

## **Telling a Life: Narration and Personal Identity**

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### **Abstract**

*In recent decades, the theme of ‘narrative identity’ has seen a significant development in different disciplinary domains, both at a practical and interdisciplinary level. The issues connected to narrative identity have (re-)gained a central position not only in narratology and philosophy, but even in psychology and in different psychotherapeutic approaches. Several scholars agree with the idea that the psychological reality is narrative and that narration is a determinant of personal identity. Starting from a short overview on identity and narration in literature and narratology, this article aims to thematise the issue of narrative identity as the fulcrum of a scientific theorisation that operates between showing how the interrelationship between these two sciences is particularly productive in psychology as well as philosophy.*

**Keywords:** Identity, Narration, Psychic Reality, Psychology, Philosophy

### **Introduction**

In recent decades, the theme of ‘narrative identity’ has seen a significant development in different disciplinary domains, both at a practical and interdisciplinary level. The issues connected to narrative identity have (re-)gained a central position not only in narratology and philosophy, but even in psychology and in different psychotherapeutic approaches. Joan McCarthy is right in saying that ‘The nature of the relationship between narrative and personal history is the focus of much of recent psychological literature’ (McCarthy, 2007, p. 11). Despite the fact that the question is, directly or indirectly, considered in personal and social psychology as well as in clinical and therapeutic psychology, only few strands of psychological and clinical research recognise the necessity to deepen through philosophy the question of narrative identity. Philosophy significantly helps to articulate and clarify many key aspects, both at a theoretical and practical level. Psychologists such as Jerome Bruner already recognised the tight dialectics between narrativity and reality, both in relation to the construction of a sense of reality and to personal development. In fact, ‘Building on Freud’s deployment of the narrative in analysis and case-studies, psychologists like [...] Bruner have promoted the usefulness of the narrative method as a means of understanding the way in which the self is psychologically constructed and constituted’ (p. 10). Bruner is clear in explaining that:

We organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on. Narrative is a conventional form, transmitted culturally and constrained by each individual’s level of mastery and by his conglomerate of prosthetic devices, colleagues and mentors. Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures that can be weeded out by falsification, narrative constructions can only achieve ‘verisimilitude’. Narratives, then, are a version of reality whose acceptability is governed by convention and ‘narrative necessity’ rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness (Bruner, 1991, p. 4).

Bruner’s lesson still constitutes an important reference, as authors such as Juan Balbi (an expert in cognitive psychology and psychotherapy) demonstrate. Balbi’s research is not limited to reproduce Bruner’s theories of narration, experience and self-development; rather, he follows and develops a narrative discursive line to the point of articulating it with new philosophical researches, such as Paul Ricoeur’s phenomenological hermeneutics of the self. In fact, in his *La mente narrativa* (2004) he expresses a point of view pretty much similar to Ricoeur’s perspective on personal and narrative identity.

This discourse binds the vast and articulated research on mind and language. Balbi explicitly makes reference to Humberto Maturana's ontogenetic approach on language. For Maturana, language is the essential source of the human, because language structures the human being. In the paper *Lenguaje y realidad: El origen de lo humano* Maturana sustains the thesis 'that human beings arise in the history of bipedal primates with the origin of language, and the constitution of a lineage defined by the conservation of an ontogenic phenotype that includes conversations as part of it' (Maturana, 1989, p. 77).

Generally speaking, the interest of psychological research goes beyond this historical-natural and biological level of understanding and explanation of the relationship between language and brain, and between structural and cultural dimension. In fact, studying narrative identity, psychology use to put in dialectics language and mind in a way that focuses narration as the form of one's lived experience and the way in which one understands his/her concrete existence and relationships with others and the life world. A hermeneutical philosophical re-reading of the theoretical-practical conception of psychoanalysis (that is, its dynamic model of mind and self-development) sustains and strengthen the thesis that narration expresses and determines the psychological reality. This (always) new or different (kind of) 'reality' mirrors a representation of oneself, human relationships and the sense of life so much in accordance with dispositions, culture, ideals and experience, as in accordance with deeper dynamisms, drive thrusts, topical experiences and character. A broad range of practical-procedural proposals related to the narration is grafted onto this reflective strand, relying on the theoretical-speculative functions of fictional or non-fictional representation via narration. If psychoanalysts, such as Freud and neo-Freudians, saw narrative representation and (re-)construction as a function involved in therapy and as a constituent in the writing of a clinical case, other psychotherapists, in turn, have identified with narrative activity a process that is therapeutic and curative *per se*. For James Hillman, for example, therapy is a way of giving life to the imagination in an emancipatory and productive way. He writes:

'...Put it my way, what we are *really*, and the reality we live, is our psychic reality, which is *nothing but...* the poetic imagination going on day and night' (Hillman, 1992, p. 62).

The therapeutic activity is essentially conceived as a sort of imaginative practice that recovers the oral tradition of narrating stories.

Certain psychotherapists have been following a comparable theoretical-technical line since the 1970s, the case of Roy Schafer, for example (see Schafer, 1976, 1982, 1992). who is more directly bound to the philosophical hermeneutical speculative and practical approach to narration, human identity and interrelation.

Schafer has contributed to identify some important aspects of the narrative functions in psychotherapy, even if his acute intuition and intelligence in writing does not parallel a rigorous work of documentation and empirical verification. In *Retelling a Life*, for instance, there is a speculative deepening of the narrative phenomenon and practice plot in connection with self-representation, unconscious fantasy and metaphor that tries to take into account the analyst-patient dialectics under their respective perspectives.

If, on the one side, those hermeneutical-narrative approaches seem more reachable to Jung's analytical psychology, on the other side, already in Freud's psychoanalysis we find some theoretical-procedural elements reproachable to the question of narration in therapy. In psychoanalysis, a patient's life history is intuitively related to metapsychological research. And clinical-therapeutic practices are oriented on the base of clinical cases summarise in material written supports. Written from the point of view of an experienced analyst-(re)narrator, the cases reproduce all the basic mechanism of a narration (context, beginning, main character(s), plot and so on).

Already Freud recognises the significant *and* problematic double aspect behind this question, writing the following:

it still strikes me myself as strange that the case histories I write should read like short stories and that, as one might say, they lack the serious stamp of science. I must console myself with the reflection that the nature of the subject is evidently responsible for this, rather than any preference of my own. The fact is that local diagnosis and electrical reactions lead nowhere in the study of hysteria, whereas a detailed description of mental processes such as we are accustomed to find in the works of imaginative writers enables me, with the use of a few psychological formulas, to obtain at least some kind of insight into the course of that affection (Breuer, Freud 2000, p. 160-161).

However, we find significant differences and limitations considering and evaluating the hermeneutical narrative contribution to psychoanalysis. For example, Jean Laplanche clearly point out that What we call an element of the narration, strictly speaking, is *anything* of the narration: as much a detail as a scene or the whole ensemble of a

dream. No relation of subordination exists between the part and the whole: the part can be as significant as the hole, and the whole can assume significance as one element among others (Laplanche, 2006, p. 174).

In fact, to interpret in psychoanalysis is first of all to radically dismantle and lay out flat the organization of the manifest 'text'. From there on it is to follow, without losing one's footing, the associative chains that form a seemingly disorganized and monstrous network, lacking any proportion or correspondence to the chain to which it is appended. And if the outline of a latent content does begin to become legible, it does not do so as a translation, in the common sense of the term, of the manifest material, nor as a transformation – even with the complexity of an anamorphic transformation – which would still entail a point-to-point correspondence between manifest and latent text.

To interpret is to cling to every thread of the discourse without go, moving step by step, but motivated by the single certainty that the innumerable interlacings of the tracks left by the hunter-game will eventually be revealed to plot out the signifying knots which punctuated a certain unconscious sequence (p. 175).

Beyond this internal 'dialectics' among psychoanalysts, we may say that this 'narrative' line of research and reasoning does not focus only the psychoanalytical approach. It tends to put in contact different theoretic models in therapy, as hermeneutical psychoanalysis, cognitive psychotherapy and socio-constructive psychology, thanks to a wider range of speculative references offered between philosophical hermeneutics and philosophy of literature. In a way or in another, all psychotherapists state that it is necessary to know and understand the experiential-biographical line of a mental pathology in order to intervene in an effective or productive way. In fact, the mechanisms of adaptation that regulate the patient's current behaviour and existential feeling are defensive mechanisms of re-adaptation directly linked to the lived experience. Even the reference to collected documents (letters, diaries, etc.) represents a main component of a psychological therapy, even if it seems to belong more to the indirect knowledge of the therapist than to his effective understanding at work during the therapeutic process (see Veglia, 1999, p. 25). Narration has been attracting philosophy and psychology as a fundamental issue since 1980's narrative turn. Today, narrative identity constitutes a broadly interest for psychology, even if its theoretical roots require an interdisciplinary approach, because they are not entirely scientific but speculative and cultural. In fact, the notion of narrative identity does not simply summarise a given conception, but it refers to a general vision concerning the human being and the constitution of personal identity. This, has been an intertwined dilemma for thousand years, in religious terms as well as in philosophical terms: What is the essence of the human being? What is the difference between spirit and mind? How to solve the mind body problem? Is there any predominantly biological rather than cultural-experiential *dialectics* between mechanism and personal identity or vice versa? For certain scholars, 'individual development' is a subject that essentially requires a reference to evolutionary and psychobiological models; in contrast, others believe that culture, social interaction, adaptation and experience are the main element of reference studying the development of the self.

The idea of 'narrative identity', which acquires full theoretical-philosophical significance only through the work of Paul Ricoeur, absorbs some of these major modern dilemmas. Indeed, Ricoeur's research not simply sustains the thesis that the 'capable self' is a *culturally* or *narratively* 'mediated unity of action' (see McCarthy, 2007, p. 106), but it reveals the profound connections that link the study of the narrative self with more traditional questions of gnoseology, epistemology, philosophy of mind, anthropology and ethics.

## **A Tensional Mediation**

Ricoeur's *Oneself as Another* (1990) develops a 'hermeneutical phenomenology of the self', that is an investigation which essentially concerns human existence and personal identity. The notion of narrative identity constitutes a pillar of this philosophical anthropology together with the idea of capable self. This already emerges within the general conclusions of the previous trilogy of *Time and Narrative* (1983-1985), where Ricoeur thematises the dialectics between history and fiction in personal identity (see Ricoeur 1988, p. 246). In *Oneself as Another*, in turn, the articulation of identity in *idem-* and *ipse-* identity is reactualised within a critical reflection and focused more on anthropological question. '*Idem-*identity is, paradigmatically, the sameness of objects; *ipse-*identity is, paradigmatically, the selfhood of reflexive beings. Ricoeur notes that although the two relations of identity – *idem* and *ipse* – are very different; they intersect to the extent that they both display features that endure through time, and they both display temporal continuity'; 'the sense of self as character with *idem-*identity is enriched and energized by a sense of self as contractor with *ipse-*identity' (McCarthy, 2007, p. 124 and 126).

Ricoeur seems mostly interested to counterpoise the sceptic solution concerning personal identity, which can be documented via his explicit reference to Locke and Hume. In particular, Hume intertwines the critique of personal identity with a critical analysis of the consciousness, underlining how self-consciousness and inner subjectivity depends on mere collected perceptions.

For Hume, the experience of the self is a mental and fictive experience, and the mind works as a kind of theatre whose essence lies in temporality, or in the temporal succession of impressions and ideas, that is, in a flow of unrelated and non-substantial perceptions, illusionary connected one another to form an ostensibly unified entity called 'identity', 'mind' or 'self'. Locke's perspective seems to fit into the same framework of a non-substantialist conceptions, even if his view is different and lesser radicalising compared to that of Hume. Shaun Gallagher highlights the significance of Hume's point of view via Kant and Husserl's receptions. In Husserl's perspective, Kant has not fully analysed Hume's wider problematique. He did not rightly grasp the dilemma of the constitutional problem in transcendental subjectivity. In fact, he opposes an abstract idea of the mind as an operational centre against the perceptual flow. By contrast, Husserl develops his own critical vision, which directly addresses Hume's perspective. For Husserl, in contrast to Hume, there is a substantial continuity in the flow of consciousness and a unity of process. Husserl accounts for the unity of both consciousness and identity of the perceived object in the double intentionality of the retentive structure (within consciousness; see Gallagher, 1992, p. 22).

It is interesting to note the productive variety of uses of the phenomenological approach on the problem of personal identity, both in contemporary philosophy and science, above all at an interdisciplinary level. For example, Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch's phenomenological project is expression of an interdisciplinary, scientific and philosophical research of this kind. However, similar projects retain unresolved problems and unsubstantiated solutions; where, more a rigorous scientific-speculative work, such as Ricoeur's, seems to be much more able to solve its main theoretical and epistemological elements of risk in terms of argumentative undetermination, terminological vagueness and brachylogy (see Busacchi 2015).

Indeed, the phenomenological hermeneutics that Ricoeur applies studying personal identity operates in dialectic with the analytic philosophy, psychoanalysis and neurosciences, but it even thematises certain problematic lines allocated between theoretical philosophy and cognitive science around the debate on conscience which started in the 1990s (with David Chalmers, Johan Searle and others). The latter, which advances a more biologic model, somehow re-actualises the substantialist point of view, speaking of the constitution of states of consciousness as the physical-biological property of the brain. Ricoeur's point of view is an articulated and stronger alternative to the tendency to modelling in a biological/causal dimension, which represents a coming back to a substantialist conception of identity. By contrast, Ricoeur conceives an idea of personal identity as an existential and cultural process whose core or ontological source has the reality of the dynamism of power and action (Aristotle) and of possibility and realisation. Somehow, this vision was already sketched in Ricoeur's first volume of *Philosophy of the Will* (1950), where (again) the phenomenological approach reveals the difficulty of a unified experience of the *Cogito* and the splitting of the corporality in an objective and a subjective dimension. In *Philosophy of the Will*, this level of dualism is solved in a practical-moral way, whereas in *Oneself as Another* he uses the speculative strategy of a hermeneutic-phenomenological solution to overcome all speculative and scientific criticalities. In another book, he clearly explains:

Mental experience implies the corporeal, but in a sense that is irreducible to the objective bodies studied by the natural sciences. Semantically opposed to the body-as-object of these sciences is the experienced body, one's own body – my body (from which I speak), your body (the body that belongs to you, which I address), the body of another (his body or her body, about which I make up stories). (...) My initial hypothesis, then, which I submit for your consideration, is that I do not see a way of passing from one order of discourse to the other: either I speak of neurons and so forth, in which case I find myself in a certain language, or I speak of thoughts, actions, and feelings that I connect with my body, to which I stand in a relation of possession, of belonging. Thus, I can say that my hands, my feet, I grasp with my hands – but this comes under the head of personal experience, I do not have to commit myself to an ontology of the soul in order to speak in this way. By contrast, when I am told that I have a brain, no actual experience corresponds to this; I learn about it in books (Ricoeur, in Changeux, Ricoeur 2000, p. 15-16).

The distinction and dialectical correlation between the biological and the narrative dimension of identity, within which the Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity fits into, responds precisely to this need for a comprehensive synthesis. It is through this differentiation that Ricoeur tries to counter the ideas of the ego as a social fiction (Hume), making the narrative dimension the true tension and mediate cornerstone to which the body and the unconscious are brought back.

In fact, as already mentioned, the problem of personal identity is in his view devoted to an antinomy without solution if the main 'role' of mediation, synthesis and comprehensive (self-) realisation is not given to the narrative function. And it is via the dialectics between -idem and -ipse dimensions of the self that 'Ricoeur drives a wedge between objectifying accounts of the self, on the one hand, and his account of a self as somehow capable of resisting its reduction to naturalist descriptions' (McCarthy, 2007, p. 128).

### ***The Problem of Narrative Identity***

Ricoeur characterises the narrative identity as a specific form of the human identity, which an individual or a group of individuals forming a community experience through the mechanism of mediation determined by the perpetual dynamism of history and fiction, of experience and imagination. As explains from Olivier Abel and Jérôme Porée,

L'identité assignée par le récit l'est également, selon Ricoeur, aux individus et aux communautés historiques. D'où les 'deux exemples' qu'il met d'abord 'en parallèle' celui de l'expérience psychanalytique et celui de l'histoire de l'Israël biblique. Dans les deux cas, 'un sujet se reconnaît dans l'histoire qu'il se raconte à lui-même sur lui-même' [...]. On peut se demander toutefois s'il s'agit d'un simple parallélisme – non tant parce que l'histoire de l'individu se confond pour partie avec celle de sa communauté, que parce que l'individu seul peut devenir, par la grâce du récit, une personne proprement dite. Encore, peut-on lire, à cet égard l'ave que 'l'identité narrative n'épuise pas l'ipséité du sujet' (Abel, Porée, 2007, p. 40).

From such a possibility, we possess intuitive precomprehension, for we know how to reach to a better understanding of human life in its *existential and cultural nature*, precisely through the narrative expressions that individuals and people are told and represented (see Ricoeur 1988b). In addition, we deeply grasp the meaning of an experience of life where it is narratively re-presented. In particular, the epistemological status of autobiography confirms, for Ricoeur, the validity of this pre-philosophical understanding, and even gives strength to the thesis that there is a deep interconnection between self-knowledge and self-interpretation, and that this interpretive exercise and practice is one with the practice and exercise of oral and written narration, transmitted from individuals to individuals within their communities. This articulates an important part of the multidimensional physiognomy of personal identity as it is mirrored between the dialectics of *idem-* and *ipse-* identity.

In *Oneself as Another*, the difference in conception and constitution behind these two uses is made by the theming of the specific mode of permanence in time, which varies significantly in both, and which refers to two dimensions proper to the experience and the human condition, that is, the *character* and the *keeping one's word*. The 'dialectics' between the *character* and the *keeping one's word* expresses a dialectics between the biological and the cultural-existential dimension of subjectivity. It is a tension that only by virtue of a continuous tensional mediation can find harmonisation. This perpetual and tensional dialectic of mediation is precisely exerted by the narrative identity, which therefore cannot be traced back to the sole cultural-existential dimension of individual identity. In fact, narrative identity oscillates between a lower limit, where permanence expresses the confusion of *idem* and *ipse*; and an upper limit where the *ipse* poses the question of its identity in an autonomous way (see Ricoeur, 1992, p. 118 and 124). This movement of 'oscillation' of the narrative identity is the formula of a perpetual tensional solution of the substantial and non-substantial dimension of the self. The common, daily, human experience of *change* over time and the *permanence* of the same and unique in the person we are, reveal the concreteness of this perpetual movement.

It is the narratological category of the character that constitutes the path of knowledge of identity on the dialectic side of permanence and change over time. The individual realised himself/herself via representation, as the one who in the story performs the action becoming the object of the plot; and this can be accomplished because the story does not just structure the action and its context, but the identity of the character. In fact, his/her identity is connected to his/her actions, because his/her actions mirror his/her view, intentions, values, understanding and so on. This is an identity that is now expressed, understood and *accomplished* as a narrative identity.

As Ricoeur explains, the person, understood as a character in a story shares the regime of the dynamic identity of the story recounted. The narration defines and substantiates the identity of the character, which can be called his/her narrative identity; and it is the identity of the story to build the identity of the character. To put this dynamic of the discordant concordance of the character in the dialectic of sameness and selfhood is imposed since the discordant concordance of the character is compared with the request for permanence over time. In addition, it is a must to show how the dialectic of the character comes to be inscribed in the gap between these two dimensions of permanence over time, to act as a mediator between them. This mediating function, which the character's narrative identity exerts between sameness and selfhood, is attested by the imaginative variations between narration and identity. As Ricoeur explains:

From this correlation *between* action and character in a narrative there results a dialectic *internal* to the character which is the exact corollary of the dialectic of concordance and discordance developed by the employment of action. The dialectic consists in the fact that, following the line of concordance, the character draws his or her singularity from the unity of a life considered a temporal totality which is itself singular and distinguished from all others. Following the line of discordance, this temporal totality is threatened by the disruptive effect of the unforeseeable events that punctuate it (encounters, accidents, etc.). Because of the concordant-discordant synthesis, the contingency of the event contributes to the necessity, retroactive so to speak, of the history of a life; to which is equated the identity of the character. Thus, chance is transmuted into fate. And the identity of the character employed, so to speak, can be understood only in terms of this dialectic (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 147).

The previous passage is part of a key paragraph that constitutes Ricoeur's theoretical articulation proper to the narratological theory of narrative identity, and gives a close connection with the experiential and practical sphere of a concrete person who is fed both of an effective *and* imaginative experience. I can identify myself with the character of a story and transform the world of text into a productive laboratory of reconfiguration and personal renewal. This is possible not only because I can interpret myself as a narrator of my own story and also because by making me a 'character' opens the way to a possible reinterpretation of who I am, of the representative possibilities concerning the circumstance of my life. The new congruence of meaning determined in the context of the narrative re-elaboration and re-determination has to do with the elaboration and re-elaboration of my own experience of life and development. The act of reading and narrating allows the individual to understand himself/herself differently and better, to rethink and define new perspectives of meaning and transformation. To narrate is to create meaning, is to re-determine our life-world. Narration articulates and develops the self. Both, self-knowledge and self-maturation of oneself are perpetually accomplished via narrative experiences, in the reflexive and critical examination aroused by narration means.

The analysis that Ricoeur dedicates to the question of proof in psychoanalysis gives greater argumentative strength and reasonableness to this discourse that closely also links imaginative functions and cultural life on the one hand, and personal experience and human psychology, on the other (see Busacchi, 2016, p. 103-107). Published in 1977, 'The Question of Proof in Freud's Psychoanalytic Writings' is a paper that goes beyond the epistemological problem in Freud's psychoanalysis. In fact, Ricoeur does not simply approach the theme of clinical cases to the notion of narrative identity, but instead, also places the latter as a function of mediation between factuality and representation. The criterion of narrativity must resolve the aporia of the loss of anchorage to the reality that the 'psychoanalytic fact' suffers, because in Freud's interpretation becomes 'relevant' not what the patient experienced, but what he/she makes of his own fantasies. In Ricoeur's interpretation, the criterion of narrativity contributes to smoothing out the difficulty arising from the fictional criterion, that is, from the recognition of the truthful force of a 'reasoned mythology'. The narrativity reconcile in some way the *Dichtung* and the *Wahrheit*, but it is a reconciliation not by substitution. In fact, the true saying and the true doing are reconciled in the perpetual (re-)construction of a coherent story starting from the scattered fragments of our experience. Following the theoretical-practical way opened by the narrative character of the psychoanalytic fact, not only emerges that what it is at stake in psychoanalysis is the fact of being able to bring a broad and singular explanation to the whole history of the case of a patient (Sherwood), and that to explain means to reorganise the facts into an acceptable and understandable whole that forms a unique *false and true* history, but that this functioning has to do with the formation and maturation of personal identity in general.

In short, Ricoeur takes us beyond Aristotle's metaphysical point of view on power and act by stating that every well-told story is an element that may exercise power upon us. Moreover, he argues that a story reveals universal aspects of the human condition and that, to this end, poetry is more speculatively substantiated than the history of

historians, which is too dependent on the anecdotal aspects of factuality. The narrative dimension is the most comprehensive and dynamic form of personal identity (see p. 108-110). It not only absorbs the psychic-physical dimension of life through the intuition of the instinctual drives and emotions, and through the dispositions of the character, but rather, it also expresses the power of the individuals in their redetermination of perspectives, meanings and projects of action.

Ricoeur holds the thesis that the process of configuration is not accomplished in the text, but in the reader instead, and this very condition makes possible the reconfiguration of life via the world of the text and narration. The meaning of a story springs from the *intersection* of the world of the text and that of the reader. Thus, the reading act becomes the crucial moment of the whole analysis. In it resides the capacity of the story to transfigure the reader's personal experience (see Ricoeur 2012b).

### **Conclusion**

It is true that while a story is being told or life is being lived, the act of reading or storytelling or writing becomes a form of suspension within an interregnum between reality and imagination, between pure possibility and possible experience. However, this interregnum is not a simple temporary suspension from concrete circumstances. It is something already concrete, above all from the perspective of our psychic life. In fact, the substance of our *psychic reality*, which is different from the empirical reality, and different from abstract, ideal or purely imaginative realities is a kind of reality *per se*. It is at this level that narrative hermeneutics intercepts and tightens in a single problematic node the gnoseological and anthropological question of the dialectic between world and experience, recognising in the narrative function a quadruple value of mediation, namely (1) between an individual and the world, (2) between an individual and his/her community, (3) between an individual and another individual and (4) between an individual and himself/herself.

The effect of identification and catharsis, of configuration and reconfiguration, which generates the character, it is exactly what touches and defines our psychic reality. And, this psychic reality constitutes a concrete reference: a reference to the facts of the world and to our communities, to intersubjective relations and to the historical experience and planning horizon of an individual.

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