home in France, but whether men and women are at ease with this 'French' God" (225).

Such criticisms notwithstanding, *God in France* is as rewarding to read as it is important for the furtherance of the contemporary debate. It is the perfect collection to include in a graduate seminar on phenomenology or continental philosophy of religion and should be carefully read by anyone working in continental philosophy who is not readily familiar with "new" phenomenology. Additionally, because it pairs thinkers who reside at the center of American continental interest (e.g., Derrida, Levinas, and Marion) with thinkers who have not yet received as much attention (e.g., Henry, Lacoste, and Girard), the book invites us to rethink our own preferences, practices, and possibly even prejudices. In short, by serving to invite further conversation and challenge current perspectives, the book is exemplary.

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Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), xvii+642 pages.

Paul Ricoeur's *Memory, History, Forgetting* (*La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* [Seuil: Paris, 2000]), dedicated to the memory of Simone Ricoeur, addresses the fundamental question of the representation of the past by examining the reciprocal relationship between remembering and forgetting. The prevailing issue of the treatise is the possibility of the past's being made present again. Following Vladimir Jankélévitch, Ricoeur presents the "mysterious and profoundly obscure fact of having been" as the human being's "viaticum for all eternity." As is befitting for a treatise on the philosophy of history, the content of the book is preceded by a black-and-white photograph of a baroque sculpture from the Wiblingen Monastery in Ulm representing the dual figure of history. (In the French edition this full-color photograph is on the front cover). Kronos (Chronos), an old man, represents a past that cannot be recuperated. History, a young man, possesses the instruments for mastering time: a notebook, ink, and a feather; the trappings of a

philosophy of history. The word *historia* means, literally, "inquiry, factual account." For the Greeks it was an inquiry into the events of the very recent past by getting the stories of eye-witnesses and participants. Ricoeur situates his philosophy of history in-between the mastery of memory and the force of forgetting.

As indicated in the title, the book has a threefold structure determined by the three key words: memory, history, and forgetting. Each of the three parts is divided into three chapters. On top of this triadic structure, Ricoeur provides the reader with a short reading guideline (*note d'orientation*) at the beginning of each part and chapter in a manner of "negotiating with the reader's patience" (xvii).

Continuing the project that he previously developed in *Time and Narrative* (representation as part of a philosophy of time describing human existence as historical) and *Oneself as Another* (human being is *l'homme capable*, as capable of talking, narrating, acting, and making him/herself responsible), Ricoeur is adding to his philosophical anthropology a vision of a human being as one who is capable of making memory and making history. *Memory, History, Forgetting* is a "prolongation of [the] uninterrupted conversation" (xv) on memory and history by "returning to a lacuna in the problematic of *Time and Narrative* and in *Oneself as Another*, where temporal experience and the narrative operation are directly placed in contact, at the price of an impasse with respect to memory and, worse yet, of an impasse with respect to forgetting, the median levels between time and narrative" (xv).

The first part "On Memory and Recollection," ('De la mémoire et de la réminiscence,') is a phenomenological approach to memory and mnemonic phenomena. Ricoeur addresses here the question of how a memory in the present can be of something absent, the past. In the spirit of Husserlian phenomenology, Ricoeur investigates two issues: "*Of what* are there memories?" and "*Whose* memory is it?" (3). Following the Husserlian distinction between "the noesis of remembering and the noema of memories" (22), Ricoeur offers his phenomenological sketch of memory, linking the preverbal or lived experience (Husserl's *Erlebnis*) with phenomenological hermeneutics (which Ricoeur calls "phenomenology on the path of interpretation" [24]). Ricoeur heavily relays on Husserl's distinction between "retention or primary memory and reproduction or secondary memory" (31). In Ricouer's interpretation of Husserl's "Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time," the famous *epoché*, which, for Husserl, results in

bracketing objective time "does not begin by laying bare a pure flow, but rather a temporal experience (*Erfahrung*) that has an object-oriented side in memory" (31). By addressing the issue of temporal duration, Ricoeur makes meaningful a distinction between "immediate memory or retention and secondary memory (recollection) or reproduction" (32). Since the object of intention endures temporally, what is being retained is immediately altered by the "ever new now." This "modification" signifies that "to endure is to remain the same" (35). Ricoeur quotes Husserl to stress that "a new now is always entering on the scene, the now changes into a past; and as it does so the whole running-off continuity of pasts belonging to the preceding points moves 'downwards' uniformly into the depths of the past" (34). Criticizing Husserl's presuppositions in his phenomenology of time (which was supposed to be suppositionless and open solely to the "things themselves"), Ricoeur points that *epoché* "under the guise of objectification, strikes worldliness" (36; see also Ricoeur's detailed analyses of Husserl as a witness to the tradition of inwardness, 109-120).

The second part, "History, Epistemology" ("Histoire, Épistémologie"), examines the nature and truth of historical knowledge. History-writing is, to Ricoeur, like Plato's *pharmakon* (a term referring to a drug which can be either poison or medicine). It therefore contains implicit within it the question of an epistemological inquiry into the historical sciences to answer whether it is a remedy or a poison, which can happen only "on the reflective plane of the critical philosophy of history" (139). Ricoeur's detailed investigation of representation understood as "standing for" (*représentance*) (236) leads him to discern "historical discourse['s] capacity for representing the past" (237). This newly invented word, *la représentance*, names the ability of the historian to render a credible equivalent (*Darstellung*) of the past. By examining the relationship between representation and narration, Ricoeur discovers that "the narrative form as such interposes its complexity and its opacity on...the referential impulse of the historical narrative. The narrative structure tends to form a circle with itself and to exclude as outside the text, as an illegitimate extralinguistic presupposition, the referential moment of the narration" (237). Ricoeur questions the possibility of writing a history of memory by efficiently breaking up a dependence on memory. "The beginning of the historian's scripturality is undiscoverable" (139). By the "taking of a distance which consists in

the recourse to the exteriority of the archival trace" (139), writing history is an irreducible course of reconstruction in order to "represent the past faithfully" (229) as an instrument for seeking truth as a faithful testimony.

The third part "The Historical Condition" ("La Condition historique"), culminates in a meditation on the necessity of forgetting as a condition for the possibility of remembering, "framed within a hermeneutics of the historical condition of the human beings that we are" (xvi). Ricoeur wonders whether we can speak of a 'happy' forgetting in parallel to 'happy' memory. In his indecisiveness he opens up a possibility for "an eschatology of forgetting" (501). Forgetting is linked to memory and faithfulness to the past, while pardoning to culpability and reconciliation with the past. A happy forgetting "can only arrange itself under the optative mood of happy memory" (505). In his phenomenology of forgetting, Ricoeur pleads for "carefree memory on the horizon of concerned memory, the soul common to memory that forgets and does not forget" (505).

Ricoeur's treatment of religious themes provides the basis for an important subject of a critical inquiry in order to establish some rules for treating religious and theological problems within philosophy. Well known and widely commented upon is the example from *Oneself as Another*, where Ricoeur excludes from the book publication his two final Gifford Lectures on the hermeneutics of selfhood "The Self in the Mirror of Scripture," and "The Mandated Self" to avoid criticism of mixing two separate discourses, which have their own presuppositions and criteria. As Ricoeur says: "I prefer the risk of schizophrenia to the bad faith of a pseudo-argument" (Charles Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and Work* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996], 125–26). In *Memory, History, Forgetting*, however, Ricoeur publishes an extensive Epilogue, "Difficult Forgiveness" ("*Le pardon difficile*," 457–506), which introduces the subject of forgiveness to an "eschatology of memory." This Epilogue marks a revolution in the relationship between philosophical and religious thinking by complementing the task of memory and historiography by the religiously saturated issue of forgiveness. "Forgiveness—if it has a sense, and if it exists—constitutes the horizon common to memory, history, and forgetting. Always in retreat, this horizon slips away from any grasp. It makes forgiving difficult: not easy but not impossible" (457). As "capable beings," we are somehow paralyzed in our ability to act by the

overwhelming power of fault. On the other hand, we are paralyzed by the mystery of feeling this fault being lifted, which we experience as forgiveness. For Ricoeur, "this double enigma runs diagonally through that of the representation of the past, once the effects of the fault and those of forgiveness have traversed all the consecutive operations of memory and of history and have placed a distinctive mark on forgetting" (457). Forgiveness, by constituting the joint horizon for memory, history, and forgetting, "places a seal of incompleteness on the entire enterprise" (457), but also casts the new light on the difficult subject of reconciliation in history. Ricoeur prepares the ground for an eschatological representation of the past thus avoiding an apocalyptic tone in his philosophical hermeneutics. "What is at stake is the projection of a sort of eschatology of memory and, in its wake, of history and of forgetting" (459). Ricoeur emphasizes the link between memory and narrative identity: memory is often falsified through the detour of narration, "slipping back into the traps amnesty-amnesia" (505), which constitutes *ars oblivionis* (art of forgetting). The selective side of story-telling creates a problem for historical truth. With regard to forgiveness, Ricoeur speaks of the strategy of elusion and evasion, which is carefully worked out to protect the self against the return of unbearable memories. Not always a felicitous human faculty, forgiveness is therefore not only an ability and a burdensome task. Rather, in his analysis of the faculty of forgiveness, Ricoeur pushes "the odyssey of forgiveness to the center of selfhood" (489). Forgiveness is the vertical dimension of "*il y a le pardon*," which emphasizes the significant asymmetry between the power to forgive and the power to promise (horizontal correlation). For Ricoeur, "forgiveness has the effect of dissociating the debt from its burden of guilt and in a sense of laying bare the phenomenon of the debt, as the dependence on a received heritage . . . it should release the agent from his act" (489). This essential possibility of separating the agent from his or her action (hate the sin and love the sinner) should create a culture of forgiveness. The arrival of forgiveness is beyond human power. The offer of forgiveness is free and can not be taken for granted: it restores the human being to the capacity of acting and action to the capacity of continuing: the unbinding of the agent from his or her act marks "the inscription, in the field of horizontal disparity between power and act, of the vertical disparity between the great height of forgiveness and the abyss of guilt. The guilty person,

rendered capable of beginning again: this would be the figure of unbinding that commands all the others" (490).

Ricoeur himself explains that his book is entirely closed and concluded before the epilogue itself. Adding the epilogue on forgiveness as a personal act, which happens from person to person, and does not concern juridical institutions, was for Ricoeur a matter of intellectual honesty. What holds the book together is the perspective of an appeased memory associated with forgiveness: the recognition of the past remembered without anger and prejudices. By emphasizing the fact that the relation between memory, history and forgetting is closed upon itself prior to the epilogue, Ricoeur opens up the question of a hermeneutic reading of his own work. As a philosopher who insisted that existence itself is essentially hermeneutic he could hardly avoid endorsing the ideal of an ever-developing interpretation of himself. Ricoeur's is a truly polysemic voice, sacrificing neither truth nor variety. His voice has been true to the confused medley of voices that constitutes the tradition that we are.

Ricoeur's avowal that he cleanly avoided the admixture of philosophy and theology is at variance with the textual record of his *Memory, History, Forgetting*. This however is not a mistake. Self-interpretation and textual record will always vary. This infinite variance is an invitation to an infinite task of self-interpretation. Brilliantly and eloquently moving between Aristotle, Sartre, Plato, Bergson, Nietzsche, Freud, Husserl, and Heidegger, while concluding with the Song of Songs's "Love is as strong as death" (506), Ricoeur invites us to a never ending dialogue, leading us on the path "from memories to reflective memory, passing by way of recollection" (4). However methodologically rigorous Ricoeur is in separating philosophy from theology, his Christian facticity nonetheless determines the discourse. This is inevitable, given our hermeneutic belonging to tradition. Ricoeur philosophizes as a Protestant Christian, because he must philosophize as Protestant Christian. He has no recourse to another voice. This voice cannot be denied or ignored. With his distinctive voice Ricoeur lets other voices come to expression in an "unstable equilibrium."

An essential incompleteness is the horizon of writing history. In Ricoeur's words:

Under history, memory and forgetting.
Under memory and forgetting, life.

But writing a life is another story.
Incompletion. (506)

This incompletion, the receding of horizons, might open up a horizon of religious transcendence. This possibility of interpretation cannot be denied and should not be understood as a flight into the unknown or a dream for completeness, since Ricoeur placed his whole enterprise "from the start under the banner of the merciless critique directed against the hubris of total reflection" (413) In this sense, the facticity of our being is the provision (*viaticum*) for the journey of life and as such is also the provision for the passage out of this mode of existence into the totally unknown.

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