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Paul Ricœur and the Relationship Between Philosophy and Religion in Contemporary French Phenomenology

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Abstract

In this paper I consider Ricœur's negotiation of the boundary or relationship between philosophy and religion in light of the larger debate in contemporary French philosophy. I suggest that contrasting his way of dealing with the intersection of the two discourses to that of two other French thinkers (Jean-Luc Marion and Michel Henry) illuminates his stance more fully. I begin with a brief outline of Ricœur's claims about the distinction or relation between the discourses, then reflect on those of Marion and Henry, who although they do not relate them in the same way still together form a significant contrast to Ricœur's perspective, and conclude with a fuller consideration of Ricœur's methodology in light of this comparison. I suggest that it is in particular his hermeneutic commitments that lead him both to more rigorous distinctions between discourses and ironically to greater mediation.

Keywords: Religion, Hermeneutics, Phenomenology, Jean-Luc Marion, Michel Henry

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> "The reference of biblical faith to a culturally contingent symbolic network requires that this faith assume its own insecurity, which makes it a chance happening transformed into a destiny by means of a choice constantly renewed, in the scrupulous respect of different choices."
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> Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 25.

> "Christians, have no fear, be rational!"
>
> Jean-Luc Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 154.

> "I do not intend to ask whether Christianity is 'true' or 'false,' or to establish, for example, the former hypothesis."
>
> Michel Henry, *I am the Truth*, 1.

Paul Ricœur was at the same time firmly committed to what he called "biblical faith" and to an avowed "agnosticism" in philosophy. Although he was willing to engage the two disciplines or discourses with each other to different degrees at various points of his career, most of the time he kept them rigorously separate. Occasionally he spoke of this as a "controlled schizophrenia" or a kind of philosophical "asceticism" in regard to his religious convictions.[1] This practice is most evident in his deliberate exclusion of the two final Gifford lectures, the ones with the most explicitly religious content, from the book based on these lectures, *Oneself as Another*. In the introduction to this book he states explicitly that he intends to pursue an "autonomous philosophical discourse" and that his philosophical conclusions can stand on their own.[2] In fact, he maintains in regard to what becomes an important topic in the book that "there is no such thing as a Christian morality."[3] And yet Ricœur also continually wrote more religiously oriented texts, especially on biblical hermeneutics, often in gracious response to various invitations from religiously affiliated institutions, whether universities, seminaries, or other centers. The question of how these two discourses, occupations, and commitments might be related to each other was raised over and over again in his long career.[4] Ricœur was not alone in his desire to keep the two discourses or commitments separate from each other. Nor was he the only one to be questioned about their possible contamination. His contemporary Emmanuel Lévinas had to deal with the same questions and suspicions on a repeated basis and maintained just as forcefully that his philosophy was not a crypto-theology and that his commitments to the Jewish community in France did not "contaminate" his philosophy but that it stood on its own.[5]

Yet an even more interesting contrast to Ricœur's negotiation of the relationships between philosophy and religion or philosophy and theology is provided not by his contemporary Lévinas, but by subsequent thinkers such as Jean-Luc Marion and Michel Henry. These later thinkers delineate the relationship between philosophy and religion in two very different ways and yet how they do so casts an illuminating light on Ricœur's own distinctions.

At first glance one might suppose that these differences are merely chronological. While Ricœur (and Lévinas) were the earliest to write philosophy with religious commitments (after the turn of philosophy to atheism or agnosticism, especially in France), they had to keep their commitments hidden in order to be taken seriously. Marion, in the next generation, has to do so less, although he still has to fight to be recognized and often maintains that he is doing phenomenology and not theology. Michel Henry, who although contemporaneous with Ricœur and Lévinas wrote his most explicitly "Christian" writings in the final decade of his career and hence subsequent to many of Marion's writings, provides almost no justification for his use of Christian ideas and texts in his writings.[6] While such a chronological account is not incorrect, it does not tell the whole story. The differences between their ways of delineating the boundary (or lack thereof) between philosophy and theology are illuminating in ways that are not merely quantitative but also qualitative, that is, the later thinkers do not only allow the two disciplines to interact more fully, but they also do so quite differently. For this very reason contrasting them to Ricœur's way of making these distinctions is fruitful.

The relationship between philosophy and religion in Ricœur's work has been examined on its own many times to the point where it is questionable whether something genuinely new can be said about this relationship on its own. This is why I want to suggest in this paper that contrasting Ricœur's stance on this issue with that of subsequent thinkers might prove illuminating in ways that focusing exclusively on his own work does not. I will seek to show that Ricœur's stronger divisions between the two are rooted not simply in professional insecurity or personal conviction, but in his particular philosophical approach. For Ricœur, the manner of relating discourses is essentially hermeneutic in a way that is not the case for Marion or Henry. Paradoxically, this causes him both to make firmer distinctions and to expend more energy on mediation between these disciplines and discourses. I will begin with a very brief summary of some aspects of the relationship between philosophy and religion in Ricœur's work. The second section of the paper will explore the ways in which this relationship is delineated in the work of Marion and Henry. The third part of the paper will return to Ricœur in order to gain new insight about his position in light of the contrast with the other two thinkers.

Ricœur on the Boundary between Philosophy and Religion

Peter Kenny has delineated three stages in Ricœur's career in which he drew the boundary between the two discourses or disciplines differently.[7] He suggests that in Ricœur's very early work the boundary still remained rather fluid until Ricœur realized that such fluidity was not acceptable in the academy. The "middle" stage is marked by a stricter division between the two as Ricœur became established as a major thinker with a strong philosophical pedigree. After his retirement, when he no longer needed to prove himself, Ricœur again felt freer to engage the two discourses with each other. Although this assessment is helpful on some level, it explains Ricœur's drawing of distinctions and relationships primarily in terms of Ricœur's personal psychology and need for academic recognition. Henry Isaac Venema goes beyond this to show how Ricœur's "philosophical explorations have indeed been deeply motivated by his

Christian faith and cannot be isolated from this religious faith" and that the "strict separation between religious confession and autonomy of thought" cannot be maintained.[8] He describes the various discourses, in which Ricœur engages, as nesting within and interacting with each other, so that "while each of these levels of discourse retains its own irreducibility, none is truly autonomous" but instead "each level opens to the other by way of attestation to a surplus of meaning, to the more-than-possible of superabundance."[9] Venema goes on to show how this is the case via an analysis of Ricœur's "capable man" in light of the reality of forgiveness. In his analysis he draws extensively on the interviews in *Critique and Conviction* and Ricœur's posthumous work *Living Up to Death*.

Boyd Blundell criticizes these approaches, which often rely heavily on interviews or Ricœur's more explicitly religious work. Instead, he explores Ricœur's position "between theology and philosophy" by engaging Ricœur's larger philosophical corpus.[10] He distinguishes between "three Ricœurs": biblical hermeneuticist, philosopher of religion, and professional philosopher and suggests that the first two have received undue weight in the American appropriation of Ricœur, which makes him seem far more "theological" than he actually is. In contrast, Blundell examines Ricœur's least explicitly religious work, namely, his writings on narrative and the self. He employs Ricœur's structural pattern of "detour and return" as an organizing principle for his analysis of Ricœur's "philosophical detour" and "theological return." Dan Stiver carries this even further by examing Ricœur's work in light of theological discussions and concerns.[11]

Ricœur's own configuration of the divide or relation between the two discourses might best be approached by distinguishing between three different emphases: (a) his explicit statements, sometimes in his texts but most often in interviews, about how he himself regards their interaction or distinction in his own work, (b) his engagement of biblical and religious sources, especially in his work on biblical hermeneutics but occasionally also in other places, such as the early texts *The Symbolism of Evil* and *History and Truth*, (c) his brief comments about faith, religion, conviction, or agape in his later philosophical texts *Reflections on the Just*, *The Just*, *Memory, History, Forgetting* and *The Course of Recognition*. Obviously, these cannot all be explored in full detail here,[12] but the three different emphases can be very briefly summarized as follows:

One could say that (a) his statements in interviews and occasionally in introductions to his own texts, such as the justification in *Oneself as Another* for not including the more religiously motivated of the Gifford lectures, amount to maintaining a fairly strict division between the two discourses, proclaiming a methodological agnosticism, and asserting the philosophical independence of his work, while often recognizing that the distinctions cannot be maintained in an absolute fashion and that his work is at least to some extent motivated by biblical faith in its fundamental tenor of hope and the kinds of questions that interest him. These admissions of greater interaction usually occur in interviews where he is pushed by his interlocutors about precisely these possible connections.[13] In his customary generosity, Ricœur was always willing to respond to these questions and to take seriously the questioner's suggestions that generally tried to push him to admit greater overlap between his philosophical and religious work or convictions. Yet, when he was not thus pushed by interlocutors' questions and his own generosity of response, he fairly firmly maintained his avowed "asceticism" in writing.

Again in broad brushstrokes (b), his work on biblical hermeneutics and biblical or religious symbolism draws on the biblical sources from a philosophical perspective and with a philosophical motivation. He maintains consistently that he reads the biblical texts as a philosopher and that they are open to any reading precisely as texts accessible to "anyone who

can read."[14] In his readings he analyzes the symbolism, genres, and narrative structures of the biblical texts and shows how they are coherent within their own presuppositions and hermeneutic circle that engages the community of faith with the texts it reads and which shape their convictions and narrative world.[15] Although this work usually focuses specifically on biblical texts and religious communities, it is not at all inconsistent with Ricœur's larger work on narrative and the shaping of identity.

Finally (c), many of Ricœur's later works make references to religious convictions or stances, although all of these are quite brief, often amounting to just a couple of sentences or an aside in the text. He speaks of forgiveness as a "Christian insight" very briefly in the final two pages of his long work *Memory, History, Forgetting* and similarly considers the topic of pardon or mercy in *The Just*.[16] In *The Course of Recognition* he briefly mentions the Christian idea of agape in regard to peace and mutual recognition.[17] Certain parallels between these discussion and his more clearly religious work in biblical hermeneutics are also illuminating, in that both "discourses" are characterized by a focus on hope, human capabilities, and a logic of abundance that cuts across but does not eliminate a logic of equivalence. Yet Ricœur himself generally leaves these parallels unexplored and shies away from making any explicit connections between the two orientations.

In light of this very cursory overview, one may conclude in preliminary fashion that Ricœur was not incorrect when he spoke of his position in regard to the two discourses as a "controlled schizophrenia." With clear commitments and significant work in both areas, Ricœur always maintained the distinction between them in writing, despite the occasional oral admissions of greater overlap or mutual influence. We will return to evaluate this provisional conclusion after examining some more recent attempts by French philosophers to negotiate the boundary between the two discourses.

The Relationship between Philosophy and Theology in Marion and Henry

Jean-Luc Marion: Philosophy, Theology, and Order

Marion explicitly addresses the relationship between philosophy or phenomenology, on the one hand, and theology, on the other, probably because he has most often been accused of transgressing the boundaries between the two. In an early article he spoke of phenomenology as providing "relief" for theology.[18] He suggests that phenomenology can provide such relief because it frees theology from its metaphysical constrictions. Marion argues that the "death of God" and the "end of metaphysics" do not imply that talk about the divine is no longer possible, as commonly assumed, but instead means that theology is now freed from the metaphysical restrictions that limited it to particular (false) definitions of God. Phenomenology allows theology to examine the divine as it freely gives itself through revelation. He suggests here already that theology might provide the concrete content of revelation (as actual and having occurred historically), while phenomenology only examines its possibility but with a wider philosophical scope.[19] In another early piece he suggested that instead of a "mere" hermeneutic function, theology could serve a heuristic function for philosophy (and that is really the only way in which he is willing to speak of "Christian philosophy").[20] Such a heuristic function means that theology has access to phenomena that are uniquely revealed to it and would not otherwise be visible. It is the task of the "Christian philosopher" to formulate these revealed phenomena rigorously via the phenomenological method. Through this process the possibility and appearance of these

phenomena can be examined phenomenologically: the phenomena are "abandoned" to the realm of more general phenomenology:

> It is conceivable that the legitimacy of such a "Christian philosophy" will be guaranteed only by the new phenomena that it would, all by itself, be able to add to the phenomena already treated in philosophy. In consequence, "Christian philosophy" would remain acceptable only so long as it invents—in the sense of both discovering and constructing—heretofore unseen phenomena. In short, "Christian philosophy" dies if it repeats, defends and preserves something acquired that is already known, and remains alive only if it discovers what would remain hidden in philosophy without it.[21]

In this context he is fairly dismissive of hermeneutics, which he regards as arbitrary and relative. Marion reiterates this argument about theology's discovery of phenomena in a more general sense and adds to it in an address first given in the context of a series of Lenten lectures at Notre Dame de Paris on the topic of faith and reason (organized by the late Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger). Here Marion contends that faith has its own rationality and can help combat contemporary nihilism. Christians contribute to the reason of the world if they pursue the "logic of love," which opens new possibilities and alone provides true access to the other.[22] He concludes that "Christians have nothing better to propose to the rationality of humans" than this logic of love and its respect for the other.[23]

Maybe most important for ascertaining how he conceives the relationship between philosophy and theology is his distinction between the three orders, taken over from Pascal's delineation of them in relation to Descartes' philosophy, but in Marion applied to the relation between phenomenology and theology. He mentions this idea in all three of the contexts briefly summarized above, but articulates it the most fully in his discussion of Pascal in the last part of the *Metaphysical Prism*.[24] Pascal speaks of three orders, each of which has its own rationality and access to different phenomena. The first concerns the natural world explored through the senses, and the second utilizes the Cartesian method of rationality to examine the thoughts of the mind and is characterized by certainty. The third order is that of the heart which goes beyond the second order and examines phenomena that cannot be accessed through clear and distinct rational perception. Instead, it knows through a commitment of the will and through love. Just as the second order is superior to the first and gains better knowledge, the third is superior to the second and can judge it. For Marion the second order is identified with philosophy (especially as metaphysics) and the third with theology. Like the treatments discussed above, this concept of the three orders, at least as Marion employs it, assumes that theology is somehow "higher" or more "real" than philosophy, that philosophy provides a method, while theology provides the content.

Furthermore, even in his more strictly phenomenological accounts in *Being Given* and *In Excess*, the phenomenon of revelation is the highest kind of saturated phenomenon: a phenomenon that is doubly saturated and comprises all the other aspects of the schema he has outlined for saturated phenomena more generally.[25] While the other four saturated phenomena (historical events, works of art, the flesh, the face of the other) push to the very edge of the phenomenal horizon, the phenomenon of revelation transcends the horizon altogether by being excessive in all four respects. The phenomenon of revelation thus is presented as a higher and fuller type of phenomenon.[26] And although Marion has recently insisted that saturated

phenomena more generally are "banal" and quite common, this presumably does not apply to the phenomenon of revelation, which retains a special status.[27]

Yet, one can also learn much about the relations between the two from Marion's work, even where he does not explicitly reflect on their relation. Marion consistently uses religious examples for illustrating what he wants to say about phenomenology. *Being Given* speaks of the calling of the disciple Matthew, both in the biblical account and Caravaggio's painting and of Christ's resurrection and transfiguration.[28] It also draws on several other biblical passages. *In Excess* focuses on the divine name and quotes extensively from Patristic thinkers such as Gregory Nazianzen.[29] Dionysius, of course, plays an important role in much of Marion's work and in many ways his phenomenology as a whole can be said to be inspired by Dionysian apophaticism. Even the more recent book *Certitudes négatives* (released at the same time as a collection of explicitly religious writings *Le croire pour le voir*) employs several religious examples, most prominently a re-reading of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac and of the story of the prodigal son.[30] In almost all cases the religious examples are taken to illustrate and often to "confirm" the phenomenological analysis. To use the most recent example: what Marion says about a phenomenology of sacrifice is taken to be true and valid because his interpretation of the Abraham story confirms it.[31] Similarly, his analysis of forgiveness is confirmed by an analysis of the parable of the prodigal son.[32] Thus despite his own avowed distinction between the two disciplines, where philosophy has no access to theological reality but only depicts its possibility, the biblical examples are taken at the very least to illustrate, but often actually to confirm and validate the philosophical analysis.

It is also informative to look at how Marion proceeds in places where he is explicitly concerned with the question of God in a theoretical manner and not necessarily with human religious experience in a phenomenological sense. His early work was marked, of course, by a desire to speak of God "without" or "beyond" being, to free God from philosophical constraints, in particular that of ontological language as it is manifested both in the early modern move to univocity and in Heidegger's overarching search for Being as such.[33] Yet his recent statements on the matter are considerably more interesting. While the early work primarily named God as the "infinite" (especially in *Idol and Distance* and some of the Cartesian writings), he went on to speak of God as the "impossible" (in his 2003 address at the fourth Villanova "Postmodern and Religion" conference),[34] and has most recently explored the notion of God as the "unconditioned."[35] In the paper on the impossible he re-reads notions of divine omnipotence in terms of God's faithfulness to God's word (illustrated by the story of the annunciation). In the most recent paper he engages in a long discussion of Kant's rejection of the ontological proof, showing not that the proof would be valid or even particularly useful if it were valid, but rather that important insight about the divine can be gained from Anselm's discussion without it "proving" anything about God's existence or non-existence.

Consequently, much of Marion's work is concerned with establishing the reality and validity of religious phenomena. Although he does not attempt to "prove" God's existence in any sort of straightforward fashion (indeed rejects any such project), his work has a heavily apologetic tenor. In a sense, his entire phenomenological project justifies and enables the possibility of revelatory phenomena. Conversely, biblical or religious examples are consistently taken to confirm his phenomenological analyses. Although the more general phenomenology of givenness is ostensibly developed without recourse to revelation, this phenomenology proves to be particularly conducive to the appearance, discovery, or even invention of excessive phenomena, to the point where in Marion's most recent work the Eucharist is taken to be the

phenomenon of the gift par excellence and becomes the paradigm for all other phenomena.[36] In Marion's work theology and philosophy are much more fully related than they are in Ricœur, but in a way that makes theology inherently superior and more true. Theology becomes the source of the content of phenomena, while phenomenology provides merely the method for investigation. This investigation happens in a lower order and is ultimately irrelevant for the theological reality except to give it a certain validity in the visible world. Hermeneutics is dismissed as relative and arbitrary, and it is not acknowledged that the project itself is a kind of reading of the phenomena.[37]

Michel Henry: Christianity and Truth

Although Marion draws on Henry's phenomenology of the flesh extensively in his discussion of the third saturated phenomenon, Henry's philosophy is actually quite different in both style and content from Marion's. In some sense they are exact opposites. While Marion's phenomenological work seems primarily motivated by his theological commitments and profoundly shaped by them, Henry's interpretations of Christianity appear deeply informed by his phenomenological presuppositions, which were worked out long before he encountered the Gospels in any real sense. If Marion occasionally succumbs to the danger of making phenomenology conform to the theological presuppositions, one may well say the opposite of Henry's philosophy, namely that his reading of Christianity is made to conform to his phenomenological presuppositions. While Marion is primarily interested in religious phenomena and appeals to the Scriptures primarily for the events or experiences they recount, Henry is almost exclusively interested in the texts themselves, which is rather ironic considering his hostile stance toward hermeneutics, of which he is even more dismissive than Marion. And yet in many ways Henry's treatment of Christianity is gripping, refreshing, and deeply insightful.

In what sense can Henry be said to be relating philosophy and religion? He is—unlike Marion and some others—not remotely interested in proving the "truth" of Christianity: "I do not intend to ask whether Christianity is 'true' or 'false,' or to establish, for example, the former hypothesis."[38] Yet, despite this disclaimer, Henry refers to this Truth extensively throughout his work. He claims that, in fact, Christianity is the only truth, that it alone gives access to Truth, and that all other truth—especially that of science as exemplified by Galileo—is utterly and completely false, a lying and deceiving "truth" that removes us from who we are and provides us with cheap imitations that render us less than human. Henry has discovered an insight in Christianity that he forces on us with breathless vigor. Christianity's Truth is this: It proclaims the Truth of Life which is God who generates all other life—especially that of human beings—in himself through the Arch-Son, Christ. Only in this Life are we self-affective, that is, directly and immediately related to our most intimate passions and joys and hence truly human. Not to be thus affected is to become an automaton, which is essentially what contemporary technology and market capitalism try to do to us by serving us a virtual reality with fake imitative experiences and affections manufactured for us.[39] Christianity calls us out of this sinful, false, and unreal life of appearances to a conversion that recalls us to our original source in the divine Life. By returning to this source, we experience ourselves as "sons" of the divine "father" and recognize that the joys and sorrows of our own self-affective life are actually expressions of the divine life in us. Henry appeals to traditional doctrines such as the Trinity, incarnation, sin, salvation, and Christian love, to formulate these insights about phenomenological life. In all cases he discovers the phenomenological Truth of self-affectivity and flesh in the doctrines to which he appeals and

consistently claims that this is Christianity's unique message and contribution. The Truth of Christianity is thus utterly different and completely separate from the "truth of the world." This does not make Christianity world-denying, far from it. Christianity alone gives us access to concrete fleshly life, while the "world" removes us from it and proposes an essentially disembodied existence to us.

Particularly interesting are Henry's ways of reading the Scriptures most evident in his final work *Words of Christ*.[40] He quotes extensively from the synoptic Gospels to cement his interpretation of Christ's divine life and his challenge to worldly conceptions of the human condition. Scripture citations are consistently used as prooftexts for his phenomenological interpretations and are usually treated as if their phenomenological import were entirely self-evident. Comments like the following abound in the text: "It would be pointless to object to this overwhelming declaration, devoid of any ambiguity."[41] Christ's claims about his divine identity are taken at face-value without any historical or larger Scriptural context (and as if they required no interpretation or justification of any sort). On the one hand, Henry affirms that in the Gospel texts "Christ himself speaks; we hear his very words."[42] On the other hand, it is part of his very project in this book to reveal Christ's words as self-manifesting. They require no justification or verification, but speak directly to our hearts in utter immediacy.[43] In a couple of cases Henry appeals to one or two (somewhat outdated) theological works, but his phenomenological interpretation does not really even require them because he presents the texts as so self-evidently establishing his points. The Gospels are presented as telling us about our very identity and our concrete, material, fleshly existence. They are read as wellsprings of our phenomenological existence, of our passions, joys, and sorrows.

Yet, Henry's interpretations of the biblical texts are deeply shaped by his phenomenological convictions to the point where the texts themselves often become practically unrecognizable. What is probably the most problematic in his work is that Henry simply refuses to recognize his reading of the Gospels as a hermeneutic exercise and is rather dismissive not only of philosophical hermeneutics but also of biblical methods of research and interpretation.[44] He simply takes the Gospels at face value and quotes from them as if no need for interpretation were necessary. But of course he *does* interpret and his interpretation is in many ways unique and untraditional. He claims that we will recognize its truth if we live it, that the Truth will speak directly to our hearts, that no mediation of any sort is necessary: "Where does life speak? In the heart. How? In its emotive immediate self-revelation. In the heart is held every constituent of this structure of self-revelation that defines human reality: impressions, desires, emotions, wants, feelings, actions, thoughts. The 'heart' is the only adequate definition of the human."[45] Christ, as the divine Word, "is the absolute Truth which bears witness to itself."[46] God, Life, Truth and the humans who find themselves within it are all intricately related if not ultimately identical: "For the human being, belonging to the truth means to be born of Life, of the only Life that exists: the all-powerful Life which engenders itself. ... Because life is self-revelation, it is Truth, the original and absolute Truth, in relation to which any other truth is merely secondary. Because they are sons of this Life, which is Truth, humans belong to the Truth."[47] We hear this Truth in our hearts, directly and immediately. Ultimately, "this word speaks in us; it speaks its own life to each one of us."[48] We understand the Scriptures, not because they require interpretation, but because they live in our hearts and emotions in complete immediacy without any sort of hermeneutic distance. For Henry, the Truth of the Gospels is identical to his central phenomenological insight about the self-affection of the flesh. No distinction can be made between them and interpretation is not only fruitless, but excluded as antithetical to the Truth itself.[49] Sebbah has rightly pointed out that

Henry really leaves the reader with little choice. It is a matter of "take it or leave it." For Henry we either recognize ourselves as sons of the divine Life or we are lost. There are no mediating positions and no place for dialogue.

The way in which these two thinkers configure the relationships between the two disciplines is really quite different. While Marion's phenomenology seems informed, confirmed, and shaped by his theological convictions,[50] Henry's interpretation of Christianity appears essentially guided by his strong phenomenological convictions.[51] While Marion seeks to show that phenomenology must make space for religious phenomena as they give themselves, Henry is convinced that the Christian discourse shows the Truth of his phenomenological insights about the self-affectivity of the material flesh. Yet, in both thinkers the relationship between philosophy and religion, or more specifically between phenomenology and theology, is much closer than in Ricœur's work. While one must mostly speak of "distinction" between the discourses in Ricœur, in these more recent thinkers one can much more justifiably speak of "relationship." At times, a clear distinction actually no longer even seems possible. This is not only due to the difference between Ricœur's Protestantism and their predominantly Roman Catholic heritage, which has traditionally seen philosophy and theology engaged in a fairly fruitful interaction. Most of all, it seems to me, this difference between the recent phenomenological thinkers and Ricœur is grounded in their differing conceptions of hermeneutics. This is what I will explore in the final part of this paper.

Ricœur in Light of Marion and Henry

As has been discussed in the previous section, Marion and Henry are quite critical of the hermeneutic exercise. Marion dismisses it as "mere interpretation," which is "arbitrary" and "secondary." Although more recently he occasionally acknowledges an "infinite hermeneutics" (in light of much criticism of his earlier negative stance), such a hermeneutics is still a rather arbitrary interpretation necessary only because the saturated phenomenon cannot be grasped or understood and therefore gives rise to an endless variety of interpretations. In *Certitudes négatives* Marion speaks of hermeneutics as a first "expansion" of phenomenology, while the saturated phenomenon constitutes a second expansion that goes further and is superior to it, and the notion of "negative certainty" is posited as a third expansion going even beyond the saturated phenomenon.[52] Henry is even far more critical of hermeneutics, which he regards as destructive of phenomenology itself.[53] The truth of phenomenology, as Henry sees it, is its utter immediacy that requires no verification or hermeneutic distance, but speaks directly to the heart in immanent self-affectivity. For Henry, that is precisely the truth of Christ's words, namely that they require no verification and are completely immediate to our very pleasure and pain.

Ricœur is, of course, a preeminent hermeneutic thinker. How do his hermeneutic commitments influence the way in which he configures the divide or relationship between the philosophical and biblical, phenomenological and religious discourses? First of all, Ricœur is far more, although of course not exclusively, concerned with *texts*. This means that his reading and analysis are to a large extent guided by the texts. Ricœur engages the text or source within the hermeneutic circle where meaning emerges through the continual cycling between text, author, and reader, previous and present interpretations, larger context and contemporary horizon. Although Ricœur stresses that one never approaches a text without presuppositions and that there is no reading "from nowhere," he is much more careful to listen to the texts themselves and

not to impose arbitrary interpretations upon them. He insists, for example, that "a hermeneutical philosophy... will try to get as close as possible to the most *originary* expressions of a community of faith, to those expressions through which the members of this community have interpreted their experience for the sake of themselves or for others' sake."[54] For the Christian community these originary expressions are the Christian Scriptures. They are the "modes of discourse" that "constitute the finite field of interpretation within the boundary of which religious language may be understood."[55] In this he is always also guided by the previous history of interpretation that he does not dismiss in anywhere near as lapidary fashion as Marion or Henry often do.[56] This practice, it seems to me, leads Ricœur to pay much closer attention to the integrity of the texts and hence makes him much less disposed to impose philosophical readings on religious texts and vice versa. In fact, he explicitly warns against "cryptophilosophical" and "cryptotheological" readings in the opening of *Oneself as Another* and appeals to this as a justification for his methodological agnosticism.[57] It is to some extent Ricœur's generosity and fidelity to the texts with which he is concerned in each particular instance that leads him to a clearer distinction between discourses. The kind of discourse depends on the kind of text that is being examined. The contrast to Marion's and Henry's practices of heavy phenomenological readings of biblical texts makes this particularly clear. For Marion, the use of ousia in the parable of the prodigal son can help overcome onto-theo-logy or confirm a phenomenological account of forgiveness. For Henry, the texts of the Gospels speak directly to us about our self-affectivity. While these readings are novel and interesting and may well prove phenomenologically fruitful, they would be unthinkable for Ricœur in the violence they wreak on the texts. Ricœur instead carefully investigates the different kinds of texts and genres contained in the biblical writings. Several of his essays examine the variety and polyphony of biblical texts, where narrative and prophecy, praise and wisdom, remembering and prescription interact with each other and can even contradict each other.[58] Ricœur is prevented from merging the philosophical and religious discourses as fully as Henry and Marion do by his commitment to upholding the integrity of his sources. This fundamental hermeneutic opennenss to the texts themselves, even when read against the contemporary horizon, makes Ricœur much more hesitant to reread the texts in the kind of radical fashion that breaks with all continuity with past readings.[59]

Furthermore, it is not only hermeneutics *per se*, but the *kind* of hermeneutics Ricœur practices that influences how he thinks about the relationships between philosophical and religious sources and commitments. Ricœur is quite critical of the kind of romantic hermeneutic that pretends that it can merge with the horizon of the original author or even the original audience. He disagrees with Gadamer about whether full understanding and complete agreement can ever be a viable goal.[60] For example, he wonders in an essay on "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology" whether "it is possible to formulate a hermeneutics that would render justice to the critique of ideology, that would show the necessity of the latter at the very heart of its own concerns."[61] In response, he suggests that "a certain dialectic between the experience of belonging and alienating distanciation becomes the mainspring, the key to the inner life, of hermeneutics."[62] Ricœur's own work similarly practices such a continual hermeneutics of distanciation and suspicion that is marked by the constant interplay of concordance and discordance. This leads him to a firm commitment to mediation and dialogue that refuses any final closure. It also prevents him from advocating the kind of absolute transcendence or complete immanence, the desire for total purity and absolute self-givenness, we encounter in Marion and Henry. Again, it seems specifically their desire for purity or total immanence, respectively, that leads them to reject or at least severely limit the scope of

hermeneutics. Similarly, it is precisely Ricœur's commitment to the messiness and incompleteness of the hermeneutic endeavor that prevents him from any such single-minded project that erases distinctions and boundaries. He argues vigorously against the kinds of premature closures provided by discourses of ideology and utopia.[63] A "hermeneutics of suspicion," he points out, "is today an integral part of an appropriation of meaning."[64] In an interview he applied this precisely to the intersection of the domains of philosophy and theology: "This is what I've learned from hermeneutic thought, it is a fact that we always aim at totality and unity as a horizon, but that our thought always remains fragmentary. This means that we cannot transform this horizon into a possession." Any attempt to subsume one into the other is dangerous: "Thus I find that there is more violence in this integration of religion with philosophy than in the recognition of their specificity and the specificity of their intersection."[65] To some extent it is also this lack of final closure that enables him to address the divide between the discourses again and again in different fashion, depending on the particular context, and not to provide one monolithic answer about their interaction. The fact that he continually rethinks the configuration of this relationship or distinction—indeed did so to his dying day as the unfinished manuscript *Living Up to Death* testifies—is rooted in this commitment to the flux of life, marked by a desire for concordance but also the reality of discordance, in which relationships must be continually newly negotiated.

Another aspect of Ricœur's hermeneutic project is also important here, namely its commitment not only to texts but also to action and life. We must always move "from text to action" and deal with the "fullness of language" as it is engaged with our living. Narrative identity, which fluctuates between concordance and discordance, is shaped not only by texts but by the events of life as they are integrated into a coherent narrative that is continually interrupted and dislocated by the realities and vicissitudes of life.[66] Although Marion and Henry are obviously also engaged with life and with the phenomenal events we encounter within it, their picture of life is far more monolithic than that of Ricœur. Marion focuses almost exclusively on "saturated phenomena" and while he acknowledges our birth, aging, and death as such saturated events, his strong emphasis on these most excessive experiences often makes more ordinary life disappear from view. Similarly, Henry focuses so exclusively on the self-affectivity of the flesh that everything else is read through this lens. In both of these cases, the relationship between analysis and "life" goes in only one direction: Marion's notion of the saturated phenomenon determines how excessive experiences are to be encountered (namely as overwhelming and bedazzling), Henry's notion of self-affectivity determines how the experiences of Life as suffering and joy are to be experienced (namely as utterly immediate and self-generating). Ricœur's hermeneutics requires, instead, that the circle always goes in at least two, often even in multiple, directions: the texts inform life, life shapes the texts, life is transformed in light of the various worlds opened by the texts, the texts are generated and shaped by manifold new experiences of life.[67] The texts challenge us to see ourselves anew: "Henceforth, to understand is to understand oneself in front of the text. It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity for understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self... the metamorphosis of the world in play is also the playful metamorphosis of the ego."[68] Not only a hermeneutics of texts but also a hermeneutics of action displays this continual back-and-forth.[69] On some level, such a back-and-forth ought to enable Ricœur to perceive many interactions between different aspects of life and understanding, including the religious and the philosophical. And indeed he certainly never excludes that such interactions are possible, but at times points them out himself.[70] Yet at the same time, this cycling between texts and actions,

narrative and life, theory and practice, also upholds the distinctions between them. The traversing would make no sense if there were no boundary to traverse, the movement between different realms impossible if they were not actually distinct in some sense. While Marion and Henry to a large extent erase distinctions in order to show the ways in which givenness covers all given phenomena or self-affectivity determines all of life, Ricœur upholds the distinctions precisely in order to enable more fruitful interactions between different realms. The agnosticism Ricœur often practices in his philosophical endeavors is precisely a measure for attending to the particularities of those discourses and occasions, including an openness to other philosophical traditions.[71]

Ricœur's configuring of the relation or distinction between philosophical and religious discourses is then not arbitrary but deeply rooted in his methodological hermeneutic commitments and in his fundamental attitude of respect toward texts and persons. The contrast to Marion and Henry, who reject or are at least ambivalent about such hermeneutic commitments, shows how profoundly Ricœur's hermeneutic practice shapes his desire to maintain the integrity of the respective discourses with which he is concerned in each case. This does not mean that the discourses cannot engage each other productively and fruitfully. Indeed they do so often in Ricœur's work, to which the immense body of literature on this aspect of Ricœur's oeuvre is not the least witness. Yet it does prevent Ricœur from any simplistic conflation of disciplines or from pretending that the divide between them can be delineated in a facile manner. In fact, it must always be determined and negotiated anew. Religious texts can certainly be read profitably by philosophers and philosophical texts by theologians or anyone with religious convictions. Ricœur himself describes this in the introduction to *Thinking Biblically* where he distinguishes his reading of biblical texts from theology:

> The philosopher most disposed to a dialogue with an exegete is undoubtedly one who more readily reads works of exegesis than theological treatises. Theology, in fact, is a very complex and highly speculative form of discourse, eminently respectable in its place. But it is a mixed or composite form of discourse where philosophical speculation is already inextricably intermingled with what deserves to be called 'biblical thought,' even when it does not assume the specific form of Wisdom, but also that of narrative, law, prophecy, or the hymn. Our working hypothesis here is that there are modes of thought other than those based on Greek, Cartesian, Kantian, Hegelian, etc. philosophy. Is it not the case, for example, with the great religious texts of India or the metaphysical traditions of Buddhism? Hence the initial philosophical wager here is that the literary genres we shall speak of below are forms of discourse that give rise to philosophical thinking.[72]

It is precisely by protecting the integrity of the discourses that genuine dialogue can become possible and that imagination and sympathy can give rise to interpretations that help us think anew. Limit-experiences of this sort can enable particularly interesting discussions between disciplines and discourses. Yet there cannot be one single definition of the divide between the discourses or one monolithic depiction of their relationship. Even this very dialogue between discourses is always marked by concordance and discordance and requires the concrete

engagement with particular hermeneutic circles called for and opened by the concrete occasion of engagement. Hospitality and fidelity to the discourses requires no less.

[1] See Paul Ricœur, *Critique and Conviction: Conversations with François Azouvi and Marc de Launay*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 6; *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 24.

[2] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 24.

[3] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 25.

[4] Indeed, there are several book-length studies that deal explicitly with this issue. It has also been the subject of many conferences and obviously of many individual papers and articles on Ricœur's work.

[5] It is interesting in this regard that Dominique Janicaud in his famous analysis of the "theological turn" strongly condemns Lévinas and makes him largely responsible for the theological turn, while he excepts Ricœur from condemnation entirely and indeed praises his rigorous distinction between the disciplines. Dominique Janicaud et al., *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 34. This translation includes besides Janicaud's "report," the papers from a French conference attempting to respond to Janicaud, including contributions by Paul Ricœur, Jean-Luc Marion, Michel Henry, and Jean-Louis Chrétien. Janicaud followed his earlier castigation of the "theological turn" with a condemnation of the "maximalist" phenomenology practiced by especially Marion and Henry in his *Phenomenology "Wide Open": After the French Debate*, trans. Charles N. Cabral (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005). This identification of Continental philosophy of religion with the "theological turn" is taken up again by a much more recent Fordham collection that grew out of the third independent conference of the Society for Continental Philosophy and Theology (SCPT) and deals with the work of Marion, Henry and Chrétien: *Words of Life: New Theological Turns in French Phenomenology*, ed. Bruce Ellis Benson and Norman Wirzba (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).

[6] To some extent one could say that these thinkers, together with some others such as Jean-Louis Chrétien, Jean-Yves Lacoste, and Emmanuel Falque have developed the subdiscipline of Continental Philosophy of Religion (although that is an English term the French thinkers would not use). The development of this discourse into a discipline is very recent. The society founded to support research in this emerging area is called "Society for Continental Philosophy and Theology" and not "philosophy of religion." One of the earliest articles exploring "Continental Philosophy of Religion" under that title is Merold Westphal's contribution to the *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion*, ed. William J. Wainwright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 472-93.

[7] Peter Kenny, "Conviction, Critique, and Christian Theology," *Memory, Narrativity, Self and the Challenge to Think God: The Reception within Theology of the Recent Work of Paul Ricœur*, ed. Maureen Junker-Kenny and Peter Kenny (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2004), 92-102.

[8] Henry Isaac Venema, "The Source of Ricœur's Double Allegiance" in *A Passion for the Possible: Thinking with Paul Ricœur*, ed. Brian Treanor and Henry Isaac Venema (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 63. Jean Greisch comes to very similar conclusions about the ways in which Ricœur cannot maintain the neat separations in his article "Le même, l'autre, le soi: Paul Ricœur à la recherche d'une herméneutique du soi," *Cahiers Parisien/Parisian Notebooks*, vol. 3, ed. Robert Morrissey (Paris:

Beaudoin, 2007), 26. See also his essay "Toward Which Recognition?" (in *A Passion for the Possible*, 90-111).

[9] *Passion for the Possible*, 65.

[10] Boyd Blundell, *Paul Ricœur between Theology and Philosophy: Detour and Return* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010).

[11] Dan R. Stiver, *Ricœur and Theology* (London: T&T Clark, 2012).

[12] For a fuller summary, see the chapter on Ricœur in my *Postmodern Apologetics? Arguments for God in Contemporary Philosophy* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012).

[13] See, for example, *Critique and Conviction*, 139-170 and *Between Suspicion and Sympathy: Paul Ricœur's Unstable Equilibrium*, ed. Andrzej Wiercinski (Toronto: The Hermeneutic Press, 2003), 670-96.

[14] See his introduction to *Thinking Biblically: Exegetical and Hermeneutical Studies*, André LaCocque and Paul Ricœur, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), ix-xix (where "the philosopher" is clearly distinguished from "the exegete") and many statements in the essays collected in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, trans. David Pellauer, ed. Mark Wallace (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995). I have explored Ricœur's biblical hermeneutics more fully in "Ricœur's Hermeneutic of God: A Symbol that Gives Rise to Thought," *Philosophy and Theology* 13 (2001): 287-309. The suggestion that texts are open to "anyone who can read" appears quite often in Ricœur's texts. For one example, see his *From Text to Action* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 298.

[15] See especially the early essays collected in *Figuring the Sacred*.

[16] Paul Ricœur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 457-506; *The Just*, trans. David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 144.

[17] Paul Ricœur, *The Course of Recognition*, trans. David Pellauer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 220-24.

[18] Jean-Luc Marion, "Metaphysics and Phenomenology: A Relief for Theology," originally in *Critical Inquiry* 20.4 (1994): 572-91, retranslated as chapter 3 in *The Visible and the Revealed* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

[19] Marion, *The Visible and the Revealed*, 64. The most famous statement of this is in note 90 of his *Being Given: Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 367.

[20] Marion, "'Christian Philosophy': Hermeneutic or Heuristic?" originally in *The Question of Christian Philosophy Today*, ed. Francis J. Ambrosio (New York: Fordham University Press, 1999), retranslated as chapter 4 of *The Visible and the Revealed*.

[21] Marion, *Visible and Revealed*, 74.

[22] Marion, *Visible and Revealed*, 152-53.

[23] Marion, *Visible and Revealed*, 154.

[24] Jean-Luc Marion, *On Descartes' Metaphysical Prism: The Constitution and Limits of Onto-Theo-Logy in Cartesian Thought*, trans. Jeffrey L. Kosky (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), Part V, especially 306-21.

[25] See Marion, *Being Given*, 234-45.

[26] Marion makes similar claims for the "phenomenon of abandon" (i.e. the sacrament). It is the most excessive type of phenomenon, the most radical instance of the gift and thus can serve as a paradigm for all other saturated phenomena.

[27] See his essay "The Banality of Saturation" in *The Visible and the Revealed*.

[28] Marion, *Being Given*, 282-87; 238-41.

[29] Marion, *In Excess*, 128-62.

[30] See chapter 4 of *Certitudes négatives* (Paris: Grasset, 2010). An earlier English translation by Stephen Lewis appeared as "Sketch of a Phenomenological Concept of Sacrifice," in his edited collection *The Reason of the Gift* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011). The earlier essay ends with the analysis of the sacrifice of Isaac and does not go on to treat forgiveness as a second "variation of the gift" as *Certitudes* does.

[31] The section is even entitled "The Confirmation of Abraham" and Marion asks, "Can we confirm this determination of the sacrifice by a significant example?" to which he answers: "Of course" and proceeds to discuss the story of Abraham and Isaac (*Certitudes*, 205).

[32] He says that this "canonical parable" "describes" the circle of forgiveness (*Certitudes*, 232) and employs the terminology of "confirm" and "attest" repeatedly in the analysis of the parable (Ibid., 232-41).

[33] Jean-Luc Marion, *God without Being*, trans. Thomas A. Carlson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[34] Jean-Luc Marion, "The Impossible for Man—God," in *Transcendence and Beyond*, ed. John D. Caputo and Michael Scanlon (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2007). This chapter is reworked as chapter 2 of *Certitudes négatives*.

[35] Jean-Luc Marion, "The Question of the Unconditioned," delivered as the Greely Inaugural Lecture at the University of Chicago in Nov. 2011, to be published in *Journal of Religion* (2012): forthcoming.

[36] See, for example, the final section of his essay "La reconnaissance du don" in *Le croire pour le voir* (Paris: Parole et Silence, 2010), 191-93.

[37] It is true that in light of repeated criticism on this point, Marion has recently tried to acknowledge the importance of hermeneutics more fully and to integrate it in some fashion into his overall proposal. It

still has a fairly limited role, however, usually relegated to an "endless interpretation" necessary (or at least possible) because of the excessive nature of the phenomenon. That is, because the phenomenon is so overwhelming and complex that it cannot ever be understood, an endless number of interpretations is possible. See his few comments on the role of endless hermeneutics in chapters 2 and 5 of *In Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena*, trans. Robyn Horner and Vincent Berraud (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 33, 36, 123-27.

[38] Michel Henry, *I am the Truth: Toward a Philosophy of Christianity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 1.

[39] This argument is made in much of Henry's work, not only in the late writings on Christianity. See especially *Barbarism*, trans. Scott Davidson (London: Continuum, 2012). See also his succinct statement of this at the end of *I am the Truth*, 265-75.

[40] Michel Henry, *Words of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2012).

[41] Henry, *Words of Christ*, 50.

[42] Henry, *Words of Christ*, 69.

[43] Henry, *Words of Christ*, 101-24.

[44] E.g., Henry, *Words of Christ*, 6.

[45] Henry, *Words of Christ*, 107.

[46] Henry, *Words of Christ*, 115.

[47] Henry, *Words of Christ*, 116.

[48] Henry, *Words of Christ*, 118.

[49] This "violence" of Henry's method is criticized also by François-David Sebbah, *Testing the Limit: Derrida, Henry, Levinas, and the Phenomenological Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), although he only considers Henry's early work and does not comment on *Incarnation* or *Words of Christ*.

[50] Thomas Carlson pointed this out early on in his translator's introduction to Marion's *The Idol and Distance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), xi-xxxi.

[51] Antonio Calcago criticizes the ways in which this is the case in Henry's work in his essay "The Incarnation, Michel Henry, and the Possibility of an Husserlian-Inspired Transcendental Life," *Heythrop Journal* 45.3 (2004): 290-304.

[52] Marion, *Certitudes*, 310-15.

[53] I critique Henry's dismissal of hermeneutics in my "Can We Hear the Voice of God? Michel Henry and the Words of Christ," contribution to *Words of Life*.

[54] Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 37; emphasis his.

[55] Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 38.

[56] Marion usually is aware of this history and at times interacts with it in detail, although he often feels free to reject it or read it in light of his own conclusion (his reading of Aquinas in *God without Being*, the later article "Aquinas and Onto-theo-logy," and his book on Augustine's *Confessions*, *In the Self's Place*, are a good example of this). Henry, conversely, seems either ignorant of the religious tradition (with the exception of Meister Eckhart) or considers it unnecessary to engage it in any fashion that would be visible in his treatment. *I am the Truth* and *Words of Christ* quote almost exclusively from the Gospels without any consideration of biblical criticism or other interpretations. *Incarnation* does engage some Patristic thinkers but reads them also with minimal secondary sources. Ricœur's texts, in contrast, are positively overwhelmed with references to other sources on the texts he examines. This seems an important difference in style that has as a result a difference in content.

[57] Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, 24.

[58] E.g., Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 217-35.

[59] For example, Ricœur explicitly criticizes Marion's dismissal of ontological interpretations of Ex. 3:14 in several places and instead maintains the "ontological" interpretation of that text as one possibility among others. See, for example, *Thinking Biblically*, 331-61.

[60] See several of the essays in *From Text to Action*.

[61] Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 270.

[62] Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 297.

[63] Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 308-24.

[64] Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 100.

[65] Yvanka B. Raynova, "All that Gives Us to Think: Conversations with Paul Ricœur," in Andrzej Wiercinski, *Between Suspicion and Sympathy: Paul Ricœur's Unstable Equilibrium* (Toronto: Hermeneutic Press, 2003), 686, 688.

[66] This is particularly evident in his writing on narrative identity. See, for example, the essay "Life in Quest of of Narrative," in *On Paul Ricœur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (London: Routledge, 1992).

[67] This is laid out the most fully in his three-volume work on *Time and Narrative* and especially the three-fold path of mimesis: prefiguration, configuration, refiguration.

[68] Ricœur, *From Text to Action*, 88.

[69] The second part of *From Text to Action* particularly seeks to establish this parallel between hermeneutics of texts and of action by showing the continual interplay between explanation and understanding, distanciation and belonging, theory and practice, "reality" and imagination, ideology and utopia, and so forth.

[70] For example, several essays in *Figuring the Sacred* seek to show that a division between "faith" and "reason" is simplistic, but that the biblical discourse has its own rationality, while scientific discourse similarly relies on faith and operates with certain presuppositions. See, for example, "Philosophy and Religious Language," in Ricœur, *Figuring the Sacred*, 35-47.

[71] His engagement with analytical philosophy in several places, especially in the early chapters of *Oneself as Another*, are a prominent example of this practice.

[72] Ricœur, *Thinking Biblically*, xvi.