

Events and the Critique of Ideology

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Abstract

This paper defends the claim that the critique of ideology requires creative interventions in the symbolic order of society and that those creative interventions must be understood as events. This is what animates the work of both Ricœur and Deleuze and yet helps to uncover the fundamental difference between them regarding the conditions that make such critique possible: a difference regarding how we understand the nature of events. While Ricœur is the philosopher of the narrated event, Deleuze is the philosopher of the dramatic event. Instead of pursuing a point-by-point comparison of their respective philosophies of the event, a line of social and political inquiry is constructed that leads from Ricœur to Deleuze with a view to establishing at what point these two thinkers take different paths. It will be argued that the crossroads is rather neatly signposted by Meillassoux's critique of strong correlationism in *After Finitude*.

Keywords: Ricœur, Deleuze, Meillassoux, Events, Ideology

Résumé

Cet article défend la thèse selon laquelle la critique de l'idéologie exige des initiatives créatrices dans l'ordre symbolique de la société et que ces initiatives créatrices doivent être comprises comme des événements. C'est ce qui anime le travail à la fois de Ricœur et de Deleuze et pourtant contribue à faire apparaître une différence fondamentale entre eux, en ce qui concerne les conditions qui rendent possible une telle critique: une différence s'agissant de la façon dont nous comprenons la nature des événements. Tandis que Ricœur est le philosophe de l'événement narrativisé, Deleuze est le philosophe de l'événement dramatique. Au lieu de poursuivre une comparaison point par point de leur philosophie respective de l'événement, l'auteur construit un fil conducteur, autour de leur recherche sociale et politique, qui mène de Ricœur à Deleuze, en vue d'établir par quelles zones d'intersection ces deux penseurs prennent des chemins différents. Il s'agit de montrer que cette croisée des chemins est plutôt bien balisée par Meillassoux, critique du "corrélacionisme fort", dans son livre *Après la finitude*.

Mots-clés : Ricœur, Deleuze, Meillassoux, Événements, Idéologie

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“On what condition is the critique of ideology possible?”

Ricœur, *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 64

There is growing evidence that we should start thinking about the philosophical contributions of Ricœur and Deleuze *together*: especially, with a view to the clarification of key concepts and to developing subtle responses to contemporary social and political problems. For example, the small extant literature on Ricœur and Deleuze has already established that they shared a strong intellectual lineage and trajectory that has yet to be deeply excavated or fully understood. Of those that have begun this process, I agree with Olivier Mongin that both philosophers shared an antipathy to the overly formal character of Kantian thought and the tortured syntheses of the Hegelian system that led each to reflect upon the richly textured and intricately refined qualities of life.¹ Some of these intricacies have been addressed by Declan Sheerin in his nicely intertwined reading of narrative and larval selves, a reading that “places Deleuze at the heart of Ricœur and Ricœur on the outside of the inside of Deleuze.”² Moreover, the strong link between these two thinkers on the importance of an ethics that affirms life’s creative potential is also becoming increasingly understood as a common well-spring from which they draw; a spring that has its source in Spinoza’s *Ethics*. Pamela Sue Anderson is making strides in this direction, from “the Ricœur side” (so to speak) that suggest that those on “the Deleuze side” need to catch up with harvesting the fruits of the cross-fertilization of these two greats of post-War French philosophy; for the mutual benefit of clarifying elements of each other’s philosophy and in pursuit of the shared goal of producing philosophy that affirms rather than denies life.³

It is equally clear from the literature, however, that for all that Ricœur and Deleuze share there remain fundamental – by which I mean, foundational and irreconcilable – differences between them. For example, Mongin has elegantly summarized his version of this difference: Deleuze is the philosopher of excess, Ricœur of debt.⁴ And Sheerin, for all that he attempts a certain reconciliation, notes that it is only possible by situating Deleuze and Ricœur in a world of his (that is, Sheerin’s) own making; the world of a “‘denarrativized’ self haunted by a virtual Aristotle lying in the shadows.”⁵ So, whatever allegiances we can find between Ricœur and Deleuze – and there are many – we must also recognize the lines of variation that condition their fundamental difference.

With this literature in mind, this discussion is aimed at making a small contribution to the growing awareness that Ricœur and Deleuze *can* and *should* be thought together without their philosophical systems being *reduced* to each other. To this end, I propose my own version of what these two thinkers share and where the fundamental difference between them is to be found.

First I will claim that Ricœur and Deleuze share a commitment to the critique of ideology. This is not a straightforward claim as regards either thinker. Concluding his essay “Science and Ideology”, for example, Ricœur said that “nothing is more necessary today than to renounce the arrogance of critique.”⁶ Equally, and dwelling on the other key term for a moment, Deleuze and Guattari famously declared in *A Thousand Plateaus* that “there is no ideology and never has been.”⁷ That said, it is clear that both Ricœur and Deleuze (and Guattari) had particularly dogmatic visions of critique and ideology in mind when making these claims and they are, without doubt, both indebted to critical philosophy and its role in unsettling our ideologically infused habits of mind. Just a few sentences before the end of his essay on “Science and Ideology”, Ricœur gives an account of a less dogmatic version of the relationship between ideology and critique that could just as easily stand in for Deleuze’s view on the matter as well: “the critique of ideology is a task which must always be begun, but which in principle can never be completed.”⁸ This suggests a deeper shared commitment. If the critique of ideology must always begin again, it is clear that underpinning this view is a challenge to the universalism of Kant’s idea of critique and the historicism of Marx’s theory of ideology. More particularly, though, these challenges point to a deep and shared commitment to developing an understanding of *what has to happen* if the critique of ideology is to become irredeemable within the universal and the historical. This is their shared commitment to the category of the event.

But, secondly, this connection between their respective philosophies points to the fundamental difference between them, a difference regarding how we understand the nature of events. In the discussion below I will defend the claim that the fundamental difference between Ricœur and Deleuze can be understood in these terms: Ricœur is the philosopher of the narrated event, Deleuze of the dramatic event. But rather than pursue a point-by-point comparison of their respective philosophies of the event, I want to construct a dynamic line of social and political inquiry that leads from Ricœur to Deleuze with a view to establishing at what point of the journey these two thinkers take different paths. I will show that this crossroads is rather neatly signposted by Quentin Meillassoux’s critique of strong correlationism in *After Finitude*.⁹

Ricœur: Ideology, Utopia and Finitude

In his essay, “Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology” Ricœur asks the following question: “On what condition is the critique of ideology possible?”¹⁰ He does so with a view to exposing the shared presuppositions animating the debate between Gadamer and Habermas, a debate ostensibly between the competing claims of tradition and reason. By proposing a dialectical mediation between tradition and reason, based on the ineluctably re-collective nature of anticipations of freedom, Ricœur draws a strong temporal line between past, present and future that he develops in a variety of different contexts under the banner of ideology and utopia.¹¹ I will briefly review Ricœur’s analysis of the relationship between ideology and utopia as it establishes important themes for the claim that I want to make.

In this analysis, he affirms that ideology is an irremovable aspect of the social imaginary against the claims of some Marxists and critical theorists who assert the solely negative dimension of ideology as false consciousness. Insisting instead upon the “integrative” function of ideology (rather than its inverting or distorting functions), Ricœur was nonetheless acutely aware of the spectre of Althusser’s understanding of ideology as a cement that binds human relations together. Seeking to avoid the epistemological quagmire into which Althusser was led, Ricœur

understood that the dual-level Marxist understanding of reality and its ideological inversion could not simply or unproblematically be surpassed by a flat model of ideology where it operates solely within or is co-extensive with the symbolic order. Rather, the dimensionality of the ideological had to be retained for the distanciation required for a critique of ideology to be effective. According to Ricœur, however, this dimensionality should be thought temporally rather than spatially, so to speak. That is, he locates a counterpart to ideology within the symbolic order that he calls, amongst other things, the utopian imagination. Richard Kearney sums it up well: “Resisting the reduction of the social imaginary to ideological distortion [Ricœur] argues instead for an affirmation of its utopian potentials.”¹²

Ricœur treats ideology and utopia as derived from a common origin – the symbolic order or “social and cultural imagination” – and both ideological and utopian symbolizations, he says, are “constitutive of social reality.”¹³ They remain nonetheless distinct: while we tend to associate the ideological aspect with claims about reality – about the origins and causes of social phenomena – Ricœur rightly asserts that much of the cultural symbolism that we value refers to the future, to the wonderful literary, artistic, musical, even philosophical anticipations of what’s to come. This utopian aspect of the social imaginary has a futural orientation that Ricœur establishes as a critical counterpoint to both the Althusserian equivocation regarding the totalizing nature of ideology and the Marxist/Critical Theory dual dimensionality of distorted ideology and the undistorted real of the lifeworld. In this context, therefore, and for all their associations with “dreaming” and “impossibilities” – the “no place” they formally designate – utopias have a practical function in challenging aspects of the ideological domain, aspects that foreclose possible worlds.¹⁴

This utopian orientation to the possibility of worlds to come is a theme I will return to later on. For the moment it is important to stress, as Ricœur does, that this dual affirmation of ideology and utopia as necessary aspects of the symbolic order is a careful mediation of the dichotomy between tradition and reason that places both within the domain of a philosophical anthropology. As established in “Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology”, both the Gadamerian hermeneutics of pre-understanding and the Habermasian critique of ideology “cross on a common ground: the hermeneutics of finitude, which secures *a priori* the correlation between the concept of prejudice and that of ideology.”¹⁵ Or as Ricœur puts it in the later essay “Science and Ideology”: “the properly epistemological difficulties that the social sciences encounter under the names of prejudice, ideology and the hermeneutical circle ... have the same origin. They stem from the very structure of a being which is never in the sovereign position of a subject capable of distancing itself from the totality of its conditionings.”¹⁶ In answering his question about the conditions of the critique of ideology, therefore, Ricœur returns us to the limitations of human finitude established by Kant and ontologised by Heidegger, thereby reminding Habermas that the ontological turn itself and his critique of it are part of the same tradition of post-Kantian philosophy.

But is Ricœur too wedded to claims of human finitude? It is well established that Ricœur’s mediation of the claims of tradition and reason have led to strident responses, especially from critical theorists who sense that too much ground has been given to tradition and not enough to the claims of reason in his mediation.¹⁷ For my part, this debate misses the point. Ricœur is surely correct in his claim that hermeneutics and critical theory are both linked by a philosophical anthropology derived from claims regarding human finitude. However, it may be that it is the common ground of human finitude itself that condemns both the hermeneutic and

critical-theoretical perspectives to the ready appropriation of their allegedly emancipatory orientations by ideological forces bent on foreclosing the utopian dreams of possible worlds. It is a claim that has been articulated in its most general terms by Meillassoux in his provocative book, *After Finitude: An Essay On the Necessity of Contingency*.

Meillassoux: Correlationism, Ideology and Fideism

The importance of Meillassoux's argument, in this context, is two-fold. On the one hand, there is the central claim of his book that philosophy must resolve its contradiction with the physical sciences by accepting that it is possible to make claims about the absolute nature of reality; claims, that is, not limited by the allegedly finite nature of human knowledge. On the other hand, there is a subterranean dimension to Meillassoux's project that alerts us to the possibility that all post-critical philosophies are complicit with the promulgation of a contemporary indifference to the world and each other; a mode of indifference he characterizes as "fideism." Fideism is the belief that belief itself is all we have, or as he also puts it, it is the "victory of religiosity."

According to Meillassoux, philosophy since Kant has been organized around the principle of "correlationism." Correlationism is "the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other."¹⁸ For correlationists, there can be no direct access to the real. That is, the only access to an event, object, law or being that is possible is always indirect by virtue of being already correlated with "a point of view."¹⁹ Any account of reality, no matter how richly detailed, must ultimately be construed as one that is relative "to us", to our experience of the world as finite beings. What Meillassoux calls the "correlationist two-step" – the variously different ways in which philosophers have described this correlation itself – is less important, he argues, than the fact that any philosopher aligned to a post-critical heritage will be engaged in this dance of thought and being. In these general terms, both Deleuze and Ricœur are correlationists (post-Kantians, in a fundamental sense). But what is the problem with correlationism, according to Meillassoux?

Importantly, Meillassoux's project is not simply to present a refutation of correlationism from a straightforwardly realist understanding of the kind of statements produced by science. On the contrary, Meillassoux spends much of *After Finitude*, and subsequent work, upholding the implacable nature of the correlationist argument against naïve realism. One cannot, according to Meillassoux, simply side-step the "correlationist two-step" in the name of realism. His project is subtly different: it is to accept the correlationist qualifier against dogmatic realism but to argue that this qualification itself, when absolutized, necessitates that we confront the "irremediable reality" of, what he calls, "ancestral statements" (for example, that the accretion of the earth took place 4.56 billion years ago).²⁰ According to Meillassoux, therefore, we must remain a correlationist against the realist but a realist against the correlationist and we can be both if we absolutize the truth "hidden beneath" correlationism. Only in this way will we be able to "get out of ourselves, to grasp the in-itself, to know what *is*, whether we are or not."²¹

The argument he constructs leads the reader through the history of post-Kantian philosophy: what he calls, the weak correlationism of Kant, the speculative idealism of dialectical and vitalist approaches and the strong correlationism of post-Heideggerian philosophy. It is the latter that concerns us here.²² According to Meillassoux, the strong correlationist has convinced

us that there is no necessary reason for our not-being, and if this is the case, then this means that we always have the capacity to be other than we are. Meillassoux presents this idea as a commonplace of post-Heideggerian – or as he has also referred to it, “post-modern” – philosophy. In important senses, this is indeed a strong point of contact between Ricœur and Deleuze in that they both place a high premium on human creativity and the emergence of the new, generally speaking. But, argues Meillassoux, “this capacity-to-be-other cannot be conceived as a correlate of our thinking, precisely because it harbours the possibility of our own non-being.”²³ In other words, the strong correlationist has convinced us of the absolute “facticity” of our being, but this facticity is no longer a limit to our thought – it is no longer the very marker of human finitude – rather it is a feature of our existence that can be thought absolutely (and which must be thought absolutely if we are to ward off idealism). This acquires consistency in what Meillassoux calls “the principle of factuality”; that is, the absolute contingency of our factual existence. As he puts it, the principle “unveils the ontological truth hidden beneath the radical skepticism of modern philosophy: to be is not to be a correlate, but to be a fact: to be is to be factual- and this is not a fact.”²⁴ Meillassoux concludes that “the equal and indifferent possibility of every eventuality” is not a claim that is relative to a human point of view on reality; it is, rather, an absolute requirement of the real.²⁵

The subterranean cultural agenda can be understood by treating *After Finitude* as a contribution to the current debates about science and religion. Meillassoux has in his sights contemporary dogmatists of both the religious and the secular variety, as well as agnostics who think they are able to remain impartial vis-à-vis such debates and “spiritualists” who invoke the world-disclosing nature of some non-material force, such as “spirit”, “will” or “life.” All these contributors to the current milieu, on Meillassoux’s terms, are unveiled as idealist metaphysicians: that is they are all shown to be purveyors of the claim that there is some ultimate reason why everything is as it is and that we can come to know this reason, either in whole or in part. The claims to dogmatism that abound in the science-religion debates, therefore rebound on all parties from Meillassoux’s perspective because every participant makes claims to the absolute necessity of some determinate entity. If dogmatism is unsustainable in the face of correlationism and if Meillassoux is correct in arguing that correlationism presupposes a claim about the hyper-chaotic nature of the real (that every eventuality is equally possible), then all of the dominant positions in the science-religion debates are disqualified as illegitimate. It is a claim that renders obsolete religious and scientific dogmatism, agnosticism and spiritualism. In his “Preface” to the book, Badiou expresses this dimension of Meillassoux’s work well: “It allows thought to be destined towards the absolute once more, rather than towards those partial fragments and relations in which we complacently luxuriate while ‘the return of the religious’ provides us with a fictitious supplement of spirituality.”²⁶ The “speculative, not metaphysical” intervention in this cultural milieu is to “think absolute necessity without thinking that anything is absolutely necessary”; or, as he also expresses the same point, speculative philosophy is a form of non-absolutist absolutizing thought.²⁷

This reference to thinking the absolute without absolutism is not merely a technical use of a philosophical concept, it also has the political overtones that one would expect with the use of such a term. For Meillassoux, however, we must distinguish between the political absolutism that follows from dogmatism and that, more subtle form, which follows from correlationism. In what at first appears to be a rather unexpected moment in *After Finitude*, Meillassoux adds “in passing” that to reject dogmatism in thought:

furnishes the minimal condition for every critique of ideology, insofar as ideology cannot be identified with just any variety of deceptive representation, but is rather any form of pseudo-rationality whose aim is to establish that what exists as a matter of fact exists necessarily. The critique of ideologies, which ultimately always consists in demonstrating that a social situation which is presented as inevitable is actually contingent, is essentially indissociable from the critique of metaphysics, the latter being understood as the illusory manufacturing of necessary entities.²⁸

According to Meillassoux, there is a necessary connection between ideological dogmatism and metaphysics. In this sense, Meillassoux adopts a broadly Marxist understanding of ideology as a distortion of the real. That said, Meillassoux's primary political target is elsewhere.

For Meillassoux, the absolutism that accompanies ideological dogmatism is not as pressing a problem of contemporary political life as the more subtle form of absolutism that accompanies correlationism. He calls this "fideism." What he describes as the "end of ideology", the victory of correlationist over dogmatic thought, has led to "the unqualified victory of religiosity" where thought "has relinquished its right to criticize the irrational."²⁹ All that remains is an absolutism of "belief": everybody is absolutely entitled to believe what they wish about the nature of the real and philosophy is no longer entitled to intervene in those systems of belief because it can no longer claim to have any unmediated access to the real as it is in-itself. Meillassoux does not shrink from drawing out the political implications of fideism: "if nothing absolute is thinkable, there is no reason why the worst forms of violence could not claim to have been sanctioned by a transcendence accessible to a select few."³⁰ With the demise of ideological dogmatism, argues Meillassoux, we witness the arrival of fideist fanaticism, an arrival described as "the result" of critical rationalism. "Against dogmatism," he says, "it is important that we uphold the refusal of every metaphysical absolute, but against the reasoned violence of various fanaticisms, it is important that we rediscover in thought a modicum of absoluteness."³¹

Events: Narrated and Dramatic

What impact do Meillassoux's arguments have on the way we establish the commonalities and differences between Ricœur and Deleuze? Taking Meillassoux's claims at face value, and to the extent that both Ricœur and Deleuze are post-critical philosophers of the strong correlationist variety, it would appear that they are equally implicated in upholding fideism and therefore complicit in the legitimization of religious fanaticism. This is not a very comfortable place for either thinker! But neither is it the end of the matter.

There are two responses to Meillassoux's claims that, we might imagine, both Ricœur and Deleuze could agree upon. First, there would be a shared skepticism regarding Meillassoux's presentation of fanaticism as post-ideological. If ideology is derived from a metaphysical view that distorts our grasp of reality by finding necessity in contingency and if fanaticism is derived from correlationism supported by a fideist "belief in belief" as the source of contingency in any necessitarian position then it seems clear that we are dealing with two sides of the social imaginary: the ideological and utopian in Ricœur's terms; or, two sides of the symbolic order, the actual and the virtual, in Deleuze's terms. But both thinkers recognize that, as two sides of the same coin, these aspects *need to be thought in tandem*. Meillassoux, in other words, is too quick to cut one off from the other, for both Ricœur and Deleuze. But what is to prevent Meillassoux from

simply disagreeing with the two-fold claims of either thinker? This raises the second general response. From both a Ricœurian and a Deleuzean perspective, Meillassoux forgets that his own argument is embroiled or embedded within its own conditions. That he does this may indeed be an example of what Ricœur calls “the arrogance of critique”; that Meillassoux has found the unconditioned within the conditioned confines of Kantian and post-Kantian critique.³² But it is also an instance of what Deleuze described as the eighth and fundamental postulate of the dogmatic image of thought; that knowledge has priority over learning.³³

Despite these two rejoinders, I do want to hold on to a version of Meillassoux’s basic claim; namely, that the critique of ideology (now understood to include Meillassoux’s characterization of fideism) requires that we are able to think that every eventuality is equally possible. Is this a claim that either Ricœur or Deleuze could uphold? If not, then I do think that we have grounds to question the sustainability of their putative desire to critique our ideologically infused habits of mind.

This raises the question of their shared commitment to the importance of events. First it requires that we think the *singular* event; what Foucault once referred to as “the singularity of events outside of any monotonous finality.”³⁴ As is clear from any engagement with his work and the commentary that has followed from it, Ricœur is a philosopher with a strong commitment to the creative dimension of the utopian imagination that *may* be said to serve as the basis for a Ricœurian understanding of the singular event. And it is a commitment that Deleuze would *appear* to share, even on similar grounds: “give me something that’s possible or I’ll suffocate. What’s possible doesn’t pre-exist, it’s created by the event. It’s a matter of life. The event creates a new existence, it produces a new subjectivity.”³⁵ But, even if Deleuze is using language similar to Ricœur here, the similarity is only apparent.

The merely apparent nature of this agreement can be revealed if we ask this question: is Ricœur a thinker of the singular event? This is no doubt a complicated issue worthy of further investigation, but as Anna Borisenkova has argued, for all of Ricœur’s sensitivities to life’s creative twists and turns and to complex social phenomena, in Ricœur’s hands “the event loses its independence.”³⁶ While in agreement with this claim, I do think that we need to dig a little deeper to get to the problem. What is it in Ricœur’s philosophy of the event that means that the event “loses its independence”? In offering a Deleuzean answer to this question, it is also possible to begin to articulate his theory of the singular event. From a Deleuzean perspective, the ideology-utopia couple that animates Ricœur’s critical utopianism is ultimately a version of the real-possible couple. As such, it removes the conditions required of singular events to the extent that Deleuzeans are committed to Bergson’s critique of the real-possible couple in the name of the actual-virtual couple as the only two-fold understanding of reality that allows for the emergence of the radically new.³⁷ So, despite a shared commitment to the fundamental role of events in the critique of ideology the difference between them is that Ricœur’s narrative encasement of the event locates it in a real-possible logic that Deleuze criticizes on the (Bergsonian) grounds that the real will always curtail the possible and therefore nothing new – other than that already contained within the real – will ever be thought to emerge. The distinction between the narrative encasement and the dramatic liberation of the event is summed up well in *The Logic of Sense*:

The role played [by an actor] is never that of a character; it is a theme (the complex theme or sense) constituted by the components of the event, that is, by the communicating singularities effectively liberated from the limits of individuals and persons...The actor

thus actualizes the event, but in a way that is entirely different from the actualization of the event in the depth of things. Or, rather, the actor redoubles this cosmic, or physical actualization, in his own way, which is singularly superficial – but because of it more distinct, trenchant and pure. Thus, the actor delimits the original, disengages from it an abstract line, and keeps from the event only its contour and splendour, becoming the actor of one's own events – a counter-actualisation.³⁸

The dramatic recovery of events provides a basis for understanding the singularity of events on the grounds that every dramatization is always already a creation.³⁹ That this is the case is premised on Deleuze's two-fold ontology of virtual/actual itself a critique of the real/possible couple that underlies, in this case, the narrative creativity of the utopian imagination in the face of ideological appropriation. For Deleuze, singular events are understood as dramatic changes in the intensive domain that traverses the symbolic order. While narrative pulls the event and its possibilities back to the real, to tradition through narration, drama unleashes the event and its virtualities into the future and in this way they are always singular events capable of providing the conditions for the critique of ideology.

This contrast between narrated and dramatic events must not be treated in an overly dogmatic manner, not least because of Ricœur's claim regarding "the capacity of utopia to break through the thickness of reality."⁴⁰ This capacity is also clearly signaled by Ricœur when he says that "the difference between something which is purely an ideology reflecting one particular time and something which opens outward to new times is that the latter does not merely mirror what presently exists."⁴¹ Indeed, this awareness of the disruptive power of utopia can be understood as part of Ricœur's consistent concern with the nature of creativity and the dynamic interplay between the real and the possible that prevents one from being subsumed by the other. This is given a fitting metaphor in the closing line of *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* when Ricœur argues that we only come to know the appropriate relationship between ideology and utopia in a process of "practical wisdom" that helps us "understand how the circle [of ideology and utopia] can become a spiral."⁴²

Within these claims there would appear to be a moment of creativity similar to Deleuze's understanding of the dramatic event as a moment of creative counter-actualisation. While this is certainly worthy of further detailed investigation, the concern remains that no matter how much dynamism Ricœur introduces to his analyses it is always a dynamism that occurs *within* the frame of the real and the possible. For example, this would seem to be the case given that Ricœur is committed to the idea that our practical judgment about the role of utopias must always assess the disruptive potential they have against "what is fitting in a given situation."⁴³ It is a difference that may be symbolised, in the first instance at least, as that between Ricœur's insistence upon breaking the interpretive circle to create a spiral and Deleuze's insistence that the dynamic interaction of the virtual and actual dimensions of the symbolic order produce lines of flight; in this context, lines of flight are dramatic events that *surpass* the "given situation" and "the possibilities" it contains.

Conclusion

It is my suggestion that "Ricœurians" and "Deleuzeans" look to the complex relationships between narrated and dramatic events for further resources to deepen the

connections *and* heighten the tensions between these two greats of post-World War II French philosophy. By way of conclusion, I offer three potentially fruitful lines of further enquiry.

a) To the extent that both Ricœur and Deleuze articulated a two-fold account of the real and that they do so with a view to avoiding both the flat Althusserian model of ideology and the Marxist depth model, there would seem to be very good grounds for further inquiry (on the Deleuze side of this relationship, especially) into the nature of ideology with the aid of both thinkers. While there is work in the commentaries on Deleuze that addresses his relationship to ideology⁴⁴, there is clearly more to be done in this regard for “Deleuzeans to catch-up with Ricœurians.”

b) It has been argued that the two-fold ontology of virtual/actual in Deleuze can provide the grounds for an immanent form of utopianism.⁴⁵ On this basis there would appear to be another good resource for deepening the “disjunctive synthesis” between the two thinkers and, no doubt, much for Deleuze scholars to learn from the subtle work on utopianism being done in the name of Ricœur.

c) While the narrated and dramatic events are certainly different, further implications of this difference may be brought to light by distinguishing their respective theories from that of another event-oriented philosopher, Alain Badiou. As an opening provocation: does Deleuze’s theory of the dramatic event avoid the pitfalls of both Badiou’s treatment of the event as a “cut in being” and the idea of an event saturated by its narrative meaning?⁴⁶

These avenues for further research are merely three of an, in principle, endless number of projects that could spring from greater collaboration and confrontation (in the best possible way) between those who work under the respective banners of Ricœur and Deleuze. Perhaps, in bringing together these divergent lines of inquiry something new will happen; maybe even an event in thought that will challenge our ideological habits of mind.

- ¹ Olivier Mongin, "L'excès et la dette: Gilles Deleuze and Paul Ricœur ou l'impossible conversation?," *L'Herne: Paul Ricœur*, 81 (2004): 271-283.
- ² Declan Sheerin, *Deleuze and Ricœur: Disavowed Affinities and the Narrative Self* (London: Continuum, 2009), 11.
- ³ Pamela Sue Anderson, "From Ricœur to Life: 'Living Up to Death' with Spinoza, but also with Deleuze" in *From Ricœur to Action: The Socio-Political Significance of Ricœur's Thinking*, eds. Todd S. Mei and David Lewin (London: Continuum, 2012): 19-32.
- ⁴ Mongin, "L'excès et la dette," 2004.
- ⁵ Sheerin, *Deleuze and Ricœur*, 10.
- ⁶ Paul Ricœur, "Science and Ideology" in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 246.
- ⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 4.
- ⁸ Ricœur, "Science and Ideology," 245.
- ⁹ Quentin Meillassoux, *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (London: Continuum, 2008).
- ¹⁰ Paul Ricœur, "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology" in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 64.
- ¹¹ For example, Paul Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).
- ¹² Richard Kearney, *On Paul Ricœur: The Owl of Minerva* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 76.
- ¹³ Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 1 and 3.
- ¹⁴ George H. Taylor, "Ricœur versus Ricœur? Between the Universal and the Contextual" in *From Ricœur to Action*, 136-154.
- ¹⁵ Ricœur, "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology," 96.
- ¹⁶ Ricœur, "Science and Ideology," 243.

- ¹⁷ For example, Thomas McCarthy, *The Critical Theory of Jürgen Habermas* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981) and also *Ideals and Illusions: On Reconstruction and Deconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1993).
- ¹⁸ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 5.
- ¹⁹ Meillassoux, "Time without becoming," paper delivered at the CRMEP Research Seminar series, Middlesex University, 8 May 2008, <http://speculativeheresy.wordpress.com/resources/>, 10.
- ²⁰ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 17.
- ²¹ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 27.
- ²² Graham Harman provides an alternative account of Meillassoux's "spectrum" of philosophical positions: *Quentin Meillassoux: Philosophy in the Making* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 14. Questions concerning Meillassoux's category of speculative idealism have been raised in Anna Cutler and Iain MacKenzie, "Critique as a Practice of Learning: Beyond Indifference with Meillassoux, towards Deleuze," *Pli: Warwick Journal of Philosophy* 22 (2011): 88-109.
- ²³ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 57.
- ²⁴ Meillassoux, "Time without becoming," 9.
- ²⁵ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 59.
- ²⁶ Alain Badiou, "Preface," in *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (London: Continuum, 2008), viii.
- ²⁷ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 34.
- ²⁸ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 33-34.
- ²⁹ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 45.
- ³⁰ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 45.
- ³¹ Meillassoux, *After Finitude*, 49.
- ³² This is a claim Ray Brasier has made in a more systematic, though non-Ricœurian, way. See his *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
- ³³ See Cutler and MacKenzie, "Critique as a Practice of Learning."

- ³⁴ Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald Bouchard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977): 139-164, 139.
- ³⁵ Gilles Deleuze, "May '68 Did Not Take Place," in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006): 233 – 36, 234.
- ³⁶ Anna Borisenkova, "Narrative Refiguration of Social Events: Paul Ricœur's Contribution to Rethinking the Social," *Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2010): 87-98, 96.
- ³⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1988). Commentary on Deleuze's relation to Bergson and, in particular, his commitment to the difference between real-possible and actual-virtual can be found in: Keith Ansell Pearson, *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 1999).
- ³⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 150.
- ³⁹ Iain MacKenzie and Robert Porter, *Dramatizing the Political: Deleuze and Guattari* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).
- ⁴⁰ Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 309. My thanks to an anonymous referee for drawing my attention to this quote.
- ⁴¹ Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 313.
- ⁴² Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 314.
- ⁴³ Ricœur, *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, 314.
- ⁴⁴ Robert Porter, *Ideology: Contemporary Social, Political and Cultural Theory* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2006).
- ⁴⁵ For example, Eugene W. Holland, "Utopian Thought in Deleuze and Guattari," in *Imagining the Future: Utopia and Dystopia*, eds. A. Milner, M. Ryan and R. Savage (North Carlton, AU: Arena Publications, 2006): 217-42.
- ⁴⁶ I have done preliminary work in this regard in MacKenzie, "What is a Political Event?," *Theory and Event* 11 (3) (2008): 1-28.