At the Threshold of Ricœur’s Concerns in *La Métaphore Vive*
A Spatial Discourse of Diametric and Concentric Structures of Relation Building on Lévi-Strauss and early Heidegger

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Abstract:
In *La métaphore vive*, spatial understandings pervade much of Ricœur’s discussion of metaphor in terms of proximity and distance, tension, substitution, displacement, change of location, image, the ‘open’ structure of words, closure, transparency and opaqueness. Yet this is usually where space is discussed within metaphor, and as a metaphor itself, rather than as a precondition or prior system of relations to language interacting with language. Based on reinterpretation of an aspect of Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist anthropology, diametric and concentric spaces are argued to be such a prior system of relations to language, actively framing metaphor. This article examines the relevance of this prelinguistic spatial discourse to Ricœur’s framework of metaphor and interrogation of the copula, influenced centrally by Heidegger. Concentric spatial assumed connection and diametric spatial assumed separation offer a framework for understanding, in Ricœur’s words, the “conflict between identity and difference” in metaphor.

Keywords: Diametric Space, Concentric Space, Ricœur, Heidegger, Lévi-Strauss.

Résumé:
Dans *La Métaphore vive*, une grande part de la discussion ricœurienne de la métaphore met en jeu une compréhension spatiale qui s’exprime en termes de proximité et de distance, de tension, de substitution, de déplacement, de changement d’emplacement, d’image, de structure “ouverte” des mots, de clôture, de transparence et d’opacité. Toutefois, c’est dans le cadre de la métaphore et comme une métaphore que l’espace est généralement abordé, plutôt que comme une condition préalable ou un système antérieur de relations au langage interagissant avec le langage. Prenant appui sur la réinterprétation d’un aspect de l’anthropologie structuraliste de Lévi-Strauss, l’argument avancé ici consiste à affirmer que les espaces diamétriques et concentriques constituent un tel système antérieur de relations au langage, encadrant activement la métaphore. Cet article examine le rapport de ce discours spatial prélinguistique avec
l’approche ricoeurienne de la métaphore et son interrogation sur la copule, influencée de façon centrale par Heidegger. La connexion spatiale concentrique et la séparation spatiale diamétrique ici presupposées offrent un cadre pour la compréhension de ce que Ricœur appelle le “conflit entre l’identité et la différence” dans la métaphore.

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Concern with space in relation to metaphor is more than at the margins of Paul Ricœur’s text in La Métaphore Vive. Spatial understandings and assumptions pervade much of Ricœur’s discussion of metaphor in terms of proximity and distance, tension, substitution, interaction, displacement, change of location, assimilation, image, the ‘open’ structure of words, transparency and opaqueness. Again and again, space emerges and inserts itself into Ricœur’s concerns. Yet this is usually where space is discussed within metaphor, and as a metaphor itself, rather than as a precondition or prior system of relations to language interacting with language.

Ricœur seeks to expand the ambit of relevance for metaphor from the word to the sentence to discourse, through a broadening of conceptions of reference. He seeks to suspend primary reference of truth as correspondence to an external world in science and to invoke a split reference to encompass another referential domain for metaphor in discourse, a ‘world’ or state of affairs of poetic reference. This reconstruction of referential relevance for metaphor in discourse requires a shift beyond the familiar terrain of the dichotomies between sense and reference, connotation and denotation. Yet this broadening of the scope of metaphor almost goes a step further to embrace an expansion of the role of space beyond simply existing within metaphor. Ricœur treats the spatialisation of language that is itself a language of space as a “brilliant maxim” of Gérard Genette.

In Study 6 of La Métaphore Vive, Ricœur also arrives at the threshold of a spatial questioning when invoking Gaston Bachelard to raise the question of a verbal mode that is vassal to the nonverbal. As well as relying on spatially imbued concepts throughout, Ricœur arrives at several thresholds of space, but stops short at delving further into these spaces. In La Métaphore Vive, Ricœur begins to trace the contours of a path regarding space as itself a discourse and system interacting with language but he does not walk through this pathway. This article seeks to open up the contours of this spatial pathway that is tantamount to being a promissory note in La Métaphore Vive. Diametric and concentric spaces are not argued to be metaphors but rather prior structures of relation to metaphor, actively framing metaphor.

In developing the concept of metaphorical truth in Study 7 of La Métaphore Vive, Ricœur seeks a “primary focus” on “the ‘is’ of equivalence.” Whereas Ricœur’s explicit consideration of Martin Heidegger in La Métaphore Vive tends to focus on some of his later works on metaphor, such as Der Satz vom Grund and Unterwegs zur Sprache, the current spatial interrogation seeks structures of being, purportedly more primordial than metaphor.
It is notable that Ricœur does invoke a conception linking primordiality with space in relation to speculative discourse which he describes as “the discourse that establishes the primary notions, the principles that articulate primordially the space of the concept.” The further step being made here in terms of concentric and diametric spaces is to uncover this space as prior to language, as an autonomous system of meaning and relations, as a precondition for language to be. Arguably resonant with Ricœur’s declared “ontological aim” of carrying “the metaphorical utterance back to the copula, understood in the sense of being-as,” the proposed prior space exists not simply within metaphor as a metaphor but as a silent discourse framing conditions for metaphor to be.

Arguments for the relevance of concentric and diametric spaces to Jacques Derrida’s quest for a new psychoanalytic graphology, embracing Freudian and Jungian thought, as well as to frames for moral reasoning have been emphasised elsewhere. Moreover, it is argued elsewhere that concentric and diametric spaces are not reducible to image schemata or conceptual metaphors but rather that these are displaced forms of these prior spaces. The current argument will focus on establishing the relevance of this proposed prior, prelinguistic spatial discourse between diametric and concentric structures to Ricœur’s framework of metaphor and interrogation of the copula influenced centrally by Heidegger. In doing so, it will seek to foreground the relevance of this spatial interplay to aspects of Ricœur’s thought, especially in La Métaphore Vive, thereby amplifying issues touched upon regarding Ricœur’s thought, though resting largely implicit there.

Diametric and Concentric Spatial Structures of Relation

Building on an aspect of structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss’s understanding of structures of relation, space is to be examined as an interactive tension between diametric and concentric spaces of relation. A diametric spatial structure is one where a circle is split in half by a line which is its diameter, or where a square or rectangle is similarly divided into two equal halves (see Fig. 1). In a concentric spatial structure, one circle is inscribed in another larger circle (or square); in pure form, the circles share a common central point (see Fig. 2).

Lévi-Strauss cites a range of cross-cultural examples of these diametric and concentric spatial oppositions observed by different anthropologists. It was in the structural anthropology of Lévi-Strauss, in his cross-cultural accounts of systems, whether social structures or mythological
systems, where dynamic relations of contrast between concentric and diametric structures of relation began to be made more explicit. However, Lévi-Strauss did not realise the full potential of his systemic insights or interrogate the transferability of these dynamic diametric and concentric spaces to other kinds of systems of relation. He tended to treat diametric and concentric modes as structures and underemphasised their features as spaces and as dynamic spatial systems.

A purportedly key distinguishing feature of concentric and diametric structures, observed by Lévi-Strauss, is that they tend to co-exist in “functional relation” and not simply in isolation. They are structures of relation as part of a system of relations. Being mutually interactive, at least potentially, they are observed as structures of relation but also structures in relation. Lévi-Strauss recognizes that they are fundamentally interlinked, so that an increase in one is compensated for by a decrease in the other; they coexist in dynamic tension. Meaning is in their contrasting relative differences, rather than in either space considered in isolated, absolute atomistic or essentialist terms. Like Wordsworth who crossed the Alps without realizing it, Lévi-Strauss opened up a discourse of relation between concentric and diametric structures, without apprehending the potentially wider scope of this spatial discourse, as it becomes transferred to ontological, as well as affective and a range of empirical contexts of relation.

A number of entailments of the relative differences between concentric and diametric spaces include: contrasts between i) assumed separation (diametric space) and assumed connection (concentric space), ii) symmetry as mirror image inversion (diametric space) and symmetry as unity (concentric space) and iii) relative closure from background (diametric space) compared with relative openness to background (concentric space). For current purposes, most focus will be on i). Only the latter two entailments were recognised by Lévi-Strauss.

First Entailment of the Relative Differences Between Concentric and Diametric Spaces: Assumed Connection and Assumed Separation

A key relative difference between diametric and concentric spaces, overlooked by Lévi-Strauss’ empiricism, is ascertainable in principle. It is evident that the inner and outer poles of concentric space are fundamentally attached to each other, unlike in diametric space; both concentric poles coexist in the same space, and thus, the outer circle overlaps the space of the inner one. The outer circle surrounds and contains the inner circle. The opposite that is within the outer circle or shape cannot detach itself from being within this outer shape. Similarly, notwithstanding that the outer circle or shape can move in the direction of greater detachment from the inner circle, it cannot, in principle, fully detach itself from the inner circle in concentric relation (even if the inner circle becomes an increasingly smaller proportion of the outer). Full detachment could conceivably occur only through destroying or altering the form of the other pole. It can be concluded that full detachment could occur only through destroying the very concentric structure of the whole relation itself.

In contradistinction, in diametric space both oppositional realms are basically detached and can be further smoothly detached from the other. These conclusions operate for both structures, whether they are viewed as being two-dimensional, or three-dimensional. A concentric space assumes connection between its parts and any separation is on the basis of
assumed connection, whereas diametric space assumes separation and any connection between the parts is on the basis of this assumed separation. As structures in relational difference, this contrast is a relativistic one of degree. Concentric and diametric spaces thus can be seen to offer contrasting structures of differential relation. A concentric spatial relation is a structure of inclusion compared to a diametric spatial structure of exclusion. In Bachelard’s words, pertinent to diametric space, “simple geometrical opposition becomes tinged with aggressivity.”

The proposed concentric and diametric spatial contrasts between assumed connection and separation help overcome what Ricœur describes as the “ruinous distinction” between cognition and emotion. D’Aquili notes the Cartesian commitments of Lévi-Strauss to uncovering mental structures; it may have been these very commitments to rigid Cartesian dichotomies which led to Lévi-Strauss’ blind spot for this key entailment that concentric relation challenges such dichotomies and is more connective than diametric relation. A Japanese cultural context offers an exploration of the entwinement between the spatial and the relational. Masayoshi Morioka suggests that “the idea of inside/outside is not only a radical essential category of cultural characteristics, but [is] also universal,” citing Kimura’s emphasis that the Japanese words *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside) express a characteristic cultural ethos, where *uchi* (inside) is exactly equal to that of one’s family or group. Yet a diametric outsideness is an assumed separation that is radically different from the assumed connection of the outside pole to the inner pole of concentric space. Inner and outer need not necessarily be diametrically framed but may also be concentrically framed. The Japanese concept of *ma* can signify the space between one thing and another and can also be used for the understanding of human relationships. Concentric and diametric spatial structures invite application to relations between self and other, thereby entwining the spatial and relational, as with the Japanese concept *ma*. A concentric model of inwardness allows for an inner realm that is not reducible to the outer but which is in a relation of assumed connection with it. It also allows for a conception of an inner realm of experience that is not necessarily a detached abstraction from the outer in Cartesian fashion.

When discussing resemblance and “the kind of semantic ‘proximity’ established between the terms despite their ‘distance’ apart,” Ricœur invokes the “metaphor of ‘far’ and ‘near’” and seeks a preconceptual generic relatedness “to suppress distance [dés-éloigner].” This is highly resonant with an interplay between concentric assumed connection and diametric assumed separation. It is important to emphasise that concentric relation of assumed connection as nearness or proximity is not the same as identity as equivalence; it is not a monistic relation. A concentric relation allows for distinction and difference that does not have to lead to opposition. Difference is maintained but through a conjoined relation of assumed connection between concentric poles. It is this assumed connection that echoes Ricœur’s concern with belongingness. Significantly, Ricœur invokes a relational conception of “primordial belonging” as a background understanding for discourse and metaphorical truth. Concentric space offers a conceptualisation of Ricœur’s sought for as-structure of belonging for metaphor, which expresses a relation of both identity and difference through a framing mode of assumed connection. Concentric spatial relation as a mode of identity-cum-difference offers a response to Ricœur’s question of how to reconcile similarity and sameness, building on Aristotle’s characterisation in *Poetics* of a good metaphor as an intuitive perception of similarity in dissimilars.
Resonant with Heidegger, Ricœur’s interrogation of metaphor as a problem of identity and difference in relation to being and to the question of being as including an ‘is not’ within a predicative assertion of ‘is’ leads to Ricœur’s spatial acknowledgment of a “topology of being” for Heidegger that again chimes with Ricœur’s concerns with “nearness of the ‘near’” in “the play of resemblance” in metaphor. Ricœur explores the as-structure of being-as, and belonging-as to examine a space for play around identity that is not necessarily equivalence.

Elsewhere in his work, a spatial insight of Ricœur further opens the door to addressing this blind spot in the spatial structural understandings of Lévi-Strauss concerning assumed connection and separation in his cross-cultural observations of diametric and concentric structures. Ricœur refers to an implicitly spatial preunderstanding of “distanciation” as establishing the relation between subject and object. He treats distanciation as the reflective, critical or suspicious moment within consciousness; such a spatial concern with distanciation is tantamount to an implicit spatial logic as the seed of a spatial discourse not yet unfolded. While the assumed separation of diametric relation is not to be equated with Ricœur’s concept of distanciation, nevertheless, both perspectives on the subject/object relation recognize a fundamental distance or separation – a spatial conception – as the basis for the subject/object dualism. Ricœur explicitly appeals to Heidegger’s being-in-the-world as the basis for a contrast to distanciation – a contrast which Ricœur terms “belonging.” Ricœur treats belonging as an immediate or unreflective relation “correcting” distanciation and a concretizing of the universality of distanciation. Diametric spatial relation is thus resonant with Ricœur’s distanciation underlying the subject-object relation as diametric spatial relation involves an entailment of assumed separation. In contrast, the belonging of concentric relation involves an entailment of assumed connection between its poles.

While these relative differences between concentric and diametric spaces may be observed empirically, it is vital to recognize that these inferences are a priori entailments. They are not being derived from empirical examples; the examples are simply illustrative. The inferences are of relative priority, a necessity of relative priority. It is recognized that transcendental, a priori arguments are, as Stefan Körner exposes, always vulnerable with regard to the strong Kantian claim for their necessity. A claim for necessity cannot exclude a myriad of other possible circumstances. It is not being argued that the relative differences between concentric and diametric structures meet a strong Kantian claim for absolute necessity. Rather, it is a specific contextual necessity of relative priority. They are directional contrasts rather than static positional truth claims treating each space in isolation from the other.

As relative differences, a vital directional dimension to assumptions of connection and separation is embraced. They are only positional structures relative to each other, rather than in an absolute essentialist spatial sense. They are also relativistic, directional projections. In other words, their operationalizations would be meaningless without the counterpole; it is a relation that is being operationalized, a directional relation (whether towards an assumed connection or separation). The issue is not so much one of uncovering a ‘substance’ but rather a dynamic relationship. As projections, these spaces are dynamic structures and active processes, as well as describing functions of relation.

These relative differences are not, to adapt Ricœur’s words in a different context, a “system of associated commonplaces”; they are not argued to be simply empirical cultural
constructions\textsuperscript{28} but are inferences based on the structural contrasts between these spaces. These are not private images in the sense that Ricœur refers to images\textsuperscript{29} but rather publicly justifiable inferences from these spatial-structural contrasts.\textsuperscript{30}

It is important to emphasise that this framework of a system of relations between concentric and diametric spatial discourse is to be distinguished from other structuralist commitments generally in Lévi-Strauss’ work\textsuperscript{31} – and also from being related to what Ricœur terms the “binarist zeal”\textsuperscript{32} of Roman Jakobson’s structuralism. The range and level of inferences between concentric and diametric spaces offer a multidimensional framework far from simple binarism, while also directly challenging the binarism of diametric spaces.

This concern with a spatial phenomenology of relation through concentric and diametric spaces has antecedents already in French phenomenology (and not only French structuralism \textit{via} Lévi-Strauss), such as Bachelard’s recognition that, “Philosophers, when confronted with outside and inside, think in terms of being and non-being. Thus profound metaphysics is rooted in an implicit geometry which – whether we will or no – confers spatiality upon thought.”\textsuperscript{33} Ricœur explicitly notes Bachelard’s phenomenological position where the image dominates over language.\textsuperscript{34} However, this phenomenology \textit{through} space in concentric and diametric spatial relations is to be distinguished from Bachelard’s evocative phenomenology of space and of objects in space. Bachelard’s lens of concentration is mainly upon physical perceptual spaces in a “phenomenology of images,”\textsuperscript{35} whereas a phenomenology through space is a spatial-relational concern with unconscious structures projected into experience. Concentric and diametric spaces are argued to pertain also to ontological dimensions. In contrast, with implicit reference to Heidegger’s existential-phenomenology, Bachelard acknowledges that “Such formulas as being-in-the-world […] are too majestic for me and I do not succeed in experiencing them […] I feel more at home in miniature worlds.”\textsuperscript{36} It is with this wider world pertaining to structures of being that a spatial-phenomenological lens of concentric and diametric spaces can come to the fore.

Other Key Entailments of the Multidimensional Contrasts Between Diametric and Concentric Primordial Spaces: Inverted Symmetry/Symmetry as Unity, Closure/Openness

Ricœur’s concerns touch briefly on issues of symmetry in metaphor,\textsuperscript{37} including symmetry by inversion,\textsuperscript{38} whereas Lévi-Strauss explicitly relates concrete spatial diametric structures to mirror image symmetrical inversions between both diametric poles. Lévi-Strauss describes “symmetrical inversions”\textsuperscript{39} in Mandan and Hidatsa myths:

[...] these myths are diametrically opposed [...] In the Mandan version [...] two earth women who are not sisters go to heaven to become sisters-in-law by marrying celestial brothers. One who belongs to the Mandan tribe, separates from an ogre, Sun, with the help of a string which enables her to come back down to her village. In revenge, Sun places his legitimate son at the head of the enemies of the Mandan, upon whom he declares war. In the Hidatsa version [...] everything is exactly reversed. Two celestial brothers come down to earth to be conceived by human beings and born as children.
Sun’s sister, an ogress, is joined with an earthborn character by means of a string. She makes him her adopted son and puts him at the head of the enemies of the Hidatsa.\textsuperscript{40}

While Lévi-Strauss related diametric structured, mirror image symmetry to myths and sought “unconscious”\textsuperscript{41} structures, he did not integrate this with a detailed examination of this structure’s relevance to wider emotions, beyond a recognition of affect underlying attributions such as good and bad. Concentric spatial structures of relation are not symmetry as inversion. Rather they offer a different entailment of symmetry as unity, where the line or axis of symmetry brings the same pole rather than a mirror image pole in diametric structures.

Again Ricœur raises what are tantamount to spatial concerns regarding metaphor in terms of an “open structure”\textsuperscript{42} to words, as well as considerations of “closure.”\textsuperscript{43} These can gain further flesh through consideration of a third entailment of the relative differences between concentric and diametric spaces – foreground-background interaction versus noninteraction. This entailment of diametricity, contrasted with concentric space, is highlighted by Lévi-Strauss. He argues that self-sufficiency and a split relation to the outside environment is a general quality of diametric structures and systems, “In a diametric system […] virgin land constitutes an irrelevant element; the moieties are defined by their opposition to each other, and the apparent symmetry of their closed structure creates the illusion of a closed system.”\textsuperscript{44} While this makes sense for the immediate example given for social structures, it is not yet clear if non-self-sufficiency and orientation to the outside environment is a general quality of concentric as opposed to diametric relation, as Lévi-Strauss claims:

[In concentric relation] The system is not self-sufficient, and its frame of reference is always the environment. The opposition between cleared ground (central circle) and waste land (peripheral circle) demands a third element, brush or forest – that is, virgin land – which circumscribes the binary whole while at the same time extending it, since cleared land is to waste land as waste land is to virgin land.\textsuperscript{45}

Lévi-Strauss rejects closure for concentric structures, by implying that the relation of the background to both poles of the dualism is governed by the relation within the dualism itself, i.e., ‘cleared land is to waste land as waste land is to [background] virgin land.’ The mode of relation to the background is not extraneous to the respective modes of relation within the poles themselves. Thus, as the concentric poles are in assumed connection to each other, they are also in assumed connection to the background; and this assumed connection to the background resists closure within the concentric structure. In contrast, diametric structures’ relation to their own poles is one of assumed separation which then maintains an assumed separation with the background.

There is minimal interaction between the structural poles of diametric relation and the background space (i.e., virgin land). Diametric structures’ relation to their own poles is one of a mirror image division, which then maintains a cleavage from the background that becomes closed off. Moreover, diametric and concentric structures are dynamic processes as much as structures. Thus, a diametric structure tends to impose a diametric process in its interaction with the background, whereas a concentric structure initiates a concentric relation with the background. In this sense of involvement with the background, concentric relation is not a self-
contained structure. There is a closer proximity between background and foreground within concentric relative to diametric space. In comparison, diametric space is a much more closed structure – closed off from the background. There is greater closure in a diametric spatial structure relative to a dis-closure process of relative opening in concentric spatial relation. A variant of the entailment of relative closure for diametric structures is that they bring decreased permeability and transparency relative to the increased permeability and transparency of concentric structures.

Key features of metaphor, highlighted by Ricœur, such as tension, substitution and interaction, are all aspects of the tension between concentric and diametric spaces. Movement between these spaces allows not only for interaction between them but also of replacement of one space by another, akin to a mode of substitution. The relative openness and permeability of concentric structural relations offer a background for Ricœur’s consideration of transparency for metaphor, which he contrasts with opacity. This offers a further resonance with the more closed structures of diametric space. Interplay between concentric and diametric spaces offers a more differentiated understanding of the actively engaged role of space in experience than a flat, one size fits all characterisation of space as the void of nothingness.

Ricœur’s Objections to Heidegger’s Critique of the Metaphysical within the Metaphorical and to Jakobson’s Selection-Combination Binarism: Issues for the Proposed Spatial Discourse of Concentric and Diametric Structures of Relation

A notable tension exists between Ricœur and Heidegger on the issue of Heidegger’s well-known contention that the metaphorical only exists within the metaphysical, being locked within a sensory/nonsensory opposition of Western metaphysical traditions of thought. One limb of Ricœur’s objection is based on a proportionality principle, when recognising that “The distinction between proper and figurative meaning applied to individual words is an obsolete semantic notion that does not have to be tacked onto metaphysics to be taken to pieces.” Ricœur additionally contests the equivalence of the two transfers, the metaphysical transfer from the sensible to the nonsensible, the metaphorical transfer from the literal to the figurative.

Furnishing his argument with concrete examples, Ricœur seeks a wider notion of metaphor than one reduced simply to visible/invisible oppositions. Ricœur’s challenge here is at a content level of specific exceptions in metaphor to the sensory/nonsensory, or at least visible/invisible binary opposition; a further step is to overcome this oppositional structure itself, in other words, to move from a diametric spatial relation of mirror image inverted symmetry between the sensory and nonsensory. Interpreted as a spatial shift away from diametric structures of relation, the question arises as to the existence of a concentric spatial relation to engage the sensory and to refashion the traditional metaphysical opposition between the sensory and nonsensory. This invites further scrutiny of the role of space underpinning the sensory realm, to transform understandings of the sensory.

Space relates fundamentally to the presensory, as a precondition for the sensory. Space is not simply as an object for the sensory, to be seen, heard as silence, touched, smelled and tasted. Moreover, the contours of space are not simply as a contrastive point of reference for experience
of the sensory, where William James highlights the sound of thunder as requiring a background of silence; space can be but is not solely in a diametric mirror image opposition to sound or other senses, as a passive background. More significantly, space can also be understood actively as an inner concentric dimension, within which senses are embedded, as an inner connective precondition, for example, for sound. Without the medium of space, sound cannot be heard; without space to move through, the resistance of touch cannot be experienced. This is not to deny the key role of the sensory in projecting experiences of sight, sound, touch, taste and smell into language for the metaphorical (see e.g., Derrida on the haptic and the ear of the other); it is additionally to interrogate projection of a prior realm of diametric and concentric spaces underpinning experience and language. This is not merely a quest for an animating space to modify abstraction in the nonsensory; it is fundamentally an interrogation of the surreptitious immanence of primordial space as concentric relations.

In his critique of Heidegger regarding the metaphysical in the metaphorical, a key search of Ricœur is for a mode of metaphor to escape the diametric sensory/nonsensory opposition, or at least visible/invisible opposition of metaphysics. Concern for current purposes is with a spatial mode of experience prior to the sensory, projected into language and thought, that does not seek to escape from the meta, i.e., beyond, of the meta-physical and meta-phorical; it is for a spatial mode of experience which shifts the diametric mirror image split spatial structure from being a supporting precondition underpinning the meta (in both the metaphysical and metaphorical), into a different embedded spatial mode of concentric relation.

Ricœur offers a range of fundamental metaphors, such as the heliotrope, home, return, all of which are amenable to understanding in concentric spatial modes – the sun as a concentric radial structure, dwelling alongside as the concentric home of assumed connection, return as projection of a common spatial structural movement of both concentric and diametric space propagating their respective modes of relation. Elsewhere it has been argued that such a concentric spatial mode of experience, prior to the sensory, can be located in the breath, as part of a shift from a mind-body (nonsensory-sensory) opposition to a breath-body opposition. In other words, experience of concentric and diametric spaces as assumed connection and separation, as relative openness and closure, are meaningful for meditative experience of the breath immersed in the body, as a more fundamental primordial mode of experience, prior to the sensory.

The diametric space of mirror image inversion underpins Western metaphysics, through its sensory/nonsensory opposition framing the metaphysical and founding abstraction; the unseating of this diametric space through concentric space is at issue. Ricœur contests the equivalence of the two transfers, the metaphysical transfer from the sensible to the nonsensible, the metaphorical transfer from the literal to the figurative; that these transfers reveal a common precondition of diametric space, as mirror image inverted symmetry, is not to assert the equivalence of these transfers but it is to highlight the structural commonality of a potentially malleable governing spatial precondition.

Ricœur’s interrogation of analogy as onto-theology, where he seeks for analogy to retain “its own conceptual structure” through entering the problematic of being, offers another example of metaphysics as diametric spatial inverted symmetry. With regard to analogy in relation to metaphor, again a diametric mirror image relation of inversion emerges in Ricœur’s account of St. Thomas Aquinas on this issue:
The question of metaphor is confronted head on in the *Summa Theologiae* (1 a, qu 13, art. 6) under the question: “Whether names predicated of God are predicated primarily of creatures?”. The answer distinguishes two orders of priority: a priority according to the thing itself, which begins with what is first in itself, that is, God; and a priority according to signification, which begins with what is best known to us, that is, creatures. The first type of priority governs analogy properly speaking and the second, metaphor.55

Ricœur continues:

This intersection of two kinds of transference, following the descending order of being and the ascending order of significations, explains the creation of composite modalities of discourse in which the meaning effects of proportional metaphor and transcendental analogy are added together [...] One rests on the predication of transcendental terms, the other on the predication of meanings that carry their material content with them.56

This Scholastic concern with intersection of contrasting directions of transcendental analogy and metaphor as *proportionalitas*, i.e., a resemblance of relations between any terms whatever (as distinct from *proporrio* here), again relies on the diametric mirror image inversion between ascension/descension, transcendental/material. This whole framing of the discussion of analogy operates against the backdrop of a structural presupposition of the metaphysical. A different spatial structural underpinning is needed than the metaphysical structure underpinning this analogy-metaphor relation, reliant on a diametric spatial reversal between ascent/descent, material/transcendent.57 This raises the question of an alternative background space to diametric relations, such as concentric space. This spatial background needs to supply a different spatial-structural underpinning, through which analogy can operate (whether as a unitary or heterogeneous structure), though the task of developing this spatial questioning for analogy is beyond the scope of the current article.

Ricœur raises a further concern with a core feature of the structural linguistics of Roman Jakobson that is also an apt question for current purposes. Resonant with Saussure, Jakobson treats any and all linguistic entities as involving two modes of arrangement, namely combination and selection.58 Ricœur suggests that:

the strength of Jakobson’s schema is also its weakness. The strength of the bipolar scheme lies in its extreme generality and its extreme simplicity [...] a heavy price must be paid [...] when applied to the domain of rhetoric, the binarism of the schema needlessly restricts its field to two figures [...] The notion is too wide when one considers the heterogeneity of substitution and selection operations from one level to another [...] [with] no place for the phenomenon of interaction, specifically of metaphorical statements, in the orbit of the selection-substitution phenomenon.59

From a similar vantage point, it might be asked whether the proposed spatial discourse of concentric and diametric structures of relation is, at once, both too narrowly restrictive and too wide to encompass heterogeneity.

It has already been emphasised that the entailments of the relational contrasts between concentric and diametric spaces are multidimensional, so it is not simply a binary reduction.
Moreover, though initially drawn from Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist observations of a compensatory relation between these spaces, entailments of the relations between concentric and diametric spaces are not confined to the Procrustean bed of structuralism, whether that of Lévi-Strauss or Jakobson. As claims for primordial spaces, this is a concern with a unity within experience; it is not a universalist truth totality claim for all spaces, all experiences, all language, such as the totalizing claim for language of Jakobson’s bipolar categories. Moreover, as spaces in mutual dynamic interactive tension, concentric and diametric spaces are not merely static categories side-by-side with each other; neither are they static grounds for truth claims. In Being and Time, Heidegger raises the question of the dynamic background horizon between categories and existentialia. As William J. Richardson highlights, it is a question of being, “It is only when we comprehend the horizon of transcendence as both the unifying dynamism of sheer presence and as non-being that we understand it properly.” This invites the question as to the background relation itself between concentric and diametric spaces.

Envisaged as diametric categories side-by-side with each other, there would be an assumed separation of non-interaction between diametric and concentric spaces. However, if the relation itself between concentric and diametric spaces operates through a further concentric background horizon of assumed connection, this would allow for a more dynamic interplay between the spaces. Such an interactive directional horizon between the proposed primordial spaces opens them from being static categories and from a premature positional grounding of these spaces, towards being directional horizons of possibility. It is notable that the role envisaged by Ricœur for his speculative discourse, is one where this is “the horizon,” offering “the gravitational pull” on the referential concerns of metaphor. Ricœur seeks an expansive spatial horizon as the gravitational pull to bring metaphor to life, with its “dynamic, directional, vectoral character” as a vivifying principle. The very image of gravitation here further invites spatial assumptions, with the recognition since Einstein, of gravitation as a curvature of space rather than a simple force per se.

Further resonance with Ricœur here is his interrogation of a dialectical interplay between speculative discourse as the horizon and metaphorical discourse; the dynamic mutual interplay between concentric and diametric spaces, against the backdrop of a potentially dynamic, connective horizontal background of relation, gives further succour to Ricœur’s search for a greater dynamism than the static, all-embracing categories of Jakobson’s overly reductive selection-combination opposition. In his search for an interactive dynamism beyond the schematic, Ricœur goes so far as to refer to the “containment of metaphorical discourse by speculative discourse,” thereby implying a concentric relation of containment and assumed connection between the two spheres. Yet Ricœur also accepts that speculative discourse offers “a beginning in itself and […] the principle of its articulation within itself […] that articulate[s] primordially the space of the concept,” in a further affinity with the spatial discourse of concentric and diametric structures of relation.

Rather than static binary categories, concentric and diametric spaces are argued elsewhere to be in dynamic interplay across a range of mutually interconnecting levels; these levels include Heidegger’s basic ontological spaces, together with the background dynamic horizon for the question of being to connect these spaces interactively, as well as a further ontic level that encompasses referential concerns. Put simply, at the ontic level of metaphor in
language, a displacement of concentric and diametric spaces from the ontological level becomes a starting point for interrogation of these complex relations.

On the issue of the proposed spatial discourse encompassing heterogeneity, as argued elsewhere, the work of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson has identified a range of conceptual metaphors and image schemata that offer structures as a key candidate, at the ontic level, for being displacements of the interplay between concentric and diametric spaces and their entailments of assumed connection/separation, symmetry/mirror image symmetry and openness/closure. The container schema is an illustrative but by no means sole example of spatial structures to encompass a heterogeneity of metaphors that is relevant also to a spatial discourse of concentric and diametric structures of relation. Lakoff & Johnson make explicit the “built-in spatial ‘logics’” of the container schema, namely, that “Given two containers, A and B, and an object X, if A is in B and X is in A, then X is in B.” They expand on the dimensions of this cross-modal image schema that is conceptual and yet can be physically instantiated, “A container schema has the following structure: an inside, a boundary, and an outside […] the parts make no sense without the whole. There is no inside without a boundary and an outside, no outside without a boundary and an inside, and no boundary without sides.” Concentric spatial relation is a fundamental example of containment, where the inner pole is contained within the outer, unlike diametric space where neither pole contains the other. The spatial discourse of boundaries and containment underlying conceptual metaphor is a precursor to a wider, more fundamental spatial discourse of concentric and diametric spaces that can also encompass the heterogeneity of diverse conceptual metaphors.

Concluding Comments

Metaphor is envisaged as part of a wider tension between primordial spaces. Ricœur’s question about “what constitutes the metaphoricity of metaphor?” can be met with a response that a prior spatial system of relations through diametric and concentric spaces are at least a necessary precondition for metaphor. Against the backdrop of this spatial discourse, the question can be reframed as to what constitutes the process of literalisation of meaning through the suppression of spatial movement and interplay. A number of implications of this prior spatial system of relations emerge for language. Space is a precondition for language; language is not a precondition for space. Space is itself a system, a system of meaningful relations through the contrasts between diametric and concentric spaces. Space cannot be eliminated from language as a system of meaningful relations. The literal is an excess upon the spatial. Rather than treating the space of metaphor as deviant or at least, deviation, it is the literal that is the excessive limiting condition. The literal is the line upon the curve, the flattening of the space of the circle, the compression and concession of the space, where the diametric stasis of opposition is a process of tightening and tension to give meaning through difference.

In developing the concept of metaphorical truth in Study 7 of *La Métaphore Vive*, Ricœur builds on understanding of ‘to be like/as’ as a “metaphorical modality of the copula itself”; Ricœur emphasises the importance of preserving the ‘is not’ within the ‘is’ in the copula in metaphorical statements. Concentric spatial relations of assumed connection allow for this distinction within identity to be preserved, though it is a more proximate relation than diametric
spatial relations of firm difference and opposition, importing externality to difference. Concentric assumed connection and diametric assumed separation offer a framework for understanding, in Ricœur’s words the “conflict between identity and difference” in metaphor and beyond. Ricœur seeks to generalize “a semantic phenomenon, assimilation to each other of two networks of signification by means of an unusual attribution” in his account of resemblance underpinning metaphor. Again here ‘assimilation’ presupposes a spatial frame of understanding in relation to identity and difference, such as the silent glue of concentric space bringing the relation of assumed connection, while respecting difference between the two linguistic networks of signification in the metaphor. The background space of relation frames the assumption of connection between two initially diverse, disconnected networks of signification; they are moved from a diametric side-by-side assumption of basic separation towards one of concentric assumed connection in the metaphoric relation. The structural interplay between concentric and diametric spaces operates as a background condition underpinning the tension between same and other, marking the relational copula. It is not a monism collapsing the identity of one part of a metaphorical ‘to be like/as’ statement into the other.

With language as part of a wider tension between primordial spaces, space and language are part of a mutually embedded interconnected system of relations. Language needs space to breathe and be given life. Concentric and diametric spaces can go beyond a rational-affective dichotomy to reveal a discourse of implication that incorporates both reason and emotion. Ricœur’s “plea for the plurality of modes of discourse” is, in effect, extended to this prelinguistic spatial discourse between concentric and diametric spaces.

In developing the meaningfulness of a prelinguistic spatial discourse as a system of relations, at one level it can be stated that this argument seeks to do to Lévi-Strauss, what Lévi-Strauss’ structuralism does to Saussure. Lévi-Strauss broadens systems of differences from signs as words to a wider context of signs as myths, as well as social structures and patterns of relation; Lévi-Strauss’ specific cross-cultural accounts of diametric and concentric space concerning social structures and myths are broadened to other systems of relation, including language and elsewhere intrapsychic systems of the unconscious. Lévi-Strauss tended to consider diametric and concentric relations as structures, with less emphasis being given to their roles as spaces, whether as part of a spatial process of distanciation or otherwise. Yet the argument for this expanded domain of relevance for diametric and concentric spaces goes beyond simply empirical referents, whether linguistic, psychological or anthropological, and beyond structuralism; it needs to also be an ontological argument for a spatial-phenomenology at the level of primordial structures of being.

The system of relations between concentric and diametric spaces offers a spatial discourse of implication independent of language, yet underpinning language in assumed connection with it. An explicit argument is not being made that primordial space operates in a concentric structural relation to language, as manifested in metaphor. Yet the structural resemblances between the differential relations of concentric and diametric space on the one hand, and metaphor on the other hand, building on the work of Ricœur, invite further consideration of this question as a strong possibility.

2 Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 147.


5 Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 300.


10 Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology: Vol. 1*.


18 See Morioka, *Constructing Creative Appropriations*. 
19 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 194.
20 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 306; my italics.
21 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 192.
22 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 309.
24 Ricœur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, 110/51.
25 Though a spatial-phenomenological inquiry is an interpretative approach, its concern with the background space of Freud's life and death drives requires a distancing from hermeneutic interpretations of psychoanalysis. The hermeneutic approaches of Ricœur in Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences and Jürgen Habermas place extreme reliance on the role of language as pivotal to the unconscious. As Adolf Grünbaum aptly recognizes, this reduction of a Freudian unconscious to language, or a language system, is a distortion of the preverbal dimensions to the Freudian unconscious. This preverbal dimension pertains not only to early childhood experience, but also to the life and death drives. It is arguable that Ricœur’s thresholds of insight regarding the centrality of space in La Métaphore Vive need to be transported to his approach to psychoanalysis (see also Chapter 5-7, Downes, The Primordial Dance). Habermas, Knowledge and Human Interests (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1972/2007); Grünbaum, Précis of 'The Foundations of Psychoanalysis: A philosophical Critique,' Behavioral and Brain Sciences, 9, (1986), 217-84.
27 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 169.
28 In Downes, chapter 8 of The Primordial Dance, the Chinese yin/yang symbol is interpreted in terms of primordial spaces of diametric and concentric relation, to highlight the different spatial implications of this discourse in yin/yang from its traditional cultural-historical associations.
29 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 208, 211.
30 See Downes, chapter 9 of The Primordial Dance on the contrasts with Wittgensteinian language games and diametric and concentric spaces, as different levels of description.

33 Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, 212.
34 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 214.
35 Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, 112.
36 Bachelard, The Poetics of Space, 161.
37 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 198.
38 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 234.
40 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology: Vol. 2, 250.
41 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology: Vol. 1, 58.
42 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 170.
43 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 126.
44 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology: Vol. 1., 152.
45 Lévi-Strauss, Structural Anthropology: Vol. 1., 152.
46 Ricœur, The Rule of Metaphor, 145.
47 Ricœur treats Heidegger’s position as ”a laziness in thinking, of lumping the whole of Western thought together under a single word, metaphysics,” The Rule of Metaphor, 311.
49 Ricœur offers examples from Fontanier such as ”consuming remorse,” ”courage craving for peril and praise,” ”the brilliant eagle of Meaux,” The Rule of Metaphor, 294.
50 See also Jacques Derrida, Writing and Difference, trans. A. Bass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978/1981) on spatial concerns with an entirely other text of a ”new psychoanalytic graphology” to come, 231, and Downes ”Developing Derrida’s Psychoanalytic Graphology” for an amplification of this.
53 Downes, *The Primordial Dance*. Such a breath-body relation is not a diametric mirror image inversion between both dimensions, it is not a diametric split of assumed separation between breath and body; breath and body need each other, they are mutually entwined. This relation is a ‘breath in body-body’ phenomenological connection, a concentric spatial relation where the breath is the inner circle for the outer circle of the body. For another discussion of the breath in relation to being, see also Derrida, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

54 Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 270.

55 Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 278.


57 Ricœur also draws on Aquinas’ argument that even causality has to be thought of as analogical, where there is some relation of the creature to God as its principle and cause, 277. For an analysis of causality in spatial terms of diametric mirror image symmetry, see Downes, *The Primordial Dance*, and Downes, “Concentric and Diametric Spatial Structures of Relation: Exploring a Neutral Bridge Language Between Quantum Physics and Neuropsychology,” *Neuroquantology, An Interdisciplinary Journal of Neuroscience and Quantum Physics*, 14 (3) (2016) (doi: 10.14704/nq.2016.14.3.885). For an account of traces or fragments of the transcendental horizon in the empirical, as the background relation between concentric and diametric spaces, see Downes, *The Primordial Dance*, chapter 11.


61 Richardson, *Through Phenomenology to Thought*, 148.

62 See Downes, *The Primordial Dance*, for an argument regarding this dynamic background horizon for concentric and diametric spaces in terms of early Heidegger’s transcendental horizon of temporality and non-simple structural whole of care.

63 Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 300.

64 Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 299.


Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 300.

Downes, *The Primordial Dance*.

See Downes, *The Primordial Dance*, for an account of the roles of concentric and diametric spaces at these different levels of transcendental horizon, horizontal-ontological and ontic referential fragments.

The entailments of diametric and concentric spaces in relation to image schemata is interpreted, as follows, in Downes “Schema Structure-Content Relativity: Part II,” and *The Primordial Dance*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diametric Spatial Schema</th>
<th>Concentric Spatial Schema</th>
<th>Image Schema Structure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assumed Separation</td>
<td>Separation on the Basis of Assumed Connection</td>
<td>Containers (Interior, Boundary, Exterior); Boundedness, Differentiation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Assumed Separation and Noninteraction between Foreground Diametric Poles and Background Space | Assumed Connection and Interaction between Concentric Poles and Background Space | Centre-Periphery; Foreground-Background; Part-Whole Relation; Object-Location Dual |

| Mirror Image Inverted Symmetry | Symmetry as Identity | Contrastive Pairs As Opposites/Inversions |


Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 249.


Downes, *The Primordial Dance*. 