

TIME, NARRATIVE AND LIBERATION DISCOURSE

*A Brief Review and Assessment of Aspects of the Recent
Hermeneutical Writings of Paul Ricoeur.*

by

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A
thesis submitted
to the Department of Religious Studies,
University of Cape Town, South Africa,
in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts

January 1991

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Acknowledgements

The bulk of this paper was written while I lived for a fifteen month period in Cape Town, South Africa. I wish to acknowledge the tremendous amount I received from the Faculty and fellow students through studying in the Religious Studies Department at UCT. While I did not always understand, nor have the necessary patience, I am grateful for the support and encouragement, the friendship and challenge that I experienced during this time.

Introduction

0.1 Rationale

The Bible remains one of the central symbols of the Christian tradition. The South African "event" has shown again, however, that the Bible is able to be co-opted in the ideological struggle. The Bible has been used to justify Apartheid¹, while liberation in such a religious country has also sought and achieved biblical legitimation. However, questions remain as to exactly the kind of liberation found in the Bible.² The questions raised by this situation include at least, firstly, the issue of the possibility (held by approaches from historical criticism to structuralism) of the Bible having its own autonomous message, and secondly, the question of the way in which the Bible is read. The former issue, which includes literary theory, is perhaps a perennial debate and once a certain position has been reached on that issue there is a limited amount achieved by pursuing that line. The latter aspect, which takes seriously the factor of context, possibly, however, allows a far more dynamic input to the whole discussion. Reflection on, and restatement of these basic hermeneutic issues will hopefully clarify aspects of the tasks, tools and weaknesses of the Church's resources in its witness in the world.

0.2 Aims and Means of this Paper

The aim of this paper is, firstly, to consider a contemporary literary methodology, that of Paul Ricoeur, and secondly, to critique that methodology from the perspective of a sharply contextual approach, in association with a materialist theory of literature, such as that emerging from the South African context. Ricoeur's position is useful as a starting point because of the eclectic make up of his theory. His work includes aspects of the historical critical approach, psychoanalytic theory, structuralism, philosophy and a

¹ See the review of this case in J. W. de Gruchy & C. Villa-Vincencio (1983) particularly "The Bible and Apartheid 1," by Willem Vorster pp. 94-111, and "The Bible and Apartheid 2," by Douglas Bax, pp. 112-143. See also Smit 1990:29-43.

² See, for example, Mosala 1989.

response to materialist thinking. We are, however, choosing to restrict ourselves to the more recent work of Ricoeur corresponding broadly to the period 1975-1990. In this period Ricoeur's concentration shifts from the hermeneutics of symbol to the hermeneutics of language.³

Ricoeur's first major work was in three parts and entitled *Philosophy of the Will*. It comprised in the first part the work *Freedom and Nature* (1966), then *Fallible Man* (1986) and *Symbolism of Evil* (1969) forming the second part, and finally the volume *Freud and Philosophy* (1970) (although this was not a completion of the original view of the project). Originally published in 1950, *Freedom and Nature* utilises the phenomenology of Gabriel Marcel to oppose the dichotomising treatment of subject and object in materialism and existentialism. It is suggested that

we transform the contents of experience from a physical world of objects onto a world of *phenomena*, that is, objects as meanings presenting themselves to a consciousness... this radically human world ... becomes the proper subject for philosophy as a phenomeno-logy (1966:xiv Translator's Introduction).

Of special interest at this point as well as in *Fallible Man* (published jointly with *Symbolism of Evil* in 1960) is an description of human fault. Ricoeur is at pains to correctly discern aspects of this element of human existence, and particularly the articulation of human possibilities in the context of this fault. His means of examining the subject, however, is tied to symbol: "the passage from innocence to fault is not accessible to any description ... but needs to pass through a *concrete mythics*" (1986:xlⁱⁱ). *Symbolism of Evil* outlined a number of ancient traditions in the expression of sin concentrating on symbol and myth. At issue for Ricoeur is the question "How shall we make the transition from the possibility of evil in man to its

³ In this work we will not treat the vast and varied secondary literature on Ricoeur's contribution. This would both be beyond our already over extended area of competence, but also detract from the fact that our concern in the contribution of Ricoeur to question of liberation discourse in South Africa, not a consideration of Ricoeur *per se*. It should be noted that where the author of an article or book is not named it is a work of Ricoeur's.

reality, from fallibility to fault?" (1969:3). The means is one of re-examining traditional symbols: "We will try to surprise the transition in the act by 're-enacting' in ourselves the confession that the religious consciousness makes of it" (1969:3). The final chapter of *Symbolism of Evil* comprised the seminal thought "the symbol gives rise to thought" which combined a methodology of reading the past in the interest of the present. *Freud and Philosophy* (originally published in 1965) continued the concern for symbol this time in the realm of modern philosophy. Ricoeur holds that "Psychoanalysis conflicts with every other global interpretation of the phenomenon of man because it is an interpretation of culture" (1970:xii). Ricoeur proposes that the issue remaining after *Symbolism of Evil* is the relationship between a hermeneutics of symbol and concrete reflection, an issue to which the questions raised by a philosophical interpretation of psychoanalysis may address itself. Interestingly, the movement towards an examination of language is already evident as Ricoeur seems to sense a limitation in his work to this point: "Today we are in search of a comprehensive philosophy of language to account for the multiple functions of the human act of signifying and for their interrelationships" (1970:3).⁴

There exists a continuity between the above works and those considered in this paper, particularly in terms of the theory of symbol. The link between symbol and metaphor is the means by which Ricoeur claims to be able to speak about life through literary theory. This process will be discussed below and forms the basis of the use of narrative to inform action. The difficulties of time in the sense of action are paralleled by Aristotelian treatment of

⁴ The collection of essays *The Conflict of Interpretation* (1970) contains aspects of Ricoeur's thought from the above writings. There are two further works from our period of interest that we will not treat at length, they being the edition of *Semeia* by Ricoeur (1975) and the *Essays on Biblical Interpretation* (1980) edited by Mudge. While both works transverse the movement in Ricoeur from a theory of symbol to a theory of language, neither extend to critical hermeneutics and therefore will not add anything to our knowledge of Ricoeur's methodology and commitment before *Time and Narrative*.

language, which proposes the centrality of plot to comprehension. The developed theory of narrative is then applied to tradition in order to produce narrated time, that is, an assessment of action through the examination of writing which, in the case of Ricoeur's theory, allows the reader to read in favour of the health of the individual and the liberation of an oppressed people.⁵

Ricoeur's eclecticism makes him a suitable resource for the multi-disciplinary style of Biblical and Christian studies in South Africa. Of further relevance, however, is Ricoeur's dialogue with romanticist hermeneutics which remain dominant in the context of Biblical Studies, often at the expense of contemporary questions of the Christian contribution to the struggle for a humane world. Ricoeur's treatment of romanticism, which will be treated at length in this paper, centres on the objection to the assumption of the theoretical possibility of absolute truth in interpretation. This takes a number of forms in biblical studies including aspects of philological criticism, the concept of authorial intention, or the examination of the original audience and their literary, political and cultural contexts. Even the more recent developments in allegedly text and reader based methods still posit universal meaning, in fact, further alienating mass and lay based

⁵ In a sense we are rushing in where angels fear to tread in current South African dialogue. The issue of the 'imagination' (which arises in Ricoeur's initial treatment of narrative) in the context of culture and the relation of culture to history and struggle has recently burst into flame after smouldering for some time. While the debate has relevance for the reception of Ricoeur's work, we are restricting ourselves to the context of the church generally and the debate surrounding the appropriation of the Bible particularly. This context, of course, firstly includes cultural activities such as reading, writing, discussion, music, celebration, and secondly, has had undeniable implications for the struggle for justice. Our competence is stretched far enough, however, in dealing with aspects of the reading of the Bible. See further on the broader debate: Njabulo Ndebele, "Redefining Relevance," *Pretexts* (1989) 1:40-51., and essays printed in *Spring is Rebellious: Arguments about Cultural Freedom by Albie Sachs and Respondents*. (Ingrid de Kok & Karen Press, Eds., Cape Town: Buchu Books 1990), especially Tony Morphet, "Cultural Imagination and Cultural Settlement: Albie Sachs and Njabulo Ndebele," pp. 131-144.

reading though technical complexity. Ricoeur does not reject these methods out of hand in revaluing the subjective aspect of the creation of meaning, but rather subsumes them in a concern for appropriate action in the context of contemporary struggles. A responsibility, in interpretation, for the quest for peace with justice in the world of the interpreter and the world of those the interpreter serves is Ricoeur's aim, and to that end he undermines the claim to authority from the elite and privileged. Biblical studies, therefore, under the influence of Ricoeur's writings since the mid-1970's, becomes as much an examination of the meaning of the Bible in contemporary discourse as a consideration of the Bible as an ancient document.

Thus, in the first chapter of this work we examine several of Ricoeur's works of the second half of the 1970's. In this period Ricoeur develops his concern not only for a theory of language but also compiles a treatment of ideology, facilitating the inclusion of ideology critique in subsequent discussions of his writings. This chapter will set the scene for a presentation of *Time and Narrative* in the second chapter. While the treatment will consist mainly of summary form, attempts will be made to link the progress of Ricoeur's path to his other work and the hermeneutical challenges along the way. The final chapter will, in the first part, involve an attempt to assess Ricoeur's theory in terms of two theorists: the first, Terry Eagleton, with influence in South Africa; and the second, Eve Bertelsen, actually a citizen in that country. In the second part of this chapter, we will use Ricoeur as focussed by another South African scholar, Neville Alexander, to comment on the discussion of the use of the Bible in the *Kairos Document*.

Chapter One - The Background to Time and Narrative

1.0 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to set the background for a consideration of Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* project. To achieve this aim three major works conceived and presented in the mid-seventies will be outlined, these being *Interpretation Theory* (1976), *Rule of Metaphor* (1977), and *Ideology and Utopia* (1986). Our thesis at this point is that, not only is a consideration of these works necessary for the reading of *Time and Narrative*, but also that a neglect of the corpus constitutes a misreading of Ricoeur's broad intention and approach.

1.1 Interpretation Theory

Interpretation Theory (hereafter *IT*) is one of Ricoeur's more popular works. Presented initially as lectures at Texas Christian University in 1973, the four brief chapters cover central themes of Ricoeur's project with particular reference to his reorientation from an interest in symbols to a broader interest in language.¹ We shall consider Ricoeur's major areas of concern in the work in the following order: Language as Discourse, Speaking and Writing, Metaphor and Symbol, and Explanation and Understanding.

¹ As mentioned in the introduction, we are concerned in this essay only with aspects of the latter part of Ricoeur's work. In *IT* Ricoeur explains the shift from a concentration on the interpretation of symbol to a consideration of language (1976:78). See also "From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" reprinted (from *Criterion* 10,3 Spring 1971) in *RM* (1977:315-322) for an articulation of this modification of Ricoeur's approach. While the shift is not our major concern we may suggest that it signals a change from the assessment of reactive expression to a study of the mechanisms of proactive expression. Narrative, as we will see, is a means not only of expression of the past but also of possibilities for the future. See "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:1010-128) for indications of continuity in Ricoeur's thought even in the context of above modification.

1.1.1 Language as Discourse

Ricoeur has situated himself in the post-Saussurean debate by the treatment of language as discourse.² The consideration of discourse signals the turn towards constructions of language, and the entity of 'Narrative'. Ricoeur stands in the Platonic tradition in suggesting that individual words are not the bearers of truth or value: rather "error and truth are 'affections' of discourse" (1976:1). Discourse, then is defined as requiring "two basic signs - a noun and a verb - which are connected in a synthesis which goes beyond the words" (1976:1). In Aristotelian terms, the key idea is predication. The more modern articulation of the definition comes from the Saussurean distinction between *langue* and *parole*. *Langue* has been used to designate the object of linguistic sciences, that is the synchronic set of codes that make up a language, while *parole* is the expression or actualisation, of those codes in speaking, or writing, in other words the entry of the codes into history. The extension of Saussure's linguistic science into hermeneutics resulted in the 'structural model', comprising a synchronic approach, a finite set of components (drawn from the phonological system), the assumption of the immanency of all relations to the system, and the primacy of difference as the means of distinguishing components from each other and establishing their relationship to each other. Such a hermeneutical model placed minimal value on the concept of discourse.

Ricoeur proposes an alternative made up of a concern for semantics as well as semeiotics, and which places much more emphasis on discourse and its basic unit the sentence. The two sciences (semeiotics and semantics) are however separated:

² See Ferdinand de Saussure *Cours de linguistique générale*. (Paris: Payot 1971, and English translation by Wade Baskin, *Course in General Linguistics*. (New York: McGraw-Hill 1966).

A sentence is ... made up of words, but it is not a derivative function of its words. A sentence is made up of signs, but is not itself a sign (1976:7).

On the other hand, however, the link is such that the same elements are involved: one process is an "integration into larger wholes" and the other a "dissociation into constitutive parts" (1976:7) The distinction between semantics and semeiotics is the "key to the whole problem of language" (1976:8) and the basis of Ricoeur's work in *IT*.

Ricoeur then sets out in quest of adequate criteria for the distinction between semantics and semeiotics. The explicit statement of aim indicates the existence of a problem that perhaps was not obvious from the definitions offered earlier by Ricoeur. At this point we may note the character of the distinction being one of poles in an ellipse rather than autonomous entities. The main heading under which Ricoeur operates is the dialectic of event and meaning.

Discourse is the event of the language system, the actualisation of the codes available. The system itself has no existence apart from its use. Paradoxically, however, the system remains and the individual event vanishes apart from its propositional content which must be somehow recorded or recordable. In this admission we have already begun to consider the pole of meaning. Although not explicitly outlined at this point, Ricoeur is on the brink of the basic challenge to structuralism from critical hermeneutics in the sense that he holds the world of the reader as constitutive for meaning. The chronicled event is not autonomous or authoritative in itself but rather, as Ricoeur will show, in its place in the world or realm of the reader. By way of anticipation, we may say that Ricoeur is paving the way for an explicit treatment of ideology in hermeneutics.

Discourse is also predication. The linking of the identified individual subject and the universal predicate produces the proposition. A synthetic structure is created (as opposed to the analytic structure of structuralism).

This is the meaning pole of discourse, whereby the actualisation of the language system links into the history and future of the world of the system. In this form the event gains a certain existence and has a message.

The dialectical relationship between event and meaning is thus presented: the event is the key movement from language as atemporal system to discourse within time. The temporality of this event is only saved from a psychological or existential relativism by the pole of meaning: "*If all discourse is actualized as an event, all discourse is understood as meaning*" (1976:12). Event has no meaning purely in its actualisation, but requires a relationship to a world. Meaning is the "suppressing and surpassing of the event" (1976:12).

Meaning contains two components: the meaning the speaker intends, and the meaning of the spoken sentences themselves. The former corresponds to the event character of discourse, the latter to the meaning character. The relationship between the utterer's meaning and the utterance meaning is achieved by "grammatical procedures" (1976:13), such as the use of the first person pronoun, or the use of a narrative voice. This is for Ricoeur "the self-reference of discourse to itself as an event" (1976:13). Such a perspective has implications for communication theory as it is this distance yet linking between text and author that makes communication possible. Direct empathy is not possible, one can never pass on one's direct experience (the event). Yet the text is a public facility and many are able to link to it in and through its actual distance, that is, because of its meaning:

language is itself the process by which private experience is made public. Language is the exteriorization thanks to which an impression is transcended and becomes an ex-pression, or, in other words, the transformation of the psychic into the noetic. Exteriorization and communicability are one and the same thing for they are nothing other than elevation of a part of our life into the *logos* of discourse. There the solitude of life is for a

moment, anyway, illuminated by the common light of discourse. (1976:19).³

Such a theory has an obvious effect for example in the field of history. What actually occurred, the event, is unobtainable, both because its source is discourse, report, narrative, and also because the act of doing history is an exercise in meaning, interpretation into a world. Ricoeur treats this question at more length in *Time and Narrative*.

Ricoeur further deconstructs the utterance meaning by the use of the concepts of sense and reference.⁴ Sense is the 'what' of the discourse, or what is actually said. Reference is the 'about what' of the discourse, or the world in which the text can be meaningfully situated. Ricoeur suggests that "With the sentence ... language is directed beyond itself" (1976:20). This is reference and the terrain on which the text's truth claim is to be tested. The parallel to the dialectic of event and meaning is clear, as is the rootedness of the distinction in the relationship between semeiotics and semantics. Sense can be an internal or isolated system differentiated only by difference. Reference makes its way in the marketplace of meanings. For Ricoeur, "Discourse in action and in use refers backwards and forwards, to a speaker and a world" (1976:22).

Ricoeur then pauses to consider the hermeneutical implications of his developments of Saussure's division between *langue* and *parole*. Ricoeur's main dialogue partner at this point is Romanticist hermeneutics. Ricoeur rejects the possibility of recovering and 'understanding' the author's intention, either through psychological or existential hermeneutics. This includes both the 'word event' hermeneutics which emphasise the centrality of the kerygma,

³ See also Ricoeur's essay "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:131-144).

⁴ This terminology is taken by Ricoeur from Gottlob Frege, "On Sense and Reference," (Trans. Max Black from "Über Sinn und Bedeutung,") in *Translations from the Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege*. Peter Geach & Max Black (Eds.) Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1970., pp. 56-78.

as well as the claim to understand authors better than they understood themselves. But Ricoeur does not intend to simply side with the opposing structuralist camp as his theory of meaning requires a concept of world which will entail ideology critique. He seeks rather to re-define the hermeneutical question in a way that the concept of discourse is taken seriously as a dialectical entity and a contribution is attempted towards resolving the conflict in a productive way. The ground covered thus far is the foundation of the subsequent examinations of speaking and writing, symbol and metaphor, and finally an explicit discussion of explanation and understanding.

1.1.2 Speaking and Writing

Building on the theory of discourse developed above, Ricoeur attempts two advances at this point, firstly, an articulation of the transition from speaking to writing, and secondly, the development of the concept of distanciation, a parallel thought to the exteriorisation examined above. Ricoeur's concern is particularly text oriented, and thus the theory of discourse, the dialectic of event and meaning, and sense and reference are fully transferred from the actualisation of language codes in speaking, to the realm of writing.

Key to the examination of speech and writing is the detachment of meaning from event that takes place in writing. However, "the semantic autonomy of the text which now appears is still governed by the dialectic of event and meaning" (1976:25). Ricoeur attempts to demonstrate his position by way of Jakobson's schema of communication.⁵ The major change in the transition between speaking and writing is that of medium. The change has important consequences. In writing there is the replacement of the human fact

⁵ See Roman Jakobson, "Linguistics and Poetics," in *Style in Language*. T. A. Sebeok (Ed.), Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press 1960., pp. 350-377. Jakobson's main factors of communication are the speaker, hearer, medium or channel, code, situation, and message. To this is paralleled six functions consisting of the emotive, conative, phatic, metalinguistic, referential, and the poetic.

by material marks. However, Ricoeur suggests that *langue* is not preserved, rather discourse. Further, it is not the event of discourse that is retained, but rather the meaning of discourse.⁶ Following the change of medium is an alteration in the relationship between the message and speaker, as well as message to hearer. Previously (in speaking), the speaker and hearer faced each other, while now the relationship is distant. Ricoeur holds that the link between the speaker and that spoken, achieved through shifters such as the first person pronoun, is stronger because of the immediacy of the link. He claims that in writing, however, "the author's intention and the meaning of the text cease to coincide" (1976:29). In other words, there is a "disconnection of the mental intention of the author from the verbal meaning of the text" (1976:29-30). This has obvious implications for romanticist hermeneutics but Ricoeur wants to retain a dialectical relationship between event and meaning in the text. Thus, he not only rejects the intentional fallacy, the linking of meaning to the initial intention, but also the fallacy of the absolute text, as if the text never had an author. Ricoeur proposes an authorial presence in all texts (no longer a speaker) but only to the extent, paradoxically, that he or she is "not available for questioning" (1976:30).

At the other end of the communication chain is the relationship between the textual message and the hearer. Firstly, a text has a potentially universal audience. This potential is subject to social processes which limit the actual numbers of readers but the work itself also creates a certain reading interest. This, for Ricoeur, is the dialectic of meaning and event again. The text as meaning is open to all, but this is a separate entity to

⁶ It is at this point that the notion of the 'speech-act' reveals its weakness. In writing the multilevel composition of the speech act is severely impaired. Only the locutionary act (what is said) is directly compatible with inscription, the illocutionary act (what is done in saying) being difficult to inscribe, and the perlocutionary act (what is achieved by saying) impossible to depict.

the actual reading event. Further, the openness of the text to the world is also the possibility for multiple readings or interpretations.

Another dynamic emergent in the application of Jakobson's model to transition from speaking to writing is that of message and code. By code Ricoeur is referring here to literary genres. The inscription of text actually takes place through the choice of genre and the production of text in a certain form: "writing and the production of works of discourse according to the rules of literary composition tend to coincide without being identical processes" (1976:34).

The most complex change that takes place is that of the relationship between message and reference. On the one hand there is the introduction of the dialectic of sense and reference, and on the other the complicating factor of various literary modes of expression, for example, poetry. In spoken discourse, reference usually includes the possibility of non-verbally undergirding the message, through, for example, showing the hearer an object by pointing. In written discourse this is impossible:

the absence of the common situation generated by the spatial and temporal distance between writer and reader; the cancellation of the absolute here and now by the substitution of material external marks for the voice, face, and body of the speaker as the absolute origin of all the places in space and time; and the semantic autonomy of the text, which severs it from the present of the writer and opens it to an indefinite range of potential readers in an indeterminate time - all these alterations of the temporal constitution of discourse are reflected in parallel alterations of the ostensive character of the reference (1976:35).

Ricoeur speaks of the implications of an "extension of the scope of reference beyond the ... dialogical situation" (1976:36). Firstly, the situation is replaced by a world, that is, "the ensemble of references opened up by the texts" (1976:36). Secondly, there is the development of a reference that appears to refer only to itself, for example, in poetry: "The gap between situational and non-situational reference, implied in the 'as if' reference of descriptive accounts, is now unbridgeable" (1976:36). Ricoeur actually holds

that poetic texts still refer to the world, but that the reference is 'split':

The effacement of the ostensive and descriptive reference liberates a power of reference to aspects of our being in the world that cannot be said in a direct descriptive way, but only alluded to, thanks to the referential values of metaphorical and, in general, symbolic expressions (1976:37).

This the key point to which Ricoeur will return in his discussion of symbol and metaphor. It should be noted however, that the two forms of reference lie on a continuum rather than on different levels.

Ricoeur, thus, reaches the point where he suggests "to understand a text is to interpolate among the predicates of our situation all the significations that make a *Welt* out of our *Umwelt*" (1976:37). Again in contradiction to romanticist hermeneutics, Ricoeur follows Heidegger's suggestion that what is understood first in a discourse is a projection, not a person. The text, freed from author and original audience, "reveals the destination of discourse as projecting a world" (1976:37).

Ricoeur's concern then at this point is that he has created an alienating view of text, that is, highlighting the distance between the text and the reader. His response is however, to treat that as a positive achievement (in parallel to his previous comments on distance and communication) and to treat it as a necessary or a facilitating part of the hermeneutical process. There is a long tradition of criticism of writing, based exactly on this distance, to which Ricoeur wishes to reply. His major tool is the theory of the icon. Ricoeur suggests a view of icon that attempts the "reconstruct[-ion] of reality on the basis of a limited optic alphabet" (1976:40). The reality produced in painting, for example, is "more real than ordinary reality" (1976:42). This production is considered in terms of writing, in a similar positive vein. The achievement is an analytical one whereby communication of portrayals of reality is achieved via finite means but also means which are conventionally adopted.

The dialectic that emerges is that of distanciation and appropriation, moments which are separate but dependant on each other. In writing a distance is achieved between speaking event and meaning. In reading the meaning is subjected to an event of interpretation, which Ricoeur entitles appropriation, as it is the act of making one's own something foreign:

Reading is the *pharmakon*, the 'remedy,' by which the meaning of the text is 'rescued' from the estrangement of distanciation and put in a new proximity, a proximity which suppresses and preserves the cultural distance and includes the otherness within the ownness (1976:43).

In the face of romanticist notions of commonality, that is, the link between the writer and reader, Ricoeur suggests "the dialectic of distanciation and appropriation is the last word in the absence of absolute knowledge" 77(1976:44). Here we see an articulation of Ricoeur's concern for the active and productive function of hermeneutics. The interpretation is not the reconstructing the past for its own sake, but rather an exercise in the hope for resolution and progress in the person and in the world.⁷

1.1.3 Metaphor and Symbol

In concentrating on discourse, Ricoeur has not abandoned the areas of symbol and metaphor. Ricoeur considers symbol and metaphor at this point for two reasons, both aimed at extending the field of interpretation theory. Firstly, Ricoeur addresses the question of how signification in literary works is to be understood, but secondly, he presents the suggestion that verbal signification is not the total expression of meaning. In the case of the former reason, Ricoeur wants to address the realm of non-literal meaning and the distinction often drawn between literary and scientific works. In the latter case, Ricoeur suggests a "surplus of meaning which goes beyond the linguistic sign" (1976:45). Ricoeur now considers it essential to examine the

⁷ See also Ricoeur's essays "Appropriation" in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:182-193) and "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theological Hermeneutics," (1976:14-33).

question of language in preparation for the examination of symbol: "Within the symbol, it now appears to me, there is something non-semantic as well as something semantic" (1976:45). There is, thus, a double meaning involved in the theory of symbol, which is accessed by the theory of metaphor. Much of Ricoeur's work at this point summarises the results of *Rule of Metaphor*.

The double or split reference of discourse, mentioned in the previous section, is exemplified in the existence of literal and figurative meaning in the metaphor. The question is the relationship between these two meanings. Ricoeur's treatment of metaphor begins with the fundamental re-orientation of the rhetorical tradition of metaphor, from the concentration on the word, to a concentration on the sentence. The rhetorical tradition, that is, a consideration of metaphor as a trope, is a discussion within the context of Saussure's *langue*. The metaphor is merely the substitution of one word for another with no new meaning being furnished by such an action. From Richards,⁸ Ricoeur has taken over the suggestion that "Metaphor has to do with semantics of the sentence before it concerns the semantics of the word" (1976:49). Meaning is thus generated by the 'impertinence' or 'calculated error' of the linking of the two elements, which engenders the conflict of interpretation, one from each perspective. Further, this meaning "tells us something new about reality" (1976:53).

Ricoeur attempts to progress from this reworking of the theory of metaphor to symbol. Firstly, he articulates the semantic moment of the symbol. Taking the combinatory aspect of metaphor as a guide, the symbol can be seen to have a literal and a figurative meaning. The figurative, Ricoeur terms the "surplus of signification" (1976:55), but he is reluctant to oppose the two meanings:

⁸ Ricoeur is referring to I. A. Richards' work *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Oxford; Oxford University Press 1936, 1971.

for the one who participates in the symbolic signification there are really not two significations, one literal and the other symbolic, but rather a single movement, which transfers him [sic] to the second signification by means of, or through, the literal one (1976:55).

A dialectic rather than an opposition then exists between concept and symbol. The two levels (as in metaphor) are created by the interaction of semantic fields or concepts, however the exegesis of the symbol can never be reduced to these component parts: "no given categorization can embrace all the semantic possibilities of a symbol" (1976:57). There is an aspect of symbol, secondly, that "resists any linguistic, semantic, or logical transcription" (1976:57). For Ricoeur "This opacity of a symbol is related to the rootedness of symbols in areas of our experience that are open to different methods of investigation" (1976:57). The investigation of dreams by psychoanalysis would be an example. The distinction at this point between metaphor and symbol is that the former occurs almost exclusively in the context of *logos*, while the latter is part of both *logos* and *bios*. Significantly, Ricoeur claims this

testifies to the primordial rootedness of Discourse in Life. It is born where force and form coincide (1976:59).

This insight is a key step towards the central proposal in *Time and Narrative* whereby narrative is a tool for the analysis and assessment of past and anticipated action. The relationship between symbol and life expresses the boundness of symbol, over against the semantic freedom of metaphor. Ricoeur suggests an irreducible element in symbol which requires hermeneutics in order to be understood, but on the other hand, holds that "the resistance of symbol to language means that language only captures the foam on the surface of life" (1976:63).

Ricoeur's interest is now the intermediate steps between symbol and metaphor, illuminated by feedback from symbol to metaphor, suggesting the concept of "root metaphors" which are "capable of both engendering and organizing a network that serves as a junction between the symbolic level with

its slow evolution and more volatile metaphorical level" (1976:64). Such a link serves to connect politics, in the sense of life processes, and discourse, that is, narrative processes. The role and legitimacy of ideology critique is already apparent. Metaphors constitute a hierarchy of discourses via their participation in various levels of organisation. Those metaphors extant and active in all of discourse parallel the role and position of archetypes and symbolic paradigms. Assuming, then, that the symbolic universe expresses the basic realities of human experience, Ricoeur suggests that this world is brought to a linguistic and literary level by means of the above relationships between metaphors and symbols. Another link between metaphor and symbol is seen in the application of a theory of model to metaphor, in order to emphasise the integrative or centripetal action of metaphor. In the combination of semantic fields we have noted the creation of something new, a centrifugal action. The essence of a model (applicable to both science and a poem) is for Ricoeur the assimilation and integration of data in a certain schema. This is an obvious action of symbols and is also a possible function for metaphor. This function will be taken up as a key starting point by Ricoeur in his *Time and Narrative* work whereby 'emplotment', or the use of plots in narrative presents an integrated interpretation of material.⁹

Thus, while metaphor is the means by which symbol is brought to the level of language, it is symbol and not metaphor that is rooted in human existence. Narrative, then, is the means by which we access much of the symbolic worlds of the past and present. The means is however limited in its ability to communicate life, and always reaches a conclusion in the reading's effect on life. The denial of this process, (typical of much romantic and

⁹ See further on Ricoeur's developing metaphorical theory "Metaphor and the central problem of hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:165-181), also "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," 1978-79:143-159, and "Erzählung, Metapher und Interpretationstheorie," 1987:232-253.

idealist hermeneutic) does not defeat the mechanism but only attempts to disguise it.

1.1.4 Explanation and Understanding

Ricoeur now comments on the implications for hermeneutics of the foregoing thoughts. His main target is romanticist hermeneutics exemplified by Schleiermacher and Dilthey.¹⁰ Ricoeur characterises that tradition as paying primary attention to intention of the original speaker or writer in the quest for understanding, and speaking of explanation in the sense of the empirical data and discourse of the natural sciences.

The dialect of event and meaning is also a dialectic in reading, that of understanding and explanation. In romanticist hermeneutics understanding and explanation were completely separated, categorised in different realms of science (*Wissenschaften*), the former part of the human sciences, and the latter part of the natural sciences. Ricoeur, however, holds interpretation to be a particular form of understanding, concerned specifically with text, but also the "whole process that encompasses explanation and understanding" (1976:74).¹¹ That process Ricoeur outlines as, firstly, "guess" or a "naive grasping at the meaning of the text as a whole" (1976:74), equivalent to distanciation, and secondly, "validation", equivalent to appropriation. Explanation mediates between these two stages of understanding.

The primary attempt at understanding takes the form of a guess because of the mute character of the autonomous text. Ricoeur suggests that this is the point of greatest opposition to romanticist hermeneutics. The maxim 'to understand an author better than he understood himself' "led hermeneutics astray inasmuch as it expressed the idea of 'congeniality' or a communion from

¹⁰ See further "Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics" (1977:181-197) and "The Task of Hermeneutics" in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:43-62).

¹¹ See further on the relationship between the traditions of human and natural sciences "The Question of Proof in Freud's Psychoanalytic Writings," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:247-273).

'genius' to 'genius' in interpretation" (1976:75). The challenge to elitism in the possession of knowledge is clear. Interestingly Ricoeur comments: "His [the author's] intention is often unknown to us, sometimes redundant, sometimes useless, and sometimes even harmful as regards the interpretation of the verbal meaning of his work" (1976:76). Thus, the term 'guess' indicates the willingness to accept responsibility for the interpretation, including the possibility of misunderstanding the text. Much of biblical studies, on the other hand, positing 'the objective message', gives the responsibility only to 'God', and claims only to say 'that which is in the text'.

While there are no rules for making guesses, there are methods of validation. Ricoeur proposes a number of steps, which point to "what is to be guessed by understanding" (1976:76). He suggests, firstly, a consideration of the text as a whole, as a structured unity, and secondly, a consideration of the text as devolved from an analysis of the generic rules of its production. Thirdly, Ricoeur suggests a consideration of the different "potential horizons of meaning" (1976:78). Such an inquiry relates particularly to the secondary meanings of symbols and metaphors and allows room for ideology discussion. The theory of metaphorical and symbolic meaning discussed above is at least a paradigm for the discussion of multiple meanings in texts.

The steps taken to validate a guess as presented above are not equivalent to a verification. It is a procedure based on a logic of probability, rather than with some claim to an empirical status. We will see that Ricoeur challenges the possibility even of empiricism in historical studies, and claims at this point that the attempts at validation offer a firm enough basis to claim scientific status in the science of the individual text.

The two elements of guess and validation also constitute the hermeneutical circle for Ricoeur. The weakness is the inherent tendency to self-confirmation, however Ricoeur proposes the existence of procedures of invalidation to counter this weakness. The procedure is the outworking of the

conflict between varying interpretations, which clarifies the probability of a certain interpretation over another. Ricoeur leaves himself open to criticism by not explicitly taking up ideology critique or the critiques of illusions of consciousness that we find in his other work considered below. This fact, combined with the popularity of *IT*, has resulted in interpretations of Ricoeur which neglect a critical assessment of the world of the reader. Lategan's work, considered in the third chapter, may be seen as an example of this weakness.

In an attempt to move from explanation to comprehension (the reverse of the previous movement from understanding to explanation) Ricoeur employs the dialectic of sense and reference. Reference is to a large extent a function of the situation of the reader and writer. The element of the writer is however alienated and lost in writing so that the text retains only an ostensive reference, as, for example, in descriptive texts. Such a process is accentuated by the canonisation of text as literature, Bible or some other form of authoritative material. But in reading a new sense of reference is generated, either projected into the structures of the text itself (as in structuralism), or created by the interaction with the reader's context. In the former case Ricoeur sees discourse reverting to *langue*, at least in terms of theory. Explanation is achieved by the transference of knowledge from the linguistic inquiry into the smallest units of language to the larger entities of the sentence and narrative.

Ricoeur's suggestion is, however, that no-one ceases their inquiry at the point where various symbols, myths and metaphors have been located in the text itself. The form of the sentence itself (predication) has been the basis for Ricoeur's original definition of meaning in terms of *parole*. For Ricoeur

the function of structural analysis is to lead us from a surface semantics, that of the narrated myth, to a depth semantics, that of the boundary situation, which constitute the ultimate 'referant' of the myth (1976:87).

This notion is particularly facilitatory for text with non-ostensive reference, such as the poem. Ricoeur holds that the sense of the text is projected by the text before itself. It is not to be sought in an attempt to question the original author's intention but rather to examine its transformation to reference, that is, the interaction between the world of the reader and the text. To understand the text for Ricoeur is to "follow its movement from sense to reference: from what it says to what it talks about" (1976:87-88). Ricoeur concludes:

The text speaks of a possible world and of a possible way of orientating oneself within it. The dimensions of this world are properly opened up by and disclosed by the text. Discourse ... goes beyond the mere function of pointing out and showing what already exists and, in this sense, transcends the function of the ostensive reference linked to spoken language. Here showing is at the same time creating a new mode of being (1976:88).

Clearly the impression may be gained at this particular point that Ricoeur is tied to the text. Certainly, it does not seem to relate easily to his definition of reading, that is, to "imaginatively actualize the potential non-ostensive references of the text in a new situation, that of the reader" (1976:81). Thus, Ricoeur appears to be in danger of not fulfilling the potential of his theory, and the danger of a misunderstanding through a limited or selective survey of Ricoeur's contribution is possible. It is our contention that Ricoeur's body of works conceived and presented in the seventies includes the aspect of ideology criticism, and to limit Ricoeur's method to the text is an incomplete reading of the philosopher.

1.1.5 Conclusion to *Interpretation Theory*

In conclusion to *IT*, Ricoeur returns to the dialectic of distanciation and appropriation. The traditional difficulty of the distance or alienation of the text has been treated by Ricoeur as a necessary virtue, that is, a prerequisite for communication and appropriation, rather than a hinderance. This view of distance is taken over by Ricoeur from Frege and Husserl's anti-historicist position where historicism is defined as "the epistemological

presupposition that the content of literary works and in general of cultural documents receives its intelligibility from its connection to the social conditions of the community that produces it or to which it was destined" (1976:89-90).

Meaning for Frege and Husserl, "the 'logician' rejoinder" (1976:90), was an objective entity contained entirely in the sentence itself. Ricoeur at this point is in agreement with the criticism of historicism and suggest that "the text - objectified and dehistoricized - becomes the necessary mediation between writer and reader" (1976:91). Importantly, however, the reader and not the text is the ultimate concern of Ricoeur so that to "'make one's own' what was previously 'foreign' remains the ultimate aim of all hermeneutics" (1976:91). In appropriation this interpretation becomes an event. The radical subjectivity of the moment is tempered, however, by the concept of comprehension. Ricoeur sees three main dangers which this element will guard against.

Firstly there is the romanticist claim to an affinity with the genius of the author. Ricoeur suggests that what is to be appropriated is the meaning of the text itself, "the power of disclosing a world that constitutes the reference of the text" (1976:92). A second misconception for Ricoeur is the attempt to understand through the original audience of the text. This possibility falls away in the universality of the text, which in turn engenders the involvement of the new reader. A third misconception is that appropriation is self-projection. The task of appropriation is aimed at the world projected by the text so that an other is clearly delineated: "interpretation is the process by which disclosures of new modes of being ... gives to the subject a new capacity for knowing himself [sic]" (1976:94). The text for Ricoeur creates and nurtures a self which stands over against ego. In

the following section an examination of metaphor will give flesh to the achievement thus far.¹²

1.2 *The Rule of Metaphor*

The work, *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977), was originally presented at the University of Toronto in 1971, published in French in 1975 and in English in 1977. It is thus contemporary with the work considered above. The two works also have much subject matter and many key insights in common and therefore our consideration of *The Rule of Metaphor* will be fairly cursory.¹³

Rule of Metaphor (hereafter *RM*) progresses in its treatment of metaphor from rhetoric, through semeiotics and semantics, to hermeneutics, a path which Ricoeur claims parallels the linguistic entities word, sentence, and discourse. We have noted previously Ricoeur's concern that metaphor be considered a sentence rather than a word (or trope) as in the classification of traditional rhetoric. This coincides with the shift from considering metaphor as a phenomenon of substitution to a phenomenon of meaning creation via semantic 'impertinence'. However, from the view point of hermeneutics the issue is "the *reference* of the metaphorical statement as the power to 'redescribe' reality" (1977:6). In metaphor there is an expression of the ability of discourse, to not only preserve and develop language, but to wield heuristic power in the mode of fiction. At this point we come upon one of the starting points for *Time and Narrative*:

By linking fiction and redescription in this way, we restore the full depth of meaning to Aristotle's discovery in the *Poetics*,

¹² See the essays "What is a Text? Explanation and Understanding," "The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text," and "The Narrative Function," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:145-164, 197-221, 274-296) for aspects of Ricoeur's progression from a theory of discourse to a theory of narrative. This step is reviewed in the introduction to *Time and Narrative*.

¹³ See further "Metaphor and the Central Problem of Hermeneutics," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:165-181).

which was that the *poesis* of language arises out of the connection between the *muthos* and *mimesis* (1977:7).¹⁴

Ricoeur begins the discussion of metaphor in the context of Aristotle's works on *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. Rhetoric is, for Ricoeur, philosophy's oldest enemy and oldest ally. The relationship is antagonistic in the sense that rhetoric's attempt to say "well" infringes on philosophy's commitment to truth. On the other hand, some form of speaking is required and it is Ricoeur's contention that philosophy itself "cannot break the ties between discourse and power" (1977:11). Metaphor is a key to this dilemma because it plays, for Aristotle, a part in both rhetoric and philosophy. The same definition of metaphor is used in both realms, but on the one hand it is involved in the attempt to convince the listener or reader of a truth (rhetoric) and on the other hand, to represent human actions (poetry). Metaphor, thus, may be considered an attempt to "speak the truth by means of fiction, fable, and tragic *muthos*" (1977:13).

The implication of Ricoeur's suggestion that metaphor does generate new meaning may be linked to a wider concern. Ricoeur suggests:

If metaphor belongs to a heuristic of thought, could we not imagine that the process that disturbs and displaces a certain logical order, a certain conceptual hierarchy, a certain classification scheme, is the same as that from which all classification proceeds? (1977:22).

Thus, the ground for Ricoeur's treatment of emplotment in *Time and Narrative* is laid. In the seeing of resemblance between 'dissimilars', a challenge is brought to the dominant categorising order and another order is generated.

In rhetoric, metaphor is the power to "set things before the eyes, the power to speak of the inanimate as if alive, ultimately the capacity to signify active reality" (1977:35). In the context of Aristotle's *Poetics* the

¹⁴ The greek word from which the word "muthos" is derived means "tale, story, legend, myth, [or] fable" (Bauer 1979:529). Similarly in the case of "mimesis", the verbal sense means to "imitate, emulate, follow, [or] use as a model" (Bauer 1979:521-522). It is in these directions that Ricoeur is employing the traditions surrounding these words.

central factor is *muthos* or plot. However the production of this plot is the act of *mimesis*. Ricoeur suggests:

There is ... a double tension proper to *mimesis*: on the one hand, the imitation is at once a portrayal of human reality *and* an original creation; on the other, it is faithful to things as they are *and* it depicts them as higher and greater than they are (1977:40).

Thus, the 'setting before the eyes' by metaphor is a new portrayal of reality, yet one which is rooted in the conditions of reality. Here we find an anticipation of Ricoeur's broad concept of ideology whereby even when new ways of speaking are devised the rootedness of speaking in all of life remains. *Mimesis* was defined above as the structuring of *muthos*. This element is essential in the consideration of the form of truth. *Mimesis* of things as they are, Ricoeur suggests "connects this referential function to the revelation of the Real as Act" (1977:43). A paradoxical view of ontology emerges in the metaphor, one in which act has primacy: "*Lively* expression is that which expresses existence as *alive*" (1977:43).

From this suggestive reading of Aristotle, Ricoeur moves to the development of tropology. In the step from rhetoric to semeiotic and semantics, the treatment of metaphor as noun or name is discarded. In the first instance (semeiotics), however, an emphasis remains on the word or trope, that is, "a change in meaning or derivation affecting the meaning of a word" (1977:44). Such an emphasis was the result of a certain response to the decline of rhetoric, explained by the structuralists as a reduction in the domain of rhetoric to the theory of style. Such a position holds that no new meaning is engendered by metaphor, and that it plays merely an ornamental role in language. Even from within this position, Ricoeur is able to raise the possibility of understanding metaphor more as discourse. The notion of figure Ricoeur finds applies to both word and discourse. This enables Ricoeur's attempt not to discard the treatment of the word but rather to complete it through the analysis of discourse. Thus, in the second instance (semantics),

the consideration of metaphor necessitates entry into the realm of discourse: "the semantics of discourse is not reducible to the semeiotics of lexical entities" (1977:66). As noted in *IT*, the unit of discourse is the sentence, consisting of event and meaning, sense and reference. Such an understanding of discourse is largely compatible with I. A. Richards proposal of metaphor as tenor and vehicle.¹⁵ The tenor is the "underlying idea", and the vehicle, "the idea under whose sign the first idea is apprehended" (1977:80). While Richards rejects the dominance of the theory of the word and the primacy of the idea, the difficulty with his position is that there is no distinction between literal and metaphorical meaning. As we will see later, this is eventually a positive element for Ricoeur, at this point there is no means of differentiating dissimilarity and resemblance. Further, no direction can be derived in terms of belief. The question "Must we accept as true what the Bible ... says metaphorically?" (1977:83) is still unanswerable. Ricoeur clarifies Richards' breakthrough with the contribution of Max Black.¹⁶ Firstly, there is in Black's work a balance achieved between the metaphorical word and the sentence, with Ricoeur suggesting the terminology, focus and frame respectively. Thus, the whole sentence is the metaphor, with some words that are metaphorical and others that are not. Secondly, some distinction is drawn between the interaction theory as in Richards, and the classical theories of substitution and comparison. Thus, the relationship between vehicle and tenor, frame and focus is more delicately considered. Thirdly, in terms of the generation of meaning, the metaphor is held to confer an insight, but in relation to a "system of associated commonplaces" (Black quoted in Ricoeur 1977:87). This last element of Black's position is the limiting factor as far as Ricoeur is concerned. In the concept of 'associated commonplaces',

¹⁵ See I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Oxford; Oxford University Press 1936, 1971.

¹⁶ See Max Black, *Models and Metaphor*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962.

as well as in the use of grammar, Ricoeur finds too much ground given uncritically to (dominant) conventions. The role of the speaker, the realm of the personal or individual, as well as the non-semantic factors of convention, are all areas needing further inquiry from Ricoeur's point of view.

He attempts to provide this assessment via literary criticism.¹⁷ In an attempt primarily to critique relativism, metaphor is viewed as discourse in miniature, and two principles are taken from it: the principle of selection and the principle of plenitude. The meaning of reference (as opposed to sense) is the "projection of a possible and inhabitable world" in line with Aristotle's combination of *muthos* and *mimesis*. (1977:92). However, key for Ricoeur at this point is that it is the reader "who works out the connotations of the modifier that are likely to be meaningful" (1977:95). Thus, in applying the principles, the possible meanings or worlds read in a text are those that are selected or related to the whole of the text: "those secondary meanings capable of surviving in the total context" (1977:96). On the other hand, applying the principle of plenitude, all those meanings that can survive the first principle are valid so that the poem "means all it *can* mean" (1977:98).

Ricoeur is continually debating the models of metaphor, moving from the model of interaction to the model of substitution. A key element then is the concept of resemblance. Aristotle's praise of metaphor, and the user of metaphor, is based on the value he places on being able to perceive "similarity ... in dissimilars" (quoted in Ricoeur 1977:23). Thus, in classical rhetoric metaphor was the trope of resemblance *par excellence*" (1977:173). The challenge from another perspective on language would hold, however, that all language is metaphorical, that is, functioning in terms of selection and combination. Ricoeur attempts to clarify both positions, again

¹⁷ See, for example, Munroe Beardsley, *Aesthetics*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1958.

in terms of sense and reference which he will relate to substitution and combination respectively.

The two elements of substitution and combination are present in the metaphor at the same time. What distinguishes metaphor from other figures of speech is the capacity to continually evoke new meaning. Exactly what constitutes the metaphoricity of metaphor is, however, still not clear. Ricoeur suggests that at base in all attempts is still the notion of "displacement or change of location" (1977:193).

The notion of resemblance has, however, a logical force which can oppose a complete relativity of terminology. It also is a stepping stone towards a psycholinguistic appreciation of metaphor. Ricoeur proposes that "the idea ... of a schematism of attribution constitutes the point on the frontier of semantics and psychology where the imaginary is anchored in a semantic theory of metaphor" (1977:208). Language through its poetic form, (the non-referential) develops a density that allows one to treat it as a Byzantine icon, that is, "a fusion of the sense and the sensible" (1977:209). In purely linguistic terms, developing Wittgenstein's 'seeing-as', Ricoeur suggests a fusion of sense and the imaginary, a designation of "the *non-verbal* mediation of the metaphorical statement" (1977:214). With this achievement, that is, the development of the theory of metaphor in terms of sense and reference to the point of connecting with the psychological image, Ricoeur suggests "semantics finds its frontier, and in so doing, ... accomplishes its task" (1977:214). The link of the sense of metaphor to the discussion of symbol in *IT* is apparent.

Ricoeur now battles with the reference of metaphor. It is the other side of the coin of the iconic image discussed above. Reference *per se* is the realm of the reader or context. The psycholinguistic sphere, however, is common to both sense and reference. Of initial importance is suspension of first level reference, the literal sense, in the world referred to by the text: "Just as

the metaphorical statement captures its sense as metaphorical midst the ruins of the literal sense, it also achieves its reference upon the ruins of ... its literal reference" (1977:221). The second level of this double or split reference is the objects of hermeneutics for Ricoeur and the work of the text. The object of the "labour of interpretation" is the "text as work" (1977:220). This level of the text is actually created by the reader in the first place, the interpretation includes the interpretation of the reader as well.

Ricoeur is attempting to co-opt the distinction between denotation and connotation: "In the metaphorical discourse of poetry, referential power is linked to the eclipse of ordinary reference, the creation of heuristic fiction is the road to redescription; and reality brought to language unites manifestation and creation" (1977:239). Such a path returns once more to Aristotle's linking of *mimesis* and *muthos*: "Only a feeling transformed into myth can open and discover the world" (1977:245). This exegesis of the tensional view of metaphor, through semantic impertinence on the level of word, sentence and copula, is the key to the concept of metaphorical truth, now approached in two moves under the heading 'is-is not'.

For Ricoeur, hermeneutics at this point becomes the interface between speculative or philosophical discourse and metaphorical discourse. This is an extension of the thematic concern in Ricoeur's work for the incorporation of the symbolic as the expression of the common primordial human experience, as well as the richness of diverse human possibilities. In other words, there is a combination of the determinism and opportunity, but as this discussion demonstrates they are in dialectical relation. The 'is-is not' of the metaphorical is repeated in this relationship, so that the simple or naïve acceptance of an ontology from the metaphorical discourse actually neutralises the semantic tension. It is a relationship between univocity and equivocity.

Several theories of discourse have proposed an identification of speculative and metaphorical discourse. Ricoeur gives as examples

Aristotle's portrayal of the equivocalness of being, Aquinas' fusion of theology and philosophy, and finally the Heideggarian location of metaphor in the metaphysical. We touch on a key transitional tool when Ricoeur comments

Heideggarian deconstruction must now take on Nietzschean genealogy, Freudian psychoanalysis, the Marxist critique of ideology, that is, the weapons of the hermeneutics of suspicion. Armed in this way, the critique is capable of unmasking the *unthought* conjunction of *hidden* metaphysics and *worn out* metaphor" (1977:285)

Ricoeur, thus, rejects the possibility that semantics includes a ready made ontology: "on the one hand, speculative discourse has its condition of *possibility* in the semantic dynamism of metaphorical utterance, and ... on the hand ... has its *necessity* itself, in putting the resources of conceptual articulation to work" (1977:296). This dynamic, for Ricoeur, is a function of the mind itself, in particular of the mind reflecting upon itself. Thus, the potential of the tension theory of metaphor, whereby there is a gain in meaning through the metaphor, but a remaining conceptual need to be addressed by speculative discourse. Ricoeur claims that "the passage to the explicit ontology called for by the postulate of reference is inseparable from the passage to the concept called for by the structure of meaning found in the metaphorical statement" (1977:297). Obviously, at this point, reference is clearly delineated from an absolute dependence on the text. The responsibility for reference lies with the reader. Ricoeur finds in the tension theory a synthesis of his theory of discourse, particularly in terms of sense and reference. But speculative discourse is responsible for "the primary notions, the principles, that articulate primordially the space of the concept" (1977:300). The step between each discourse however is of an epochal nature:

Interpretation is then a mode of discourse that functions at the intersection of two domains, metaphorical and speculative. It is a composite discourse, therefore, and as such cannot but feel the opposite pull of two rival demands. On the one side, interpretation seeks the clarity of the concept; on the other, it hopes to preserve the dynamism of meaning that the concepts holds and pins down (1977:303).

From this perspective the importance of a 'living metaphor' is revealed (cf. the original title *La métaphore vive*): it is a means of "thinking more" and this "struggle to 'think more' ... is the 'soul' of interpretation" (1977:303). The entity of language therefore plays a mediating role, between the person and the world, between person and person, and between person and the self. Its fundamental presupposition is that "*knowledge of being related to being*" (1977:304). Ricoeur concludes:

What is given to thought in this way by the 'tensional' truth of poetry is the most primordial, most hidden dialectic - the dialectic that reigns between the experience of belonging as a whole and the power of distanciation that opens up the space of speculative thought" (1977:313).

In the next section we consider more fully the world of the reader, in which the aspects of belonging and speculation take place.

1.3 Ideology and Utopia

The third major work of Ricoeur's from the 1970's period is the publication *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (1986). The lectures were originally presented in 1973-4 but were not published until 1986. This may have led to a distortion in the reception of Ricoeur in the early eighties, but is properly considered at this point of time as a work of the seventies.

1.3.1 Introduction and Overview

Ricoeur's starting point in this work centres on "imagination": "social imagination is *constitutive* of social reality" (1986:3). The relationship between ideology and utopia is a key to understanding the role and mechanism of social and cultural imagination, particularly in the sense that both are characterised by noncongruence with respect to reality.

Ricoeur proposes the expansion of the realm considered ideological to include not only a negative distortive function but a positive integrative role. Ricoeur comments:

We must integrate the concept of ideology as distortion into a framework that recognizes the symbolic structure of social life.

Unless social life has a symbolic structure there is no way to understand how we live, do things, and project these activities in ideas, no way to understand how reality can become an idea or how real life can produce illusions; these would all be simply mystical and incomprehensible events. This symbolic structure can be perverted, precisely by class interests and so on as Marx has shown ...[but] ... The distortion function covers only a small surface of the social imagination ... (1986:8).

Again the concept of symbol is introduced in order to achieve the link between lived experience, value or tradition, and narrative. *Time and Narrative* will develop the mechanism and implications of the connection through symbol and metaphor of life and writing.

An integrative or interpretive function of ideology is of importance for the mental health of a society or culture. The question is, of course, the point at which the distortive function of ideology becomes an integrative function. Following Weber, Ricoeur suggests the pivotal issue to be that of authority (*Herrschaft*) in a community. On the one hand authority may play a structural or integrative role in a society, while on the other it may be the root of distortion.

Turning to Utopia, then, Ricoeur again begins from the pathological or distortive role of the phenomena and moves to the positive or integrative function. Utopia can obviously be an escape, a delusion, but Ricoeur also wants to read utopia as a point from which the present may be critiqued:

From this 'no place' an exterior glance is cast on our reality, which suddenly looks strange, nothing more being taken for granted. The field of the possible is now open beyond that of the actual; it is a field, therefore, for alternative ways of living (1986:16).

Imagination is integral at this point also as "imagination itself - through its utopian function - has a *constitutive* role in helping us *rethink* the nature of our social life" (1986:16). The distance that is inherent in the "exterior glance" is the first step of subversion. Again the turning point at which utopia moves to either pathology and integration is the point of authority.

1.3.2 Ideology

In considering Marx, Ricoeur begins with the early works such as *A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's "Philosophy of Right" - Introduction* first published in 1844. In this period Marx's concept of ideology is fundamentally concerned with inversion or distortion.¹⁸ Ideology is opposed to reality. This critique is extended from the realm of religion (as first expressed by Feuerbach) to law and politics. The contrast highlighted is that between predicted ideas and the real or concrete. Ricoeur comments: "Major concepts of Hegel (estrangement, objectification) and of Feuerbach (species being, generic powers) are here reformulated and placed within the structure of labour" (1986:34).

Labour is that process of objectification of the worker in a project and the fundamental contradiction in the capitalist economy typified by the entity of private property, which in the 1844 Manuscripts, is the power of the product, produced by the worker, to harm that very worker. Here religion is used by Marx as a metaphor for this alienation.

The solution proposed by Marx is communism, where the possibility of private property is removed. Ricoeur pounces on this as a utopia, although he recognises this characterisation would be rejected by Marxists. For Ricoeur, however, the possibility of a criticism from outside the present or the "anticipation of the end that is projected backwards" (1986:61) fulfills the basic criteria of a utopia mentioned above. In the Manuscripts, Ricoeur suggests: "Intellectual life is not reduced to economic life, instead, Marx attempts to lift the abstraction which opposed one to the other" (1986:62). The distance or criticism achieved in the imagination, exemplified in utopias,

¹⁸ Ricoeur notes that Marx doesn't actually speak of "ideology" until *The German Ideology*, however, the concept is present, for Ricoeur, from the first works.

is the first step of subversion and emancipation: "We rediscover that we are creative to the extent that we have a project of appropriation" (1986:65).

The German Ideology shifts away from Feuerbachian categories of consciousness towards the categories of a political economy. Consciousness is regarded explicitly in terms of ideology. There is in this shift a perception that Marxism forms the basis of an objective science, and epistemology which opposes ideology or consciousness to reality and implicitly to science. This is the seed of the notion that Marxism is not an ideology. The famous Marxian statement regarding changing the world, is challenged by Ricoeur who, at this point, asks if change can be achieved without interpretation. Again this is the beginning of a more positive appraisal of ideology towards which Ricoeur is moving.¹⁹

In Marx's explicit treatment of ideology in the *German Ideology*, it is defined as "that which is reflected by means of representations" (quoted in Ricoeur 1986:76). Thus, there is a distinction between the real and a representation. Ricoeur holds, however, that there is a language before distortion which he refers to as "a symbolic structure of action that is absolutely primitive and ineluctable" (1986:76). Even if consciousness is determined by life (against idealism), Ricoeur still reads consciousness as a representation which is in itself the unavoidable mode of the reception of 'reality', not necessarily positive or negative. Thus, for Ricoeur, ideology is not the production of a class in the interests of maintaining its economic domination, but an integral part of being human. Both understandings of consciousness emanate from Marx, although the former would seem to exclude the possibility of the latter. Thus, from the perspective of the working class, ideology is part of the mechanism of oppression. As we have noted, however,

¹⁹ See further at this point "Science and Ideology," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:222-246).

Ricoeur wants to posit, without discounting this negative element, a more positive role for ideology.

The discussion of the division of labour is the context for the presentation of ideology as the tool of the dominant or ruling class. The division of labour takes on its fullest form when there is a division between mental and material labour. The working class carry out the material labour, while the dominant class who own the means of production engage in mental labour with a view to preserving their privileged position. At this point, however, Ricoeur proposes two possible readings of Marx. The first is on the basis of the relationship between the infrastructure and the superstructure, the second on the basis of the individual or real person. In the former, the collective entities of class, city, country, factory, actually give rise to consciousness, whereas in the latter it is the experience of the individual. The difficulty comes then in the definition or understanding of liberation. The division of labour actually delineates a division within the individual. Liberation is, however, in Ricoeur's reading the "claim of the individual against the collective entities", a claim which exists in Marx's texts themselves (1986:97).

Ricoeur then proposes three major changes in Marxist theory to the point of Althusser's work. Firstly, ideology is opposed to science (seen not as empiricism but as a body of theory), secondly, there is a change in the conception of the real basis of history from individuals to productive forces and relation, and thirdly, the relation between the real basis of history and ideology is expressed with the metaphor of a building with a base and floors.

This last area is the realm in which Ricoeur attempts to introduce the work of Weber. Ricoeur claims that the relationship between basis and ideology is better treated in terms of "motivation than causation" (1986:106). Ricoeur comments: "My argument is that while Althusser introduces improvements, he never changes the radical structure of effectivity, of determination in the

last instance ... " (1986:107). Significantly, Ricoeur returns to Freud and the struggle of the individual in his questioning of Althusser: "what kind of relation exists between a field and a thought if we do not have a motivational framework, a conceptual framework" (1986:121).

Althusser argues against Marx for the indispensability of ideology. People will always attempt to make sense of their lives or in Nietzschean terms require illusions to survive the hardness of life. Ricoeur sees Althusser's demand on science as so high as to fail, thus leaving a role for ideology. This is the point at which Ricoeur begins to question the strict opposition between science and ideology.²⁰ Ricoeur posits a confusion between scientific theory and ideology in Althusser's writings and asks "Does not this 'confusion', in fact, express the impossibility of drawing the line between the lived contradiction and the real basis?" (1986:140).

Ricoeur's point is illustrated by a consideration of Althusser's essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses",²¹ where it is argued by the author that the fundamental function of ideology is to reproduce the dominant conditions of production. Such a position gives autonomy and power to the ideological to influence the real. For Ricoeur it is important that the relation to the conditions of production are "symbolically mediated", otherwise they could not be distorted (1986:144). Further, the power of ideology to construct the real falls not into a framework of determinism or causality, but rather one of motivation, that is, the interest of the dominant class to maintain the *status quo*. The view of the individual subject that is totally constituted by ideology (in the sense of immediate interest) is also too simplistic for Ricoeur, however, in order to critique such a position an outside point, a utopia is proposed. Thus, Althusser has laid the groundwork

²⁰ See "Science and Ideology," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:222-246).

²¹ in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books 1971:121-173.

for the legitimate study of ideology as an element of every society and class. On the other hand, Althusser maintains a view equating ideology with distortion or perversion of reality, and an immediacy of interest which ties a class or individual totally to their own concerns. At this point Ricoeur is interested in overcoming the limitations of the second part of Althusser's work, in building a positive or non-pathological theory and function of ideology, and providing the theoretical framework for the possibility of a view from a utopia, in order to assess the immediate interests of a society, class and individual.

The work of Mannheim enables Ricoeur to partly achieve his aims. For Ricoeur, Mannheim's main achievements are the linking of ideology and utopia, and the expansion of the realm of ideology to include all of society as expressed in the paradox: "We speak of ideology, but our speech is itself caught up in ideology" (1986:160). This corresponds to the symbolic basis of all narrative, particularly in the sense of its connection to life. Such a view demands a response to the question of the whole rather than the immediate. The possibility is carried by recourse to a utopia. Mannheim gives two criteria for a utopia. The first, shared with ideology, is incongruence with reality. The second is that a "utopia tends 'to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at the time'" (quoted in Ricoeur 1986:173). This is opposed to ideology which may be understood as that which "preserves a certain order" (1986:173). In a class society particularly utopias are also characterised according to the class articulating them. Usually, the ruling class presents utopias as unattainable, whereas the concrete possibility of a new order is a driving force for oppressed majorities. Ricoeur suggests "It is always a utopia which defines what is ideological, and so characterization is always relative to the assumptions of the conflicting groups" (1986:178). This connection between ideology and utopia is, however, not a negative relation but rather a necessary and

practical link which allows the possibility of a positive appreciation of the role of both utopias and ideology.

Ricoeur has several times to this point mentioned the role of Weber's work in helping determine the point at which ideology and utopia moves from being pathological to being integrative. The work which is of assistance in this regard concerns the functioning of authority or dominion (*Herrschaft*), and particularly its legitimation. Ricoeur suggests that "What is at stake in all ideology is finally the legitimation of a certain system of authority; what is at stake in all utopia is the imagining of an alternative way to use power" (1986:192). All societies include some form of enforcement but the question regards the legitimacy of this enforcement: "the problem of ideology is raised at least in principle when we confront the claim to legitimacy with the belief in legitimacy" (1986:200). The occurrence of legitimisation is the "reification ... [of] a symbolic system" (1986:213). Ricoeur holds that it is "only a symbolic system [that] may be altered in such a way that it looks like a deterministic system" (1986:213-214).

Ricoeur now turns to Habermas who he presents to show "that the significance of the gap Weber reveals between claim and belief can only be fully understood at the end of a process of critique, and ... that ideology at bottom concerns communication and the symbolic mediation of action" (1986:216).²² Habermas' contribution to Ricoeur's concern is the distinction between the "scientific" concerns of the model of praxis as material production or instrumental action, and the "dialectics of the instrumental and integrative poles of praxis, ... which is not an extension or a transposition of natural sciences but of a different kind of science, ... critique" (1986:224). Thus, for Habermas, as read by Ricoeur, class struggle is not

²² For further "Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology," in *Hermeneutics and Human Sciences* (1981:63-100) on Ricoeur's reception of Habermas.

limited to the system of production but "is part of the movement from alienation to recognition within the symbolization process, it is a moment of desymbolization" (1986:231).

Habermas, linking psychoanalysis to hermeneutics, divides sciences into the instrumental, the hermeneutical and the critical. In Ricoeur's words "The critical social sciences are distinctive because they allow us to make the detour required to explain the principle of distortion" (1986:236). Ricoeur, however, is reluctant to completely sever the link between hermeneutical and critical sciences. The critique for Ricoeur is itself hermeneutical - "Hermeneutics without a project of liberation is blind, but a project of emancipation without historical experience is empty" (1986:237). Ricoeur suggests that Habermas's failure to acknowledge such a position is a function of his use of the analysis situation as a model of critique. In psychoanalysis there exists the analyst and the one analysed or critiqued. However, no duality exists in ideology criticism. There is no privileged position which the critique may claim as objective, removed, uninvolved. Rather "ideology critique belongs to the polemical situation of ideology" (1986:248). Further, however, ideology critique lacks the aspect of "cure" involved in the psychoanalytic situation. Critique "functions much more at the level of analysis of the wheels of social machinery" (1986:249). The aspect lacking is provided in Ricoeur's position by the utopia: "It is always from the depth of an utopia that we may speak of an ideology" (1986:251).

Ricoeur in the final chapter of the section on Ideology considers Geertz. To this point Ricoeur has argued for three functions of ideology, they being distortion, legitimation and integration. In achieving the diversity of roles of ideology, the concept of action as symbolically mediated has been a central tool. It is this concept that Ricoeur is able to deal with

metaphorically in the field of linguistics.²³ Thus, it is the "possibility that rhetoric can be integrative and not necessarily distortive [that] leads us to a non-pejorative concept of ideology" (1986:258).

Using Geertz, Ricoeur proposes that, firstly, all action is symbolically mediated, secondly, that ideology is a part of all action, and, thirdly, that, ideology occurs in all forms in a society. Thus, questions regarding integration cannot be separated from questions of legitimation and distortion. The coexistence of various ideologies in a society, gives for Ricoeur the possibility of overcoming the perception that opposing ideologies are mutually exclusive and wholly committed to destruction.

The nexus between the three functions of ideology that Ricoeur has presented is related at this point to the role of the imagination in social life. Simply put, ideology functions to preserve a certain order, whereas a utopia, in that it gives an experiential dimension to criticism, functions to disrupt an order.

1.3.3 Utopia

We come to the second part of Ricoeur's work, the section on Utopia. Here Ricoeur again considers the work of Mannheim, pertinent because of his combination of Ideology and Utopia, but also that of the nineteenth century French socialists, Saint-Simon, and Fourier. As Ricoeur stated at the outset, utopia has its pathological form, which he has designated "fancy". Such a phenomenon has as its common form, in evangelical Christianity, escapism and other-worldliness. Utopia also, however, has the function of providing an alternative to present power and is a powerful tool in the exploration of the possible. The struggle for power or authority in society is again the pivotal point around which the role a utopia plays revolves.

²³ It is important to note that this is metaphor - Ricoeur recognises the difference between action and narrative, but posits the possibility of comparing them in a metaphorical fashion.

Mannheim stresses the antagonism between utopias. As noted in the section on ideology, the character of utopias is linked to the class in society from which they emanate. Mannheim proposes the socialist communist utopia to be a combination of the chiliastic, the liberal humanitarian and the conservative utopias that he discusses, but regrets its development into another ideology. Ricoeur holds that while such a comment may be justified in (what was) the "second world" it is out of step with the constructive approach of the "third world".

Ricoeur considers Saint-Simon in relation to Mannheim's framework. Saint-Simon's actual utopia proposed the substitution of "ecclesiastical feudalism" by "industrial power" (1986:291). The workers of this utopia are, however, as much artists as artisans. This is due to the importance Saint-Simon gives to the role of the imagination. While this work is flawed by the underestimation of the forces of history, according to Engels, the centrality of power in the question of society is again evident: "ideology is the surplus value added to the lack of belief in authority, utopia is what unmasks this surplus value" (1986:298). Ricoeur goes on: "the deinstitutionalisation of the main human relationships is finally, I think, the kernel of all utopias" (1986:299). However: "At a time when everything is blocked by systems which have failed but which cannot be beaten ... utopia is our resource" (1986:300).

Fourier's utopia is of interest to Ricoeur because it achieves a critique of politics. In an extension of Saint-Simon's quest for a new society, Fourier gives ultimate value to the personal. His concern, "in Marxist terms, is to develop new relations of production for productive forms" (1986:303). Ricoeur compares Freud's work to Fourier's criticism even of liberative and therapeutic possibilities, claiming that such an inquiry undermines structures of power and places utopia in the jurisdiction of politics.

1.3.4 Summary

In summary, then, Ricoeur has dealt with and developed a view of ideology that extends from distortion, legitimation and integration. Utopia similarly fulfills a threefold function of fancy, an alternative to present power, and the exploration of the possible. The pivot around which ideology and utopia move from pathological to constructive is the issue of authority.

1.4 Summary and Conclusions

In summary, the concept of discourse as bearer of truth has been the means by which Ricoeur has moved from a concern with symbol to language. In particular the dialectics of event and meaning, and sense and reference have opened the way for both a discussion of 'what is said', accessed via a theory of metaphor, and the 'about what it is said', accessed and assessed by ideology critique. The concept of symbol used by Ricoeur is such that while originating in life the symbol is able to be transferred into narrative by means of metaphor. The discussion of metaphor has provided the basis for a theory of language which related narrative to action, while the discussion of ideology and utopia has presented the means towards a critical reading of the world of action and the world of words.

Chapter Two - Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative Project* -
An Attempted Presentation

2.0 Introduction

The review of *Interpretation Theory, The Rule of Metaphor, and Utopia and Ideology* reveals a number of key ideas which are developed more fully in the *Time and Narrative* volumes. The central concept, of course, regards the relation between narrative, that is, history or fiction, and life or action, both past and future. Therefore, the development of the aspect of *parole* in language and the concept of discourse, as opposed to the aspect of *langue*, occurs in the context of a concern for correct action. From the theory of metaphor outlined in the chapter above, Ricoeur is able to link written expression to life in the world. Symbol remains a fundamental category even in the development of a theory of language because of its non-verbal content, expressed by Ricoeur as the "surplus of meaning" (1976:45-46) which undergirds a connection between experience, culture, tradition, and narrative. In his examination of ideology and utopia, he is able to develop a critical perspective on the world. In sum, Ricoeur develops a theory of reading that plays an essential role in the assessment of action. Ricoeur suggests that "narration ... implies memory and predication implies expectation" (1984:10). The question "What shall we do?" is answered by Ricoeur in terms of a literary theory.¹

¹ Interestingly, the relationship between history and fiction has become a field of interest in the South African context. Visser (1990) points to differences in the development of historical and literary cultural studies in South Africa at the moment, as partly a division over the use of Althusser, but more fundamentally a question of theory itself: "Consequently, just as literary and cultural studies were becoming more theory-based as disciplines, much historical inquiry was becoming deliberately anti-theoretical. Of course, it is impossible to be *non*-theoretical, so what eventuated in some circles was a powerful commitment to a largely untheorised empiricism, and a related, accompanied shift to micro-studies" (1990:74). Visser's essay is a plea for the consideration of literary cultural studies and tools in the realm of history. For example, in relation to 'land' he suggests "we need a unified co-operative inquiry into all aspects and periods of the history of land in SA, a

In terms of our initial proposal, through Ricoeur's work in *Time and Narrative* the area of biblical studies becomes a discipline of contemporary engagement, rather than reflection on a past period. The role and effect of reading the Bible in this world becomes as much a concern of that world as an attempt to clarify areas of discussion concerning the ancient world. Ricoeur will provide input into this area via a theory of reading that utilises three moments of mimesis: recollection or memory; configuration; and, refiguration. While Ricoeur appears at times to take no account of conflicting readings and conflicting actions, he does maintain, in continuity with his treatment of ideology and utopia, that the realms of action "and suffering" are the privileged perspectives of reading in the quest for responsible decisions (1988:208). His contribution, however, does not devalue the individual at the expense of the class and, as we will propose in the next chapter, provides the basis in his emphasis on the present for a criticism of all reading, speaking and acting which dehumanises and oppresses, thus undermining in particular an anachronistic tradition which claims authority beyond its realm. Ricoeur's depreciation of authorial intention is shown in this work to be less a revival of subjectivist or existentialist speculation, and more a concern for contemporary responsibility. In other words, the exegete is asked to be an explicit practitioner in order to give credence to the exegetical work. Certainly, the idealist tradition that holds an elite standing for the intellectual is attacked, but Ricoeur as usual seeks a balancing rather than a complete rejection of the opposing system.

history not only of legislation, habitation, dispossession, and so on, but also a history of the representations of land and its forms of relation to people from oral material through the travel narratives and right up to the work of recent poets and novelists. And at the same time, we need to inquire into the discursive strategies of the legislation itself, and to look at the various specialised discourse of land in South Africa in the disciplines of geography, geology, law, surveying, architecture and town planning, and of course historical and social research" (1990:76-77).

Ricoeur begins the work, *Time and Narrative*, by linking it to *The Rule of Metaphor*:

Although metaphor has traditionally belonged to the theory of 'tropes' (or figures of discourse) and narrative to the theory of literary 'genres,' the meaning effects produced by each of them belong to the same basic phenomenon of semantic innovation (1984:ix).

Both metaphor and narrative operate as "discourse", that is, "the level of acts of language equal to or greater than the sentence" (1984:ix). In the same way that metaphor creates meaning through its "new semantic pertinence", narrative generates something new through the "invention of another work of synthesis - a plot" (1984:ix). The plot then "'grasps together' and interacts into one whole and complete story multiple and scattered events, thereby schematizing the intelligible signification attached to the narrative taken as a whole" (1984:x).

Following on again from his work on metaphor, Ricoeur suggests that narrative performs a parallel and related function to that of the metaphor, in "redescribing a reality inaccessible to direct description" (1984:xi). Narrative achieves this through its "mimetic function" following Aristotle's suggestion that "Plot ... is the *mimesis* of an action" (1984:xi). Admitting the integral link between action and time, the question of what is a responsible act becomes also a question of time. Time is the "reality inaccessible" just referred to, and that question to which the theory of the plot is called upon to address. It is faith then in the "mimetic value of poetic discourse and the redescriptive power of narrative fiction" (1984:xi) to address the question of time/action with which Ricoeur starts. The relationship between time and action remains obscure at this point but is

necessary, we suggest, to make practical Ricoeur's difficult discussion of time.²

2.1 "The Circle of Narrative and Temporality"

Volume one of *Time and Narrative* comprises, firstly, a presentation of Augustine's theory of time, secondly, a presentation of Aristotle's theory of 'emplotment', and thirdly, an outline of Ricoeur's theory of the threefold mimesis of narrative. Ricoeur suggests that the fundamental presupposition at this point is the "temporal character of human experience" (1984:3). The temporal basis of narrative, therefore, offers itself to a comparison of the relationship between time and experience. The treatment of narrative as a metaphor of time (and therefore of experience of action), based on the theory outlined above, makes use of the 'is - is not' relation (See *RM* 1977:247-273). Thus, narrative provides a separate but parallel link ('is - not'), but also emerges itself from human experience ('is').

2.1.1 Augustine's Theory of Time

Ricoeur begins with a discussion of time from Augustine's *Confessions*.³ In asking the question "What is time?" Augustine takes over the traditional difficulties of a theory of time. Ricoeur enumerates them as, firstly, time as

² A simplistic example of the relation between time and action may serve as a preliminary comment: the concept of history integrates time and action, in that it concerns itself with, for example, human actions, as they have occurred in time. Time is action, and *vice versa*, as no action has occurred outside time, and no time has been devoid of action. Protest may be raised in terms of ("timeless") myths, and periods of time when no action is documented, for example, an ice age. Perhaps an adequate response would be that myths deliberately impinge on time in the sense of claiming significance for all time, and in the second case, that we are concerned primarily with responsible human decisions in the present and thus an actionless time is irrelevant to our question. See further "Narrative Time," (1980-81:169-190) and "Action, Story and History," (1983:60-72).

³ Ricoeur (in the English editions of *Time and Narrative*) is working mainly from Book 11 of Saint Augustine's *The Confessions*. trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin Books 1961). Important also for his treatment is E. P. Meijering's commentary *Augustin über Schöpfung, Ewigkeit und Zeit. Das elfte Buch des Bekenntnisse*. (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1979).

having no being but being, and secondly, the paradox of the measurement of time, the extension of that which has no extension.

The traditional skeptical argument holds that "time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain" (1984:7). Yet over against this scepticism stands experience (including memory and expectation) and language and, therefore, Ricoeur suggests:

we do speak of time as having being. We say that things to come *will be*, that things past *were*, and that things present *are passing away* (1984:7).

Augustine formulates this approach in the understanding of the "threefold present" whereby "The present of past things is the memory, the present of present things is direct perception ... and the present of future things is expectation" (quoted in Ricoeur 1984:11). This is the response to the charge that time has no being.

Turning to the possibility of the measurement of time, a psychological rather than material category is utilised. The idea of the distention of the spirit (*distentio animi*) serves as a substitute for the cosmological basis of time (that is, movement of a material body). The phenomenon of the mind that situates itself outside itself parallels the concept of measuring time. Similarly, the *distentio* may be conceived "as" the threefold present and *visa versa*. Linking again time and action:

The *distentio* is then nothing other than the shift in, the non-coincidence of the three modalities of action: and the scope of the action which I am performing is divided between the two faculties of memory and expectation, the one looking back ... the other looking forward (1984:20).

The concordant (in the sense that they occur together in the threefold present) intentions of expectation, attention, and memory result in discordance of action. The relation of *distentio* and *intentio* also parallels the human predicament or the struggle of the soul to which the Christian tradition addresses itself between time and eternity: "the *distentio* becomes

synonymous with the dispersal into the many and with the wandering of the old Adam, the *intentio* tends to be identified with the fusion of the inner man" (1984:27). This general 'dialectic' between *distentio* and *intentio* is, for Ricoeur, the "province of narrative" (1984:22) recalling the reason for the exploration of narrative, that is, its potential for "redescribing" the inaccessible. To some extent we are already anticipating the discussion of plot, to which we now turn.

2.1.2 Emplotment - A Reading of Aristotle's *Poetics*

Ricoeur takes up Aristotle's *Poetics* for two main reasons.⁴ Firstly, Aristotle's concept of emplotment is the opposite to Augustine's concern with existential discordance. The use of plot gives concordance to the discordance of human experience. Secondly, in extension from the first reason, the concept of mimetic activity makes possible "creative imitation" of human experience. Ricoeur admits that it is initially difficult to distinguish between mimetic activity and emplotment. Emplotment in Aristotle's work is defined as the active organising of events. Mimesis, on the other hand, is the "active process of imitating or representing something" (1984:33). Ricoeur deals with the concepts as a pair. Aristotle entertains a "quasi-identification" of the two in suggesting "The imitation [mimesis] of action is the Plot" (quoted in Ricoeur 1984:34). Inherent in such a statement is the "subordination of character to events", a step which establishes also the priority of ethical action over ontic ethical qualities in defining the character (1984:37).⁵

⁴ Amongst other works, Ricoeur uses *Poetics*. Introduction, Commentary and Appendices by Frank L. Lucas (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1968), G. F. Else, *Aristotle's Poetics: The Argument*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1957), *La Poétique*, texte, traduction, notes par Roselyne Dupont-Roc et Jean Lallot (Paris: Seuil 1980), and *Aristotle's Poetics*, Trans., with an introduction and notes by James Hutton (New York: W. W. Norton and Company 1975).

⁵ See further "The Power of Speech," (1985:59-70).

A conscious step is necessary in transferring the concept of plot and mimesis from the genre of tragedy (where Aristotle concentrates) to the whole narrative field. Key to the success of this step is the character of the tragic plot, that is, concordance, deliberately containing within itself discordance, which corresponds to the Augustinian *distentio animi*. In Aristotle's plot, time is excluded, consisting rather in a logical connection which links itself to the *Verstehen* tradition of hermeneutics. In relation to tragedy again "It is the composition of the plot that purges the emotions, by bringing to representation the pitiable and fearful incidents, and it is these purged emotions that govern our discernment of the tragic" (1984:45).

The importance of mimesis for Ricoeur in relation to all narrative, is the sense of creative imitation, and the "space for fiction". Narrative presents itself "as if" it were the real. Thus, Ricoeur has reached that point once more of holding in emplotment a tool that expresses the inexpressible.⁶

2.1.3 Time and Narrative: Threefold Mimesis

Ricoeur now combines the two previous studies to test his basic hypothesis that

between the activity of narrating a story and the temporal character of human experience, there exists a correlation that is not merely accidental but that presents a transcultural form of necessity. To put it another way, *time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through a narrative mode, and narrative attains its full meaning when it becomes a condition of temporal existence* (1984:52).

The three moments of mimesis consist, then, in the mediation of the hermeneutical moment of narrative (mimesis₂), between the past or experience (mimesis₁) and the future possibilities (mimesis₃): "*We are following the destiny of a prefigured time that becomes a refigured time through the mediation of a configured time*" (1984:54). In other words, Ricoeur sees in

⁶ See further on relationship between truth (what is said) and rhetoric or emplotment (the way in which it is said) in "The Fragility of Political Language," (1987:35-44).

narrative a means of recapitulating the past in tradition and experience in such a way that the future can be informed and conformed. Future action itself becomes the means and the end of reading.

Mimesis₁ concerns the presuppositions to poetic composition, that is "a preunderstanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character" (1984:54). This is the framework in which action has its meaning. Judgement on the action, that is, ethical valuation, can take place because of the terms of the framework.

Mimesis₂ is the mediation of the plot between the experience or preunderstanding and possible future or post understanding: "With mimesis₂ opens the kingdom of the *as if*" (1984:64). The plot mediates in several ways: firstly, between individual events and the story as a whole; secondly, between heterogenous elements; and thirdly, between temporal characteristics. The plot holds together the dialectical relation of distention and intention, and in temporal terms "transforms the succession of events into one meaningful whole" (1984:67). The common idea of the 'arrow of time' is countered so that from the perspective of the plot one may recollect.

Mimesis₃ is what Gadamer called 'application' and Ricoeur refers to as 'appropriation'.⁷ Ricoeur speaks of the "intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader", that is, the "world configured by the poem and the world wherein real action occurs and unfolds its specific temporality" (1984:71). Clearly the three moments of mimesis have a circular relation and Ricoeur makes a commitment to the effect that it is a "healthy circle" (1984:76). Further, Ricoeur introduces the concepts of tradition and experience in the context of this circle. These categories include the discussion of reference, to be addressed in the second part of the work. At

⁷ See footnote 7, chapter one.

this point then a definition of narrated time is proposed: "the time of action that ... is refigured by the configurational act" (1984:83).

This is the point of achievement in the first part of Ricoeur's work. A phenomenology of time (which we have so far reviewed), in dialogue with history and literary criticism, is Ricoeur's favoured path to examining the relationship between time and narrative and evaluating the thesis that "the poetics of narrativity responds and corresponds to the aporetics of temporality" (1984:84).⁸

2.2 "History and Narrative"

The second part of *Time and Narrative* comprises of a discussion of the relation between historiography and narrative fiction. While a general tendency amongst historians has been to devalue the role of fictional narrative, Ricoeur sets about re-examining the construction of history itself and the implications such a study has for the assessment of fictional narrative.

Ricoeur discusses historical and fictional narrative as the continuation of his treatment of Aristotle's concept of plot. This immediately includes historiography in the realm of "emplotment", an anticipation of Ricoeur's direction:

if history were to break every connection to *our basic competence for following a story* and to the cognitive operations constitutive of our narrative understanding, ... it would lose its distinctive place in the chorus of social sciences. It would cease to be historical" (1984:91).

Ricoeur further claims that even "history the most removed from narrative form continues to be bound to our narrative understanding" (1984:91). In relation to historical time, he proposes that history, as a work of the mimesis₂ genre,

⁸ According to Bauer the Greek verb from which "aporia" and "aporetics" are derived means "to be at a loss, in doubt, uncertain" (1979:97).

is "rooted in the temporal characteristics of the world of action" (1984:92).

Thus:

To reconstruct the indirect connections of history to narrative is finally to bring to light the intentionality of the historians thought by which history continues obliquely to intent the field of human action and its basic temporality" (1984:92).

The implications of such an assessment of historical narrative are such that with regard to the New Testament Gospels and their commentators, for example, the emphasis passes from a concern for the world intended or postulated by the author, to the world actually of the author. In other words, the contemporary concerns and interests of the author become apparent in the projections of the text. The 'objective events' are subject to these authorial interests.

2.2.1 The Eclipse of Narrative

Ricoeur takes up in this chapter the general denial of the narrative character of history. There are two main attacks that he attempts to counter, firstly, that of French historiography whereby there is a displacement of the object of history from the "active individual" to the "total social fact", and secondly, that of logical positivism, comprising an "epistemological break between historical explanation and narrative understanding" (1984:96). To some extent these contenders represent the poles of explanation and understanding, respectively. In an emphasis upon the "total social fact", the all embracing theory absorbs the totality of all events. In logical positivism, Ricoeur sees understanding achieved only by divorcing it from any empirical input. The emphasis on either explanation or understanding at the expense of the other is a unacceptable hermeneutical practice for Ricoeur. As noted in *Interpretation Theory* (1976:22-23 & 71-95), Ricoeur aims at overcoming the opposition between the two traditions, claiming rather the importance of articulating a theory that integrates explanation and understanding.

2.2.2 Defenses of Narrative

The defence of narrative was borne out of criticism of the covering law model, in particular its concept of explanation, as well as the development of a view that narrative is also a valid object of intelligible inquiry. The covering-law model is subject to two major criticisms. Firstly, it is suggested that "historians do not proceed from the classificatory term toward the general law but from the classificatory term toward the explanation of differences" (1984:124-125). Secondly, and consequently, in dealing with differences, historiography makes judgements, using warrants and causal analysis, rather than deducing positions and statements from historical law.

It is important, however, not to neglect the question of actions that cannot be attributed to individual agents. This opens the possibility of the reintroduction of the concept of plot. A re-emphasis of the polarity between

understanding and explanation and the results of the intersection of the theory of action and the theory of history raises the question again of teleology. The answer for Ricoeur is the concept of plot which "'comprehends' in one intelligible whole, circumstances, goals, interactions, and unintended results" (1984:142). Further, plot is able to incorporate each new act or fact, adjusting the "'motivational background' assignable to the action of different historical agents" (1984:142).

Turning to the development of a science which considered the narrative an appropriate object of intelligible inquiry, Ricoeur is aware that the simple re-adoption of the narrative in history does not answer the questions of understanding and explanation. He declares himself in search of "a more indirect tie between historical explanation and our narrative understanding" (1984:143). The effect of working out steps by which to link the two will be to demonstrate the similarity of historical narrative to fictional narrative.

Ricoeur notes several themes of inquiry which supplement the discussion of narrative and explanation. The 'narrative sentences' consist of a phenomenological type of description whereby explanation and description coincide. In order to link narrative sentence to narrative text the concept of 'following a story' is suggested. While explanation proceeds from the narrative, the explanation is also at the service of the narrative form. Thus, the conclusion must fit the narrative/ story in order to be acceptable to the reader.

The concept of the 'configurational act' emphasises the sense in which the writing can only take place after the event, and thus is, in effect, re-writing. A positing of historical rules is not a guarantee of future predictions but the results of observations of the past.

The concept of 'explanation by emplotment' is the bringing together of history and fiction in a build up of a theory of style. This is the context of the phrase the "poetics of history". The trilogy of story-line, emplotment and

argument in relation to the ideological implications of the text leads to a position whereby emplotment is "what brings about the transition between narrating and explaining" (1984:168).

Finally, the question of 'how one writes history' results in the position that history is a truthful narrative and that it is inadequately presented in historical 'laws'. Such a stance proposes, according to Ricoeur, that "there is nothing to understand in history except plots, and that expanding our questionnaire is equivalent to a progressive conceptualization" (1984:174).

2.2.3 Historical Intentionality

Having considered the redundancy of narrative in French historiography and logical positivism, as well as the various emphases of the narrativists, Ricoeur is still in quest of the indirect connection that must be maintained between history and narrative:

despite this ... epistemological break [between historical knowledge and narrative] history cannot ... sever every connection with narrative without losing its historical character. Conversely, this connection cannot be so direct that history can simply be considered a species of genus story (1984:177).⁹

Ricoeur considers the counter-attack of the narrativists to be only partially successful. They are correct in the suggesting that to narrate is to explain, and in diversifying the explanatory resources of narratives, however, Ricoeur maintains that a "gap remains between narrative explanation and historical explanation" (1984:179).

The Husserlian technique of 'asking back' is employed in the examination of Ricoeur's programme in which he will attempt to "explore by which indirect paths the paradox of historical knowledge ... transposes onto a higher level of complexity the paradox constitutive of the operation of narrative

⁹ See further "History and Hermeneutics," (1976:683-697).

configuration" (1984:180).¹⁰ Ricoeur introduces the concepts of "quasi-plot", "quasi-character", and 'quasi-element'

which belong to the same intermediary level and have a similar function, serving as a relay station for the movement of history's questioning back towards narrative and, beyond the narrative, in the direction of actual practice (1984:182).

The relation between the historical event and time is also examined as it contains both the increasing distance of historical time from both narrative and lived time, but also the challenge to the time of action through the temporality of narrative.

The concept of "quasi-plot" is related to the causal analysis of history. Such an analysis preserves a link between explanation and understanding. It involves a judgement as to the possibilities of explanation and why one factor is considered more significant than another. The notion of plot is related then "*by analogy* to all singular causal imputation" (1984:192), in that it performs the same role of simplifying, yet making accessible on a narrative level. Similarly, in terms of 'quasi-characters' the action of a society is paralleled to that of a mass of individuals and *vice versa*. Therefore, 'characters' in narrative become the bearers of themes, analyses, and results of inquiries made in relation to history. Finally, Ricoeur suggests that "historical events do not differ radically from the events framed by a plot" (1984:208) giving rise to the concept of a 'quasi-event'. In the narrative, events receive their intelligibility in relation to

¹⁰ Ricoeur explains: "I have distinguished three paths along which we may question back: the one that leads from the explanatory procedures of scientific history back to the explanatory power contained in the emplotment of narrative: the one that leads from the entities constructed by the historian back to the characters in narrative: and finally, the one that leads from the multiple time of history back to the temporal dialectic of narrative. These three paths are inseparable ... They are characterized not only (1) by the same style of indirect filiation linking history to narrative understanding, but also (2) by the same recourse to certain relay stations that history itself provides for the task of reconstructing the historical intentionality" (1984:193).

the plot: "events are singular *and* typical, contingent *and* expected, deviant *and* dependant on paradigms" (1984:208).

In concluding the second part of the work *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur summarises his aim as an "*investigation of the relations between the writing of history and the operation of emplotment, which Aristotle elevates to the rank of the dominant category of the art of composing works that imitate an action*" (1984:227). By way of the method of 'asking-back' applied to historical intentionality, and corresponding to the generation of meaning, the use of relay stations has been uncovered. The concepts of quasi-event, quasi-character, and quasi-plot, have enabled the expression of the "tenuous and deeply hidden tie that holds history within the sphere of narrative and thereby preserves the historical dimension itself" (1984:230). Ricoeur's aim in this part, therefore, has been to illustrate that mimesis₂, that is, configuration or emplotment, is the means by which historical narrative is produced. Anticipating Ricoeur's overall treatment of both historical and fictional narrative, the concern to outline the similar function of mimesis₂ in both cases will be prominent.

2.3 "The Configuration of Time in Fictional Narrative"¹¹

Having applied the mimesis model, specifically mimesis₂, to historical narrative, Ricoeur turns to fictional narrative, that is, narrative that does not aim to "constitute a true narrative" (1985:3). Ricoeur proceeds by firstly asking if the concept of 'emplotment', taken over from Aristotle, is applicable or compatible with the examination of the modern novel. Secondly, emplotment will be brought into dialogue with the rationalist narratology of structuralism, particularly in terms of temporality. Thirdly, Ricoeur will "explore the resources of narrative configuration that seem peculiar to fictional narrative" in preparation for a later comparison of the time of

¹¹ See further "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality," (1979:123-141) and "The Bible and the Imagination," (1981:49-75).

fiction and the time of history (1985:5). Finally, the notion of the world of the text will be taken up, complete with its theory of temporality, also in preparation for the later confrontation of the world of the text and the world of the reader, which is, strictly speaking, the realm of mimesis.

2.3.1 The Metamorphoses of the Plot

Ricoeur notes in the modern novel an expansion of character at the expense of plot. The social sphere in which action unfolds has been expanded to classes outside the heroic and nobility. The development of a character over time rather than a static presentation of a character's attributes has also been an area of change. However, the incompleteness or multi-dimensionality of character has also replaced a uni-level presentation. In the wake of these changes Ricoeur asks: "Can we still talk about the plot when the exploration of the abysses of consciousness seems to reveal the inability of even language to pull itself together and take shape?" (1985:10). His proposal is, however, that the notion of emplotment is still operative. The modern novel, even in its greater concentration on character, exemplifies two histories in fiction: "that of the conquest of new regions by the formal principle of configuration, but also that of the discovery of the increasingly conventional character of this undertaking" (1985:13). The novel is responding to a new consciousness, but it only attempts to play the same role as emplotment in tragedy, that is, the configuration of time.

A question arises, now as to whether literary history may replace criticism. Ricoeur responds in terms of the concept of tradition: "narrative understanding retains, integrates within itself, and recapitulates its own history" (1985:14). Tradition is defined as "sedimentation of a practice within a specific history" (1985:14). Important, however, is the pre-rational character of tradition:

Traditionality is that irreducible phenomenon that allows criticism to stand half-way between the contingency of a mere history of genres, or types, or works arising from the narrative

function, and an eventual logic of possible narratives that would escape history" (1985:14-15).

Ricoeur, thus, is able to hold together several strands of hermeneutical theory. The role of genre is affirmed, enabling the comparison of similar narrative constructions from different cultures and times. The link of narrative to the "productive imagination" facilitates the inclusion of the subjectivist tradition. Finally, in the sense that emplotment is an order of the imaginary "it includes an irreducible temporal dimension, that of traditionality" (1985:19). Ricoeur suggests that in emplotment we see "the correlate of a genuine narrative understanding that precedes, both in fact and by right, every reconstruction of narrating in terms of a second-order rationality" (1985:19).

In terms of change in the modern novel, Ricoeur wants to consider the possibility of the death of narrative. He holds that even in the rejection of the past, tradition, or conventional schematism, configuration is an order and capable of bearing truth status. Narrative may be metamorphosed, but it remains an appropriate category for meaning in its new form, because of the basic characteristic of configuration in the sense of mimesis₂.

2.3.2 The Semeiotic Constraints of Narrativity

Ricoeur turns to the question of deep structure, with the observation that perennality (used in connection with traditionality) indicates an archaic basis to narrative. Several steps are required to pass from history to structure. Firstly, a deductive procedure is adopted. (We will see shortly that this step is equated with primary emplotment.) Secondly, a model of narrative semeiology is constructed on the basis of models used in linguistics. Thirdly, the integrative capacity of such models, through the priority of the whole over the parts, is recognised. In these steps, structure is created or generated which has, through its reliance on linguistics, also involves a dechronologisation. The challenge is clear then, from fictional

narrative analysed from the structuralist perspective, to the temporality of narrative that Ricoeur has developed in the context of historical narrative.

Ricoeur addresses a number of specific structuralist positions. Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*¹² served as the primary work of a taxonomic approach to structure. In classification Propp emphasised the priority of function over character. As a result the folk tale became a sequence of formalised events. Ricoeur holds that such a rationality cannot be substituted for narrative understanding, however:

despite the epistemological break made by narrative rationality, we can find between it and narrative understanding an indirect filiation comparable to the one I brought to light in Part II of this work between historiographical rationality and narrative understanding (1985:38).

Key to this link is the basis for the narrative logic, that is, in Ricoeur's words, something which stems "from a semantics of action prior to a logic of narrative" (1985:42). Thus, even the formalisation of action into standard events is a form of emplotment, of configuration, which is then furthered by the arrangement of these events in a certain sequence, a plot: "It is the function of a plot to bend the logic of *possible* acts towards a logic of *probable* narratives" (1985:43).

Ricoeur also considers the work of A. J. Greimas.¹³ Greimas considers actors or actants as primary (rather than function as in Propp), but still proposes an achronic model of narrative. Three central sets of relations are proposed, those of desire, communication and action. In that his major semic category is conjunction and disjunction (in its similarity to the *distentio*

¹² Second edition published by Austin: University of Texas Press 1968.

¹³ Ricoeur is responding to the works *Structural Semantics: An Attempt at a Method*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press 1983, *Du Sens: Essais sémiotiques*. Paris: Seuil 1970. The work *Du Sens Vol. 2*. Paris: Seuil 1983, appeared just as the French edition of this volume went to press. See Ricoeur's more recent essays on Greimas: "On Narrativity," and "Greimas' Narrative Grammar" (1988-1989:551-562, 581-608 respectively).

animi) the synchronic and atemporal is temporalised. Further, Greimas' concern with the order of values, gives a teleological guide to the relations:

Greimas' model seems to me to be under a double constraint, logical on the one hand, praxic and pathetic (that is, having to do with acting and suffering) on the other. Yet it only satisfies the first of these ... " (1985:60).

Thus, in considering the apparent limitation of semantic models of literary theory on the universal applicability of narrative theory as previously developed, Ricoeur argues for the actual temporality of both Propp's and Greimas' models.

2.3.3 Games With Time

Ricoeur is here dealing with the division in linguistics between utterance and statement, a possibility only for fictional narrative. In this shift of interest from statement to utterance

the specifically fictive features of narrative time take on a distinctive outline. They are in a sense set free by the interplay between various temporal levels stemming from the reflexivity of the configuring act itself (1985:61).

Ricoeur initially considers the verbal tense system of language and its relation to lived temporal experience. The relation between tenses of the lived past and the narrative tenses is comparable to the relation between *mimesis*₁ and *mimesis*₂: "Past tenses first express the past: then by a metaphorical transition that preserves what it supercedes, they state the entry into fiction without a direct, though perhaps with an oblique, reference to the past as such" (1985:75).

A key comparative tool, however, in the question of utterance and statement is that of the relation between the discourse of the narrator and the discourse of the character in fiction. The two are present, yet come from different times. They both invite the reader to view as they view, and in turn present the world of the text to the reader. This realm of self-reflection in judgement and mirrored in linguistics is a microcosm of the relation between configuration and refiguration.

2.3.4 The Fictive Experience of Time

Following on from this dynamic created by the division of time of narration and time of narrated, Ricoeur wants to now articulate an experience of time. On doing so he proposes to open for investigation the field in which "the problems of narrative configuration border on those of the refiguration of time by narrative" (1985:100). (At this point Ricoeur concentrates on the projection of a world by the text, rather than the interaction between that world and the world of the reader. That will be the concern of the area of mimesis₃.)

A literary work relates to, and is directed towards a world which escapes its own closure, "a transcendence immanent in the text (1985:101). This is the fictive experience of time. To demonstrate this proposal explicitly Ricoeur introduces three 'tales about time'. All tales are tales of time, but only some are tales about time.¹⁴

In concluding this third part of the *Time and Narrative* work, 'The Configuration of Time in Fictional Narrative', Ricoeur has concentrated strictly on mimesis₂. It is important to note, however, that mimesis is still understood as an action. In this part Ricoeur has considered character and consciousness, maintaining the position that "saying is still doing" (1985:156). In other words, in the face of the increased examination of the person as person, temporality is not rendered invalid as emplotment is essential for the presentation of character. Similarly in the consideration of

¹⁴ Ricoeur uses *Mrs Dalloway* (Virginia Woolf), *Der Zauberberg* (Thomas Mann), and *A la recherche du temps perdu* (Marcel Proust). Each work is, in Ricoeur's terms, a tale about time, the mode of 'discordant concordance' whereby the spheres of praxis or pathos are addressed as well as lived experience, and finally, engaged in the relating of time and eternity. Ricoeur suggests: "Fictional narrative thus detects temporalities that are more or less extended, offering in each instance a different figure of recollection, of eternity in or out of time, and ... the secret relation between eternity and death" (1985:101).

synchronic linguistic theory, temporality is still a constitutive category because of the place of action in the classification of the text.

In comparing the analyses of historical narrative and fictional narrative, configuration may be said to take place in both. The investigations "parallel each other and constitute the two sides of one and the same investigation into the art of composition, ... [that is] mimesis²" (1985:156). There are several reasons for this. Both narrative modes are preceded by the use of narrative in daily life, that is, they both have their basis in lived experience. Both also involve the reconstituting of the narrative field by emplotment. Finally, both demonstrate the precedence of narrative understanding over narrative rationality. Ricoeur concludes:

The universal character of the formal principle of narrative configuration was thereby confirmed, to the extent that what this understanding confronts is the emplotment, taken in its extreme formality, namely, the temporal synthesis of the heterogeneous (1985:158).

The implications for biblical studies are not immediately clear, but it may be suggested that the value of the study of the biblical studies begins to show itself. Biblical study is usually presented as historical narrative with an apparent emphasis on explanation according to 'historical science'. Understanding in the sense of identification or empathy generally is either restricted to very personal elements or produced by means of a revisionist approach to the narrative, which concentrates more on the story behind the story than the produced text. Ricoeur's process would, however, shift focus onto the world not of the Bible, but of biblical studies, and the world in which biblical studies takes place and has its impact. The next step consists of the consideration of mimesis³, not only the relating of the world of the reader to that of the text, but asking at the same time the truth question, in other words, the possibility of responsible action.

2.4 Narrated Time¹⁵

This final part of *Time and Narrative* aims at an explication of the thesis that: "the effort of thinking which is at work in every narrative configuration is completed in a refiguration of temporal experience" (1988:3). This refiguration corresponds to the third mimetic moment proposed at the end of the first part of the work.¹⁶ The part comprises of two sections, the first considering the aporetics of temporality over against the power of refiguration, and the second, dealing with the gap between the ontological intentions of history and fiction.

2.4.1 The Aporitics of Temporality

The first section of this part concerns the phenomenology of time, along with historiography and fiction, that is, a three way conversation concerning mimesis. Dealing briefly with Augustine, Aristotle, Husserl, Kant, and Heidegger, Ricoeur illustrates the question that a phenomenology of time poses to the refiguration of the future, namely, the absence of an absolute starting point. While time is related to self-reflection and is related to movement, neither sense fully captures time, nor are they outside or in any sense objective with respect to time. The refiguration of the future, then, becomes a task only possible from within the contingency of the present.

2.4.1.1 The Time of the Soul and the Time of the World

The limitation of Augustine's theory of time is that it was unable to reconcile a cosmological concept of time with a psychological one, the latter rather being added to the former. As a result Ricoeur is left still having to relate the movement of the world to the movement of the mind. There are two 'inconceivable' aspects of time to note in Aristotle, firstly, the "unstable and ambiguous status of time itself, caught between movement, of which it is an aspect, and the soul that discerns it" (1988:18) and secondly, movement

¹⁵ See the summary article "Narrated Time," 1985:259-272.

¹⁶ See section 2.1.3 above.

itself which is still not accessibly defined in the phrase "the fulfillment of what is potentiality, as such" (1988:18). The extension of physical time cannot be derived, however, from within the distention of the soul, nor from cosmology. There is, instead, a basic clash between the notion of the threefold present, the dialectic of intention and distention and the notions of before and after. Ricoeur therefore replies:

Our ambition will be to show below how the poetics of narrative contributes to joining what speculation separates. Our narrative poetics needs the complicity as well as the contrast between internal time-consciousness and objective succession, making all the more urgent the search for narrative mediations between the discordant concordance of phenomenological time and the simple succession of physical time (1988:22).

2.4.1.2 Intuitive Time or Invisible Time?

Husserl's phenomenology of time attempts to portray time in a form that allows no difference between time and consciousness, an endeavour to make the transcendent irrelevant. There are, thus, two great discoveries of Husserl's phenomenology of time: firstly, the description of the phenomenology of retention and its counterpart protention; and, secondly, the distinction between retention (primary remembrance) and recollection (secondary remembrance). Husserl wants to hold together "the continuity in the phenomenon of passing away, of being drawn together, and of becoming obscure" (1988:28) and thus considers time on three levels: i. objective time, or experienced time; ii. objectified time, or retained time,; and iii. immanent time or recollected time. Ricoeur quotes: "'The primal succession of moments of appearance, by virtue of the time-founding retentions, and the like, constitutes appearance (altered, or unaltered) as phenomenological-temporal unity'" (1988:44). The question may be asked, however, as to whether this is not merely a circular exercise. Kant refutes the possibility of a time without transcendent intention, but he is not able to construct a view of time distinct from the contribution of the phenomenology of time. For Kant time does not appear, it is rather a condition of appearing.

2.4.1.3 Temporality, Historicality, and Within-Time-Ness

In Heidegger the questions of Augustine, Aristotle, and Husserl were superceded by virtue of the rise of category of *Dasein* (over against the soul). However, Ricoeur demonstrates the rise of a similar dynamic (to *distentio animi*) in *Dasein*. Enveloping the three categories of time (past, present, and future) in the realm of being, Heidegger proposes three different denominations, namely, "temporality, historicality, and within-time-ness" (1988:63). Temporality in relation to the basic axis of "Care", expresses being (and time) in a way that includes all aspects of human experience, that is "being-a-whole (*Ganzsein*)" (1988:64). In that temporality is expressed as "coming towards, having been, and making present" it is an articulation of Augustine's threefold present (1988:70).

Turning to historicality (*Geschichtlichkeit*), both a derivation from and an addition to temporality, a combination of *Erstreckung* and *Wiederholung* is envisaged. Historicality, Ricoeur suggests,

begins with the notion of stretching-along (*Erstreckung*), following the chain of the three semantically related concepts - history (*Geschichte*), fate (*Schicksal*), and common destiny (*Geschick*) - and then culminates in the concept of repetition (or recapitulation) (*Wiederholung*) (1988:76).

Ricoeur again discerns within this construction a parallel to *distentio* and *intentio*, as well as discordance and concordance.

'Within-time-ness' is also a derivation and addition, this time in relation to historicality. In relation to temporality this 'within-time-ness' is the source of "ordinary time" (1988:80). Three characteristics of within-time-ness, datability, lapse of time, and public time, combined with the 'reckoning with', and measuring of time that takes place in being, combine to constitute ordinary time. Thus, for example, calendar time combines the existential experience of movement that can be measured, and combines with the datability of time.

2.4.1.4 Conclusion to the Aporetics of Temporality

Ricoeur summarises the first section of part four in the following way: "the autonomy of time with respect to movement ... constitutes the ultimate aporia for the phenomenology of time - an aporia that only the hermeneutical conversion of phenomenology could reveal in its radicality" (1988:91). This has been the service of Heidegger's construction of the 'ordinary concept of time'. Ricoeur proposes two conclusions. Firstly, the participation of phenomenology of time in discussion of phenomenology, historiography and literary narratology results in both aporias as well as positive discoveries. Secondly, in asking the question "what is time?" we see that "we cannot think about cosmological time (the instant) without surreptitiously appealing to phenomenological time and *vice versa*" (1988:96). Interestingly, the major difficulty of time uncovered by Heidegger's critique echoes Ricoeur's treatment of ideology where no position is an objective or free vantage point. In a similar way to the universality of the ideological, there is no timeless or absolute position with regard to reading and consequent action. As with ideology, however, Ricoeur seeks a positive rendering of this difficulty.

2.4.2 Poetics of Narrative - History, Fiction, and Time

This section offers the reply to the impasse reached in the former consideration of Heidegger. Ricoeur proposes that "the key to the problem of refiguration lies in the way of history and fiction, taken together, offer the reply of a poetics of narrative to the aporias of time brought to light by phenomenology" (1988:99).

2.4.2.1 Between Lived Time and Universal Time - Historical Time

Historical time is an attempt to mediate between lived time and cosmic time. This mediation is achieved by means of a number of connectors or bridges. The first example of such a bridge is the calendar. Via the mechanism, cosmic time is humanised and human time cosmologised according to Ricoeur: "This is how it contributes to re-scribing the time of narrative into

the time of the world" (1988:109). A second bridge is the 'succession of generations':

The notion of a succession of generations provides an answer to this antinomy [between mortal and public time] by designating the chain of historical agents as living people who come to take the place of dead people. It is this replacement ... that constitutes the third time characteristic of the notion of a succession of generations" (1988:109).

This succession also mediates between the private and public, given the sense in which death is private and curtailing but a public continuity can be maintained. It also allows, however, for the on-going significance of the dead in their sense of what the past symbolises for the future.

A third form of bridge between lived and universal time are "archives, records and traces" (1988:116). Archives and records base their meaning from the position that "history has left a trace, which has become the monuments and documents that bear witness to the past" (1988:119) A trace, then, is defined as two systems of relations, one being the links of causal chains which form historical actions, the other being the mark of that which, amongst all the possibilities, carried significance. The trace "refigures time by constructing the junction brought about by the overlapping of the existential and empirical in the significance of the trace" (1988:125-126).

2.4.2.2 Fiction and Its Imaginative Variations on Time

Having considered the 'imaginative variations' of time offered by fiction in part two, the reintroduction of the possibilities is appropriate in the context of the three way discussion between historical and fictive views of time, and the aporias of time revealed by phenomenological inquiry. In fiction the narrator is freed from the obligations of the historian to "conform to the specific connectors acting to rescribe lived time upon cosmic time" (1988:128). The split between cosmic time and lived time as discussed earlier, can be examined without recourse to the linear constraints because of the fact that all time occurs "within the great chronology of the universe" (1988:132). Fiction reacts to the aporias of the phenomenological examination,

not to neutralise or overcome them, but rather to make them productive (1988:134). Thus, the question of unifying the temporal flow, of re-emphasising eternity as the "limit-experience of temporality", and the challenge of remythicising time are the tasks and challenges, as well as the distinctive contribution of fiction (1988:132).

2.4.2.3 The Reality of the Past

With this section, Ricoeur begins a constructive convergence with respect to the above discussion. The key to establishing relations are the categories of 'the other', 'the same' and their combination in the 'analogous'. The enabling question at this point is "What are we saying when we say that something 'really' happened?" (1988:142). The key is the notion of trace. In asking a question of the past, the temporal distance is 'de-distanced' by the notion of the trace:

is not the trace, as a trace, present? Is to follow it not to render contemporary with their trace the events that it leads back to? ... is the past intelligible any other way than as persisting in the present?" (1988:144).

By means of the trace the past is 're-enacted' in the present, however, the temptation is to identify such a possibility with the idealist thesis of self projection. Ricoeur employs but qualifies the sub-heading "Under the sign of the same" as he is keen not to fall into complete subjectivism: "history is not possible unless historians know that they reenact an act that is not their own" (1988:146). This stipulation, however, resides uncomfortably under the category of the same.

Ricoeur then examines briefly the category of the 'other' in relation to historical event. Under such a regime "history generally attempts to distance the past from the present" (1988:148). This sometimes takes the form of attempting to emphasise the individuality of historical subjects. Ricoeur critiques such attempts, however, as unable to extract itself from the form of narrative and model of sociology for example. Such constraints are subject, as

we have already seen, to the emplotment and the creating of concordance from and in relation to discordance.

The "sign of the analogous" is a combination of relating the same and the other. The theory of tropes expresses a debt to the past and yet refigures it in a way that it can be described in the present. For Ricoeur, such a theory "constitutes the deep structures of the historical imagination" (1988:153), and particularly metaphor has "an explicitly representational vocation" (1988:153). The iconic value of a representation is that there is no original to be compared with the representation:

It is precisely the strangeness of the original ... that gives rise to history's effort to prefigure it in terms of a style. This is why, between a narrative and a course of events, there is not a relation of reproduction, reduplication, or equivalence but a metaphorical relation. The reader is pointed toward the sort of figure that likens the narrated events to a narrative form that our culture has made us familiar with" (1988:153-154).

The representation function of the metaphor, the 'seeing as' and the 'being as', is the content of the real. The same, the real and the analogous are all categories of the trace. In holding them all together Ricoeur suggests we have "preserved the mysterious aspect of the debt that makes the master of the plot a servant of the memory of past human beings" (1988:156).

2.4.2.4 The World of the Text and the World of the Reader

Having asked about the "real" in history, Ricoeur seeks the equivalent in fiction. He seems to find it simply in the "unreality of fiction" (1988:157). However, in the sense that Ricoeur critiqued "reality" through the modes of same, other and analogous, he will also critique "unreality". Ricoeur attempts this critique by moving away from the vocabulary of reference to that of application. Application is not an addition to the hermeneutical process but an integral part of mimesis₃. This position represents a change from the work *Rule of Metaphor* where the referential power of the metaphor was accorded great significance. Now Ricoeur wants to ascribe greater significance to the

confrontation between the world of the reader and the world of the text, that is, to reading.

Reading falls under the rubric of rhetoric in the sense that the author is attempting to convince the reader of something. However, in relation to text (rather than speech) the author is the implied author, constituted by both the reader and the text. In this constitution, the reader intuitively applies a unifying role to the implied author, rendering invalid and speculative a claim to concentration on the actual author in the reading of the text.

The reading of the text constitutes a unified text also. Although rhetoric is the appropriate category at the level of the text, the reader makes a reading which in a sense is absolute. Thus, a claim to relate to the autonomous meaning or message of the text is undermined.

However, Ricoeur claims the aesthetic of the text to be its own capacity. It is this sense in which a text "acting on a reader *affects* that reader" (1988:167). Thus, a combination exists in which the activity of the text is made active by the action of reading. Proposing a phenomenology of the act of reading, Ricoeur claims that the reading act has its starting point in the incompleteness of the text. The text offers schematic views which the reader will concretise. However, the text is never able to be fully perceived in any one reading, leading to a continuing process of the engagement of text and the reader. As well as providing a historical mediation, Ricoeur sees the importance of the text as follows:

The moment when literature attains its highest degree of efficacy is perhaps the moment when it places its readers in the position of finding a solution for which they themselves must find the appropriate questions, those that constitute the aesthetic and moral problem posed by a work" (1988:173).

The dialectic that arises in the interaction between text and reader is that of the freedom of fiction and the constraints of a view of the world. In analysing the "unreality of fiction" Ricoeur returns to the analogous:

the convergence of writing and reading tends to establish, between the expectations created by the text and those contributed by reading, an analogizing relation, not without resemblance to that in which the relation of standing-for the historical past culminates (1988:178).

2.4.2.5 The Interweaving of History and Fiction

By being able to deal with both history and fiction in terms of the analogous, Ricoeur has brought the two apparently dissimilar forms of narrative together. He now takes up an explicit attempt to refigure time through the interweaving of history and fiction.

Ricoeur has regarded history as the reinscription of the time of the narrative in the time of the universe. Building on the phenomenon of the trace as an expression of the synthetic activity of both history and fiction, the step to a refigured past is examined. Considering firstly the fictionalisation of history, Ricoeur posits a history that narrates "those events that a historical community holds to be significant because it sees in them an origin, a return to its beginnings" (1988:187). Thus, in history, the past is refigured in the interaction of texts and a specific reading community, which in turns shapes preservation and tradition. Ricoeur suggests:

By fusing in this way with history, fiction carries history back to their common origin in the epic. More precisely, what the epic did in the sphere of the admirable, the story of the victims does in the sphere of the horrible... In both cases, fiction is placed in the service of the unforgettable. It permits historiography to live up to the task of memory" (1988:189).

Ricoeur turns to the historicisation of fiction. Fictional narrative imitates the historical form in presenting itself "as if it were past" (1988:189). As noted above, the unreality of the fiction is limited by the possibilities of the world: "What 'might have been' ... includes both the potentialities of the 'real' past and the 'unreal' possibilities of pure fiction" (1988:192).

Ricoeur concludes:

the interweaving of history and fiction in the refiguration of time rests in the final analysis, upon this reciprocal overlapping, the quasi-historical moment of fiction changing places with the quasi-fictive moment of history. In this

interweaving ... originates what is commonly called human time, where the standing-for the past in history is united with the imaginative variations of fiction, against the background of the aporias of the phenomenology of time" (1988:192).¹⁷

2.4.2.6 Towards a Hermeneutics of Historical Consciousness

Ricoeur has left behind the possibility of the total mediation of the past, substituting for it "an open-ended, incomplete, imperfect mediation, namely, the network of interweaving perspectives of the expectation of the future, the reception of the past and the experience of the present" (1988:207). He proposes that the present be considered the "*time of initiative*" whereby the weight of the past and the dreams of the future are "transposed into a responsible decision" (1988:208). With such a perspective the dimension of acting (and its corollary, suffering) will become the privileged mode of reading. This concern, in consequence, shifts the question from the understanding of the past, to the making of the future.¹⁸

Ricoeur is at pains to rebuff an overly optimistic view of the future, such as that typical of the Enlightenment. The new age suggested to have dawned in the Enlightenment is difficult to relate to such an origin for Ricoeur. Also, instead of an acceleration of progress since that time, Ricoeur suggests there has been an acceleration of historical mutations. Finally, the claim to be mastering history obscures the fact that it is on the basis of a past that is not made by us. Ricoeur warns against utopian expectations and claims, seeking rather responsible commitment and a resistance to the temptation to narrow the space of experience.

Tradition is the category called upon by Ricoeur to emphasise the sense of being affected by the past. The sense of temporal distance involved is not

¹⁷ Such a position is a renunciation of Hegel's proposal of the unity of time, the supreme plot, and the universality of the rational. See the chapter "Should we renounce Hegel?" in *Time and Narrative, Vol. III*. (1988:193-206) and further "Irrationality and the Plurality of Philosophical Systems," (1985:297-319).

¹⁸ On the importance of suffering for Ricoeur's biblical hermeneutics see "From Proclamation to Narrative," (1984:501-512).

a "dead interval" but rather one full of potential for generating meaning. Similarly in reading, traditions are both limiting and generative of meaning, depending on the extent to which they are invoked. They embody a legitimacy, a claim to truth, but offer an argument within the public space of discussion. The compatibility of traditions with the analogous in the realm of narrative is easily seen.

Finally, reflecting on the present in the light of the above discussions, pushes Ricoeur to advocate a break with the problem of knowledge in favour of life, a break with the question of truth in favour of that of utility. To this extent Ricoeur has broken with the convention surrounding history:

a certain iconoclasm directed against history, as sealed up in what is past and gone, is a necessary condition for its ability to refigure time. No doubt a time in suspension is required if our intentions directed at the future are to have the force to reactivate the unaccomplished possibilities of the past, and if effective-history is to be carried by still living traditions (1988:240).

2.5 Conclusions to *Time and Narrative*

Ricoeur's hypothesis has been "that temporality cannot be spoken of in the direct discourse of phenomenology, but rather requires the mediation of the indirect discourse of narration" (1988:241). In the course of addressing this thesis Ricoeur has considered three areas: firstly, the aporia resulting from the comparison of the phenomenological and the cosmological perspectives of time (and the possibility of a response via the interweaving of history and fiction); secondly, the question of "what meaning to give to the totalization of the ecstases of time, in virtue of which time is always spoken of in the singular" (1988:242), that is, a perspective that overshadows the split between phenomenological and cosmological: and thirdly, the aporia of "the ultimate unrepresentability of time, which makes even phenomenology continually turn to metaphors and to the language of myth in order to talk

about the upsurge of the present or the flowing of the unitary flux of time" (1988:243).

Ricoeur suggest that "Narrative time is like a bridge set over the breach speculation constantly opens between phenomenological time and cosmological time" (1988:244). Through the interweaving of historical and fictional narrative, that is, a distilling of narrative identity, a third time has been proposed which enables a "the poetic resolution of the hermeneutic circle" (1988:248). However, narrative identity is not a stable and seamless identity.

The second aporia is born from "the dissociation among the three ecstases of time - the future, the past, and the present - despite the unavoidable notion of time conceived of as a collective singular" (1988:249-250). In that the poetics of narrative has denied the possibility of bringing about a totalisation of history through concepts and the eternal present of absolute knowledge, Ricoeur proposes instead an imperfect mediation by expectation, tradition, and the force of the present. Such a structure corresponds to the multiform unity of temporality. Ricoeur asks if it is because of narrative that there is a "good correlation between the multiform unity of the ecstases of time and the imperfect mediation of the historical consciousness" (198:259) and rejects such a possibility for two reasons. Firstly, narrative in the strict sense allows only an inadequate medium for thinking out history: "there is no plot of all plots capable of equaling the idea of one humanity and one history" (1988:259). Secondly, the literary category of narrative is itself "inadequate to thought about history" (1988:259). In spite of these limitations, however, traditions are essentially narratives, and thus narrative is a privileged medium in terms of history. There is also an indirect relation between the horizon of expectations and narrative in that narrative can function as anticipation. Thus Ricoeur suggests that

narrativity does not offer the second aporia of temporality as adequate a response as it offered to the first aporia. This inadequacy will not be seen as a failure if we do not lose sight of the following two maxims. First, the reply of narrativity to the aporias of time consists less in resolving these aporias than in putting them to work, in making them productive... Second, any theory reaches its highest expression only when the exploration of the domain ... is completed with a recognition of the limits that circumscribe this domain of validity (1988:260-61).

The second maxim takes on its full meaning in the third aporia of temporality.

In the case of the third aporia the rereading comes up against the problem of the inability to think time. The problem in fact is, for Ricoeur, the embarrassment that arises from not being able to master time, the insult to the *hubris*. Having noted the limits of narrativity, "These limits ... attest that not even narrative exhausts the power of the speaking that refigures time" (1988:261). Not only is time inscrutable, but it gives rise to a diversity of figures of what is beyond time. In Ricoeur's reviews of thinkers some have tended to archaism and others to hermeticism, the former not able to be captured in concepts and an ever present critique, the latter not able to be incorporated in thinking and a constant presupposition.

Ricoeur concludes: "The most cumbersome question our whole enterprise runs into may be summed up in the question of whether the unrepresentability of time still has a parallel on the side of narrativity" (1988:270). The possibilities and the limitations of narrative have been uncovered at each level of questioning, including the conclusion that narrativity is not a total solution to the problem of time. However, in the path traced in arriving at this point Ricoeur affirms "that ... historical consciousness within the limits of its validity requires in turn the search, by individuals and by the communities to which they belong, for their respective narrative identities" (1988:274). This for Ricoeur is the centre of the investigation and the activity in which "the aporetics of time and the poetics of narrative correspond to each other in a sufficient way" (1988:274).

In summarising briefly the contribution of *Time and Narrative* several key advances may be enumerated. Firstly, the three types of mimesis form the basis of a theory of reading and interpretation which is dependent on the quest for responsible action in the present. Secondly, in the discussion of historical and fictional narrative, the common division between explanation and understanding, natural and human sciences is treated in such a way that each aspect contributes to the other in the context of a common quest. Thirdly, narrated time positively assesses the limits of any theory of time, such that the contingency becomes a legitimate part of struggling for health and justice. We now move to a brief assessment of Ricoeur's work in the form of questions directed to and from aspects of liberation hermeneutics and theology in South Africa.

Chapter Three - Questions to and from Ricoeur with Regard to Liberation Hermeneutics

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to enter into brief dialogue with aspects of Ricoeur's hermeneutical writings of the last fifteen years. In the first section we consider the possibility of the lack of ethical commitment in Ricoeur's work by reviewing the aspects of the literary theories of two Marxist writers. Ricoeur is, in our view however, able to answer the query at this point. We will demonstrate the difficulty, however, by noting the use of Ricoeur by a prominent South African exegete.

In a second section, we will use Ricoeur to strengthen a concern over the use of authoritarian language in ostensibly liberative discourse. The discussion revolving around the biblical basis of the *Kairos Document* will provide an example of this difficulty.

3.2 A Critique of Ricoeur's Position

We suggest that, broadly speaking, Ricoeur's hermeneutics as articulated in parts of his post-1970 corpus runs the risk of being ahistorical and devoid of a clear ethical commitment. We will attempt to demonstrate this by comparison to marxist literary criticism, as articulated by a Briton, Terry Eagleton (1978), and a South African, Eve Bertelsen (1984, 1986).

Eagleton employs two approaches that may assist our assessment of Ricoeur, namely "categories for a materialist criticism" and "science of the text" (1978). The former concerns the theory of the production of texts, the latter, the relationship between text and reality.

Components in Eagleton's literary theory are the following: the general or dominant mode of production (GMP), the literary mode of production (LMP), general or dominant ideology (GI), authorial ideology (AuI), aesthetic ideology (AI), and text (T). Within the GMP of any society or economy there exists a number of LMPs. The variety is defined in terms of its relationship

to the GMP so that there can exist an integrated LMP and an alternative LMP, the former reinforcing and forming part of the GMP, the latter challenging and undermining the GMP. The LMP forms part of the literature itself, in the sense that every text posits a reader and thus defines itself in terms of a certain capacity for consumption in a society. The GMP, of which an integrated LMP is an important part, produces a dominant ideology which functions to reproduce the conditions necessary for the continuation of the GMP. Eagleton suggests that "All literary production ... belongs to that ideological apparatus which can be provisionally termed the 'cultural'" (1978:56). His concern is not, however, the individual text but the "ideological significance of the cultural and institutionalisation of literature as such" (1978:57).

The AuI is the specific relationship between the author and the GI. It can take forms of homology, disjunction and contradiction and is "overdetermined" by specific factors such as class, gender, nationality and religion. The specific region of the GI that is encountered by AuI is the AI, that is the ideology of culture, determined by the GMP and in turn reproducing the conditions for the same. In order for a text to gain approval (or literary status) within the GMP, it must conform to the AuI and its component theories of literature, critical practices, literary traditions and genre conventions, for example. Further, such 'approval' would comprise the positive relationship between the AuI and the dominant LMP.

Eagleton is not, however, suggesting that the final text is a passive vehicle for the above dynamics. In his science of the text Eagleton holds that text is not a transparent expression of ideology. It is rather a "production" of ideology (illustrated by way of the relation between script and theatrical production), with the relation between the text and its production being a "relation of *labour*" (1978:65). Thus, a direct spontaneous relationship between history and text is explicitly denied, with Eagleton suggesting that "History ... 'enters' the text .. precisely as *ideology*" (1978:72) so that the

AuI in relation to AI determines the "historical". Freedom often associated with fictional writing is equally an illusion: "Ideology ... so produces and constructs the real as to cast the shadow of its absence over the perception of its presence" (1978:69). However, as noted above, Eagleton posits a certain autonomy for the text: "Ideology pre-exists the text; but the *ideology of the text* defines, operates and constitutes that ideology in ways unpremeditated ... by ideology itself" (1978:80). Further:

The text constitutes itself as a structure: it destructures ideology in order to reconstitute it on its own relatively autonomous terms, in order to process and recast it in aesthetic production, at the same time as it is itself destructed to variable degrees by the effect of ideology upon it" (1978:98-99).

While the literary text attempts to present itself as a natural object, Eagleton holds that the function of criticism "is to refuse the spontaneous presence of the work ... in order to make its real determinants appear" (1978:101).

We turn to the work of Eve Bertelsen as a further tool in the attempt to concentrate Ricoeur's work in the context of specific struggles. Bertelsen has suggested that there exist two major streams of marxist literary studies, that centred on culture, and that concentrating on structuralism. Raymond Williams, as a proponent of the former stream, "suggests that we try to 'read through' the documentary forms of a culture (texts, buildings etc) in an attempt to rediscover the 'structure of feeling' of a class or group and identify their historical *experience* as individuals" (1986:1). The other stream (championed, for example, by Stuart Hall) "stresses the materiality of the *sign*" and claims that "Consciousness can have no existence *prior* to the ways in which it is produced and organised by the operation *on* men and women of particular ideologies and cultural forms" (1986:1).¹ Ricoeur's use of metaphor and

¹ Bertelsen's treatment of both streams within the broader category of marxist thought indicates an advancement from a 1984 work in which she read structuralism outside of such a category. The linking of the more specialised linguistic studies to the area of the construction of ideology (on a syntactic

narrative contains elements of both streams. Particularly in the early work of symbol and metaphor a 'documentary form of culture' was observable in the expressions of archaic realities. On the other hand, and possibly via the medium of metaphor, the construction of narrative as an expression of ideology is the subject of much of Ricoeur's more recent work.

Bertelsen is interested in the combination of the two streams in the discussion of hegemony, that is, both the cultural basis for a certain perspective, and the formation of an ideology which will produce that perspective. She achieves this combination by the linking of structuralist categories such as sign, code and discourse to the structure of ideology. While language is a system, that system attempts to disguise its background: "Its *systematic* nature is hidden beneath its *use* value, and only 'appears' when there is a dispute regarding usage" (1986:2-3). Thus, a sign is the working unit of discourse and maintains a relationship to a referent because of convention. Signs are combined by codes, that is, rules or conventions, into discourse. Bertelsen does not restrict codes to linguistic or grammatical forms, rather this category takes on an ideological character as well (reminiscent of Eagleton's aesthetic ideology) so that the codes also have a material aspect to them. Discourses, then are the different kinds of use to which language is put, not determined but related determinants through the structure of language. The field of discourse is finally a field of conflict and exchange:

Just as we teach *language as exchange*, fixing the trivial 'rights' and 'wrongs' of grammar, but seldom questioning the validity of the standard dialect ... so in *discourse* we are persuaded to

level) overcomes the problem she previously formulated in the following way: "On the one hand specialised linguists/ structuralists offer impeccable analyses of texts, their chief concern being formal rectitude and disinterestedness, while on the other, radical critics, bent on active intervention, often tend to ignore the precision and clarity that can be achieved by the careful tools of analysis, falling back on a rhetoric which does little to explain the particular strategies and procedures they are so concerned to counteract" (1984:4).

consent to the rules (codes) and ranking of discourse and their entrenched differences within the cultural/political system (Bertelsen 1986:4).

Particularly of interest is the function text or discourse plays in obtaining and maintaining "consent" to a certain relations of production. Bertelsen comments:

The effect of this work is ... to produce social knowledge and cultural values which will mark the *limits* of acceptable thought and action; to 'make sense' of everyday life in terms that leave the fundamental fracture out of account, simply because these relations are not clearly *seen* (1986:5).

Thus, there is a crisis in hegemony in the "moments *when the whole basis of political leadership and cultural authority becomes exposed and contested*" (Hall quoted in Bertelsen 1986:5).

In broad terms we suggest that Ricoeur has not provided as simple, nor as incisive a treatment of the question of literary production as Eagleton and Bertelsen. The concept of the emplotment, however, may function in this discussion and certainly Ricoeur's critique of "history" and "fiction" relates productively to Eagleton's view of the relation between text and ideology. Further, Ricoeur's basic attempt at addressing the problem of responsible action (temporality) by a theory of texts, lends itself to Bertelsen's style of criticism. Apart from minor comments though, Ricoeur runs the risk of reading for the sake of a present which is paradoxically devoid of reality, a reality with no clear relation to factors such as class or gender, for example. Further, the type of exegesis that Ricoeur has outlined contains an emphasis on the present, but again lacks an explicit commitment. The dangers of existentialism are the dangers of Ricoeur's proposals at this point. The dangers of reader response criticism are also evident. Certainly, the concentration on the present is an important step but, as the South African situation bears out, the actual class position of the reader can be ignored by a simple appeal to the contemporary reader.

The South African exegete, Bernard Lategan, has used Ricoeur in his presentation of reader response criticism (1983, 1989). Particularly of interest for Lategan is Ricoeur's suggestion of the projection of a world by the text, the concept of split reference, and the influence of text on a reality. In both Lategan's works, however, only the writings *Interpretation Theory* are of any importance. While *Rule of Metaphor* is referred to, along with several articles, even in the 1989 work no mention is made of *Time and Narrative*, nor of *Ideology and Utopia*. This selective reading of Ricoeur gives rise to the neglect of the concept of ideology criticism and a blunting of the critical edge of *Time and Narrative*. Consequently, Lategan's presentation of reader response criticism remains text-based. There is no possibility for the reader to question a text. There is no sensitivity to the possibility of different readings of a text from different positions in a society. Lategan follows Ricoeur in the suggestion that "communication is not complete until the text has reached its final 'destination'" and that "Reading is not merely a reproductive, but essentially a productive activity" (1985:68-69). His use of the categories of implied and real author, and implied and real reader, gives way to another stream of thought. In that Lategan suggests "the implied reader becomes the route by which the author reaches for the heart of the real reader" (1985:70), meaning remains text-based and not actually produced by a specific reading. The difficulty is illustrated by the conclusion that "the function of the text is to link real author with real reader in terms of the real world in which they find themselves" (1985:75). Ricoeur's point even before *Time and Narrative* is that the author and the reader do not share the same world. The use of the concept of the text projecting a reality is determinative for Lategan and, as we suggested, there is no possibility of a challenging of this world of the text from outside the text. The process of moving from text to reality is achieved, for Lategan, by certain words that "defy restriction to semeiotics and ... inexorably lead the movement from the

text to reality" (1985:90). Thus, any questions of how language convention arises, of whose interest the text is in, of who is reading are ignored. The message is simply there via special words which, in the case of the Bible, are normally given the authority of God. Lategan's presentation is difficult to understand in the context of the divided South African society. On many issues the differing social positions of the readers indeed do produce different readings, yet even in his shift from structuralism (unashamedly textually-based hermeneutics) to reader response criticism, there appears no opportunity for the reader's world to actually inform the reading. Lategan's use of Ricoeur, on the other hand, is partly justified, we would suggest, on the basis of most of the Ricoeurian corpus of the 1970's. The ethical commitment and the rootedness in history is emphasised far more in Ricoeur's works *Ideology and Utopia* and with this in mind is more visible in *Time and Narrative*. Thus, the use of Ricoeur in the work of Lategan, while understandable on the basis of selective reading, is no longer valid.

There is, however, some possibility that Ricoeur's treatment of history and fiction has exposed the structure and construction of such narrative, as Eagleton would have us do, and has freed them to be used in ideology critique of the Bible. There is a sense in which Christians may need to cease listening to the Bible as absolute "Word", and to begin again to hear the words of the neighbour, or even to deconstruct the whole concept of speaking, given its control by the upper classes and the reproduction of this in the church. Biblical studies may need to become less a question of the Bible in its own context and more a question of the place of the Bible in this context, that is, an analysis of the use of the Bible in contemporary discourse. We now turn to an example of such an issue.

3.3 A critique of Liberation Hermeneutics from the Perspective of Ricoeur's Model

In the second part of our assessment of Ricoeur we employ Alexander (1985) to focus Ricoeur's contribution. We are seeking tools that will empower the inquiry into the place and use of the Bible, taking as an example the discussion of the use of the Bible in the *Kairos Document*.

Alexander's particular concern is the use of language (both *langue* and *parole*) in the perpetration of minority rule in South Africa. Language has underlaid a division of the black working class into "racial" and "ethnic" groups, so that the minority ruling class is assisted in its control over the economy. He attempts to show the "ideological function of concepts such as 'race', 'ethnicity', and 'nation'" (1985:129) and to "suggest how, through a new approach to language in conjunction with political practice, these concepts can be either disarticulated from or articulated with the ideology of the working class" (1985:129-130). Of particular interest to us is the basic proposal that "it is in and through language that the individual is constituted as a subject" (1985:142-143).² Language is the means by which material reality enters consciousness, but equally, it functions to shape reality. Thus, the creation of a false consciousness by linguistic means has material consequences. This process is amply illustrated by the creation of ethnicity in the South African context, that is, the topic with which Alexander is directly concerned. We are to concern ourselves, however, with the topic of the Bible, and the material consequences language about the Bible may have in the South African context.

In order to examine the place of the bible in liberation discourse, we will consider the discussion of the use of the Bible in the *Kairos Document*. Since the publication and distribution of the document in 1985 and its revision in 1986, there have been a number of comments on its use of scripture. We limit ourselves to a number of articles published in the Journal

² In this position Alexander is indebted to Coward and Ellis (1977).

of Theology for Southern Africa (*JThSA*), all generally positive about the document and its role in the church struggle.³

An explicit comment is that of Goba's (1986), a theologian heavily involved in the genesis of the document and who states his commitment to the "new biblical hermeneutical approaches that are emerging amongst theologians of liberation" (1986:61). Goba holds that the *Kairos Document* is a "biblical response to the current political crisis in South Africa" (1986:61). This claim is expressed in relation to the symbol of the "kairos", which Goba then goes on to define. We are suggesting however that this is not the key to Goba's exegesis, but rather that texts that have been utilised for "oppression" are rehabilitated by the document for "liberation". This structure is illustrated by the treatment in the document of Romans 13:1-7. While state theologians are characterised as crediting Paul with "absolute and definitive Christian doctrine about the state", the document points out an error in the argument that "abstracts a text from its particular context thus distorting its intended meaning" (Goba 1986:62). An alternative approach is then presented which allows for or encourages the church to defy an unjust state. Goba proposes that the category of prophetic theology employs a hermeneutic similar to that articulated by Juan Luis Segundo in *The Liberation of Theology* (1976). On the one hand "profound and enriching questions and suspicion" are counseled with regard to the context of the reader, and on the other hand a call is made for a "new interpretation of the Bible that is equally profound and enriching" (Goba 1986:64). Such an interpretation emerges in the document's statement that oppression is a central theme of the Bible, and that God is a liberator. While, on the one hand, Goba suggests that all readings of the Bible are interpretations, the above positions begin to take

³ The reference to the *Kairos Document* is merely an example and not an exhaustive treatment of the biblical aspect of the document. See further and generally on the *Kairos Document* articles in *JThSA* volume 55, for example.

on an objective status: "there are numerous examples within the Bible which project this bias towards the poor" (1986:65). Goba concludes:

What I appreciate most in the Kairos document ... is that it enables those Christians who are struggling for liberation in South Africa to see the crucial relevance of the Bible in their struggle. For me this is the most significant contribution of the document (1986:65).

In that Goba speaks both of the document as a "biblical response" and as an interpretation from the perspective of liberation hermeneutics, we suggest he embodies an ambiguous relationship to the Bible. On the one hand all theologies, regardless of their political consequences, claim to be biblical, that is, to adhere to some apparently objective and unchanging message or tradition throughout history. On the other hand, Goba claims a particular perspective and commitment in favour of the liberation of the oppressed. This we suggest is a semantic contradiction, a conflict between uncritical bondage to a body of tradition, emergent in and repeatedly used for repression, and a commitment to liberation.

A slightly different style of approach is exemplified in Suggit's constructive critique (1987a). Suggit aims at showing "two instances in which it could legitimately be held that *The Kairos Document* is based on insecure biblical foundations, and ... goes on to suggest a surer route to the same goal" (1987a:70). Suggit's is firstly a philological concern, centring on the use of *episkope* ('visitation' in the *Revised Standard Version*, 'opportunity' in the *Jerusalem Bible* and used in the *Kairos Document*), and then on *kairos* which Suggit suggests was, at the time of writing the New Testament, synonymous with *chronos*. The second concern has to do with the document's stress that God is always on the side of the oppressed. Suggit suggests

this [contention] can easily be countered by observing that God is always on the side of *his people*. Israel, when they are oppressed ... [but] ... is prepared to countenance the oppression and slaughter of the Amalekites ... and the Canaanites ... (1987a:73).

Thus, it is, for Suggit, only in certain contexts that one can confirm that God is a liberator of the oppressed and "it is therefore dangerous to invoke biblical authority for an absolute use of the phrase" (1987a:73). Having established the ambiguity of the biblical witness, Suggit paradoxically suggests that the document "however, needs to be backed by biblical evidence" (1987a:73). No attempt is made to explain why this biblical evidence is any less prone to Suggit's charge of invalid selectivity. Rather a framework of the Christian tradition is suggested which begins in Genesis, dwells on Christ, and winds up in the church. Without articulating his methodology, Suggit concludes with the suggestion: "The challenge to the church should rather be based on the person and word of Christ himself ... " (1987a:74). We suggest that Suggit combines the same contradictory elements of methodology as Goba. Having, postulated the objective possibility of determining the meaning of a word or words in literature of 2000 to 2500 years ago (a presupposition of the philological method), he then balks on a conceptual level, claiming the ambiguity of the bible as a collection of words to be a stumbling block. His solution, then, ignores this dilemma by slipping in the neo-orthodox, dialectical mode of using the concept (Word) Christ, as the canon or measure of the biblical evidence (words).

Cochrane and Draper (1987a) claim that Suggit's concerns undermine the challenge of the *Kairos Document* and set out to "reassert not just the importance of the *Kairos Document*, but its biblical and theological validity as well" (1987a:66). In response to Suggit's philological critique, it is significant that philosophical framework is placed on the (philological) work engaged in by both articles. However, claim is also made to the objective possibilities of philology by Cochrane and Draper: "We have, fortunately, an objective reference in the matter, which is roughly contemporary with Jesus himself: the Dead Sea scrolls" (1987a:67). Thus an argument is constructed to oppose Suggit's exegesis of the words in question. There is no difference in

the methodology, at this point, only in the evidence submitted and the interpretations drawn from that, a combination of apparent empiricism and autonomous reason, a result achievable by all disinterested scholars. Confusion results, however, in the return to Luke 19:44 where it is suggested that the concept of the "time of visitation" is linked to the destruction of Jerusalem in a "theological re-interpretation by the redactor" (1987a:68). Thus the tradition is, although objectively definable, reinterpreted, or in Cochrane and Draper's terms, the autonomous (ahistorical) concept is linked to the historical concrete by the Lukan redactor. One might ask where exactly the biblical element lies: is it the autonomous concept (found also in the Dead Sea scrolls) applied to a concrete situation - this would allow the *Kairos Document* to take up the same structure in its attempt to make an urgent and incisive call (this seems to be the suggestion, see 1987a:69); or is the biblical element the application of the concept to the fall of Jerusalem, that is, the actual appearance of the concept in the biblical text, rendering the *Kairos Document's* quotation of Luke 19:44 a complex relation between one historical instant and another? Cochrane and Draper go on to separate the Lukan redaction from the preaching of Jesus, a step which further confuses the 'biblical legitimacy' they set out to articulate.⁴

Turning then to the question of God and the oppressed, Cochrane and Draper reject Suggit's implication that Christian theology cannot talk of God siding with the oppressed. They propose three points at which Suggit's objection may be overcome: i. a universalising of the understanding of Israel

⁴ While we do not endorse his general position, Loader has articulated this type of contradiction well: "the central proposition of liberation theology ('Exodus proves that God sides with the oppressed') becomes *implicitly self-contradictory*. If the liberation theologian oscillates between 'Bible' and 'situation' he [sic] alternatively ascribes authority to each of these poles while excluding the other... alternatively claiming: 'Exodus vindicates my theology' and 'In my theology Exodus is read this way'." Interestingly, Loader adds "The fact that this kind of difficulty crops up in many other theologies does not alleviate the problem for liberation theology" (1987:12).

to the church as 'New Israel' via Christian theology, ii. "the extension of gospel truths to all" (1987:69), and iii. a relating of oppression to the rule or kingdom of God. Thus, apparently the attitude of God towards non-Israelites in the Old Testament is no longer a concern or issue because of the universalising nature of Christian theology. Again, it appears that the Bible as such is not the point, but rather the interpretive framework used by the interpreter. This, however, further devalues the concept of 'biblical'. This suspicion is given further weight by the reference to the link between eschatology and apocalyptic. The reference is to apocalyptic as a phenomenon ("canonical apocalyptic and other apocalyptic literature of the New Testament time" 1987a:70) and it is not clear by which tools one might distinguish between the apocalyptic of the poor and the apocalyptic of the rich or collaborative classes of a society, paralleled in the present day by the apocalyptic of the right wing religious groups.

Coming to Suggit's suggested theology Cochrane and Draper's commitment is clear:

On the surface the [solution of Suggit's] is fine. But what lies hidden is precisely what *The Kairos Document* challenges, namely, that general principles are applied uncritically and ahistorically ... not requiring critical interpretation in the light of actual conditions of existence (1987a:71).

Which "actual conditions of existence"? Those of present South Africa, or those of the biblical period? We suggest that Cochrane and Draper mean the former, even though they claim to have engaged in a (objectivist) exercise of determining the meaning of a concept in another period. A final example of the actual meaning given to the concept 'biblical' is the suggestion that the *Kairos Document* "begins with a *biblical immediacy*, meaning the immediate bearing upon a critical situation of the prophetic word" (1987:71 emphases added). Again, this is a phenomenological type observation with no regard given to the actual content of such an act. This, however, appears to be integral to the "new paradigm of contextual theology that challenges the older

paradigms" (1987a:71). Finally, then, the question is one of theological paradigm, in which the Bible is claimed as ally, ostensibly because of its objective meaning, but actually because of its legitimating significance.

In Suggit's response to the above critique (1987b), he first makes reference to the "present trend in biblical exegesis to consider the meaning of a text as it stands without regard to the author's intention" (1987b:73). It is not clear as to what is actually to be inferred from the comment, as neither article admits to such a stance but both ultimately employ it in their primary theological commitments, as shown above. Suggit summarises the intention of his first article as showing "an appeal to the words of Scripture to support the claims of *The Kairos Document* is not as effective as an appeal to the person and work of Christ, the Word made flesh" (1987b:73). Again an attempt is made to determine Luke's intention (with the assumption of his mental equilibrium and literary prowess: "Luke knew what he was doing and was capable of using dramatic irony to good effect" 1987b:73). Regarding God and the oppressed, Suggit admits what we noted above: "The inference drawn by my respondents that 'one cannot legitimately talk of God as siding with the oppressed' (in absolute terms) is true if the argument is based only on biblical premises" (1987b:74). If, however, a theology is developed on the basis of Christ, this effects the "transformation in the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament" (1987b:74). Thus, the adjective "biblical" refers more to a theology developed from aspects of the Bible.

Finally, in the comment from Cochrane and Draper (1987b), the contradictory nature of the methodology employed in the discussion is laid bare:

An appeal to the person and work of Christ, the Word made flesh may be common to each of us [that is, Suggit and themselves]; but a knowledge of the person and work of Christ is, firstly, inseparable from an interpretation of the words of scripture which testify to him, and secondly, affected by one's hermeneutical tools (1987b:76).

It is rather, we suggest, that the hermeneutical tools, determined consciously and unconsciously by the theological, political, and psychological agenda of the exegete, produce the interpretation of the words of scripture. The refusal to recognise this, bears witness to a disguised idealism present in the exegetical exercise. This is manifested in an inability to actually call the bluff of the concept of the authority of scripture. On the level of the texts we have considered the authority of the Bible is claimed as a tool in the liberation of the oppressed. On examination, the means by which the Bible has such authority is confused. It appears rather that the claim to biblical authority functions as a 'shibboleth' which the exegete must utter correctly in order to pass into the real discussion. Who dictates this passage is unclear but it might be suggested that it is not the poor and oppressed, the claimed beneficiaries of all this activity. To attempt a comment within the 'actual conditions of existence', it may be that the sword is rather wielded by theologians, church hierarchy, and in particular (in 1990) the 'white' fears of the 'white' church.⁵

In terms of the challenge that Alexander has made, that is, of the concept of language constituting the subject, the use of the category 'biblical' is an oppressive and authoritarian one, and thus incompatible with the discussion of liberation. It is clear from the above analysis that the concept has no particular content of its own but is subject to the particular framework imposed upon it (usually unstated), and to the structural position it plays in an argument. Overall, however, the concept acts as legitimator and authority.

⁵ A clear example of exegetical idealism is that of Breytenbach (1990). In responding to the work of Mosala (1987) and Domeris (1987), Breytenbach entitles his work an "exegetical response" and claims the key to the discussion lies in the "basic rules of sound exegesis" (1990:64). This is a blatant example of hegemonic discourse with Breytenbach arrogantly using as his primary authorities Liddell and Scott's Greek dictionary ("Much of that what [sic] has been the target of my critique, could have been prevented by a glance in Liddell and Scott" 1990:68n37). Exactly why Liddell and Scott's interpretation of the available data has authority is not discussed.

Ricoeur does include the possibility of concepts of tradition and experience in his work, particularly in connection with the circularity of the three relations of mimesis. The presuppositions of mimesis₁ ("preunderstanding of the world of action, its meaningful structures, its symbolic resources, and its temporal character" 1984:54) are, in fact, expressions of tradition and experience, and to that extent may include the Bible as symbolic resource. Certainly, the experience of oppression would shape an understanding of structures, and it is here that we suggest the concept of Bible as authority would fall, that is, as structure rather than resource.

Ricoeur's challenge, however, in terms of Biblical studies, is that he has abandoned the quest for total and perfect mediation of the past, that is, the possibility of possessing the truth as word. His proposal is for a "open ended, incomplete, imperfect mediation" (1988:207) not only in terms of the past, but integrally related to the struggles of the present. Aspects of his treatment also lend themselves to liberation discourse, where he suggests that with an emphasis on the present as "initiative", the dimension of acting and suffering will become the privileged modes of reading (1988:208).

3.4 Summary and Conclusions

The broad outlines of the chapter may be reviewed in the following manner. The aim of Ricoeur's work in *Time and Narrative*, that is, the quest for a path towards responsible action through a consideration of narrative, is of great significance for the field of biblical studies. The methodology Ricoeur has outlined, however, is a challenge to the romanticist view of both historical narrative and fictional narrative dominant in modern biblical studies. The 'truth' and 'freedom' values, usually ascribed to these narrative discourses, are examined by Ricoeur in such a way that both are deabsolutised. The result, however, is to postulate the phenomenon of narrated time, constructed from the three moments of mimesis, that is, the link between

narrative and action. The privilege of readers conscious of the present time, particularly of those in quest of responsible action and willing to risk the suffering entailed, is proposed. In our use of Eagleton and Bertelsen, however, the proposal of Ricoeur is shown to be vulnerable to abuse by the upper and middle classes of society. The example of Lategan's use of Ricoeur indicates the ease with which Ricoeur may be treated as merely a literary theorist. A reading of *Time and Narrative* in conjunction with *Interpretation Theory* perhaps allows for an interpretation with neither ethical commitment, nor any concrete grounding in specific history. The whole of the post-1970 corpus, in particular *Ideology and Utopia* does, however, contain certain resources. Focussing our discussion through Alexander and in relation to the discussion of the Bible in the *Kairos Document*, Ricoeur's work is able to provide valuable tools and perspectives. The link between life and writing in the production of meaning calls for a reading that interprets the effect of narrative on human relations. Thus, we have critiqued the underlying concept of biblical authority lurking in the background of the discussion we considered. To this extent, Ricoeur's work provides a resource for the construction of a truly liberating discourse, in positive relation to liberating praxis.

Conclusion and Summary

This work has attempted to present briefly an interpretation and assessment of Ricoeur's writings since the mid-1970's. This time period has corresponded to Ricoeur's increased concentration on language in addition to symbolism. However, an additional development is observable in this period whereby Ricoeur has become, in our view, much more sympathetic to the interaction of ideology and literature without rejecting the bases of his earlier positions, particularly in relation to symbols. Perhaps such a movement is consequent in an examination of discourse, but it also reflects a more explicit commitment to the present. In other words, Ricoeur has addressed the hermeneutical question usually answered in terms of explanation and understanding, but made those categories subservient to the quest for responsible action. Exegesis is no longer an end in itself but rather a servant of the contemporary quest for a humane world.

The works *Interpretation Theory* and *Rule of Metaphor* outline Ricoeur's development of a theory of discourse. Particularly important is the development from a hermeneutics of symbol, via metaphorical theory, to an understanding of discourse and narrative that is able to be linked to lived experience. Discourse is the bearer of truth value so that narrative may serve as a tool in the quest for responsible action. This adds the dimension of the reader's world to the meaning and value of the text. This element is sharpened to ideology critique in the work *Ideology and Utopia*. Here Ricoeur takes Marx's view of ideology as a starting point but broadens the concept so that ideology also fulfills a positive function. Similarly with utopia: there exists both a constructive and pathological form pivoting on the issue of authority. Ricoeur's aim is to articulate a positive and constructive understanding of utopia with a view to the critique and contribution to contemporary debates and struggles.

Time and Narrative restates these major areas, that is, a theory of discourse and a constructive view of ideology critique. The question of time

is the question of contemporary action. The question of narrative is the means by which the person might access debates of life. The key links between the two realms are symbol and metaphor. Ricoeur proposes a dissolution of the traditionally opposed poles of history and fiction, explanation and understanding, natural and human sciences. The contingency of human life is integrated by Ricoeur, so that the concept of narrated time incorporates the finite into all action. By carrying over the discussion of the gap between the claim to legitimacy and the belief in legitimacy, we see that the absolute discourse is linked to the legitimisation of the absolute in authority. Struggle may then be a category that expresses the limitedness and yet the possibilities of human existence.

In briefly assessing Ricoeur's work we have considered questions to and from the theological discourse of the recent South African context. Ricoeur has been a direct resource for the work of Lategan, for example. The perspective of a number of Marxist literary theorists, however, highlights the limitations of such theology in that particular context. We have argued that Ricoeur's post-1975 corpus does not allow a reading which excludes ideology critique but the fact that this type of reading has occurred must be taken seriously. On the other hand, Ricoeur's linking of narrative to life provides a tool for critiquing oppressive language, even within allegedly liberative discourse. This has been fundamental to our examination of the discussion concerning the biblical basis of the *Kairos Document*.

In conclusion, the struggle for a humane world finds an ally in narrative according to the work of Ricoeur in the last fifteen years. In terms of biblical studies, the challenge of Ricoeur is to consider exegesis as part of contemporary discourse with contemporary social consequence. While literary theorising remains vulnerable to co-option by methods which avoid current responsibilities, we suggest that Ricoeur makes his greatest contribution when the element of ideology critique is read as integral to his work.

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