

“As If” and the Surplus of Being in Ricoeur’s Poetics

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Abstract

Based on the double character of “as if,” it is argued in this paper that “the surplus of meaning” turns out to be “the surplus of being,” which reveals a human being who interprets his or her own being and also acknowledges this being as being at the same time. In this article, 1) the notion of “as if” is retrieved from Ricoeur’s early work in relation to the “poetics of being” aspired to by him. This leads us to 2) examine the relation between the “semantic surplus” and the “becoming of being.” 3) Addressing the problem of metaphorical reference, the key philosophical problem of poetics, is, therefore, inevitable. Only after this analysis will we 4) be able to consider whether there is a kind of “poetics of being” in the work of Paul Ricoeur.

Keywords: poetics, ontology, polysemy, metaphor

Résumé

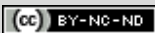
Tiré du caractère double de “comme si,” on pourrait soutenir que “le surplus de sens” devient “le surplus de l’être.” Ce surplus révèle un homme qui se trouve lui-même dans son acte interprétant, et comme un être, est à la fois étant et conscient de son état d’être. Cet article 1) récupère la notion de “comme si” des premières oeuvres de Ricoeur par rapport à la “poétique de l’être” aspiré par Ricoeur. Ceci conduit à 2) examiner le rapport entre “le surplus sémantique” et “le devenir de l’être.” Il semble donc inévitable qu’on doive 3) aborder le problème de la référence métaphorique, qui philosophiquement est le problème le plus important lié à la poétique. C’est seulement après cette analyse que 4) nous sommes capables de considérer s’il y a une certaine “poétique de l’être” dans l’oeuvre de Paul Ricoeur.

Mots-clés : poétique, ontologie, polysémie, métaphore

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"As If" and the Surplus of Being in Ricoeur's Poetics¹

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Introduction

In laying the groundwork for his much-commented "triple-mimesis" in *Time and Narrative I* – the mimetic process of pre-, con-, and re-figuration – Ricoeur summarizes the essence of Aristotelian mimesis in terms of two complementary aspects: creative imitation and the space for fiction. In short, the imitative-representational aspect is not to be conceived as a "redoubling of presence" but as a shift from the real to the possible, which is then portrayed in the poetic composition of a plot (*mythos*). Ricoeur argues that the opening of the possible takes place in a poet's work: "The artisan who works with words produces not things but quasi-things; he invents the as-if (*comme si*)."² A poet figures a possible world while challenging the real one with a tragic plot.

While developing the idea of organization of events as a configuring activity, Ricoeur distances himself from the Aristotelian understanding of mimesis, which is limited to the paradigm of tragedy. For Ricoeur, configuration/*mimesis*₂ mediates between prefiguration/*mimesis*₁ (the presupposed structural, symbolic, and temporal character of the world of action) and refiguration/*mimesis*₃ (the appropriation of the text in the world of the reader).³ A connection to the "as if" is, however, retained. In particular, Ricoeur argues that "the kingdom of the as if" is opened with configurative action, with the mimetic phase of "grasping together."⁴ Configuration, Ricoeur maintains, "draws from the manifold of events [agents, goals, means, interactions, circumstances, and the like] the unity of one temporal whole."⁵ The act of emplotment makes a story out of distinct elements. The Aristotelian model of a "complete whole" is then not "radically altered," despite the fact that Ricoeur amplifies it to cover all literary narratives, and it also emphasizes the temporal, episodic feature that that configuration produces.⁶

Even though composition, or configuration, then, has both an integrating and a mediating function, Ricoeur maintains that "emplotment is never the simple triumph of order."⁷ A narrative – whether fictional ("imaginary") or historical ("real") – is always internally discordant or dissonant because it "gives form to what is unformed," as Ricoeur summarizes.⁸ The idea of this internal dissonance could well lead us to a vicious circle of "violent" interpretation.⁹ The consonance imposed on dissonance can give us "the 'as if' proper to any fiction [i.e., to any emplotted narrative¹⁰]," and still be a mendacious "literary artifice" based on "a kind of nostalgia of order" in the face of its death.¹¹ Instead of reading a narrative as a violent cover-up, however, Ricoeur calls for a "healthy circle" of discordant concordance and concordant discordance since it is the plot's very function to coordinate the dialectic of dissonance and consonance to model human experience.¹² By focusing on this dialectic, Ricoeur preserves the delicate duality of configuration as both an ordering and a discord.

Refiguration, the appropriative actualization of a narrative in the act of reading, is made possible by this discordant concordance of configuration. "In the act of reading," Ricoeur claims, "the receiver plays with the narrative constraints, brings about gaps, takes part in the combat between the novel and the antinovel, and enjoys the pleasure that Roland Barthes calls the

pleasure of the text."¹³ Configuration provides – due to its prefigurative “anchoring” to symbols, meaningful structures, and temporality¹⁴ – a certain readability (*lisibilité*), which, in turn, facilitates reception. A reader, however, is situated in a world of action, and the reader’s “receptive capacity” is defined by this situatedness.¹⁵ The threat of a gap between the horizon of a text and the horizon of a reader is avoided, according to Ricoeur, by pointing out that “language is oriented beyond itself”; a narrative “says something *about* something.”¹⁶ Refiguration as appropriation is the reactualization of this intention to say in the world of the reader.

Configuration, then, leads us, through refiguration, to adopt an ontological perspective. The postulated ontology of language, the “ontological presupposition of reference,” arises from “language’s reflexivity with regard to itself, whereby it knows itself as being *in* being in order to bear *on* being.”¹⁷ The language of human experience, Ricoeur argues, presupposes the transference of meaning beyond itself. This ontological attestation – the externalization or “orientation toward the extralinguistic” – has its ground, however, in “our experience of being in the world and in time,” and it proceeds “from this ontological condition toward its expression in language.”¹⁸ Language, while saying something about something, is about being.

The ontological presupposition of reference is not limited to the descriptive uses of language. According to Ricoeur, nondescriptive language also brings “an experience to language” and comes, therefore, “into the world.” By the use of metaphorical reference, “poetic texts, too, speak *of* the world, even though they may not do so in a descriptive fashion.”¹⁹ An indirect expression is still an expression that reveals a positively asserted aspect of the human being-in-the-world. Ricoeur then concludes that, in fact, “we owe a large part of the enlarging of our horizon of existence to poetic works.”²⁰ Both direct and indirect, descriptive and nondescriptive languages speak of the world. “The world,” Ricoeur defines, “is the whole set of references opened by every sort of descriptive or poetic text I have read, interpreted, and loved.”²¹ All references convey an onto-existential attestation. In sum, it is, then, in the “as-if” of being, in “being-as” (*être-comme*), that a direct description is enriched and complemented with “a full ontological meaning” of the figurative, nondescriptive references of poetic diction.²²

The thesis of this paper is that the argument for this ontologically aware approach – needed also for the tenth study of *Oneself as Another* (1990) on ontological commitment²³ – can be found in Ricoeur’s work that preceded *Time and Narrative* (1983-85) and even *The Living Metaphor* (1975).²⁴ I have, therefore, chosen to follow Ricoeur’s texts closely to demonstrate Ricoeur’s own take on the issue rather than merely to assert a new reading of his works. For example, Ricoeur maintains in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (1949)²⁵ that “in myth a philosophy of man and a philosophy of the Whole encounter each other in symbolization; all nature is an immense ‘as if’ (*comme si*).”²⁶ Such quotations are invaluable in terms of the goal set for this paper. Therefore, I first address some key elements from Ricoeur’s earlier texts to acquire the incipient ideas of the “as if.” This excursion will then lead us to an analysis of the “as if” at its proper, ontological level. This analysis is carried out by focusing on 1) semantic surplus, 2) metaphorical reference, and 3) concrete reflection as the poetics of being.

Understanding the “as if”: Ricoeur’s Quest for a Poetics of Being

It is well known that, in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, Ricoeur aspires to gain a certain “poetics of being” – *une ‘poétique’ de l’être et de la volonté dans l’être* – as his methodological aid in explaining the human condition.²⁷ The notion of poetics is not, however, restricted to *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, as it also appears, for example, in *The Symbolism of Evil* (1960).²⁸

Despite adopting an elaborated approach to the question of human voluntariness and involuntariness, it can be argued that *The Symbolism of Evil* continued the task of poetics, but not only by recycling material from *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* and *Fallible Man* (1960).²⁹ The key assertions of these preceding works – that man dwells in language and “remains speech” and that “a philosophy of man and a philosophy of the Whole encounter each other in symbolization”³⁰ – function in *The Symbolism of Evil* as a starting point for an extended series of works.³¹

The “as if” reappears at the very outset of this series in relation to Ricoeur’s propedeutic “criteriology of symbols.” Briefly, for Ricoeur, the main difference between a sign and a symbol is that, in a symbol, there are two levels of intentionality instead of just one. In a symbol, the conventional meaning, the first level of intentionality, does not resemble the thing signified. This first level of meaning points to a “second intentionality,” which takes the first intentionality as “as” or “like” (*comme*) the intended symbolic signification: take a stain on a cloth, for example, as a symbol of metaphysico-ethical defilement. There is, therefore, a link between “as if” and the symbolic meaning. Furthermore, Ricoeur points out that “the philosophical ‘re-enactment’” of symbols – his hermeneutics of symbols – echoes this same “as if.” He writes: “The philosopher adopts provisionally the motivations and intention of the believing soul. He does not ‘feel’ them in their first naïveté; he ‘re-feels’ them in a neutralized mode, in the mode of ‘as if.’”³² A philosopher’s approach to the symbols – which themselves convey the as-if function – takes place in the mode of “as if.”

Ricoeur also argues that symbols that speak of the world (cosmos) or of the experiencing subject (psyche) should be understood as poetic images. This figurative expressivity is another aspect of the “as if” functionality. As much as “Cosmos and Psyche are the two poles of the same ‘expressivity,’” this “double ‘expressivity’ ... has its complement in a third modality of symbols: poetic imagination.”³³ This poetic imagination – and the images it produces – is therefore not just a complementary but a necessary aspect of the cosmic (i.e., transcendent) and the oneiric (i.e., subjective) symbolisms.³⁴ It is the poetic image that “places us at the origin of articulate being.” Ricoeur asserts – by quoting Gaston Bachelard in both *The Symbolism of Evil* and *On Interpretation* (1965)³⁵ – that it is the poetic image that “becomes a new being in our language, it expresses us by making us what it expresses.”³⁶ The poetic image allows the experienced to be expressed.

It is not insignificant, however, that in *On Interpretation*, Ricoeur also follows Bachelard in mentioning that “this *verb*-image, which runs through the representation-image, is symbolism.”³⁷ Poetic language expresses, but it also makes by speaking out our experience of the world and ourselves. The poetic image, which utilizes the “as if” function, is, therefore, also a *verb*-image. *The Symbolism of Evil* foreshadows this by stating that “a poetic image is much closer to a *verb* than to a portrait,” that the poetic images are “essentially verbs.”³⁸ Representation is, according to Ricoeur, making the present rather than portraying it.

These assertions, which interlink the as-if function, poetic language, and making the present, require the support of *Fallible Man*. In it, Ricoeur maintains that there is a “two-fold supra-signification” in verbs. The verb holds the sentence together but – in the wake of Aristotle’s *Peri Hermeneias*³⁹ – it implies also “the two dimensions of truth, existential and relational.”⁴⁰ The verb, in other words, transcends the signified noun-contents, as it has the potential to affirm or deny what is signified: just consider “Socrates is sitting” or “Socrates is not sitting.”⁴¹ Furthermore, in clarifying the precise locus of this “supra-signification,” Ricoeur claims that, although it is the “unity [of the copula and the predicate] that supra-signifies,”⁴² there is an ontologically affirmative “vehemence of the Yes which has for a correlate the ‘is’ that is signified – or, to be more precise,

supra-signified."⁴³ In brief, it is with regard to Socrates that sitting is affirmed in the statement, "Socrates is..." The verb, and especially the copula, is affirmative with regard to its subject.

While beginning this preparatory analysis with the notion of "as if," we have now achieved the idea of copula that "supra-signifies" – the existential and relational levels of signification are then brought to our attention. Hence, three special features of Ricoeur's thought can be retrieved from his early works: a) the "as if" function in affiliation with a symbolic expression calls for philosophical reflection, b) symbols carrying this "as if" function are to be conceived as poetic images, and c) all these relate to verbs and especially to the copula "is," which carries an onto-existential signification.

The notion of the verb *is*, therefore, requires an analysis of *The Living Metaphor*, which clarifies the problem of metaphorical reference, particularly with respect to the question of being and to the copula "is."⁴⁴ The question of metaphors as a means of the "indirect language" of one's existence was addressed in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*.⁴⁵ After Ricoeur's "wager" – i.e., after the methodological shift from existentially informed phenomenology to ontologically informed hermeneutics of symbols⁴⁶ – the metaphor theory plays, however, a significant role in ensuring that philosophical rigor is maintained with regard to understanding the nature of equivocal language. In other words, after the hermeneutic wager, a linguistic turn was needed. The metaphor theory helps explain why the turn to the philosophy of language was necessary.

The need can be drawn directly from *The Symbolism of Evil*. Ricoeur argues in it that the task of philosophical hermeneutics is "to elaborate existential concepts – that is to say, not only structures of reflection but structures of existence, insofar as existence is the being of man."⁴⁷ Ricoeur maintains that the *cogito* does not subsist but finds itself within being. This call for post-critical ontology leads one to assume that symbols have an ontological function, which in the language of *The Symbolism of Evil* can be described as "an appeal by which each man is invited to situate himself better in being."⁴⁸ Symbols, Ricoeur insists, "speak of the situation of the being of man in the being of the world."⁴⁹ Symbols, then, are expressions of being, and their hermeneutics is a means of opening up this language of human beings' ontological situatedness.

Semantic Surplus and the Becoming of Being

The same question of the onto-existential "fullness of language" animates Ricoeur's efforts in *The Living Metaphor* but from the perspective of philosophical speculation – the question now is *how* to elaborate these existential concepts, leading to the use of such linguistic terms as "polysemy" and "semantic innovation." Ricoeur argues that the "semantic surplus" or "the surplus of meaning" of a metaphor produces correlates, however, with "the surplus of being." This concept of the surplus of being reveals a human being who interprets his or her own being and acknowledges also being as be-ing at the same time. Ricoeur's theory of metaphors is, therefore, studied here, especially from the perspective of their relation to being.

The Living Metaphor states that language has a reflective capacity that relates to being, from which the notion arises that "something must be for something to be said."⁵⁰ This ontological assertion is, furthermore, strengthened by a demand that, for a language to signify, it needs such a function – revealed by speculative discourse – that grounds the referential function ontologically:

Language designates itself and its other. This reflective character extends what linguistics call meta-linguistic functioning, but

articulates it in another discourse, speculative [i.e., philosophical] discourse. It is then no longer a function that can be opposed to other functions, in particular to the referential function; for it is the knowledge that accompanies the referential function itself, *the knowledge of its being-related to being*.⁵¹

Language itself calls for reflection and ontological situatedness. To fully understand the implications of this statement, it is necessary to highlight Ricoeur's basic arguments in relation to metaphors.

Ricoeur studies the metaphorical use of language by placing it in a dialectical process. At the theoretical level, Ricoeur proceeds from semiotics to semantics and, finally, to hermeneutics. At the level of metaphorical statements, he proceeds from a word to a sentence and to language *per se*.⁵² Moreover, Ricoeur places the substitutive "word" and contextual "interaction" theories in a dialectical relationship. For Ricoeur, these theories form a dialectic pair that reflects the totality of the problematics of language.⁵³ At the same time, Ricoeur aims to bridge the theories by placing the metaphor in connection with both a substituted word and a sentence (i.e., its context). This becomes possible when the relationship between a word and its context are seen from the viewpoint of *polysemy*. With this term, Ricoeur means certain semantic elasticity or expandability of discourse, namely its capacity to "acquire new significations without losing their old ones."⁵⁴ Language, Ricoeur argues, is semantically elastic.

The polysemic character of language is itself not a metaphor, but it can be seen as a necessary condition for one to occur. A word, any word, already has some "semantic capital" but is also open to new significations. In its use, it is adjusted and fixed semantically in relation to its context. In other words, Ricoeur is willing to argue that connecting a word to a sentence alters it to a process by which the semantic potential of the word is actualized in full and then limited by the context to such a signification that renders the discourse meaningful. The context – a sentence, a discourse – then works "playfully" as a limiting semantic apparatus.⁵⁵

This interplay between a word and its context has two diverging directions. In a process that can be called "univocization," the sentence achieves meaningfulness by limiting the "semantic capital" of its words in such a way that the semantic potential of each word is "eliminated" to one acceptation, which makes it compatible with the newly formed meaning of the whole sentence. Consider, for example, the sentence "Socrates is a wise man." But in the case of a metaphor – which Ricoeur understands as "a semantic event that takes place at the point where several semantic fields intersect"⁵⁶ – this process can be understood as inverse: there are no suitable potential senses that would make the expression meaningful. We can consider, then, the sentence "Socrates is a stingray."⁵⁷ For Ricoeur, this implies that "it is necessary, therefore, to retain all the acceptations allowed *plus one*, that which will rescue the meaning of the entire statement."⁵⁸ A signification needs to be added to achieve a meaningful expression. In this "metaphorization" or "equivocization," the context produces a semantic surplus that then leads to the meaningfulness of the entire expression.

Now, how could the "as if" function and the notion of the "poetic image" be explained by this? In sum, a metaphor illustrates semantic creativity, the ability to produce new meanings, which – according to *The Living Metaphor* – is connected to the "iconic character" of metaphor.⁵⁹ The "as if," Ricoeur argues, is connected both to "saying as" and "seeing as." This iconicity, then, also has its correlate in poetic praxis. Ricoeur states that "thinking in poetry is a picture-

thinking."⁶⁰ This means, for example, that a poet "is that artisan who sustains and shapes imagery only by a play of language."⁶¹ Poetic images rest on the polysemic character of language, which becomes figurative speech by using its "as if" function also in the mode of "seeing as."

A shift from polysemy to poetic images and "seeing as" leads us to consider its ontological import. According to Ricoeur, who at this point draws both from Kant's schematism and especially from later Wittgenstein, the pictorial capacity of language (i.e., "seeing as") is, first, related to *reception*. Anticipating the refigurative aspect of the threefold mimesis, Ricoeur announces that the "seeing as" is exposed in the act of reading.⁶² The semantics of a metaphorical expression is, therefore, reaching its limits and about to turn to hermeneutics. In addition, the question of being arises in connection with the metaphorical statement as an image inviting interpretation. *On Interpretation*, however, states that interpretation and reflection coincide.⁶³ It is the poetic image that opens up the whole sphere of being while discovering it in reflection.

Using once again the words of Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1957), Ricoeur then argues in *The Living Metaphor* that there is a direct relation between poetic images and reflection on being:

Bachelard has taught us that the image is not a residue of impression, but an aura surrounding speech: "The poetic image places us at the origin of the speaking being." The poem gives birth to the image; the poetic "becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being (*l'expression crée de l'être*) ... one would not be able to meditate in a zone that preceded language."⁶⁴

The profundity of existence is disclosed in a poetic statement that works as a metaphorical image. Since the poetic image also brings together the cosmic and the oneiric aspects of this expressivity, it is most fundamentally "a becoming of our being," which is better understood as a "processual event" of becoming (more) self-conscious of one's own being. "The function of 'semantic innovation,'" Richard Kearney summarizes while analyzing Ricoeur's hermeneutics of poetic imagination, "is therefore, in its most fundamental sense, an *ontological event*" – or "the ontological paradox of *creation-as-discovery*."⁶⁵ This "paradox" of the becoming of being asks for a hermeneutical approach but also opens the possibility of an existentially significant ontology.

Metaphorical Reference as a Key to Ontological Affirmation

The notions of "as if" and "poetic image" seem to leave us empty-handed in a way not intended by Ricoeur. When he alludes to the "pictorial" capacity of poetic language, the idea of referential relation seems to get lost. It appears that a poetic image can have a quasi-referential relation only to language itself: "Like sculpture, poetry converts language into matter, worked for its own sake. This solid object is not the representation of some thing, but an expression of itself."⁶⁶ Ricoeur, however, clarifies his understanding of a poetic discourse by introducing three statements with regard to its nature: "[first,] in the metaphorical discourse of poetry referential power is linked to the eclipse of ordinary reference; [second,] the creation of heuristic fiction is the

road to redescription; and [third,] reality brought to language unites manifestation and creation."⁶⁷ Ricoeur, in other words, redefines the notion of referential relation in poetic language.

Ricoeur then argues that the question of metaphorical reference is the most important one in *The Living Metaphor*.⁶⁸ The idea of the rhetorical process of poetic discourse, understood as a power of words unleashed to redescribe reality, urges philosophical clarification. Metaphor theory works as an instrument in explaining how this redescription comes about. Ricoeur maintains that a metaphor simulates poetic discourse: "with respect to the relation to reality, metaphor is to poetic language what the model is to scientific language."⁶⁹ Furthermore, in light of creation as discovery, a metaphorical reference models the ontologically heavy reference of a poetic discourse. Ricoeur writes: "In service to the poetic function, metaphor is that strategy of discourse by which language divests itself of its function of direct description in order to reach the mythic level where its function of discovery is set free."⁷⁰ Put differently, a metaphor is a step away from direct description, but it facilitates the discovery of the surplus of being in its surplus of meaning. It is, therefore, possible to "presume to speak of metaphorical truth in order to designate the 'realistic' intention that belongs to the redescriptive power of poetic language."⁷¹ An analysis of metaphorical reference results in the notion of ontologically affirmative redescription.

This redescription, however, already entails tension at the semantic level of metaphor. Ricoeur locates the three types of semantic tension between a) the "focus" (word) and the "frame" (sentence) of a metaphorical statement, b) literal and metaphorical interpretations, and c) between identity and difference in the relational function of the metaphorical copula. It is the last one that Ricoeur takes as the most significant.⁷² In the introduction to *The Living Metaphor*, Ricoeur asserts that the idea of metaphorical truth is, in itself, admissible, but only as tensional because of its seat in the tensional copula:

By linking fiction and redescription in this way, we restore the full depth of meaning to Aristotle's discovery in the *Poetics*, which was that the *poiësis* of language arises out of the connection between *muthos* and *mimësis*. From this conjunction of fiction and redescription I conclude that the "place" of metaphor, its most intimate and ultimate abode, is neither the name, nor the sentence, nor even discourse, but the copula of the verb *to be*. The metaphorical "is" at once signifies both "is not" ("*n'est pas*") and "is like" ("*est comme*"). If this is really so, we are allowed to speak of metaphorical truth, but in an equally "tensive" sense of the word "truth."⁷³

In other words, the possibility for a metaphorical truth – as tensional truth – is opened by the copula "is" in its double function of identity and difference.

The analysis undertaken at the semantic level of metaphor is not, however, sufficient. As pointed out in the *Fallible Man*, the copula is not just relational but also existential.⁷⁴ This existential character of its expressiveness is derived from "ontological vehemence," which Ricoeur relates to ontological attestation. "To state 'that is,'" Ricoeur maintains, "such is the moment of belief, of ontological commitment."⁷⁵ By focusing again on the ontologically affirmative side of the copula, Ricoeur then holds that, rather than anything else, redescription concerns being:

In the most radical terms possible, tension must be introduced into metaphorically affirmed being. When the poet says that

"nature is a temple where living columns..." the verb *to be* does not just connect the predicate *temple* to the subject *nature* along the lines of the threefold [semantic-relational] tension outlined above. The copula is not only relational. It implies besides, by means of predicative relationship, that *what is* is redescribed; it says that things really are this way.⁷⁶

Even if the metaphorical truth is tensional, it is still ontologically affirmative in terms of the world that it redescribes. The trait of ontological naïveté is preserved in the dialectic of "is like" and "is not," which in itself is brought to our attention in the analysis of the relational function of the metaphorical copula.

I argue that, at its onto-existential level, the redescription concerns "the being of human being in the being of the world" as in the case of symbols.⁷⁷ The onto-existential function of copula is linked directly to the ontologically affirmative "vehemence," to the belief that *something* is redescribed. The importance of this theme is highlighted in the fact that Ricoeur also examines the idea of ontological commitment in the concluding study of *Oneself as Another*.⁷⁸ But to remain in the context of *The Living Metaphor*, I also maintain that the threshold of semantics has been reached with Ricoeur's ontological analysis of redescription. The copula states, by means of the predicative relationship, that things are the way they are expressed – based on a specific metaphorical modality "to be like" (*être-comme*). This modality bears a tension that prevails between "is" and "is not" even in this equivalent use of the verb. As such, the verb "to be" is dialectical; it is an expression both of the ontological naïveté of "is like" and of the critical approach of "is not" (*la démythisation*). For Ricoeur, metaphorical truth is then "tensional" as well as paradoxical; it is dialectic truth between being the same and being other.⁷⁹

If I am, then, stressing the ontological pole of the dialectic, Eugene Kaelin points out that the dialectic truth rests on the critical "is not," without which the notion of poetic meaning is not understandable. "Without the accompanying 'is-not' the resemblance or iconicity of the metaphor has no meaning, and without the interpretation of the 'is' as an 'as if', the poem cannot negotiate any transfer of meaning," Kaelin states.⁸⁰ "It follows," he concludes, "that the truth communicated through poetry cannot be literal, but yet must still be, in some sense, 'metaphysical'."⁸¹ By highlighting the "metaphysical" notion of metaphorical truth, Kaelin alludes to the final study of *The Living Metaphor* in which Ricoeur examines the metaphysical implications of metaphors in Aristotle, Aquinas, Heidegger, and Derrida.⁸² Ricoeur, however, also clarifies his own account. While Ricoeur undertakes two tasks, namely that of erecting "a general theory of the intersection between [the speculative and poetic] spheres of discourse" and that of proposing "an interpretation of the ontology implicit in the postulates of metaphorical reference";⁸³ the latter is of particular interest to me as it conveniently responds to Kaelin's criticism.

Kaelin admits himself that, instead of "metaphysical," Ricoeur "prefers the term 'ontological'."⁸⁴ Ricoeur's notion of "dialectic truth," however, implies that both the naïve thesis of an immediate ontology and the inevitably relativist Wittgensteinian thesis of the heterogeneity of language games are rejected.⁸⁵ Ricoeur wishes to ground his own analysis in the idea that "every gain in meaning is at once a gain in sense and a gain in reference."⁸⁶ In other words, Ricoeur argues for a surplus of being in the surplus of meaning based on "semantic dynamism" in the circularity of sense and reference. In a metaphor, the meaning "goes beyond" the established field of references. Approached from the side of reference, in turn, the "semantic aim" (*visée sémantique*) of wanting to formulate an entrancing experience in words – which then animates the

metaphorical expression – carries an “ontological vehemence” directed toward the second, “unknown” referential field of meaning.⁸⁷ Ricoeur states that “ontological vehemence cuts signification from its initial anchor, frees it as the form of a movement and transposes it to a new field to which the signification can give form by means of its own figurative property.”⁸⁸ It is, therefore, understandable why Ricoeur prefers the term “ontological” rather than “metaphysical” – a concrete experience of being a human being in the world seeks to express itself.

The asserted ontological vehemence leads us to examine language and the world as well as the relationship between the two. Ricoeur’s analysis of the relation of language to reality poses again the general question of metaphorical reference. This question, however, extends far beyond linguistic problems. Language, for Ricoeur, appears “as that which raises the experience of the world to its articulation in discourse, that which founds communication and brings about the advent of man (*fait advenir l’homme*) as speaking subject.”⁸⁹ In brief, language articulates the human experience of being in the world. Ricoeur conceives semantics, then, in a Humboldtian manner as a philosophy of language because it examines the relation “between being and being-said.”⁹⁰ Ricoeur argues that this “examination” is made possible by the reflective capacity of language, that is, its ability to consider itself by the means of distancing: “Language designates itself and its other.”⁹¹ While signifying, language refers to the world.

It follows from this reflective capacity, which links language to the world, that there is a peculiar ontological “knowledge” inherent in the referential function itself – that it is “being-related to being.”⁹² Although Ricoeur does not use this terminology, the knowledge-bearing function revealed in reflection can, therefore, be understood as the *cogito* of the language itself. Ricoeur mentions that language is “installed” in being and that it “becomes aware of itself in the self-articulation of the being which it is about.”⁹³ But this notion of being “aware” of being, which, in a way, inverts referential relation,⁹⁴ goes indeed further as it yields to extra-linguistic “knowledge” and even grounds itself in this extra-linguistic status when “moving” from being to language:

When I speak, I know that something is brought to language. This knowledge is no longer intra-linguistic but extra-linguistic; it moves from being to being-said (*de l’être à l’être-dit*), at the very time that language itself moves from sense to reference. Kant wrote: “Something must be for something to appear.” We are saying: “Something must be for something to be said.”⁹⁵

Ricoeur states, then, that it is the “surplus of being” that asks for a corresponding “surplus of meaning,” revealed in an act of speech. Instead of language referring to the world, Ricoeur argues that it is the world that speaks out its being.

A question remains, however, if it is also the case that this just-achieved ontological understanding is attainable only in and with the speculative discourse because the ontological vehemence becomes apparent only in speculative distancing. Although one could applaud Ricoeur for reaching the level of his anticipated Poetics, Ricoeur warns that the speculative by no means becomes poetic.⁹⁶ For Ricoeur, the speculative philosophical discourse must remain distinct from the poetic one precisely because of its self-reflective character. Hence, the “extra-linguistic”⁹⁷ is only pointed at in speculative discourse by noticing it in speech itself, that is, in “discourse as use.” This stance, however, is distinct from taking language as a closed system since the “extra-linguistic” cannot be achieved directly.⁹⁸ When noticing that actuality – in which Ricoeur includes

all its possibilities through an interplay between the actual and possible⁹⁹ – has meaning only in the speculative discourse concerning being, Ricoeur points out that "the polysemy of being" (*la polysémie de l'être*) signifies the ultimate reference of poetic discourse, although this can be articulated only in a speculative discourse.¹⁰⁰

It is, then, necessary to conclude that the poetic and the speculative are in a dialectical relationship with each other: the poetic leads us to recognize a certain tension of being ("being-as" conceived as the same and the other), whereas the speculative construes this tension critically.¹⁰¹ It appears that, while criticizing but also borrowing from both Aristotle and Heidegger, Ricoeur has reached the threshold of a postcritical "first philosophy," namely a philosophy that would illustrate the ontological in referential relation.¹⁰²

The fact that Ricoeur clearly wishes to find an affinity with a kind of metaphysics of concrete presence à la Gabriel Marcel¹⁰³ does not, however, necessarily lead to our being held captive by this "presencing." Ricoeur strives to understand, to "hear anew" as he insists in *The Symbolism of Evil*, but this "hearing" takes place only in the conflict of interpretations.¹⁰⁴ If there is a possibility of a regained presence, it is only hermeneutical in a postcritical sense and not directly appropriable by any means. This distinguishes Ricoeur's approach from those of romanticists and certain existentialists – for example, there is a difference between Ricoeur's "metaphorical 'as'" and Heidegger's "hermeneutic 'as'."¹⁰⁵ The *fidélité* and *disponibilité* Ricoeur is searching for pertain to "ontological vehemence," but the awareness of this openness to being is attainable only from the critical distance of speculation.

The possibility of a "regained" presence remains, however. In his own reading of Ricoeur's imago-poetics, Richard Kearney asserts: "An understanding of the possible worlds uncovered by the poetic imagination also permits a new understanding of ourselves as beings-in-the-world."¹⁰⁶ Poetic expressions can be called authentic because they are instances of onto-existential discovery, which, in turn, calls for immediate interpretation. This discovery is most essentially about being that is already present, with its possibilities, and is by no means postulated. In Ricoeur's words – which explain the phrase *la métaphore vive*, the living metaphor – "Lively expression is that which expresses the *living* existence."¹⁰⁷ To use language that is more traditionally metaphysical, in a lively expression, the possibilities of the living existence emerge as actual. This is the "ontological function of metaphorical discourse, in which every dormant potentiality of existence appears as blossoming forth every latent capacity for action as actualized"¹⁰⁸ – a presence regained.

Although produced by a need to explicate an aspect of being in some new kind of way that seems to provide an appropriate description of that experience, a living metaphor is still an expression that operates within language. The preceding analysis has been important in explicating the semantic "surplus," which calls for a "surplus of being." Understanding a living metaphor as a model in this sense for a poetic-speculative account is valuable because it clarifies the initial problematic, namely that of *onto-poetic utterances*. As mentioned above, Ricoeur himself asks for this in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*: "A genuine Transcendence is more than a limit concept: it is a *presence* which brings about a true revolution in the theory of subjectivity; it introduces into it a radically new dimension, the *poetic* dimension."¹⁰⁹ Ricoeur's conviction is that poetic language introduces and expresses being. This leads us already to think *as if* there is a poetics of being in Ricoeur's work. This "as if" leads us to the final step in our analysis, to Ricoeur's understanding of concrete reflection.

Poetics of Being and Concrete Reflection

To open the question of the possibility of theorizing the “poetics of being,” I suggest that the theory of “authentic” or living metaphors has a mutual connection to the level of symbols that Ricoeur calls tertiary symbols.¹¹⁰ In *The Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur addresses the question of juxtaposing philosophical reflection and speculative symbols, the “tertiary symbols,” that interpret the experience of being by rationalizing it – as, for example, the doctrine of original sin rationalizes the experience of moral impurity.¹¹¹ In addition, Ricoeur’s 1976 text *Interpretation Theory* asserts that the metaphor theory is capable of enriching our understanding of the symbolic function of language.¹¹² It is, therefore, feasible to assume that the metaphor theory clarifies Ricoeur’s analyses on symbols and that the symbol theory provides an argumentative context for the question of metaphors.

Ricoeur maintains that even though symbols differ from metaphors – which are merely “saying-as,” “seeing-as,” or “being-as” – in their capacity to truly reveal and express the extra-linguistic reality,¹¹³ the relationship between metaphors and symbols is mutually beneficial. First, a metaphor models the “semantic surplus,” which also takes place in every symbol. This, however, does not mean that they are indistinguishable. According to Ricoeur, metaphors exceed symbols because of their capacity to explain the semantic structure of symbols. Symbols, on the other hand, exceed metaphors due to their partially non-semantic character. Ricoeur defines metaphors as purely linguistic procedures, whereas symbols extend beyond their semantics. Put differently, the word for a metaphor is *λόγος*, whereas the word for an authentic symbol is rooted both in *βίος* and in *λόγος*. In Ricoeur’s words, a symbol “testifies to the primordial rootedness of Discourse in Life.”¹¹⁴ Ricoeur maintains that authentic symbols relate to *being* in such a way metaphors never can, as they are “just the linguistic surface of symbols.”¹¹⁵

What, then, is the relationship between language and the world, given that Ricoeur’s conception of a “full” language includes the idea that it is thoroughly symbolic?¹¹⁶ As mentioned above, in *The Living Metaphor*, Ricoeur defines language as “that which raises the experience of the world to its articulation in discourse, that which founds communication and brings about the advent of man as a speaking subject.”¹¹⁷ Language, in other words, articulates being-in-the-world. Based on Ricoeur’s thought, Mary Gerhart argues that language is a mediation that “integrates human beings into society and assures that there be a correspondence between language and world.”¹¹⁸ Gerhart emphasizes both the societal and the epistemic aspects of language. According to Gerhart, Ricoeur understands language as having genuine references whenever it is considered to be this mediatory function.¹¹⁹ The notion of mediation alone, however, does not fully explicate Ricoeur’s understanding of the relationship between language and the world.

Ricoeur clarifies his position in his 1995 reply to Gerhart. The background for this explanation is his focus on “living metaphors,” i.e., on those expressions that reveal a new experience of being by taking advantage of language’s capability to create new meanings. This semantic innovation, based on the polysemic character of language, plays, therefore, a key role when Ricoeur states that the “revelation” in poetic language exceeds that of scientific language. It does this, however, only in interpretation:

If semantic innovation is related to these three [overlapping] disciplines [rhetoric, poetic, and hermeneutics], it remains that rhetoric is marked by the nature of the effects that discourse

exerts on its listeners, whether this be in the form of persuasion resulting from a pleasing discourse or in that of conviction resulting from probable arguments. Poetry, for its part, unfolds between two poles – the celebration of language for its own sake and the revelation of aspects of the world inaccessible to the language of empirical observation and of scientific truth. It falls, therefore, upon hermeneutics to relate the intralinguistic sense of the statement to the extralinguistic reference that opens language upon what I call the world of the text.¹²⁰

In brief, the extra-linguistic is expressed in poetic language and appropriated in interpretation. Still, the poetic language itself "unfolds"; that is, it does not merely mediate but reveals.

With respect to "the ontology induced by metaphorical reference," the post- *Time and Narrative* Ricoeur brings forth the role of the "reader," i.e., the role of an experiencing subject, who interprets his own being while expressing it – consequently considering the subject's own life as a text.¹²¹ This is not, however, far from Ricoeur's hermeneutic position in earlier texts such as *The Symbolism of Evil*, *On Interpretation*, or *The Living Metaphor*. As argued by all these works, a hermeneutical approach should be accepted once and for all in the case of symbols and living metaphors. It is only in interpretation that the ontological becomes attainable.

This ontologically "restorative" hermeneutics, however, is grounded in the possible intersection of the speculative and poetic discourses and in the ontological clarification of the postulate of reference. A second look at this dialectic is, hence, needed. First, the idea of intersecting discourses, the dialectic that governs both the speculative and the poetic, opens up the possibility of an explicit ontology instead of an implicit one.¹²² For Ricoeur, this movement of making the ontological apparent implies that "the passage to the explicit ontology called for by the postulate of reference is inseparable from the passage to the concept called for by the structure of meaning found in the metaphorical statement."¹²³ This interconnectedness between making being explicit and a metaphorical expression is explained by the fact that metaphor itself works at the very intersection of speculative and poetic discourses.¹²⁴

The ontological vehemence of language triggers the intentional interaction of these discordant discourses at their intersection. Ricoeur summarizes: "An experience requests to be expressed."¹²⁵ The speculative discourse, however, grounds the metaphorical one by opening up a horizon in which the aspects of "is" and "is not" of the "is like" become articulated. In other words, speculation (*intellectio*) is required for poetic language (*imaginatio*).¹²⁶ Would Ricoeur not, then, indeed be saying that it is "the horizon of speculative λόγος" that constitutes the plurivocal? This is not Ricoeur's intention, as he maintains that a discourse can be mixed or composite. The idea of a mixed discourse, however, takes us back to the level of interpretation: "Interpretation is ... a mode of discourse that functions at the intersection of two domains, metaphorical and speculative. It is a composite discourse (*un discours mixte*), therefore, and, as such, it cannot but feel the opposite pull of two rival demands."¹²⁷ The intersection of speculative and poetic discourses is "located" in the interpretation of statements that follow the metaphorical mode of expression.

The other pole of the dialectic, however, should not be forgotten. The poetic discourse differs from speculative discourse by bringing to language "a pre-objective world in which we find ourselves already rooted, but in which we also project our innermost possibilities."¹²⁸ This

notion of the world is inherently important because it functions as an extra-linguistic referent – it is the correlate of signified meaning. As such, it is a necessary condition for the possibility of speech: “We must thus dismantle the reign of objects in order to let be, and to allow to be uttered, our primordial belonging to a world which we inhabit, that is to say, which at once precedes us and receives the imprint of our works (*nos oeuvres*).”¹²⁹ In short, the poetic discourse reveals our being-in-the-world while, however, being also “our work.”

This duality of poetic language – bringing forth the world while giving means to expressing our belonging to it – becomes apparent only through the aid of speculative discourse. The idea of such a poetic discourse, however, brings us finally to the threshold of the Hölderlinian-Heideggerian “*Worte, wie Blumen*,” the notion of words as flowers.¹³⁰ Even after having followed Ricoeur from his very early works to the final study of *The Living Metaphor*, it is still captivating to see him write about “the ‘flowers’ of our words ... utter existence in its blossoming forth.”¹³¹ Language discloses being at its coming-to-presence. Even though Ricoeur appears to be close to this style of thought, it should not be forgotten that Ricoeur was, throughout his career, uncompromisingly reserved with regard to Heidegger’s ontological hermeneutics. Heidegger’s approach appears to him as a mere inspiring temptation.¹³² Being reserved, however, does not mean that Ricoeur would be incapable of utilizing Heidegger’s later texts pedagogically. Heidegger helps Ricoeur in maintaining that language is ontologically revealing.

Ricoeur’s understanding of poetic language is, in some respects, akin to that of Heidegger. In *The Living Metaphor*, for example, Ricoeur seeks support for the view that it is acceptable to comprehend Heidegger’s term *Ereignis* as a “philosopher’s metaphor.”¹³³ In addition, Ricoeur concludes by using Heidegger’s words from *What is Philosophy?* (1956): “Between these two [*viz.* thinking and poetry, i.e., speculation and poetics] there exists a secret kinship because in the service of language both intercede on behalf of language and give lavishly of themselves. Between both there is, however, at the same time an abyss for they ‘dwell on the most widely separated mountains.’”¹³⁴ This notion of a conflicting kinship brings us, for the last time, back to the idea of a dialectic that governs both the speculative and the poetic. Ricoeur affirms that Heidegger’s words capture this “very dialectic between the modes of discourse.”¹³⁵ The two poles of this dialectic must, therefore, be reinvestigated, now keeping in mind the notion of the ontological clarification of the postulate of reference.

The poetic pole of the dialectic sums up “all the forms of tensions,” as explicated above. These tensions are brought together “in the paradox of the copula, where being-as signifies being and not being.”¹³⁶ In other words, the metaphoric copula expresses being while resorting to “being-as.” Ricoeur argues that it is, therefore, poetry – aided by the speculative discourse – which “articulates and preserves *the experience of belonging that places man in discourse and discourse in being*.”¹³⁷ Poetry explicates the human condition as being-in-being and being-in-language. The experience of “belonging” is, however, made apparent in a critical, speculative distanciation. Without the speculative distanciation, the poetic would remain only lived and not understood. Ricoeur maintains, however, that this critical distanciation is not foreign to the poetic but quite natural to it: “poetic discourse, as text and as work, prefigures the distanciation that speculative thought carries to its highest point of reflection.”¹³⁸ The being-as is not simply “is” but is tensional – and, therefore, also “is not.”

In sum, as much as the poetic animates speculative reflection, the poetic discourse also depends on the possibility of distanciation provided by the speculative. These two are not, then, just “the most widely separated mountains” but truly have “a kinship.” Ricoeur concludes,

therefore, that the "as if" grounds our experience of being torn between life and thought: "What is given to thought in this way by the 'tensional' truth of poetry is the most primordial, most hidden dialectic – the dialectic that reigns between the experience of belonging as a whole and the power of distanciation that opens up the space of speculative thought."¹³⁹ The understanding that I am alive is possible only by maintaining a critical distance from it. Despite Ricoeur's strong objections, I suggest that we should then call this dialectic of being "presencing in absencing," as it is indeed – to use the words of Gert-Jan van der Heiden – "productive distancing" that is Ricoeur's focus.¹⁴⁰

Final Reflections

When assessing Ricoeur's poetics, it should be remembered that "the poetics of will" that Ricoeur initially aspired to in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* was defined as "suitable to the new realities [of the gift of being] that need to be discovered."¹⁴¹ Furthermore, these "new realities" are essentially poetic since poetry highlights the ontological rootedness of the human will. A precise, speculative description does not yield to this ontology of the subject because it neglects the aspect of being bound by being while being in being. "There remains for reflection and speculation the inappropriable character of the source of life," argues Ricoeur once again in one of his late essays,¹⁴² emphasizing that speculation is unable to reveal the foundation of being. In brief, Ricoeur recognizes that "there is a ground which I do not control."¹⁴³ He argues, therefore – resorting to Heideggerian language – that "the idea of the groundless ground, the foundation in abyss, remains a limit-idea for understanding."¹⁴⁴ As the speculative approach does not reach the level of existential analysis, our primordial relation to that onto-existential foundation can be articulated only "within a framework of high culture ... in what I would call a poetics of the good."¹⁴⁵ Poetics – which follows Ricoeur from the early works to his late texts – reveals the human reality of being in being.

Ricoeur maintains in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* that poetry holds the first place in expressing being. It is "the art of conjuring up the world as created" as well as "the order of creation," and its analysis is, therefore, worthy of being called "the poetics of being."¹⁴⁶ When this idea is read in connection with Ricoeur's later texts, has Ricoeur reached the level of Poetics in the manner anticipated? Although not infrequently flirting with the idea of ontological expressivity, Ricoeur still claims to keep himself on the side of philosophical reflection. This conviction, however, leads him to difficult-to-defend assertions such as 'Ereignis is a philosopher's metaphor and not a poetic one' – an "event" of being as "enowing" is clearly nothing but a poetic metaphor. Even though maintaining that the "groundless ground" always escapes speculative understanding, Ricoeur himself discusses "a semantic event" (*un événement sémantique*) in relation to the onto-semantic surplus.¹⁴⁷ It is equally true, however, that, despite aspiring to indicate the same groundless ground of being in a philosophical manner, Ricoeur does not write poetry himself – nevertheless, his key phrase is poetics.¹⁴⁸

Even if Ricoeur has been cautious in expressing himself poetically, it has still been shown that language itself maintains its rootedness in *βίος*, insofar as this boundedness is understood as an ontological necessity that is the condition for making *λόγος* possible in the first place.¹⁴⁹ After all, it is *λόγος* – thinking and saying – that truly gives a human being to him- or herself through the poetic art of speech, manifested in expressive acts. Ricoeur argues in the *Fallible Man* that human beings are formed in thoughtful expressions:

“Works” of art and literature, and, in general, *works of the mind* (*les oeuvres de l’esprit*), insofar as they do not merely mirror an environment and an epoch but search out man’s possibilities, are the true “objects” that manifest the abstract universality of the idea of humanity through their *concrete* universality. ... Man, artisan, artist, legislator, educator, is for himself incarnated because the Idea (*l’Idée*) is in itself materialized.¹⁵⁰

While expressing himself, a subject becomes a self-conscious being, a being with an understanding of being-in-being. If Ricoeur’s expression is not poetic, it draws close to a metaphysical style.

At the very end of this brief study, we then reach the final frontier of language. The “works of thought” and the reflection in relation to them reveal “the poetic surplus which is the treasury of *spiritual* significations.”¹⁵¹ Ultimately, although indirectly, Ricoeur talks of “foundational excess,” that is, of “superabundance.”¹⁵² According to Ricoeur in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, the subject’s “poetic sensitivity” rediscovers “the ‘spirit of the song beneath the text which leads divination from here to there.’”¹⁵³ A question remains, however: why couldn’t it then be argued that this same “sensitivity” leads Ricoeur in *The Living Metaphor* to recognize that “the philosopher’s metaphors may well resemble those of the poet”? That their difference is “infinitesimal”?¹⁵⁴ Finding that these poetic works bear witness to this treasure of “belonging-here” as much as “belonging-there,” a capable human being has entered into the “concrete reflection” of the “Poetics of being.” This Poetics goes well beyond the analyses in *Time and Narrative* by opening a proper view to the “alethic” understanding of ontological attestation, as well as to the hyperbolic “excess” in the face of the Other.¹⁵⁵ For a philosopher, this mystery becomes problematic – it turns to speculation that concerns the “as if.” Indeed, with the ethico-theological “aporia of the Other,” Ricoeur writes in *Oneself as Another*, “philosophical discourse comes to an end.”¹⁵⁶

- ¹ A shorter version of this text was presented at the Society for Ricoeur Studies conference in Philadelphia, PA (October 22-23, 2011). I thank Richard Kearney, John Starkey, Cristina Bucur, and especially Dagmar Van Engen for their comments to the earlier versions of this paper. Research for this publication was funded by The Finnish Cultural Foundation.
- ² Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1, L'ordre philosophique* (Paris: Seuil, 1983), 76. (45). – As the translations are occasionally modified (especially with regard to *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, *La symbolique du mal*, and *De l'interprétation*), references are given to original French texts. References to the corresponding English translations of the works are given in brackets.
- ³ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 87-88, 116-117. (54, 76-77).
- ⁴ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 101, 103. (64, 66).
- ⁵ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 102-103. (65/66).
- ⁶ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 66-67, 101. (38-39, 65).
- ⁷ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 71, 112. (42, 73).
- ⁸ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 111. (72).
- ⁹ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 110-111. (70-71). – Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, Philosophie de la volonté 2: finitude et culpabilité I (Paris: Aubier, 1960), 57. (39); Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 5th ed., Studies in Continental Thought (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 141. (§35).
- ¹⁰ Ricoeur defines the term "fiction" in a manner similar to literary criticism. In short, the word "fiction" designates "the configuration of a narrative for which emplotment is the paradigm," and it therefore covers both fictional and historical narratives. Cf. Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 101. (64).
- ¹¹ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 111. (72).
- ¹² Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 111-113, 116. (72-73, 76).
- ¹³ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 117. (77).
- ¹⁴ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 87-88. (54).
- ¹⁵ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 117-118. (77).
- ¹⁶ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 118. (78).
- ¹⁷ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 118-119. (78).
- ¹⁸ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 119. (78).
- ¹⁹ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 121. (80).
- ²⁰ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 121. (80).
- ²¹ Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 121. (80).
- ²² Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 121. (80).
- ²³ Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, L'ordre philosophique (Paris: Seuil, 1990), 347-351. (299-302). Marc-Antoine Vallée criticizes Ricoeur for arguing a modest "regional" ontology. Cf. Marc-Antoine Vallée, "Quelle sorte d'être est le soi? Les implications ontologiques d'une herméneutique du soi," *Études Ricoeuriennes / Ricoeur Studies* 1, no. 1 (2010): 35, 42. In light of Ricoeur's earlier works that are assumed as the basis for Ricoeur's argument in *Oneself as Another*, however, Vallée's comments would have to be reformulated. Cf. Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 350. (301).

- ²⁴ Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, 1977. Ricoeur points out to the importance of the original French title in a 1981 interview with Richard Kearney: "In *La métaphore vive* I tried to show how language could extend itself to its very limits forever discovering new resonances within itself. The very term *vive* (living) in the title of this work is all-important, for it was my purpose to demonstrate that there is not just an epistemological and political imagination, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, a *linguistic* imagination which generates and regenerates meaning through the living power of metaphoricity." Cf. Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricoeur: the Owl of Minerva, Transcending boundaries in philosophy and theology* (Aldershot, Hants, England, Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., 2004), 127. The title *The Living Metaphor* is therefore used.
- ²⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, trans. *Freedom and Nature* (by Erazim V. Kohák, 1966). F.D. Vansina's well known bibliography has long insisted that *Le volontaire et l'involontaire* was published in 1950. The library copy at the Boston College O'Neill Library, however, lists the following: "Achévé d'imprimer par A.Taffin-Lefort, imprimeur a Lille, pour M.F. Aubier, éditions Montaigne, a Paris – en octobre MCMXLIX – Imp. no 24-4-49. No d'ordre 684. Dépôt legal: 4e trim. 1949."
- ²⁶ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 449. (478).
- ²⁷ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 443. (471).
- ²⁸ E.g. Paul Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, Philosophie de la volonté 2: finitude et culpabilité II (Paris: Aubier, 1960), 304, 306. (327, 329).
- ²⁹ Cf. Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 399, 445. (425, 473).; Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 11-15, 292, 304. (3-7, 313-314, 328).
- ³⁰ Cf. Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 449. (478). Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 44-45. (26-27).
- ³¹ Cf. Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Postmodern*, Second, rev. and enl. ed., Perspectives in continental philosophy (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998), 143.
- ³² Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 25. (19).
- ³³ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 20. (13).
- ³⁴ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 21. (14).
- ³⁵ Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: On Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (1970). In this essay, the title *On Interpretation* is used.
- ³⁶ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 20. (13).
- ³⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), 24-25. (16). Italics added.
- ³⁸ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 20-21. (13)
- ³⁹ Cf. Aristotle, "The Complete Works" (Clayton, Ga: IntelLex Corporation, 1992), 6-25.
- ⁴⁰ Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 54. (37).
- ⁴¹ Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 50-51. (32).
- ⁴² Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 50. (32). "Dans 'Socrates est assis' le verbe c'est le bloc 'est assis' c'est set ensemble qui sur-signifie (*consignificat*, dit saint Thomas) le temps."
- ⁴³ Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 152. (136).

- ⁴⁴ Mary Gerhart, "The Live Metaphor," in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995), 216.
- ⁴⁵ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 388-390. (413-415).
- ⁴⁶ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 324-326, 330. (348-351, 355).; Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, 13. (3). Cf. also Paul Ricoeur, "Existence et herméneutique," *Dialogue* 4, no. 1 (1965): 1-11. (3-11).
- ⁴⁷ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 331-332. (356-357).
- ⁴⁸ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 331. (356).
- ⁴⁹ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 331. (356).
- ⁵⁰ Paul Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive* (Paris: Seuil, 1975), 386. (304).
- ⁵¹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 385. (304).
- ⁵² Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 7, 10. (3, 5-6).
- ⁵³ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 161-171. (125-133).
- ⁵⁴ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 217. (170).
- ⁵⁵ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 167. (130). – As much as there is a "play" in the copula, and a play between the word and the sentence, there is also a "play" played by a poet; "[a poet] is that artisan who sustains and shapes imaginary only by a play of language (*le seul jeu du langage*)." Cf. Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 167, 268. (130, 211).; Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, 167. (165). This notion can be taken as being inspired by Kant's third *Critique* and the 'free play of imagination', which is an aspect of Kant's thought Richard Kearney highlights. Cf. Richard Kearney, *The Wake of Imagination: Toward a Postmodern Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 172.
- ⁵⁶ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 127. (98).
- ⁵⁷ Cf. Plato, *Meno*, 79e-80b.
- ⁵⁸ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 168. (131).
- ⁵⁹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 238-242. (187-191). Cf. also Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 239, 250-251. (188, 196-197).; Charles S. Peirce, *Collected Papers. Elements of Logic*, ed. C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss, vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 157.
- ⁶⁰ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 269. (212).
- ⁶¹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 268. (211). Cf. Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 20-21. (13-14).; Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, 24-25. (15-16).
- ⁶² Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 268-271. (212-214).; Ricoeur, *Temps et récit 1*, 117, 121. (77, 80).
- ⁶³ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 271-272. (213-215).; Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, 59-60. (52-54).
- ⁶⁴ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 272. (215). Cf. also Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 20. (13).; Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, 24. (15-16).
- ⁶⁵ Kearney, *Poetics of Imagination: Modern to Postmodern*, 149, 160.
- ⁶⁶ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 283-286, 289-290. (224-227, 230, 234).

- ⁶⁷ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 301. (239).
- ⁶⁸ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 11. (7).
- ⁶⁹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 302. (240).
- ⁷⁰ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 311. (247).
- ⁷¹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 311. (247).
- ⁷² Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 311. (247).
- ⁷³ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 11. (7). – The English translation of *La symbolique du mal* (The Symbolism of Evil) translates the French word "le verbe" with the English word "word." Cf. Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 20. (13). This is also the case in *De l'interprétation* (On Interpretation, transl. by Denis Savage) in which there is a similar failure to capture the intended meaning. Cf. Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, 24-25. (15-16). When the above cited passage from *The Living Metaphor* is taken into account, these untoward choices disguise the original argument in an unfortunate manner.
- ⁷⁴ Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 54. (37).
- ⁷⁵ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 313. (249).
- ⁷⁶ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 311. (247-248).
- ⁷⁷ Cf. Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 331. (356).
- ⁷⁸ Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 32-34, 347-351. (20-21, 299-302).
- ⁷⁹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 310-313, 321. (247-249, 255-256).
- ⁸⁰ Eugene F. Kaelin, "Paul Ricoeur's Aesthetics: On How to Read a Metaphor," in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995), 246.
- ⁸¹ Kaelin, "Paul Ricoeur's Aesthetics: On How to Read a Metaphor," 246.
- ⁸² Cf. Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 324-374. (258-295).
- ⁸³ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 374. (295).
- ⁸⁴ Kaelin, "Paul Ricoeur's Aesthetics: On How to Read a Metaphor," 255. n31.
- ⁸⁵ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 374-375. (295).
- ⁸⁶ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 376. (297).
- ⁸⁷ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 377-379. (298-300).
- ⁸⁸ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 379. (300).
- ⁸⁹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 385. (304).
- ⁹⁰ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 385. (304).
- ⁹¹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 385. (304).
- ⁹² Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 385. (304).
- ⁹³ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 385. (304).

- ⁹⁴ Cf. Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 295. (234).
- ⁹⁵ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 386. (304).
- ⁹⁶ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 388-389. (306-307).
- ⁹⁷ Cf. Gerhart, "The Live Metaphor," 223-224.; Paul Ricoeur, "Reply to Mary Gerhart," in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn, *The Library of Living Philosophers* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995), 234.
- ⁹⁸ David Pellauer, "The Symbol Gave Rise to Thought," in *The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*, ed. Lewis Edwin Hahn, *The Library of Living Philosophers* (Chicago and La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1995), 106.
- ⁹⁹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 389-390. (307).
- ¹⁰⁰ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 389. (307).
- ¹⁰¹ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 398-399. (313).
- ¹⁰² Cf. Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 388-393. (307-309).; Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 154-157. (§40).
- ¹⁰³ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 18, 456. (15, 485-486).; Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, 21, 35-36. Cf. also Kenneth T. Gallagher, *The Philosophy of Gabriel Marcel* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1962), 119-121, 139.
- ¹⁰⁴ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 326. (351).; Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud*, 61-63. (54-56).
- ¹⁰⁵ Gert-Jan van der Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language: Heidegger, Ricoeur, and Derrida on Disclosure and Displacement* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2010), 148-149.
- ¹⁰⁶ Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: Modern to Postmodern*, 149. Cf. also Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 127, 370, 384. (99, 291, 303).
- ¹⁰⁷ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 61. (43). "L'expression vive est ce qui dit l'existence vive."
- ¹⁰⁸ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 61. (43).; Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language*, 145.
- ¹⁰⁹ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 456. (486).
- ¹¹⁰ Cf. Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 378. (299).; Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 17. (9-10). – In *The Symbolism of Evil* Ricoeur asserts that there are three connected forms of symbols: primary (double-intentional signs), secondary (myths), and tertiary (rational speculation). Hierarchically, these "tertiary symbols" are in continuity with the primary and secondary symbols, but in distinction to them, they do not have an independent symbolic function. Although they are not - strictly speaking - symbols anymore, Ricoeur still sees them as remaining within the extended field of symbols. These tertiary symbols, "rational symbols," are concepts with an analogical meaning that refers to mythical language. This can also be stated in return: mythical language leads to rationalizing speculation.
- ¹¹¹ Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 17. (9-10).
- ¹¹² Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, Texas: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 46.
- ¹¹³ Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 60-63. Cf. also Paul Ricoeur, *Le conflit des interprétations: essais d'herméneutique* (Paris: Seuil, 1969), 67, 252. (65, 256).

- 114 Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 59.
- 115 Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 69.
- 116 Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*, 324-325. (349).
- 117 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 385. (304).
- 118 Gerhart, "The Live Metaphor," 223.
- 119 Gerhart, "The Live Metaphor," 223.
- 120 Ricoeur, "Reply to Mary Gerhart," 234.
- 121 Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 180-193. (152-163).
- 122 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 375. (296).
- 123 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 376. (297).
- 124 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 212, 377. (166, 298).
- 125 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 378-379. (298, 300).
- 126 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 381. (301).
- 127 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 383. (303). Cf. also Gerhart, "The Live Metaphor," 225.
- 128 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 387. (306).
- 129 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 387. (306).
- 130 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 392. (309). Cf. also Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language*, 145-148.
- 131 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 392. (309).
- 132 Cf. e.g. Ricoeur, *Le conflit des interprétations: essais d'herméneutique*, 23-28. (19-24).; Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 393. (309). Cf. also Paul Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," *Critical Inquiry* 5, no. 1 (1978): 158.
- 133 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 394-395. (310).
- 134 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 398. (313).
- 135 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 398. (313).
- 136 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 398. (313).
- 137 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 398. (313). Italics added.
- 138 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 398-399. (313).
- 139 Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 399. (313).
- 140 Cf. Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language*, 72-73, 76, 152. Gert-Jan van der Heiden summarizes Ricoeur's affinity with Heidegger's *in-der-Welt-sein* as follows: "Poetic language is the medium of understanding our being-in-the-world *par excellence*." (Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language*, 84.) In Heiden's related analysis, however, the notion of fiction (taken as the "is-not" aspect of "as if") seems to be stressed in such a manner that it threatens to leave the "is" aspect of "as if" aside quite completely. Heiden understands that in distanciation the experienced "everyday world" is suspended.

The poetic task of language is, however, not only to describe an imaginary world, i.e., that of possibilities, but precisely to understand the living experience of the world (the "is"). It is this *distanciation in language* that Ricoeur discusses in relation to "is not" – and not a literary genre of fiction which only highlights this dimension of "alienation." Heiden is thus correct when he later states (Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language*, 140.): "the genuine concern of poetics is not language as such but rather the disclosure of our own existence." For Ricoeur, poetics reveals a surplus of being.

- ¹⁴¹ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 32. (30).
- ¹⁴² Paul Ricoeur, "Religious Belief: The Difficult Path of the Religious," in *A Passion for the Possible: Thinking with Paul Ricoeur*, ed. Brian Treanor and Henry Isaac Venema, *Perspectives in Continental Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 37.
- ¹⁴³ Ricoeur, "Religious Belief: The Difficult Path of the Religious," 39. Cf. also Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 357, 364-365. (308, 314-315).
- ¹⁴⁴ Ricoeur, "Religious Belief: The Difficult Path of the Religious," 37.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ricoeur, "Religious Belief: The Difficult Path of the Religious," 37.
- ¹⁴⁶ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 32-35, 443. (30-33, 471). Cf. also Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language*, 84-86.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 127. (98).; Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 9-12. Cf. also Heiden, *The Truth (and Untruth) of Language*, 75-78.
- ¹⁴⁸ Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, L'ordre philosophique (Paris: Seuil, 2000), 657. (506).
- ¹⁴⁹ Cf. Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 148. (132).; Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory*, 69.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ricoeur, *L'homme faillible*, 139, 157. (123, 141). Italics added.
- ¹⁵¹ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 381. (406). Italics added.
- ¹⁵² Ricoeur, "Religious Belief: The Difficult Path of the Religious," 36.
- ¹⁵³ Ricoeur, *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, 381. (405).
- ¹⁵⁴ Ricoeur, *La métaphore vive*, 394-395. (310).
- ¹⁵⁵ Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 33-35, 347-348, 388-393. (21-23, 299-300, 337-341).
- ¹⁵⁶ Ricoeur, *Soi-même comme un autre*, 409. (355).