemned), *restoration* (the re-establishment of rights lost) and *pardon* (making someone the beneficiary of forgiveness that is not owed) thus re-establishing self-esteem and public esteem. This rather unpredictable triad ideally expresses the reality of the judicial experience and in Ricoeur's opinion delineates justice from its shadow, vengeance. Attempts to deal with the burden of debt and guilt caused by communal violence in and between states in the contemporary era have in some instances been formalized into official hearings such as that which took place in South Africa (1996–98) in the aftermath of the apartheid regime.

From Ricoeur's perspective, such initiatives can act as useful if controversial measures to break unhealthy bonds between justice and vengeance that might well perpetuate the cycles of violence. Any type of judicial hearing, even the ordinary process of a trial, ought in Ricoeur's assessment, put a distance between justice and the primitive urge to vindictiveness. As such, the law must establish '*just distance*' between hideous crimes that can ignite private and public anger and punishment inflicted. Vengeance on the other hand, 'short-circuits' the suffering undergone by the victim and that inflicted by the avenger. Official hearings and trials interpose between these two poles (vengeance and sanction), thereby instituting the necessary just distance.[1]

The exercise of the law establishes a gap between violence and the word of justice. Ricoeur delineates four elements of judicial hearings, as follows:

i. The presence of a *'third-party'* qualified to open a space for discussion. (This might be the state, normally the guardian of legitimate violence, as well as judicial institutions and judges).

ii. Third parties must adopt a *'non-partisan'* position, which is usually safeguarded by a juridical system of written laws and through cultural acquisition. Laws define crimes and establish proportion between crime and punishment.

iii. The *hearing* provides the structure through which a case or enquiry may proceed from a place of uncertainty to one of certainty. It is important that hearings bring into play a plurality of protagonists who collectively contribute to the setting up of a just distance between the parties involved in the conflict.

iv. The fourth element of any type of juridical process is the *verdict* whereby disputes are settled.

Oral hearings together with the pronouncement of a verdict provide a therapeutic service in bringing an end to a period of confusion or uncertainty and with it, the likely suspension of vengeance.[2]

Ricoeur anticipates that some kind of sanction will always be necessary where infractions upset the social order and the public peace is threatened. Having said that he cannot avoid asking in what sense a sanction can be 'owed' to the victim. The answer seems self-evident. Nevertheless it is necessary to distinguish reparation from vengeance. Moreover, not all forms of punishment are acts of reparation in that they cannot restore a prior state of affairs, as is the case with murder and other serious offences. He therefore emphasizes the 'moral signification' of the sanction. Here, we can say that official commissions and hearings into past violations and abuses offer victims or survivors an opportunity to have public recognition of being offended and humiliated, a recognition that Ricoeur says 'does not count for nothing.'[3] Recognition re-instates *self-esteem* and it restores other goods, such as reputation and honour. In sum, public recognition of suffering, loss and humiliation restores the *dignity* attached to the moral status of the human being.[4]

With Ricoeur, we can even go a step further and suggest that the quite intimate form of recognition afforded by formal hearings, touching on self-esteem, are capable of contributing to the *work of mourning* through which the wounded soul is reconciled with itself by 'internalizing' the object of the loss inflicted. In terms of truth commissions or reconciliation forums, this would amount to a somewhat unexpected application, for example, of the apostolic words: *"the truth will set you free"*.[5]

On this point, Ricoeur has observed that in the great traumas to which the disasters of our century have given rise, the work of mourning is not only offered to victims if they still exist, but to 'their descendents, kin and allies' whose pain merits being honoured.[6] In the work of mourning – which implies a prolongation of the public recognition of the offence – Ricoeur concludes that it is possible to recognize the *moral* and not just the aesthetic version of the '*catharsis*'. Moreover, is not something owed also to *public opinion?* Ricoeur answers in the affirmative because public opinion is the first 'broadcaster' of the desire for vengeance. For this reason he believes that we cannot underestimate the effect of publicity in the sense of making public, past wrongs. However, this publicity is not media hype but 'an education about fairness' through which our impure vindictive desires are disciplined. Ricoeur proposes that *indignation* then, is the basic virtuous emotion from which public education about fairness and equality has a chance of succeeding. In short, justice procedures, including the modern phenomenon of truth commissions, owe something to public opinion which too, must be crowned by a certain '*catharsis of vengeance*'.

So the regulative or 'limit idea' of *recognition* that public hearings afford, cannot be underestimated. If recognition 'pursues its trajectory' into the intimacy of the person offended against, in the form of restoration of self-esteem, then such notions as: sanction, rehabilitation and pardon, have a future.

4.2 Rehabilitation and Restoration

In speaking of the rehabilitative capacities of juridical systems or public hearings Ricoeur has in mind the idea of *restoration*, meaning to restore persons or communities to their rightful place, capabilities or legal status that may have been lost. The idea of rehabilitation in the French legal system, for example, implies a 'wiping away' of all incapacities and loss of rights akin to pardon. However, the idea of rehabilitation does not pass directly to pardon without reference to the intermediaries of amnesty and mercy. The latter may be understood as a type of royal privilege, having the effect of wiping out penalties. The former, however, despite appearances, in no way prepares for a correct appreciation of pardon. In many ways, amnesty is the 'antithesis of pardon' and springs from the political rather than the juridical realm.[7] Ricoeur is dubious of this principle in the sense that it goes beyond a wiping away of all past wrongs, adding a prohibition even to refer to the facts themselves, which invites the question of a

veritable institutional amnesia, whereby society must act as though something never happened.

What is at issue here? Foremost in Ricoeur's estimation is national reconciliation, allowing that it is perfectly legitimate to mend things by 'forgetting the tears in the social fabric.'[8] If healing the past is the fruit of national reconciliation, then the principle of amnesty is not the place to look Ricoeur advises, because all the detrimental effects of forgetting are contained in the claim to wipe away the traces of public discord. It is in this sense that amnesty is the contrary of pardon, which Ricoeur insists, requires *memory*. He would claim that historians, and it might be added, the Churches and religions, must guard against institutional forgetting, and counteract through discourse, attempts to wipe out the facts of the past. Some traces must remain, he argues, for pedagogic reasons, to safeguard the future.

It is no easy task to situate the principle of *pardon* within the judicial trajectory of sanction-rehabilitation-pardon. Ricoeur offers two contradictory but equally necessary links between pardon and all the juridical forms that encompass sanction, rehabilitation, mercy and amnesty. He makes the point, on the one hand that pardon does not belong to the juridical order because it does not stem from the plane of law but belongs to the order of charity. Pardon indeed 'outruns' the law in his opinion because its logic is premised on love. From an epistemological viewpoint, its sources are in the principle of 'gift'. As Ricoeur puts it, the *'gift'* of pardon has a 'superabundant' quality over and above that of the law.

To make sense of what has just been asserted, Ricoeur directs us to think about who carries out the remarkable action of pardon. 'Absolutely speaking', this can only be the victim. In this regard pardon is never owed. Not only can it not be expected, but such an expectation can legitimately be refused. To this extent, Ricoeur claims that pardon must first have run into the 'unpardonable' – meaning the 'infinite debt' and the 'irreparable wrong'. That stated Ricoeur does offer an out clause so to speak. The cycle of unforgiveness is not without end – and this 'end' had to do with *memory* – whose project is not to wipe away the past – it is not forgetting (*amnesia*). On the contrary, the project of pardon is to overlook the debt – which in Ricoeur's view is incompatible with forgetting. Therefore it is helpful to think of pardon as a kind of healing of memory, the end of mourning.[9] Ricoeur then asserts that memory, delivered from the weight of debt, is then freed for great projects. In other words, pardon gives memory a future. Pardon can have a second-order effect in law too, insofar as in escaping it, pardon looms over the legal process.

Pardon is a 'permanent reminder' that justice is the justice of human beings and that it must not set itself up as the final judgment. For Ricoeur,

'the fallout of pardon on justice' is summed up in all the manifestations of compassion and goodwill which are the fruit of justice touched by mercy. In other words pardon 'accompanies' justice in its efforts to eradicate on the *symbolic* plane, the primitive element of vengeance. It is not only from 'savage vengeance' that justice seeks to dissociate itself, but from 'sacred vengeance' as well, in that blood calls for blood, a reality that itself claims the 'mantle of justice'. On the deepest symbolic plane, what is at stake as Ricoeur sees it, is the separation of the justice of humans from its more pathological shadow, vengeance. It therefore belongs to the fragile and humble virtue of pardon to exercise over this 'malicious sacred' the *catharsis* that makes a 'benevolent' sacred emerge from it.[10] Nonetheless, at an advanced age, Ricoeur continued to be troubled by the 'unsettling spectacle' of 'excess of memory' here and 'excess of forgetting' elsewhere. Therefore the idea of a 'just allotment' of memory was one of his 'avowed civic themes'.[11]

The narrative trajectory of forgiveness takes the form of an odyssey destined to lead forgiveness step-by-step back from the furthest regions of selfhood (juridical and political institutions and social morality), to the intimate domain of the person.

Ricoeur perceives 'the person' as a narrative identity shaped by many influences both conscious and unconscious – an important one being memory – which penetrates the deeper layers of the person and even whole societies – to the point where it can determine our capacity to act – whether towards the axiom of peace and forgiveness or that of revenge. He rightly alerts us to the necessity of dealing with memory as a potential source of justice and reconciliation and even of the duty to remember (*devoir de memoire*) not only out of a deep concern for the past, but in transmitting the meaning of past events to the future generations, a task that carries a moral weight.[12] Indeed, the 'necessary task' of these times according to Ricoeur, is to search collectively for a 'just peace' because this is the only means of preventing war and overcoming violence.[13]

Memory is central to Ricoeur's project of forgiveness and peace. In responding to the challenge of how to heal hurt memory, Ricoeur points out that the entire phenomenology of memory is presupposed on the idea of *happy* memory which of course can also be disappointed.

The challenge of making peace with the past, infers in Ricoeur's analysis, the passage from unhappy memory to healed memory. For this to happen, memory must pass through the difficult process of mourning. Ricoeur observes that in certain favourable circumstances, such as the right granted by another to remember or better yet, the help contributed by others in sharing memories, recollection can be said to be successful and

mourning is checked from sliding down the 'fatal slope' into *melancholia* which is an 'attraction to sorrow.'[14]

4.3 Pedagogies of Pardon

We will keep in mind Ricoeur's conviction that unhappy memory, touched by the spirit of forgiveness, is open to transformation in time. This is so he asserts because the sets of memories that compose the fragile identity of a singular life, are shown to result from the constant dynamic of separation from (*distanciation*) and appropriation of, the past.

There is a tie between the spirit of forgiveness and the completion of the project of remembrance. Or put differently, if hurt memories are to be transformed then we have to be able to consider from a distance, the stage upon which memories of the past are invited to make an appearance, if we are to truly claim them as our own, in order to be unbound from them eventually.

In the paradox of binding and unbinding ourselves from past hurts there is a hidden presence – the *incognito* of forgiveness – particularly in situations marked by public accusation.[15] So the dialectic of binding and unbinding unfolds along the lines of re-collection. Moreover, Ricoeur asserts that our memory primarily wishes for our happiness. Therefore it is incumbent upon us to seek for the restoration of memory at peace – for ourselves, loved ones and those with whom we share public space. The issue to hand is 'unhappy memory' and Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon amounts to an ambitious proposal to heal and reconcile its wounds. To echo the words of the psalmist: "*Who will make us see happiness?*" (Psalm 4.7).

4.3.1 Dealing with memory: Northern Ireland

A first step towards healing the past is to become aware of the particularity of narrative memory and to recognize that what is specific to one group or person, may be perceived differently in the memory of others: "*Too often in conflict situations, people get locked into their own stories and don't acknowledge those of others.*"[16] Therefore 'the exchange of memories' is absolutely indispensable.

We can learn how this is done through fictional narratives like those of Robert McLiam Wilson, who wrote *Eureka Street* in which he takes Protestants and gives them 'Catholic' thoughts and Catholics and gives them 'Protestant' thoughts. Another example is Frank McGuinness, a Donegal Catholic who wrote the *Sons of Ulster Marching towards the*

Somme or James Joyce from a Catholic heritage whose main character in *Ulysses*, is Jewish. These are revolutionary ideas if one wants to be ethical about narrative memory. Many individuals and groups do not, so they magnify their own narrative, 'which for them is the truth because it is their history with a capital 'H'.[17] It can be surprising then to realize that there can be plural readings of the events of the past and that no single narrative interpretation will be adequate for the reality of what may have taken place. Moreover others may have a different 'take' on what happened. While there is a truth claim to tell things as they actually happened, modesty is required in realizing that you cannot always do so adequately. This does not mean that history is just a multiplicity of different stories, but seeing it in different perspectives may help to get closer to the truth. Hermeneutics in this sense is the 'art of decoding indirect meanings.'[18]

The immense suffering shared by both sides during the period of 'the Troubles' – the thousands of deaths and injuries as well as the collapse of the economy, the hatred and triumphalism, mean that Irish Protestants and Catholics have to take a new and different view of where their vital interests lie in order to survive, while realizing that after centuries of 'misconceptions' it will be difficult and painful, but it must be done. To put it another way, coming to terms with the past is the means to a new future.[19]

In Ricoeur's opinion, the circle of 'accusation and punishment' leaves little margin for forgiveness. However his thesis is that entering into the 'circle of exchange', signals taking into account the 'bi-lateral' relation between the parties to a dispute and openness to the spirit of unconditionality as regards the question of forgiveness. Third parties must take into account the guilty person who speaks of faults committed, at the price of a formidable work of formulating the wrong, of painful telling and that of the presumed victim who may or may not be capable of uttering the liberating words: *"I forgive you."*

Huge dilemmas face the conditions of such an exchange of words in post-conflict societies, Northern Ireland included. Nonetheless the spirit of exchange is visible in the unilateral efforts of courageous organizations that have entered into dialogue and have shared their stories even into the heart of the supposed enemy camps – the community who opposed them. Two such examples are:

- *An Crann/The Tree*: An arts-based charitable organization dedicated to providing a space in which people can tell and hear personal narratives relating to 'the Troubles' era.
- *The Healing through Remembering Project*: Produced an important report under the title *All Truth is Bitter* (*ATB*) reflecting ways of facing

the past through the lens of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). A further *Storytelling Audit* was published in September 2005.

Both of these organizations share a common aim which is to deal with the 'huge legacy of unresolved hurt that is the aftermath of the violent years' so that everyone may understand the causes, share some responsibility and then be enabled to move on together to a more peaceful future.[20]

4.3.1.1 An Crann/The Tree. An Crann/The Tree was founded in 1994, in response to a desire to help ordinary citizens deal with the violence that had engulfed their community. In the space provided by *An Crann*, people came together to share and to listen to personal experiences and stories of 'the Troubles' the popular colloquial expression used to describe the thirty-year conflict. The organization published a unique collection of personal testimonies of ordinary people whose lives were shaped and sometimes shattered by the violence under the title *Bear in Mind – Stories of the Troubles*. The book reveals largely unedited, firsthand testimonies from all sides of the community including members of the police, the emergency services, the military, even children, in the belief that everyone's perspective, whether that of an ex-terrorist, a soldier, a community worker or trauma survivor, has a place of value in building a more respectful and tolerant society. Though often conflicting, contradictory and fragmented, the editors hoped that these stories would be respected through being heard and would help to stimulate an intensive dialogue on healing and the conversion of attitudes that have lead to conflict in the first place, these being sectarianism and prejudice. The *leitmotif* of this collaboration is the belief that: "*What is forgotten cannot be healed and that which cannot be healed easily becomes the source of greater evil.*"[21]

The work of *An Crann* is a very real attempt at the grassroots level to contribute to peace through narrative discussion and in the process mounts a challenge to the way in which society deals with the past so that conflict itself can be a source of healing rather than the sustenance of division. People are facilitated to 'tell their story' and in so doing they articulate the hurt that they feel:

> It is in the heart and mind that conciliation and its processes begin. Here too the victim/survivor/perpetrator begins the process of forgiveness. They may seek revenge or retribution, as this is easier to deal with than forgiveness, but it is only in forgiveness that true reconciliation can begin, otherwise there is not much more than a conditional ceasefire at community level. Story also acknowledges the hurt and it lets the lonely know that people care for them

in their suffering. It is by empowering people to tell their stories that their journey of forgiveness can begin.[22]

The logic of narrative as perceived by *An Crann* is that once the story is shared, its healing effects may spread further afield beyond their small groups of tellers and listeners. The evidence resulting from exchanging stories feeds into communities and people may then feel compassion, sympathy and empathy especially for victims and in so doing, they in turn may begin a forgiveness process, even to the extent of 'forgiving anonymous perpetrators'. Each member of society who is moved to compassion in turn can have an effect on their home community and eventually the whole of society. The alternative to storytelling is silence – the silence of sufferers, victims, survivors or perpetrators: "*There are many historic silences in the world and perhaps the shame of further degradation motivates such silences.*"[23]

Because much of the conflict in the North has tended towards expressions of 'religious sectarianism and bigotry' *An Crann* has eschewed an overtly religious approach. There are victims other than from the Christian traditions so they adopt what they say is a 'holistic' approach so that no one feels excluded on the grounds of race or religion. This does not deny a 'spiritual dimension' but in an increasingly secularized society *An Crann* feels the need of a more 'person-centred' approach which can accommodate 'the non-religious and non-partisan' expressions of spirituality today. Since the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, much of the limited funding that was available to voluntary organizations, such as *An Crann*, has dried up, yet the need for avenues of support, the like of which this organization offers the community, remains vital. The problem of funding is connected to how the relationship to the North's past is perceived by the powers that be. Many are of the opinion that it is better to leave the pain behind and to start over afresh. Still more remain trapped in the hurt of the past. For *An Crann*, the conflict of interpretations about how to deal with the past raises important issues for the future:

> The victims and their closest friends or loved ones might go to the grave with these wounds [of memory]* but civil society which cannot even cope with basic health and mental issues is likely to steam roller over those lifetime hurts. If it cannot adequately help victims, how then can it help those who are victims of the nation's history – for example the combatants? Perhaps a new war has commenced – between civil society and those seeking to deal with the legacy of the conflict.[24]

The battle of how to interpret history is not limited to Northern Ireland. Ricoeur discusses the problem of how the French Revolution is interpreted

in his native France, a conflict that still provokes heated argument among historians, some of whom regard it as a brave new beginning for the world and others as a variation on a larger historical movement which was not without its flaws. The main point that he asks us to accept regarding the interpretation of the past is that historical events, more often than not, involve a conflict of several interpretations. Acknowledgement of this fact can help to resolve outstanding cultural and historical issues. Furthermore, there are political implications:

> Political projects concerning the future invariably presuppose different inter-pretations of the past. Utopian projects for example, are about un-kept promises of the historical past being re-animated in terms of a better future which may realise the lost opportunities of the past.[25]

Can 'an ethics of discussion', as posited by Ricoeur, help communities to forgive and to forget? Simply put; it is better to give expression to anger and hatred than to repress these emotions. To hear the anger of others may force us to confront our wrongdoings, which is the first step towards forgiveness: *"It is good that the wounds of history remain open to thought. There is indeed something healthy in the expression of anger. To repress grievances is extremely bad. Expression and discussion are ways of healing."*[26]

In Ricoeur's experience, the best weapon against violence is language; therefore we have to learn to trust in language as a weapon. Some of course, do not want to change the past, and are happy with how it represents their group. The reality of the past can be understood in the comments of peace activist and Nobel Peace Laureate, John Hume:

> There was the traditional Unionist approach of seeking exclusive exercise of political power in Northern Ireland for themselves and of ignoring the exist-ence of a community, comprising forty per cent of the area's population, who have a different identity and a different aspiration. They hark back to the past and speak of the future only with fear and foreboding, a paranoia encapsulated by a poet in the lines now graffitied on the walls of the prov-ince's largest city: 'to hell with the future, long live the past. May God in his mercy be kind to Belfast'.[27]

Such attitudes reflect a 'siege mentality' that is based on fear – explicitly of being dominated by a Catholic majority and by implication, so-called 'Rome Rule'. The creation of a culture of discussion would go a long way towards breaking down the 'sentimental walls' that have traditionally div-ided the people into mutually suspicious groups. Hume is critical of all groups that have chosen to stick with the past:

> I was in Berlin when the Berlin Wall fell, a moment of great hope right across
> Europe, but I was also conscious that, as the Berlin Wall was falling, the
> Belfast walls were rising. Those walls are an indictment of us all because we
> created them – they were built by our past attitudes. The only positive way to
> look upon them is as a challenge that unless we all re-examine our attitudes,
> we will not bring the walls down. The mindset that has built these walls has
> to re-examine itself.[28]

The path to critical self-reflection for Ricoeur, lies in exchanging memories
in order to loosen the hold of the past on one's self-understanding and
identity. Ireland's problems are not unique in Europe or the rest of the
world. Many nations have backgrounds of conflict, or internal tensions
based on differences of language, religion or identity. The lessons learned
in many places is that difference need not be a problem and that stability
and harmony can be achieved by accommodating rather than eliminating
diversity.[29] The major challenge facing those who desire self-determination
and a permanent peace in Ireland is the healing of divisions between
Catholic and Protestant. This implies that religion must play a central role
in finding a lasting settlement, but perhaps in a more enlightened way.
Thirty years of condemnation of violence by religious leaders at an insti-
tutional level is not enough. For some commentators, there needs to be
more active engagement with the whole cultural and ethnic aspect of mem-
ory so that one recognizes where one is speaking from, as a particular
viewpoint. This does not deny a truth claim or imply relativism just that
there are different perspectives on what has taken place:

> The role of exchanging memories is not to go back to the past and change
> your past for another's and just become them. That is not the point. The
> point is that you return to yourself after a detour, to a self that is enlarged,
> more generous and more capable. So the goal of narrative is to arrive at a
> fuller meaning of life and a more ethical one as well, in that it is open to
> different perspectives, and more aware of what others are suffering. Without
> an exchange of memory the future can easily become just an endless repeti-
> tion of the past.[30]

Positive, community-based initiatives, such as *An Crann*, facilitate remem-
bering in a therapeutic way that helps to nurture healing and forgiveness
instead of bitterness and revenge. This type of remembering opens up pos-
sibilities for the future and means that the past does not remain a shadow,
a betrayal or a failure that denies the promise of a future. Good leaders are
necessary too because they are narrators, they tell a certain story and if
people identify with that story, then it works. For example, Gandhi had a

story and so did Martin Luther King. More than ever, the resources of Christianity need to be drawn upon constructively, so as to liberate instead of incarcerating communities in the North. This is 'the duty' of the Christian Churches now. In the past, there has been failure to open up the horizon of liberation. The authentic way forward to break the cycle of hate, at the deepest level, is spiritually, through genuine ecumenism.[31]

Although *An Crann* has a deliberate policy of side-stepping religion, dealing with the past in Northern Ireland has unavoidably religious implications. There is an intellectual responsibility to bring a hermeneutic of understanding through education to as many people as possible. More opportunities must be made available so that others too might share their stories in order to spread the cathartic advantageous of exchanging memories. This may eventually translate into a spiritual quest because political solutions, such as the Good Friday Agreement, are not sufficient in themselves. Many are convinced that there is also need of cultural and spiritual change alongside the 'political', which the latter cannot impose. Grassroots peace initiatives, no matter how effective, cannot win change by themselves especially when as Hume has observed, the structures in which they are operating are open to suspicion. Nonetheless, the 'small gestures of peace' of the sort that organizations, such as *An Crann* symbolize, are indispensable.

4.3.1.2 Healing through Remembering Project. The Healing through Remembering Project, located in Belfast, has conducted an ongoing enquiry into how people should remember the events connected with the Northern Ireland conflict. A consultation was made with Dr. Alex Boraine, Deputy Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee in South Africa (TRC) who visited Northern Ireland in 1999 at the invitation of Victim Support Northern Ireland (VSNI) and the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO). In March 2000, Boraine returned to launch the report of his visit under the title *All Truth is Bitter* (*ATB*) which outlines the themes and issues that emerged during his time in the North, as well as his experience of South Africa's TRC. One of the priorities of the ATB report is to explore 'the public discourse surrounding truth and reconciliation' in particular the use of pejorative terms such as 'victim' and 'perpetrator' and secondly to stimulate debate in the public domain on approaches to truth and reconciliation.[32] While it is recognized that there are significant differences between the South African experience and Northern Ireland, nonetheless the importance of truth telling, the position of victims and the need for reparation and reconciliation are also relevant themes for the North. If there was one overriding theme

that emerged from *ATB*, it is the importance of establishing truth itself as a vital means of moving on from the conflict.

For a small region like Northern Ireland, the number of people killed or injured represents a significant proportion of the community and as in most civil conflicts, a significant proportion of those most seriously injured were drawn from the poorest sections of the community.[33]

The *ATB* report brings home the reality of there being two sides to the Northern conflict, neither of whom want to lose face or 'accept defeat'. So the question is how to achieve a reconciled community where surrender or defeat might be required. The issue of decommissioning is perhaps a practical illustration of this problem. Added to the desire to uphold their position is the threat that both communities experience due to their 'minority status'. The concept of the 'double minority' problem has become almost common parlance and may reflect the 'beginnings of an accepted truth' by the two traditions.[34] The truth is that the North is a 'damaged society' and many can only envisage the future in the context of two warring cultures some of whose members may yet believe that 'acts of political violence must be a potential part of the solution'.[35]

A lack of awareness exists regarding the 'abnormal nature' of society, a status that has come to be accepted as 'normal'. The conclusion is that abnormal societies require 'abnormal solutions'. Whether one agrees with this statement or not, it is necessary to recognize where the starting point is. Furthermore, the abnormality has lead to a 'culture of dishonesty' where 'the truth haunts everyone'. The hope is that through processes of exchanging memories both communities might move to a position of shared truth. Boraine noted that the TRC enabled South Africans to discover a 'common memory' that replaced the previous, literally 'black and white' view of history.

The North of Ireland is also a world of different and contested realities. Community leaders, whether political or religious, can help encourage the recognition of others – a new spirit of embrace. As Ricoeur has put it, the odyssey from 'self' to 'other' is a 'solidaritizing' one which: "*Seeks that which is good for me and leads to a good life [. . .] in this way the good for me enlarges into the good for us.*"[36]

The fact of recognition and reciprocity leads to self-esteem and the restoration of human dignity, which has suffered diminishment over the past decades and is in need of rehabilitation. The spirit of exchange is a valuable commodity towards this end. According to the Healing through Remembering Project, whatever way the community decides to deal with the past, the overall objectives must be to establish 'a truth' that the majority from both communities accept; a shared Protestant

and Catholic, Unionist and Nationalist, Loyalist and Republican memory.[37]

Those who have suffered most in the North (as in South Africa) come from the disadvantaged sections of the community. It is also the case that those who have suffered least and who have benefited most financially, from the conflict reflect 'apathy' to the situation and a 'lack of motivation' to work hard for change.[38] For the betterment of all and so as to encourage the acceptability of memory on all sides, 'the apathy of the better-off' also needs to be addressed. Truth and progress require at least the acceptance, and hopefully the commitment of all sections of society while recognizing that inevitably there will be (a minority) who will never be reconciled to change.

4.4 Towards Just Memory

Apartheid in South Africa built a discriminatory political structure around different racial characteristics. In Northern Ireland, more subtle indicators enabled the quite rapid identification of a person's 'tribal roots' such as place of birth, name, residence, school attended and place of work. The ready identification of 'the other' community serves to reinforce bigotry, stereotypes and discrimination in both traditions.[39] There is often a detailed working knowledge within particular communities of history, family background, attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. This localized knowledge has been used on many occasions to enable the targeting and killing of people from the 'other' tradition. Also, wrongs against individuals are often interpreted as attacks against family and community, exacerbating divisions and tension and reinforcing the possibility of retaliation. It is no easy challenge to accept or work for reconciliation with divided small communities who have been at war with one another, who have killed or been killed and who still live side by side. South Africa's experience suggests that the solution of 'collective amnesia' where society tries to deny the past simply will not work:

> Where protagonists who have killed each other live side by side, we must establish some mechanism for enabling their future lives in the same community, to be possible. Families and individuals who have left communities because of fear of attack must be enabled to return if they so wish.[40]

On this point, Ricoeur cites the greatest innovation of South Africa's TRC as having to do with establishing the principle of individual and conditional amnesty as against the general amnesties issued in Latin America

under the pressure of the military. The South Africans, to their credit, he grants, did not try to conceal but to reveal, did not try to cover over crimes but tried to uncover them. The former criminals were obliged to participate in re-writing national history in order to be pardoned: immunity had to be deserved. It also implied public recognition of crimes and the acceptance of the new democratic rules.[41] In other words, an authentic if asymmetric spirit of exchange prevailed.

Within the context of the newly established political settlement in Northern Ireland, there is renewed hope of progress in relation to the past within the two communities.[42] This is where the hope of finding a shared truth will emerge. There is recognition that any process of truth telling and exchanging memories must ultimately be endorsed by the main political traditions. The role of organizations such as trade unions, employers, the Churches and NGO's standing alongside the politicians can make a real difference in achieving consensus about settling the past.

There is an 'irreducible' fragility inherent in politics to which Ricoeur's reply is for citizens to take up more social responsibility.[43] To foster renovation in the political order, Ricoeur recommends that citizens begin to employ a new public discourse out of a sense of duty to the past and to their own historical community based on the following models: exchanging memories, a spirit of translation and not least, forgiveness.

Such models are becoming more necessary in this era of internationalization. The model of exchange of memories, in particular holds significant promise, not only to ward off new atrocities but to enhance the quality of life for all peoples who would participate in it.[44] The *ATB* report does highlight the importance of challenging beliefs that emerge from our allegiances, and of learning to 'manage' without the comfort of our own reference group, affirming that the only way to achieve reconciliation is for the people to first of all 'acknowledge what has happened'. Ricoeur's model of exchanging memories is a useful structure to begin with; nonetheless facing the past is a delicate matter as well as a work of memory:[45]

> Victims must be heard and they must be afforded time and space to tell their story. Their memories must be acknowledged if they are to remember and move on. The vast bulk of victims who came to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (in South Africa) reflected one fundamental requirement – the need to know what had happened to their loved ones. That knowledge may be brutal but it can liberate the victim and enable life to go on as a survivor.[46]

According to Ricoeur, remembering is an ethical and political problem because it has to do with the construction of the future – implying that recollection consists, not only in having a deep concern for the past, but in

the transmission of the meaning of the past to the next generation. The duty to remember then has mostly to do with the future: as an imperative directed towards the future, it is the exact opposite side of the traumatic character of the humiliations and wounds of history. The 'duty to tell' is pedagogic in the sense of helping to prevent the past from repeating itself in the future.[47]

Holding separate enquires as has been the custom in Northern Ireland 'inevitably excludes many victims'. Given the 'adversarial' nature of such enquiries they provide only 'limited scope for truth-telling' and victims often are left with unanswered questions.[48] In the final analysis, sustainable peace depends on offering a place for all who seek resolution of the past, to tell their own truth and to eventually allow these 'different truths' to be seen as truth.[49] Many of the most contentious traumas such as Bloody Sunday, Bloody Friday and the Omagh bombing, are still open wounds.

An overall conclusion that can be drawn is that those who have suffered deserve to have their voice heard, to state their needs and to be given an appropriate official forum in which to do so. There is also the issue of reparation. At the very least, such a gesture would send a signal that a commonly acknowledged past of shared suffering would help to build an agreed future.

Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon suggests that it is possible to have 'loving conflicts' even accepting the fact that cultures and histories are different and that they may compete. The real art is not to let conflicts degenerate into violence. Moreover, to assume and live conflicts is a kind of practical wisdom (*phronesis*). It takes time for the negative 'repetition of memory' to subside in a culture so that memory is gradually transformed from the level of compulsive repetition into a 'talking cure' and a healing of 'pathological obsession'.[50] The work of memory, Ricoeur acknowledges, requires patience.

It cannot be denied that the sensitive process of dealing with the past is aided by the promotion of a culture of peace through dialogue. In other words, the 'critical use of memory' is vital to reconciliation with what has been repressed. The reward of persistence is that despite the setbacks, there is the hope of transfigured memory, even memory at peace.[51]

Throughout the course of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) hearings, journalist and poet, Antjie Krog reported daily and her impressions provide a practical illustration of Ricoeur's exhortation to deal with memory:

> The jury is still out as to whether the Truth Commission has been successful as an agent of reconciliation and reparation and South Africans are discovering that the relationship between truth and reconciliation is far more complex than they ever imagined. It has been possible to chart the progress of

democracy and reconstruction by following the Truth Commission's troubled and volatile history. Nevertheless its work allows us to understand the 'human cost' of the transition from apartheid to democracy. There is a need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for 'ubuntu' [the African philosophy of living together in harmony] but not for victimisation.[52]

Even though it was traumatic, the TRC was a narrative means of 'decoding the miracle of our times', Krog concludes. Not only did it put a spotlight on South Africa's past, it allowed this to come about through the personal recollections of those who testified before it and put 'real flesh' on rhetorical phrases like 'crimes against humanity'. By means of the TRC, the voices of ordinary people entered the public discourse and played a part in shaping the passage of history. For Krog, there was great hope that the TRC, which had its genesis in South Africa's 1990 Interim Constitution, would provide the nation with a new and badly needed moral conscience. The assurance of amnesty for those who confessed to violations of human rights during the apartheid regime has its plaudits and opponents. It certainly meant that a new political order could begin and elections be held.

Ricoeur points out that amnesty does not mean amnesia, and it can be argued that the TRC has allowed that distinction to stand since South Africa's amnesty for confession of guilt let too many offenders off the hook too easily. In hindsight, one of the most important services of the TRC was to offer an *emotional* space where 'the legacy of hatred, fear, guilt and revenge' could be ventilated. Interestingly, the whole process was run, not by a neutral third party but by South Africans themselves, telling their stories, listening to others and reporting the outcomes to a wider audience – all of whom were united in the struggle to find a new identity out of the shadows cast by an apartheid history.[53] The narrative structure of the hearings allowed the full human tragedy of apartheid to be conveyed. The South African model has influenced theories of conflict resolution throughout the world ever since. There have been advances in the style, mandate and powers of succeeding Truth Commissions and not all have followed South Africa's 'amnesty-for-truth' approach.

Ricoeur's observation that 'an ethics of memory' must do justice to the future as well as to the past to ensure that the same violence does not repeat itself, is a useful guideline. He is also aware of the difficulty of holding or managing 'power-in-common'. In politics, there can be regression as well as progression. In other words, 'history as the history of power' is uncertain. It is the collection of 'chances and perils', the possibility of gaining everything or losing everything.[54] The fact remains that political practice has always involved a struggle to gain or retain political dominance.

According to Ricoeur, politics pertains to the granting of special unmerited privileges and advantages to some dominant class. As such, rulers are tempted to make ever greater impositions, either on those whom they already rule, or on those whom they aspire to bring under their domination[55] Politically, the past 'is an argument' and the function of truth commissions 'like the function of honest historians, is simply to purify the argument, to narrow the range of permissible lies.'[56]

Ricoeur has noted that there is equally a need to appreciate the limitations of 'truth seeking.' It is only in the willingness to exchange, possibly opposing memories and stories that an approximation of the truth may emerge. Demands for truth and justice may 'reverberate' for many years and will continue irrespective of the successes (and failures) at the political level. It is certainly not the case that the simple sharing of stories will provide instant healing. Patience, perseverance and commitment are needed in dealing with memories. 'Speaking out' needs to be done in a structured manner and for specific ends. Unstructured truth-disclosure is 'pointless'.[57] By the same token, trauma and support counselling should not be equated with dealing with the past. Many victims will not divorce the questions of truth, justice and responsibility from their suffering. Support for victims is only one component of an effective strategy for dealing with the past. Truth commissions and formal public hearings can be a useful frame in which 'public discourse and memory can be housed'.[58]

History in conflict-ridden societies is a debate and a volatile one at that, but this does not deny the need to deal with it. Framing the debate on memory in a structured way can potentially help defuse the explosive content of history. This does not mean that the truth should be watered down to suit the political players, rather that all points of view should be included.

No doubt as time goes on and as society continues to 'normalize' in Northern Ireland, the truth will continue to emerge organically and indirectly through further research and the media. The 'patchwork quilt' nature of dealing with the past is likely to continue alongside calls for official recognition of suffering, and injustice. There are conflicts of interpretations and 'competing versions' of the past. Therefore it is unlikely that society will be able to move on fully without eventually some versions of the past being officially legitimized and validated and some discarded:

> Many people in Northern Ireland have died in the name of a cause legitimised by their side in the conflict. Others perhaps have covertly supported violence merely by their silence or disrespect for the dead of the other community. If a negotiated dispensation that includes all role-players is consolidated, then society cannot escape the debate about the competing moralities

of the use of violence. Equally the plight and demands of victims and survivors cannot be swept under the carpet through the provision of counselling and compensation. To this end, the debate about the truth in Northern Ireland is only beginning.[59]

A sense of ambiguity has marked the peace process but the need to pursue the 'murky path of compromise' to secure lasting peace, remains.[60] Nonetheless there is also a time for the game to end. There may be a place for 'constructive ambiguity' so that 'adversaries can work together and trust be built'. Ambiguity could be necessary to forge a breakthrough but too much ambiguity can hinder rather than facilitate trust.

For Ricoeur, the 'logic of love' extends a generosity towards conflicting interpretations and opposing arguments as these are part of life and we can learn to have 'reasonable disagreements'. The challenge is to bring conflicts to the level of discourse and not to let them degenerate into violence.[61] However, 'consensus' can sometimes be 'a dangerous game' – if we miss it we think that we have failed. There are lessons to be learned and truths to be understood from all sides. What is important in Ricoeur's view is to respect the hesitancy and caution of citizens and to tread carefully and patiently where particular histories, identities and morale are at stake.

Where the work of memory is concerned Ricoeur suggests that time must do its work, 'which is not destruction' but a 'dilution of resistance'.[62] The implication is that all parties to the peace process must acknowledge that the history of the past will necessarily involve 'a conflict of several interpretations and memories' if there is to be a chance of creating a different future. In other words, respect for the past and its pain is the beginning of re-claiming 'lost opportunities and betrayed possibilities' despite the grievous blows incurred. These are the challenges that lie ahead. It is not only a task for politicians, but for the Churches. Religion may have been part of the problem, but must also be part of the solution. There will always be 'a permanent tension' between 'the space of experience' and 'the horizon of expectation' as well as competing moralities about the past. Ricoeur argues that the 'good use' of memory respects all the 'truth-claims' of the past no matter how opposed. Simply put, there can be no 'good' use of memory if there is no respect for the truth, so 'what really happened' must concern us. We have to 'tell things as they really happened' a task that he admits is not easy.

Where the progress of the peace process is concerned in Northern Ireland, Christian observers like David Stevens of the Faith and Politics Group and the Corrymeela Community question the need for an official truth-seeking process:

> Do we require some sort of formal truth-seeking process – some sort of honest disclosure? The report on the 'Healing Through Remembering Project' suggested that a full truth recovery process should be given careful consideration. It was proposed that an important first step would be acknowledgement by all organisations and institutions that have engaged in violence to take their responsibility for the past. The Bloody Sunday process suggests that a judicial enquiry is not the way to go.[63]

Ricoeur suggests that 'historical memory' needs to be supplemented by documentary and archival evidence: *"finally we have to return to a body count ... to accurately count the corpses ... as well as offering vivid narrative accounts that people will remember."*[64] In other words, the 'reality claims of memory' are vital. They represent a debt owed to the past. Testimony is 'indispensable' because it is the ultimate link to memory. The witness says: '*I was there, I was part of the story.*' The witness tells a story [about the past] that is at the same time a *living* presentation and deploys the capacity of imagination to place the events before our eyes as if we were there. Testimony is a way to bring memory and imagination together, so that the past is made visible for us in the here and now. Ricoeur is asking us to consider the past as having two meanings – no longer there yet still there, courtesy of our imagination. It is at once absent and present. The ethical conundrum of memory for Ricoeur, is to honour the debt to the past as it actually happened, trying to make the past visible and present so as to find new insights (*phronesis*). The goal of ethical remembering is to open up the archives of the past in order to 'retrieve the traces' which the 'dominant ideological forces' try to suppress. This is the subversive agency of narrative to offer a critique of power – particularly power that is wielded sometimes without conscience, by means of recounting the 'little histories of the vanquished'.

We are all 'embedded in history' and are also 'actors in the plot.' None of us are in a state of pure indifference, so testimonies can never be completely neutral and memory can be a selective activity. However, it is far less selective than the testimony of the dominant class.[65] In light of the discussion and the views presented in this chapter, it may be timely to search for a 'reflective equilibrium' between 'predominantly held beliefs' and the findings of 'critical minds'.[66] Such a mechanism will help to distinguish between 'good and bad history' and by implication, between good and bad memory.

A narrative ethic suggests that it is only through discussion that suspicion between opposing groups can give way eventually to 'trust and a certain level of consensus'.[67] Ricoeur's advice is to keep the wounds of history open to thought:

Bear in mind these dead
I can find no plainer words . . .
They propose no more than thoughtful response[68]

4.5 Structuring Memory

Expression, discussion and contemplation are ways of healing. To hear the
hurt of others may force us to confront our own wrongdoings, which is
the first step towards forgiveness. For some, the Good Friday Agreement
sidestepped the issues of guilt and responsibility and the demand for truth
exceeds supply. There is clearly a need for a more structured process of
honest disclosure and in some quarters there is little hope of that. What
several commentators have predicted is already happening: *"the truth is
emerging piecemeal over time."*[69]

The experience of Bishop Trevor Williams as former Director of the
inter-faith Corrymeela Community has taught him that there is no alterna-
tive to peace building:

> Learning how to deal with diversity is very important for Christians in
> Northern Ireland, where religious divisions mark out who belongs to 'us' and
> who belongs to 'them' – who can be trusted and who is to be feared. We are
> learning what it means to be an inclusive Christian community and we try to
> confess our own responsibility for the destructive conflicts in our society and
> recognise that we are part of the problem. At Corrymeela, we invited others
> to find out what life can be like when we live through the paradigm of
> forgiveness rather than violence.[70]

Williams is of the opinion that coming out of thirty years of hurt, the
communities in the North need at least thirty years of healing. He is con-
scious of the pressure on everyone to put the past behind and to get on with
'normal life'. Within that impulse there is a temptation to paper over the
cracks, to pretend that the deep divisions between the communities in
Northern Ireland no longer exist. With the emphasis on 'normalization' he
fears that the work of reconciliation may not rate such a high priority but it
is needed more than ever.

> One of the things that I have learned is that people do need to tell their
> stories. When people are able to tell their stories into the community that
> opposed them it has been my experience that it bears fruit in empathy and
> compassion. In turn this facilitates the evolution of new stories, in a safe
> space. There are some rules of engagement involving a contract of 'respect'
> for others and 'listening without prejudice'. What matters most in life is

conducting respectful relationships with one another. This is what makes growth and change possible. After living in a part of the world that for so long has been segregated through fear, finding a place where you can safely meet the stranger, even the enemy, is a tremendous gift. When relationships of trust are forged across a chasm of fear, you receive the wonderful gift of freedom.[71]

Different Christian traditions have created their identities over against one another in this part of the world, he observes. Belonging to an inclusive Christian community is like being on a journey that challenges one's prejudices against 'the other'. Finding the healing of those hurts through a once-perceived enemy brings with it the possibility of celebrating diversity for the richness it can bring to one's life: *"There is a healing catharsis that can only be mediated by the enemy who holds the key to one's truth and one's future."*

4.5.1 *Mourning*

The examination of memory in the wake of conflict suggests that we take seriously the question: *"What do we do with our suffering?"* Ricoeur's analysis of this challenge is insightful. He shows that there is a bond between narrative, memory and forgiveness. Narrative creates an opportunity for the reconciliation of memories, for mourning what is lost which opens the way to forgiveness, then possibly to healing. A willingness to enter into an exchange of memories opens up a certain flexibility concerning the past and renders it less black and white – a movement towards *ipseité*. The story of the past begins to modify as well.

Mourning past losses and wounds is an important element of healing and of putting the past to rest. The work (*durcharbeiten*) of mourning is also a work of repair and acceptance. Mourning, however is not a backward glance at the past, it is concerned with how memory can be respected and given recognition so that new possibilities of living are created for the future. The bringing in of flexibility to the way the narrative of the past is told begins to issue in a sense of loss but at the same time there is hope:

> The past is a wound that leaves a scar. We realise that we cannot ever restore the past. There is a human level where no reparation is possible. In a lot of stories about the past, what is going on is not just a sense of wanting the past suffering to be acknowledged; often there is an implicit claim on the perpetrators that "I want to get something back from them." But there is a level of

loss that is just pure loss – and this is the bit that must be mourned. Maybe I
will get compensation, which is some way of making reparation, but in terms
of one's life, all the opportunities that are gone cannot be brought back. In
that sense, I think that this is what Ricoeur is getting at; mourning is essential
to forgiveness.[72]

People cannot be pushed into mourning – it cannot be contrived. So the
question is how can the memory of suffering be respected and be given
the type of recognition that it requires to allow people to move towards
the place of forgiveness and healing? Mourning gets blocked and there-
fore forgiveness and reconciliation also get blocked in the process. When
there are competing memories there is a struggle because one group of
people, who have suffered hugely did not get enough recognition, so in the
present historical moment how is it possible to work towards just memory?
The solution lies in attaining more narrative flexibility, even within one's
own camp, which once again emphasizes the interplay of *idem* and *ipsé*
identification towards the past:

> Let's say we take different positions on something. How can I be empathetic
> to your view if I have not had the opportunity to express my side of things so
> that I might see more nuances than I did before and perhaps achieve more
> flexibility in the argument – especially if we both consider ourselves to be
> victims of each other's behaviour.[73]

As regards, the civil conflict that we have experienced in Ireland for
example, the necessary step that needs to be taken now is to ask how we
can give a structure to memory and give it recognition so as to facilitate its
evolution? People in both communities will not acquire flexibility with
regard to their past until their hurts has been listened to and given
recognition.

Ricoeur suggests that it is out of a process of real empathy with their
position (which is not saying that they were completely right and someone
else was wrong) and with the kind of suffering that they have endured over
a long period of time, that people get the freedom to re-tell their story in a
slightly different way – and to take into account the position of the other.
We can also ask about the position of the listener in this process and if they
need to be neutral? When you think of the *situated-ness* of the listener, it is
not really helpful for the one who has been victimized to have a listener
who is seen to represent the oppressing organization or group, being
involved and this is hard for some people who want to help, to accept.
Situated-ness is important. The listener has to be perceived to be neutral
to the event and at some distance from the event. Otherwise, empathic
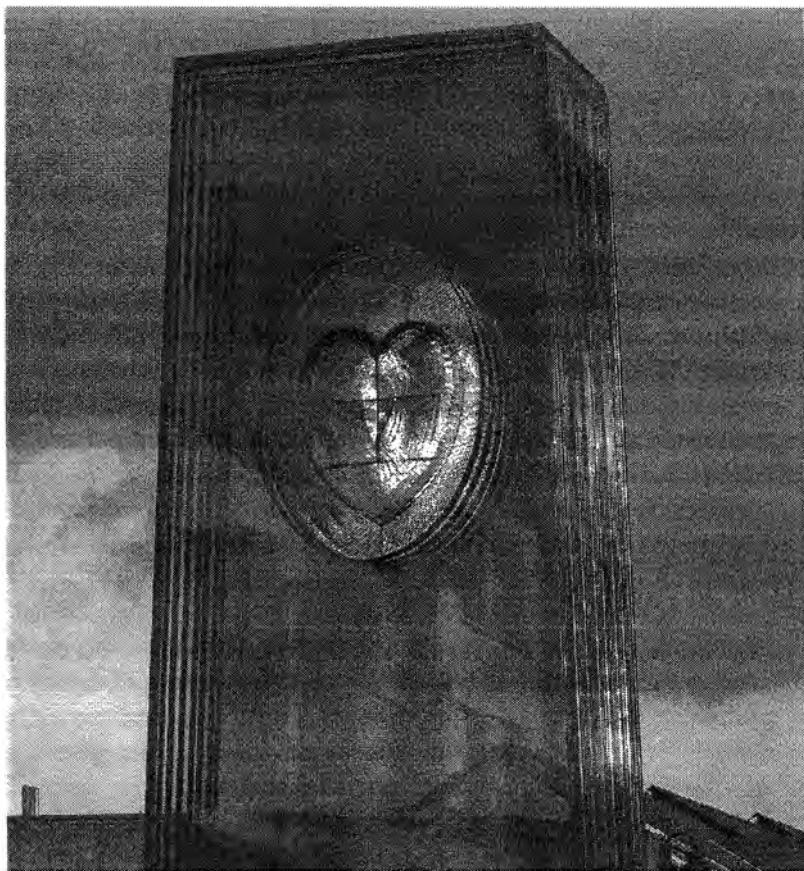
The Tyrone Crystal heart mounted within a glass pillar is the focus of Sean Hillen and Desmond Fitzgerald's Omagh Bomb Memorial, unveiled on the Tenth Anniversary of the worst atrocity of the Troubles which occurred on 15 August 1998. It captures the challenge of memory and forgetting.

listening to the other cannot really be experienced because it will have too many questions attached to it:

> In terms of civil conflicts, from a narrative perspective, there needs to be a lot of listening across the line, but equally it is important to listen from within the lines. Structured listening within and without is equally important. You can only take into account the position of the other when you have your group with you. You cannot risk your relationships being torn apart at the seams. None of us are innocent in the sense that all of us are situated by others in one way or another[74]

To an extent this is a cultural problem because our society gives more credence to speaking than to listening. By creating structures for listening, more progress can be made. To put it another way, Ricoeur's wager is that: "*Perhaps my enemy can teach me something*".[75] His narrative philosophy of the self, takes issue with 'the intransigent and uncompromising' ideology of 'sameness' that hinders progress and human flourishing. In the interplay of narrative identity (idem and ipse), so deeply connected to memory, the priority is on flexibility (*ipse*) because this quality facilitates historical communities to move forward in time, out of conflict, in a positive way.

Structuring memories of suffering is a necessary pre-condition to reconciliation and forgiveness in Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon. The very words *reconciliation* and *forgiveness* must remain 'incognito' in the context of the peace process until the structuring of memory has been put in place, yet these values remain implicit in the narration of the past. We may be on the path to reconciliation even if the very word has to remain 'incognito' because the memories of the past are still very raw and immediate for many people.

The wisdom of experience indicates that it is quite common for people who begin to share their story of suffering and loss to be unconscious of the deep trauma that may be involved in the telling and are not immediately aware of who the listener is, so long as it is not the enemy or perpetrator. There is no consciousness of the otherness of the listener as another subject who may be interested in listening in a questioning kind of way. In other words, where you 'sit' in the story becomes significant. Getting to the level of conscious re-collection takes time and trust. Eventually through the creation of structures, suffering can get out onto the stage of memories that are spoken. Therefore it is important to see memory as an act of creation. The narrator is involved in an act of creation, so the *imagination* is at work at all levels of memory. Moreover, the performance of memory is always in a sense political because 'the other' never remains in the eyes of the teller 'ultimately neutral.'[76]

There is always a hidden purpose in the telling, which might be in the first instance, simply having one's suffering heard and recognized by another. For many people, telling their story may be the only form of redress.

One can also get reconnected to the unfulfilled promises of the past, in other words, to what was lost. Sharing one's story can be an opportunity to say to oneself: "*What can still now be fulfilled of that past, in the telling of the wounds of the past?*"[77]

Ricoeur asserts that something can be recovered from the past in the present but some potentialities remain lost forever. So getting in touch with memories can be bittersweet. Yet paradoxically, the very acceptance

of our losses is a dimension of the healing process. Nobody can ever change what happened, a little mourning goes on, some of the lost potential is recoverable but not all. That is why it is important to have a structure for memory. The commemoration of memory can be the beginning of something new.[78]

The danger of memory is that it can be mere recall. Ricoeur's critique is a challenge to the mere repetition of events and he suggests that the structuring of memory can be an opportunity for a more *creative* engagement with the past. Commentators say that sometimes the narrator is not able to take into account that there is a real other listening to their story. There is no consciousness in the telling that the other who is listening might have questions about the story that is being told. Ricoeur asks us to consider why we want to remember the past. He is convinced that we remember because there is something of value (exemplary) there for human beings – whether it is something to do with justice or realizing human beings should not be treated in particular ways, or to remain connected to the event by saying 'these values are important to us and we should hold onto them'.[79]

His message is that a certain kind of solidarity, a certain kind of witnessing to suffering, to the memory of the past is important and that it is worth thinking as a community about how we can do this. In other words, there can be a moral sentiment tacked on to memory which is creative in a certain way. Getting in touch with this creative movement of memory is at the heart of Ricoeur's narrative pedagogy of pardon.

4.5.2 Forgiveness

The ethical function of *memoire* is to pave the way for forgiveness and healing. By asking us to think about our lives as a story that provides us with a 'narrative' identity, Ricoeur suggests that it is possible to revise or recount events whether personal or collective, in a different way. Forgiveness is 'a specific form of revision of the past' and through it, 'of specific narrative identities'.[80] However, as we are more often than not 'entangled' in different life-stories, a 'mutual revision' of the past is necessary. Moreover, forgiveness is a 'specific form' of that mutual revision, the most precious outcome of which is the liberation of its unfulfilled promises. Moreover, historical communities that have wronged each other need to reflect from the perspective of those who suffered from, rather than profited by, the hand of momentous events.

According to Ricoeur, suffering is a double-edged evil: first there is 'suffering endured', which transforms the agents of stories into victims,

secondly, there is the suffering that is 'inflicted' on others. This double reality of suffering leads him to suggest that any exchange of memories must proceed from the suffering of others, that is, out of trying to imagine the suffering of others prior to examining one's own.[81] In so doing, our narrative identity, both communal and individual, can profit from important 'correctives', namely, the examination of one's own stories and the entanglement of our stories with those of others and a better appreciation of the suffering of others, both past and present.

Exchanging memories is primarily a sharing of 'sufferings inflicted and sustained'.[82] It is an exchange that demands 'more than imagination and sympathy'. This *'more'* has something to do with forgiveness. It is only in forgiving, he insists, that we can 'shatter the debt' owed to the past.

Forgiveness is in essence, a gift, arising from the logic of love. It is a generosity of heart and mind that far exceeds 'political categories'. As such it belongs to the realm of 'the spiritual' or put another way, to 'the poetics' of moral life. The spiritual power of forgiveness consists in shattering the law of the 'irreversibility of time' by changing the past, in terms of what it might *mean* for us today. In other words, forgiveness does not abolish the past, but it lifts the 'burden of guilt' which can paralyze the relationships between individuals and communities who are 'acting out and suffering' their own history.[83]

Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon has important observations for post-conflict communities and is instructive in showing that it is possible to have compassion, even for enemies, by imagining the suffering of others first. Moreover he suggests that sentiments of compassion and empathy 'strongly resemble forgiveness'.[84]

However, a cautionary note is circumspect here if two 'pitfalls' are to be avoided. First, it would be wrong to confuse forgiveness with forgetting. Nothing Ricoeur surmises, is more loathsome than 'forgetful forgiveness' – a product of shallowness and indifference. The work of forgiveness must be grafted onto the work of memory in the language of narration. The second pitfall to avoid is the granting of 'easy forgiveness', which also leads to forgetting. On the other hand, there is the difficulty of responding to a request for forgiveness. To the victims of crimes they consider to be unforgivable, Ricoeur offers no other advice than to 'wait for better times'. He assures them that they will see the first 'cathartic effect' of the drawing-up of wrongs suffered. The work of memory will help the offender attain 'full understanding' of the crimes that he or she has committed: *"There is a time for the unforgivable and a time for forgiveness. Forgiveness requires enduring patience."*[85]

Although Ricoeur argues for generosity in relation to the hurts and losses of the past to the extent that forgiveness toward the past may be possible, he is in no way substituting 'charity' towards the errors of the past, for justice. Love and forgiveness are always 'a surplus'. A spirit of compassion and tenderness is what provides the process of cross narration of memories, with its 'profound motivation and daring'.[86] The sharing of stories of suffering, even though at times conflicting and shocking may move us to pity, to a deeper understanding of the past and hopefully at some stage, to forgiveness.

That stated it would be wrong to interpret Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon as a sad story that has a happy ending. Forgetting can all too readily imply an effacement of memory via the paradigm of amnesty, which for Ricoeur only provides grist to the 'abuses of forgetting'.[87]

Is it not as plausible to speak of 'happy forgetting' as it is to speak of 'happy memory'? For Ricoeur, there is no symmetry between memory and forgetting in terms of success or accomplishment with respect to forgiveness. There is a debt owed to the past when memory is traumatized by violence. The admission that loss is forever is the wisdom that is held as the *incognito* of forgiveness present in tragic action. The art of forgetting, if there is one, cannot be constructed as a parallel project alongside the wish for happy memory. There is a tension to be held, a necessary asymmetry between memory and forgetting, due to the debt owed for past wrongs, but this does not deny the place of 'carefree' memory on the horizon of 'concerned' memory. Mediating between the two is *the incognito* of forgiveness, an echo of the ultimate poetics of existence that announces: "*Love is as strong as death.*" (*Song of Songs* 8.6)[88]

4.6 Conclusion

The seeds of forgiveness and reconciliation are sown in memory. The right use of memory saves us from remaining only victims of the past. In other words, the story of who we are can expand and this is a type of resurrection. Good things can grow out of remembering. While accepting that it is not possible to restore the past and its losses fully, remembering can realize new potentialities of being and change the meaning of tragic events for the future. New connections with the past can help to create a better future. Moreover, Ricoeur has successfully argued that reconnecting with the losses and suffering of the past is not a morbid exercise, but has value for human beings. There is a need to remain connected to events of the past but not tied to them – and this he posits is 'the art of

memory' (*ars memoriae*). Furthermore, what gets 'tacked onto memory' is important because this is the moral ground that provides opportunities for a fresh start:

> The very wound begins to be the source of a new skill. So defining our wounds is a positive step to recognising the hidden value in suffering. We can create new life-skills. For example even by accepting a desire that is unfulfilled – we can learn what is of real value to us.[89]

This is the way the human spirit fights against the erosive or destructive forces in life that try 'to bring everything to ruins' in Ricoeur's opinion. Human action is a 'counter-trend' that ensures the prevailing of growth over destruction so that the traces and archives of the past are preserved and memory is one of these archives. Ricoeur advances four pre-conditions attached to memorizing:

- First, remember in order not to forget – the past, heritage and history.
- Second, remember so that at some point there is an ability to forgive and thus to be unburdened of memories.
- Third, remember in order to re-activate in some new and meaningful way the 'unfulfilled promises of the past'.
- Fourth, remember most of all to 'keep alive the memory of suffering' over and against the tendency of history to celebrate victors.

To memorize the victims of history – the sufferers, the humiliated and forgotten – should be the task of all of us into the new millennium he concludes.[90] However, is there not also a concomitant duty to forget? Ricoeur links memory to the duty to teach the future generations the lessons of the past whereas the duty to forget is directed at 'going beyond anger and hatred'. His narrative paradigm suggests that whether we succeed or not as citizens and communities in resolving the past also depends on the mediation of justice. True peace, therefore necessitates the evolution of 'a *culture of just memory*'.[91]

Narrative logic implies that memory works through an encounter with forgetting, not with memory as guardian of the past, preserving the past event, but with memory that confers on human beings the power to keep promises, to be constant. Ricoeur argues for a type of memorizing that while ordaining the future on the basis of past commitments, renders the person, 'calculable, regular, necessary' hence able to stand security for his own future. It is against this honourable background that unfolds the shadow side of memory – debt, fault and guilt.[92] The latter aspect of

remembrance begs the question of forgiveness, an act that belongs to the logic of love rather than justice.

The absolute measure of the gift Ricoeur notes, is love of one's enemies, as the gospel encourages, expecting nothing in return – the measure of an almost impossible commandment. (Luke 6.32–35) While the radical asymmetry of the relation between requesting and granting forgiveness cannot be denied in serious cases of offence nonetheless the generosity of the gift wipes away guilt. Asymmetry then is 'constitutive' of the forgiveness equation.

The South African TRC did provide an important service for public peace in establishing an official forum where victims of the apartheid era could remember and mourn their losses. Ricoeur has commented that the TRC exposed 'brutal truths' that were often 'unacceptable' to the agencies of political reconciliation. Nonetheless, he does not despair of such enterprises because reservations aside he sees in their *esprit* the seed of reconciliation:

> It is not a sign of despair to recognise the non-circumstantial, but more properly structural limitations belonging to a process of reconciliation which not only requires a great deal of time but also a work upon the self, in which it is not an exaggeration to see under the figure of a public exercise of political reconciliation, something like an 'incognito' of forgiveness.[93]

Additionally on the side of victims, he posits the 'undeniable therapeutic benefits' both moral and political, for all concerned. In this sense the TRC hearings truly permitted the public exercise of the work of memory and mourning, guided by an appropriate process of cross-examination. Many would agree with Ricoeur's assessment that: *"in offering a public space for complaints and the recounting of suffering, the commission certainly gave rise to a shared catharsis."*[94]

Ricoeur's triad of memory-exchange-forgiveness is an aide to contemporary peacemaking. Furthermore, the *incognito* of forgiveness is the spirit that informs all that he has to say regarding the enormous project of memory, history and forgetting. In other words, the human search for perpetual peace will eventually find completion on the eschatological plane of love. It remains for each generation to take up the challenge of cultivating the spirit of *agape* in civic institutions and of invigorating pubic life with the necessary compassion that marks our authentic humanity.

This point now invites consideration of the context of narrative reconciliation in the contemporary sphere.

TOWARDS A NARRATIVE PEDAGOGY OF RECONCILIATION

Peace comes dropping slow

W. B. Yeats

5.1 Introduction

Reconciliation is one of the few words from the Christian theological tradition that remains in vogue in public discourse in secular modernity. However, its original context is religious and centred on the relationship between God and a fallen world. As St. Paul has written: "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself*" (2 Cor. 5.19). This statement raises the question of reconciliation as belonging first of all to the transcendental realm.[1]

Nonetheless the ethical dimension cannot be neglected. It needs to be placed in a broader frame and this is where Ricoeur's narrative theory makes important connections to the virtues of love and justice. His insight into the dynamics of their often confrontational relationship is of interest for Christian ethicists. However his work has yet to be systematically drawn out.[2] Despite this lack of development, Ricoeur's dialectical exposé of the interface between the secular law of equivalence (justice) and the religious logic of superabundance (the love command) helps to deepen our understanding of both love and justice through mutual interpretation. In advancing the science of love and justice, Ricoeur points ahead to a deeper purpose which is to take seriously, claims about 'the ethical possibilities of biblical witness'.[3] The latter is critically important for Christian ethics, which constantly needs to update its language to engage the post-modern, pluralist world. As Ricoeur is also a thinker of *mediation*, he is capable of making what might at first look like an incompatible juxtaposition, coherent. As a mediator between the poles of the secular and the sacred, Ricoeur asserts that 'hermeneutics should not divorce truth from method'. He directs our attention to the ways in which human understanding is 'schematized' through texts, rules and institutions.[4]

In the field of ethics, Ricoeur has cautiously edged towards a '*theonomous*' expression of the dialogue particularly between love and justice. He is hesitant though about 'a premature synthesis' that would assume

'a ready commensurability' between *love*, on the one hand, which is figured through poetic discourse and *justice*, on the other, which is schematized through juridical argumentation.[5]

For example, Ricoeur will say that biblical *agape* possesses a 'meta-ethical' character from which he deduces that: *"there is no such thing as a 'Christian morality' . . . but a 'common morality' which biblical faith places in a new perspective, in which love is tied to the 'naming' of God."*[6]

This new perspective is not without effect in the secular sphere though – the biblical paradigm of 'gift' based on love seeps into the cracks in the public moral imagination now and then, as a re-figuring agent within secular ethics. It is visible for example, in the way the religious language of reconciliation has impacted on the political sphere of conflict resolution in South Africa and Northern Ireland. The sharing-in-common of originally Christian terms that find their way into popular discourse is not without problems. This is so because they can undergo changes of meaning. Ricoeur seeks to maintain a unity in the meditation of love and justice.

It is possible to gain a deeper insight into the re-figuration of justice by love by paying attention to the *'figurative* language' through which justice and love are 'thought'.[7] Metaphors especially biblical ones, relate religious faith and the ethics of common life. In the metaphors of the 'veil' and 'kingdom', for example, we find a distinctive way of melding love's poetry with the prose of justice to advance a more compassionate civic order. The encounter between love and justice is incorporated into Ricoeur's ethical writings metaphorically in the following way:

5.1.1 The veil

The metaphor of the veil enters Ricoeur's justice discourse through his interest in John Rawls' social theory, which uses the idea of a 'veil of ignorance' behind which the members of society choose the principles of justice. The veil is an imaginative ploy to represent ways of making life-in-common fairer and more just, so that social inequality is kept to a minimum. While Ricoeur has some reservations about the veil theory, he does use it as an integral part of his dialectic on ethics. Ricoeur concedes that Rawls' fictional 'veil of ignorance' is the most adequate projection of the notion of autonomy in the contemporary institutional sphere.[8] The 'veil' serves two important functions in Ricoeur's treatment of justice: first, by virtue of the fact of purifying ourselves of 'particular interests', it serves to represent the critical distance that is essential to ethical decision-making. Second, because the veil theory is a fictive tool, it allows moral theory to

think something *otherwise* – in this case – a just and equitable society. The veil of ignorance then, is a useful device that Ricoeur utilizes in order to compensate for humanity's forgetfulness of the original social bond which is the will to live together.

5.1.2 The kingdom

The metaphor of the kingdom finds expression in Ricoeur's concern for how God is revealed to human understanding through the 'extravagant' forms of biblical discourse, especially the parable. Ricoeur asserts that human understanding can approach the kingdom of God only by being re-figured through metaphors. The image of 'the kingdom' is the central metaphor to communicate biblical faith. While 'kingdom' connotes the ideal of law and rule, in this case the ruling principle is a different logic – that of love. It challenges our mundane way of calculating our interactions in social life. On the other hand, human law and prudence are based on the logic of *equivalence* (this for that). The corrective action of the kingdom introduces into our lives-in-common, the principle of *superabundance*, with the intent of re-figuring our actions in the direction of generosity, transformation or justice.[9] Ricoeur links the image of the 'kingdom' to the notion of *love* as the central ethical expression of religious faith. Its relation to the earthly world can only be indirect which is why he asserts that *agape* is meta-ethical. Metaphorically speaking, the kingdom expresses the hope of a social realm that will be colonized by the extraordinary 'economy of the gift'. Only the belief that the extraordinary is encountered in the ordinary, gives us an indication that love must break through in earthly justice. Perhaps in this context, the seepage of a religious language of reconciliation into the public domain can be interpreted as a positive development.

5.1.3 Love's logic

Reconciliation is one of the 'many models of salvation' in the New Testament and it has unique insights to offer, especially as a *'relational'* model of reality established through the Christ event, yet continuing in the present, in the life of believers, until the *eschaton*. Christ's mediating presence within a fractured humanity is the basis of the Christian concept of reality, restoring the communion broken by human fault. Therefore reconciliation may be described as the backbone of 'the logic of love', which is both God's work and yet requires human agency to be fulfilled.

This logic is Trinitarian in character, conferring the Spirit with the power and efficacy of God's reconciling action, bringing the work of Christ on the cross into the present so as to bring about a re-figured world.[10]

Accordingly, some conclusions can be drawn for the bearing down of this mystery on the world, particularly in the realm of politics. The work of reconciliation does not only involve human effort; the 'Godward' side of the relation is also crucial. From a Christian perspective there cannot be 'an ethic of reconciliation' at the expense of the 'once and for all' atoning act of Christ. Claims on a too humanistic ethic of reconciliation will necessarily fail because it will be 'too weak to bear what is loaded upon it'. In other words, the originally Christian notion of *repentance* must be integrated into a secular ethic of reconciliation. In the end, reconciliation is something given – a gift to the Church from God.

From the viewpoint of social cohesion, reconciliation, via the healing of memories, represents the renewed possibility of the free relation of equals and the relinquishing of an adversarial past. First though we must allow that our identity is 'dialogical' in that it relates to that of others with whom we share community.[11] When this relationship of mutual dependency is resisted or refused, then our connections with others take 'destructive' rather than 'constructive' forms and alienation is multiplied. In Christian terms, all this will lead to the cross, which is also the resolution of civic failure because the reconciliation achieved on the cross involves reconciliation in the human sphere – a point Ricoeur alludes to in his metaphorical working out of the interface of 'veil' and 'kingdom' or to put it another way, of love and justice.

Metaphoric language expresses the transcendental quality of reconciliation. The term does not belong to the domain of politics, nor even of morality, but to 'the works of love'. In other words the 'poetics' of love influences the public sphere as well as the personal and more intimate sanctum of human relationship. For Ricoeur, forgiveness and reconciliation are not 'exclusively' the domain of theology. First and foremost, reconciliation belongs to the 'poetics of existence' of which the religious is the culmination. It is by virtue of the generosity of the gift, that the poetics of existence can influence politics.[12]

5.2 Narrative Pedagogy and Reconciliation

Healing and reconciliation are issues of urgent global concern. The relief of economic or material privation worldwide is in some instances being

overtaken by the need for healing and reconciliation, especially in societies ruptured by violence and hatred.

Processes of reconciliation nowadays, are multifaceted. Political and legal recourse can help as the many Truth and Reconciliation Commissions around the globe, illustrate. But there is also a growing awareness that these remedies are not, of themselves, adequate for the task in hand. Another dimension is needed which is the spiritual.[13]

Statutory commissions can examine the wrongs of the past but they cannot effect forgiveness; social conditions can facilitate reconciliation but they cannot guarantee it. The social dimension is vital to providing structures whereby a torn society can be rebuilt as truthful and just, helping a community to come to terms with its past, punishing wrongdoers, providing some measure of reparation to victims and generally creating a space where the trust that makes civil society possible, begins to flourish once again. There is another space that also needs to be created and this is spiritual. It has to do with re-building shattered lives so that reconciliation becomes a reality. To put it another way: "*The state can set up commissions to examine the wrongdoing of the past but it cannot legislate for the healing of memories. The state can offer amnesty or mete out punishment to wrongdoers but it cannot guarantee forgiveness.*"[14]

Efforts made through political and juridical avenues may create the necessary conditions to make reconciliation more likely, but these conditions are not sufficient. Religion has a role to play in providing the 'spiritual space', which implies 'a Christian way' of dealing with suffering by bringing one's own story into contact with the story of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The gospel narratives are a means of making sense of violence, of the suffering of innocent victims, of their hope of redemption.

Scriptural stories map the pattern for all human suffering. The 'spiritual dimension' of reconciliation is revealed, especially in Jesus' appearance stories, which can be read as practices of reconciliation, of coming to terms with violent history, of re-building the human community.[15]

As narratives of reconciliation, the resurrection 'appearance' stories can give us hints about the spiritual nature of reconciliation. This is not the only way to read these stories, it simply reflects their richness and multivalent character. There is of course the danger of reading into them, what we want to see – which requires vigilance.

A characteristic of the Christian practice of reconciliation is to bring the human need for healing to the Paschal Mystery in the hope that our quests will be illumined and our histories expanded. The reasoning behind this approach is that God starts with the victim. Who is the victim in the

appearance stories? It is none other than Jesus himself. Restored to life in a transfigured humanity, he begins again by healing and forgiving his disciples, commissioning them in turn to carry forth his message and mission to the world. The appearance stories invite us to meditate on such things so that we may come to know better the power of Christ's resurrection.[16]

For example, the 'appearance' story that has particular resonance in the climate of post-conflict Northern Ireland is the Emmaus narrative:

> The Easter peace brokered by the 1998 Good Friday Agreement means that things are very different yet the wounds are still there, still recognisable even though something life-changing has taken place. In the Emmaus story we begin to realise that Jesus has become a wounded healer and therefore we might begin to understand that our own hurts can help to heal the wounded hearts of others. The message of the resurrection is that the destructive powers of the world will not prevail.[17]

Further insights can be gleaned into the nature of Ricoeur's narrative paradigm of reconciliation from the Emmaus story as it touches upon human experience in so many different ways:

> The stranger gains the trust of the group and provides a safe place for the disappointed disciples to tell their story. The story gets retold until a new perspective emerges. The finding of the new perspective happens as a moment of grace. Jesus 'recounts' the whole biblical story from the perspective of God and what God wants for the world.[18]

Nowadays in our more secularized world, a God-centred perspective is not so evident. The stranger in the Emmaus story creates a circle of love in which the disciples can tell their stories in safety and begin to re-build trust. In the circle of love, memories can be revisited in their pain and sorrow, not simply to relive the negative feelings but to find a way to outlive them:

> It is in such a setting that the cup of suffering can be transformed into the cup of hope. All of this moves the victim toward a new creation in which truth will reign. In the Emmaus story, the disciples had thought that the truth of the matter was that Jesus was not the one whom they had hoped would redeem Israel. In fact, he was.[19]

The Emmaus story is one of the best examples of how we can place our own stories in the bigger story of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus. It also contains the principal elements of a spirituality of reconciliation: going on the journey, telling one's story, recognition, which means

finding oneself in another's story, an experience that Ricoeur assures us can precipitate a cathartic moment of transformation. In other words, the biblical perspective of 'the kingdom' prepares a community to repair the social fabric by offering:

- a message of reconciliation and an ensuing spirituality
- rituals (sacraments) of healing and forgiveness
- the capacity to create communities of reconciliation.[20]

Christian spirituality also addresses issues of memory, forgiveness and re-building trust. The Church believes that God has entrusted it with a ministry of reconciliation and Catholicism expresses that ministry in the sacrament of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5.17) The theology of this sacrament of the kingdom has yet to be fully brought to bear upon situations of social conflict though there are signs of progress.[21]

Among the sacramental tasks involved in bringing about a marriage between the sacred sphere of love and the human realm of justice are the following:

- Dealing with the guilt of bystanders.
- Developing 'ritual moments' to facilitate remorse and apology, to hear declarations of forgiveness and celebrate new beginnings.
- Preaching – which is a form of 'ongoing schooling' in the spirituality of reconciliation.
- Celebrating the Eucharist, to offer healing and renew hope.
- Creating communities of reconciliation – spaces of safety, memory and hope.
- Accompanying victims, creating zones of safety through hospitality.
- Unfolding memories and making new connections in stories so that a *cadre* of reconciled people can serve as a leaven in the new society.[22]

Social reconciliation can be perceived as the re-construction of the 'moral order'.[23] While work needs to be done in terms of the rule of law, economic re-alignment and social change, reconciliation and the ethos of the post-conflict society also deserve priority.[24] In other words, the synergistic energy of love and justice are required. The metaphor of the Emmaus story is also apt for the work of reconciliation in that biblical faith can teach societies coming out of conflict how to act. Ricoeur explains that the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom reconciled to itself, is only glimpsed at in our human world through the veil of the *parable* or some other mode of religious discourse.[25] As a *metaphorized* narrative the parable can work its

transformative power on the civic imagination so as to re-figure human action in an extraordinary way. As such, the wedding of 'kingdom' and 'veil' can be understood as the meeting point of the search of *love for justice* and of *justice seeking love*. Hence, the veil is re-figured as a *wedding veil*.

Applying this image to reconciliation, the wedding of justice and love evokes the transformation that is supposed to occur when the passion of Christ tears the veil separating the human community from God and floods the earth with the illumination of the heavenly kingdom. The human community is transformed into the bride of Christ exactly to the extent that it in turn works to transform the world in accordance with the economy of the gift.[26] Love does not turn into justice, but does appear to be capable of transforming the *sense of justice* that lays at the basis of systems of justice. Ricoeur suggests that our sense of justice moves back and forth between the two poles, but the ideal is to reach a place of 'mutual indebtedness' as communities. It is to the logic of love that he appeals to help human justice to reach the level where the 'mutual recognition' of opposites is held in common. This is necessary because the logic of equivalence (this for that) is a characteristic of secular justice, and is susceptible to a perverse utilitarian interpretation, which can lead to vengeance. On the other hand, the principles of justice *educated* by love will be part of the imitation of God in the secular world.

If we can imagine the secular task of justice as that of imitating the rules of a divine partner who is teaching a loved one to reflect the love that they share, but who is still learning about love, then we can develop a more charitable appreciation of the human legislature as imitator of God. Ricoeur ascertains that human activity, including the work of reconciliation, educated by love becomes part of the 'divine economy' of action by which we are called to imitate Christ.

On the level of praxis, religion itself can be part of the conflict. If it has generally maintained its credibility among a people and has not been utterly compromised by complicity in violence, religion can function in the reparation of a damaged society. If there has been complicity, then a religious tradition has little 'moral authority' upon which to stand. Societies coming out of violent conflict need more than laws, agreements and contracts. Religious leaders can take on significant roles, such as making claims for the truth, focussing on the quest for justice as an agent of forgiveness and providing access to rituals, all of which are aspects of justice being educated by love.[27] In sum, the logic of love will encourage steps towards reconciliation praxis by promoting the search for truth in human action. In other words: *"Telling the truth about the past is the foundation*

stone for a stable and peaceful society in the future. Therefore what is remembered, and how it is remembered, is the basis for the narrative which must carry the society into the future."[28]

Love will help justice to establish the truth but too often, cries for justice resemble calls for revenge. Here, religious traditions can provide further inspiration to the codes of human justice by offering:

- 'ethical codes' and formulas for 'right relationships'
- guidelines for punishing wrongdoers and making reparation
- resources to help society overcome the injustices that fuelled the conflict in the first place.

To the extent that religious traditions command the respect of a society they provide badly needed moral norms to help temper hatred and foster reconciliation. Furthermore, the logic of the kingdom carries an array of other concepts that can play into reconciliation on the human plane, such as forgiveness.

While religious traditions may vary in their interpretation of this virtue, in Archbishop Tutu's South African experience there is *'no future without forgiveness'*.[29] How religion deals with memory, and the resources it brings forward to heal memories makes it a potent resource for the spiritual quest that reconciliation essentially is. Conflict transformation experts advise never to overlook 'the rituals of forgiveness and reconciliation which may be present in a culture'. Knowing what those rituals are and when to enact them can help heal a divided people. Of course religion can be implicated in violence as 'a witting and unwitting accomplice'.[30]

The true logic of love, as revealed in the Easter gospel narratives, imply that the kingdom provides:

- a vision of peace
- commitments to truth and justice
- the promise of forgiveness.
- the resources of its leaders, people and institutions to anchor and guide human efforts to reconcile.

The values of the kingdom of love aim at restoring relationships that have been traumatized by wrongdoing – an aspiration that is exacerbated by a refusal to accept the truth – plus the tendency to cover up – and by the arrogance (*hybris*) – of not wanting to forgive and worse still of not allowing victims to forgive. Faced with this, love's logic will search for honesty and the unmasking of the *'mysterium iniquitatis'* in the human order.[31] In

sum, the values of the kingdom posit three steps to reconciliation: truth, justice and forgiveness.

The Pauline words are apt: *"the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness ... those who by their wickedness suppress the truth."* (Romans 1.18)[32] For this reason, it is 'good to turn to a God who denounces the evil of lying and who makes the truth needed for reconciliation more possible'.[33]

Since the so-called '9/11' event, the question of religion and violence has re-appeared with urgency and some commentators are now more convinced than ever that: *"We must cling to the 'God factor' not only so as not to make war on the poor in the name of God, but so as not to bring about their slow death through injustice."*[34]

The scandal of the ethics of the kingdom is that even when human beings are against him, God remains open towards them. In other words, it is in the nature of love to be reconciled. Furthermore, the Sovereign of the kingdom trusts human beings with the ministry of reconciliation. God's love re-builds that which has been destroyed by *hybris* and shows humans that reconciliation is possible, and that it is achieved through 'major gestures of truth, justice and forgiveness'.[35]

Everything that serves to put the poor (in this case victims who do not have a voice) at the centre of reconciliation takes us forward to the kingdom. Working for reconciliation is practically speaking also a means of creating 'an option for the poor'.[36] Social reconciliation is a 'two-way street'. It takes two to reconcile, and in this way, reconciliation is arduous because it must entail the work of 'two consenting adults' or as Ricoeur would have it, the co-operation of the bride and groom (as love and justice) in the marriage of veil and kingdom. The evangelical words, especially those of St. Paul speak of the need to be reconciled with God in the name of Christ's sacrifice, in other words in the name of love (Romans 5.10–11).

Conflicts in this world often end for practical reasons such as when the parties find them too costly to continue and are unlikely to produce acceptable results. Reconciliation may be a nice thing in and of itself but its value can be as utilitarian as it is moral or ethical: *"Unless reconciliation takes place, co-operation and other positive aspects of re-building society – communal, national or international – cannot occur. Reconciliation, therefore, is also an instrumental value, not just a goal in itself.*[37]

The rhetoric of reconciliation abounds, yet it can clash painfully with the reality of conflict. The South African TRC was premised on an understanding that there can be no reconciliation that is founded on lies and deception. In other words, truth is a necessary prerequisite. Sometimes

though it seems that it is precisely the emergence of truth that makes reconciliation impossible.

Can there be reconciliation between the perpetrators of the most serious forms of injustice and their victims and is there a way of breaking the laws of mutuality whereby the historic relationships between opposing parties are no longer based on vengeance for past wrongs and suffering? The rhetoric of the kingdom suggests reconciliation is a gift that is open to reception in the sphere of human action to heal the effects of evil and violence.

There is no doubt that the notion of reconciliation as it is used in contemporary political and social discourse has its roots in the language of Christian proclamation. One of the hallmarks of the cultural influence of Christianity is that its central precepts have penetrated all spheres of discourse.[38] It can be concluded therefore that faith is by no means restricted to a special province in the human spirit or to a specifically 'religious' aim. However, in the transmission from one context to another – from the sphere of worship to that of political and social discourse – the notion of reconciliation can undergo subtle, sometimes dramatic changes.

The dispute over the interpretation of reconciliation nowadays is nothing less than a dispute about the destiny of human beings and as such, about the character of reality. The nature of a particular reality will usually decide whether the rhetoric of reconciliation applies some kind of 'cosmetic varnish' to a situation characterized by irreconcilable conflicts or whether it can speak the truth as a way towards living the truth. The churches have not been slow to take up the high profile given to the notion of reconciliation in politics. As the community of interpretation of the gospel, the churches will need to take up the key notions that are used in political life and test them, deepen their meaning and where necessary, criticize and correct them by confronting them with the message of the gospel in the biblical tradition. Moreover, one of the callings of the Christian ethicist is to develop the biblical metaphor in a way that clearly shows its place in reality.[39]

In re-figuring the place of reconciliation within the doctrinal scheme of faith, ethicists can influence how reconciliation is understood in politics – and help bridge the gap between rhetoric and reality. The faithful then have a two-fold task: to act as a community of reconciliation called to witness to the world not only by proclaiming the gospel in word and sacrament but second: to enter into critical and constructive engagement in political, social and cultural life. To echo Ricoeur, if our lives are to be appreciated as a meaningful narrative, reconciliation is the 'central

phenomenon of all drama'.[40] It follows then that reconciliation discourse cannot be addressed without reference to its spiritual core. Intellectual conviction is not attained in a spiritual vacuum. We have to be open to receive reconciliation. Christian faith and praxis is eschatological. However, notions of praxis can be used with limit in the secular sphere if we allow that they will suffer some strain. It is helpful then to think of faith communities as mediators of the kingdom of love, mediating 'reconciling practices' and 'habits of peacemaking' in the world. Moreover, as 'bearers of the evangelical words' they witness to the 'fundamental asymmetry' between divine and human action.[41] That stated Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon offers hope that despite the inequalities, a marriage of veil and kingdom is realisable. Love provides a new perspective on the human face of ethics. Ricoeur suggests that if we are to understand how love affects ethics, then we must look at how the new being, the fruit of the union of love and justice, *re-organizes* and *re-orients* autonomous systems of thought and praxis which are encountered in the secular sphere. For example, love may alter systems and theories of justice by transforming the ethical intuitions that are the basis of those systems.[42]

The important point that Ricoeur would have us note is that in human ethics, love re-figures, but does not replace justice. In other words, the kingdom of love offers conceptual clarifications that will allow our ethical insights to be preserved, taught and practiced in the human world. Not least, these clarifications are essential to the search for reconciliation, which is the point of coherence in Ricoeur's narrative ethics of memory.

5.3 Ricoeur's Mimetic Configuration of Reconciliation

Ricoeur's narrative theory of pardon and remembering is essentially *mimetic* in character; a movement from ideas to action and back again with the aim of gaining new insights and understandings to take the situation forward. This mechanism is described technically by Ricoeur as a *mimetic arc* of understanding. Put another way, the mimetic arc is an attempt to re-interpret reality with the help of imagination in order to capture 'the essentials' of situations. As such *mimesis* has the capacity to 'remake' the world so to speak, in light of its potential truths.[43]

The *mimetic arc* is a useful remedy for thinking about reconciliation; particularly in difficult situations where there are conflicted interpretations about a past which has been tarnished by violence, hate, bigotry and prejudice. Mimesis suggests a way out of the finality of the past, the seeming

irreversibility of events by *re-configuring* them in light of the present.[44] Mimesis is a circular process, an arc with a triple movement which can be summarized as:

i.   Pre-figuration (*Mimesis1*): According to Ricoeur, the more that is understood between peoples the better. Therefore his mimetic arc consists first of all in obtaining a rather innocent (naïve) understanding (*pre-figuring*) of events, followed by a second moment of explanation.
ii. Configuration (*Mimesis2*): This second moment seeks to deepen understanding which in turn is completed by a third moment.
iii. Re-figuration (*Mimesis3*): The application of new insights.
iv. Review of Principle of *Mimesis*: The first move (*pre-figuration*) pertains to our initial or received understanding of the world, our identity and history with its prejudices as well as its hopes. A narrative understanding of the self implies that we all construe an ongoing story of our lives, so the pre-figured world in which we act as agents, while not written as a text, already contains a 'proto-plot'.[45] This 'tacit' narrative activity does not imply a wholly coherent outcome. The mimetic arc draws out the tensions in our attempts to narrate our lives by pointing to the paradoxes and '*aporias*' in time itself. Nonetheless Ricoeur suggests that the narrative trajectory can overcome such *aporias* through its mechanism for 'ordering and arranging'.

A narrative understanding of the self implies that we all construe an ongoing story of our lives. The pre-figured world in which we act as agents, while not written as a text, already contains a 'proto-plot'.[46] This 'tacit' narrative activity does not imply a wholly coherent outcome. The mimetic arc draws out the tensions in our attempts to narrate our lives by pointing to the paradoxes and '*aporias*' in time itself. Nonetheless Ricoeur suggests that the narrative trajectory can overcome such *aporias* through its mechanism for 'ordering and arranging'. In theory, there appear to be three distinct temporal stages on the arc but in reality these overlap. The mimetic arc of understanding applies to personal experience as well as to historical events.

Originally developed by Ricoeur in 1970s, the '*mimetic arc*' became a '*narrative arc*' by the 1980s because he asserted that mimetic action happens within the broader framework of a story. In sum, Ricoeur's *mimetic arc* is a type of creative re-telling of the past in order to reach a point of mutuality for the future. The fruit of the mimetic process is a more positive re-figuration of reality and the bringing to light of features of existence that were previously concealed in the hope of transforming

present experience into a more enlightened praxis.[47] Thus Ricoeur's revised arc of understanding assists to bring forward a re-figured world.

On the bigger canvas, Ricoeur's hermeneutical arc is a pathway to affirming the interrelationship between the gospel text and its values and those of the world. Or to put it differently, the arc is a means of holding the tension between the sacred and the secular. In any case it is a useful model for thinking about reconciliation in all of its dimensions, spiritual and political.

Reconciliation in a mimetic paradigm, is not just about the political accommodation of various interests and aspirations in a mutually accept-able way. Rather it is concerned with the social re-construction of a society and by implication is connected with re-building 'the moral order'.[48] Its goal must be the transformation of relationships with all that implies – spiritually, socially, economically and politically.

From a Christian perspective, reconciliation is an invitation to *metanoia or* conversion of mind and heart. If it achieves its purpose, the gift of reconciliation will take people to a new place. It is a dynamic quest.

5.4 The Mimetic Arc of Understanding[49]
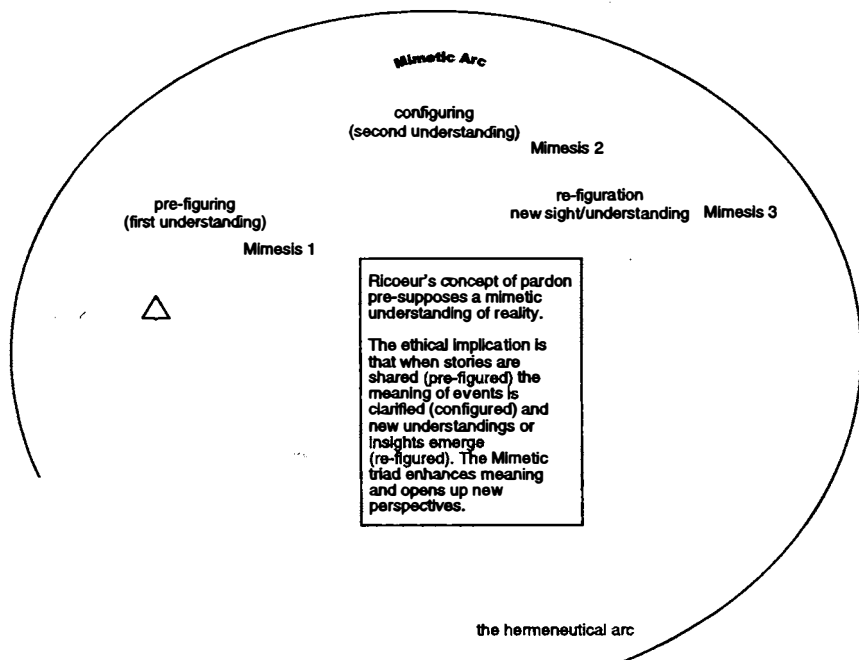
5.5 Memory, Forgiveness, Healing: Ricoeur's Mimetic Remedy

Ricoeur's mimetic remedy is useful for constructing the path to peaceful co-existence. Forgiveness is a necessary element of Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon. Theologian, Miroslav Volf concurs:

> For victims to forgive means not to allow the oppressors to determine the terms under which social conflict is carried out, the values around which the conflict is raging and the means by which it is fought. Forgiveness thus empowers victims and dis-empowers oppressors.[50]

The danger is that those who cannot forgive may end up being like their oppressors, 'if not in deed then in thought'. Furthermore, forgiveness is not only a matter for individuals, it also holds at the political level.

How then is it possible to break out of the cycle of 'mutually accusing definitions' of victimhood? Forgiveness is the key to any adequate answer. Moreover, forgiveness is now claimed as a political virtue and not merely as a private one. It is a virtue which Ricoeur reminds us, has the capacity to relieve communities and individuals of the 'onerous burden' of history and to break the cycle of victimhood and recrimination – by not insisting 'that justice as one side conceives it' be done first. This is why forgiveness deserves to be thought of politically. Moving the fragile conversation of peace forward means asking politicians to do something new, namely to search out common ground, to seek inclusive belonging and to encourage all citizens to move beyond the old 'friend–enemy' distinction. Politicians too have a duty to lead the way to conflict resolution:

> It is our duty [as politicians] to recognise, advocate and uphold the principle that there can be no victories or defeats for any one section of society. There can only be a collective and mutual victory through establishing a lasting peace and agreement on future political arrangements. Peace is the only real victory on offer and peace is indivisible.[51]

A healing process can only begin when '*old prejudices and hatreds are let go*'.[52] To this end, Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon and memory is resourceful. The principle of *mimesis* implies a working through of the past. We cannot re-live it as it actually happened, but we try in the re-counting, to place ourselves in it, to find a new synthesis in the present. Ricoeur acknowledges that a clear and distinct movement from one moment to the next on the mimetic arc 'exists more in analysis than in reality' and therefore the last phase of critical reflection (re-figuration) would lead to appropriation in

the manner of a 'spiral' rather than an arc. Such is the problematic of forgiveness in many social contexts.

The terms 'reconciliation, 'repentance' and 'forgiveness' are increasingly appearing in political discourse. 'Repentance' has even been suggested as 'the essential component of the spirit of the age'.[53] Many in the public policy community, for example, believe that the term 'forgiveness' will be central to working with the political order of the twenty-first century.[54]

This development is a reflection of the realization that a nation's conscious and unconscious memories are the raw material of its policies and politics. How the past is dealt with has political as well as spiritual importance. To be social is to be 'forgiving'.

Nowadays the concept of forgiveness, customarily the realm of religion, belongs at the heart of reflection about how groups can move to repair the damage that they have suffered from their past conflicts with each other: *"Precisely because it attends at once to moral truth, history and the human benefits that flow from the conquest of enmity, forgiveness is a word for a multidimensional process that is eminently political."*[55]

Many commentators are of the view that the debris caused by an unresolved past will never get cleaned up until forgiveness enters the relationship in some political form. Undigested memories retain an unconscious power over the community. Therefore any true political recovery will inevitably involve the creation of new relationships with enemies and their descendants if they are not to go to war again with each other.[56] Moreover from a practical point of view, the world of the twenty-first century is shaping up as a place in which peace among nations is a practical necessity, not merely an elusive ideal. We are all on our way to having to learn to live with neighbours not of our choosing in the global village that is now upon us. Enmity and enemies are not likely to disappear from the human scene anytime in the future, but politics will have to take into account the access that the world's peoples now have to each other for mutual good and evil. The reality is that isolation does not succeed as an ideal in the modern world, and people do not have to *like* each other in order to become politically settled into ongoing relationships.[57] In other words: *"Politics ought to be about the business of learning to live with neighbours, some too different to be likeable, who have too many interests in common with us to be dismissed from our civic company."*[58]

Narrative theory locates the root of the 'morally complex' problem of forgiveness in the past, in the historical traditions that give rise to our stories, our identity and self-understanding.[59] In other words, forgiveness begins with memory:

> Popular usage of the word forgiveness sometimes implies that to forgive is to
> forget, to abandon primary concern for the crimes of enemies. Quite the
> reverse, 'remember and forgive' would be a more accurate slogan. Forgive-
> ness begins with a remembering, a moral judgement of wrong, injustice and
> injury. Logically forgiveness goes from wrong-sufferers to wrongdoers, but
> in human societies and most of all in political conflict, it may have to go
> both ways.[60]

The real core of forgiveness is the 'abandonment of vengeance'.[61] Forbear-
ance from revenge opens the door toward a future that will not repeat the
old crimes. Moral judgement that is unaccompanied by forbearance often
fuels new enmity. At least trying to understand one's enemies distasteful
as that may be, is another step towards entertaining the possibility of
living with them as fellow human beings. One way or another, genuine
forgiveness aims at the renewal of relationships.

Therefore, 'forgivers are prepared to begin living with the enemy again
on some level of positive co-existence'. 'Co-existence' may only be the
mildest of moves toward reconciliation and only the faintest anticipation
of a genuine political connection, perhaps it may be little better than
'passive tolerance', nonetheless it is a welcome move away from the past
towards a new future. The principle of co-existence represents the political
landscape of many post-conflict communities, Northern Ireland included
and brings with it, ongoing spiritual and social challenges such as:

i.   dealing with the past and its *memories*
ii. facing the challenge of *forgiveness*
iii. finding *healing*.

The *leitmotif* of *Psalm 85* (which was recited at the secret inter-party meet-
ings that preceded the negotiation of the Good Friday Agreement), depicts
God as the One who is always favourable to his people, forgiving their
iniquity, pardoning their sins and turning away from his heated anger. In
human relations forgiveness may not be so forthcoming. Forgiveness is in
the first instance, a divine gift and an expression of a love that endures all:
"*To forgive is never to let the past have the final word on the other or
oneself.*"[62]

Forgiveness never guarantees a truce for it is not necessarily mutual. The
one you forgive might remain hostile. Ricoeur's mimetic appropriation of
forgiveness means refraining from a one-sided fascination with the past
and keeping open towards the future. We know all too well the destructive
power of the past. Looking towards the future requires a double courage
facing, sometimes brutal facts and then risking faith in the future. For

Ricoeur, forgiveness gives memory a future. To forgive is to be liberated from the burden of the past. On the mimetic arc of understanding, forgiveness is at the end of a work that begins in the region of memory and eventually flows into forgetting, which leads to healing. Forgiveness is a continuation of the work of remembrance and mourning as well as being a specific form of revision of the past – and through it – of narrative identities. More importantly, in the framework of Ricoeur's mimetic arc, forgiveness is the key to the whole reconfiguration process. Therefore forgiveness is a pre-condition of true reconciliation and the cornerstone of healing which expresses itself in the creation of new relationships. The key to forgiveness is to be found in *memory* – meaning, how we deal with the legacy of the past especially when it carries wounds, suffering, trauma. Forgiveness can be automatic for some extraordinary individuals, but typically it takes time, often years, if at all. However, mourning allows the burden of memory to pass. Moreover, requests for forgiveness must imply remorse: *"Forgiveness is something to be asked for, something begged from others, especially from victims."*[63]

The narrative paradigm of pardon helps relieve the burden of guilt which blocks any new start in relationships between people. In so doing, we are not condemned to remain enclosed in the painful past. In other words, forgiveness relieves pain and guilt.[64] While forgiveness cannot be reduced to the political sphere, it can demonstrate significant effects in this realm. The poetics of existence exercises an influence over politics and Ricoeur refers to examples from recent history such as:

i. the apology of German Chancellor Willy Brandt in Warsaw to the people of that city for the atrocities inflicted by Germany during the Second World War;
ii. the letter of apology from the Czech president Vaclav Havel to his German colleague Karl von Weizsaeker on the fate of the Sudetes (citizens of German origin who were exiled from Czechoslovakia in 1945).

In sum, narrative ethics implies an encounter with difference, which must be broadened out to include all civic institutions so that they can be mediators of freedom and justice, even of forgiveness and healing. Faith is perceived as a matter of 'responding to the call of the 'absolutely Other'. Gospel stories, such as the Sermon on the Mount suggest ways of overcoming hatred by fostering a more loving attitude even towards enemies. Such transformations cannot be exacted by political or juridical structures alone. They also require a spiritual change, an inner commitment to reform.

Ricoeur's narrative pedagogy of pardon offers the following prescription for reconciliation:

i.   A willingness to enter into an exchange of memories and to forgive.
ii.   Sharing memories may lead to empathy with the other and so to breaking down walls to search for pardon.
iii. Reconciliation is a work of love. It does not destroy responsibility for past wrongdoing but shatters the debt owed to the past and lifts the burden of guilt that blocks any new start between peoples.

'Forgiveness' is one of those corrections that 'love of neighbour' introduces into the world of power.[65] It is not so much something earned as 'gift'. That stated, forgiveness must first be requested, even if it is not due.[66] It is in the price of these restrictions that the greatness of forgiveness is manifested. The granting of forgiveness that is not due is the logic of love exerting itself over the logic of reciprocity and it is by virtue of its 'generosity' that forgiveness exercises an influence in politics.[67] Though forgiveness originates in the religious domain, it is not exclusive to it. First and foremost, forgiveness belongs to the poetics of existence of which religion is the culmination.[68]

The following testimony is an example given by the Faith and Politics Group, Belfast, to describe both the difficulty and the miracle of forgiveness. It is the story of Una O'Higgins O'Malley, a founding member of the Glencree Centre for Reconciliation, whose grandfather, Kevin O'Higgins, the Irish Free State (Republic of Ireland), Minister for Justice and External Affairs, was murdered in 1927.

> No one ever spoke to her about forgiveness, she says, it was 'imprinted' in her. The men who shot her grandfather in his home for being the father of Kevin O'Higgins were almost certainly neighbours and known to her grandmother. Yet she would never identify them and insisted on forgiveness and no reprisals. When Una was five months old, her father was shot on his way to Sunday Mass. During his five conscious hours, he too chose not to identify his killers, speaking only about forgiveness. Sixty years later, it would be revealed that Kevin – with eight bullets in him – had managed to speak to his assailants on the roadside, telling them that he forgave them, that he understood why they had done it, but that this must be the end of the killings. There was some doubt that this occurred, but later, one of the attackers – Bill Gannon – who told this to his son – would only speak of O'Higgins as a 'very misunderstood man' and would no longer carry a gun. But another member of the assassination gang – one Archie Doyle – who danced on her father's grave, was harder to forgive and caused her to lose faith in the Christian ideal of love and forgiveness. However a thought

eventually crossed her mind, to have a Mass said for them all. And so it happened that sixty years after the murder of Kevin O'Higgins, his daughter arranged a memorial liturgy for him and his killers in the Dublin parish of Booterstown and experienced 'great relief' after having done so.[69]

Forgiveness is also a challenge to the 'larger community, battered, hurt and damaged' by what has happened, to enter into a more general process of 'being able to set aside the past' with all its 'enmities, resentments and demands for revenge' to start anew, 'accepting and respecting the existence of the other:'[70]

> Love is not cheap, love is costly. It requires cross and resurrection. We have to challenge cheap answers to reconciliation. We must look at the facts too, as well as praying for those we hate, as well as symbolic acts.[71]

5.6 Summary

There is no magic solution to the problem of dealing with the impact of extensive violence. Healing is 'inevitably a lengthy and culturally-bound process, with no clear starting-point and few markers along the way'.[72] Indeed, it is rare for the psychological impact of the past ever to be dealt with completely. This does not mean that the pursuit of social and cultural forms of healing are a waste of time, rather it implies that there must be an acceptance of the limitations of dealing with the legacy of extreme violence and of the long-term nature of such projects. On a related point, the World Health Organization (WHO) defines health, not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity, but as a positive state of physical, emotional and social well-being. Psychological, emotional, physical and social health is interdependent.[73] The WHO defines healing as more than a personal or private matter:

> Healing is not only about assisting individuals to address their psychological health needs in an isolated way, but is dependent upon and integrally linked to repairing and rebuilding communities and the social context.[74]

This implies 'restoring a normalized everyday life that can recreate and confirm people's sense of being and belonging'. What needs to be healed therefore, are the multitude of individual, political, social and cultural responses to a traumatic situation and its aftermath. In other words, healing is essential to the cultural and spiritual welfare of society. Forgiveness and healing are not quantifiable goods that can be legislated for. In other words, *'forgiving usually takes time'*.[75]

The indication is that forgiveness can be promoted successfully to varying degrees and that 'empathy-based interventions' are often successful. Additionally, while forgiving is 'valued' in secular society, it holds a special place in Christianity.[76]

Exchanging memories represents 'a modest beginning' to reconciliation at the narrative level, but perhaps in terms of praxis, it has a deeper emotive charge. Ricoeur's guess is that our 'mobile identity' contributes to the reconfiguration of our own past, and that of others, by the 'incessant restructuring of stories that we tell'. However he accepts that the move towards re-figuration is decisive and that few adversaries can reach it, at least not without an enormous struggle or the passage of a significant time. Indeed, the desired 'fusion of horizons' that makes for deeper communion, still remains a challenge for Europe. Ricoeur takes the view that the degree of mimesis (enlightened consciousness) necessary to re-figure the past completely has not yet been fully realized in modernity.[77]

Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon shows that forgiveness begins with a willingness to 'share mourning'. Hostility breaks out when two narratives clash and neither will make space for the other. In so many conflicts an absence of trust leads the parties involved to courses of action that rational in themselves, end in disastrous consequences For many, acts of forgiveness seem 'absurdly inadequate' to substantive conflicts of interest and the sheer momentum of suspicion, distrust and cumulative grievance. In the end peace is made, if at all, by people who acknowledge the 'personhood' of their opponents. One means of retrieving the humanity of enemies is potentially in the sharing of stories and memories of suffering.

A narrative ethic of pardon encourages enemies to dialogue, to listen to one another, to hear each other's anguish and anger and to make 'cognitive space' for one another's hopes, otherwise 'there is no way forward.' To be able to forgive is an aspect of love. Ultimately, forgiveness is the ability to let go. We learn from Ricoeur that the best way to honour the innocent victims is through mourning and remembrance. Suffering is pedagogic if we can learn from it – by refusing to '*add pain to pain, grief to grief*' which is why he asserts that all of us must ultimately answer 'hatred with love, violence with peace, resentment with generosity of spirit and conflict with reconciliation'.[78]

Miroslav Volf with Ricoeur invokes memory as a 'shield' against evil, generating 'solidarity' among victims while at the same time generating resistance to horrors of the present: "*To struggle against evil, we must empathize with its victims.*"[79]

Volf has noted how memory can also create a false sense of identity. For example in Bosnia, the conflict was rooted in hatred over memories of past

wrongs. Memory can 'prod victims into violence instead of spurring them to fight for justice.' It is important to be aware of the degree of freedom that we have in regard to our memories and on this point Volf offers a helpful insight: *"if salvation lies in the memory of wrongs committed, it is not the memories themselves but what we do with them that is important."*[80]

Facing the past raises the question of how to put hate, hurt, killing, loss and violence behind us. South Africa's TRC is held up as an example of the way forward particularly in terms of *restorative* justice in action.

The aims and objectives of the South African TRC were to steer a path between retribution (which many believed would have served to perpetuate further violence) and simply ignoring the past, letting bygones be bygones. Solutions that only perpetuate deeper resentments are counterproductive. The TRC sought neither retribution nor going easy on crime. In the words of Archbishop Tutu, chairman of the TRC:

> We have been concerned that many consider only one aspect of justice. Certainly, amnesty cannot be viewed as justice if we think of justice as only retributive and punitive in nature. We believe however, that there is another kind of justice – a restorative kind which is concerned not so much with punishment as with correcting imbalances, restoring broken relationships – with healing, harmony and reconciliation.[81]

Are these just fluffy liberal sentiments? Those who support retribution often make this claim. But 'restorative justice' (*Ubantu* for black South Africans), gives recognition to the interrelatedness of all in society and of the need for communal healing through truth telling, which has generally been recognized as a practical and politically realistic way of helping create the new South Africa.

One commentator has observed that: "As one reads the report of the TRC one becomes aware of the powerful, difficult but nonetheless potentially restorative value of truth – 'healing' truth, as the TRC describes it." The priority of South Africa's TRC was to establish 'truth-as-honesty' and the hearings have helped to enlarge our understanding of truth: *"Truth requires courage as much as intelligence and engages our capacity for soul-searching rather than academic rigour. This might even be the sort of truth the Holy Spirit leads us to. There is great virtue in discerning 'truth-as-honesty'."*[82]

5.7 Conclusion

Ricoeur's mimetic arc of re-figuration concludes that it is only with time (*distanciation*) that self-understanding emerges. Immediacy may well be the enemy of understanding. Distance makes self-criticism possible which in turn may yield new insights or a 'surplus of meaning' which ready judgements cannot produce. There is more than one way of construing events and it is not true that all interpretations are equal, Ricoeur advises. It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them and finally to seek for an agreement even if this agreement remains '*beyond our reach*'.[83] The search for the true meaning of events begins with 'little narratives' (*petits récits*) in favour of the 'vanquished' to give 'validation' to experience.

Ricoeur eventually started to apply his mimetic model to human *action* (as well as texts). Actions are also open to interpretation, which in turn leads to a post-critical understanding, embracing all three movements of his hermeneutical arc. The surplus of meaning arises from the third stage – critical reflection. Here, Ricoeur sounds a note of caution in that 'events' are not as clearly 'communication' as 'discourse'. Nonetheless, *time* and distance can yield previously unconsidered solutions to problems that in the pre-figured moment appear beyond resolution.

Nothing is more dispiriting than the cycle of revenge that can haunt human societies and trap populations into a past that never relaxes its grip. The virus of hate can lie dormant for a while, but it rarely dies. Retaliation is the instinctual response to perceived wrongdoing: "*No man ever forgets where he buried the hatchet.*"[84] In the face of tragedy, forgiveness is the 'counter-narrative' of hope. Neither is it a moral luxury or an option for saints. 'Forgiveness' is a religious virtue though non-believers can show forgiveness too.[85] Wrongdoing damages relationships – but these are not beyond repair, Ricoeur asserts.

A Christian account of reconciliation centres not so much on reconciliation itself as on the reconciler – the one through whom God is reconciling the world to himself. The task of the theologian then is to develop the biblical metaphor in a way that clearly shows its place in reality. We may well live in 'an era of reconciliation' but it is also a time when the notion of reconciliation has been trivialized even sentimentalized. How far can there be reconciliation between fallen sinners without a price being paid by somebody?

The language of exchange is everywhere beginning as a monetary image but in biblical thought is encompassed in the notion of sacrifice when something is given in place of, and for the sake of, the other. Ricoeur

interprets 'exchange' in terms of a revision of the past, of its memories, so as to honour the debt owed due to wrongdoing. A Christian 'ethics of reconciliation' cannot evade 'asking about the price of it all'.[86] That is why Ricoeur is deeply sensitive to the evolution of a culture of 'just memory'. Therefore any groups' translation of memories demands more than imagination and sympathy – the 'more' (surplus) asked for is forgiveness.[87] A narrative ethic of pardon posits that forgetting is impossible, but remembering 'done together' and ritualized in the right way enhances the community's awareness of *"the human solidarity across all temporal boundaries, that comes with the singular world created by suffering."*[88]

Acknowledgement of shared suffering is a compassionate basis on which to initiate any formal attempt to redress the past. By implication, the deeper-going issues of forgiveness and restoration must be faced. Narrative prescribes a 'poetic' healing of hurt. What then does this 'poetry' consist of? Its power according to Ricoeur, lies in shattering the law of the irreversibility of time by changing the past, not as a record of what factually happened (which of itself has a truth-claim), but in terms of its *meaning for* us today. This is why Ricoeur emphasizes that the work of forgiveness must be grafted onto the work of memory in the language of narration.[89]

We come to appreciate narrative ethics as a hermeneutics of moral experience and that stories are an important means of expressing and passing on values. As such, narrative ethics holds a *normative* force in its concern for discerning as clearly as possible what presents itself as morally significant. Therefore, recognition of 'the contextuality and relativity' of moral experience 'must not necessarily' lead to relativism: *"relativism in the sense of insensitivity to the meaning and expression of the [morally] significant, are mutually exclusive."*[90] So, Ricoeur can assert that: *"we learn from others, testify to others, appeal to the judgment of others and sometimes suffer their violence in response to our testimony."*[91]

Amidst the hubris is the call to reconciliation.

CONCLUSION: RICOEUR'S LEGACY: *A PRAXIS OF PEACE*

I hear it in the deep heart's core

W. B. Yeats

6.1 New Directions

In July 2003, Pope John Paul II presented Paul Ricoeur with the *International Paul VI Award in Theology* for his fruitful research on the relationship between faith and reason as well as his outstanding contribution to theology through its connection with philosophy.[1]

At the core of Ricoeur's narrative epistemology is the premise that in encountering 'the other' – mediated by the story of culture, history and religion – we discover the fullness of life and our true humanity. He invites human beings to take seriously the claim that we cannot live fully unless it is in solidarity with others.[2]

John Paul II was convinced that the biggest threat to faith and human survival in this age is the 'loss of ability to experience an authentic encounter with the truly other'. With Ricoeur, he held that the ability to establish solidarity is a key characteristic of the person. In other words, the human being cannot be free, cannot live fully, if he or she is not in solidarity with others. The inability to grasp 'otherness' is a threat to faith and human survival and John Paul went so far as to say that it is only in encountering 'otherness' that one can have faith.[3]

Theology now pays greater attention to hermeneutical thinkers like Ricoeur because of the significant shift that the Second Vatican Council provoked in the Church. Sharing the Christian message in the modern world calls for *reading the signs of the times* which is another way of expressing the ability to think hermeneutically. The implication being that historical and cultural narratives are not incidental to, but 'the context for' faith.

In the summers of 1983, 1985 and 1994, John Paul II invited Ricoeur along with a small group of academics, to join him in the papal summer retreat of Castel Gandolfo in the hills outside Rome, to discuss current topics in philosophy.[4] It is noteworthy (and perhaps not unconnected to these discussions) that John Paul undertook a unique and extensive

'revision of the history of the Catholic Church' in preparation for the Jubilee Year of AD 2000.[5] The Holy Father explained to a Polish journalist at the time, that the end of the second millennium was an opportunity for an examination of conscience, to reflect as believers, on where Christ had brought us and also where the Church had deviated from the gospel.

Vatican correspondent Luigi Accattoli, a journalist with Italian newspaper, *Corriere della Sera*, has made the observation that for a longstanding institution, nothing is more challenging than to attempt a 'revision' of its history. However, the pope was convinced of its necessity. So it was that the end of the second millennium of Christianity marked the initiation of an 'epochal *mea culpa* to free the Church itself from 'the burden of the past' and to prevent it from remaining 'a prisoner of its past'.[6]

John Paul's revision of memory represents in many ways the completion of Vatican II's definitive step forward. To put it differently, the Church's re-reading of its history which began with Vatican II, found fulfilment in *'the purification of historical memory'*. The subsequent *'mea culpa's'* proffered in light of that examination of conscience included:

> Expressions of sorrow for the inquisition, for anti-semitism, Galileo, Luther, the religious wars, violence against Native Americans, Islam; for racism, for its [the church's], part in the eastern schism, for persecution of Hus, Calvin, Zwingli, among others, for the oppression of women and for the Crusades.[7]

According to Ricoeur, any 'new evangelization of Europe' depends on a price being paid by the Christian denominations – the price of sorting out their own differences and of 'shattering the debt' inherited from a long history of persecution, inquisition, repression and acts of violence perpetrated by some Christian communities against others or by all of the communities against non-Christians and non-believers.[8] In light of these challenging words, the readiness of the Bishop of Rome to apologize for the mistakes of the past in the Roman Catholic tradition represented courage and spiritual leadership: *"The purification of memory becomes a reality with the confession of faults. Only forgiveness can really purify the historical memory."*[9]

Swiss theologian, Hans Kung once stated that there could be no peace among nations until there was peace among the religions.[10] It is plausible that enlightened by Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon, John Paul II sought to lead Catholic Christians into the third millennium: *"less burdened by the weight of history, better reconciled with the other Christian communities and with a bond of friendship with every religion and with all [people] of good will."*[11]

It is not surprising that John Paul's last work was a personal reflection concerning the multi-faceted issues of *Memory and Identity* especially in Europe.[12] Under that title, he examined the roots of these two influential vectors on the Continent's past, on his own relationship to the terrible moments in its history in the twentieth century, as well as the innumerable positive fruits that have been the result of Western history. He shares Ricoeur's view that: "*the great problem is finding the meaning of history.*"[13] Through the lens of memory and identity, John Paul II's final reflection addressed the ideologies of evil, socialism and communism, the regimes that resulted and how the presence of evil often ends up being an invitation to do good. Ricoeur and Pope John Paul II in fact shared a common dream: the promotion of peace and a civilization of love.

To an extent, theology in the twentieth century has mirrored the 'convulsive nature' of the time. The era began in hopes for a Christian century and a war to end all wars but ended in manifold global threats and the rise of sinister forms of terrorism. Theology also started out in hope and confidence expressed by liberals and conservatives alike but: "*ended by fracturing into a host of divergent attempts to gain a footing in a dramatically altered landscape.*"[14] Against this background Ricoeur's 'hermeneutical philosophy' is a timely dialogue partner that does not seek to dictate the flow of the conversation so much as help to keep it interesting and productive. That said Ricoeur has not yet been fully 'tapped' in theology because it has been difficult to see his work as a 'coherent whole'.[15]

If anything, theology has tended to latch onto individual creative nuggets of insight offered by Ricoeur. Some draw on his narrative reflection, others on his work with metaphor. Ricoeur is essentially a philosopher and his theological perspective is more suggested than developed. It is his hermeneutics of *the person* that arguably, is most helpful to contemporary theologians in navigating the post-modern; arguably post-human society.[16]

Ricoeur has made striking ventures into theology and biblical studies, revealing a level of expertise rare to philosophers. He has made original contributions to exegesis and biblical hermeneutics – a trajectory that has brought reason closer to faith. Instead of theology being marginal and suspect it now 'belongs in the game' because of the latitude given nowadays to multiple interpretations, to personal judgement, to passion and discussion.

The challenge for theology is to find a way to affirm a balance, for which Ricoeur also has striven, between conviction and critique.[17] In this context, theology owes no small debt to Ricoeur for his elucidation of the problematic issue of justice, to give one example, which he approaches as a dimension of human action (*praxis*).

His philosophy of the person can be understood as a liberating praxis that goes to the heart of human suffering and seeks its transformation. It stands more on a par with liberation theologies than traditional theological methods which speak from a universal non-contextual standpoint.

Ricoeur reads history from the viewpoint of the oppressed, a theme also explored by John Paul II who has related the developments of modern democracy, liberty and human rights to the 'great mystery' of the person formed in the image of God.[18]

For those looking to relate or fuse the gospel with the contemporary struggle for peace, Ricoeur's hermeneutical insights are a rich yet under-utilized resource. His archaeological dig into memory in the service of reconciliation has yet to be fully appreciated. However, there is a growing acceptance of the role of memory and of the link between memory, identity and reconciliation.

When memories go unresolved, a serious civic problem arises which Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon seeks to heal.[19] In so doing he also reminds us of the uniqueness of the Christian *memoria* to protest against the myths of history, which all too often have ridden roughshod over its victims.

Ricoeur offers a comprehensive interpretation of memory in light of the gospel narratives, relating theology and its multi-faceted concerns, to the contemporary scene. As such, narrative contributes to theological hermeneutics itself by emphasizing the 'epistemological uniqueness' of metaphor and narrative, which are so basic to Christian faith and the scriptures.[20]

Rather than just being perceived as ornaments to religious speech, metaphor and narrative are coming to the centre of faith discourse. However narrative theology is still viewed with suspicion by some, due to concerns about relativism and subjectivism. In navigating these sensitivities, there are few as resourceful as Ricoeur.

On a positive note, our times are also witnessing a renewal of primary sources, notably scripture. Ricoeur's hermeneutical philosophy offers a framework for relating theology with faith-life, particularly via his 'hermeneutical arc' – the circular model of pre-figuring, configuring and re-figuring experience (*mimesis*). Committed to the 'self-in-community' Ricoeur develops the notion of 'person' in a manner that is at once deeply biblical, Christian and theological. As such, he is 'a dialogue partner' for theologians to engage with the landscape of post-modernity, pluralism and praxis.[21]

Narrative sheds light from a different angle on theology's attempts to reflect on God in a secular and plural world but is by no means a 'cure-all' or the only model available for this task. It may be wise to draw on several approaches with their various strengths and weaknesses and ultimately the

true test of the usefulness of any model lies in its appropriation by the wider community of faith.

At the *Paul VI Award* presentation, Pope John Paul II re-asserted that theology's starting point must always be God whose word is Truth. The search for the truth is central to Ricoeur's narrative project in a manner that contributes to the great adventure of faith seeking understanding (*fides quaerens intellectum*).

6.2 Human Capability

Ricoeur's focus on the 'capable man' highlights the human capacity to act for good or evil. Narrative presents an enriched account of our moral possibilities as well as the limits of human action. Put differently, the narrative paradigm is a space in which to investigate: the manner in which cultural ideals help or hinder authentic self-hood; the tasks of citizenship in relation to communal and global contexts and human capacities for meaning in its various moral dimensions.

Implicitly, Ricoeur takes up the challenge to faith in our times, expressed in Vatican II (*Gaudium et Spes*), as coming from atheistic humanism; the rejection of God in the name of human liberation and the suspicion that faith is infantile even pathological as a means of solving human problems.

While at the University of Chicago, Ricoeur critiqued the great founders of modern thought – Marx, Nietzsche and Freud – whom he described as being 'masters of suspicion'. Yet the intuition of dialectics is not to be afraid in the face of suspicion – take the questions as far as they go – let them even become a cry – no matter if it is a cry of hatred, rebellion or rejection – because the cry itself is a step towards faith. Ricoeur challenges theologians to take up the cry of suspicion as the beginning of a dialogue on belief.[22]

6.3 A Praxis of Peace

Ricoeur's 'integrated hermeneutic' allows for a critical reading of theology, social ethics and peace research but finally points to a 'post-critical' understanding which is more fully appropriated in terms of the 'hermeneutical arc'. While his arc theory raises a critical appraisal of the subject matter it must also be received holistically. In other words: *"Ricoeur's arc prompts us to test our appraisals but also to move beyond criticism to critical appropriation."*[23]

The arc expresses Ricoeur's conviction that language is the preferred weapon against violence, a sentiment also implied in the benchmark peace encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (1963), written in light of the communist threat and the new era of *détente* signalled by the end of the Cuban crisis. The encyclical pleads for a new world order in which: *"relations between states, as between individuals, be regulated not by armed force, but in accordance with the principles of right reason – that is the principles of truth, justice and vigorous and sincere co-operation."* (PT, 114). As such, for John XXIII, and the pontiffs who succeeded him, the just war argument is subjugated by the demand to secure peace.[24]

Pacem in Terris is: "a welcome paradigm shift from just war theory to the praxeology of *peace*."[25] In light of the option for dialogue is it then 'right to abandon the just war theory' in favour of more positive peace ethic?

It is tempting to answer *"yes"* when we examine recent experiences in the case of the Iraq war, for example, and see how a valid theory can be open to abuse. Furthermore, the just war theory does not include '*ius post bellum*' contexts nor is it concerned with reconciliation or restorative justice.[26] International law then becomes the guarantor of the international order and promoter of the common good of citizens, conscious that the common good of nations cannot be separated from the good of the entire human family.[27]

Clearly, there is much work to be done to secure peace through non-violence. There are lacunas and gaps in Catholic social ethics, for example, on just how to go about building a culture of peace apart from a stated 'commitment to negotiation' in resolving differences between nations and a 'definitive' rejection of the idea that 'justice can be sought through recourse to war.[28] This is not the place to explore the intricacies of that debate. Suffice to say that Ricoeur's narrative corpus provides the building blocks for the '*ius post bellum*' scenario (see illustration overleaf).

6.4 Ricoeur's Narrative Model of Pardon

In seeking innovative ways to reach an increasingly secularized world, Ricoeur's narrative language offers a creative means of emphasizing human capability, while showing its limits and the need for God's critical transformative action. His dialectics therefore propose a theology of hope and an ethic of human responsibility. Put another way, any ethic of reconciliation will find itself located in the creative tension between 'unilateral love' and 'bi-lateral justice'.

i. Just War Theory precludes post-conflict ethics

Just War Theory

ii. Ricoeur's Narrative theory of pardon can be interpreted as an important development of *ius post bellum* ethics

ius post bellum ethics

iii. Ricoeur's narrative ethics makes a significant contribution to the construction of a *praxis of peace* in our time

ongoing development of praxeology of peace

Ricoeur's Narrative Model of Pardon

This study has sought to connect narrative's ethical and religious synergy to the concrete moral problem of reconciliation and forgiveness. Ricoeur's understanding of public memory and forgiveness begs a new 'communitarianism' in which political life is grounded in the human capacity for citizenship.[29]

His resourceful ideas for peace research confront us with the place of tragedy in life, the reality of goodness, the struggle for meaning, the contest between love and justice and the demands of life together as political and social beings. Through it all, the narrative path seeks to link moral conviction and our deepest longings for the sacred – for the poetics of existence. In so doing, Ricoeur's pedagogy of pardon offers new insight into one of the most pressing questions of our time – building peace.

His narrative ethics serves to remind us that in the final analysis, peace is 'essentially' about people not structures. The modern institutions that

we sometimes take for granted – juridical, political, economic – are derived from nothing other than the accumulated wisdom and experience of innumerable gestures of peace made by women and men throughout history 'who have kept hope and not given in to discouragement'.[30]

Gestures of peace are possible in Ricoeur's opinion, when we can appreciate fully the community dimension of our lives. Then we may grasp the meaning and consequences of events in order to build a culture of peace. Religion, by implication has a vital role to play in fostering 'gestures of peace' and in consolidating the 'conditions for peace' by encouraging universal brotherhood and a culture of 'human solidarity'.

The pursuit of the 'good life' far from being a hedonistic escape, invites our participation in the 'immense' task of 'establishing new relationships in human society' under the guiding principles of truth, justice, love and freedom. To bring about true peace is a work in progress and the responsibility of every generation.

Ricoeur's excavation of the possibilities of narrative imagination for moral reflection and conflict resolution amounts to a legacy for the praxis of peace in our time that goes beyond the confines of current and sometimes entrenched positions. He gives expression to nothing less than the heart's profound longing.

NOTES

Introduction

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21. Colin Murphy, 'Higher Walls – the legacy of peace in Northern Ireland?', *The Word*, Spring 2004, pp. 7–9.
22. Nigel Biggar, 'Jury still out on Truth Commission for North' in *The Irish Times*, Friday 3 December 2004.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Source *We Will Remember Them* – The Report of the Northern Ireland Victims Commissioner, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield (April 1998) [Participant's Responses to Consultation on Next Phase of Victims Policies], pp. 6–8.
27. Terry Waite, 'Foreword' to *The Legacy – A Study of the needs of GB Victims & Survivors of the Northern 'Troubles'* (November 2003).
28. Terry Waite, 'Foreword' to *The Legacy Report*.
29. Ibid.
30. Priscilla B. Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 250–51.
31. William Scholes, quoting Robin Eames, in 'Understanding Key to Healing', *The Irish News*, Thursday 27 May 2004.
32. Ibid.
33. Sean Brady, *'Faith and Identity – A Catholic Perspective on Northern Ireland: The Key to Peace is the Will to Embrace'* – his address to St Ethelburga's Centre for Peace and Reconciliation, London, Wednesday 5 May 2004.
34. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), p. 184.
35. Since the British General elections in 2005, which saw the Democratic Unionist Party win the majority of seats in Northern Ireland, the Catholic Primate of Ireland, Cardinal Sean Brady has sought dialogue with all parties, for the sake of reconciliation. Dr. Ian Paisley (former leader of the DUP) accepted, for the first time.
36. Cardinal Sean Brady's address in Milan on 'Religious Identity, National Identity: Citizens or Believers?', 23 May 2005, where he spoke of breaking the cycle of exclusion in Northern Ireland by a will to 'embrace' difference, http:// www.catholicireland.net [Accessed 8 June, 2005].
37. Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness and Reconciliation*.
38. Miroslav Volf, Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School, in a speech on compassion as part of Yale's *Pacem in Terris* lecture series, http:// www.thehoya.com/news/100804/cfm [Accessed 9 June 2005].
39. Dermot Lane, 'Memory in the Service of Reconciliation and Hope' in *Truth and Memory: The Church and Human Rights in El Salvador and Guatemala*, edited by Michael A. Hayes and David Tombs (Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2001), p. 179.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid., p. 180.
42. See also, Eric Voegelin, renowned American political philosopher who fled Vienna when the Nazi regime came to power, he wrote a classic reflection on *Anamnesis*, in which he recalls twenty experiences as an infant and small boy which formed the basis of what later became his influential thought on the

philosophy of consciousness. See his *Zur Theologie der Geschichte und Politik* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1966), later translated into English by Gerhart Niemeyer (Notre Dame: Chicago University Press, 1978).

43. See Paul Ricoeur, *La Mémoire, L'Histoire, L'Oubli* (Paris: éditions du Seuil, 2000), pp. 593–95.

44. Ibid., p. 595.

45. Jean-Claude Dumoncel, Centre d'études Théologiques de Caen, http://theologie-caen.cef.fr [Accessed Friday 3 June 2005].

46. George Hunsinger and William C. Placher, eds, *Hans W. Frei, Theology & Narrative, Selected Essays* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). See also Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), especially the first two chapters.

47. George Stroup, 'Theology of Narrative or Narrative Theology?: A Response to Why Narrative?', in *Theology Today*, 47, 4 (January 1991), http://theology-today.ptsem.edu/jan1991/v47-4-criticscorner.htm [Accessed 9 July 2004]

48. See Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones, eds, *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989). For more on the 'liberal v. post-liberal' narrative debate, see *The Modern Theologians*, edited by David Ford (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1997), pp. 330–38.

49. George Stroup, 'A Response to 'Why Narrative?' in *Theology Today*, 47, 4 (January 1991).

50. James Gustafson has critiqued Hauerwas's stance of 'witness' as too fideistic because it serves to isolate Christianity from taking seriously the wider world of science and culture, thereby limiting the participation of living in patterns of interdependence in the world. Ricoeur's anthropology, on the other hand seeks participation with culture and experience as sources of narrative coherence. Hauerwas's response to Gustafson's critique is that Christians must not submit theological claims to non-theological standards because Christians do not 'inhabit' the world in the same way as non-Christians do. See Stanley Hauerwas, 'With a Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology: The Gifford Lectures' delivered at the University of St Andrews (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2001).

51. John Paul II, '*Pacem in Terris: A Permanent Commitment*' – Message for the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2003, in *America*, 10 February 2003, p. 19.

52. Ibid., p. 21.

53. *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, published by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), p. 279.

54. Sebastian Murken, 'Believing in Speech: A Response to James Day's Application of Narrative to the Psychology of Religion' *The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 3, 1 (1993): 237–40.

55. See Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, translated by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

Chapter 1

1. Paul Lauritzen, 'Is Narrative Really a Panacea? The use of Narrative in the Work of Metz and Hauerwas', *Journal of Religion*, 67, 3 (1987): 322–39.
2. Emmanuel Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason: The Relation between Religion and Ethics in the Work of Stanley Hauerwas* (Chicago: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), p. 105.
3. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984–88), vol. 1, xi. It was originally published in French as *Temps et récit* (Paris: editions du Seuil, 1983–85).
4. A good survey of trends in narrative theology can be found in Michael Goldberg, *Theology and Narrative – A Critical Introduction* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001).
5. George Stroup, 'Theology of Narrative or Narrative Theology – A Response To: Why Narrative?', *Theology Today*, 47 (1991): 424–32.
6. Stanley Hauerwas, *Wilderness Wandering: Probing Twentieth-Century Theology and Philosophy* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), p. 4. See also his *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, with Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989).
7. Emmanuel Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, p. 106.
8. Ibid.
9. David Carr in a discussion of 'Ricoeur on Narrative', published in *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa/University of Ottawa Quarterly Review*, 55, 4 (1985).
10. Ibid.
11. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (Oxford, London: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 35ff.
12. Roland Barthes, Louis Mink and Hayden White, *On Narrative*, edited by W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
13. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
14. Ibid., p. 114.
15. Ibid., p. 115.
16. Ibid., p. 85.
17. Paul Ricoeur, 'Life in Quest of Narrative' in *On Paul Ricoeur – Narrative and Interpretation*, edited by David Wood (London: Routledge Press, 1991), pp. 20ff.
18. Ibid., pp. 188ff.
19. Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), pp. 99ff.
20. Ibid., p. 8.
21. Ibid., p. 10.
22. After Mounier's sudden death Ricoeur wrote an intellectual essay in his honour entitled 'Emmanuel Mounier: A Personalist Philosopher', which was later published in the *Esprit* journal in the December 1950 issue. This article is a long intellectual biography reviewing the development of Mounier's philosophy and paying homage to its influence on Ricoeur and on a whole generation of French intellectuals.

23. Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work*, p. 127.
24. Ibid.
25. Don Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971).
26. Ibid., pp. 120–23.
27. Ibid., p. 121.
28. Charles E. Reagan, interview with Paul Ricoeur, Chicago, 17 May 1990, in *Paul Ricoeur His Life and His Work*, pp. 116–18.
29. See Ricoeur's seminal *Soi-meme comme un autre* (Paris: le Seuil, 1990) and *The Just* (Paris éditions: Esprit, 2001). His later writing on justice and ethics were influenced by political developments in central Europe in recent years. He was deeply impressed by the now retired Czech Prime Minister, Vaclav Havel, whose sense of the political issues is highly ethical. Havel reinforced in Ricoeur the need to build political discourse on ethical principles, simply because decisions made at the political level usually concern a third party, who is distant from the decision-making process. More classically, Ricoeur consults the Arisotelian notion of justice in *Nichomachean Ethics* (see *Paul Ricoeur: The Hermeneutics of Action*, pp. 23–39).
30. Ibid., p. xii.
31. Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work*, pp. 1–3.
32. Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, translated by Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). From the French *Soi-Meme comme un autre* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1990).
33. From an interview with Charles E. Reagan, Chatenay-Malabry, 8 July 1991 in *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work*, p. 135.
34. Ibid., p. 87.
35. Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, p. 179.
36. Emmanuel Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, p. 104.
37. Pamela Sue Anderson, 'Ricoeur's Reclamation of Autonomy: Unity, Plurality, and Totality' in *Paul Ricoeur and Contemporary Moral Thought*, edited by John Wall, William Schweiker and W. David Hall (New York and London: Routledge, 2002), p. 27.
38. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, p. 4.
39. Paul Ricoeur, *Life in Quest of Narrative*, p. 23.
40. Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work*, p. 85.
41. Ibid., p. 57.
42. It would be remiss not mention the notable work of biblical scholar, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, who recognizes the primacy of narrative in situating biblical texts, in that 'the *Sitz im Lebem* or life setting of a text is as important for its understanding as its actual formulation', leading her to conclude that Christians witness as 'a community of hermeneuts'. See Fiorenza's, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroads, 1992), p. xvff.
43. Joseph Dunne in *Back to the Rough Ground: Phronesis and Techne in Modern Philosophy and in Aristotle* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), pp. 60–63. Dunne provides a penetrating and invaluable analysis of Aristotle's attempt to resist this tendency. He also examines some key authors in the modern period who have tried to resist the 'technicalist tendency'. These

are: Newman in the sphere of religion, Collingwood in art, Arendt in politics and Gadamer in philosophy. Also Desmond (*Philosophy and Its Others*) provides a successful attempt to qualify the 'technicalist' way of thinking by calling attention to other valid ways of being mindful.
44. Emmanuel Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, p. 123.

Chapter 2

1. According to Stephanus, 'bios' does not just mean life (zoé) but a specific kind of life, that is to say 'bios' is a lifetime, chronological and rational, therefore specific to humans. 'Zoé' is described as the life that all living things share. In Christian literature 'zoé' often refers to the spiritual life, though more prevalent is the use of the term to contrast with 'bios'. The division of life into 'zoé' and 'bios' was an idea the Romans politically installed. It divided life into two castes where 'zoé' was understood as the 'unqualified' form of life and 'bios' was supposed to signify a 'qualified' form of life that only humans would lead.
2. Richard Kearney, *On Stories* (London and New York: Routledge Press, 2002), p. 3.
3. Hannah Arendt. Ibid., p. 4.
4. Wilhelm Dilthey. Ibid., p. 4.
5. Robert Kellogg and Robert Scholes. Ibid., p. 5.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
7. Ibid., p. 9.
8. This commentary on the five pillars of narrative is mostly derived from two sources: A lecture by Paul Ricoeur on '*The Narrative Function*' presented as the Leroy E.Loemaker Lecture in Philosophy, Emory University, New York, on 18 November 1977, and Richard Kearney's *On Stories* (London: Routledge Press, 2002).
9. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1984–88), vol. 3.
10. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, pp. 137–42.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 143.
13. Saul Friedlander, 'Probing the Limits of Representation', cited in *On Stories*, p. 145.
14. Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), p. 9.
15. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, pp. 150–56.
16. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 72.
17. Emmanuel Katongole, *Beyond Universal Reason*, p. 138.
18. Paul Ricoeur, cited in *The Continental Philosophy Reader*, edited by Richard Kearney and Maria Rainwater (London: Routledge, 1996), pp. 15–16. Ricoeur acknowledges his debt to Heidegger's analysis of historicity in *Being and Time*, to Hans-Georg Gadamer's notion of 'effective history' *(Wirkungsgechichte)* and to Jurgen Habermas.
19. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, p. 155.
20. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 3, p. 249.

21. Ibid., p. 156.
22. Ibid.
23. Paul Ricoeur, 'Narrative Identity' in David Wood's, *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 198.
24. Ibid., p. 22.
25. Ibid., p. 24.
26. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, p. 25.
27. Ibid., p. 27.
28. Ibid., p. 28.
29. Paul Ricoeur, *Life in Quest of Narrative*, p. 32.
30. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, pp. 138–39.
31. Alan Jacob, 'What Narrative Theology Forgot' in First Things, *Journal of Religion, Culture and Public Life* (August/September 2003): 25–30.
32. David Carr in a roundtable discussion of Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, published in *Révue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, 55, 4 (1984): 169–71.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., p. 173.
36. This article appeared originally in *Esprit*, 57 (1990), and was translated by Dale Kidd of the European Centre for Ethics, Leuven, for the journal, *Ethical Perspectives* in a feature issue entitled '*Is Personalism Still Alive in Europe?*', 6, 1 (Leuven: April 1999): 45.
37. Paul Ricoeur, 'Is Personalism Still Alive in Europe?' in *Ethical Perspectives*, p. 54.
38. Ibid., p. 46.
39. Ibid., p. 54.
40. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).
41. Paul Ricoeur, 'Love and Justice' in *Paul Ricoeur: The Hermeneutics of Action*, edited by Richard Kearney (London: Sage Publications, 1996), pp. 35–36.
42. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination* (Augsburg, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 300.
43. Paul Ricoeur, 'Love and Justice' in *The Hermeneutics of Action*, p. 300.
44. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p. 301.
45. Jef Van Gerwen, *The Gospel in The Moral Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, edited by Henri Opdebeeck, p. 72.
46. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p. 301.
47. Henri Opdebeeck, *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy – Ricoeur's Ehical Order* (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2000), p. 27.
48. Paul Ricoeur, 'On Love and Justice' in *Refiguring the Sacred*, p. 323.
49. Ibid., p. 323.
50. Paul Ricoeur, *The Hermeneutics of Action*, p. 33.
51. Ibid, p. 35.
52. Ibid.
53. Message of His Holiness *Pope John Paul II* for the celebration of World Peace Day, 1 January 2004. '*An Ever Timely Commitment: Teaching Peace*' p. 5. <http://www.holy see.vatican.va.> [Accessed 27 February, 2004].

54. Kevin Burke, *The Ground Beneath the Cross: The Theology of Ignacio Ellacuria* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2000), pp. 1–13.
55. Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt: Life is a Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), p. 48.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.

Chapter 3

1. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, p. 139.
2. Paul Ricoeur, 'Memory and Forgetting' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, edited by Richard Kearney and Mark Dooley (London and New York: Routledge Press, 1999), p. 11.
3. Paul Ricoeur, 'Can Forgiveness Heal?' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy – Ricoeur's Ethical Order*, edited by Hendrik J. Opdebeeck (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2000), p. 35.
4. Paul Ricoeur, '*Le pardon peut-il guérir?*' was the title of a talk that he gave as part of a series of lectures on the topic '*Is God Credible*' at the Temple d'Étoile, Paris, 1995 and later published in the French journal *Esprit*, 210 (1995): 77–82.
5. Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, translated by Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1967). First published in French as *Finitude et Culpabilité II: La Symbolique du mal* (Paris: Aubier, 1960).
6. Jacques De Visscher, 'Ricoeur's Ethical Order' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy: Ricoeur's Ethical Order*, edited by Hendrik J. Opdebeeck (Leuven: Peeters Press, 2000), p. 4.
7. Ibid.
8. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative and Imagination* (Augsburg, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 290.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., pp. 291–92.
11. Richard Kearney, *On Stories*, p. 31.
12. Ibid., p. 15.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 16.
15. Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and His Work*, p. 51. From the mid 1990s onwards Ricoeur began to write more on theories of justice and the relation between ethics, politics and justice, inspired by the late Harvard philosopher John Rawls, whose seminal *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971) has re-invigorated contemporary philosophical debates on issues of social justice.
16. Ibid., p. 17.
17. Ibid.
18. Paul Ricoeur, 'Memory and Forgetting' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, pp. 5–8.

19. In 1965, Ricoeur produced an analysis of Freud with the publication of *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. As the title suggests, this book is more an investigation of Freudian discourse and methodologies for what they can bring to interpretation theory, than a critique of Freudian psychoanalysis. It is in this work that Ricoeur introduces the idea of a 'hermeneutics suspicion' which traces to the Freud, Marx and Nietzsche, though he regards all three positively in that they help disentangle consciousness from false consciousness.

20. Ricoeur supports Freud's theory of mourning, presented by the latter in an essay entitled *Remembering, Repetition and Working Through* published in 1914 in which he states that the way towards reconciliation with oneself and others is by means of 'working through' one's memories (*Durcharbeiten*).

21. Paul Ricoeur, 'Memory and Forgetting' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, p. 7.

22. Paul Ricoeur, 'Can Forgiveness Heal' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy: Ricoeur's Ethical Order*, p. 34.

23. Paul Ricoeur, 'Memory and Forgetting' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, p. 8.

24. Ibid., p. 9.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid., p. 9.

27. Ibid., p. 10.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., p. 11.

30. Paul Ricoeur, 'Love and Justice' in *The Hermeneutics of Action*, edited by Richard Kearney (London and California: Sage Publications, 1996), p. 34.

31. Paul Ricoeur, 'Can Forgiveness Heal?' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy*, p. 35.

32. Paul Ricoeur, 'Quel éthos nouveau pour l'Europe?' in *Imaginer l'Europe*, edited by P. Koslowski (Paris: Cerf Publications, 1992), pp. 107–16.

33. Paul Ricoeur, 'Can Forgiveness Heal?' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy*, p. 35.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid., p. 36.

37. Current research in the area of child sexual abuse has raised the controversial issue of recovered memory and false memory syndrome. The scientific community has waged a heated debate as to whether the recovered memory movement, for example, is credible or whether it is a pseudoscience that has devastating social effects. Certainly, the repressed memory syndrome can be traced to the aftermath of Freudian psychoanalysis. While contemporary psychology has dismantled many of Freud's theories, Ricoeur's main interest is in his success with patients who worked through troubled past memories that were recounted without manipulation or recourse to hypnosis. Freud kept diaries in which he recounted the progress of certain patients in therapy. His plotting of the working through, and mourning for, what memories revealed, was the interpretative key for Ricoeur's research interest. For further reading on the polemical topic of Freud's legacy, see Frederick Crews, *The Memory Wars: Freud's Legacy in Dispute* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1995) and

Richard Ofshe & Ethan Watters, *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy and Sexual Nature* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1994). See also the work of Harvard psychiatrist, Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Book, 1992), which is widely acclaimed as the best book yet written on psychological trauma and recovery; it includes an excellent chapter on 'Remembrance and Mourning'.

38. Paul Ricoeur, 'Can Forgiveness Heal?' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy*, p. 33.

39. Ibid.

40. Lawrence Langer, 'Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory' in *On Stories*, p. 25.

41. Ibid.

42. Martha C. Nussbaum, *Poetic Justice: The Literary Imagination and Public Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), pp. 61–70.

43. Richard Kearney, 'Narrative and the Ethics of Remembrance' in *Questioning Ethics: Contemporary Debates in Philosophy*, pp. 30–31.

44. Ibid.

45. Luc Anckaert, 'Respect for the Other: The Place of the "Thou" ' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy. Ricoeur's Ethical Order*, pp. 37–50.

46. Ibid., pp. 32–34.

47. Ibid.

48. Alan Jacobs, 'What Narrative Theology Forgot' in *First Things*, pp. 25–30.

49. Ibid.

50. Luc Anckaert, 'Respect for the Other: The Place of the "Thou" ', in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy. Ricoeur's Ethical Order*, p. 17.

51. Mary Grey, 'Liberation Theology and the Bearers of Dangerous Memory' in *New Blackfriars* (1994), pp. 512–24.

52. Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering* (London: Dartman Longman Todd, 1975), pp. 61–86.

53. Elaine Scary, *The Body in Pain* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 13.

54. See Johann Baptist Metz, *Hope against Hope: Johan Baptist Metz and Elie Wiesel Speak Out on the Holocaust*, edited by Ekkehard Schuster and Reinhold Boschert-Kimming (New York: Paulist Press, 1999).

55. See, for example, Bruno Forte, *The Trinity as History* (New York: Alba House, 1989).

56. See also René Girard's radical scapegoat theory of violence. His study of fictional texts and mythology led him to develop a theory of acquisitive mimesis and rivalry from which originates all violence (1965) and the surrogate victim, from which originates ritual is the 'ameliorative' factor for violence, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977). He believes these social mechanisms are hidden in the great novels, myths and historical texts, especially 'texts of persecution' and are finally revealed in the Christian gospels, *The Scapegoat* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). The starting point of Girard's theory is *acquisitive mimesis*. Girard proposes that much of human behaviour is based on *mimesis*,

an all-encompassing expression of imitation, but focuses on acquisition and appropriation as the object of mimesis. Ricoeur's sense of the mimetic is sourced in Aristotelian theory and proposes a hopeful and therapeutic expression of mimesis as a pedagogic or virtuous principle operative in the narrative dynamic and therefore is a useful model for reconciliation discourse.

57. Dorothee Soelle, *Political Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), p. 130.
58. Ibid.
59. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p. 261.
60. Ibid.
61. Johan Verstraeten, 'The World of the Bible as Meta-Ethical Framework of Meaning for Ethics' in *Currents of Encounter – Hermeneutics, Values and Society*, edited by Hendrik M. Vroom and Jerald D. Gort (Amsterdam and Atlanta, GA: Rodopi Press, 1997), p. 144.
62. Interview with Professor Richard Kearney, December 2002. *Etty Hillesum was a Dutch Jew who died in Auschwitz in 1943 at the age of 29. She left behind a diary and letters of her experience entitled: *Etty Hillesum: An Interrupted Life and Letters from Westerbork* (New York: Owl Books, Henry Holt and Company, 1996).
63. Ibid., Interview with Professor Richard Kearney.
64. Comments from an interview with Richard Kearney at Boston College, December 2002.
65. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (hereafter TMA), *Origins* 24, 23 (November 1994): 401–16.
66. Ibid.
67. John Paul II, *Bull of Indiction of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, Incarnationis Mysterium* (hereafter IM), *Origins* 28, 11 (December 1988): 445–53.
68. Kevin Lenehan, The Great Jubilee and the Purification of Memory' in *Louvain Studies* (Leuven, 2000), p. 293.
69. COMECE (Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community), *Truth, Memory and Solidarity – Keys to Peace and Reconciliation* (Brussels: 11 March 1999), no. 44.
70. Johan Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), pp. 88–89.
71. Kevin Lenehan, 'The Great Jubilee and the Purification of Memory' in *Louvain Studies*, p. 296.
72. George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology* (London: SCM Press, 1984), pp. 258–59.
73. Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, p. 81.
74. Michael Buckley, S.J., 'The Catholic University and the Promise inherent in its Identity' in *Catholic Universities in Church and Society: A Dialogue on Ex corde Ecclesiae*, edited by John P. Langan S.J. (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1993), p. 83.
75. Jef Van Gerwen, 'Ethics and the Gospel' in *The Foundation and Application of Moral Philosophy – Ricoeur's Ethical Order*, edited by Hendrik J. Opdebeeck, p. 65.
76. Ibid., p. 71.
77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p. 72.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid., p. 71.
81. Ibid., p. 72.
82. Ibid., p. 73.
83. Ibid.
84. Ibid.
85. Richard Kearney, 'Myth and Sacrificial Scapegoats: On René Girard' in *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Post-Modern* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1995), pp. 136–47.
86. Ibid., p. 79.
87. John Dominic Crossan, *The Dark Interval: Towards a Theology of Story* (California: Sonoma Press, 1988), p. 102.
88. Ibid., p. 105.
89. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 42 (1988).
90. Johan Verstraeten, 'The World of the Bible as Meta-Ethical Framework of Meaning for Ethics' in *Currents of Encounter – Hermeneutics, Values and Society*, pp. 145–47
91. Ibid.
92. Ibid., p. 159.
93. James Fodor, *Christian Hermeneutics: Paul Ricoeur and the Refiguring of Theology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 162.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid., p. 83.
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Index of Names

Index of Terms