 Abstract: *Taking a point of departure in theories which explain the relation between victimization and sacred groundings of community, the article relates to the recent and evolving literature on memory, forgiveness and reconciliation, reflecting on the need for a restoration of the potential which lies in memory and forgiveness. Of special importance are the theories of Habermas, Derrida and Ricoeur, which assert the necessity of memorizing the traumas of founding violence and creating a more conciliate climate. A common trait is a fuller affirmation of a post-secular agenda in humanities. While Habermas defends a communicative approach, Derrida will defend a deconstructive messianicity affirmative of religious hospitality. Ricoeur will defend a caritative approach: Confronting violence makes necessary an ethics of memory and forgetting where forgiveness sustained by love form a therapy for the post-secular epoch. Towards the end of the article we discuss this disagreement. Ricoeur's approach suggests a middle way between Habermas and Derrida. Giving significance to Ricoeur's theory of linguistification of the sacred through metaphor and speech-act, we learn that Christianity`s emphasis on gifted and incarnate mutuality, communicate a performative gesture indispensable for dialogue.*

PAUL RICOEUR' S SUGGESTION OF FORGIVENESS AS THERAPY FOR THE POST-SECULAR CONDITION
By Dag Helge Moldenhagen

1.0. Some theoretical presuppositions for the necessity of forgiveness on the ethico-political level.

A trait in contemporary ethics is that no one wants a retreat back to the devastating manifestations of state terrorism and the romanticism around community identity that evolved in the midst of the twentieth century. Through deeper reflexivity, an appreciation of peace, commitment, and human rights, ethics tries to establish a more just and open democracy. Yet, our sorrow is that these hopes of democracies have not been fulfilled. Risk of terror and deep oppression was still haunting Europe until the turn of the millennium, showing that violence against *the other* is part of a larger problem of identity and otherness, as in Croatia in 1992 (Volf 1996). Some of the reactions after the event of 9/11 have also been diagnosed as a new romanticism around state identity (Butler 2004). This suggests that victimization with its reduction of citizenship lay at a very deep level in Western morality, and is not a surface phenomenon, but part of our social traditions. Variables of pathological emotions, anxiety, shame, desire, stigma, moral panic (Goffman 1963;Nussbaum 2004), or efforts to clean society from contagious elements (filth), together with social misunderstandings, the collective traumatic, the prohibition of mourning, upheld and regenerated by symbol making, form a "system" of victimage society (Douglas 1966;Goffman 1963;Hughes 2002;Nussbaum 2004).There is a deep inability to communicate trauma (Caruth 1996;Gillis 1994;Natzmer 2002).Theories will even suggest that *religion* and

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societies are structured from *foundational* violent events: In the beginning of culture is the sacred victim. Religion may reconcile people, but does so by way of a legitimizing *founding murder* (Girard 1977;Taylor 2006). Sacrificial processes require a certain degree of social misunderstanding and forgetting.

New theory seems to make a difference to how this forgetting is treated in *post-secular* societies. For Agamben the difference between the post-secular society, an archaic situation where the murder is hidden in ritual practice, and a fully secular order where religion's way of hiding the reconciling murder is manifested, is that the victimage constraint now seems to be *partly hidden, partly manifest*. As Agamben implies, *victims must now be held captive without ritual and without murder.* The idea of the sacred victim is indissociable from the idea of state sovereignty. The sovereign sphere is the sphere in which it is permitted to kill *without committing homicide and without celebrating a sacrifice.* The state of exception is a situation where sacred life is laid out as bare life, placed in a suspended zone, a zone of anomie (Agamben 1998;Agamben 2005). According to Butler, this relates to a hierarchy of grief, a prohibition of certain forms of public grieving, performed by post-secular governmentality (Butler 2004).

What Agamben and Butler point to, is a *possibility* which makes necessary efforts of reconciliation. Their theory is related to the critical theory of Benjamin, Adorno and Horkheimer which suggests anamnestic (recollective) solidarity as a pragmatics of reconciliation. Earlier, Adorno's theory was extended by Habermas' appeal for a therapeutic, reparatory agenda in ethics and an imperative of reconciliation through the public use of reason (Habermas 1992,55-57; 1995b). Societies must be grounded on memorative, open constructions of identity; a memory that reconciles with victims and makes democracy into a project of humanization. Other discourses reflect on establishing a conciliatory climate out of memory and mourning strategies (Bloom 1997), a caritative approach of healing of memory through public forgiveness (Ricoeur), societal hospitality (Derrida 1994;Derrida 2002;Derrida & Vattimo 1998), political forgiveness (Amstutz 2005), Ubuntu spirituality (Battle 2002), or the traditions of religions (Heft, J eds 2004).

A repeated *problem* in these discourses, is the status of the claims of religions seen in relation to violence towards the victim, the persistence of trauma and false memory, *and* the

thesis of a possibly *human* capacity to forgive and release the offender from the act. We may also ask what paradigm of forgiveness is congruent to an understanding of how forgiveness can be operative in institutions? Is the practice of forgiveness a question of religious spirituality or secular reason? How will arguments relate to what the philosophy of language tells us of the use of language?

In this article I show how Ricoeur defends a theory of reconciliation 1) inclusive to christian thought, 2) a view on how the linguistification of the sacred (gifts) both limits and enable practice, and 3) a pragmatics of how institutional and pragmatic constraints must be taken into account. Giving significance to his theory of forgiveness as universalized *speech-act*, we learn that emphasis on gifted *mutuality,* communicates a performative gesture which is indispensable for dialogue, but not exclusive to the arguments of Habermas and Derrida. Situated between Habermas and Derrida, Ricoeur, is also compatible with Agamben and Butler's understanding of post-secular society as a blurring of the borders between sacred and governmental regime.

2.0 Paul Ricoeur's therapy for the post-secular condition

Ricoeur's alternative route must be understood in combination with his understanding of language, a dialectic between a hermeneutic of suspicion and a recollective technique giving tribute to a restorative move from "naïve faith" to a "second faith" that is attained by phenomenology, tribute to spiritual convictions and traditions, analogy and kinship (Gadamer), observance of fault, solitude, death, liminality (Jaspers), a hermeneutic of the significance of action, combined with a plea for difference, societal citizenship (Arendt), and the need for just democracy (Ricoeur 1996). Evil and frailty are contingent structures and can only be explored through symbols and metaphor in how the symbol sets us thinking. Ricoeur criticizes an approach where symbol is reduced to a system of signs without any anchor in a subject or extralinguistic factors (Ricoeur 1996 ,22,29). In accordance with results in analytical philosophy, Ricoeur finds the speech-act theory of Austin and Searle to give reliable support to his own theory: To Ricoeur, speech-act theory facilitates the integration of action, hermeneutics and ideas of speech as an event (Ricoeur 1996,32-33,40;Wallace 2000). This makes it possible to see speech-events in relation to "the sense of history in general, the place of violence and nonviolence in history, the

sense of history and Christian eschatology, progress, ambiguity, hope,…"(Ricoeur 1996,cit. 39).
Ricoeur`s hermeneutical phenomenology is enriched by a theory of narrative configuration
(Ricoeur 1994,113-115).

In his ethics written in the nineties Ricoeur asserts that there always will be a *tension*
between 1) the right of individuals to ground their *identity*, 2) the demand of societies to define a
political identity by explicating a meaning of founding events, its beginnings, its epoch-making
events, and 3) the histories of the victims themselves, memories of the horrible crimes that must
not be forgotten, memories of sufferings (Ricoeur 1991b,187,246). Ethical reconstruction of
citizenship-identity is a function of societal *care,* extracted from Heidegger's view of care as the
form of human identity: in Ricoeur's texts this is modified to be consistent with imperatives of
hospitality to the other, developed from the ethics of Levinas (Ricoeur 1995b,5), and Arendt's
understanding of natality as the potential of the individual to make new beginnings (see below).

This implies that there is always the option of telling a story where the victim and the
collective who has legitimized terror give themselves a new identity. In that way Ricoeur seeks to
replace the communicative scarcity which created victims with an ethics of hospitality on sharing
language and identity, making a twist to Habermas' observations of the risks of communicative
fatigue (Ricoeur 1991b,254; 1994,163,190,202,227; 2000,133-145). In accordance with the
Arendtian plea for a politic which regards difference and pluralism as facts of life, political
identity must always be open to reform, in a spirit of asking and giving forgiveness for the
impingements nations impose on one another. Forgiveness is a specific form of the revision of the
past belonging to *the order of charity*, a tool to resist fanatism (Ricoeur 1991a,312; 1995b,9). A
nation's tale of founding events can be reorganized in a new articulation on strangers, sufferings,
crimes, amnesties, rehabilitation, and the institution of pardon. Pardon seems to be an equivalent
of forgiveness. Pardon is a kind of healing of memory, the end of mourning. Pardon gives
memory a future, signifies our capacity to recreate ourselves in a new future (Ricoeur
1995a,12,13; 2000,145).

At the turn of the millennium Ricoeur seems to become more aware of the persistence of a
collective traumatism in cultures. This concerns especially the memorizing of the founding of
nations: "What we celebrate under the title of founding events are, essentially, acts of

violence....what was glory for some was humiliation for others...in this way symbolic wounds calling for healing are stored in the archives of collective memory" (Ricoeur 2004b,cit p.79,82). Memory is considered as a vulnerable, risky action, cast out to uses and abuses (Ricoeur 2004b,57). Memory-healing presupposes a combined work of memory and mourning to make the person capable of reconciliation with the past. Otherwise persons will repeat traumas as actions and there will be no reconciliation (Ricoeur 2004b,70). This also regards the pathology of collective memory and the therapeutic perspectives in the society which the demand for reconciliation opens. To break the memory which repeats the violence the joint work of memory and mourning should occupy a strategic position in reflection on the failures and abuses of memory. The target of this work is a happy memory where mourning comes to completion (Ricoeur 2004b,80,77). Forgiveness is put into the centre of ethics: "Forgetting and forgiveness, separately and together, designate the horizon of all we say about an ethics of memory, included the horizon of a happy forgetting" (Ricoeur 2004bcit.412).

As to the hermeneutic of those key issues, forgetting and forgiveness, Ricoeur asserts that they must be held separate: For forgetting, the problematic relates to memory and faithfulness to the past, for forgiveness, the problematic relates to guilt and reconciliation with the past (Ricoeur 2004b,413). If we compare Ricoeur`s approach with the theories mentioned in the opening of this article Ricoeur seems to place anxiety, shame, and desire in a lower place of the hierarchy of significant emotions (Ricoeur 1966,74; 1994,314,327-328). Real suffering, as experience of lack, and vulnerability to social violence, plays a greater role (Ricoeur 1994,3). Besides, Ricoeur considers *wonder* as a strong emotion; Wonder is the emotion which opens to *the other* and gives food to imagination (Ricoeur 1966,101).

Ricoeur's opinion is that to understand the place of forgetting and forgiveness in an ethics of memory we must look at *how the line between them is blurred in abuse and misunderstanding and how they sometimes must be held together* (Ricoeur 2004b,448,476,479). Misunderstanding results in an overhasty assimilation of forgiveness into an e*xchange* defined by reciprocity. A reciprocal relation between the offender and the victim ignores the fact that the victim is the first subject of forgiveness. Forgetting is here, *in its abuse*, *a semi-passive, semi-active behavior*

affecting an unfinished mourning (Ricoeur 2004b,450). A question then is how, in combat against misuse, the boundary between forgetting and forgiving can be kept intact.

From these prospects, Ricoeur turns to the question of fault, and the possibility of forgiveness. On the one hand, there is fault (stain, sin, guilt), and *the unforgiveable* in the abysses of history, held to paralyze our power to use societal action to care for society, but on the other hand there is the possibility of the *announcement* of forgiveness from a "height", which says: "There is forgiveness", held to release the power to act in capable ways. According to Ricoeur the first phenomena will *bring to language* an experience of solitude, failure, struggle, where agents bind themselves to their action, while the second will open the imagination to the possibility and praise of forgiveness (Ricoeur 2004b,457-459,466-467). Forgiveness gives *voice* to an eschatology of the representation of the past, constitutes the common horizon of memory, history and forgetting (Ricoeur 2004b,457). According to Ricoeur, this speech-act is congruent with "announcing anonymized source"(illéité, [Levinas]), - in Ricoeur`s phenomenology of *self* described as a voice from the heart of hearts =conscience (Ricoeur 1996,59). In a contemporary theological essay Ricoeur describes conscience as the inner forum where the justification and mandate of God is heard in hymns (Ricoeur 1995c;Wallace 2000;Wallace 2002). Ricoeur will insistently state that philosophy and theology are disparate discourses. Yet, at the level of speech-acts, they may come together. Ricoeur relates to *kinship* between forgiving and giving, found in numerous cultures, and the power to communicate and fuel an *imagination of Gods forgiveness.*

As part of the eventualization (1*) of speech-acts, forgiveness eludes us. As a horizon, it always slips away from any grasp, is always incomplete, not belonging to us, but to *an other economy,* in contradiction to the abysses of faults and guilt. Forgiveness belongs to an *economy of gift*, as love also belongs to a faculty of gift (Ricoeur 2004b,467), - this idea being inseparable from *the kerygma* of Jesus Christ and from its inscription into a Trinitarian proclamation and typology of gifts, stated in the litany of the early church: 1.Cor, 12:1,31, about the gifts of the spirit, implying that "There is forgiveness, as there is joy, extravagance, love. Forgiveness belongs to the same family." (cit: Ricoeur 2004b,467,468). Ricoeur's argument is that this kerygma and proclamation are early speech-acts in the *eventualization* of the imagination of

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1* Eventualization : how events manifests in time , mind, history (philosophically) or creation (theologically).

forgiveness. It states the imagination which biblical language performativity *effects.* These gifts, then, through their altarity, make a *break* into human history and install creative newness*,* at the same time as they reign beyond our control. We can only reach them through wonder, imaginary language and in our *litanies*, as in 1.Cor 13, 8, saying: Love *remains* (Ricoeur 2004b,456,467,469). The gifts are not at our disposal, *but belong to a family of sovereign phenomena in human life, situated far from the abysses (speech-acts) of guilt and fault.* Ricoeur seems to regard love, joy, and forgiveness as analogical operations which seem to bear relationships between immanent meanings and values, probably reminiscent of what Wittgenstein termed "family resemblance" (Ward 2000,ix).

Since forgiveness does not belong to an economy of exchange, Ricoeur makes the proposal that forgiveness operates differently on the institutional level than in the margins of institutions. Inside the institutions forgiveness is *impossible* because forgiveness creating *impunity* is a great injustice (Ricoeur 2004b,470). Unforgiveness remains and true justice must be done. Further, an important argument is that institutions are carrying out kinds of *incognito forgiveness.* At this level, acts of forgiveness, which originally did not take on meaning, because they were incapable of being transformed into institutions, can be professed in gestures or speech-acts such as pardon, amnesty, or truth commissions, showing forgiveness in a will to make a *distanc*e between persons and the crime. Moderation, magnanimity, or self-limitation of the state, are "the shadow of forgiveness". These gestures are also "quests for forgiveness." What matters is their exceptional character. They signal their membership in two orders of thinking: Unforgiveable guilt, and exchange where guilt begins to be chipped away (Ricoeur 2004b,477-478,483,485-486). To Ricoeur forgiveness will then happen *here*, through a rich differentiation of speech-acts, incognito actions, public exercise, and rituals, such as Chancellor Brandt kneeling in Warzaw. Ricoeur also says, with Derrida, that there seems to be a spread, simply by staging, of the multiplying of scenes of repenting, confessing, and forgiving on the geo-political stage (Ricoeur 2004b p.469). Outside the institutions forgiveness is possible by a return to the self, where the *individual* makes use of a more direct capacity *to unbind the offender from the act* in a pure giving. The absolute measure of the gift is the love of one's enemies (Ricoeur 1994,3,18;Ricoeur 2004b,467) .

This brings us to the last important argument in Ricoeur's therapeutic recommendation, his use of Arendt's philosophy of natality. *Natality* meaning: how human beings are introduced and introduces themselves to the world through birth, thought, biography and new action. Natality marks a realm of *beginning* and *gift* inherent in life itself*,* a beginning prior to debt and guilt. Sustained by the different modi of natality new action looks like a miracle and it is this miracle which sustains forgiveness' *capacity to unbind the actor from the act* and makes the guilty capable of beginning again and thus to be restored to the capacity to renew the world (Ricoeur 2004b,489,493). Political reconciliation, as an institutional praxis *which make promises,* is then placed into this *other* eschatological realized economy of creativity (=natality). Accordingly, Ricour seems to identify another set of recapitulative speech-acts: promise, as wish for a reconciliate future. "The originality of this wish is that it consists not in action but in a representation taken up again in a series of speech-acts constituting the declarative dimensions of memory" (Ricoeur, 2004b,494 cit). "We will remember the victims of.., we promise,..we wish" (my phrases). As with the case of forgiveness, Ricoeur seems both to separate *and* fuse the political and theological horizons (Ricoeur, 2004b, 492-493). We owe the possibility of a *happy memory*, a memory at peace, crowned with joy and professed in *care* (Ricoeur 2004b,505). Reconciliation is then possible, in spite of the unforgettable, through *a dialectic of unbinding and binding* which creates a new climate (Ricoeur 2004b,496).

3.0 Expanding the regimes of forgiveness

From our analysis of Ricoeur's reconciliation pragmatics we can now make a further comment on the theories commented in the opening of this article. By placing pathological memory in the centre of his agenda for a therapy of modernity Ricoeur's framework is inclusive of these theories. Victimization, differentiated through the specter of stigma, shame, social misunderstanding (term), or through ritual or sovereign administration, where people are placed in limbo-like situations, or excluded, is always accomplished by a forgetfulness of the violent event, the reconciling murder. We also observe how Ricoeur adds new dimension to the theories: Through the *blurring* of the lines between forgiveness, memory and forgetting, victimization persists in society. Through blurring practices the gestures of incognito forgiveness are constantly threatened with being immersed into calculations of market exchange and administrative manipulation. Indirectly Ricoeur seems to sustain the theories of Agamben, Butler and Habermas;

It appears that society, because of these *evolving semi-memorizing practices and communicative fatigue,* possibly, (but not certainly), *may be* in a new, risky, and instable post-secular phase: If mourning and memory practices are not extended, made visible in gestures and performatives, litanies, public rituals, which reveal, *and make open,* the human capacity of forgiveness, life might fall into new forms of sacred violence or emerge into the technological versions of governmentality. Society may lose its wider *horizon of thought*, and exchange it in small picture narratives, simulacra or substitutes to the lost memories. For Ricoeur, expanding the regimes of forgiveness is possible only if there are communities that *repeat the performative gestures of the family of gifts, together with incognito forgiveness, as indiscriminate speech-acts which societies can not be without.* Through this use of the language of gift we observe how Ricoeur aims to rescue life from a loss of memory of gifts. By reference to the economy of gifts a possibly post-secular nihilism is attempted avoided and a non-violentary relinguistification of the sacred, is configured.

4.*0 Which paradigm of reconciliation?*

It is now time to compare Ricoeur's model of reconciliation with the debate on reconciliation mentioned in the opening of this article. While we have explicated Ricoeur's relation to the discourses of memory, trauma and guilt (all too briefly), we will explicate Ricoeur's position in relation to Derrida and Habermas, to answer the question in the opening of this article.

First, to Habermas: in line with almost all authors on the theme, Habermas speaks of the necessity of mourning the past (*Trauerarbeit*), and of memory as a bulwark against a repressed reconciliation (Habermas 1987,138;Habermas 1992;Habermas 2003b,107). In congruence with his early theory of communicative action, his "action theoretical approach", Habermas will put a contested rationality grounded in anamnesic reason, which resists the forgetting of victims, and also the forgetting of forgetting, in the forefront (Habermas 1989,377, 380). Since philosophy does not begin from the premise of an almighty and just deity, it cannot make use of the question of theodicy or the dogma of the resurrection of the victim in its plea for a culture of loss and what has been withheld from public consciousness. It must itself open the dimension of validity claims which transcend social space and historical time: "…*now it is argumentative reason itself which*

reveals, in the deepest layers of its own pragmatic suppositions, the conditions for laying claim to an unconditional meaning" (Habermas 2002cit 134). Speech-acts are directed towards illocutionary goals (wishes), communicated in the communicatively un-coerced act, goals that do not have the status to be realized inwardly (Habermas 2002,91,89). Post-metaphysical thought differs from religion in that it recovers the meaning of the unconditional without recourse to religion (Habermas 2002 cit.108).Yet, he acknowledges how western philosophy is intrinsically informed by the symbol of redemption and history in terms of salvation" (Habermas 1995a,15). Habermas will also acknowledge the potential of religious discourse to *console people.*

Consistent with these mandates, Habermas' ethics has often, wrongly, been interpreted to be congruent with a progressive thesis of secularization. The linguistification process, the process of reconciliation transferred through overlapping consensus and ethical discourse on collective life-form seemed to presuppose a theory of religion as an intermediary stage in the development of cultures. The cleansing of modernity is fulfilled by a linguistification of the sacred, rationalization of myth, linguistification of the potential in the sacred, reconciliation without reenchantment (Habermas 1983; 1989,238).

In his recent work Habermas has reservations concerning the power of reconciliation reason to secure ethics. After the events of 9/11, 2001 he comments; "We are rightfully disturbed by the irreversibility of past sufferings…injustices that exceed every *human* power of redemption. The lost hope of redemption has left behind a palpable emptiness" (Habermas 2003a). Habermas' argument defends religion's practical contributions from a thesis of risky emptiness which makes out the instability of post-secular ethics. A thesis on religion as intermediary stage does not fit into *a post-secular society.* "The boundaries between secular and religious reasons are tenuous" (Habermas 2003a). Religion is a force against violence, not only a source of violence. But already, in *Post-metaphysical thinking* Habermas applies for a collaborative coexistence with religion, *where philosophy surrenders its extraordinary status*. Religious language is considered as bearer of a semantic content that is indispensable and continues to resist translation into reasoning discourses (Habermas 1995a 51).Yet, the significance of what it *means* that religious speech-acts resist translation seems to be unresolved. Another, repeated critique from the "warm current of critical theory", sees Habermas' theory as un-adaptable to the role of *emotions* in

consciousness raising and responsible action (Fraser 1989). The role of religions in cleansing emotions, is unanswered.

Now, to Derrida, as indicated in the opening of this article, the affirmation of religions role as a force against violence, takes a new turn in Derrida's work. For Derrida, we should always think about the political crime. Grief expresses the necessity of a wrong that must be righted, a violence to be repaired (Derrida 1997 p.ix). For Derrida, *friendship to come*, means a mode of love which is, perhaps, a totally new experience, unheard of, a friendship for the future, friendship which relates to the community of those without a community, a weak community *without foundation*, religion without institutional religion, in contradiction to ethnocentrism, populism or xenophobia (Derrida 1997 p.29,42,81,100,217,219,306). To Derrida, like Girard, messianic religion exists once the secret of the sacred, orgiastic has been, if not destroyed, at least integrated, and finally subjected to the sphere of responsibility (Derrida 1995,2,20,50). True religion begins in the heart of the single human being, the soul, the untouchable, innocence, in secrecy (Derrida 1995;Derrida 2005). According to Derrida, *the other* will represent a regime of the tender, the weak and indefinite, which undoes any attempt to secure ethics or politics in established metaphysics, rites, constitutionalism or institutional design (Derrida 2003). For Derrida responsible religion is the solution and hope of the post-secular condition. While Habermas takes a distanced stance to religions hope of fulfilling promise, Derrida desires religion with its gifts. Derrida, who once worked with Ricoeur at the University of Sorbonne, is overlapping with Ricoeur's arguments on the resistance of gifts to a rational ethics. Habermas would possibly not deny this possibility, but would not affirm it either (Habermas 1995a, 51).

Decisive in Derrida's work is the description of the absolute non-violent event of religion (messianicity) as the impossible possibility, *beyond historic horizons*. Forgiveness and memory appears as important topics for a reflection on just democracies. New justice is an undeconstructible horizon manifesting the need for developing an unconditional hospitality to the other (Derrida 1978; 1994; 2000). He appeals for a new religious cosmopolitanism, exercising a loving friendship and universal hospitality which transcends the *present* sphere of international law which operates in terms of reciprocal agreements and treaties between sovereign states. This is to think a politics, friendship and justice which *begin* by breaking with national "naturalness"

or homogeneity (Derrida 1997,105). Hospitality is a condition of culture itself (responsible culture) and not one ethic among others, insofar as it has to do with inclusion of the other which cultures else seek to appropriate, control and master (Derrida 2003, 8,16). Proliferation of the scenes and stages of forgiveness signifies how it is necessary to turn towards the past, and take as necessary the act of memory, self accusation, repentance, *beyond* the juridical instance, or nation state. We need to develop a new geo-politics of forgiveness, a globalization of forgiveness, justified by the sacredness, and secrecy of the human (Derrida 2003,30). He defends the *purity of forgiveness,* as non-normality, not by ethical or spiritual purism, but by the necessity to maintain a reference to an-economical forgiveness, in accordance with a weak community to come (Derrida 2003,30,38,59). Forgiveness should not be normal, normalizing. It *should* remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible; as it interrupts the ordinary course of history (Derrida 2003,32).

Habermas and Derrida, though they profess different philosophies, both project the idea of a quasi-messianic eschatology. Yet, we note a remarkable difference. In Habermas' work the linguistification process, the process of reconciliation transferred through overlapping rational consensus and ethical discourse on life-form, is restorative to the idea of a communicative society, a victimless society created through *external* inter-subjective communication (Habermas 2001,82,86,88;Siebert 1985,12). The work of Derrida presupposes gifts, a religious messianicity restored from *within,* in the interiority and depth of the human self. While Habermas seems to imply a post-Hegelian, post-Kantian paradigm, filtered through critical theory, Derrida develops an anti-Hegelian, quasi-judaic idea of reconciliation. Derrida's work presupposes another departure from critical theory, filtered through the philosophy of gift, prophetic eschatology, and cosmo-political messianicity, the messianic as a surprise, at *any moment* (Derrida & Vattimo 1998). While Habermas' therapy is designed through a technique of institutional design, reflection on good reasons and processive co-operation, Derrida's vision of cosmopolitian democracy is informed by an ontology of promise which epiphanizes in singular events and breaks with processual collaboration and repetitive institutional design. While Habermas seems to imply reconciliation and healing of nations through cooperation of institutions, Derrida will await

new "democracy" through the inner intervention of the totally Other, through absolute eschatology.

This makes a question of how we might consider Ricoeur's project alongside that of Derrida and Habermas. There are certain arguments in Ricoeur, among them the reference to liminality, aporia, promise, inner economy of the self, gift, Kierkegaard and Levinasian other-orientated ethics, which fit more to Derrida's inner purity of forgiveness than to Habermas' external "reconciliation through the public use of reason". With Levinas, and subsequently Derrida, he defends the priority of narrative hospitality. Simultaneously Ricoeur, against Derrida, seems aware of the necessity of reconciliation as a public institutional practice, even if it must be done as an "incognito" speech-act. Ricoeur says that Habermas' project is a "strong approach", complementary to his own (Ricoeur 2004a,213). Reconciliation through the public use of reason, differentiated in levels of ethical discourse, legislative processes, and expansion of rights, may be interpreted as a far-reaching example of reconciliation as an incognito-speech-act. Simultaneously (discussing Derrida`s idea of a pure forgiveness), Ricoeur warns of a simplification of forgiveness in exchange, through a test of universalization, "feeding the confusion between universalized morality and internationalization and globalization" (Ricoeur 2004b,cit 469). The communicative ethics debate is indebted to Ricoeur for bringing the complexities of narrative discourse into sharper focus (Rainwater 1996). The speech-act processed through the communicative forum, seems indispensable for creating a conciliatory climate, but is not sufficient.

How are we to understand those configurations? *If* religion professes its own indispensable knowledge claim (as Habermas asserts), how could we understand such a *claim* and differ it from claims that assign to the quasi-sacred violent foundations of nations which Agamben and Butler talk of? Could the Christian speech-act of forgiveness itself *claim* more than a Habermasian recognition of religious consolation? We will ask if Christianity, as one of the religions, communicates a performative gesture indispensable for dialogue. When Ricoeur integrates arguments related to gifts, emotions, and forgiveness as an incognito deliberate practice, the question arises if the approach of Ricoeur can be interpreted as a middle-route between Habermas and Derrrida, close to Christianity's emphasis on *mutuality and presence* (see below).

5.0 Ricoeurs approach interpreted as a middle-route between Habermas and Derrida.
As already indicated in our analysis of Ricoeur's conception of gift and caritative logic- the
argument of how joy, love, extravagance, make a *break* into human history - Ricoeur will, when
he applies his theory of speech-acts, indicate congruence with *how* the kerygma of Christology
and the proclamation of Trinitarian dogma *is performed historically*. Ricoeur will then, not, in his
own opinion, have gone beyond the limits of the philosophy and how philosophy situates speech-
acts as *worldly* events. Philosophy will point to the aporia of gifts (what Derrida calls the
impossible), simultaneously as the phenomenology of speech-acts points to kerygma and
proclamation as *events in the world*. We have already mentioned how Ricoeur hints at a *kinship*
between how the forgiveness of God is presented to consciousness and how the human capacity
to forgiveness is presented in the specter of speech-acts (p.6). Responsibility, religiously narrated
or not, is situated, sustained and recapitulated through the differentiated sovereign utterances of
love, joy, fecundity and natality, and also through "text", sapiential poetry, public litanies, and
narratives - leaving dialogue open for discussing how different speech-acts may release a
reconciling climate.

From Ricoeur's inclusiveness of theology as speech-act, a significant question regards
Derrida's and Habermas' stance on the Christian performative. When Habermas argues for a
relinguistification of the substance of salvation history, as resource for communicating
reconciling reason, this implies a distanciation (rightly), to dogmatism and religious irrationalism
(Habermas 2002 p.1,2). In the institutional-communicative mode *Versöhnung* can be identified or
known only as an *indefinite* reality - in continuation with *Bildverbot* - prohibitions of making
images of God (Habermas 1978,35). Derrida is, like Habermas, negative to any identification of
the *messianic* as *represented* in concrete religion (Derrida 1995).To Derrida the other will
represent a regime of the tender, which is *indefinite*, and undoes any attempt to secure ethics or
politics in established rites, constitutionalism or institutional design (Derrida 2003).
Deconstruction is a regime which undoes its utopias and horizons as quickly as they are
established (Derrida 2002).

A repeated critique against Habermas and Derrida, is that they, in respect of religion,
abide in the desert of jewish (quasi) messianity and *Bildverbot*, and ignore the religion which
makes a knowledge claim from incarnation, presence, charity, and mutuality as presupposition for
divine sustenance of the world. Christianity will *claim* that gifts are incarnate in nutrition,
energies, structures of embodiment, utterances of the soul, need, *jouissance*, economy of love, the
neighbour and the possibility which eventualizes according to how *cosmos* eventualizes (Ward

2005 p.86,250). Theologians emphasize how Derrida breaks with the ontological models of *presence* that have grounded philosophy and theology (Long 2003,130;Lowe 2003;MacCammon 2002;Ward 2003,76,89). A similar argument can be said of Habermas when he limits Christian speech-acts to being a "*normalizing discourse of the extraordinary*". In theology creation cosmology and cosmic Christology will be the presupposition for eventualization as embodied *pleroma* (fullness), so that there is an economy of growth and expansion through "the operating of him operating in me in power [ten energeia autou ten energoumenen en emoi en dunamei]" Eph, 2, 12-13.

According to Ward, making a twist to Derrida's term "the regime of the tender", this pleroma is presented as the wisdom of God filling a space (=presence), manifest in the wounding of love, weak love, in the concrete history of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Ward 2005,257-261).Which theologically is the presupposition for the redemption of the victim, and *the scandalizing of sacred violence* (as Habermas rightly says). This argument is central in Girard: To Girard what Christ manifests on the cross is nothing other than a manifestation through *performative repeating* this scandal, the victimage mechanism, so that Christology manifests in this *icon* both the original trauma and the possibility of another praying and celebrating community without violent groundings. This ritual is a paradigm of every discourse which manifests victimhood (Girard 1977;Girard 1987,170,174,178-179,184;Lefebure 1998). It can be considered as the speech-act of Jesus in itself, as opposed to an idolatric one, a naming which is not only a naming but a de-naming, alert to the human tendency toward idolatry, (Girard 1987p 170;Robbins 2003, 121-124.).Which, from a theological viewpoint, deconstructs what is at issue in the negative theology of Habermas and Derrida, because it informs us of a *mutuality already here, shown through Jesus` performative of Abba as address to God* (Jeremias 1972).

This *difference* is, of course, as Habermas and Derrida subsequently do philosophy, not theology, acknowledged in Habermas and Derrida. Habermas states that cosmos is a metaphysical or archaic presupposition that philosophy must proceed without. He substitutes it with the formula of the life-world. The horizons of our life histories and forms of life, form a porous whole of familiarities that retreat in the face of reflexive incursions, and expert cultures in science, morality and law (Habermas 1995a,16,20). He does not admit the possibility of a post-secular reflexivity that makes cosmos appear as a contradiction to totalizing thinking through unfamiliar self- estrangement, chaocosmos and the simultaneous possible impossibility of eventualizations. "Making room for otherness is logically implied by the idea of creation"(Gregersen 2003 cit 207).When Habermas make the argument that religion's language is

"indispensable in ordinary life for normalizing intercourse with the extraordinary"(Habermas 1995a,51)*,* he ignores that for theology discourse on the extraordinary will not mean *without presence*. The creation, in prophetic proclamation, does not refer to the archaic life-world, but reflective religion in the biblical sources themselves, where creation sometimes means an estrangement of religions' historic life-worlds and an affirmation of creation as non-normalizing intercourse of God. As I see it, the mutuality, revealed by Jesus, in his *Abba* speech-act, is singular, a *new* naming. *This naming of God, as other, but mutual counterpart - is indispensable for the Christian dialogue on reconciliation.*

Derrida seems to be open for a reappraisal of cosmic eventualization, but will admit that Christianity involves a thought on creation, presence and mutuality which is unacceptable in *his* quasi- judaism. It is only possible in a messianicity that goes beyond Christendom. Contact between God and the soul or the mind of humanity can only be mutual (*mutuus contactus),* in the gracious tactility of love. According to Derrida the essence of Christian loving is immediate transitivity, dissymmetry- and reciprocity. "*This particular reciprocity would no doubt,..be unacceptable in a discourse, such as Levinas, if not in Judaism in general, because of the touching and because of this mutuality as experience of the divine"*(Derrida 2005 p.250).

In Ricoeur's *double* charitable paradigm of reconciliation mutuality is presupposed: When Ricoeur on philosophical bases identifies a spectrum of speech-acts of forgiveness, through different sources, and also, on theological bases, signifies reconciliation (justification) as a speech-act of God, the discourses are *not* contradictory to each other. To Ricoeur the charitable gift "forgiveness sustained by love" is itself new mutuality, it appears as wonder, akin to religious miracle and promise. When forgiveness is a for-giving, Ricoeur presupposes a natal eventualization, which is cosmic. The saying: "There is" forgiveness, *as* there is joy, wisdom, extravagance (=hospitality), means that this family of utterances, with its resemblances in action and closeness to natality, are intimate with creation. Ricoeur's philosophical paradigm presupposes intersubjective communication and friendly communication, as already *informed by love and natality.* It is because of the love we experience in daily mutual contact and spacing, that "There is" a possibility to *understand* the performative of the incognito forgiveness, and turn it into a knowledge claim of our promising. Love, joy, and *natality,* as incarnated powers from the earth*,* are nearer to us in our vulnerability, pathology of emotions, anomie, misunderstanding and blurring of practices than we are ourselves. The conjoint work of mourning, memory and forgetting *can* make us anticipate another future. Sustained by love it can heal emotions, reopen horizons, put wonder back in place. It is by interpreting that we can hear again. Ricoeur's re-

linguistification of the sacred happens then, through a "second naivitée in and through criticism". It is, in my opinion, a criticism after trauma, after state terrorism, after the cross, and after celebration and singing of hymns. The purpose of religious speech-acts is not to explain, but to disclose and evoke *in the human heart* a response. To Ricoeur metaphor and icon are beyond rhetorical or tropical device. They function as figurative conveyors of possible meanings. Metaphor is a complex intersection of logical, semantic and imagistic movements which resist any simplistic limitation to a starched oppositional format -as indicated in Derrida's deconstructionism. "Icon", refers to the non-verbal kernel in the quasi visual kernel of imagination, imagery understood in the quasi-visual, quasi- auditory, quasi-tactile sense. Metaphor will also initiate new meaning that has implications for *reality, in that it makes new experience come to language.* Living metaphor has the capacity to change the world (Joy 1988, 520-521).With metaphor and speech new experience is brought unto concept, and eventualization intersects in the self of the listener. *The to come*, which Derrida speaks of, is, in Ricoeur's text, congruent with realized eschatology, and Ricoeur will escape absolutisms.

What we assert is that the mutuality which Christianity talks of, is an indispensable argument for an understanding of the reason why we are always motivated. Because of the happy memories of this first mutuality, in fecund relations, love, and action, that stay in consciousness and symbols beside the unhappy traumatic memories, it will always be a possibility that we expect new mutuality through forgiveness. Without a memory of first mutuality, it becomes incomprehensible why the offender would seek the other in a movement of a plea for forgiveness. Ricoeur opens post-secular thought to a consideration of gifts as *remaining* here. Reconciliation is also from the earth, since through natal gifts we are given incarnated *newness*, possibilities to restore life. Reconciliation is not indefinite. *Conten*t can be memorized in celebratory practices, making us ready for *the to come*.

In Derrida's texts authentic religion seems emptied of content and even of horizons. The opening of the future is, or must be, without horizon of expectation, with an absolutely undetermined messianic hope at its heart (Derrida 1994;Derrida & Vattimo 1998,8,17;Derrida 1976). Habermas seems to understand reconciliation as a slightly formal process. *Versöhnung* can be identified or known only as an indefinite reality - in continuation with prohibitions of making images of God (*Bildverbot*). Habermas and Derrida both profess an abstract messianicity, they marginalize *reconciliation* at the level of convictions and emotions (Ricoeur 2004a,214). Christianity, as a teaching of incarnation, will talk of reconciliation both from the inside and from the outside, manifest in celebration. Ricoeur presents a model of reconciliation that is critical to

an absolute abstracted eschatology: Reconciliation appears inclusive to a thinking of God as incarnated, mutual counterpart. Reconciliation has begun. Reconciliation, at the level of hearts and politics, is consistent with a caritative model of reconciliation, since societal care is professed as the form of *the* liberative life. If care is the form of human life, God is the giver of this life.

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