The Culture of Recognition: Another Reading of Paul Ricoeur's Work

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THE CULTURE OF RECOGNITION:
ANOTHER READING OF PAUL RICOEUR’S WORK

a dissertation

by

TIMO HELENIUS

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THE CULTURE OF RECOGNITION: ANOTHER READING OF PAUL RICOEUR’S WORK

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation work examines culture as a condition, as a context, and, finally, as an achievement. The research objectives for this examination are both historical and philosophical. The historical objective is to retrace the appearance of the notion of culture in the works of Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), and to demonstrate that Ricoeur adopts and adapts the term to his philosophical vocabulary. The accompanying philosophical objective, the proper task of this dissertation, is equally twofold. At the scholarly level this dissertation reconstructs – in the form of a hermeneutic of cultural recognition – Paul Ricoeur’s cultural theory, and explicates why such a theory is necessary relative to Ricoeur’s more openly-argued anthropological phenomenology of “being able.” I maintain that all anthropological thought requires the support of cultural understanding, as no comprehensive anthropology is possible without the philosophical elaboration of the cultural condition that concerns human situatedness.

The ultimate aim of this dissertation, however, is to go beyond this scholarly analysis and point out a subjective cultural hermeneutic process under the peculiar “dramatic” modality of this dissertation. This postcritical process is what I sum up with the term re-con-naissance. The reception of a cultural heritage is reaffirmed in the incessant task of acquiring a notion of one’s self through hermeneutic reappropriation, or, as a perpetual task of freedom and the fulfillment of fundamental human possibilities in the interpretation of one’s culture. Put differently, the matter of this dissertation is to recognize (reconnaître) this level of cultural hermeneutics that is unceasingly present; to expose a postcritical depth structure that takes place in the reader's own reconfigurative process as culturally enabled re-con-naissance. Since this hermeneutic concerns the postcritical interpretive
reflection of a living, acting and struggling human subject – and is, therefore, not directly explainable – this reconfiguration can only be pointed at or suggested. In spite of its postcritical aim, therefore, the dissertation remains an academic work that functions at the level of critical explanation. The postcritical cultural hermeneutics has to be approached through the critical means that are exemplified by the scholarly analysis in this dissertation; our analysis stands for the critical and objectifying (academic) culture within which the reader reads this dissertation as a cultural and interpretive subject.

After having propaedeutically explained the critical scholarly course and the ultimate postcritical task of this dissertation in part one, part two then breaks open the realm of cultural hermeneutics in the work of Paul Ricoeur by “letting it appear” through the critical analysis of the different perceptions concerning his last major work *The Course of Recognition*. This is the moment of “re-” or re-membering again the cultural condition. Ricoeur’s post-Hegelian notion of “cultural objectification” necessitates, however, examining the synthetic moment of “con.” Part three analyzes this “con” by pointing out a trajectory of Ricoeur’s “post-Hegelian Kantian” though in his early works that runs from the condition of objectivity to cultural objectivity, and furthermore to a poetically constituted hermeneutic of culture. In turn, part four contrasts Ricoeur’s thought with that of Martin Heidegger, focusing on Ricoeur’s later works that propose an etho-poetics of culture that is manifested in institution. Part four, which closes off the scholarly analysis of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics, thereby displays the moment of “naissance,” or “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject.” The last part of this dissertation, part five, distances itself from the academic or scholarly mode by revealing the underlying “dramatic” structure of this dissertation. As a re-reading of the reading of Ricoeur’s work in parts two, three, and four, part five exposes a new dimension to the whole of this work; namely, an experiential one that concerns the current reader of the work and his or her cultural re-con-naissance.
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As it comes to writing the text, the discussions with several colleagues – especially at the Society for Ricoeur Studies conferences – were indeed helpful, but I could not overemphasize the importance of that devoted support to my process that my supervisor, Professor Richard Kearney, has shown throughout the years. I have been extremely satisfied with the straightforward manner he has guided me in my occasionally overextended pursuits. Un grand merci, professeur, pour votre soutien et patience!

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Part I

Introduction: Ricoeur, Culture, and Hermeneutics
1. **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005) was deeply convinced that the meaning of being is never immediate but always mediated in a continuous process of conflicting interpretations. This conviction is echoed in a statement made in Ricoeur’s 1965 essay “Existence and hermeneutics”: “Existence becomes a self – human and adult – only by appropriating that meaning which first resides ‘outside,’ in works, institutions, and cultural monuments in which the life of the spirit (*la vie de l’esprit*) is objectified.”\(^1\) For Ricoeur, existence is achieved only in tension with this “ontological horizon” of structured forms of life. In his words, existence “arrives at expression, at meaning, and at reflection only through the continual exegesis of all the significations that come to light in the world of culture.”\(^2\) In short, human existence is dependent on cultural meanings, through which a “decentered” self gains an understanding of itself.\(^3\) My question is how these significations come about in the first place.

Let me further introduce the general theme of my thesis in a Ricoeurian manner, that is, indirectly. In the 2004 Kluge Prize acceptance speech “Asserting Personal Capacities and Pleading for Mutual Recognition” Ricoeur enlists temporal personal *identity*, that is, personal history, as well as the capacities to *say*, to *act*, and the preeminent capacity to *recount* as constitutive human powers. In a similar manner as in his late work *Parcours de la*

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\(^1\) Ricoeur 1969, 26. (22). – The titles of Ricoeur’s essays that have been translated to English language will be given in English. Pagination to the corresponding English translation is given in brackets. Of Richard Kearney’s analysis of the same section in “Existence et herméneutique,” cf. Kearney 2004, 2, 28.

\(^2\) Ricoeur 1969, 26. (22).

\(^3\) Johann Michel captures well the essence of Ricoeur’s conception of “decentered” and “indirect” subjectivity: “Le rejet du subjectivisme ne se traduit chez Ricoeur par aucune proclamation de la ‘mort de l’homme.’ Ici, ce sont les concepts d’homme et d’humanisme qui portent à confusion. Si l’on entend, avec Heidegger, l’humanisme comme ‘époque du monde’ au cours de laquelle l’homme est place ‘au centre de l’étant,’ il faut alors attester que la philosophie de Paul Ricoeur n’est rien ‘humaniste,’ puisque son point de départ demeure le décentrement du sujet. Mais un tel décentrement n’implique pas réciproquement chez lui d’abandon des philosophies du sujet, non certes au sens d’homme abstraits,’ mais au sens d’individus reels et vivants,’ inscrits dans une histoire, dans des structures sociales, dans des traditions culturelles.” Michel 2006, 64.
reconnaissance (2004),4 Ricoeur states that these basic capacities or powers constitute “the primary foundation of humanity” as distinct from everything nonhuman. Saying, acting, and recounting can be understood respectively as the abilities to spontaneously produce 1) a reasoned discourse, 2) events in society and in nature, and 3) life narratives that have led up to self-identity. To these three it is possible to add the equally constitutive moral capacities of imputability and promising.5 Now, what comes to be interesting is Ricoeur’s suggestion that each of these capacities requires a reciprocal recognition on the part of other human beings:

Discourse is addressed to someone capable of responding, questioning, entering into conversation and dialogue. Action occurs in conjunction with other agents, who can help or hinder. The narrative assembles multiple protagonists within a single plot. A life story is made up of a multitude of other life stories. As for imputability, frequently raised by accusation, I am responsible for others. More narrowly, imputability makes the powerful responsible for the weak and the vulnerable. Finally, promising calls for a witness who receives it and records it.6

The primary foundation of humanity, Ricoeur maintains, can only be found in relation to others. This reciprocity, however, is not spontaneous; it grows out of desperate need that seeks recognition. In the wake of Hegel, but especially of Hobbes, Ricoeur goes as far as asserting that “the idea of a struggle for recognition is at the heart of modern social relations.”7 Even though this struggle can also be fruitful, and it can lead to reciprocal recognition, Ricoeur claims that genuine mutuality is achieved only when a certain “logic of the exchange of gifts” is applied in a social relation.8 This logic brings forward an aspect of human generosity: “giving remains a common gesture that escapes the objection of

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4 Trans. The Course of Recognition (by David Pellauer, 2005). From hereon the English title is used.
6 Ricoeur 2010a, 24.
7 Ricoeur 2010a, 24.
8 Ricoeur 2010a, 25.
calculated self-interests.”\(^9\) Giving, in turn, points to a common origin of both the struggle for recognition and the “good will” in human encounters.

After this brief detour that prepares the reader for the subsequent ones I am taking in this dissertation, let us return to the main theme, that is, cultural hermeneutics. Although Ricoeur himself does not stress the point in his Kluge Prize acceptance speech, but leaves it for an attentive listener to hear, the “giving” he discusses does not need to be direct – in fact, it cannot be. We need to think of all mediated forms of this exchange. To be precise, Ricoeur insisted that his central thesis concerns “the idea of symbolic mutual recognition.”\(^10\) As I will later demonstrate, Ricoeur’s use of the term “symbolique” implies that there are cultural expressions that facilitate ethical self-understanding. All these expressions also count under the idea of “giving,” as they can be understood as “gestures” which invite us “to a similar generosity.”\(^11\) This is why Ricoeur mentions that the “ceremonial exchange of gifts in traditional societies” models this moment of mutual “giving.” My claim is that what is modeled by the “ceremonial exchange” is nothing else but the necessary condition and context of cultural exchange that is then manifested in “ceremonies” of all kinds.

As I will explain later, Ricoeur’s analogy of the gift is a model of cultural exchange that enables mutuality. As Ricoeur also discusses the need for recognition, let me clarify at the outset that the symbolically mediated forms of mutual recognition do not remain at the level of calculated self-interests for a narcissistic and self-enclosed ego. Ricoeur claims that such rationalizing calculation is ultimately at the root of the Hobbesian-Hegelian struggle\(^12\) that cannot liberate the ego – only cultural mutuality gives the notion of the self:

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\(^9\) Ricoeur 2010a, 26.
\(^10\) Ricoeur 2004b, 338. (233).
\(^12\) Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 246, 254. (167, 171-172).
Allow me to say that what we call the subject is never given at the start. Or, if it is, it is in danger of being reduced to the narcissistic, egoistic and stingy ego, from which literature, precisely, can free us. [...] In place of an ego enamoured of itself arises a self instructed by cultural symbols, the first among which are narratives handed down in our literary tradition. And these narratives give us a unity which is not substantial but narrative.\textsuperscript{13}

In brief, for Ricoeur self-identification and attaining oneself as an existent being are both dependent on other selves that are mediately present in culture.\textsuperscript{14}

Furthermore, there are two aspects of this thought that I want to emphasize right away. First, this indirect mutual recognition through culture should not be taken as a completely unreachable utopia, or as indefinitely somewhere “there,” but instead as a necessary, albeit also a tensional, phase in coming ever closer to a comprehensive self-understanding. Even though this understanding remains a task, as Ricoeur frequently emphasizes, the process of attaining it is already an achievement. In sum, a self is, by necessity, “instructed by cultural symbols.” Second, mutual recognition is guided by cultural objects such as literary works, “the narratives handed down in our literary tradition.” Ricoeur means by those objects, however, not simply “things” in the sense of the goods, commodities or services, or public institutions as expressions of power. Cultural objects, which frame the intersubjectively attainable and yet mediated self-understanding, are “true monuments” instead. They are not reducible to reification, that is, they are not all primarily material objects, since they include works of law, art, literature and philosophy. Their “true” monumentality relates rather to them being fundamentally poetic creations in broad sense, and as such exalted expressions of human capacities.\textsuperscript{15} According to Ricoeur, such monuments of human creativity both manifest and enable the mutualizing cultural exchange.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Ricoeur 1991b, 33.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Ricoeur 1965a, 502. (523).
\item \textsuperscript{15} Ricoeur 1960a, 139. (123); Ricoeur 1965a, 502-503. (522-523). Cf. Gadamer 1989, 163.
\end{itemize}
Bringing in Ricoeur’s assertion of poetic works and narrations as true monuments at the very beginning of this dissertation could seem quite sudden. The poetic “monuments,” however, clarify the direction that I will undertake in this work. With poetic works, their “objectival” character – their material “monumentality” – is only secondary compared to their function of promoting human ideas, most notably by language. This capacity to express is the very source of them being truly monumental. It could be helpful to remember Hans-Georg Gadamer’s famous line in *Truth and Method*: “The remnants of past life – what is left of buildings, tools, the contents of graves – are weather-beaten by the storms of time that have swept over them, whereas a written tradition, once deciphered and read, is to such an extent pure mind that it speaks to us as if in the present.”16 The material monuments, and politic as well as economic structures expressed in institutions, are important objects of a culture. For Ricoeur, the exalted expressions of human spirit (*les oeuvres de l’esprit*), such as poetic works of all sorts, still capture best the idea of humanity in an ideal sense.17

In sum, Ricoeur argues that a human being becomes him- or herself and sees himself as a capable being through these cultural objects, which are “correlates of sublimation.”18 Cultural objects, therefore, also describe human possibilities that were introduced here by means of the 2004 Kluge Prize acceptance speech. The exploration of these possibilities, in turn, should thus extend into the works or “proper” poetico-cultural objects described above. These objects become “images of being human,” or figurations of human existence. Recognition, or *reconnaissance*, takes place in the signs deployed by human subjects. Ricoeur maintains that it is through the “images of being human” that “a certain

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16 Gadamer 1989, 163.
17 Ricoeur 1960a, 139. 123).
18 Ricoeur 1965a, 499. (519).
dignity of human beings is formed, which is the instrument and the trace of a process of
reduplicated consciousness, of recognition of the self in another self." It is here that the
cultural *reconnaissance* is also encountered, precisely as *reconnaissance du soi dans un autre soi*.

Guided by Ricoeur, this dissertation argues that the process of attaining self-consciousness strongly relates to the term *reconnaissance*, understood in the subjectifying sense that includes the notions of “again” (*re-*), and “through and with others” (*con-*). Furthermore, self-consciousness is a birth (*naissance*) by this culturally facilitated recognition. A human being becomes a true human being, finds him- or herself “again” as rational in relation to humanity expressed as culture.

This humanity or “humaneness” is, however, bound to that which is involuntary. Already in his very early works Ricoeur insists that a philosophical anthropology must face a mutually restricting contest of *nature* (nature or essence) and *liberté* (freedom). In the wake of both Kant’s critical philosophy and Hegel’s philosophy of the self-realization of the Spirit, it can be understood, however, that cultural expression, and culture itself, brings voluntary “freedom” to the framework set by involuntary “nature,” and that this process can be then described even as liberating sublimation in its deepest sense. Using Freudian terms familiar to Ricoeur, this is to say that cultural sublimation is another way of seeing a human being overcoming oneself, being “more” than might be surmised by one’s

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19 Ricoeur 1965a, 503. (523).
20 I will discuss Paul Claudel’s term *coEnaissance* and its relation to *re-coEnaissance* in Appendix 4 of this dissertation.
21 Ricoeur 1949, 7, 18. (3-4, 14-15).
22 John Sallis points out that “there are grounds for regarding the problem of antinomies as ‘the cradle of the critical philosophy’,” and that “the question whether the soul is an indivisible unity, whether there is freedom, whether a supreme cause of the world exists – there are questions of ultimate human concern.” It is especially the third antinomy, that of the possibility of freedom, which is thought of here as it points to the question of morality discussed in the second as well as in the third *Critique*. Sallis 1980, 102, 112-113, 125-127. Cf. Kant 1999, V.427-433, 435-436, 447-450. (*KdU*).
I maintain, therefore, that culture becomes a concept with a tensional double meaning. On one hand, it expresses the possibility of universal freedom, as well as potentiality, and on the other hand, it describes human dependence and boundness, the ontological bond of being situated that cannot be by-passed. As such, I maintain, the concept of culture has the crucial function of signifying and safe-guarding human freedom and autonomy in the face of this involuntary, expressing the freedom of the will in manifestations of des possibilités de l’homme.

Even though I will readdress the question of research objectives, a word to briefly describe the general task of this dissertation. There are two levels of objectives in this dissertation, one historical and the other philosophical. The historical objective is to retrace the appearance of the notion of culture in the works of Paul Ricoeur, and to demonstrate that Ricoeur adopts and adapts the term to his philosophical vocabulary. The accompanying philosophical objective, the proper task of this dissertation, is to reconstruct – in the form of a hermeneutic of cultural recognition – Paul Ricoeur’s cultural theory. I maintain that such a theory is necessary for Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of being able.”

While focusing on the philosophical task, I propose that the model of threefold mimesis Ricoeur introduces in Time and Narrative I – the process of reconfiguration – functions as a clue for analyzing the conditions for remembering, judging, and ethico-political being respectively. In parts two, three, and four I trace concomitantly Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of recognition, and in particular his hermeneutic of cultural recognition, to

23 Ricoeur 1965a, 499, 502-503. (519, 523-524).
which the three moments of remembering, judging, and ethico-political being relate. Based on a detailed analysis of Ricoeur’s major works I will maintain that Ricoeur’s oeuvre as a whole constitutes a course of cultural recognition. Finally, I will argue in part five that the critical moments of reconfiguration, or Ricoeur’s “threefold mimesis,” are translatable to – or readable as – the postcritical moments of re-, con-, and naissance.

Let me also summarize in an introductory manner the main tenets of the following analysis, that is, clarify the ultimate focus of my analytical reading of Ricoeur in parts two, three, and four of this dissertation. As I will continuously remind us later, I will emphasize that the essentially etho-poetic culture that is manifested in ethico-political institution sums up Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture in the appearing of a cultural and ethical subject, or, in the moment of “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject.” There are three sides to this issue: the moment of institution that is problematized in part two in terms of assumed ethico-cultural life (viz. prefiguration) and particularly in part three of this dissertation in the light of objectification that captures the idea of humanity in those institutions that Ricoeur calls the true human “monuments” (viz. configuration). The subsequent moment of the unceasing becoming a human self in the reappropriation of these monuments or institutions (viz. refiguration) is analyzed in our part four of this dissertation.

In brief, the etho-poetic nucleus of culture is approachable only through institution, but not reducible to it. As I will maintain, the varying concrete forms of sociocultural entities, their institutionalized settings, are not beyond criticism, but the general need for such cultural forms as contexts for life is incontestable. The cultural, in other words, includes ethics as well as politics, since for Ricoeur there is no culture absent institutions that are also political in nature. When Ricoeur reads Freud, for example, the analysis of culture begins with aesthetics and then moves to socio-political institutions. Put
differently, the structural level – economical, political, and juridical systems among others – of communal life has to be acknowledged as the needed form for the manifestation of essentially etho-poetic culture.

As I have already maintained above, for Ricoeur human beings are fundamentally ethico-political beings. According to him, an individual becomes human only under the condition of the above mentioned institutions, through which the etho-poetic creativity is brought about and reappropriated. Institutional mediation of ethical intentions, for example, is indispensable. As indicated above, the same applies to political institution as well as law, art, and literature; the ethical life of a people is governed, for example, by a system of justice. All these institutions manifest etho-poetic cultural discourse that facilitates the becoming of a cultural, or ethico-political, self.

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Having now described the general task of this dissertation and outlined some of its main themes, let me also make some reservations with regard to the scope of investigation, and the manner of approach. As I am proposing a style of reading Ricoeur’s work that so far has not been widely recognized, this dissertation will, therefore, avoid jumping to conclusions. Perhaps slightly at the expense of the reader’s willingness to understand the whole of my argument sooner than factually enabled by this text, I will proceed very cautiously. This means that I will let the main theme appear indirectly, through an analysis that covers the most recent discussion in the field of Ricoeur scholarship: recognition.

The reader should, also for certain methodological reasons, be prepared to an experience that resembles a marathon rather than a sprint. After the extended introductory remarks in part one (whose value will become fully apparent only in part five), the “letting
appear” of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics at the analytical level will take place in part two in particular. The rest of the dissertation serves as verification that this hermeneutic is not unfounded in terms of Ricoeur’s work as a whole. For this reason, I will – when needed – also cover other themes that help understand the main question. I emphasize, however, that in the final analysis I will not fully elaborate Ricoeur’s ethics, politics, legal hermeneutics, poetic ontology, philosophy of religion, or any other theme that would require a complete investigation of its own. Put differently, in spite of the necessary detours that support my main thesis, this dissertation focuses, in the whole course of its argument, on Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics.

To reiterate, my question concerns Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture that I claim is underdeveloped and underestimated in terms of Ricoeur’s critics. This leads me to another limitation of this work, as important as it is intended. Ricoeur’s passing and somewhat reserved allusions in some of his later texts to the “American” discussion of multiculturalism do not allow this thesis to constitute a direct response to, or a reflection of, the continuing multiculturalism discussion that was largely initiated by Charles Taylor’s 1992 celebrated essay “The Politics of Recognition.”26 This thesis confines itself to the question of

26 Ricoeur 2004b, 310-315. (212-216); Ricoeur, Azouvi, & de Launay 1995, 84-97. (52-61). Cf. Ricoeur 2004c, 53-63. (30-36); Ricoeur 2004a. – Charles Taylor’s seminal 1992 essay on multiculturalism was republished in 1994 along with an English translation of “Kampf um Anerkennung im demokratischen Rechtsstaat” by Jürgen Habermas (1993). Even though the original publication already included a number of commentaries by Taylor’s critics – such as Susan Wolf, Steven C. Rockefeller, and Michael Walzer - Habermas’s comments on Taylor’s essay, soon to be followed by Will Kymlicka’s Multicultural Citizenship (1995), helped to ensure that the theme of multiculturalism was to become one of the key terms in the contemporary (political) philosophy. Rudi Visker even goes as far as stating that “the word ‘multiculturalism’ itself has begun to take over from that other key word which fascinates us for so many years: we no longer expect ‘postmodernism’ to provide the answers to all our enigmas, but rather multiculturalism.” (Visker 2003, 91.) Of the multitude of recent texts on multiculturalism, cf. e.g. Murphy 2012; Wise & Velayutham 2009; Headley 2012; Phillips 2009; May & Sleeter 2010; and Wren 2012. Many of these works not only discuss multiculturalism from the points of view of cultural pluralism, diversity and equality, cultural identity, multi-ethnicity, structural racism, everyday multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism, cultural interaction, or intercultural communication, but also take into account the so-called “critical multiculturalism” as a form of “critical pedagogy” that aims at an
how a human subject is able to recognize him or herself as a capable – albeit also fallible – human being through culture as a condition and a context.

Apart from few passing allusions to multiculturalism in chapter 7, this dissertation does not, therefore, engage in the discussion that in its own way responds critically to the 19th century conceptions of nation states with their respective cultural-linguistic and ethnic profiles, or Herderian-Hegelian *Volksgeist*. As Ricouer’s latest work and the resultant discussion in Ricoeur scholarship reflects the theme of recognition, however, and as this work analyzes Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics, it can be admitted that this dissertation implies a certain level of interest in the multiculturalism discussion, but only from a distance. To restate, therefore, the task of this dissertation, I maintain that the focus of this work is on Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of cultural recognition, but from a point of view that addresses culture in general as a condition, a context, and, finally, as an achievement.

For the same reason this dissertation does not take part in the recent debate on recognition that extends the “politics of recognition” discussion in the sphere of social justice. Even though I will indicate the points of connection in this direction by including some extended commentaries in footnotes, particularly in chapter 15, my aim differs from the philosophical concerns debated, for example, by Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth in their joint publication *Redistribution or Recognition*? 27 This dissertation constrains itself to educational reform – the philosophical discussion has already had far-reaching political and educational consequences. Of multiculturalism and Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition*, cf. Moyaert 2011.

27 In their debate, which brings together John Rawls’s conception of distributive justice and Charles Taylor’s theorizing about recognition, Nancy Fraser stresses the primacy of redistribution over recognition as well as their irreducibility to each other, whereas Axel Honneth emphasizes recognition and understands the question of distribution as a connected derivative of this foundational point of view. I do acknowledge, however, that Fraser and Honneth extend their discussion in the direction that, broadly understood, has a connection to the core theme of my dissertation: Fraser and Honneth take into account the “cultural turn” in
proposing another angle of reading the work of Paul Ricoeur, a task that itself will prove to be quite daunting for the reader. I am firmly convinced, nevertheless, that in spite of its obvious limitations and, perhaps, even frustrating minuteness, this dissertation work functions as a corrective to those views that approach Ricoeur’s thought from the mere anthropological viewpoint, or merely as a philosophy of the human subject. Ricoeur’s cultural understanding deserves to be recognized.

2. RICOEUR AND THE QUESTION OF CULTURE

Let me begin my extended preparatory remarks by pointing out that the concept of culture itself is pivotal when any anthropological question – such as human nature, human action or expression of being – is examined. The importance of the culture concept does not mean that in many cases the anthropological aspect wouldn’t prevail. This is relevant also to Paul Ricoeur, for whom human capability and freedom were the major themes in philosophy from the very beginning. There are, however, different readings of what Ricoeur’s work was ultimately about. In their *A Passion for the Possible* (2010) Brian Treanor and Henry Isaac Venema argue that the question of the possible captures the essence of Ricoeur’s oeuvre:

> If we look at the path that Ricoeur’s work has taken, it is fair to say that his entire project narrates a ‘passion for the possible’ expressed in the hope that ‘in spite of’ death, closure, and sedimentation, life is opened by the *how much more than possible* of superabundance. This narrative of the more than possible is particularly evident in Ricoeur’s philosophical anthropology and his religious thought.

Despite their inclination toward the possible and Ricoeur’s religious thought, Treanor and Venema acknowledge that the theme of *l’homme capable* is indeed the most compelling:

> “Alternatively, we can say that there is a narrative unity to Ricoeur’s work that tells a story of *the capable man*, beginning with original goodness held captive by a ‘servile will,’ and ending with the possibility of liberation and regeneration of the heart.”

In their book, this second aspect, capable human being, actually outshines the first one (what is possible) – for a good reason.

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29 Ricoeur 1949.
30 Treanor & Venema 2010, 2.
31 Treanor & Venema 2010, 2.
Towards the end of his life Ricoeur himself affirmed that the anthropological question of being able and not being able (puissance et impuissance) was the ultimate purpose and goal for his philosophical explorations.\(^{32}\) In one of his very last interviews (2003) with his friend and former doctoral student Richard Kearney,\(^{33}\) Ricoeur mentions that the goal of hermeneutic reflection is to reveal a capable human being:

The ultimate purpose of hermeneutic reflection and attestation, as I see it, is to try to retrace the line of intentional capacity and action behind mere objects (which we tend to focus on exclusively in our natural attitude) so that we may recover the hidden truth of our operative acts, of being capable, of being un homme capable. So if hermeneutics is right, in the wake of Kant and Gadamer, to stress the finitude and limits of consciousness, it is also wise to remind ourselves of the tacit potencies and acts of our lived existence. My bottom line is a phenomenology of being able.\(^{34}\)

David Pellauer, another one of Ricoeur’s friends and co-workers, confirms this focus on l’homme capable when stating that “philosophical anthropology [that was begun with the early works] will later become the question of what Ricoeur will call the capable human being who is a social being and lives in a world organized by social institutions.”\(^{35}\) Pellauer thus professes a certain unity in diversity – concordant discordance – in Ricoeur’s not always thematically aligned works; philosophical anthropology and its implicit ontology are always present in his work.\(^{36}\)

In spite of – or, perhaps, because of – this well-established idea of an underlying thematic unity, the question of situating the capable human subject in terms of its cultural situation and engagement has not drawn the attention that it also clearly merits from Ricoeur’s works. In particular, explicit questions of the concept of culture as well as the

\(^{32}\) Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 168.
\(^{33}\) Cf. Treanor 2006, 222-225.
\(^{34}\) Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 167.
\(^{35}\) Pellauer 2007, 27.
\(^{36}\) Pellauer 2007, 120.
question of cultural recognition have been neglected. It is somewhat encouraging, however, that in the Spanish speaking world Ricoeur’s work has been understood to discuss these themes as well; some of his essays have been compiled and published in 1986 under the title *Ética y Cultura*. The late Clark professor of philosophy at Yale University, John E. Smith, also supports – in the 1995 volume of the *Library of Living Philosophers* dedicated to Paul Ricoeur – the idea that Ricoeur’s final end is the hermeneutic of culture:

> Although it is clear that Ricoeur wishes to be identified with the linguistic approach to philosophy, in fairness it must be said that he has a far broader understanding of what this means than many philosophers at present. This stems from the fact that, while Ricoeur’s proximate subject is language, his ultimate subject is *culture* or the meaningful substance of human experience and activity.

Smith, in other words, places Ricoeur’s work primarily to the field of cultural hermeneutics. Behind all the particular hermeneutics of symbols, language, and narratives, it is possible to detect a hermeneutic of culture that maps Ricoeur’s works onto the same trajectory.

John E. Smith’s assertion of the aim of Ricoeur’s work as a whole stands out, however, as a lone cry. In the same compilation of twenty-five scholastic articles and Ricoeur’s personal replies to each one of them, only Joseph Bien briefly discusses Ricoeur’s dialectics of culture and nature – along with Ricoeur’s notion of “cultural objects” – using the 1962 article “Nature and Freedom.” In addition to Smith’s and Bien’s remarks, Gary B. Madison merely alludes to a subject’s participation “in the realm of culture,” without which

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38 J. E. Smith 1995, 148-149.

39 Bien 1995, 300-301. – Ricoeur’s article “Nature et liberté” was later published in English in *Political and Social Essays* (1974), which is a collection of Ricoeur’s articles edited by David Stewart and Joseph Bien.
one “would not exist as such,” whereas Peter Kemp refers to “the works of culture” in connection with a self that applies these works to itself. Domenico Jervolino affirms this idea of mediated self-understanding in passing when he states that one’s notion of the self is grounded in “the inheritance of cultures and traditions where our roots are sunk.” When David Pellauer then mentions a “cultural tradition which we find ourselves either a member of or related to,” Thelma Z. Lavine wonders “where in the historical currents of twentieth-century intellectual culture” could Ricoeur be located. Hans Rudnick, in his brief text, goes on, therefore, to depict Ricoeur’s philosophy as “conscious of cultural responsibility,” or, in words of Stephen Tyman, attentive to the historical “pulsations” that require thinking of them anew “from under the turns and twists of culture.”

The disturbing vagueness of all these scattered allusions indicate that the question of culture, and Ricoeur’s philosophical work as a hermeneutic of culture, does not seem to have been a relevant viewpoint for the scholars contributing to the Ricoeur edition of “the philosophers’ Nobel.” While not being able to fully express the importance of a hermeneutic of culture for Ricoeur’s thought or systematize it, these Ricoeur scholars, nevertheless, indicate that such a level of Ricoeur’s thought exists. But then we come to the other front of the issue, and it potentially is an equally troubling one.

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41 Kemp 1995, 386.
42 Jervolino 1995, 539.
44 Lavine 1995, 169-171, 182. – Lavine discusses in the same essay Freud’s psychoanalysis that, according to her, presents “the archeology of Western culture and the vicissitudes of its teleology […] with such a ‘surplus of meaning.’” Lavine does not, however, discuss Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture but merely reflects his Freud interpretation. Cf. Lavine 1995, 174, 176.
45 Rudnick 1995, 145.
47 The Library of Living Philosophers is a series of works published by OpenCourt, and since there is no Nobel Prize for philosophy, it is being considered as an honor for a professional philosopher to be selected in this series.
The silence Ricoeur keeps in his replies to these scholarly contributions is nothing but disconcerting. If Ricoeur’s distinction between “distant” and “nearby” cultures – that he makes in passing when responding to Bernard Stevens\(^\text{48}\) – and his reference to the “Freudian philosophy of culture” in his reply to Lavine are set aside,\(^\text{49}\) the term “culture” appears only in his reply to Joseph Bien:

> It is the entire debate between freedom and nature that has to be transposed onto the social plane, inasmuch as nature is at once corporal and social, biological and cultural. Freedom will then acquire a political dimension, while necessity will unfold on the economic, social, and cultural plane. The dialectic of freedom and nature will be played out on the level of work and of all the institutions in which human desire is objectivized.\(^\text{50}\)

Here, Ricoeur pairs freedom with the political (which is not to be equated with the quotidian “politics” of political parties), whereas culture is paired with unfolding necessity. The dialectic of freedom and nature is transformed into another dialectic at the social plane, that is, on the level of work and institutions.

Despite the overall silence in his 1995 replies to his critics, I should emphasize, Ricoeur nevertheless admits that culture has a role in the dialectics of objectified human desire. I argue that this dialectics of objectified desire describes a human being who is both creative and capable. In it there opens a possibility for him or her to recognize himself or herself as a capable human being (\textit{un homme capable}). Agreeing with José Gama and his judging that Ricoeur’s work comprises a “\textit{hermenêutica da cultura},”\(^\text{51}\) I maintain that understanding the meaning of the concept of culture as a part of this dialectics is, therefore, essential.

\(^{48}\) Ricoeur 1995e, 509.

\(^{49}\) Ricoeur 1995m, 191.

\(^{50}\) Ricoeur 1995i, 307.

\(^{51}\) Gama 1996, 386-392.
A relating claim that I also pursue is that making Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics explicit is necessary for the comprehension of what Ricoeur wanted to express with his works; after all they form a series of analyses of various cultural aspects. To stress this point further, I read Ricoeur’s work *in toto* as a course of cultural recognition – and not only as an unfinished and unfinishable work on recognition as Jean Greisch asserts.\(^{52}\) I argue that there is a cultural hermeneutic “parcours de la reconnaissance” which makes recognition possible in the first place. To draw support from other Ricoeur scholars, let me point out that Richard Kearney, for example, maintains that there is a steady cultural progress taking place in Ricoeur’s work: “We find Ricoeur’s hermeneutic trajectory progressing consequently as a series of reflections upon the primary sources of cultural interpretation.”\(^{53}\) Ricoeur’s hermeneutics, in other words, is as much cultural hermeneutics as hermeneutical anthropology; it provides a cultural understanding.\(^ {54}\) My conviction is that Ricoeur’s work as a whole – that can in itself be described, as Margit Eckholt argues, mirroring an *Inkulturationsprozess* to major contemporary philosophies\(^ {55}\) – is better understood when this trajectory of cultural reflections is brought to the forefront.

### 2.1 The Culture/Civilization Confusion

I have already made strong assertions concerning Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics. Let me continue, however, by questioning the validity of this cultural investigation of Ricoeur’s work so as to pre-emptively respond to the possible criticism by acknowledging certain challenges his texts present us at the outset. As demonstrated by Ricoeur’s essays in *Histoire et vérité*

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\(^{52}\) Greisch 2010, 90.

\(^{53}\) Kearney 2004, 14.

\(^{54}\) Eckholt 2002, 11-19.

\(^{55}\) Eckholt 2002, 9.
along with his other essays from the 1950s, the notion of culture has a firm role in Ricoeur’s work from very early on. The question remains, however, as to its propaedeutic meaning. Ricoeur’s 1960 conference presentation, which became the essay “Universal Civilization and National Cultures” (that was included in the 1964 and 1967 editions of History and Truth) appears promising for the search for a definition of the concept of culture. This is perhaps the reason why, for example, Manuel Sumares, Margit Eckholt, David M. Kaplan, and Jens Mattern use it as a source for drawing out Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy.

Despite the fact that Ricoeur scholars have formulated their respective interpretations of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics on the basis of this text, the actual essay, however, is philosophically ambiguous and conceptually confusing. As also in the other essays included in History and Truth, the concepts “civilization” and “culture” are at times seen as different, and at times they seem to be interchangeable at least at the level of Ricoeur’s rhetoric. Similarly, Ricoeur discusses “nations” (une nation, un peuple) but apparently takes this term on some occasions as synonymous with “states” (l’état) or “countries” (un pays, la patrie). Moreover, every so often Ricoeur also conflates the meanings

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56 The enlarged 1964 edition of Histoire et vérité (originally published in 1955) was translated as History and Truth (by Charles A. Kelbley, 1965). The third, yet enlarged edition was published in 1967, and I will in this dissertation refer to this third edition. I will also include references to the English translation where possible, however. From hereon the English title of this work is used.

57 Ricoeur 1991a, 315-367.

58 According to Frans D. Vansina’s extensive 1935-2008 primary and secondary bibliography of Ricoeur texts, there are only two dissertation works (written by Kelton Cobb and Marcel Madila-Basanguka) and three monographs (by Pawel Ozdowski, Manuel Sumares, and Jens Mattern) which indicate with their titles that they deal with the question of culture. For a brief analysis of each of these, see the Appendix 2. (Cf. Vansina & Vandecasteele 2008, 343-431.) Margit Eckholt’s 1999 essay “Kultur – Zwischen Universalität und Partikularität. Annäherung an eine kulturphilosophische interpretation Paul Ricoeurs” as well as David M. Kaplan’s analysis of Ricoeur’s critical theory also utilize Ricoeur’s 1961 essay in their respective discussions of Ricoeur’s Kulturphilosophie. Cf. Eckholt 1999, 103.; Kaplan 2003, 173-187.


of the words “country” (or “nation”) and “culture” (or “civilization”).

One can therefore legitimately ask what the “certain privileged civilizations” would be, and what is their relationship to cultures, countries, or nations – or for that matter to the “universal civilization,” mentioned in the context of the very same essay, and characterized by rational-scientific attitude, utilization of tools and techniques, and the existence of rational politics.

Clearly, as the detailed analysis in Appendix 3 of this dissertation explains, the text cannot be considered as one of Ricoeur’s best in terms of clarity, or insight.

This confusion is not easily overcome, partially due to Ricoeur’s intentional avoidance of analytic-style philosophizing which he sees as leading to endless vicious circles rather than any positive outcomes. In his 1965 essay in Esprit, “The Tasks of the Political Educator,” Ricoeur avoids the question of his conceptual arbitrariness simply by announcing that he “will not engage in the debate – as academic as sterile – on ‘civilization and culture.’” This avoidance or neglect seems to be his strategy later as well, as in his late work Course of Recognition he also informs his readers that there is no reason to oppose the word culture to that of civilization.

Ricoeur, however, lets the reader of his 1965 essay know that he is aware of the different original meanings of these terms:

In German sociology, the word Kultur tends to take on a restricted sense which covers only the third reality – the exercise of values – whereas the word Civilization has very rapidly taken on a much broader meaning which covers the three realities already mentioned [i.e., industries, institutions, and values]. But one also speaks of acculturation in order to indicate the growth of civilization in all its aspects. There is therefore no reason to linger over this debate.

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62 Ricoeur 1961, 440-441, 447. (272, 278).
64 Ricoeur 1973a, 165.
67 Ricoeur 1965c, 79. (Ricoeur 1974, 272.).
In principle, then, Ricoeur has it all together: he knows the meaning of the word *Kultur* and its distinction from *Civilization*. As long as he distances himself from the centuries-long *Kultur-Civilization* discussion – examined in Appendix 1 of this dissertation – Ricoeur risks, however, sounding philosophically arrogant. In addition, this distanciation does not overcome the conceptual problem that has not been sufficiently addressed in the reception of Ricoeur’s work.

I should point out, nevertheless, that there are good historical reasons for Ricoeur’s perplexity. According to Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, in the French context the words “*la civilization*” and “*social*” were still predominant in the 1950s over that of German-originating “*la culture*.”

Then again, Ricoeur’s wavering between “*culture*” and “*civilization*” could perhaps help us to “hear anew,” or to understand. Our question concerns objectified human reality, which provides a matrix of meaning for the individual interpreting his or her own being in the view of this articulated reality. Whether we call this objectivity civilization or culture, thus makes no difference in the final analysis. This does not, however, absolve us from the task of searching for clarity at the terminological level of Ricoeur’s philosophy.

Our difficulty is that there is no clear conception or definition of the concept of culture in “Universal Civilization and National Cultures” and, as I point out earlier, Ricoeur intentionally leaves the definition in the shadows even in *Course of Recognition*. This confusion leads us to the matter that the basic background problems of a thesis, namely those of definition, relevance, comments, and sources, are then still unclear for us. Although the detailed analysis of Ricoeur’s essay in Appendix 3 of this dissertation allows us to

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understand a culture to have an “ethico-mythical nucleus” – Manuel Sumares, Kelton Cobb, Marcel Madila-Basanguka, Margit Eckholt, and Jens Mattern all highlight this in their respective texts on Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics – a reader is still left in a state of perplexity. The question of the validity of existing scholarly comments is also disconcerting, since Ricoeur’s essay has been rather widely used as a source in explicating his cultural philosophy. The lack of a precise definition is alarming, however, and it indirectly opens the question of the appropriate sources: there are no explicit references in the 1961 essay – nor in the 1965 essay – to Ricoeur’s other works that could possibly clarify his argumentation.

Lastly, the question of the relevance of the culture concept to Ricoeur’s work in general becomes problematic in relation to possible source materials. In his 1961 essay Ricoeur actually seems to tackle more the anthropological issue of the creative human being and his or her self-understanding than anything else: “In order to confront a self other than one’s own self, one must first have a self.” Ricoeur’s approach could, therefore, be described as more anthropological than cultural. The very last statement of Ricoeur’s 1961 essay reveals that he, in fact, is not keen on studying the notion of cultural being:

Every philosophy of history is inside one of [the] cycles of civilizations. That is why we have not the wherewithal to imagine the coexistence of these manifold styles; we do not possess a philosophy of history which is able to resolve the problems of coexistence. Thus if we do see the problem, we are not in a condition to anticipate the human totality, for this will be the fruit of the very history of the men who will take part in this formidable debate.

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70 Cf. Appendix 2. – Margit Eckholt indicates in her 1999 essay “Kultur – Zwischen Universalität und Partikularität: Annäherung an eine kulturphilosophische interpretation Paul Ricoeurs” that Madila-Basanguka’s work is familiar to her. Her brief pamphlet (2002) on Ricoeur’s cultural understanding, which applies Ricoeur cultural philosophy in the direction of a theology of culture (just as the 1999 essay does), is not included in the Appendix 2 that discusses dissertation works and monographs. Eckholt’s pamphlet, nevertheless, also includes the idea of a creative ethico-mythical nucleus of culture. Eckholt 1999, 99-100, 104-105.; Eckholt 2002, 16-17.

71 Ricoeur 1961, 452. (283).

72 Ricoeur 1961, 453. (284).
Ricoeur implies that although a cultural condition can be acknowledged, it is not possible to philosophically investigate the fundamental nature of this condition because we are all “within” and there is no “wherewithal.” This perhaps forecloses for us the effort of reconstructing Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy.

Although one could easily be suspicious of the relevance of this inquiry—especially on the basis of our analysis in Appendix 3—one should not, however, leave aside the observation that Ricoeur does discuss culture and its characteristics. His preface to the first edition of *History and Truth* (1955) basically begins by acknowledging that “the philosophical way of being present to my time seems to be linked to a capacity for reaching the remote intentions and the radical cultural presuppositions which underlie what I earlier called the civilizing drives of our era.”73 This inclusion of cultural thematics is also evident in the light of Ricoeur’s rather late conference presentation “Fragile Identity: Respect for the Other and Cultural Identity” (2000), in which Ricoeur acknowledges a need to examine the notion of collective identity and cultural integration.74 Moreover, Frans D. Vansina’s extensive bibliography mentions some twenty articles and chapters by Ricoeur which clearly address the question of cultural being, or being cultural.75 These texts vary from the very early “Le chrétien et la civilisation occidentale” (1946) to the very late “Cultures, du deuil à la traduction” (2004). Ricoeur does, therefore, indeed provide explicit material for a reconstruction of his cultural theory.

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73 Ricoeur 1967a, 8. (4).
75 Vansina & Vandecasteele 2008.
2.2 Between Philosophical Anthropology and Cultural Hermeneutics

It is the task of this dissertation to show that Ricoeur’s work not only implies but necessitates a cultural theory. There are two levels at which the research objectives of this dissertation can be worked out. The first level is historical. Even though approaching the issue of culture with the question of recognition – that is, from the point of view of a recent scholarly discussion initiated by Ricoeur’s last major work – this dissertation will in part retrace the appearance of the notion of culture in the works of Paul Ricoeur. The underlying assumption is that in the context of French philosophy the attitude towards using the term “culture” was still “resistive” in the 1950s. It is evident, however, that Ricoeur utilizes the term in its modern sense in his texts in the 1960s and 1970s; let us take Ricoeur’s 1975 lecture on Clifford Geertz’s *The Interpretation of Cultures* as an example. The question thus is, does Ricoeur use the term “culture” throughout his career or can one detect a change in his philosophical vocabulary? A reformulation of this question is, are Kroeber and Kluckhohn correct in their proposal that there was such “resistance” in French language? These questions do not, however, constitute a proper philosophical analysis.

The second, more elaborate level of the research objectives is philosophical. The task for this dissertation is to reconstruct – in the form of a hermeneutics of cultural recognition – Paul Ricoeur’s cultural theory. The hypothesis that lies at the heart of this question is that such a theory is necessary for any anthropological interpretation of the question of the situated subject. As Roy Wagner admits, the concept of culture is now commonly associated with cultural anthropology. In contrast to the suggestion that Wagner’s assertion implies – that the concept of culture is approachable and understandable

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77 Ricoeur 1986b, 255-257.  
78 Wagner 1981, 1.
exclusively by the methods of cultural anthropology – this dissertation demonstrates that a philosophy of culture is relevant and even necessary for both philosophical and cultural anthropology.

The proper task for this dissertation is, therefore, to show that although perhaps not systematically presented, Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of being able” requires the support of an underlying cultural hermeneutics. “Culture,” Ricoeur argues in his essay “What Does ‘Humanism’ Mean?” (1956), “appears as a ‘great detour’ between man and his powers.” There can be no comprehensive anthropology without a sufficiently satisfying elaboration of the cultural condition that locates the human being by providing him or her with the possibility of self-recognition. To use a term well-known to both Hegel and Heidegger, it is the Da of Da-sein and the reflection arising from facing this condition that animates this dissertation work.

As an indication of the need to take into account the human situatedness, Ricoeur’s three-step analysis of traditionality-traditions-tradition in *Time and Narrative III* should also not be forgotten. Even at the risk of letting Ricoeur appear as too Gadamerian, let me point out that this analysis leads him to state that “we are never at the beginning of the process of truth; […] we belong, before any critical gesture, to a domain of presumed truth.” Traditionality as a human condition, or being-here (Da-sein) in culture, precedes any

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79 Ricoeur 1956, 86. (Ricoeur 1974, 73.).
80 Hegel 2008, 458-459. (§508). – It is noteworthy that Heidegger points out in *Being and Time* that Da-sein’s self-understanding is dependent on its relation to beings that are not it itself: “Da-sein understands itself – and that means also its being-in-the-world – ontologically in terms of those beings and their being which it itself is not, but which it encounters ‘within’ its world.” Heidegger 1967, 58. (55).
82 Ricoeur 1985, 318-332. (219-227). – Ricoeur quite obviously criticizes Gadamer’s conception of tradition as partially too narrow while also bringing in Habermas’s critique of ideology. This aspect pertains, however, only to the third analyzed notion, namely, that of “tradition.” It should be clear that Gadamer’s take on “tradition” (Überlegung) is to be conceived not only as “a process that experience teaches us to know and govern,” but especially as language, for “it is language.” In furthermore defining the truth of tradition Gadamer asserts that it is “like the present that lies immediately open to the senses. The mode of being of tradition is, of
phenomenology of being able, and it cannot therefore be avoided as a question awaiting explication.

To briefly explain myself in a propaedeutic manner, the condition of traditionality relates closely to the notion of culture in Ricoeur’s texts. His 1973 essay “Ethics and Culture: Habermas and Gadamer in Dialogue,” for example, insists that “every culture comes to us as a received heritage, therefore as transmitted and carried by a tradition.” The essay also brings forth the idea of historicity and implies the presence of collective memory. According to Ricoeur, culture is “one modality of the replacement of human generations by one another, by instituting the continuity of an historical memory across the biological discontinuity of the generations.” The essay preserves, however, an institutional aspect as well. The historical continuity, Ricoeur writes, “is assured through institutions, whether formal as in teaching and education, or informal as in custom and usage.” The institutional level of our with-being is part of our traditionality as its preservation in human πρᾶξις.

Not all the institutions, however, have initially an equal weight. Amid the cultural institutions mentioned in Ricoeur’s essay, language is the primary one. Ricoeur argues in the wake of Wilhelm Dilthey that language is “the first of these institutions, above course, not sensible immediacy. It is language, and in interpreting its texts, the hearer who understands it relates its truth to his own linguistic orientation to the world. This linguistic communication between present and tradition is [...] the event that takes place in all understanding.” This conviction of an appropriative-interpretative event (Ereignis) of “coming into language of what has been said in the tradition” - which as disclosure comes near to Heidegger’s Ereignis - is the reason why Gadamer announced that “the guiding idea [of the concluding part III of Truth and Method which brings forth the ontological shift of hermeneutics guided by language] is that the fusion of horizons that takes place in understanding is actually the achievement of language.” In other words, “the linguisticality of understanding is the concretion of historically effected consciousness.” This means that “language is a medium where I and world meet or, rather, manifest their original belonging together. [...] Being that can be understood is language.” (Gadamer 1989, 358, 378, 389, 401-402, 463, 474.) Of Ricoeur’s debate with Gadamer, cf. Brown 1978, 54-55.; Ricoeur & Gadamer 1991.

83 Ricoeur 1973a, 153.
84 Ricoeur 1973a, 153.
85 Ricoeur 1973a, 153.
all because it is fixed through writing.” Dilthey had noted that “fixation through writing and by all comparable procedures of the inscription of human discourse is the major cultural event which conditions all transmission of cultural heritages and every constitution of a tradition.” I do not want to pass over lightly this notion of being “fixed.” For Ricoeur it carries a certain objectivity that gives stability to the reception of a cultural heritage: “Transmission is thereby assured by the ‘documents’ of culture – works of art and of discourse – offered to the interpretation of the following generations.” Paradoxically, transmission implies therefore also distanciation, temporal and conceptual, from the initial situation. As argued later in the same essay, “the communication of past heritages takes place under the condition of distanciation and objectification.” Still, objectification as distanciation takes place in language, in a living discourse.

The condition of traditionality points to the “living circle” of reception and invention, tradition and freedom, cultural situation and productive imagination. Ricoeur explains that “none of us finds himself placed in the radical position of creating the ethical world ex nihilo.” In reference to Nietzsche, Ricoeur seems to be arguing that transvaluation is perhaps possible but not genuinely creative evaluation. One aspect of our human condition is that “we are born into a world already qualified in an ethical manner by the decisions of our predecessors, by the living culture which Hegel called the [objectifiable] ethical life (Sittlichkeit), and by the reflection of the wise and the experienced.” The other side of the story, however, is equally true: “we never receive values as we find things or as we

86 Ricoeur 1973a, 153.
87 Ricoeur 1973a, 160.
88 Ricoeur 1973a, 154.
89 Ricoeur 1973a, 163.
90 Ricoeur 1973a, 163.
91 Ricoeur 1973a, 164.
find ourselves existing in a world of phenomena.”  

Again, a tradition is an unavoidable context in which I live, but I have to reaffirm this tradition with my own choices and acts.

The dialectics of tradition and freedom implies critical distancing. The “interest in emancipation” opens a productive realm that Ricoeur calls “ethical distance.” There is no ethical naïveté for us anymore: “Nothing survives from the past except through a reinterpretation in the present which takes hold of the objectification and the distanciation which have elevated previously living values to the rank of a text.” This re-interpretation does not mean simple adoption, however, since it takes on “a project of freedom,” a project of re-establishing the values freely. From this point of view the past heritage is nothing but a trait of previous attempts, “past conquests,” in the mutual project of freedom. All this points to human creativity, which takes place while held captive by the cultural situation: “Ethical distance thus becomes a productive distance, a positive factor in reinterpretation.” Creativity is only possible by contesting the living tradition in which I live.

To conclude, Ricoeur’s 1973 essay speaks the same language as my hypothesis: a theory of culture is necessary for any anthropology of the situated subject. After all, it is clear for Ricoeur that only by a “detour through the theory of culture” are we able “to catch sight of the process of mediation by which this antinomy [of the theory of attaining values] is ceaselessly overcome.” Ricoeur emphasizes, in fact, that “there are no other paths, in effect, for carrying out our interest in emancipation than by incarnating it within cultural

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92 Ricoeur 1973a, 165.
93 Ricoeur 1973a, 165.
94 Ricoeur 1973a, 165. – George H. Taylor correctly emphasizes the difference between objectification and reification, and resists characterizing an institution “as purely formal and procedural with an internal logic only.” Institution itself is a creative act that rests on productive imagination, even though the various institutions then assume a quasi-material “objectivity” in the cultural reality within which they are reappropriated through critical distance (Darstellung or positing rather than Vorstellung or representation). G. H. Taylor 2010a, 9-12, 18-19.
95 Ricoeur 1973a, 165.
acquisitions.” Indeed, then, the phenomenology of being able requires the support of an underlying cultural hermeneutics. Even if some of Ricoeur’s texts – such as his 1961 essay discussed above and more closely in Appendix 3 – would cast doubt on the idea of tracing such a hermeneutics in Ricoeur’s work, I have now shown that the task itself is in place. The goal of explicating Ricoeur’s theory of culture is, therefore, necessary because of both Ricoeur’s philosophical anthropology and the reception of his work.

2.3 Ricoeur, Cassirer, and Geertz

My introductory remarks have already been lengthy. Our preceding discussion necessitates, however, the further clarification of Ricoeur’s relation to cultural anthropology. The idea of “a detour through the theory of culture” leads me, nevertheless, first to point out that Ricoeur stands firmly in the reflexive philosophical tradition that stresses self-awareness and self-knowledge. It is also true, however, that Ricoeur adjusts the philosophical tradition that has a Cartesian basis, and maintains that human self-knowledge is never direct or immediate. In terms of Ricoeur’s approach to cultural recognition this means that “we know ourselves only indirectly in terms of the objective world and our actions in it,” as David Pellauer affirms. Self-understanding is always only mediated by objects of corporeal and cultural world that function as symbols awaiting for interpretation.

This essential feature of the cultural-objective detour in becoming reflectively self-aware is discussed in *Time and Narrative I*. Ricoeur maintains in this 1983 work that human action “is already articulated by signs, rules, and norms: it has always been symbolically

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96 Ricoeur 1973a, 165.
97 Pellauer 2007, 12.
mediated.”

Mark I. Wallace pays attention to the same idea. According to Wallace, Ricoeur maintains that “the subject enters consciousness already formed by the symbolic systems within one’s culture. […] The journey to selfhood commences with the exegesis of the imaginary symbols and stories constitutive of one’s cultural inheritance, in order to equip the subject to become an integrated self by means of appropriating these symbols and stories as her own.” The notion of symbolic mediation indicates that Ricoeur possibly has close ties to thinkers such as Ernst Cassirer and Clifford Geertz, and it leads us therefore to consider the implications of these relations at the hermeneutical level. First, however, these relationships need to be established, which is not too difficult a task.

Ricoeur acknowledges in *Time and Narrative I* that the “anthropologists who in various ways make use of *Verstehen* sociology, including Clifford Geertz,” have had some influence on the way he thinks about symbolic mediation. Furthermore, Ricoeur admits that he understands the word “symbol” in a Cassirerian manner: “I have opted for one close to that of Cassirer, in his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, inasmuch as, for him, symbolic forms are cultural processes that articulate experience.” The challenge for Ricoeur then is to maintain a philosophical attitude and not to slip into sociologically inclined cultural anthropology that merely constitutes only another “detour.” Before getting deeper into Ricoeur's relation to

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98 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
100 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57). – The term “*Verstehen* sociology” is provided by Ricoeur’s translator as an explanation. Ricoeur himself uses the term “sociologie comprehensive,” the sociology of knowledge - which, in Ricoeur’s *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, is equated with the sociology of culture (Ricoeur 1986b, 11.). All of these, however, allude to the German sociological tradition which maintained that the method for the human sciences to understand (*Verstehen*) rather than to explain (*Erklären*) by using the methods of natural sciences - because everyone who aims to analyze the human condition necessarily interprets his or her own condition as well. Ricoeur is very familiar with this tradition because of his continued interest in this distinction that was originally made by Wilhelm Dilthey.
101 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
these two prominent scholars of culture, it is necessary to briefly introduce Ricoeur’s understanding of the mediating function that the cultural symbols have.

**Ricoeur and Cultural-Symbolic Mediation**

Both Cassirer and Geertz place symbols at the epicenter of their respective cultural anthropologies: Cassirer considers symbolic forms as the necessary conditioning element in culture, and Geertz considers symbols essential in his definition of culture as a “thick” context. In *Time and Narrative I* Ricoeur utilizes the term in like manner when referring to “the symbols of a cultural nature.”

Ricoeur understands by these cultural symbols meanings which are “incorporated into action and decipherable from it by other actors in the social interplay.” Now, according to Ricoeur, all these cultural symbols mediate significations but in different manners. Paralleling Clyde Kluckhohn’s distinction of implicit culture (that is, only indirectly analyzable cultural substance) and explicit culture (the observable forms of culture), Ricoeur distinguishes between implicit or immanent symbolism, and explicit or autonomous symbolism.

Ricoeur’s earlier distinction between constitutive and representative symbolisms – which are very understandable terms – can still be said to hold at some level in the later distinction between implicit and explicit symbolisms. There are, first of all, those

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103 Ricoeur 1983, 92. (57).
104 Ricoeur 1983, 92. (57).
106 Despite Ricoeur’s sentiment that the distinction he himself had proposed earlier between “constitutive” and “representative” symbolisms is inadequate, I maintain that Ricoeur deplores only the vocabulary, his choice of terms, and does not refute the distinction between two complementing functions of symbolism itself. Ricoeur 1983, 92. n 1. (243, n 5).
immanent symbols “which underlie action and that constitute its first signification.” Secondly, there are the explicit “autonomous symbolic wholes dependent upon speaking or writing” which are detached from “the practical level” – supposedly as the products of reflection on practical action. These two levels of symbolisms are then not totally separable but complement each other. Ricoeur argues that “before being a text, symbolic mediation has a texture.” In other words, an explicit symbolism rests on implicit symbolic meaning, incorporated in symbolizing action, by which the “autonomous” explicit symbols become meaningful in the first place. The explicit rests on the implicit, and the implicit provides the condition as the possibility of the explicit. Put differently, the implicit constitutes the explicit symbolism that is representative of the implicit one.

Now, getting back to the notion of symbolic mediation, Ricoeur argues that besides being internally related to action – because human action “is always already symbolically mediated,” and the implicit symbolism both underlie action and constitute its primary meaning – the term “symbolic mediation” indicates that the symbolic systems have a structured character. “To understand a ritual act,” Ricoeur explains, “is to situate it within a ritual, set within a cultic system, and by degrees within the whole set of conventions, beliefs, and institutions that make up the symbolic framework of a culture.” Understanding an action requires that it become situated in its particular cultural context. As a result, culturally based symbolic system enables the understability or “readability” of an action. It “furnishes the context of description for particular actions” as Ricoeur maintains.

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107 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
110 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
111 Ricoeur 1983, 92. (58).
In turn, action itself can be taken as a “quasi-text,” but only to the extent that it is based on the symbolic system as a function, that is, on the symbolic system as the “rules of meaning” (les règles de signification) in interpreting particular actions such as gestures. The example given by Ricoeur is highly illuminative in this respect: “The same gesture of raising one’s arm, depending on the context, may be understood as a way of greeting someone, of hailing a taxi, or of voting.”113 The symbolic system as a context instructs our interpretation. This regulative function extends well beyond the implicit symbolisms.

In addition to descriptive regulation, there is also the level of prescriptive regulation. In contrast to the “rules of meaning,” that is, the implicit regulative function of symbolic systems, Ricoeur asserts that it is possible to introduce an extension to the “idea of a rule” that has an explicit functionality. The notion of symbolic mediation leads us to proceed “from the idea of an immanent meaning to that of a rule, taken in the sense of a rule for description, then to that of a norm, which is equivalent to the idea of a rule taken in the prescriptive sense of this term.”114 Symbols, in other words, extend to norms (l’idée de règle au sens de norme). In sum, the difference between a rule and a norm is that the first is the function of regulation in interpretation, whereas Ricoeur defines the second as the “function of social regulation.”115

To somewhat sum up the preceding discussion, I emphasize that both forms of regulation, descriptive and prescriptive, relate to action. Cultural codes such as manners and customs are, according to Ricoeur, “programs’ for behavior; they give form, order, and direction to life.”116 Behavior, that is, human action, is also evaluable, however, because the

113 Ricoeur 1983, 92. (58).
114 Ricoeur 1983, 93. (58).
immanent cultural norms also have that function. Ricoeur argues that actions receive a value that places them into a hierarchical relationship with each other according to moral-cultural preferences.

Another extension brings us then back to the level of philosophical anthropology. Based on our moral judgments, actions receive a relative value. “These degrees of value, first attributed to actions” can, according to Ricoeur, “be extended to the agents themselves.” It is then, as Ricoeur requires, “by way of cultural anthropology” that the ethical presuppositions of human character can be pointed out. The notion of cultural-symbolic mediation, in other words, has brought us back to the question of Ricoeur’s relations to cultural anthropologists.

Ricoeur and Clifford Geertz

In spite of Ricoeur’s infamous detours – religion, psychoanalysis, language, identity, political philosophy, and the philosophy of history among others – there seems to be a consensus of sorts among his critics that a clear tone of philosophical anthropology is detectable in his work. That there is a course from *l’homme faillible* to *l’homme capable* is a foregone conclusion. Although it could be said that cultural anthropology merges in some of Ricoeur’s texts with his interest in philosophical anthropology, perhaps most prominently in *The Symbolism of Evil*, this cultural anthropologic aspect of Ricoeur’s work has not been discussed very often. Still, silence does not render such an aspect non-existent. This,

118 Ricoeur 1983, 93. (58).
120 Fiasse 2008, 9-10.
121 Laurence L. Alexander’s 1976 essay “Ricoeur's Symbolism of Evil and Cross-Cultural Comparison: The Representation of Evil in Maya Indian Culture” is worth of interest because of its cultural anthropologic
hopefully, is already clear on the basis of Ricoeur’s views on cultural heritage and symbolically mediated action.

Perhaps a good place to continue the task of searching for Ricoeur’s point of connection with cultural anthropology is *La mémoire, l’histoire, l’oubli* (2000). In this work Ricoeur repeats his indebtedness to one of the most prominent scholars in that field: Clifford Geertz. As an indication of important connections at the theoretical level of their respective work, Ricoeur acknowledges that he owes to Geertz “the concept of mediated symbolic action.” In doing this, Ricoeur refers to two earlier compilations of his texts. *Du texte à l’action* (1986) examines the hermeneutics of texts as a model for a hermeneutics of human actions as well as actions as meaning-bearing, and it, therefore, relates to Geertz. So does another collection of Ricoeur’s essays: *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* (1986). Ricoeur’s 1975 lecture on Clifford Geertz’s seminal *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) was published in this later mentioned selection of his essays.

These texts enable us to discuss Ricoeur’s own assessment of Geertz’s influential work – which is further discussed in Appendix 1 of this dissertation. Ricoeur’s Geertz lecture focuses on *The Interpretation of Cultures* while examining the concept of ideology. Similarly as in his 1976 essay “Ideology and Utopia as Cultural Imagination,” Ricoeur claims in *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* that Geertz helps in building the concept of approach. The essay does not, however, present Ricoeur’s symbol theory in a manner that would, presumably, be completely acceptable for Ricoeur himself. Cf. Alexander 1976.


123 Ricoeur 2000b, 279. n 71. (546. n 76). – The indebtedness Ricoeur acknowledges in his own text doesn’t by any means work in only one direction. In the famous opening study of Geertz’s *Interpretation of Cultures* a philosopher called Paul Ricoeur is credited with providing an idea of “inscribing” action. While Geertz clearly points to himself when mentioning that “the ethnographer ‘inscribes’ social discourse; *he writes it down,*” he also notes that it is “Paul Ricoeur from whom this whole idea of the inscription of action is borrowed and somewhat twisted.” Geertz 2000, 19.

ideology as a cultural system that helps organizing social and psychological processes in forms of integration or identity.\textsuperscript{125} Ideology, Ricoeur argues, is both an integrating rhetoric of basic communication, and an identity-building class structure.\textsuperscript{126} As will be seen later, the notion of identity will have a major role in part four of this dissertation. The notion of integration, however, is equally important – for both Ricoeur and Geertz – since symbolization as the means for integration is also the key term in Geertz’s well-known “thick” description of culture. Ricoeur opens his own discussion of Geertz’s symbolic anthropology with this same definition:

\begin{quote}
As interworked systems of construable signs (what, ignoring provincial usages, I would call symbols), culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly – that is, thickly – described.\textsuperscript{127}
\end{quote}

This provisional definition of culture rests completely on the idea of culture as a semiotic process, that is, ethnography understood as a conversation, which implies having “an interpretive attitude.”\textsuperscript{128} In short, ethnography is an interpretive science in search of meaning.\textsuperscript{129}

The shift from symbolic action to Geertz’s definition, and furthermore to the idea of ethnography and interpretation, is already an indication that my claim – that anthropology as the phenomenology of being able requires the support of cultural hermeneutics – is well founded. This is also indicated when Ricoeur points out that Geertz describes the task of anthropology as “the enlargement of the universe of human

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{125}Ricoeur 1986b, 254-255.; Ricoeur 1976a, 22-23. – Of Geertz and his conception of culture, cf. Appendix 1.
\item \textsuperscript{126}Ricoeur 1986b, 259, 261, 264.
\item \textsuperscript{128}Ricoeur 1986b, 255.
\item \textsuperscript{129}Ricoeur 1986b, 255.
\end{itemize}
The concept of culture Geertz espouses “is essentially a semiotic one,” and this in particular interests Ricoeur. It is precisely “because culture is understood as a semiotic process [that] the concept of symbolic action is central for Geertz” as an anthropologist. “Action,” summarizes Ricoeur, “is symbolic just like language,” and they both attain their signification by interpretation within a cultural context.

Here, however, Ricoeur insists on a clarification. It is not so much that action in a social setting would necessarily be symbolic for Ricoeur, but that it is always symbolically mediated, as seen earlier. To be sure, there can also be “symbolic action,” and this is the task of literary works, for example. “Literature is symbolic action,” Ricoeur asserts, “whereas here we want to say that action itself is symbolic in the sense that it is construed on the basis of fundamental symbols.” In pushing his point, Ricoeur stresses that there is a fundamental “infrastructure” of being a human being, its “basic constitution,” and that symbolic systems already belong to it. This is why Ricoeur deplores Geertz’s choice of terms, when Geertz uses the term “extrinsic symbol” with reference to immanent cultural regulation – although this takes place in highlighting the contrast to natural regulative models such as genetic codes.

Above, the gist of Ricoeur’s take on Geertz has been approached from the point of view of their concurrent interests. There is another, supplementary level of this discussion, however, which deserves a brief note especially in this context. Quite evidently, Ricoeur persistently uses the concept of culture in his analysis of Geertz’s symbolic anthropology. Ricoeur mentions, for example, the “non-modern cultures” as well as the

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132 Ricoeur 1986b, 255-256.
133 Ricoeur 1986b, 258.
134 Ricoeur 1986b, 256.
135 Ricoeur 1986b, 256-258.
post-Enlightenment “modern cultures.” In addition, Ricoeur refers to the “different cultural situations,” and points out that besides using “the tools of the crisis of the developed countries” the people in the developing countries “are educated […] with the intellectual tools of their own culture.” Ricoeur even frequently uses the term “subcultures.”

This use of the culture concept, however, does not mean that Ricoeur’s task would be the same as Geertz’s – or vice versa. Although culture is “a way of talking about man,” as another American anthropologist claims, philosophy and cultural anthropology are distinct approaches and comprehensions of it. Anthropologist Roy Wagner, nevertheless, underlines that culture is specifically a human phenomenon. Furthermore, if culture is “man’s general control, refinement, and improvement of himself,” then “the word also carries strong connotations of Locke’s and Rousseau’s conception of the ‘social contract,’ of the tempering of man’s ‘natural’ instincts and desires by an arbitrary imposition of will.”

This much is probably shared between a philosopher and an anthropologist. Whereas cultural and social anthropologists like Wagner and Geertz approach the notion of culture from the point of view of the multitude of particular cultures and their possible common structures and other denominators, however, a philosopher like Ricoeur aims at examining culture as a condition of human existence in general.

The cultural anthropologists could well be correct in that there is not any real universal culture or any corresponding “superorganism” of culture. There still can be a universal cultural condition, however. Unlike an anthropologist who “invents ‘a culture’ for

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136 Ricoeur 1986b, 259, 262-263, 265.
people, while they invent ‘culture’ for him,” a philosopher is, therefore, interested in explicating questions such as “how is it that we are human in the first place?,” “what are the necessary conditions of being human if there should be any?,” and “how can the collective mode of being human be described if there is such a modus?” In contrast to an anthropologist, I argue, a philosopher does not seek primarily to witness the prevalent forms or manifestations of a culture, but to question the cultural condition itself.

To summarize these remarks that have briefly evaluated the philosopher Ricoeur’s relation to the anthropologist Geertz, let me only mention that in his 1975 Geertz lecture Ricoeur not only shows profound interest in the work of the most influential contemporary cultural anthropologist, but also engages in the discussion and utilizes the concept of culture in a manner that most significantly differs from any “resistant” attitude that might have prevailed in the French intellectual and conceptual setting. And to reiterate Ricoeur’s relation to cultural anthropology, Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan argue that Ricoeur – among Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Charles Taylor, Clifford Geertz, Robert Bellah, and others – contributed to the whole “interpretive turn” of the social sciences. From this point of view, an analysis of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics is more than needed. Any further significance of this evaluation will become evident in the course of our later discussion.
Before rushing ahead with the reasons why Ricoeur’s hermeneutics lent to the hermeneutic turn in the social sciences, let us take a further step back. In terms of the whole dissertation, it is necessary for us to also consider Ricoeur’s relation to another major, albeit an earlier, figure in the modern scholarship on culture: Ernst Cassirer. Before getting to the notion of symbolic forms for which Cassirer is most well-known, let me mention that for him culture, concrete human life, and self-knowledge are profoundly tied up together in symbolisms. In *Essay on Man* (1944), for example, Cassirer announces that his objective as a modern philosopher is “a phenomenology of human culture.”¹⁴³ This implies that the question of culture is both illustrated and elucidated “by concrete examples taken from man’s cultural life,”¹⁴⁴ and this phenomenological method is how Cassirer then proceeds.

In order to base the claims that I will make with regard to Ricoeur’s relation to Cassirer and Ricoeur’s subsequent understanding of culture, which includes a Kantian moment, I will open this brief analysis with a few remarks of Cassirer’s famous theory. Even though for Cassirer, as a well-known neo-Kantian, “space and time are the framework in which all reality is concerned,”¹⁴⁵ that framework is also approached indirectly. Instead of reopening Kant’s question of the transcendental forms of sense intuition, Cassirer insists that “we must analyze the forms of human culture in order to discover the true character of space and time in our human world.”¹⁴⁶ This leads him, in the end, to reformulate the notion of space altogether. Instead of discussing of aesthetic “perceptual space” to which Kant refers

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¹⁴³ Cassirer 1974, 52.
¹⁴⁴ Cassirer 1974, 52.
¹⁴⁵ Cassirer 1974, 42.
¹⁴⁶ Cassirer 1974, 42.
in *Transcendental Aesthetics*, Cassirer directs our attention to the “symbolic space,” which then by a “complex and difficult process of thought” takes us to “the idea of abstract space.” This idea is a gift given to human beings, Cassirer argues, which distinguishes them from all the other creatures of “organic space, the space of action.” “It is this idea [of abstract or intellectual space],” Cassirer maintains, however, “which clears the way for man not only to a new field of knowledge but to an entirely new direction of his cultural life.” As this dissertation is not only interested in those questions which relate to the concept of culture, but also of those of recognition – especially of those of self-recognition in culture – it is important to pay attention to this expanded notion of “knowledge.” This will also have importance later in this dissertation that focuses specifically on the Kantian elements of Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy.

For Cassirer, this new kind of “knowledge” is not any type of knowledge of things or affairs, but of the person knowing – Cassirer refers to self-knowledge. The *Essay on Man* opens by affirming that “self-knowledge is the highest aim of philosophical inquiry.” “Self-knowledge,” Cassirer writes while elevating the phrase “know thyself” to the role of a categorical imperative, “is not simply a subject of curiosity or speculation; it is declared to be the fundamental obligation of man.” Self-knowledge is, however, tied to the symbolic forms as processes of culture, which articulate the human experience while providing means of its expression in human action. This conviction is echoed with Cassirer’s conclusion: “Human culture taken as a whole may be described as the process of man’s progressive self-liberation. Language, art, religion, science, are various phases in this process. In all of them

147 Kant 1999, III.A27/B43. (*KrV*).
148 Cassirer 1974, 43.
149 Cassirer 1974, 43.
150 Cassirer 1974, 43.
151 Cassirer 1974, 1.
152 Cassirer 1974, 3.
man discovers and proves a new power – the power to build up a world of his own, an ‘ideal’ world.”\textsuperscript{153} These “phases” or “functions,” which all “complete and complement each other,” reopen the question of action.\textsuperscript{154}

Like for many philosophers, Ricoeur included, action is an essential part of being a human being for Cassirer. A human being should be considered as “an animal of superior species which produces philosophies and poems in the same way as silkworm produce their cocoons or bees build their cells.”\textsuperscript{155} There is, however, one fundamental difference between the action of human beings and that of all the other animals. Cassirer argues that a human being has adapted to his or her environment in a truly novel way.

Between the receptor system and the effector system, which are to be found in all animal species, we find in man a third link which we may describe as the \textit{symbolic system}. This new acquisition transforms the whole of human life. As compared with the other animals man lives not merely in a broader reality; he lives, so to speak, in a new dimension of reality. […] No longer in a merely physical universe, man lives in a symbolic universe. Language, myth, art, and religion are parts of this universe. They are the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience. All human progress in thought and experience refines upon and strengthens this net. No longer can man confront reality immediately; he cannot see it, as it were, face to face. Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man’s symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of this artificial medium.\textsuperscript{156}

This argument, which insists that living in a symbolic universe is the human condition, leads Cassirer to require that the “classical definition” of human beings should be revised. “Instead of defining man as an \textit{animal rationale},” he writes, “we should define him as an

\textsuperscript{153} Cassirer 1974, 228.  
\textsuperscript{154} Cassirer 1974, 228.  
\textsuperscript{155} Cassirer 1974, 20.  
\textsuperscript{156} Cassirer 1974, 24-25.
animal symbolicum.” The knowledge of which Cassirer writes “is by its very nature symbolic knowledge.” A human being lives in a thoroughly symbolic world, which is his advantage but also his loss – “no longer can man confront reality immediately.”

To reconnect with our Ricoeur discussion, I maintain that Cassirer’s conviction, that the human being is distinguished from all the other animals by the necessary use of symbolic significations, conforms to Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of symbols, as developed in The Symbolism of Evil and De l’interprétation: essai sur Freud (1965). First, The Symbolism of Evil makes evident the shift of methodological emphasis that Ricoeur undertakes. The essence of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic “wager,” that is, Ricoeur’s turn to the hermeneutics of symbols, is captured in the well-known idea that Ricoeur imports from Kant’s third Critique: “the symbol gives rise to thought.” Ricoeur commits himself to a view which leads him to change the overall methodological approach from onto-existentially inspired phenomenology to hermeneutical phenomenology of symbols.

The reason for this change will be explained later in more detail in relation to Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of postcritical innocence. Let me mention, however, that it is comparable to Cassirer’s conviction that anthropological “knowledge” is attainable only with the idea of symbolic forms. Ricoeur writes: “I wager that I shall have a better understanding of man and of the bond between the being of man and the being of all beings if I follow the indication of symbolic thought.” For this reason, as Laurence L. Alexander mentions in his 1976 essay “Ricoeur’s ‘Symbolism of Evil’ and Cross-Cultural Comparison,” Ricoeur focuses

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158 Cassirer 1974, 57.
159 Cassirer 1974, 25.
160 Trans. Freud and Philosophy: On Interpretation (by Denis Savage, 1970). From hereon the title On Interpretation is used.
162 Ricoeur 1960b, 330. (355).
on “revealing the formative processes of symbolization in man and in culture at large.”

David Rasmussen, for his part, had already summarized the implications of Ricoeur’s wager by mentioning that “mythic-symbolic language is necessary for a global understanding of man.” Both Cassirer and Ricoeur argue that human self-knowledge is not possible without restoring the cultural system of symbols.

The mythic-symbolic language, however, is not quite enough in itself for Ricoeur. The philosophy based on “the wager,” Ricoeur asserts, “starts from the symbols, and endeavors to promote the meaning, to form it, by a creative interpretation.”

To be able to think along the “symbols of the self” requires that “the original enigma of the symbol” – maintaining a mediated immediacy – should be preserved and respected while having been subjected at the same time to critical investigation. Here the notion of hermeneutics is worked out. “In short,” Ricoeur argues, “it is by interpreting that we can bear anew; it is thus in hermeneutics that the symbol’s gift of meaning and the endeavor to understand by deciphering are knotted together.” As much as man “remains speech” Ricoeur’s “wager” poses no problems for philosophy – “there exists nowhere a symbolic language without hermeneutics,” he argues.

Language works as a medium for elaborating the onto-existential meaning of symbolic expressions, in the process of interpretation:

A meditation on symbols starts from language that has already taken place, and in which everything has already been said in some fashion; it wishes to be thought with its presuppositions. For it, the first task is not to begin but, from the midst of speech, to remember itself again; to remember with a view to beginning.

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164 Rasmussen 1971, 127.
165 Ricoeur 1960b, 330. (355).
166 Ricoeur 1960b, 18. (11).
167 Ricoeur 1960b, 325. (350).
168 Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (351).
169 Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (350).
170 Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348-349).
Both the conviction of the possible “fullness” of language, and the conviction of a human being’s foundational relation to such language open Ricoeur’s hermeneutics from the level of primary symbols and myths to a broader understanding of symbolic forms.

To remind us, Ricoeur does not, in *Time and Narrative I*, take the term “symbol” in the sense of a sign that has a double-intentional structure, but more precisely in a Cassirerian manner “inasmuch as […] symbolic forms are cultural processes that articulate experience.”

It is this sense of “symbol” which “Cassirer made classic,” and which cultural anthropology adopted, that Ricoeur wishes to follow when discussing the symbolic mediation of human action. Ricoeur then repositions himself dramatically. Almost two decades earlier in *On Interpretation* Ricoeur held that Cassirer’s position provides “too broad a definition” by making “the ‘symbolic function’ the general function of mediation by which the mind or consciousness constructs all its universes of perception and discourse.” At the time of *On Interpretation* Ricoeur maintained that Cassirer’s notion of symbolic function is all-encompassing and therefore problematic, since this single mediating function subsumes all ways of giving meaning to reality under one notion. *Time and Narrative I*, in contrast, approves the Cassirerian standpoint.

Put differently, the later Ricoeur adopted more fully the implications of the praise he offers in the context of *On Interpretation*. In “doing justice to Cassirer” and explaining why the general signifying function has been called “symbolic,” Ricoeur acknowledges in *On Interpretation* that the term “seems well suited to designate the cultural

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171 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
172 Ricoeur 1983, 88. (54).
173 Ricoeur 1965a, 19. (10).
instruments of our apprehension of reality: language, religion, art, science." It is Ricoeur’s conviction that Cassirer’s philosophy of symbolic forms helps in arbitrating these cultural forms – that include cultural institutions – thus safeguarding against taking any of these as absolutes by their own right. Furthermore, according to Ricoeur the term “symbol” pushes beyond Kantian transcendental epistemology “and moves from a critique of reason to a critique of culture,” which is yet another indicator that Ricoeur was not indifferent to cultural hermeneutics in *On Interpretation* either.

A terminological problem remains, however. Where Ricoeur would like to see the term “signifying function” be used, Cassirer utilizes the term “symbolic function.” “By unifying all the functions of mediation under the title of ‘the symbolic,’” Ricoeur criticizes, “Cassirer gives this concept an amplitude that is equal to that of the concept of reality and that of culture.” This critique is understandable in the context of *On Interpretation*, which focuses on the symbolic uses of language. What really disturbs Ricoeur is the idea that by making the notion of “symbolic” too broad, Cassirer also wipes out “a fundamental distinction [...] which constitutes, as I see it, a true dividing line: the distinction between

174 Ricoeur 1965a, 20. (10). – Based on Ricoeur’s re-evaluation of Cassirer as well as our discussion of the Kantian element in Ricoeur’s though later in this dissertation, I cannot fully agree with Laurence Alexander’s claims of certain foundational differences between Ricoeur and Cassirer. Alexander states that “Ricoeur stands opposed (or perhaps in complement) to Cassirer’s critical phenomenology of symbolic forms. In his concern for the phenomenology of the will Ricoeur reduces the problem of the process of symbolization to a thematic structure; Cassirer does exactly the opposite in reducing the structural forms of the process of symbolization at the expense of thematic analysis.” Alexander’s “cross-cultural” analysis of the symbols of evil is based on Ricoeur’s 1960 work, and does not read Ricoeur carefully enough; his leading argument is that Ricoeur’s analysis could not be confirmed in the realm of Maya symbolisms - which, I claim, is a misconception of Ricoeur’s ultimate thesis - even though Alexander himself acknowledges that Ricoeur has decided to limit the scope of his own investigation to the Western symbolisms. Cf. Alexander 1976, 705, 707, 709, 714.

175 Ricoeur & Reagan 1996, 100.
176 Ricoeur 1965a, 20. (11).
177 Ricoeur 1965a, 21. (11).
Ricoeur’s concern is that the idea of rich symbolic meanings would be lost.

Although already approaching the notion of language as a whole, Ricoeur was still in his 1965 work very much in line with the “criteriology of symbols” elaborated in *The Symbolism of Evil*. The “criteriology” is echoed with Ricoeur’s “deliberate restriction” that symbols should only be taken as “double- or multiple-meaning expressions whose semantic texture is correlative to the work of interpretation that explicates their second or multiple meanings.” Here, however, Ricoeur’s later distinction between implicit and explicit symbolisms comes into play. Those symbols “which underlie action and that constitute its first signification” Ricoeur understands in the Cassirerian sense as testifying to the universal functionality of symbolic forms. The “autonomous symbolic wholes dependent upon speaking or writing” can, in turn, be understood in the specific double-intentional sense as defined in both *The Symbolism of Evil* and *On Interpretation*, that is, as double-intentional signs.

It is evident, however, that in spite of its misgivings, Cassirer’s theory appears quite attractive for Ricoeur. John E. Smith and David Pellauer also point to this in their respective readings on Ricoeur. Having approached the notion of symbols as multiple-meaning expressions in a cultural context, Ricoeur later finds himself needing explication of how this context comes about, as well as pointing out that this symbolic context – that is, its implicit and pre-signifying form – brings about a certain “readability” needed for understanding. Ernst Cassirer, the philosopher who most significantly provided conceptual

178 Ricoeur 1965a, 21. (11).
180 Ricoeur 1965a, 22. (13).
181 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
182 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
means for modern cultural anthropology, also provokes Ricoeur to ponder the role of symbolisms in relation to human action and in understanding its meaning. It is also in this sense that I claim that “symbol gives rise to thought.”

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To sum up this brief introductory analysis that responded to the need of clarifying Ricoeur’s relation to cultural anthropology, I maintain that we have now both sufficiently explained the nature of these relations – especially between Ricoeur, Cassirer, and Geertz – and further assured us of the necessity to examine Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics. There is “an unavoidably ‘hermeneutical’ component in the sciences of man,” Charler Taylor states when arguing that Ricoeur’s *On Interpretation* helped to bring this hermeneutic question “again to the fore.” At the risk of frustrating the reader, I will not yet move into that discussion, however. What I have yet to explain is the overall nature of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics, before then showing that it is cultural from the beginning to the end. I am firmly convinced, nevertheless, that the next introductory discussion also affirms that the question of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics is, indeed, well-founded.

\[184\] Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348).
\[185\] C. Taylor 1987, 33.
3. RICOEUR AND POSTCRITICAL HERMENEUTICS

This dissertation focuses on Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics. It is, therefore, also necessary to explain how I understand Ricoeur’s hermeneutics in the first place, before making any further claims about it. There are two basic models that can be used to describe Ricoeur’s hermeneutical approach: phenomenologico-symbolic and linguistic-practical. The first is guided by Ricoeur’s so-called “wager” from phenomenology to hermeneutics in 1960, the other by his accompanying emphasis on the problem of language that gradually became to the forefront in Ricoeur’s thought, and which then bloomed full in the works published in the mid-1970s and after. This later model was subsequently expanded, in his works in the 1980s and 1990s, to cover practical action.

Both of these models, however, are not only interlinked by their threefold structures – very common to Ricoeur’s thought in general – but also by their common, although indirect, interest in the question of being. My claim is that this onto-existential interest includes the notion of cultural being, through which the question of being is worked out. In addition, as I will argue at the end of this chapter, the multi-triadic model of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics provides a clue for us for the explication of his cultural

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186 Ricoeur 1960b, 324-326, 330. (348-351, 355); Ricoeur 1965a, 13. (3); Ricoeur 1975d.; Ricoeur 1976b.; Ricoeur 1983, 11. (ix). – It can be argued that despite his later emphasis on language Ricoeur nevertheless remained close to phenomenology. This is evident in the opening lines of his 1965 essay “Existence et herméneutique,” in which Ricoeur aims at examining the “renewal of phenomenology through hermeneutics.” Ricoeur’s “hermeneutic wager” should thus be understood as “grafting” hermeneutics into phenomenology, and not as leaving phenomenology behind. Ricoeur uses the French word greffe to describe his attempt to use hermeneutics as a tool for solving the problem of limitation encountered at the level of phenomenological analysis. This does not, however, lead him to set phenomenology completely aside - instead, Ricoeur adopts a hermeneutical approach to the phenomenological method. This is the essence of the wager in The Symbolism of Evil. Cf. Ricoeur 1965b, 1-11. (3-11).

187 In order to avoid confusions, let me add that Ricoeur, already in his early work, approached the question of being a human subject in such a manner that it included the idea of human praxis. This inclusion is very explicit, for example, in The Voluntary and the Involuntary and in Fallible Man.
The importance of these preparatory comments is also highlighted by the fact that I will return to this discussion at the very end of this dissertation.

3.1 Hermeneutic of Postcritical Innocence

Let me begin this brief introduction to Ricoeur’s hermeneutics with the phenomenologico-symbolic approach that Ricoeur adopted in the 1960s. I maintain that this earlier hermeneutic model emphasizes the ontological aspects of Ricoeur’s thought. Ricoeur’s symbol theory highlights the process of precritical, critical, and postcritical aspects of being. These three can be read as 1) primary naïveté that marks spontaneous, “innocent” existence in the presence of being, 2) distanciation in critical objectivism, and 3) secondary naïveté describing the postcritical, that is, critically informed existence. In brief, this threefold structure aims at a certain “re-gaining” of participated presence. This idea of regained ontological participation was already expressed in Le volontaire et l’involontaire (1949), in which Ricoeur maintained that “if life begins beyond anxiety, there is a way back from there to here, to a naïveté, albeit a naïveté which has matured in the experience of anxiety.” On this basis Ricoeur then stated in La symbolique du mal (1960) that “it is by interpreting that we can hear anew” – it is “hearing,” or understanding our rootedness in being, which Ricoeur is...
interested in, but in the mode of hearing “anew” in a postcritical fashion that resorts to interpretation.

Furthermore, for the early Ricoeur the primordial experience of being-in-being is our “genesis,” an existential-experiential starting point beyond our reach. This is the “first innocence” (la naïveté ontologique or la naïveté première), in which the ontological aspect of life is directly experienced. This innocence is, however, lost in the critical state – “oblivion” or “forgetfulness” in distanciation – which, in a manner similar to Rousseau, can be associated with culture and the cultural mode of being. Ricoeur’s thesis is that a philosophy that is “instructed” by symbolic meanings – which bring language to its fullness and “recharge it” by taking us back to the origins of our speaking being – wishes to answer to this “situation of modern culture,” or alienation. In The Symbolism of Evil Ricoeur describes this cultural “situation” in a manner that resembles “the profane man” of Mircea Éliade. Our modern culture is oblivious forgetfulness (l’oubli) that results in “the loss of man himself insofar as he

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192 Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s critique of the demoralizing and corrupting effect of cultivation in the famous 1750 essay “A Discourse on the Moral Effects of the Arts and Sciences” is summarized in the opening phrase of his 1762 work The Social Contract: “L’homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers.” The idea that “man is born free, and [yet] he is everywhere in chains” emphasizes that cultural and social structures can tame the human nature and alienate it from itself by “chaining” or enslaving it by social, political, and cultural conventions. This is what I mean with the “Rousseauian” aspect in Ricoeur’s early hermeneutic model.

It would have to be remembered, however, that Rousseau argued for exchanging one’s natural liberty to civil liberty, established by the Sovereign resembling to “the general will” of a people, because that would ensure a person’s “moral liberty, which alone renders a man master of himself.” The difference is between two types of social contracts, the one proposed by Hugo Grotius and Thomas Hobbes, which emphasized the supreme authority of the common-wealth (or the Leviathan) over the subjects, and the more “democratic” one proposed by Rousseau himself that stressed that the authority, even as supreme, is never anything else but the general will of the people manifested in laws. (Rousseau 1947, 5-19, 24-27, 31-35.)

Furthermore, in our reading of Ricoeur, I will have to point out that Ricoeur does not consider a human being as “free” at his or her birth – Ricoeur is not a liberalist. According to Ricoeur, a human being is bound by the cultural condition that is a given already at the moment of birth: “My birth is the beginning of my life: in it I was placed, once and for all, into the world, and posed in being before I was able to posit any act voluntarily. […] My birth does not mean only the beginning of my life, but also expresses its dependence with respect to two other lives: I do not posit myself, I have been posited by others. […] To be born means to receive from another the capital of heredity. […] In beginning as an ‘I,’ I participate in a lineage. […] Anything I can decide comes after the beginning, and before the end. […] I am always in the process of beginning to be free, I have always begun to live when I say ‘I am.’ As birth, all necessity is prior to any actual act of the ‘I’ which reflects on itself.” Ricoeur 1949, 407-416. (433-443).
belongs to the sacred.”

This phase of forgetfulness is the antithetic moment of Ricoeur’s early hermeneutics, or the moment of modern alienation.

In one of his 1975 lectures Ricoeur explains this post-enlightenment situation further when commenting that “all modern cultures are now involved in a process not only of secularization but of fundamental confrontation about basic ideals.” Forgetfulness thus conforms both to human hubris and to critical and reductive questioning. To understand this phase better, one could think of the reductive shift described by Heidegger from the ontological level of being to the ontic level of beings or Hegel’s description of cultural world as self-worked alienation. Oblivious forgetfulness embodies a thought of a delusional understanding of the essence and the fundament of being, that is, a kind of culturally produced illusion of the ground of being. But this is not yet a satisfying description for Ricoeur. The ontological richness of “the first innocence” and the state of forgetfulness form a dialectic pair that calls for “understanding interpretation.”

Even though for Ricoeur – in the wake of Karl Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel – the fundamental structure of being is mysterious, it can be discerned through mytho-poetic language. This emphasis on mytho-poetics draws Ricoeur close to the later Heidegger or

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194 Ricoeur 1986, 259.
197 Pellauer 2007, 6, 9, 13.; Kearney 2004, 17-18.; Porée 2010.; Bégué 2010.; Blundell 2003. – Jerôme Porée’s essay on the Jaspersian influences in Ricoeur’s thought is a concise and yet comprehensive introduction to the theme, as are the essays by Marie-France Bégué and Boyd Blundell in terms of Ricoeur’s indebtedness to Marcel. The two philosophical mentors are, however, only two of all the philosophers that had an influence to Ricoeur’s thought. David Pellauer lists also Heidegger, Kant, and Husserl as such contributors. Richard Kearney, for his part, mentions “such German hermeneutic thinkers as Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer” when finding predecessors and possible contributors to Ricoeur’s hermeneutic thought. (Kearney 2004, 1.) Any such list however, as Kearney notices, can easily be enlarged to include a vast number of major figures in philosophy - beginning with Plato and Aristotle - and thus no further “mapping” will be given in this introductory part of the dissertation, as the question of placing Ricoeur’s philosophy of cultural recognition will be dealt with the discussion below. Cf. Kearney 2004, 3-4.
“Heidegger II.” Heidegger’s *Letter on Humanism*, for example, states that even though a human being stands “in the lighting of Being,” it is so that “Being remains concealed.” According to Heidegger, it is only possible to approach this Whole by means of poetic language: “the world’s destiny is heralded in poetry” as “poetic composition is truer than exploration of beings.” As will be shown in part four of this dissertation, for Ricoeur it is this poetic aspect that forms the very core of our cultural being-here. This reopens the question of achieving a kind of new innocence.

The moment of cultural forgetfulness or alienation is not, therefore, the final phase for Ricoeur’s early hermeneutics, but the moment of possibly overcoming it. Second, yet “another,” innocence (naïveté seconde) describes the synthetic, “postcritical” outcome of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of being. This synthetic phase compounds both the open presence of the “first innocence” (the experience of being-in-being) and the oblivious forgetfulness in distanciation (culture). This secondary innocence is thus a state of postcritical interpretative “wondering” at the “ciphers” of nature and the experience of cultural being. This postcritical innocence is achieved only in interpretation, that is, in hearing “anew” in interpretation. As I will argue in the last part of this dissertation, this moment of “postcritical” understanding, according to Ricoeur, remains a task for a human subject, but it also designates the possibility of achieving an authentic notion of being a human being.

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199 Heidegger 1976, 339. (Heidegger 1977b, 219.)
200 Heidegger 1976, 339. (Heidegger 1977b, 219.)
201 Heidegger 1976, 363. (Heidegger 1977b, 240.)
3.2 Hermeneutic of Reconfiguration

In Ricoeur’s later work the threefold structure of primary naïveté, forgetfulness, and secondary naïveté – which parallels the structure proposed by Marcel203 – was replaced or, rather, supplemented by the “threefold mimesis,” or the process of reconfiguration. Ricoeur argues in his trilogy Temps et récit204 that this hermeneutic process of pre-, con-, and refiguration is described by mimesis 1, 2 and 3, or the threefold process of imitation/representation that I will explain in this section.205 In short, the open-ended and recurring mimetic process begins with pre-figuration at the stage of the conditions of practical experience (such as the necessity of symbolization), is unified in con-figuration that takes place in the emplotment as a synthesis, and results in re-figuration that returns to the

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203 Throughout his career, Ricoeur was open about his indebtedness to his mentor Gabriel Marcel, who provides a threefold structure of reflection that can be seen as a model for Ricoeur’s threefold structure of hermeneutics of being-here: 1) the unity of experience, i.e., the immediacy of situation, 2) primary reflection, i.e., retreat from existence due to objectifying, and 3) secondary reflection, that is, recalling the unity of experience by recognizing the categories of the primary reflection to be insufficient. Kenneth T. Gallagher (who for Marcel is the same as William Richardson to Martin Heidegger) explains Marcel’s account on this threefold structure: “[Marcel] agrees that reflection is integral to human existence, and his own thought should not be classified with those philosophies of life which exalt raw, uncritized experience over wisdom. Reflection is part of life, not opposed to it, but it operates at more than one level: ‘Roughly we can say that where primary reflection tends to dissolve the unity of experience which is first put before us, the function of secondary reflection is essentially recuperative; it reconquers that unity.’ It is primary reflection which severs man from the immediacy of his situation; in the same breath that it sets up the world of objectivity it also isolates the subject as an element over against this world. For both subject and object, this stage represents a retreat from participation, and therefore a retreat from existence. […] Secondary reflection, then comes on the scene in the role of a reflection upon a reflection. It is not so much of a denial of primary reflection as a refusal of any claim to finality and exclusiveness inherent in the latter. Secondary reflection, says Marcel, is reflection squared, reflection raised to the second power. Specifically, it is a recognition of the insufficiency of the categories which make primary reflection possible.” (Gallagher 1962, 41-42.) As The Voluntary and the Involuntary indicates, Ricoeur was, based on his earlier work on Marcel (cf. Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers: philosophie du mystère et philosophie du paradoxe, 1947), well aware of Marcel’s structure of reflection. Ricoeur also discusses Marcel’s conception of reflection later in his career, in the 1984 essay “Réflexion primaire et réflexion secondaire chez Gabriel Marcel.” Ricoeur 1949, 440. (468); Ricoeur 1992, 49-67. Cf. Treanor 2006, 217-222.; Blundell 2010, 58-62, 77-80.

204 Trans. Time and Narrative I-III (by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, 1984-1988). From hereon the English title is used. My heartfelt thanks to Professor Tuomo Mannermaa for donating the English translations to me.

thus enriched practical experience of the “reader.” In this tensional process of reconfiguration a creative subject discovers him- or herself as a creative interpreter.\textsuperscript{206}

Drawing on Aristotle’s \textit{Poetics} and especially from the term \textit{μίµησις πράξεως} – an imitation or representation of action by the medium of metrical language\textsuperscript{207} – Ricoeur argues that mimesis draws together the practical world and the imaginary world:

That the praxis belongs at the same time to the real domain, covered by ethics, and the imaginary one, covered by poetics, suggests that mimesis functions not just as a break but also as a connection, one which establishes precisely the status of the “metaphorical” transposition of the practical field by the mythos.\textsuperscript{208}

This then means that the term mimesis has several different, albeit connected, meanings. First of all, “a reference to the first side of poetic composition,” that is, to the actual world of the author, would have to be preserved. Ricoeur calls this reference \textit{mimesis},\textsuperscript{1} and distinguishes it from \textit{mimesis},\textsuperscript{2}, namely, “the mimesis of creation” – a world opened up by the text. These two have their complement in \textit{mimesis},\textsuperscript{3}, which means mimesis as an activity that requires “a spectator or reader,” who with his or her world of action represents “the other side of poetic composition.”\textsuperscript{209} The three worlds – the world of action, of text, and of action – translates to those of ethico-politics, poetics, and ethico-politics again. Ricoeur then concludes that mimetic activity, reconfiguration, bridges \textit{ποίησις} and \textit{πράξις}, which by themselves are distinct realms of action.\textsuperscript{210}

The whole of mimetic action can be better understood taking into account Ricoeur’s assertion that \textit{mimesis}, is fundamentally about the reader appropriating the world

\textsuperscript{206} Cf. Michel 2006, 80-83.
\textsuperscript{207} Aristotle 1984, 1449b.24. (\textit{Poetics}).
\textsuperscript{208} Ricoeur 1983, 76. (46).
\textsuperscript{209} Ricoeur 1983, 77. (46).
\textsuperscript{210} Ricoeur 1983, 78. (47).
deployed by the poetic work.\textsuperscript{211} Here, as we now try to understand the proceeds of the whole mimetic arc, the notion of culture comes into play. For Ricoeur, it is the cultural world that constitutes the possibility for \textit{mimesis}, or the figurative reception of a work:

This world [deployed by the poetic work] is a cultural world. The principal axis of a theory of reference on the second side of the work passes therefore through the relationship between poetry and culture. As James Redfield so forcefully puts it in his book \textit{Nature and Culture in the Iliad}, the two relations, each the converse of the other, that we can establish between these two terms “must be interpreted … in the light of a third relation: the poet as a maker of culture” (p. xi). Aristotle’s \textit{Poetics} makes no incursion into this domain. It sets up the ideal spectator, and even more so the ideal reader, with his intelligence, his “purged” emotions, and his pleasure, at the junction of the work and the culture it creates.\textsuperscript{212}

For Ricoeur, the threefold mimesis not only represents combining different worlds but also the processual mediation in culture between “the prefiguration of the practical field \textit{[mimesis]}\textsuperscript{1} and its refiguration \textit{[mimesis]}\textsuperscript{3} through the reception of the work [which in itself represents configuration, \textit{mimesis}\textsuperscript{2}].”\textsuperscript{213} According to Ricoeur, therefore, the threefold mimesis is ultimately a description of cultural mediation. To explain this claim in further detail, I will focus briefly on each of the three phases of reconfiguration in what follows below.

\textit{Mimesis\textsubscript{1}},

Ricoeur argues that prefiguration, \textit{mimesis\textsubscript{1}}, has three “anchorages” that essentially echo his earlier hermeneutics of symbols. The “preunderstanding of the world of action” includes the meaningful structure of action, symbolic structures, and the temporal character of that world of action.\textsuperscript{214} The first anchorage, the semantics of action, leads us to understand that

\textsuperscript{211} Ricoeur 1983, 83. (50).
\textsuperscript{212} Ricoeur 1983, 83-84. (50-51).
\textsuperscript{213} Ricoeur 1983, 86. (53).
\textsuperscript{214} Ricoeur 1983, 87-88, 100. (54, 64).
narrative and praxis are interdependent, because plot (mythos) is “the literary equivalent of the syntagmatic order that narrative introduces into the practical field.” Ricoeur asserts that “to understand a story (une histoire) is to understand both the language of ‘doing something’ and the cultural tradition from which proceeds the typology of the plots.” Narrativa conveys its meaning only in a structured context of action.

The second anchorage, symbolic structures, represents the implicit or immanent symbolism of the first one. Ricoeur reminds us that human action can be narrated because it is “always already” both symbolically mediated and articulated in signs, rules, and norms. In applying Ernst Cassirer’s philosophy of symbolic forms, Ricoeur therefore defines the symbolic forms he himself discusses as “cultural processes that articulate experience.”

This symbolic mediation, however, is distinguishable from symbolic wholes, which Ricoeur understands as autonomous contexts of meaning; a symbolic whole is “a meaning incorporated into action and decipherable from it by other actors in the social interplay.” This is a direct result of affirming Clifford Geertz’s assertion that “culture is public because meaning is.” There are then two sides to symbolic structures: they are necessary conditions and contexts of meaning.

Symbolic mediation is a necessary function, and a symbolic whole a context of meaning. Symbolic mediation signals “the structured character of a symbolic system,” whereas symbolic systems, in turn, furnish “a descriptive context for particular actions.” Furthermore, “symbolism confers an initial readability on action”, and for this reason the term “symbol” introduces the idea of a rule – as a norm connected to social regulation. In explicating this regulation Ricoeur alludes to Hegel’s term Sittlichkeit, historico-ethical

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216 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
217 Ricoeur 1983, 92. (57).
situatedness in social structures he calls “ethical life.” This prereflective stance includes the ethical substance as well as other manners and customs, and therefore defines the “cultural code,” which, in its turn, conditions social regulation.\textsuperscript{218}

Culturally immanent norms thus imbue actions with value, but not only actions. Ricoeur mentions that the degrees of value are extended, beyond the actions, to their agents. Here a link to Aristotle’s \textit{Poetics} is apparent: “The \textit{Poetics} presupposes not just ‘doers’ but characters endowed with ethical qualities that make them noble or vile.”\textsuperscript{219} The heroes and the villains in a story, however, become such only due to the practical understanding shared by the author and the audience. Every action is evaluated by the cultural context in which it is undertaken. Ricoeur maintains that “this ethical quality is itself only a corollary of the major characteristic of action, that it is always symbolically mediated.”\textsuperscript{220} Symbolic mediation and symbolic wholes are then interdependent forms of symbolic structures.

Finally, the third anchorage Ricoeur introduces of the world of action is its temporal character, which is linked to human experience that has a prenarrative structure. Ricoeur examines this as “within-time-ness,” that is, as Heidegger’s \textit{Innerzeitlichkeit}, or intratemporality. Within-time-ness abstracts both from existential temporality of constantly projecting ourselves “ahead” (\textit{Zeitlichkeit}), and from acknowledging this primordial experience as historicity (\textit{Geschichtlichkeit}) which, as an extension between birth and death, calls for narration. In the first place, \textit{Innerzeitlichkeit} highlights therefore the duality of being in time, that being-here is historical because it is temporal.\textsuperscript{221}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{218} Ricoeur 1983, 92-93. (57-58).
\item \textsuperscript{219} Ricoeur 1983, 94. (59).
\item \textsuperscript{220} Ricoeur 1983, 94. (59).
\end{itemize}
Being-here is not only temporal, however, but also being-with and care – being preoccupied in the world. The description of temporality is dependent on the description of this preoccupation. This means that within-time-ness reveals being-here in the present, by way of “making-present” the world. The temporal manner of being-in-the-world therefore “crosses over” from time and history to being preoccupied. This is decisive for Ricoeur, who argues straightforwardly that the narrative order and being preoccupied in the world are then bridged – “for the first time.” His conclusion is that “narrative configurations and the most elaborated forms of temporality corresponding to them share the same foundation of within-time-ness.”

This conclusion seems also to summarize *mimesis*, the necessary preunderstanding of the world of human action that is “common to both poets and their readers,” by implicitly drawing together its semantics, symbolic structure, and temporality as cultural prerequisites.

*Mimesis*₂

Ricoeur locates *mimesis*₂ between prefiguration and refiguration – or, in Ricoeur’s terms, between “preunderstanding” and “postunderstanding.”²²⁴ Briefly put, the configurating operation is nothing but “grasping together.” As we have seen, this means for Ricoeur emplotment in an Aristotelian manner.²²⁵ Ultimately, however, it has a Kantian meaning as a “function of unity among our representations,” that is, judging.²²⁶ According to Ricoeur, the kinship between the configurational act – that of organizing an intelligible whole as

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²²² Ricoeur 1983, 96-100. (61-64).
²²³ Ricoeur 1983, 100. (64).
²²⁴ Ricoeur 1983, 102. (65).
²²⁶ Kant 1999, III.A69/B94. (*Kritik der Reinen Vernunft*).
“concordant discordance” – and the operation of judging as described by Kant cannot be overemphasized. Ricoeur argues that this is most apparent in the case of reflective judgments – distinguishable from the determinate ones.  

Here, however, Ricoeur seems to be of two minds. Instead of following Kant’s third *Critique* and the notion of reflective judgments, Ricoeur requires that the configurational act should be compared to the work of the productive imagination in a sense familiar to the first *Critique*. When elaborating his understanding of configuration Ricoeur refers to the schematizing power and the synthesizing function of the productive imagination. “We may speak of a schematism of the narrative function,” says Ricoeur. But what distinguishes Ricoeur from Kant is his claim that the schematism he discusses be culturally bound, it “is constituted within a history that has all the characteristics of a tradition.” Besides weaving between Kant’s first and the third *Critique*, Ricoeur seems to think in a post-Hegelian manner.

The notion of culture appears again in relation to traditionality, which according to Ricoeur is the second feature of configurational action. Taken from the point of view of traditionality, the Western narrative paradigm – “our culture” as Ricoeur calls it – is based on the genre of Greek tragedy but also “several narrative traditions: Hebrew and Christian, but also Celtic, Germanic, Icelandic, and Slavic.” Our cultural paradigm is heir to all of these, “issuing from” previous traditions, but still not uniform with any

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227 Ricoeur 1983, 103-104. (66). – Kant distinguishes determinate and reflective judgments with regard to the universal rule: “Judgment in general is the ability to think the particular as contained under the universal. If the universal (the rule, principle, law) is given, then judgment, which subsumes the particular under it, is determinative (even though as a transcendental judgment it states a priori the conditions that must be met for subsumption under that universal to be possible). But if only the particular is given and judgment has to find the universal for it, then this power is merely reflective.” Kant 1999, V.179-180. (*KdU*).

228 Ricoeur 1983, 106. (68).

229 Ricoeur 1983, 106. (68).


one of them. This disjointed continuity points to a dialectic between innovation and sedimentation, by which new works and original productions come about – Ricoeur uses the term “rule-governed deformation” when he explains how the changes of paradigm take place. \[232\] “It is the variety of applications,” he writes, “that confers a history on the productive imagination and that, in counterpoint to sedimentation, makes a narrative tradition possible.” \[233\] Once again, then, the lived experience finds itself articulated in cultural products that capture the essence of the configurational operation.

*Mimesis*.

Prefiguration concerns the preunderstanding of the cultural world of action, and configuration the world of the text, that is, cultural schematization. Refiguration, or *mimesis*, marks then “the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hearer or reader.” \[234\] The intersection is thus akin to Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons” (*Horizontverschmelzung*), \[235\] since it concerns both “the world configured by the poem” and “the world wherein effective action unfurls and unfolds its specific temporality.” \[236\] Generally, therefore, *mimesis*, “corresponds to what Gadamer, in his philosophical hermeneutics, calls ‘application.’” \[237\] This hermeneutic activity is, according to Ricoeur, both unending and recurring. It is an “endless spiral,” or a “healthy circle,” which carries “the

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\[233\] Ricoeur 1983, 109. (70).
\[237\] Ricoeur 1983, 109. (70). – In *Truth and Method* Gadamer first pays attention to the fact that philological, legal, and theological hermeneutics recognized application “as an integral element of all understanding.” He then proposes that “our thesis is that historical hermeneutics too has a task of application to perform, because it too serves applicable meaning, in that it explicitly and consciously bridges the temporal distance that separates the interpreter from the text and overcomes the alienation of meaning that the text has undergone.” Gadamer 1989, 308-311.
meditation past the same point a number of times, but at different altitudes." The reader or hearer ultimately constructs both the narration and its meaning, and thus refigures the world of action in the light of that narration. The act of reading or that of hearing, the aesthetic reception, connects *mimesis* to *mimesis*. For Ricoeur, then, the reader’s world – the cultural world “in front of the text” – is far more important than that “behind the text” to which the author’s intentions and the ontological unnameable belong. Re-figuration as both re-description and re-signification should therefore be comprehended properly. “In *La métaphore vive,*” Ricoeur writes, “I held that poetry, through its *mythos*, re-describes the world. In the same way, in this work I will say that a narrative act (*le faire narratif*) re-signifies the world in its temporal dimension, to the extent that recounting a story (*raconter*), reciting, is to remake the action following the poem’s invitation.” In other words, Ricoeur understands interpreting a text as “the proposing of the world that I might inhabit and into which I might project my ownmost powers.” Reconfiguration is therefore ultimately about human creativity – “doing something” in a cultural tradition. The proposing and the projecting of the world, which sums up the whole process of reconfiguration, lead to apprehending the world itself “from the angle of human

239 Ricoeur 1983, 116-117. (76-77).
240 Trans. *The Rule of Metaphor* (by Robert Czerny, 1977). The translated title is, unfortunately, largely misleading - like in the case of some other Ricoeur’s texts (such as *Le volontaire et l’involontaire* > “Freedom and Nature,” and *De l’interprétation* > “Freud and Philosophy”). Ricoeur himself points to the importance of the original French title in a 1981 interview with Richard Kearney: “In *La métaphore vive* I tried to show how language could extend itself to its very limits forever discovering new resonances within itself. The very term *vivre* (living) in the title of this work is all-important, for it was my purpose to demonstrate that there is not just an epistemological and political imagination, but also, and perhaps more fundamentally, a *linguistic* imagination which generates and regenerates meaning through the living power of metaphoricity.” For this reason, from hereon the title *The Living Metaphor* is used. Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 127.
242 Ricoeur 1983, 122. (81).
praxis." Interpreting a text makes the world of action anew for the reader, that is, re-establishes the reader’s cultural world.

This re-establishing the cultural world needs to be explained in more detail. Based on his earlier work on polysemy and onto-metaphorical reference of figurative language – its “iconic augmentation” – Ricoeur maintains that “we owe a large part of the enlarging of our horizon of existence to fictional [i.e. poetic] works.” Here, he is not too far from Gadamer and his notion of an ontological function of Bild, which contains “an indissoluble connection with its world,” and is an increase in being. Ricoeur is quick to point out, however, that the onto-existential refiguration is guided by prefiguration at the level of practical world of action, or, put differently, it is conditioned by the structures of cultural formation. In short, refiguration presupposes the preunderstanding of the meaningful structure of action, of symbolic structures, and of temporality. Ricoeur therefore clarifies the refigurative moment by arguing that “being-in-the-world according to narrativity is a being-in-the-world already marked by the linguistic practice leading back to this preunderstanding [of the world of action under the governance of mimesis].” The horizon of our existence can be enlarged only when a certain readability is granted by shared preunderstanding, that is, by shared cultural condition of all the readers who then reconfigure their respective beings-in-the-world. With this remark our path from pre- to con- and further to refiguration makes a leap back to prefiguration.

This brief explication of the threefold mimesis must be closed by returning to the thought that the world presupposed and proposed by the poetic work is a cultural

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244 Ricoeur 1983, 121. (80).
245 Ricoeur 1983, 122. (81); Gadamer 1989, 137-144. – Cf. my analysis of Gadamer’s understanding of Bildung in section 11.3 of this dissertation.
246 Ricoeur 1983, 123. (81).
world. In particular, it is a cultural world that describes at the same time, as Ricoeur maintains, my ownmost powers. In fact, I can recognize myself as having these powers only in this cultural world, because the human experience is articulated only in symbolically mediated cultural processes. These closing remarks, however, lead us away from the immediate description of Ricoeur’s conception of threefold mimesis, to the question of connecting these two hermeneutical models that have been introduced above. The following connecting the two hermeneutics will help us, in the end, clarify the hermeneutics of cultural re-connaissance.

3.3 Hermeneutics of Postcritical Understanding

We have now briefly studied Ricoeur's hermeneutical approach in form of the two basic models he proposes in his work. In order to map these two hermeneutical triads onto each other – which Ricoeur himself did not do explicitly – I follow the model proposed by Dan Stiver. Stiver suggests folding the later hermeneutics of threefold mimesis (which he calls “the mimetic arc”) into the earlier one, that of postcritical innocence (“the hermeneutical arc”). When thought together, this results in a revised threefold arc “in which each moment of the hermeneutical arc includes a mimetic arc.” In other words, Stiver connects the two threefold hermeneutics, and reads them together as a triad of 1) a naïve

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247 Ricoeur 1983, 83-84. (50-51).
248 Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
249 Stiver's practical interest in this particular context of his 2001 work lies in describing how doctrinal systematic theology and scriptural texts can relate to each other. Despite the quite precise aim, Stiver offers a model that takes seriously the two hermeneutics proposed by Ricoeur.
250 Stiver argues that Ricoeur introduced the earlier “hermeneutical arc” in the 1970s. I have maintained, earlier in this dissertation, that the first “arc” was introduced already in The Symbolism of Evil, that is, in 1960. Stiver himself explains the arc of The Symbolism of Evil by using the articles written in 1970s, acknowledging thus indirectly that the 1970s arc is only a reworked version of the earlier one. Cf. Stiver 2001, 56, 64.
251 Stiver 2001, 74.
understanding, 2) a critical understanding (explanation), and 3) a postcritical understanding. It is in each of these phases of the “revised arc” that the full “mimetic arc” takes place, showing how refiguration is a new prefiguration in an open-ended hermeneutical process of reconfiguration. 252

As Stiver mentions, this “revised arc” has the advantage of bringing in a “holistic ‘understanding,’ even in the middle momentum of explanation.” 253 Stiver explains that the model he proposes “retains Ricoeur’s emphasis on critique, but it recognizes that critical evaluation of the configured and refigured world of the text demands synthetic imagination.” 254 Stiver is thus able to conclude that “we have therefore a nuanced and inseparable interweaving of the configuration and refiguration of the text that nevertheless allows us to make a relative distinction between the text and our interpretation of it.” 255 Stiver’s model seems indeed to bring the two hermeneutics together in a sound manner.

Stiver’s suggestion and especially the actual figure of the “re-figured arc” in his book, 256 must not be accepted uncritically, however. For Stiver, it seems, the realm of “postcritical understanding” includes not only the “postcritical possibilities” (configuration), but also the refigurative moment of “appropriative understanding.” This refiguration then leads to, or is already, a “postcritical application.” 257 In brief, it remains quite unclear what this postcritical application would be. I argue – keeping in mind that the secondary naïveté is

252 Stiver 2001, 75.
253 Stiver 2001, 74. – Due to Stiver’s willingness to maintain a holistic approach I cannot agree with Mike Higton that Stiver’s model is in danger of being “entirely abstract” without a close contact to concrete reflection, or that it would “hopelessly smother” some aspects of Ricoeur’s thought. For certain, it is a redescription and as such it models Ricoeur’s hermeneutics. Still, Stiver does not make Ricoeur appear as a system-builder – of which Higton accuses him. Cf. Higton 2002.
254 Stiver 2001, 74.
255 Stiver 2001, 75.
256 Stiver 2001, 75.
257 Stiver 2001, 75.
not a given, but a task\textsuperscript{258} – that this postcritical application is perhaps something that could be hoped for, but not anything that would be realizable in full in terms of human understanding. It is a horizon that always withdraws. Still, the path toward it is worth working for itself, even if the task will never be completely fulfilled.

It is quite true that, according to Ricoeur, refiguration corresponds to application in its Gadamerian sense.\textsuperscript{259} As mentioned above, however, hermeneutic activity is for Ricoeur an endless spiral in search of meaning. When the world “into which I might project my ownmost powers” is reconfiguratively formed, it is still never a totality, it never reaches its fullest manifestation. Instead, this cultural world of possibilities needs to be continuously renewed “from the angle of human praxis.”\textsuperscript{260} The impression of a possible closure that one gets from Stiver’s proposal must therefore be shunned: there is no “finality,” no ultimate end in this hermeneutic activity, which would go beyond the idea of “trying to live” in the light of the text’s “truth for me.”\textsuperscript{261}

Although Stiver does not, and would not, come anywhere close to suggesting that such a stagnant finality – an ultimate application – is likely to take place,\textsuperscript{262} it is best to be clear about this: there is no total escape for us from the critical phase. According to Ricoeur, if there is “another immediacy,” it is possible only as a critically informed continuous attempt to understand, or to “hear anew.” It is perhaps good to remind ourselves about the other option by bringing in Martin Heidegger’s hermeneutics as a point of comparison. It can be said in a Ricoeurian vein that Heidegger’s problem was that he wanted to “listen” to Being but affiliated this listening directly with thinking. When Heidegger argues that

\textsuperscript{258} Ricoeur 1960b, 331-332. (356-357).
\textsuperscript{260} Ricoeur 1983, 122. (81).
\textsuperscript{261} Cf. Stiver 2001, 76.
\textsuperscript{262} Cf. Stiver 2001, 76.; Ricoeur 1973a, 164-165.
“thinking is of Being insofar as thinking belonging to Being, listens to Being,” for Ricoeur, thinking is not “listening to Being,” whereas interpretive reflection provides hope for “hearing again.” Ricoeur is always quick to note that the nature of hermeneutics is not “spontaneous” listening anymore but “critical” reflection instead.

Even though Ricoeur aspired to the ontological level of analysis suggested by Heidegger, he criticized Heidegger’s fundamental ontology as too “direct” – its striving for pure description could never be achieved. The primitive naïveté, “the sunken Atlantides,” has been lost in modernity, but through critical hermeneutics – and in interpreting – a second immediacy, “the postcritical equivalent of the precritical hierophany,” is still within our reach. It is in interpreting that this postcritical understanding takes place, and it is only in interpreting that we can have a possibility of appropriative understanding. This interpretative appropriation, having detached itself from the immediate experience of being, cannot in turn detach itself from the distanced, cultural mode of being-here, and return to pure immediacy. As Dan Stiver finally admits, the postcritical phase leads to “further critical reflection and then to further postcritical appropriation, in a hermeneutical spiral rather than an arc.”

There is no stagnant finality for a cultural subject.

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As also André Stanguennec maintains in his brief essay on Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics, appropriation through reconfiguration is always bound to culture. The three “anchorages”

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263 Heidegger 1976, 316. (Heidegger 1977b, 196.)
265 Ricoeur 1960b, 325, 327. (349, 352).
266 Stiver 2001, 76.
267 Stanguennec 2010, 142-143. – Stanguennec identifies, as I do, three moments or phases in Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture: 1) “transcendental” conditions of practical anthropology, 2) the dialectics of internal freedom and cultural systems, and 3) the moment of appropriation that serves as the teleological goal for
of *mimesis*, the demand for both schematization and traditionality of *mimesis*, and the very moment of refiguration of *mimesis*, all indicate this boundedness. This is why I propose that the model of the threefold mimesis we have introduced above – the process of re-configuration – can be taken as a clue for analyzing respectively the cultural conditions of remembering, judging, and ethico-political being in the three middle parts of this dissertation. Ricoeur’s initial stand, however, will be modified by Stiver’s reading of it.

As I will repeatedly remind the reader of this dissertation, the threefold mimesis is placed here on the level of critical understanding. In parts two, three, and four I trace Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of recognition, and in particular his hermeneutics of cultural recognition. Part two portrays the prefigurative critical moment, part three the configurative critical moment, and part four the refigurative critical moment. As the hermeneutics of cultural recognition becomes a focus of our attention, these moments are approached through the very term *reconnaissance*. It is only in part five that I suggest a path beyond the critical understanding, in explicating how the moments of *re-*-, *con-*-, and *naissance* – parts two, three, and four – can be taken as a guide for a postcritical hermeneutics of intra-cultural recognition. In other words, I will propose that the critical moments of reconfiguration are transferable to, or readable as, the postcritical moments of *re-*-, *con-*-, and *naissance*. For the reasons explained, this is only suggestive, however, because in the ultimate analysis it is indeed a task for the reader to drive this point home: “it is the reader who completes the work inasmuch as [...] the written work is a sketch for reading.”

The spiraling towards a becoming an authentic human subject. Stanguennec emphasizes, however, structural anthropology in such a manner that is foreign to Ricoeur’s work (Stanguennec 2010, 140-142.) In addition, Stanguennec’s analysis of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics is materially limited to Ricoeur’s philosophical interpretation of Freud’s cultural analysis.

268 Ricoeur 1983, 117. (77).
postcritical understanding is achievable only by appropriating a text, so also this text, which in itself remains at the level of critical understanding.
4. Reflections

I maintain that understanding the human subject and his or her cultural being can be seen as key questions in Ricoeur’s thought. But there is, nevertheless, a difference between philosophical anthropology and a quest for the meaning of culture. Although it is quite true that in many ways these two are inseparable, because they parallel each other – culture can be seen as an outward expression of human condition, or its manifestation – it is also true that philosophical anthropology opens only one approach to the question of culture. Considering Ricoeur’s overall approach, however, it will be necessary to refer to a “general” human condition as cultural.

To differentiate between the two aspects, the focus in this dissertation is more about the question of situating the human subject – of a cultural situation and engagement – and not of the subject per se. It is the meaning-giving condition and context, also in the sense of providing the possibility for self-understanding, in which this dissertation is interested. To use the terminology of Ricoeur’s early work, philosophical anthropology is therefore the “involuntary,” meaning unavoidable, for this dissertation that focuses on tracing the idea of cultural self-recognition. The anthropological question is a necessary one, and it relates closely to the theme of this dissertation, but it still is not the question I elaborate in this work.

In sum, I trace in this dissertation Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of cultural self-recognition and, generally, his cultural hermeneutics. To be more explicit about this task, let me formulate my aims in the form of specific research objectives to which I will respond in this dissertation. By making an extended excursion – or a “detour” – to Ricoeur’s early work, I aspire to demonstrate that these nine theses hold:
1) The theme of recognition is developed and discussed by Ricoeur well before the 2004 work *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, translated as *The Course of Recognition*.

2) Although the subject-centered progress from identity to self-recognition and furthermore to mutual recognition is important (cf. *Course of Recognition*), the “course” of recognition should be approached at the level of Ricoeur’s work as a whole, and consequently at the level of cultural formation or figuration.

3) Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of being able” – which culminates in the notion of *l’homme capable (de faillir)* – necessarily requires the support of a cultural hermeneutics.

4) This hermeneutic of culture recasts Ricoeur’s relations to such thinkers as Hegel, Kant, and Heidegger.

5) The notions of “cultural objectivity” and “cultural objects” have a major role for both Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture and his anthropological phenomenology, since the possibility of recognition is fundamentally grounded in them.

6) The foundational *etho-poetic nucleus* of human culture, which Ricoeur mentions in his texts, is found only indirectly in and by these cultural objects.

7) This poetic nucleus, as an opening up of a language of the possible ἥθος, is a necessary condition for the possibility of an ethico-political self-understanding.

8) In summing up the course of recognition, the term “*reconnaissance*” should be literally understood as “*re-con-naissance*,” that is, as “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject.”

9) The term “*re-con-naissance*” should be understood as a model of the hermeneutic of culture.269

These nine theses are worked out in the four subsequent parts. I will first examine, in part two, the notion of recognition as analyzed in the 2004 work *Course of Recognition*. This leads us to Hegel and to the idea of culture as figuration or formation. Part three responds to this by bringing in Ricoeur’s analysis of Kant’s critical philosophy, which Ricoeur holds essential insofar as cultural objectivity is thought. This discussion of cultural objectivity and cultural

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269 Let me mention again that I have reserved a discussion of Paul Claudel’s term *co-naisance* in Appendix 4 of this dissertation.
objects opens the problematics of part four, in which the notion of the etho-poetic nucleus of culture is analyzed by contrasting it with Martin Heidegger’s philosophy.

All these themes are brought together in the concluding part five under the notion of re-con-naissance. The suggestion that is opened with this “dramatic” act five is that this critical analysis can be read in a postcritical manner, thus subjecting the reader to a culturally enhanced process of recognizing him- or herself more properly in a process of ever becoming an ethico-political human being. If I maintain a close connection to Ricoeur’s works in the course of reading them, this is done only with the purpose of demonstrating that they propose this postcritical reading of re-con-naissance.
Part II

The Cultural Course of Recognition
The very first of the nine theses I introduced at the end of the previous part – that Ricoeur develops the theme of recognition well before *Course of Recognition* – presupposes that we are already familiar with the content of this work. The task of tracing the earlier notions of *reconnaissance* is therefore postponed until parts three and four. The aim of the present part is to understand the *Course of Recognition* itself, and more importantly, its major implications. It is these implications that necessitate the subsequent reading of Ricoeur’s work, in parts three and four of this dissertation, as a hermeneutic of culture. I therefore begin the analysis by affirming that Ricoeur’s explication of the subject-centered progress from identity to self-recognition and furthermore to reciprocity, gratitude and mutual recognition is indeed important. I argue, however, that this course of recognition hardly satisfies the whole of another level of recognition that Ricoeur’s discussion of Hegel opens up in the very same work.

What Ricoeur proposes in terms of a hermeneutic of culture recasts his relation to Hegel by pointing out that despite “renouncing” Hegel at some point of his career, Ricoeur returns to Hegel’s ideas – especially that of “being recognized.” Ricoeur’s pairing of Hegel’s terms *Anerkennung* and *Sittlichkeit*, recognition and politico-ethical life that entails situatedness in history, leads us to the threshold of this complex issue. According to Ricoeur recognition implies some objectifying, which is itself an essential part of the process of cultural formation described by Hegel. The subject-centered aspect that is most evident in *Course of Recognition* cannot be set completely aside, but the process in which the subject is in the focus, is only made possible by a contrast to another subject – who, despite its representing the other, still speaks the language of a figure of humanity in which I become recognized. What I argue, then, arises directly from Ricoeur’s explanation that his own investigation is guided by “a reversal” from the active to the passive sense of recognition: “I
actively recognize things, persons, myself; I ask, even demand, to be recognized by others.\textsuperscript{270} The passive sense of recognition, being recognized, will eventually overtake the active one.

Ricoeur plays with the idea of a passive understanding of recognition when describing his own project in \textit{Course of Recognition}. As he maintains, “there can be a philosophical discourse \textit{about} recognition that is, in fact, that \textit{of} recognition.”\textsuperscript{271} Ricoeur indicates that for having a philosophical discussion of recognition, another level of recognition is needed that makes the discussion possible in the first place: the notion of being recognized as an author, as a reader, or as a commentator, in a word, as an intelligent human subject. The idea of recognizing another aspect, position, viewpoint, and ultimately that of another human being therefore presents itself necessarily.

This implied multitude of perspectives is why I begin this part by discussing some recent interpretations of Ricoeur’s 2004 work, \textit{Course of Recognition}, but I should point out that I also do this for methodological reasons. First, this indirect approach to the work stresses the point of critical reading and re-reading (\textit{la relecture}) that will eventually become an important theme in this dissertation. Second, my intention is to recognize these scholarly interpretations as attempts to recognize in turn the work done by Ricoeur through the conflictual reality of interpretations, and only then I move on to provide a reading of my own as an additional perspective in this “liebenden Kampf.” Third, this “passive” approach to the core theme of this dissertation – culture – provides a scholarly horizon, or an intellectual-cultural background, in contrast to which I formulate my own attempt to understand Ricoeur’s work by recognizing its cultural hermeneutic dimension. Put

\textsuperscript{270} Ricoeur 2004b, 10. (x).
\textsuperscript{271} Ricoeur 2004b, 11. (xi).
differently, this dissertation is situated in a scholarly culture within which it functions, as a critical reading of this particular culture of reading Ricoeur’s work, as a corrective to those interpretations that have adopted a different, more anthropological orientation.

In my own reading of Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition* the notion of recognition as rediscovering brings forth the role of Hegel’s philosophy especially in relation to Hegel’s term *Anerkennung*. The course of recognition, I argue, appears as cultural in the light of this term, which Ricoeur also uses as an essential part of his argument. Put differently, I maintain that when reading Ricoeur’s work on recognition, his cultural hermeneutics presents itself as necessary – this is the “letting appear” of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics that I mentioned in the general introduction to this dissertation. In fact, the course of recognition that Ricoeur discusses will then be approached precisely as *Anerkennung*, as re-cognition that gathers itself amidst cultural-symbolic expressions. This discussion leads us, through the section on “a Ricoeurian *Anerkennung*,” to consider how Ricoeur will eventually define the role and function of culture in *Course of Recognition*. In terms of the theses laid out at the end of the previous, introductory, part, in this part two we begin, therefore, to ground theses from two to five.
5. HERMENEUTICS, CONFLICT, AND REFLECTION

In the preceding introduction to the present part, I have maintained that the reading of Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition* will lead us to notice that a hermeneutic of culture is necessitated by the work. This assertion, however, can be set against a multitude of interpretations that do not recognize such necessity at all. For this reason, I have chosen to approach the implicit cultural hermeneutics cautiously, that is, by way of “letting it appear” in its own right. To maintain scholarly rigor and discipline, I will, therefore, also take into account some recent interpretations that place their respective emphases differently, so as to contest the hypothesis that *Course of Recognition* is, in fact, nothing else but a cultural course of recognition. In other words, for methodological reasons that become fully apparent only later in this dissertation, it is through this critical approach that Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics will be presented.

This willingness to acknowledge rival readings of Ricoeur’s late work, however, results in the difficulty of incorporating the cultural reality of conflicting interpretations in this dissertation. It seems that the way to the culture concept is indeed a winding path. I am convinced, however, that there is a prize at the end of it, “the prize won through much struggle and effort” as Hegel would say.²⁷² Let me continue, therefore, with a further explanation of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics that, theoretically speaking, begins by admitting the ineluctable condition of conflicting interpretations. It is through this polyvocal reality of interpretations that the necessity of cultural hermeneutics becomes evident.

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5.1 A Conflict of Interpretations

A number of Ricoeur scholars have characterized Ricoeur’s hermeneutics with the phrase “the conflict of interpretations,” a notion rooted in Ricoeur’s texts written in the 1960s.273 The Symbolism of Evil, published in 1960, introduced the idea of manifold “expressivity” of symbols. Whereas cosmic and oneiric (that is, religious and psychic) symbolisms are “the two poles” of this expressivity, a foundational “third modality of symbols” underlies this “double expressivity.” Ricoeur calls this foundational modality the poetic mode of symbols. Despite the polarity between cosmic and psychic modalities, all three symbolisms are mutually complementary in relation to each other.274 The idea of tension – that will became a trademark of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics in its “discordant concordance” and “concordant discordance”275 – between the cosmic and the psychic, however, has now been introduced.

The thematic of dialectical complementarity continues in On Interpretation, published five years later. First of all, Ricoeur reaffirms a certain confidence in language when he claims that “language, which bears symbols, is not so much spoken by men as spoken to men.”276 Individuals do not invent the language as a whole, but rather they apply what they have found in language. Ricoeur thus emphasizes that “men are born into language, into the light of the logos ‘who enlightens every man who comes into the world.’”277 This conviction, which Ricoeur says animates all his research, includes the idea of the “revealing power of symbols,” which in turn invites philosophic reflection.278 Reflection, while aiming at clarifying what the symbols reveal, struggles between “two interpretations of

273 Cf. e.g. Kearney 1986, 97, 101-106.; Lavine 1995.
276 Ricoeur 1965a, 38. (29-30).
277 Ricoeur 1965a, 38. (29-30).
278 Ricoeur 1965a, 39, 46. (31, 38).
interpretations,” that is, between the restorative (or holistic) and the reductive (or critical, demythicizing) models of interpretation.\textsuperscript{279}

According to Ricoeur, this overwhelming internal tension and the struggle of hermeneutics can be overcome by showing that reflection requires interpretation. “One can then justify,” writes Ricoeur, “the detour through the contingency of cultures, through an incurably equivocal language, and through the conflict of interpretations.”\textsuperscript{280} Cultural contingency and the non-univocity of language result from a multiplicity of non-coherent interpretations which all, however, are rooted in reflection. The notion of reflection must therefore be also clarified in order to rise above the inevitable conflict.

Ricoeur’s comprehension of reflection follows the tradition of indirectness set forth by Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Jean Nabert.\textsuperscript{281} In opposition to understanding this reflection as self-reflection, where the conscious self is immediately given, Ricoeur argues in \textit{On Interpretation} that the Cartesian formula \textit{cogito ergo sum} cannot be posited directly but is achievable only indirectly. Self is in need of being “‘mediated’ by the representations, actions, works, institutions, and monuments that objectify it.”\textsuperscript{282} This mediation means that reflection is not intuition, immediate self-consciousness, and also that reflection is not reducible to simple epistemology, since it concerns a living subject. For Ricoeur reflection is “a

\textsuperscript{279} Ricoeur 1965a, 40. (32). – Applying the distinction between cosmic and psychic symbolisms, Ricoeur understands the restorative interpretation model as a theologico-holistic, and the reductive as a psychoanalytic model. He argues that two schools dominate the field of interpretation: the “school of reminiscence” and the “school of suspicion.” The internal constitution of each school requires an unbridgeable gap between them. The schools themselves, however, have scattered further into a multitude of theories that do not necessarily cohere with each other. For example, the primary figures of the school of suspicion – the “three masters of suspicion,” or the “three great ‘destroyers’” of an immediate consciousness as Ricoeur calls them – are Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx who each approached the idea of “false” consciousness in a different manner. This multitude of interpretations, “the war of hermeneutics within itself,” calls for a clarification in order to find a returning path from reflection to symbols. Ricoeur 1965a, 40-42, 50. (32-34, 42).

\textsuperscript{280} Ricoeur 1965a, 50. (42).

\textsuperscript{281} Ricoeur 1965a, 52. (44-45).

\textsuperscript{282} Ricoeur 1965a, 51. (43).
reappropriation of our effort to exist,” that is, a recovering of the notion of “I” as the subject of all my actions in my actions. “The act of existing, the positing of the self,” Ricoeur claims, is recovered, re-appropriated “in all the density of its works.” The positing of self is therefore not “given” (donnée), whereas “it is a [reflective] task.” Put differently, I do not understand myself from the beginning but only gradually begin to understand as a living, acting and also suffering subject.

In sum, then, Ricoeur maintains that reflection is a task of reappropriation. As such, it also “calls for an interpretation and tends to move into hermeneutics.” The meaning of the works, which “bear witness” to our effort and desire to exist, “remains doubtful and revocable.” Rather than actions having immediately clear meanings, Ricoeur argues in favor of understanding actions as signs of one’s existence open to interpretation. This is why he maintains that “reflection must become interpretation because I cannot grasp the act of existing except in signs scattered in the world.” It follows that reflection turns into interpretation that concerns my place in the world of cultural objects.

The first of the two important conclusions Ricoeur draws from being-related to the world of objects connects the demand of interpretation to hermeneutics as science. Ricoeur argues that “a reflective philosophy must include the results, methods, and presuppositions of all the sciences that try to decipher and interpret the signs of man.” The second conclusion highlights, yet again, the indirect and culturally bound nature of reflection. It also points out, however, that reflection does not begin as a science, but that a

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283 Ricoeur 1965a, 52. (45).
284 Ricoeur 1965a, 52. (45).
285 Ricoeur 1965a, 53. (45).
286 Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (46).
287 Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (46).
288 Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (46).
289 Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (46).
self must recover itself from the midst of the contingent cultural manifestations which are
only then analyzed and deciphered. Ricoeur writes:

In positing itself, reflection understands its own inability to transcend the vain
and empty abstraction of the \textit{I think} and the necessity to recover itself by
deciphering its own signs lost in the world of culture. Thus reflection realizes
it does not begin as science; in order to operate it must take to itself the
opaque, contingent, and equivocal signs scattered in the cultures in which our
language is rooted.\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (47).}

This conclusion, that reflection requires cultural-linguistic support, leads Ricoeur to assert
that not only does reflection not begin as a science, but it cannot become abstract at all. To
retain its connection to living experience, that is, to its onto-existential re-appropriation,
reflection must remain “concrete.” In order to “become concrete,” however, “reflection
must lose its immediate pretension to universality, to the extent of fusing together its
essential necessity and the contingency of the signs through which it recognizes itself (dans lesquels
elle se reconnaît).”\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 55. (48). Italics added. – In addition to similarities with reflexive tradition, Ricoeur’s
though has a Christian existential undertone. Even though Gabriel Marcel is, most convincingly, his mentor in
this line of thought, Kierkegaard also comes occasionally close to Ricoeur’s taste. Kierkegaard argues, for
example, in his \textit{Concluding Unscientific Postscript} that “instead of understanding the concrete abstractly, as the task
of abstract thinking has it, the subjective thinker has the opposite task of understanding the abstract concretely.
Abstract thinking looks away from concrete human beings in order to consider pure human being; the
subjective thinker understands what is to be the abstract human concretely, in terms of being this particular

Reflection begins from particular signs, cultural objects, and not
abstractions. The contingency and equivocity of these signs, the doubtful and revocable
meaning of our works, indicates that hermeneutics is in itself internally inconsistent in that it
must both claim and relinquish mere objectivity without subjectivity.

Ricoeur claims that when taking all of this into account, there cannot be a
general, all-encompassing, reconciled hermeneutics but only a tensional one that is almost
torn apart by rival interpretations. “Not one but several interpretations have to be integrated

\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (47).}

\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 55. (48). Italics added. – In addition to similarities with reflexive tradition, Ricoeur’s
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of abstract thinking has it, the subjective thinker has the opposite task of understanding the abstract concretely.
Abstract thinking looks away from concrete human beings in order to consider pure human being; the
subjective thinker understands what is to be the abstract human concretely, in terms of being this particular
into reflection,” Ricoeur insists. This rivalry, however, should not be understood as a deficiency that destroys the possibility of a regained self-understanding. The internal dynamics of hermeneutics, the “war” within it, rather, resists the temptation of accepting the immediacy of ego, or immediate consciousness. “The hermeneutic conflict itself is what nourishes the process of reflection and governs the movement from abstract to concrete reflection.” The reflection, which leads us to self-understanding, is dynamized by the multiplicity of possible interpretations in the many particular sciences. “To let ourselves be torn by the contradiction between these divergent hermeneutics is to give ourselves up to the wonder that puts reflection in motion,” Ricoeur argues, “it is no doubt necessary for us to be separated from ourselves, to be set off center, in order finally to know what is signified by the I think, I am.” The erasure of immediate consciousness both results from the conflict of interpretations, and opens an arduous path of self-recognition, or the “primary analogate of being,” by means of that same multiplicity of interpretations. Insofar as there is an indirect course of self-recognition, there is then also the curse of self-recognition: the need of self-recognition that is not immediate but always in the making.

5.2 Reading Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition*

Having opened this part with a brief recourse to Ricoeur’s view on the necessary internal conflict in hermeneutics, we must now reconnect with the original theme for this part – an analysis of Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition*. My intention is to provide next the gist of some recent interpretations of this 2004 work, or to give the phrase “the conflict of

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292 Ricoeur 1965a, 61. (54).
293 Ricoeur 1965a, 61. (54).
294 Ricoeur 1965a, 62. (54-55).
295 Blanchette 2003, 115-144.
interpretations” a concrete and contextual meaning, before moving on to a reading of our own that I have already outlined in my introductory remarks to this part two. By analyzing three different attempts to clarify the central message of Course of Recognition, I will show that the reception of this work does not recognize the necessity of cultural hermeneutics, even though the theme comes through loud and clear as we will see in chapter 7 in particular. As I have pointed out earlier, this discussion functions as a platform for the ensuing “letting appear” of Ricoeur’s cultural understanding.

I welcome those readers already familiar with the scholarly discussion concerning Ricoeur’s work on recognition to move directly to chapter 6, in which I respond to these readings in a more unique and constructive manner. To the readers not quite familiar with the discussion, let me mention that as in the case of Ricoeur’s larger oeuvre, there are likewise many interpretations of his last work that focuses on the theme of recognition. These interpretations commonly accept – and correctly so – a “course” in Ricoeur’s argument that runs from the state of perplexity to that of identification, self-recognition, intersubjective reciprocity, and finally to mutual recognition and gratitude. In the grand scheme of things, a certain intellectual course or a path of Ricoeur’s line of reasoning has therefore been rather widely recognized.

Similarly, as Ricoeur is clear on these, the two major shifts he makes in Course of Recognition have been quite well noted.296 First, Ricoeur argues for a shift from “active” to “passive” recognition, that is, from recognizing to being recognized. Although his analysis might begin by asking about recognizing in an active sense, it will soon become clear that the

296 David Pellauer, for example, provides a brief summary of the internal dynamics of Course of Recognition, which can be of help in getting the basics of this work. Pellauer 2007, 126-133.
need for recognition, that is, of “being recognized” prevails.\textsuperscript{297} Ricoeur maintains that from a structured point of view this quest for passive recognition reaches to reciprocity as an intersubjective struggle to be recognized, but not to mutuality that implies ethical involvement between persons. Ricoeur thus terminologically distinguishes mutuality from reciprocity; being recognized as a legal person by the judicial system, for example, is not yet full mutual recognition. Second, the paralleling shift from epistemological recognition to the ethical one is well spotted. Clearly, being merely capable of identifying things or entities does not exhaust the meaning of the word recognition. What Ricoeur draws out from the term “recognition” is reflected in the French language and in its use of the term \textit{reconnaissance}. Besides a variety of commonplace significations, an element of gratitude is found among its meanings. Recognition arises from ethical mutuality, and therefore from taking \textit{ἀγάπη} into account, that is, the incommensurable value of love in all its forms.\textsuperscript{298} Again, according to Ricoeur, recognition guided by gratitude must be distinguished from the normative and structural reciprocal recognition.

Beyond this initial consensus regarding the proposed interpretations of the meaning, or the message, of \textit{Course of Recognition} vary. As I next introduce three of these approaches, it will soon become clear that a sense – if not of a direct conflict, then at least – of a discordance is evident when these readings are contrasted with each other. First, an analytic attempt proposed by Arto Laitinen functions as a conceptual approach to Ricoeur’s work. The second example, Gonçalo Marcelo’s interpretation, diverges from this conceptual endeavor as it promotes a vision that Ricoeur proposes a kind of “pure ethics” of recognition. The third approach, by Jean-Luc Amalric, brings us much closer to the themes

\textsuperscript{297} Ricoeur 2004b, 35. (19). – For the sake of the following discussion, I should point out that Axel Honneth also discusses Hegel’s conception of “being recognized.” Honneth 1995, 49-52, 80, 86.

\textsuperscript{298} Ricoeur 2004b, 21, 351-352. (8, 243).
elaborated above when opening the question of reflection in relation to recognition, but also restricts itself to an anthropological point of view that does not take into account the cultural approach necessitated by Ricoeur’s work. Again, those readers with an understanding of this scholarly cultural background, in contrast to which I propose my own attempt, are welcomed to move directly to chapter 6 that opens the elaboration of my cultural approach to Ricoeur’s work. I should point out, however, that some themes that will become of some importance later in this dissertation – such as re-reading, human life as “with-being” and “being-among,” the tensional achieving of mutuality, passive recognition, and the narrative identity of a reflective self – are both discussed and indirectly shown to be essential in Ricoeur’s thought in the following critical discussion.

The Analytic Attempt

Course of Recognition opens with a confession that yet another “conflict” remains to confuse Ricoeur. He acknowledges that the whole work arises “from a sense of perplexity” which results from “the apparently haphazard scattering of occurrences of the word [recognition] on the plane of philosophical discourse.”299 In brief, the semantic status of the word is not clear. This confusion leads Ricoeur to a lexicographical survey, since lexicons imply that it is possible to consider the term “recognition” as a single lexical unit.300 By maintaining its place in a dictionary, the word “recognition” indicates that at least a minimal level of coherence remains among its meanings.

Starting from this lexical stability, Ricoeur asserts that a philosopher can benefit, “find some encouragement,” in surveying some basic lexical conceptions of

299 Ricoeur 2004b, 9. (ix).
300 Ricoeur 2004b, 9. (ix).
Ricoeur is equally convinced, however, that “philosophy does not advance by a lexical improvement.” Precise lexical definitions do not abolish philosophical problems, and seeing them as such was neglected even by Wittgenstein in his later writings. Moreover, this is in fact the first time during his career that Ricoeur resorts to dictionaries to this extent as his guide. In the strongest of terms, Ricoeur also renounces any attempt at harmonizing the discordance in the “rule-governed polysemy of the word recognition” by making the partial lexical definitions more coherent with each other by adding new meanings and by rewriting. He could not be much clearer on this: “Such an effort leads nowhere.”

If there is a kind of “bridging of gaps” in the whole course of the work, I propose that it takes place only in the process of reconfiguration. Ricoeur enables this assertion by emphasizing the notion of re-reading, la relecture, that for Ricoeur means not only reading again but the necessity of recurring “reading” or interpretation. It is, therefore, rather surprising to find an analysis that aims to enumerate all the aspects of “the full course of recognition,” as if Ricoeur suggested it be read in such a disconnected and totalizing way. This is all the more surprising, as an analysis like this appears in a journal focusing on Course of Recognition. A special issue of Études Ricoeuriennes/Ricoeur Studies (2011:1) was dedicated to the theme of recognition, and the article written by Arto Laitinen is perhaps the most unique in this lexicalist sense. He proposes a kind of analytic pathology for Ricoeur’s Course of Recognition. Although Laitinen refers to Ricoeur’s ultimate meaning of

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301 Ricoeur 2004b, 14, 34. (2, 18).
302 Ricoeur 2004b, 32. (16).
304 Ricoeur 2004b, 14, 32. (2, 16).
305 Ricoeur 2004b, 32. (16).
306 Ricoeur 2004b, 359. (249); Ricoeur 1983, 117. (77).
mutual recognition – experienced generosity that is modeled on the ritual of gift-giving\textsuperscript{308} – he does not conceive it as central to the message of Ricoeur’s work, but only as a “substantial contribution” instead.\textsuperscript{309} Laitinen also concludes with a dictionary-style approach, which indeed seems foreign to Ricoeur’s philosophy that, instead of fully completed course of recognition, emphasizes being always in the path of recognition:

Together with the consulted dictionaries and contemporary debates, as well as Ricoeur’s earlier work, the full course of recognition might be something like the following: i) recognition-identification of something as ‘a something’ at all, or as this particular thing, or a thing with these and these particular features, or as a thing of this generic kind; ii) recognition-adhesion in accepting a proposition as true; iii) recognition-adhesion in accepting a norm as valid; iv) recognition-attestation of oneself as a capable agent, a person (‘what am I?’) or as this kind of person (“who am I?” “what am I like?” “what kind of person am I?” “where do I stand?”), as being this irreplaceable, singular person (“who am I?” “which person am I?”); v) recognition of others in the sense of esteem, respect or approbation or love. And perhaps one should add the following: vi) recognition of collective agents, institutions, organizations, groups.\textsuperscript{310}

This conclusion functions as a crude summary of the mere surface of Ricoeur’s argument. As seen earlier, however, Ricoeur himself does not aim to bring together all the meanings mentioned in the dictionaries. Lexical survey only served Ricoeur as a basis of finding “some encouragement,” not as an exhaustive list of accepted meanings to be reconciled with each other.\textsuperscript{311} It is then perhaps the case that Laitinen has expectations different from those of other Ricoeur readers, as well as Ricoeur himself.\textsuperscript{312} Furthermore, Laitinen repeatedly tells us that Ricoeur has included the idea of the recognition of self in his own work without it being

\textsuperscript{308} Laitinen 2011, 42, 47.; Ricoeur 2004b, 351-352. (243).
\textsuperscript{309} Laitinen 2011, 47.
\textsuperscript{310} Laitinen 2011, 47.
\textsuperscript{311} Ricoeur 2004b, 14, 34. (2, 18).
\textsuperscript{312} Laitinen 2011, 36. – Laitinen mentions at the outset that he wishes to “highlight those aspects of [Ricoeur’s] take on recognition that are in some sense surprising,” but since “something can be a surprise only relative to expectations, so I will first try to explicate the nature of the expectations, or the kinds of contextual background, against which Ricoeur’s book on recognition stands out.” Laitinen 2011, 36.
listed in the dictionaries.\textsuperscript{313} How could there be human agency, however, in the full sense – a person recognizing – without this aspect of recognition taking place? In Laitinen’s own words: “agency and agentic capacities are crucial.”\textsuperscript{314} As we will see, Laitinen’s reading of Ricoeur is truly unique in its lack of discernment.

Even though Laitinen claims that Ricoeur has a “surprising take on recognition,” it is we who are surprised by Laitinen’s analysis. The angle chosen by Laitinen seems encyclopedic: not only does he suggest that a concise listing of all the possible aspects of the “full course” is important, but in the main body of his own text he analyzes Ricoeur’s work on the basis of a kind skeleton model, one merely listing the different steps taken by Ricoeur.\textsuperscript{315} The “full course of recognition” Laitinen writes about is thus very far from the reflective course of \textit{reconnaissance} Ricoeur intended. Maybe this is why Laitinen comments on Ricoeur’s unwillingness to fully engage in analytic philosophizing: “Ricoeur does not thematize the change from ‘ideas of objects’ to ‘propositionally structured thoughts’ which is crucial for analytical philosophy from Frege onwards (which Ricoeur more or less bypasses in silence, in contrast to the dialogue with analytical philosophy in his \textit{Oneself as Another}).”\textsuperscript{316} Laitinen seems to take Ricoeur’s argumentation both as ambiguous and limited at the same time. Quite clearly, however, Ricoeur’s work is not an analytic attempt to formally clarify a concept, which seems to be the expectation of his commentator, but to philosophically understand certain fundamental constituents of recognition as a necessary phenomenon of human life.

\textsuperscript{313} Laitinen 2011, 36, 38, 42.
\textsuperscript{314} Laitinen 2011, 44.
\textsuperscript{315} Laitinen 2011, 37-41, 43-47.
\textsuperscript{316} Laitinen 2011, 44.
Laitinen emphasizes the analytic mode of philosophizing to such an extent that he also misstates the notion of “being true” as laid out in hermeneutic philosophy. Even though the notion of semantic truth is well grounded in itself, it would be a serious mistake to limit the meaning of ontological “being true” to that perspective, and to forget, for example, the remark made by Heidegger in the opening paragraphs of *Being and Time*, in which he argues that the ontological significance of αλήθεια as apophantic unconcealment must not be set aside. Fundamentally, Heidegger maintains, truth is dis-covering, letting beings “be seen as something unconcealed (αληθες).” This hermeneutic conception appears to be quite unfamiliar to Laitinen, whose notion of truth is exclusively formal and semantic. When Ricoeur uses the phrase “accepting as true,” Laitinen interprets that truth “is primarily propositions, statements, and beliefs that are true.” This is not, however, a shared conviction with Laitinen and Ricoeur.

To be sure, Ricoeur brings up the notion of truth in the context of analyzing Descartes’ *Meditations* and especially the Cartesian theory of judgment. Still, Ricoeur advances the idea that in the light of Cartesian philosophy “the act of ‘accepting an idea as true’ mobilizes a subject” who “attests to the first truth: I am, I exist.” Ricoeur comprehends this attestation as an indication that a strictly epistemological position, the absolute certainty of “I am,” moves towards an ontological one. The Cartesian idea of recognition as “the affirmation of the impossibility of being mistaken” – now formulated against the threat of error – is therefore according to Ricoeur already “on the way to its

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318 Laitinen 2011, 44.
320 Ricoeur 2004b, 60. (34-35).
dissociation from the simple idea of knowing.” Ricoeur suggests that epistemology necessarily opens itself up to the ontology of the first truth. Even Descartes’ *Meditations* allow and demand “a place for a subject responsible for its errors and hence for ‘accepting/recognizing as true.’” In other words, the very positing of the phrase “I am, I exist” by one’s own acts leads us to affirm that there can be *a living subject* who is the one “accepting the idea as true.”

Ricoeur is dissatisfied, however, with the simplistic interpretation of *res cogitans*; he points out that besides this openness to the living subject, an element of passive recognition, of being recognized, is already present for Descartes as well. The author of the *Meditations*, for example, quite obviously “calls out to his reader.” This sense of “calling out” reframes Ricoeur’s assertion that “it is this same subject of recognition [who accepts/recognizes as true] that later in our inquiry will demand to be recognized.” Calling out, in other words, is demanding to be recognized. As a result, Laitinen’s analysis faces yet another challenge. It indeed “sounds wrong to say that the subject of ‘accepting as true’ is the same subject that later in our inquiry will demand to be recognized” – but for reasons very different from those Laitinen suggests. When Ricoeur writes that “the act of ‘accepting an idea as true’ mobilizes a subject,” Laitinen responds: “Typically, persons can be recognized as worthy of respect, as meriting esteem and so on, but rarely as true.” Laitinen is thus misled on two accounts: First, Ricoeur does not claim that the subject would be semantically true, but that the subject accepts an idea as true. Second, even though the

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321 Ricoeur 2004b, 59-60. (34).
322 Ricoeur 2004b, 60. (35).
324 Ricoeur 2004b, 60. (35).
325 Laitinen 2011, 44.
326 Ricoeur 2004b, 60. (34).
327 Laitinen 2011, 44.
first condition holds, the very subject appears, or is aethically discovered, by his calling out to the reader. Laitinen does not account for this distinction.

Laitinen’s comments on Ricoeur’s notion of peace serve us as another example of his confusion. Ricoeur points to the possibility of achieving the generously harmonious state of mutuality under the aegis of αγάϖη. Laitinen, in turn, discusses normative as well as justified demands, and boils the question down to the reciprocal level of intersubjectivity where “all parties may rest content” insofar as “the demands for respect, social esteem and so on are being adequately met.” Laitinen’s allusion to the living human experience – figured in the struggle for recognition – is quickly by-passed: “Of course, things are messy in practice.” Laitinen argues, however, that “conceptually speaking the issue seems clear.”

Even at the risk of contesting Laitinen’s satisfaction with his own conceptual analysis, I cannot agree with him on the clarity of his own exposition.

In terms of Laitinen’s own analysis of Course of Recognition, the conceptual clarity seems not to hold. What else could be said of his final “recap”; that there are “areas where public recognition could be detrimental (such as private life)”? Laitinen bypasses not only by the notion of recognition, but also the Marcelian-Arendtian notion of life Ricoeur supports. Laitinen’s surprising notion of “areas of life that should be protected from public recognition” – explained as privacy and perhaps intended as a “practical” supplement to his analysis – indicates that Laitinen is ultimately not clear of Ricoeur’s meaning of recognized life. Unlike Ricoeur, Laitinen sets aside the much deeper philosophical notion of human life as “with-being” and “being-among,” co-esse and inter-
For Ricoeur, human life takes form only “in one’s lineage,” in a living tradition, or in a hereditary connection with other persons that is both diachronic and synchronic. According to Ricoeur, self-recognition is also anchored to the fact that “we find ourselves already situated in an order of meaning.”

Following Ricoeur, I argue, therefore, that it is this with-being in an order of meaning where “being recognized” takes place, and where the state of peace is hoped to prevail.

The Pure Vision

After having pointed out the dangers of reading Ricoeur simply from an analytic or lexicalist point of view, I will now turn to consider an interpretation that acknowledges Ricoeur’s hermeneutic standpoint. Let me begin, however, with a quick clarification by mentioning that Course of Recognition extends and somewhat reconsiders the outcome of an earlier gift-analysis in Ricoeur’s Memory, History, Forgetting. In spite of the apparent thematic continuity, Ricoeur emphasizes in the later work – in the wake of Marcel Mauss, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and especially Marcel Hénaff – that gift-exchange implies mutuality between individuals, that there is a pledge of personal commitment (l’engagement) involved in this gesture. Ricoeur therefore distinguishes mutuality from structure-oriented reciprocity, that is, mutuality differs from merely pointing out the relation between social agents. As Ricoeur asserts, implicitly criticizing Axel Honneth, he places reciprocity “above social agents and their transactions”.

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335 Ricoeur 2000b, 621-630. (479-486).
336 Ricoeur 2004b, 342. (236).
and understands it as cultural life reduced to its structures, whereas mutuality concerns persons and their experienced interconnectedness in life that is cultural.

The conceptual distinction that Ricoeur makes between mutuality and reciprocity is not “pure” in terms of practical life, however. This tensional shadiness between the two will become an issue for Gonçalo Marcelo. In his essay “Paul Ricoeur and the Utopia of Mutual Recognition,” Marcelo argues that the notion of agapeic generosity is the culmination point of Ricoeur’s work on mutual recognition. The “unilateral character of the generosity peculiar to αγάϖη” poses, however, a question Marcelo’s text examines: this kind of mutuality does not seem achievable for human beings. The notion of αγάϖη, Marcelo argues, suggests a utopia precisely because “it knows nothing of comparison and calculation,” as Ricoeur maintains. More precisely, Marcelo suggests that Ricoeur proposes a utopia of “pure ethics,” or that Ricoeur’s recognition theory is “a sort of ethical utopia.” Mutuality, Marcelo argues, rests on generosity which implies an ethical utopia that can only be hoped for.

It is this idea of “pure” mutuality as a utopia that I will contest in Marcelo’s reading of Ricoeur’s work. First, the idea of “pure ethics” is already countered in Marcelo’s own text by the idea of graduality. In the concluding section of his essay Marcelo asserts that Ricoeur’s “utopia is anchored in the hope that step by step, individuals will start acting more ethically.” Marcelo’s claim means either that 1) the state of pure ethics is achievable by the growth of ethical understanding, but since the pure state only lies ahead of us, we must

338 Ricoeur 2004b, 320. (219).
340 Marcelo 2011, 112, 123.
341 Marcelo 2011, 111. – Even though Marcelo repeatedly refers to Ricoeur’s “recognition theory,” Ricoeur himself maintained that Course of Recognition does not amount to one but merely discusses the problem of recognition. Ricoeur 2004b, 357. (247).
342 Marcelo 2011, 126.
consider it as a utopia, or that 2) it can only be hoped for, indefinitely, that such a state of pure ethics would one day prevail and it should, therefore, be called as a utopia. In terms of agapeic generosity, this duality converts to the question: do we have the possibility of experiencing this kind of generosity, or do we only hope that such a generosity would be possible? It is not immediately clear what the nature of Marcelo’s ethical utopia is.

Explicating his reading, Marcelo argues that Ricoeur’s notion of “clearings” – which Ricoeur defines as intellectual glades “where the meaning of action emerges from the fog of doubt”\(^{343}\) – explains the corresponding idea of ethical utopia. Marcelo claims that these “clearings” indicate a “horizon of reconciliation.”\(^{344}\) Whereas the struggle for recognition leads to a capitalism-like ideological stranglehold, to a “kind of ‘bad infinity’” of requiring and bargaining of recognition,\(^{345}\) this proposed utopia of reconciled mutuality would, according to Marcelo, be “built upon a noncommercial good: recognition.”\(^{346}\) Marcelo’s pure ethical utopia is about recognition in a sense that knows no rivalry or no notion of commercial value; it would be “clear” and pure of such defects. Although repeating the idea of the difference between mutuality and reciprocity, this outcome still leaves the meaning of the term utopia in the fog – if not of doubt, then of unclarity.

There is one possible explanation to Marcelo’s claims, however. The term utopia, in the sense Marcelo uses it, is drawn from Ricoeur’s 1986 texts *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia* and *From Text to Action*.\(^{347}\) Marcelo restates Ricoeur’s conviction that “utopia is productive imagination at work,” and argues that Ricoeur’s take on recognition proposes

\(^{343}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 318, 355. (218, 245).
\(^{344}\) Marcelo 2011, 118, 123-126.
\(^{345}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 317. (218).
\(^{346}\) Marcelo 2011, 118-119.
\(^{347}\) Marcelo 2011, 124. – Marcelo mentions only *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, but since he strongly emphasizes the idea of social imagery, the essays in *From Text to Action* would clarify Marcelo’s position. Cf. e.g. Ricoeur 1986a, 214, 228-236. (169, 181-187, 260-263, 318-324)
one, because *Course of Recognition* “gives new meaning to the concept of recognition [and] also because it projects a possible alternative social order.”\(^{348}\) In other words, Marcelo suggests that productive imagination is at work in Ricoeur’s 2004 work as it refigures the social imaginary.\(^{349}\) Clarifying his explication of social imagination, Marcelo also claims that in *Course of Recognition* Ricoeur’s aim “is to enlarge the spheres of mutual recognition”\(^{350}\) – supposedly in connection with projecting the social order anew in ever wider horizons. According to Marcelo, these spheres of mutuality are the “horizontal, mutual experiences of gift-giving and symbolic gestures.”\(^{351}\) In sum, the utopia of recognition that Marcelo proposes establishes a new socio-ethical configuration in gift-exchange and gestures.

I will later return to Marcelo’s emphasis on the social gestures, so let me now discuss his conception of the utopian element in Ricoeur’s discussion of recognition. Even though the utopia Marcelo suggests could be understood as this new social configuration that breaks into reality, or clears it up, the notion of “pure ethics” is still disconcerting. In terms of ceremonial gift exchange that Ricoeur uses as his heuristic example, for instance, Ricoeur differentiates the first gift from the “second gift” that is given in return. Marcelo, however, reads Ricoeur as suggesting that in this festive-ceremonial exchange of gifts “every gift being as if it were a first gift – that is, a moral gift – is what grants symbolic, ceremonial gift-giving the nature of a transcultural symbol.”\(^{352}\) Guided by the notion of αγάϖη, and Boltanski’s analysis of the utopia of “perfectly coordinated state of peace,” Marcelo goes even deeper in his analysis of this festive gift-giving. He claims that in his “depiction of a

\(^{348}\) Marcelo 2011, 124.

\(^{349}\) Cf. Ricoeur 1986a, 236. (187). – Let me add a terminological sidenote. In his *Lectures on Ideology and Utopia*, Ricoeur maintained that the dialectics of ideology and utopia typifies “cultural imagination”; this was his organizing hypothesis. Even though important for us as a term that will be discussed later in this dissertation, this observation is not my main point here. Ricoeur 1986b, 1-2.

\(^{350}\) Marcelo 2011, 124.

\(^{351}\) Marcelo 2011, 124.

\(^{352}\) Marcelo 2011, 120.
state of \( \alpha\gamma\alpha\nu\eta \).” Ricoeur requires that “the dialectic of love and justice can be mediated by the symbolic gift-exchange.”\(^{353}\) The social utopia is possible, Marcelo states, since gift-exchange also pertains to festive recognition and \( \alpha\gamma\alpha\nu\eta \).

Now, based on the idea of recognition as a noncommercial good, Marcelo concludes that Ricoeur’s “utopia of mutual recognition,” or the festive experience of exchange, is also “a utopia of the redistribution of recognition.”\(^{354}\) In his argument Marcelo then comes close to stressing the festive-ceremonial gift-giving as “pure,” that is, as if it would outshine that of a commercial exchange, or a kind of reciprocity without mutuality. In his own text, however, Ricoeur is more complex as he merely wishes to “sort out good reciprocity from bad” for the sake of his own argument, and uses the idea of gift only as an example.\(^{355}\) The fact that these two must be analyzed at different levels – as Marcelo also does\(^ {356}\) – does not mean that in the final analysis there is no obligation “to give back” in the so-called festive approach.\(^ {357}\) Put differently, Marcelo’s emphasis leads one to approach the issue of recognition from a dichotomical rather than a dialectical point of view. Ricoeur, even though making a distinction between mutuality and reciprocity, does not ultimately cut them off from one another.

Let me continue this critical reading, that tries to make a very refined point in terms of Marcelo’s interpretation of Ricoeur, by affirming that in spite of its ultimately

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353 Marcelo 2011, 121.
354 Marcelo 2011, 122.
356 Marcelo 2011, 122.
357 Ricoeur’s suggestion that the “second” giving of a gift, giving in return, should be considered “as a kind of second first gift,” is not to say that this “second first gift” would actually take place. Avoiding a kind of infinite regress where everything is first or not at all, Ricoeur merely argues that the obligation to give in return - if analyzed “under the sign of \( \alpha\gamma\alpha\nu\eta \)” - would better be understood as “a response to a call coming from the generosity of the first gift.” In Ricoeur’s earlier analysis in \textit{Course of Recognition} that focused more directly on the notion of \( \alpha\gamma\alpha\nu\eta \), it is true, “the emphasis fell on the gift with no expectation of something in return.” Later, Ricoeur’s emphasis moved away from gift-giving to receiving. Ricoeur 2004b, 351. (242-243). – Marcel Hénaff makes a similar kind of point in his \textit{Price of Truth}, cf. Hénaff 2010, 139.
“unpure” nature in practice, αγάϖη does, however, have a role in Ricoeur’s later form of mutual recognition in gift-exchange. Ricoeur asserts that “gratitude [reconnaissance] lightens the weight of obligation to give in return and reorients this toward a generosity equal to the one that led to the first gift.” With the possibility of indefinitely postponing the expectation of a gift in return, “something of the ‘giving without return’ of αγάϖη can be retained in the practice of a gift in return.” This does not imply, nevertheless, that the second gift, given out of justice, is ethically equal to the first given out of αγάϖη. Ricoeur does not claim that the obligation to give in return is completely abolished. Αγάϖη, even if “lightening” the obligation, can only reorient the sharers attention to the notion that something has been given, although in return.

Moreover, taken to the plane of recognition, there is no “peaceful recognition” or “pure” ethicality apart from the struggle. Ricoeur maintains from the outset that there is no pure mutuality, but that recognition always remains tensional. “The experiences of peaceful recognition cannot take the place of a resolution for the perplexities raised by the very concept of a struggle, still less of a resolution of the conflicts in question,” he stresses. The struggle is inevitable, as are the “orders of recognition,” but this does not render the peaceful experiences impossible. Ricoeur argues, in fact, that these experiences offer “a confirmation that the moral motivation for struggles for recognition is not illusory.” In brief, the experiential certainty affirms mutual ethicality in the structures of reciprocity. Even though these “sunny breaks” (l’éclaircies) of the peaceful moments of recognition are experientially genuine, Ricoeur nevertheless explicitly warns us not to forget “the original

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360 Ricoeur 2004b, 318. (218).
362 Ricoeur 2004b, 318. (218).
asymmetry in the relation between the self and others, which even the experience of peaceful states does not manage to abolish.”

We face, therefore, the question of whether the confirmed moral motivation is enough for Marcelo to maintain that Ricoeur’s notion of mutual recognition is a realizable utopia of “pure ethics.”

Ricoeur himself verbalizes his doubt that the question could be easily settled by admitting that “we must not expect from this investigation of recognition through the gift more than a suspension of the dispute.” The gift is only a model at the level of social practices. It is an example, which illustrates that recognition is not only about a struggle or structures, even though they both remain integral parts of it. “The experience of a gift,” therefore, “is inseparable from its burden of potential conflicts, tied to the creative tension between generosity and obligation.” By alluding to conflicts and tension, Ricoeur indicates that a paradox lies at the heart of his example. Gift-exchange in itself is not pure in generosity, but potentially leads to stressing the moral obligation. Taken again to the level of recognition, the example then reveals that pure mutuality is not experienced either. “The struggle for recognition,” Ricoeur admits, “perhaps remains endless.” The resulting “aporia of gift,” however, does not render Ricoeur’s gift-analysis meaningless.

Even though having pressed the notion of utopia, it seems that eventually Marcelo himself admits that the utopian element does not by itself amount to the claim that such a “pure ethics” would be central to Ricoeur’s work. Marcelo tries to shift the burden of indecisiveness back on Ricoeur. “Ricoeur is prudent enough,” Marcelo comments, “not to state that this horizon of reconciliation shall be definitive. He only speaks about the

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363 Ricoeur 2004b, 375. (261).
‘clearings’ of recognition.” Marcelo now conceives the “‘clearings’ in the forest of perplexities” as “provisional states of conciliation amidst the conflict.” While getting close to the notion of the struggle again, Marcelo fleshes out his earlier remark that “any volitional act of recognition has a process of reciprocal recognition as a sine qua non.” In the end, mutuality and reciprocity seem to be two sides of the same coin, the one inseparable from the other.

Based on Marcelo’s admission that Ricoeur does not argue for a pure generosity, or “pure ethics,” but rather for rare glimpses of it, Marcelo’s “hopeful utopia” is therefore a bit less hopeful than he might have wanted it. The same could be said of Marcelo’s elaboration on the idea of dissymmetry between human beings. In his conclusions in Course of Recognition Ricoeur admittedly reaffirms something like “the gap between people” that Marcelo points out. Ricoeur argues that alterity, “the original asymmetry between the self and the other,” confines people to reciprocity. This notion of the alterity of others – affirmed both by Husserl and Lévinas – leads us to reiterate the idea of mutuality. Where Marcelo sees altruism, Ricoeur sees in the expression “before others” (meaning that the others stand over and against a subject) an anticipation of mutuality. Only by suppressing or damping – as if “forgetting” – this dissymmetry can a possibility open up for “a just distance,” in which one is, nevertheless, still not the other. Applying George H. Taylor’s summation of “metaphoric relationship,” the dissymmetry can be set aside in the mode of

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367 Marcelo 2011, 125.
368 Ricoeur 2004b, 355. (245).
369 Marcelo 2011, 125.
370 Marcelo 2011, 123.
371 Marcelo 2011, 125.
372 Marcelo 2011, 123.
“as if,” but it cannot be annulled. Ricoeur states that “we exchange gifts but not places.”

Even in the act of receiving and in the gratitude it gives rise to, a “twofold alterity is preserved.” This discussion of alterity is where, perhaps with an aim to strengthen his interpretation of the hopeful configuration of social order, Marcelo takes an unfortunate sidestep.

For his own part, Marcelo opens the final section of his essay – on “hopeful utopia” – by completely inverting the notion of passive recognition and, consequently, downplaying the idea of unsurpassable alterity. Instead of “being recognized,” Marcelo now proposes an aggressively active and altruist standpoint: “I must recognize the other first.”

In brief, Marcelo reads Ricoeur as arguing that “before demanding recognition, we should happily grant it.” This reiterated conception of “pure mutuality” – that cancels out the idea of a utopia because of “a new figure in Ricoeur’s anthropology: that of the altruistic subject” – is highlighted best by Marcelo’s provocative claim: “Want recognition? So recognize. […] Instead of striving for the recognition of my identity, what I should do is simply recognize others.” In contrast to Marcelo’s accentuation that is on the way of nullifying the “original asymmetry” by indicating that granting recognition can be pure and free from the struggles of reciprocity, however, in his triad “give, receive, give in return” Ricoeur places “a special emphasis” on the second term, and not the first.

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377 Ricoeur 2004b, 376. (262).
379 Marcelo 2011, 123.
380 Marcelo 2011, 123.
381 Marcelo 2011, 123, 126.
382 Marcelo 2011, 123.
To use Jean-Luc Marion’s terminology of gift-phenomenon, “givenness,” or *Gegebenheit*, is the condition for receiving, and it is the correlating passive receiving, or being recognized, that in Ricoeur’s concept of recognition comes before active giving, that is, recognizing the other. Put differently, by stressing the importance of the “second term,” or receiving, Ricoeur maintains that, because of the human reality that is “always already fallen,” we are always in the mode of “give in return.” As Jacques Derrida also clarifies, “when phenomenologists in the broad sense say *Gegebenheit*, something is given, they refer simply to the passivity of intuition [and signification]; something is there.” Conceptually, identification as active identifying remains for Ricoeur as “the hard core of the idea of recognition,” but this presumes the condition of givenness, or “the given” that is to be identified. This is the reason for Ricoeur’s “reversal” from active to passive recognition. Ricoeur is very insistent on this: “Receiving then becomes the pivotal category,” he stresses, “everything depends on the middle term of [this] threefold structure.” In brief – for those “who hath ears to hear” – no receiving results in no giving (in return). Even though I admit that Marcelo refers to Ricoeur’s notion of receiving, he does not maintain that being-recognized, or receiving that correlates with givenness, holds the first place. The “pure ethics” of always giving the first gift, or “simply recognizing others,” is not realizable, however, since there is always something that has been received to begin with.

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385 Derrida, Marion, Kearney, Scanlon, & Caputo 1999, 58, 61.
386 Ricoeur 2004b, 224-225. (151). – Ricoeur also argues that the logic of identification is dominated by “the idea of the exclusion between the same and the other.” This notion of exclusion prefigures the dialectics between the same and the other into which Ricoeur enters in his analysis on mutual recognition. Moreover, Ricoeur argues that it is “most important for [his] pursuit of the course of recognition” to pay attention to the fact that the idea of identification has been shifted from a conceptual “to an existential status thanks to which the other is likely to affect the same.”
387 Ricoeur 2004b, 10. (§).
388 Ricoeur 2004b, 351. (243).
389 Marcelo 2011, 123.
Ricoeur’s conviction that the mode of receiving is the most important one leads us to the final remarks in terms of this brief commentary of Marcelo’s interpretation. Ricoeur maintains, in line with the ideas of dissymmetry and of being recognized, that “being-recognized, should it occur [full in the human world], would for everyone be to receive the full assurance of his or her identity, thanks to the [direct] recognition by others of each person’s range of capacities.”\(^{390}\) Let me briefly explain only three of the many points that can be made in relation to this claim that seems to relativize Ricoeur’s – and my – emphasis on receiving.

First, Ricoeur maintains that one can never give or receive the “full” recognition as a *homme capable*. The “sense of mutual recognition” that Ricoeur mentions in his conclusions is only a “complement” he believes he had to “add to the idea of a struggle for recognition.”\(^{391}\) Furthermore, even though the moment of receiving is the pivotal one, it is still the case that pure recognition – also in its passive sense of being recognized – is beyond the human capabilities because of the original asymmetry, or our “fallenness.” Ricoeur maintains, however, that even in the case that such recognition would occur, it is first “for everyone to receive the full assurance of his or her identity” through being recognized by the others.\(^{392}\) I cannot “give” without first gaining a notion, even an imperfect one, of being a person who then gives (in return). The idea that emphasizes “pure ethics” by maintaining that “I should simply recognize others” is, therefore, doubly dismissive in terms of this limitation.

Second, we are called to examine the same issue from the viewpoint of *l’homme capable*. Ricoeur’s notion of personal capacities points to a capable subject – a subject

\(^{390}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 361. (250).
\(^{391}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 361, 363. (250-251).
\(^{392}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 361. (250). Italics added.
perhaps even capable of self-recognition. In that case recognition by others would not be necessary at all. For Ricoeur, however, even the primal self-assertion rests on the anticipation of mutuality, that is, it implies the notion of an “other.” In brief, “self-assertion does not signify solipsism.” 393 Not only reflective self-assertion must be distinguished from all the attempts to ground a solitary subject, but “each modality of the ‘I can’” implies an “alterity.” 394 Reduced to the theoretical level of the “I,” the notion of being a person with capabilities is still formed, at least, in the anticipation of mutuality, that is, under the mode of “being recognized.”

Third, it is in this mode of “between” the same and the other, or becoming a self in the presence of others, that the ethical thought presents itself; this sphere is what Marcelo attempts to examine in his essay. Using Ricoeur’s example of a capable subject, “to speak – in effect, to say something – presupposes an expectation of being heard.” 395 Such intelligible human actions presuppose the breaking off from the Cartesian solipsism, or from one’s fourneau, that is, they presuppose a relationship that actualizes an ethical quality of sharing amid all asymmetry. This implied theme of recognition as the dynamics of anticipation and reception in the intertwining of mutuality and reciprocity – that sets Marcelo’s model of “pure” activity in contrast to Ricoeur’s “mixed” model of receiving – leads us to the third interpretation of Course of Recognition.

394 Ricoeur 2004b, 364. (252).
The Anthropological Journey

In contrast to the two previous readings of *Course of Recognition*, Jean-Luc Amalric’s analysis is more well-balanced as it takes a bird’s-eye view of the whole course of Ricoeur’s thought: the methodological, the problematical, and the conceptual. As a matter of fact, I generally agree with Amalric’s exposition of Ricoeur. I have, therefore, placed Amalric’s reading of Ricoeur after that of Marcelo, as it – in its emphasis on reflection – strengthens the idea that receiving is the pivotal moment for Ricoeur in terms of recognition. There is one major deficiency in Amalric’s analysis, however: instead of bringing in the notion of culturally mediated recognition – or culturally facilitated reflection – Amalric deliberately places *Course of Recognition* on the path of Ricoeur’s philosophical anthropology, more precisely as its “third phase.” In spite of this precise viewpoint that proves to be a limitation, let us focus on Amalric’s contribution on reading Ricoeur’s work.

Making a claim similar to that of Jean Greisch in his seminal review of Ricoeur’s 2004 work, Amalric relates the first of the three anthropological phases to Ricoeur’s very early works and especially to *L’homme faillible* (1960), whereas the second phase connects to *Soi-même comme un autre* (1990). Although the “third phase” of *Course of Recognition*, Amalric argues, is in direct continuity with the earlier ones, it is distinguished from them by exploring the rule-governed polysemy of the word recognition. In other words, although the theme of recognition is not totally absent in Ricoeur’s earlier philosophical anthropology, it is explored especially in this third “phase.” The idea of recognition-attestation, however, binds *Course of Recognition* more closely to *Oneself as Another* than to the even earlier works. In contrast to the earlier anthropology of “fallible man”

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397 Trans. *Oneself as Another* (by Kathleen Blamey, 1992). From hereon the English title is used.
(l’homme faillible), Amalric notes, this later anthropology – which, again, consists of “phases” two and three – focuses on the “capable man” (l’homme capable) through “different modalities of the experience of ‘I can’.” To reiterate, Amalric maintains that in contrast to the earlier anthropology of fallible human being, Ricoeur’s later philosophical anthropology concerns the capable human being.

Despite the shift from fallibility to capability, Amalric argues for a fundamental continuity within Ricoeur’s anthropological project. Amalric’s main thesis is that Ricoeur was influenced by Jean Nabert’s reflexive philosophy, which shows itself in Ricoeur’s work, not only in concepts such as original affirmation, attestation, and recognition, but also in its main task as a “reflective reappropriation of our efforts to exist.” Amalric maintains that this Nabertian influence is set to work in the key ideas of Ricoeur’s anthropology, that is, in the movement from the “shattered ego” to the reflective “fragile mediation” of the self by productive imagination. The self is attained and even constituted poetico-practically in Ricoeur’s philosophical anthropology.

In order to understand this claim, and all that Amalric draws out of it, let us briefly summarize the course of his thought. I focus first on the shattered ego, cogito brisé. Drawing on Ricoeur’s works from The Voluntary and the Involuntary to The Symbolism of Evil, Amalric correctly summarizes Ricoeur’s conviction of the human position as internally torn: “our experience is internally shattered, because the cogito is always in the holds of an irreducible alterity such as that of my body (corps propre), of desire, and of life.” The immediately given Cartesian cogito is inconceivable as the cogito is in a state of primordial conflict. The “living

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400 Amalric 2011, 13-14.
401 Amalric 2011, 17.
402 Amalric 2011, 14.
tension” between the infinitude of discourse and the finitude of perspective, the human disproportion as non-coincidence of self to self, makes a human being “a fragile mediation,” and thus also a task for himself.  

The task of retrieving the cogito calls for reflection, but this reflection, in turn, is based on an originating affirmation, the “vehemence of Yes” as the early Ricoeur calls it.  

Although the originating affirmation is only the beginning of dialectics – in which the other pole is “existential difference,” and their fragile synthesis is “human mediation” – Amalric argues quite convincingly that Ricoeur places this Nabertian notion of affirmation at the heart of his earlier anthropology. “Originating affirmation,” Amalric summarizes, “is this power of affirmation which dynamizes our knowing, our acting, and our inner sense of infinity.” It is never directly accessible, and never submits to intellectual insight. Nevertheless, it furnishes for a human being “the horizon of the possible unification of his experience.” This unification, put differently, is not given but achieved only in a conflict requiring reflection.

Amalric’s three remarks on Ricoeur’s early anthropology of fallible human being focus, therefore, on the reflective “fragile mediation.” First, whether we speak of a human being at the theoretical, the practical, or at the affective level, he is “a being whose whole existence consists in mediation.” A human self is not a substance or a pre-given ego, but a tensional “relational self” that is rooted both in βίος (bios, life) and λόγος (logos, discourse). Second, the halfway point between desire and intellect is productive

407 Amalric 2011, 15.
408 Amalric 2011, 15.
imagination, which dynamizes all the mediating processes between these two by prompting spontaneous primal reflection of the self. A mythico-poetic nucleus therefore resides at the heart of human subjectivity.\(^{410}\) Third, imagination is a capability but also a “false” imagination, because the possibility of both fault and illusion is indistinguishable from it. A human self is indeed a fragile mediation. *Le cogito est brisé*, Amalric correctly concludes his Ricoeur summation\(^{411}\) – the self is nothing but torn and shattered.\(^{412}\)

Amalric maintains that in contrast to this earlier anthropology, the later anthropology of the capable human being is placed between shattered cogito and self-posited ego – or even “beyond the alternative of the cogito and of the anticogito” as Ricoeur himself asserts.\(^{413}\) Amalric points out that despite maintaining the idea of discordant concordancy, Ricoeur later examines the conditions of the possibility of human identity.\(^{414}\) According to Amalric, this later anthropology represents a new phase of Ricoeur’s philosophical reflection, which is “precisely a constructive phase of the regrouping (*remembrement*) of the philosophy of self.”\(^{415}\) This new phase – based first on attestation and secondly on recognition – does not, however, disconnect from the earlier anthropology, thanks to the one and same reflective mode of philosophizing in all three stages.\(^{416}\) Additionally, Amalric suggests that attestation and recognition are two successive ways of articulating further the philosophy of imagination, which now aims at “an idea of poetico-

\(^{410}\) Amalric 2011, 16.  
\(^{411}\) Amalric 2011, 16.  
\(^{412}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 157. (141).  
\(^{413}\) Ricoeur 1990, 11-35. (1-23).  
\(^{414}\) Amalric 2011, 17.  
\(^{415}\) Amalric 2011, 17.  
\(^{416}\) Amalric 2011, 18.
practical constitution of self in the ontological horizon of acting and capability,” as Amalric argues.\textsuperscript{417}

In brief, Amalric’s argument is that the later approach cannot be understood without the earlier one, which explains how Ricoeur arrives at the question of \textit{ipseity}, the narrative identity of self, and further to the question of the indirect constitution of the self in memories.\textsuperscript{418} This assertion leads Amalric to reconsider the notions of originating affirmation, epistemic-ontological attestation, and recognition. There is no need for us to repeat his analysis, which finds both a thematic continuity and conceptual-theoretic disruptions. Essentially, Amalric maintains that the dimension of intersubjective relations – which in reference to Levinas also opens the ethical side of the question – fills in a deficiency in Ricoeur’s earlier anthropology, and that the notion of originating affirmation connects Ricoeur’s different elaborations of his hermeneutics of the self to Nabert’s reflexive philosophy.\textsuperscript{419}

The enriching aspect of thought that Amalric draws, like many of Ricoeur’s critics, from \textit{Course of Recognition} is that the work strives to get beyond reciprocity to include the peaceful experiences of mutuality. Mutual recognition, being “a condition of the possibility of the recognition-attestation of self,” relativizes reciprocal intersubjectivity, which in turn cannot anymore be understood as an absolute constitution but one still necessary in terms of authentic human experience.\textsuperscript{420} Based on this mutual-reciprocal duality of human experience, Amalric proposes that Ricoeur’s idea of “communicating personal testimonies capable of carrying the attestation of self” amount to thinking of mutual

\textsuperscript{418} Amalric 2011, 21, 23-25.
\textsuperscript{419} Amalric 2011, 23, 25.
\textsuperscript{420} Amalric 2011, 27.
recognition as “mutual testimony.” According to Ricoeur’s *Memory, History, Forgetting*, testimony presupposes both the self-designation of the testifying subject (“*j’y étais*”), and a dialogical structure which is enabled by the dimension of trust. The process of accreditation – which Amalric clearly reads as a process of being recognized – settles the struggle between confidence and suspicion. As we have pointed out in our previous analysis, Amalric infers that Ricoeur, therefore, searches for a “tensional balance” of recognition.

To bring this brief summation of Amalric’s reading to a close, let me reaffirm that I agree much of what he draws out from Ricoeur’s works in terms of their continuation in the reflexive tradition and of the resulting conception of the internal tension and shatteredness of the human self. The “Ricoeurian self” is a relational self, Amalric concludes, but the relation between the self and its other is dissymmetric. The goal of Ricoeur’s philosophy of “being-in-the-world and of the ‘passive synthesis’,” as Amalric describes it, was to “reveal the prepredicative foundation of the poetico-practical constitution of the self.”

De-centralization of subjectivity, in other words, does not result in fully eclipsing the initial locus of the self which, according to Amalric, is in Ricoeur’s philosophy rooted in recognition-attestation and originating affirmation. To re-emphasize, “we exchange gifts but not places” as Ricoeur explains the self’s relation to the other self; the self remains in its own place without becoming to an other. Amalric maintains that even if Ricoeur’s philosophy moves conceptually to attestation and furthermore to recognition, the Nabertian notion of originating affirmation remains at the heart of Ricoeur’s anthropology. Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of mutual recognition, therefore, gives, according to Amalric, an access to the

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421 Amalric 2011, 26-27.
422 Ricoeur 2000b, 204-205. (163-164).
423 Amalric 2011, 27.
fundamental meaning of human moral experience as returning to this notion of original “Yes!” or affirmation in concrete reflection. As such Ricoeur’s reflexive anthropology enriches the notion of the poetico-practical constitution of the self that necessitates, nevertheless, a hermeneutic of culture, of which Amalric remains silent.

As I have already pointed out, this cultural hermeneutic silence is the unfortunate shortcoming of Amalric’s otherwise concise explication of Ricoeur’s position. It is now our task to graft out such a hermeneutic, in contrast to the scholarly horizon of expectation set forth by these three conflicting interpretations. Following discussion will take us back to the notion of cultural-symbolic expressivity discussed in the beginning of this chapter.

6. A HERMENEUTIC OF SYMBOLIC RECOGNITION

I have sketched above three different approaches to Ricoeur’s last major work, all of which in their own way inform us about the contents and the reception of *Course of Recognition*. Our critical reading reveals, however, that the three accounts on Ricoeur’s work are also limited perceptions of it. The analytic attempt seems quite foreign to Ricoeur’s overall approach, the vision of pure recognition pushes too far to the side of gratitude and generosity actively understood, and the one focused on Nabertian reflexive tradition takes the question of recognition as a complementary part of Ricoeur’s anthropological project and only as such. In spite of the fact that all these accounts stress recognition between individuals, a conflict of interpretations indeed prevails. After having taken this indirect route to the core of *Course of Recognition*, a clarification is necessary to explain the complementing angle from which I will read it. This reading will not deny the process of recognition as between human selves, but functions as a corrective by emphasizing recognition as facilitated by the cultural.

As I will demonstrate in parts three and four of this dissertation, Ricoeur discusses recognition in many of his texts that precede his 2004 work *Course of Recognition*. Ricoeur’s preface to *L’esprit de société: vers une anthropologie sociale du sens* (1993) is one of them; in it Ricoeur maintains that since “interaction effectively supposes a mutual relation,” the act of speaking implies “a circle of recognition,” *un circuit de reconnaissance.* Ricoeur’s anthology *Le Juste 2*, published in 2001, continues this thematics of recognition. It includes

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428 Ricoeur is very clear that conversation is based on the intention that the parties have the intention of recognizing each other: “Si je dis quelque chose, il y a l’attente d’une reception de ce que je dis telle que l’intention – mon intention – implique l’intention de l’autre de me reconnaître. C’est un circuit de *recognition*, de reconnaissance.” Ricoeur 1993, 7. Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 364. (253).
a brief “meditation” that I adopt as a guide for reading the work that specifically focuses on recognition, published only a few years later.

While focusing his attention on the fragility of human autonomy, Ricoeur also examines in *Le Juste* – in line with his “older work on the symbolic function and the more recent work on the social imagination as expressed in the ideas of ideology and utopia” – symbols as signs of recognition. The symbolic order (*l’ordre symbolique*), Ricoeur argues, *figures* obligation, and these poetic images function “as signs of recognition (*comme des signes de reconnaissance*) among the members of a community.” The question of recognition, in other words, is a question of “situating oneself in relation to a symbolic order” that bases the shared socio-politico-moral realm of practical action as Ricoeur also maintains in the same work. As I will maintain, recognition and the cultural are so profoundly intertwined that discussing recognition between individuals is simply not feasible without taking this communal aspect into account.

The theme of recognition, in other words, is connected with that of symbolization, which establishes the vertical dimension of authority replayed in ethicopolitical institution: “We might in this regard take up again the Hegelian concept of recognition to speak of this communalization of moral experience,” Ricoeur suggests. “To be capable of entering into a symbolic order is to be capable of entering into an order of recognition, of inscribing oneself in a ‘we’ that distributes and apportions the authority of the symbolic order.” This dual theme of symbols as tokens of *Anerkennung* in and through *Sittlichkeit* will be the guiding thread of the rest of this part two. I will first examine the idea

430 Ricoeur 2001e, 27. (19).
431 Ricoeur 2001e, 98. (84).
432 Ricoeur 2001e, 101. (86).
433 Ricoeur 2001e, 103. (88).
of symbolic recognition, and move then into examining Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel and his dialectical conception of recognition. These two steps will, finally, get us to the proper realm of cultural hermeneutics after “letting it appear” in its own right.

6.1 The Idea of Symbolic Recognition

Based on the preceding critical analyses of Ricoeur interpretations, the general structure and contents of Ricoeur’s argument in *Course of Recognition* is already clear. Ricoeur himself helps us to recall – by describing “in broad strokes how the dynamic I could begin to call a ‘course’ of recognition becomes apparent” – that there is a steady path from recognition as identification to ethico-political mutual recognition:

> I mean the passage from recognition-identification, where the thinking subject claims to master meaning, to mutual recognition, where the subject places him- or herself under the tutelage of a relationship of reciprocity, in passing through self-recognition in the variety of capacities that modulate one’s ability to act, one’s “agency.”

The most apparent “course” of recognition concerns the multiphase progress from the state of confusion to that of mutual recognition. Furthermore, Ricoeur affirms that this threefold index of identity, self-recognition, and mutual recognition – drawn from French lexicons in the beginning of *Course of Recognition* – has been taken as a guide in organizing the work. Based on these three ideas of recognition, Ricoeur derives three corresponding lines of inquiry. It is in the “interweaving” of these phases that a certain interconnectedness is found, which in turn leads Ricoeur and his readers to notice a course or a path of recognition. The outcome, however, is nothing but a dialectical progress: “I put in first place the progression of the theme of identity, then passing beyond it, that of otherness (*alterité*), and finally, in a

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more hidden background, that of the dialectics between recognition and misrecognition." The course of recognition finds its limits when set in contrast to failing to fully recognize correctly.

Drawing on the discussion above, it should be clear that Ricoeur does not merely enumerate the different aspects of recognition and explain their formal structure, but aims to hermeneutically understand how these aspects complement each other. It is the hermeneutics of recognition that is at stake and not a mere formal clarification of recognition. Furthermore, as Ricoeur insisted that in the triad “give, receive, give in return” the emphasis is on the second term, it is not primarily the active sense, to recognize, but the passive sense of recognition that is the most important: *being recognized*. Otherness might not be totally overcome in this dialectics of recognition, but the hermeneutic approach reveals that in the mode of “being recognized” I am reconciled with this otherness in such a manner that – despite the primal dissymmetry between me and the other – I can pay tribute to the “sunny breaks” (*l’éclaircies*) of mutuality.

The question of how a living, capable human being becomes recognized persists, however. I am convinced that this is the leading question of *Course of Recognition*, as it grounds Ricoeur’s discussion of “recognizing oneself in one’s lineage,” understood as approbation, the first model of recognition. Moreover, Ricoeur begins this discussion explicitly from the point of view of *être-avec*, or “being-with” others. As I have argued earlier in this text, “being recognized” takes place only as with-being (*co-essê*) in an order of meaning. Culture, for this reason, functions as the platform of loving “recognition of others”

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436 Ricoeur 2004b, 359. (249). – Not only Ricoeur, but Honneth also analyzes different forms of Mißachtung that is translatable as “misrecognition” in form of “disattention” or “disrespect.” Honneth 1995, 130-139, 160-170.


(Anerkennung des Anderen) in the mode of gift as Margit Eckholt summarizes. As I have noted, Ricoeur is quick to point out that the model of gift-exchange indicates concrete and manifold hereditary connection with others – mutuality that precedes us as individuals. Being recognized depends on this cultural mutuality that is still not without tensions.

One of these tensions concerns “recognizing oneself in one’s lineage,” that is, being an individual in a tradition. The pledge of personal commitment (l’engagement), however, is involved in recognition since, once again, the discussion is about living subjects. The notion of committing oneself as a person – or rather, being bound to commit oneself – pries open the idea of being-with in a living tradition, in a hereditary connection with other persons. This engagement, therefore, already calls for human values and ethical being-here. Following Ricoeur, I maintain, therefore, that the middle term of “receiving” is the most important one, it is truly “the pivotal category” as Ricoeur defines it. This position will be modified later on by bringing in the element of critical reappropriation, but for the time being, let us focus on this notion of received heritage that facilitates recognition.

Here, then, a crucial extension presents itself for us. I will show that Ricoeur understands the symbolic gift-exchange to take place in recognition at two different levels: social and linguistic. This distinction has not been well noted in the reception of Ricoeur’s work. Gonçalo Marcelo, for example, seems to be following Marcel Hénaff’s social understanding of symbolic gift-exchange: it indicates the relation between those exchanging the gifts in a social setting. It appears that the figure of social exchange is so compelling

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440 Ricoeur 2004b, 342. (236).
441 Ricoeur 2004b, 351. (243).
that it also captures Marcelo’s attention. Despite mentioning that for Ricoeur “recognition is of the order of the symbolic gesture,” and acknowledging that he is “always talking about symbolic gift-giving and not necessarily the exchange of actual goods or commodities,” Marcelo conceives the “Ricoeurian recognition” as highlighted in the idea of “mutual gift-giving as a process of symbolic recognition.” In spite of his emphasis on “pure ethics” that is distinct from any economic approach, Marcelo apparently stresses the socio-phenomenal rather than linguistic-symbolic aspect of gift-giving, just as Hénaff and Marcel Mauss did before him. Using the words of Jean-Luc Marion – when he also criticizes Mauss while responding to Jacques Derrida – “the failure to explain the gift was due to the fact that the analysis remained in the horizon of the economy.” Marion’s claim that in the final analysis “the gift does not coincide with the object of the gift” but rather with its “symbolic support,” that is, with the values unrelated with the gift-object, is, perhaps, not fully

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443 Marcelo 2011, 118.
444 Marcelo 2011, 115. Marcelo’s emphasis.
445 Marcelo 2011, 123.
446 Marcel Hénaff maintains in his *Price of Truth* that the “symbolic exchange,” that is “a social procedure of recognition,” is different from any type of market exchange, but that this exchange uses goods “to establish bonds of recognition between persons or groups.” “Gift exchange is a ceremonial duel in which autonomous beings who wish to associate without relinquishing their freedom confront each other.” Hénaff’s understanding of symbolic gifts as tokens of recognition concerns, therefore, gestures “by which one holds out a mediating object to the other.” Hénaff, in other words, presupposes “a physical element, a pledge of good faith, given as substitute for the group that offers an association: [that is,] the thing given.” Even though this physical element is, according to Hénaff, elementary to the ceremonial recognition through the practices of gift-giving, it cannot - because of its symbolic nature - be considered as “a good,” since “it is the granting of a pledge that commits the giver as substitute of himself and that stands for the conclusion of a pact [...] The subject asserts himself in the thing presented.” The aim of this ceremonial exchange is “to express generosity and initiate or continue cycles of exchange.” The symbol, in other words, is the entirety of the social act itself - objectified in the physical element that is given - that represents the experienced and willed reciprocity and recognition of the other party: “This is an essential point because the entire issue turns on this commitment, the risk taken, the challenge presented by an alliance – that is, the folly of binding oneself through reciprocal offerings. Therein lies the incalculable value of the thing given.” Even though Hénaff extends the scope of this symbolic gesture from physical objects to their correlates such as observable “gestures, words, dances, music, celebrations, songs, or feasts,” the idea of a physical element, or “the thing,” remains at the core of his idea. Hénaff 2010, 17-18, 130-135, 139-141, 153, 381, 386-388, 400-401.
acceptable as it downplays the “objectival support” of a gift and threatens to turn it into an obscure non-phenomenal phenomenon. Marion’s account, nevertheless, points out that the gift is not reducible to a mere social phenomenon at the level of exchange.\textsuperscript{448} Marcelo’s view, I argue, needs to be challenged for this same reason.

Instead of fully considering the implications of the linguistic aspect, Marcelo emphasizes that gift-giving is a gesture, that is, a social phenomenon.\textsuperscript{449} It is true that Ricoeur includes the social view as an essential part of his own argument – this is clear already on the basis of his previous analysis of gift-exchange in \textit{Memory, History, Forgetting}.\textsuperscript{450} The meaning of the term “symbolic” in Ricoeur’s sense, however, is far from exhausted by Hénaff’s and Marcelo’s accounts that merely reiterate the social setting of ceremonial exchange. Marcelo himself, however, points out this Ricoeurian extension to the idea of “symbolic gift” when he refers to Jean Greisch’s influential essay on \textit{Course of Recognition} in the opening lines of his own text: “[i]n Ricoeur’s initial anthropology, the one whose main works are \textit{Freedom and Nature} [i.e. \textit{The Voluntary and the Involuntary}] and \textit{The Symbolism of Evil}, one can already find a connection with recognition, because every symbol is always already a symbol of recognition.”\textsuperscript{451} Evidently, Marcelo’s summation of Greisch’s article does not, however, lead him to reflect upon the very idea of \textit{symbolic} expressions as the basis of the act of recognition, rather than of social gestures.

Although many of Ricoeur’s commentators leave it in the shadows, the idea of symbols \textit{per se} has a pivotal role in \textit{Course of Recognition}. Ricoeur explicitly states that he resolves Hénaff’s “enigma of ceremonial reciprocal gift giving” by “resorting to the idea of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{448} Marion 1999, 132-133.
\item \textsuperscript{449} Marcelo 2011, 124-125.
\item \textsuperscript{450} Ricoeur 2004b, 246-247, 337-338. (167, 232-233); Ricoeur 2000b, 619-630. (478-486).
\item \textsuperscript{451} Marcelo 2011, 111.
\end{itemize}
symbolic mutual recognition.” This notion of “resorting” – par recours – unlocks Ricoeur’s intentions. To be sure, in the 2004 Kluge Prize acceptance speech, Ricoeur maintains that gift-giving offers a model of what happens at the symbolic level of every human society; already in his Lectures on Ideology and Utopia Ricoeur had argued that social life necessarily has a symbolic structure. Course of Recognition is also very clear on this. There is “an actual, albeit symbolic, experience of mutual recognition,” which Ricoeur examines philosophically by “following the model of the reciprocal ceremonial gift.” Furthermore, this ceremonial reciprocal gift offers “an actual experience of mutual recognition in a symbolic mode.”

This “symbolic character of recognition,” Ricoeur acknowledges, is, however, “unaware of itself, insofar as it clothes itself and conveys itself in the exchange.” This unwittingness necessitates the example of exchanging gifts for a philosophical clarification of the issue. In itself, however, the figure of gift-giving is only a heuristic tool to explain those exchanges that are symbolic in their nature, and which require openness to the idea of mutual recognition.

Ricoeur’s notion of symbol will be in our focus in the next section. In the light of the cultural hermeneutic task of this dissertation, however, it would be philosophically inconvenient not to already emphasize the connection Ricoeur makes in Lectures on Ideology and Utopia between a cultural-symbolic structure and social life – this is an important moment of “letting appear” this cultural hermeneutic. The connection between symbolic

453 Ricoeur 1986b, 8. – Ricoeur insists in Lectures on Ideology and Utopia that culturally manifested symbolic structure grounds social life, as in the most primitive kind of action the symbolic function is already at work, and therefore enables understanding: “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.” Ricoeur 1986b, 8.
455 Ricoeur 2004b, 349. (241).
456 Ricoeur 2004b, 353. (244).
culture and social community, I argue, enables Ricoeur’s later idea of symbolic mutual recognition. He insists that social processes are constituted by a necessary cultural system that utilizes symbolic communication:

We have to articulate our social existence in the same way that we have to articulate our perceptual existence. Just as models in scientific language allow us to see how things look, allow us to see things as this or that, in the same way our social templates articulate our social roles, articulate our position in society as this or that. And perhaps it is not possible to go behind or below this primitive structuration. The very flexibility of our biological existence makes necessary another kind of informational system, the cultural system. Because we have no genetic system of information for human behavior, we need a cultural system. No culture exists without such a system. The hypothesis, therefore, is that where human beings exist, a nonsymbolic mode of existence, and even less, a nonsymbolic kind of action, can no longer obtain. Action is immediately ruled by cultural patterns which provide templates or blueprints for the organization of social and psychological processes, perhaps just as genetic codes – I am not certain – provide such templates for the organization of organic processes.457

In sum, Ricoeur argues both that nonsymbolic existence and action is not human existence and action, and that the cultural system, which patterns and guides the symbolically mediated being-here, is necessitated by the fact that life itself – and as a result also its social forms – would otherwise remain obscure and unorganized. Life and social life gain meaning only if structured cultural-symbolically.

In contrast to the socio-practically accenting interpretations of Course of Recognition, I thus propose that gift-giving is not only a symbol of mutual recognition at the social level, but that the very “gift-giving” takes place at the cultural-symbolic level. Instead of focusing on the gesture or phenomenon of gift-giving, I emphasize that linguistic-symbolic practices themselves are gift-giving. Although the social aspect is an irreducible one, the cultural-linguistic aspect is for Ricoeur more fundamental. In his conversation with George H. Taylor, Ricoeur maintained that in contrast to the social and the political, which

457 Ricoeur 1986b, 11-12.
focus on different aspects of varying institutions, the cultural focuses on language, intellectual life, and works produced by these: “the cultural has more to do with the medium of language and the creation of ideas.” The ritual of gift-exchange, which is used by Ricoeur as an example to clarify his argument, only models an intellectual exchange that is wholly and utterly symbolic in itself. In other words, the symbolic exchange on which I will focus is made “visible” by the ritual, but it is not by any means limited to it. Instead of thinking of the gift-exchange example as a social phenomenon, as some commentators do, I claim that Ricoeur’s critics should have had the symbolically mediated forms of gift-exchange, or intellectual transactions, in their focus.

Ricoeur explicitly states that the central thesis of *Course of Recognition* concerns “the idea of symbolic mutual recognition.” He could not be much clearer that the symbolic aspect of gift-giving is for him more important than the gestural one:

The thesis I want to argue for can be summed up as follows: The alternative to the idea of struggle in the process of mutual recognition is to be sought in peaceful experiences of mutual recognition, based on *symbolic mediations* as exempt from the juridical as from the commercial order of exchange.

To repeat, the symbolic mediations ground the “sunny breaks” of the experiences of mutuality. Analyzing the “paradox of the gift and the gift in return” provides a space to notice that *αγάϖη* – overwhelming generosity – transcends the “autonomous circularity” attached to reciprocity. “In this way,” Ricoeur explains, “the ground will be clearer for an interpretation of the mutuality of the gift founded on the idea of *symbolic recognition*.” The “symbolic character of recognition” is, therefore, also in our focus, since “the theme of

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458 Ricoeur 1986b, 323. n1.
462 Ricoeur 2004b, 339, 353. (234, 244).
symbolic recognition” is relevant for the search for Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics through the hermeneutic of recognition.\textsuperscript{463} Ricoeur indeed emphasizes the cultural-linguistic-symbolic rather than the gestural aspect of recognition. As we will see later in this dissertation, Ricoeur’s emphasis becomes more understandable taken together with his cultural hermeneutics.

6.2 The Gift of Symbolic Language

Let us now consider the idea of gift from a symbolic point of view. Ricoeur suggests in Memory, History, Forgetting that the discussion of gift-exchange is opened by certain dilemmas of speech acts as well as by a linguistic comparison between don-pardon, that is, “gift and forgiving.”\textsuperscript{464} I have also brought up, however, Ricoeur’s idea of committing oneself, engaging oneself in recognition. These two sets of ideas are not foreign to each other, since Ricoeur maintains that the above-mentioned commitment manifests itself first in language that is inherently symbolic. When winding his argument down in the concluding section of Course of Recognition, as if he was retracing his steps in reverse order, Ricoeur then connects the ideas of commitment and our uses of language: “Taken as an act of language,” he argues, “the assertion invested in the act of judgment requires the commitment (l’engagement) of the speaker just as much as do specific performatory locutions, for which the promise remains a key example.”\textsuperscript{465} Interestingly enough, it is this linguistic commitment which, according to

\textsuperscript{463} Ricoeur 2004b, 341. (235).
\textsuperscript{464} Ricoeur 2000b, 619-621. (478, 480).
\textsuperscript{465} Ricoeur 2004b, 367. (255).
Ricoeur, “includes an expectation of the approbation of others.” In other words, commitment takes place in language.

A relating comment that I will have to make concerns Ricoeur’s notion of love as discourse. Ricoeur’s claim, in the so-called course of recognition of his 2004 work, namely, that “αγάϖη speaks,” has not so far been sufficiently highlighted by his critics. Ricoeur argues quite deliberately that αγάϖη, the form of love that corresponds to generosity and therefore also to mutuality, enters “into language” – it is linguistically manifested. This makes it, as Ricoeur also maintains in his 1989 lecture “Amour et justice,” first of all “in some ways commensurable with talk about justice,” despite the fact that “the discourse of αγάϖη is above all else one of praise.” The linguistic-symbolic manifestations of αγάϖη escape the notion of a struggle or a search for justice, but they are, nevertheless, comparable to the discourse of justice. Both discourses, even if in contrast to each other by their contents, are discourses, and therefore to that extent tantamount to each other. “It is again on the level of language,” Ricoeur continues in Course of Recognition, “that this discordant dialectic [between ethical love and moral-juridical justice] can be apprehended: αγάϖη declares itself, proclaims itself.” αγάϖη articulates itself in language as praise. Ricoeur reintroduces therefore the notion of “the poetics of αγάϖη” as well. Insofar as Ricoeur is concerned, there is then indeed a direct path from the theme of symbolic recognition to the discourse on αγάϖη.

In sum, Ricoeur argues that the figure of social gift-giving models gift-giving at the linguistic plane. “The festive aspect of the gift, as a gesture,” he explains, “is like the

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466 Ricoeur 2004b, 367. (255).
467 Ricoeur 2004b, 323. (222).
468 Ricoeur 2004b, 323, 324. (222, 223).
469 Ricoeur 2004b, 323. (222).; Ricoeur 2008, 32-42. (Ricoeur 1995a, 324-329.)
470 Ricoeur 2004b, 324. (223).
471 Ricoeur 2004b, 326. (224); Ricoeur 1990, 37. (25).
hymn on the verbal plane, or, more generally, all those uses of language I like to place under the grammatical patronage of the optative, which is neither a descriptive not a normative mode of speech."472 A hymn, like praise, wishfully points to its signification without explaining it. To repeat, gift-giving models what takes place at this verbal level. Another clarification, however, is needed to explain the style of this language to which Ricoeur refers. In contrast to the scientific, reductive language of explanations, Ricoeur refers to language that extends to the “poetic usage of the imperative, close to that of the hymn and the benediction.”473 The rich, equivocal uses of language, including “the power of metaphorization that attaches to expressions of αγάϖη,”474 are therefore the ones in which Ricoeur is interested. The idea of generous giving, I emphasize, is most apparent in these linguistic forms. The religious discourses model how generosity and the good will of mutuality underlie human relations.

Even though a different manner of approaching the whole issue of “symbolic gifts” has already been opened, I will now steadfastly ground this reading to Ricoeur’s early work. The idea of giving and equivocal language calls for restating Ricoeur’s idea that should already be clear on the basis of part one of this dissertation. At this point, I will re-introduce the “wager” of the _Symbolism of Evil_. The essence of this wager, it was said, is captured with the phrase _le symbole donne à penser_. In short, the symbol gives a “gift” for thought, but also gives rise to thinking.475 Here, after Ricoeur’s gift-analyses, the aphorism opens itself to us richly: the linguistic symbol gives, the linguistic symbol donates. In _The Symbolism of Evil_ Ricoeur claims that the counterpart to this giving is “a creative interpretation of meaning” –

472 Ricoeur 2004b, 354. (245).
473 Ricoeur 2004b, 323-324. (222).
474 Ricoeur 2004b, 324. (223).
475 Ricoeur 1960b, 324, 330. (348, 355).
that is, the hermeneutics of symbols – “faithful to the impulsion, to the gift of meaning from the symbol, and faithful also to the philosopher's oath to seek understanding.” The symbolic language itself is gift-giving, thanks to the wager that interpretation opens up, in contrast to scientific explaining, the generous gift of meaning mediated by symbolic language.

In terms of reading Course of Recognition, Arto Laitinen does not in any way indicate such an understanding of the notion of “symbolic gift.” Gonçalo Marcelo, even though discussing at length “symbolic recognition,” also seems to have left aside this meaning of symbolic mediation in Ricoeur. Jean-Luc Amalric at least points in this direction. Amalric argues that if Ricoeur’s anthropology is both reflexive and hermeneutic, “it is precisely because of the task it assigns to itself, that is, that of a reappropriation of our acts of existing, which requires fundamentally an interpretation of those signs, symbols, and actions in which this act of existing objectifies itself.” Amalric, in other words, acknowledges the need for the hermeneutics of symbolic recognition in the Ricoeurian rather than Honnethian sense. To be fair, Amalric also mentions Ricoeur’s conviction that the self is mythico-poetically constituted. None of these three scholars, however, take seriously the challenge presented by The Symbolism of Evil about how to understand the symbolic nature of recognition.

The idea of symbolic recognition, in the sense I propose, can only be found in Jean Greisch’s seminal analysis of Ricoeur’s last work. Greisch’s first hypothesis in reading Course of Recognition – “in the spirit of recognition-exploration” – penetrates the heart of the matter when stating that the fundamental function of symbol is a function of recognition.

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476 Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348). Italics added.
477 Amalric 2011, 17.
478 Amalric 2011, 22.
479 Greisch 2010, 90-91.
“If the ‘symbol gives rise to thought,’” Greisch argues, “it is because it is, by definition, a symbol of recognition.” Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of symbols seems, therefore, to contain at least “the seed of the problem of recognition.” Greisch himself, however, turns back to the idea of the symbolic effect and the value of the phenomenemon of gift exchange, rather than examining the gift-like recognition in symbols themselves any further. This is unfortunate, since he clearly holds the key to unlocking the Ricoeurian idea of symbolic recognition, but does not expand on it fully.

To explain more fully the approach that I have adopted, let me elaborate briefly on Ricoeur’s ideas of symbolic recognition in The Symbolism of Evil. First, Ricoeur affirms the connection between symbolic language and the consciousness of self. To be sure, the “symbols of the self” Ricoeur analyzes are “primary in comparison with the elaborated and intellectualized formations of the consciousness of self.” Symbols are rudimentary explicitations of being conscious. Still, these spoken symbols “reach into reflective consciousness,” and in them “one can catch sight of the most fundamental and stable symbolisms of humanity.” The rudimentary symbolic explanations of being-here do not exclude reflection, but rather call for it instead. Second, a symbol gives, it is “donative,” only because we are in a certain way committed to it. A symbol, a double-intentional sign, cannot be considered only from the outside, but internally existential. It is “the movement of the primary meaning which makes us participate in the latent meaning and thus assimilates us to that which is symbolized without our being able to master the similitude intellectually.”

480 Greisch 2010, 92.
482 Greisch 2010, 110.
483 Ricoeur 1960b, 18. (11).
484 Ricoeur 1960b, 19. (12).
485 Ricoeur 1960b, 22. (16).
The experience of being-here unconceals the symbolic meaning, rather than any rational speculation. Third, this existential-expressive archaism is why symbols precede hermeneutics, because symbolic language is “essentially bound to its content.”\textsuperscript{486} Put differently, symbols truly express what they refer to, because they do not merely refer but participate in that reality. As stated already above, however, symbols inevitably lead us to their interpretation which opens up the depth of symbolic meanings. These three characterizations from Ricoeur’s “criteriology of symbols,” I assert, are enough to understand the connection between symbolic language and recognition.

It would be a mistake, however, to infer from \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} that the idea of symbolic recognition could be restricted to only the lexical meanings enlisted in the beginning of \textit{Course of Recognition}. It is true, nevertheless, that in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} Ricoeur develops a philosophical anthropology “under the guidance of the symbols and myths of human evil.”\textsuperscript{487} In short, symbolic language is taken as a means for self-recognition. In other words, an indirect understanding of being human is achievable through symbols. They speak of nothing else but human reality. The Adamic myth, for example, “is the anthropological myth \textit{par excellence},” because Adam – as the name signals – is an archetype of a human being.\textsuperscript{488} In the myth, Ricoeur suggests, even “the serpent would be a part of ourselves,” albeit that part “which we do not recognize.” Ricoeur argues that the serpent is the “pseudo-outer,” quasi-other, which represents our own bad faith.\textsuperscript{489} To conclude this analysis of the relation between mythic-symbolic language and self-recognition, we should say that the idea

\textsuperscript{486} Ricoeur 1960b, 24. (17).  
\textsuperscript{487} Ricoeur 1960b, 305-306. (329).  
\textsuperscript{488} Ricoeur 1960b, 218. (232).  
\textsuperscript{489} Ricoeur 1960b, 240. (256).
of recognizing oneself, becoming more aware of one’s own being by naming the unknown, is clearly present in *The Symbolism of Evil*.

In addition to correcting the comprehension of “symbolic recognition,” *The Symbolism of Evil* also enriches our reading of *Course of Recognition* by guiding our understanding of the “other.” Besides the pseudo-other that I mentioned just above, *The Symbolism of Evil* introduces the notion of the Other, which leads us here to the idea of “being recognized.” The notion of being “before other,” for example, draws its significance from being “before God” that Ricoeur discusses in *The Symbolism of Evil*. In relation to Old Testament symbolisms and their later elaboration, Ricoeur maintains that “the initial situation of man as God’s prey can enter into the universe of discourse because it is itself analyzable into an utterance of God and an utterance of man, into the reciprocity of a vocation and an invocation.”\(^{490}\) God holds human beings answerable to his commands. The idea of the Covenant based on these commands, however, encourages us to “never lose sight of the fact that all these imperatives [of the Law] are motivated by the recognition of the gratuitous and merciful election of Israel by its God, who loved it first.”\(^{491}\) Ricoeur’s statement implies that while God loved us first, the movement towards self-understanding, therefore, flows primordially from the Other.

This recognition in the mode of “being recognized” is not limited to humanity in general, or to the chosen nation, since it covers each individual at the personal level. The “absolute Seeing” of the omnipercipient God gives us symbolic grounds to understand the recognition coming from the Other as “the foundation of truth for the view that I have of

\(^{490}\) Ricoeur 1960b, 55. (51-52).
myself.”\textsuperscript{492} In accordance with the Pauline interpretation of the role of the Law – that it merely tells me what I am not capable of – Ricoeur summarizes that “there is the I that acknowledges itself.”\textsuperscript{493} But symbolic language works in a similar manner also outside of Judeo-Christian context. The Greek tragedy of Oedipus – while revealing the truth “in the pain of identification” – is a tragedy of “the recognition of self in an alien past.”\textsuperscript{494} Symbolic language makes us recognize ourselves as individuals while revealing aspects of our being that are not directly accessible to each of us.

Besides these two notions of symbolic recognition in the face of the Other, there is yet another sense of recognition to which \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} alludes. The cultural-religious ritualization of ethics, most notably present in the different models of ceremonialization of the divine law, including its juridization, quite obviously maintains a connection to the idea of the Other, but it also highlights the social aspect of being recognized. “Of course,” Ricoeur affirms, “rites bind together a community to which they furnish symbols as rallying points and as signs of mutual recognition (\textit{reconnaissance mutuelle}).”\textsuperscript{495} This symbolically maintained mutuality between the observants, the “internal bond” among them, is made possible by reflection that is turned to ritualization. All this flows, however, from cultural symbols that “give” or “donate” grounds for thought (\textit{donne à penser}). Culturally rooted symbolic language thus provides the means also for those types of recognition which surpass plain self-recognition.

\textsuperscript{492} Ricoeur 1960b, 86. (86).
\textsuperscript{493} Ricoeur 1960b, 137-138, 141. (142, 147).
\textsuperscript{494} Ricoeur 1960b, 208. (221).
\textsuperscript{495} Ricoeur 1960b, 132. (137).
It is clear, therefore, that the symbol gives, or donates. It should not be forgotten, however, that “what it gives is occasion for thought, something to think about.”\textsuperscript{496} The immediacy, characteristic of symbol, asks to be posited, that is, it asks to be taken as the mediation of thought. This is why Ricoeur furthermore argues in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} that a human being “remains language through and through” in virtue of symbols, meaning that interpretative explication is already on its way as “there exists nowhere a symbolic language without hermeneutics.”\textsuperscript{497} Appreciating the gift of meaning given by the symbol is to interpret it. “It is in hermeneutics that the symbol’s gift of meaning and the endeavor to understand by deciphering are knotted together.”\textsuperscript{498} While conjoining the gift of meaning and interpretation together Ricoeur insists, however, that the word “to understand” must guide our endeavors. It is in a creative and understanding interpretation, approached with “a hope for re-creation of language,”\textsuperscript{499} as Ricoeur mentions in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil}, that the gift of meaning is given.\textsuperscript{500} This modern, critically attuned hermeneutics does not think in symbols anymore but takes them as a starting-point. The aim is, nevertheless, to re-charge our modern language, to remember. This remembrance, I will argue, is ultimately the gift that is given by the cultural symbol.

\textbf{6.3 From Forgetfulness to Re-membering}

As many of Ricoeur’s critics seem to have forgotten the above discussed ideas pertaining to symbolic recognition that Ricoeur’s elaborates in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil}, it was necessary to

\textsuperscript{496} Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348).
\textsuperscript{497} Ricoeur 1960b, 325. (350).
\textsuperscript{498} Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (351).
\textsuperscript{499} Ricoeur 1960b, 325. (349).
\textsuperscript{500} Ricoeur 1960b, 326-330. (351-355).
pause for a moment to consider the gift of symbolic language. The gift of meaning that is given by symbolic language calls for interpretation, however. Properly understood, this task of interpretation is not an easy one. In *The Symbolism of Evil* Ricoeur claims – perhaps prophetically for us – that the philosophy of symbols must begin in the moment of forgetfulness. Interpretation, or restoration as Ricoeur calls it, must regain its “view” back to its beginning. If this is to be reached, Ricoeur asserts, “it is first necessary for thought to inhabit the fullness of language.” In a way, regained presence is then not impossible. “In being born I enter into the world of language that precedes me and envelops me,” says Ricoeur elsewhere. The matter is to accept the full expressivity of language which is then articulated in interpretation.

In brief, Ricoeur insists that we have already been placed in language, which in itself is pregnant with onto-existential meaning. “I believe that being can still speak to me,” he maintains in *The Symbolism of Evil*. What was, perhaps unintentionally, de-symbolized must now be re-symbolized – or rather, “remembered” in interpretation. Ricoeur asserts:

> A meditation on symbols starts from speech that has already taken place, and in which everything has already been said in some fashion; it wishes to be thought with its presuppositions. For it, the first task is not to begin but, from the midst of speech, to remember (*se ressouvenir*); to remember with a view to beginning.

Discourse, language in use, refers to the fullness of being in a symbolic mode: everything is and has already been said. As argued in *The Symbolism of Evil*, remembering is, therefore, our first task, to gather oneself from the midst of the world that is primordially verbal for us.

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501 Ricoeur 1960b, 325. (349).
502 Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348).
503 Ricoeur 1960a, 45. (27).
504 Ricoeur 1960b, 327. (352).
506 Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348-349).
After having reminded us of the idea of interpretation as onto-existential remembering, let me get back to the *Course of Recognition*. Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of the capable human being,” which by no means is the final point of analysis in the 2004 work, culminates in the idea that the living subject, or “the ‘acting and suffering’ human being,” recognizes itself as “a person capable of different accomplishments.” This reflection which results in self-designation not only connects with our actions, but also our capacity to remember. Ricoeur admits in *Course of Recognition* that personal pronouns, among other similar expressions of ordinary language, are “means of designation from which the self-designation of the speaking subject follows.” Language directs self-designation. This primal consciousness, however, would have no significance if a subject was not able to remember. Ricoeur attributes therefore the capacity to remember to “all the subjects that find lexical expression in one or the other of the personal pronouns.” Personal pronouns, in other words, allow memory, but – paradoxically – memory makes personal pronouns mean. Put in a semi-Kantian manner, the “I” in the “I can” must be the selfsame “I” who, according to Ricoeur, finds itself in “the living present of self-recognition” of his or her own life-story. My self resorts to remembering that I am I even if my circumstances change.

The notion of recognition we have now achieved in this chapter as remembering calls for noticing its counterpart: forgetting. “One would need to be able to ‘name forgetfulness’ to be able to speak of recognition,” as Ricoeur puts it in *Memory, History,*

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509 Ricoeur 2004b, 145. (95).
510 Ricoeur 2004b, 156. (104).
Forgetting. The problem of forgetting (l'oubli) reconnects also with the Symbolism of Evil, where Ricoeur argues that we “moderns” dwell in the age of forgetfulness – and “forgetting is indeed the enemy of memory.” We therefore think about the active moment of remembering, argues Ricoeur, as “the struggle against forgetting.” Henry Bergson’s understanding of recognition as reconstructive recollection, which Ricoeur applies in Course of Recognition, makes clear how this struggle of recollection contributes to the recognition of the past, and furthermore to self-recognition: forgetting is powerlessness or inability (impuissance) to recognize.

Remembering and recognizing find themselves close neighbors from the viewpoint of the present representation of something absent. The certitude accompanying recognition “makes recognition the mnemonic act par excellence,” Ricoeur asserts. Bergson’s analysis of the recognition of images underlines this vivid connection between the past and the present. Ricoeur calls him therefore “the philosopher of la durée,” or of duration. “In short,” Ricoeur quotes, “the ‘concrete process by which we grasp the past in the present is recognition.’” There must still be something present of the “original virtuality,” otherwise recognition and remembering would not be possible at all. “Here the enigma of the presence of the absent is reaffirmed,” Ricoeur summarizes, “occurring in the present,

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513 Ricoeur 1960b, 324-325. (349).
514 Ricoeur 2004b, 169. (112).
515 Ricoeur 2004b, 169. (112-113).
516 Ricoeur elaborates Bergson’s distinction between spontaneous and “laborious” recollection in Memory, History, Forgetting. Both of these are, however, analyzed under the notion of intellectual effort. The “dynamic scheme” requires reconstructing the memories, and indicates therefore both our effort and the experienced resistance in reworking (remaniement) the images. Cf. Ricoeur 2000b, 34-36. (28-30).
518 Ricoeur 2004b, 185. (125).
519 Ricoeur 2000b, 192. (154).
520 Ricoeur 2004b, 185. (125).
recognized as memory.”  According to Ricoeur on Bergson, recognition refers to the original experience through the image of this impression in the present.

Read in the light of *The Symbolism of Evil* and its insistence on onto-existential remembering, the Bergsonian idea of recognizing the “original virtuality” in the present is truly thought-provoking, as is Ricoeur’s further move in *Course of Recognition* to connect recognition and remembering to rediscovery: Ricoeur brings forth an aspect of thought that goes beyond the sense of mere regaining and recovering. Recollection can be arduous and take effort; this is why Ricoeur had followed Bergson in stating that the effort of recollection is completed in the moment of recognition. This arduousness, however, has its uplifting counterpart. “Reconnaître un souvenir, c’est le retrouver,” Ricoeur argues in *Course of Recognition*: “To recognize a memory is to rediscover it.” In the age of modern forgetfulness it is precisely re-discovering that characterizes our task “to remember with a view to beginning.” *The Symbolism of Evil* complements the analyses of *Course of Recognition*, as it launches – by challenging us “moderns” to remember fully – a whole new way of reading the later work.

*Course of Recognition* is clear on the connection between recognition and rediscovering. “To rediscover is to recognize what one once – previously – learned,” Ricoeur states. The theme of recognizing as rediscovering highlights that Ricoeur focuses on ανάµνησις, recollection of persistent memories, and not some mimetic εικών, or an iconic copy.

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522 Ricoeur 2004b, 186. (125). – Despite underlining the present moment, Ricoeur refers to Bergson’s thematization of memory as a distinct representation (mémoire-souvenir) in contrast to memory as a habit (mémoire-habitude). “It is the privilege of representation-memory to allow us ‘in the search for a particular image to remount the slope of our past’ - - man alone is capable of such an effort,” Ricoeur writes in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. Ricoeur 2000b, 30-32, 50, 61-66. (24-26, 41-42, 50-55).
523 Ricoeur 2000b, 66. (55).
524 Ricoeur 2004b, 186. (126).
525 Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (349).
526 Ricoeur 2004b, 186. (126); Ricoeur 2000b, 563. (435).
of an absent thing. Re-cognition, *re-connaissance*, in the sense of re-discovering occupies Ricoeur’s thoughts, and not the “simple evocation” of a memory-image. *Ανάµνησις* refers to *μνήµη*, however, to the basic, simple memory-imprint. In other words, Ricoeur pairs the “survival from the past” and the effort to recall with recognizing images. Bergson’s theory, which emphasizes both the effort and particular “images” in recollection, has therefore been useful indeed for Ricoeur. This pairing of memory that repeats and imagines is self-confessedly “projected into the center” of Ricoeur’s last work.

Let me make here another pause for reflection. To counter possible objections for giving too much weight on the idea of recognition as rediscovery, it is necessary to point out that recognition/rediscovery is a frequently recurring theme in Ricoeur’s work. Time as “lost-rediscovered” (*perdu-retrouvé*) and “crowned with a recognition” (*couronné par une reconnaissance*) – all this “in life,” in the living presence of being – is precisely how Ricoeur reads Marcel Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* in his own *Time and Narrative II*. “The small miracle of recognition,” writes Ricoeur also in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, “is to coat with presence the otherness of that which is over and gone. Here, memory is re-presentation, in

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527 Ricoeur 2004b, 167-170. (111-113); Ricoeur 2000b, 8-25. (7-21).
528 Ricoeur 2000b, 22. (17-18).
529 Ricoeur 2004b, 182-183. (123).
531 Ricoeur 1984, 217-223. (147-151). – In terms of understanding time, it should be noted that in *Time and Narrative II* Ricoeur contrasts Proust’s *Remembrance of Things Past* to Bergson’s philosophy of duration. “Remembrance,” Ricoeur comments, “is far from a Bergsonian vision of a duration free of all extension; instead it confirms the *dimensional* character of time. The itinerary of *Remembrance* moves from the idea of a distance that separates to that of a [metaphorical!] distance that joins together.” (Ricoeur 1984, 224. (151)). In both cases, however, the tension is construed between “the two foci of the ellipse,” that is, between the past (that which is ‘lost’) and the present (the moment and the way by which rediscovery takes place). This is affirmed by Ricoeur himself in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, when he writes about the transition from “corporeal memory” to the “memory of places and things”: “The moment of awakening, so magnificently described by Proust at the beginning of *Remembrance of Things Past*, is especially favorable for returning things and beings to the place assigned to them in space and time the previous evening. The moment of recollection (*rappel*) is then the moment of recognition (*reconnaissance*).” Ricoeur 2000b, 49. (40-41).
the twofold sense of *re-*: turning back and anew.” While taking place in the present, the phenomenon of recognition “throws us back” (*renvoyer*) to the “enigma of memory as presence of the absent encountered previously.” The “profound truth of Greek *ανάµνησις*,” Ricoeur argues further, is that “seeking is hoping to find.” Literally, then, in rediscovery we are finding again (*retrouver*), perhaps even “recharging” ourselves again as Ricoeur writes in *The Symbolism of Evil*, while re-cognizing ourselves as living subjects with a past and a probable future.

I should also mention that I am not completely alone in reading *Course of Recognition* from the viewpoint of remembering. Jean-Luc Amalric, for example, argues that Ricoeur’s later anthropology – that of *Oneself as Another* and *Course of Recognition* – represents a new phase of Ricoeur’s philosophical reflection, “a constructive phase of the regrouping (remembrement) of the philosophy of self.” Following Amalric’s lead I maintain that if our “first task” is to remember, it is in re-membering that we are able to recollect ourselves as being related to being. To repeat, the first task for a living subject is to re-member. As Amalric states, the “reflective reappropriation of our effort to exist” is placed at the center of Ricoeur’s anthropological enterprise.

The re-membering that I propose, however, has another, equally important sense that perhaps goes beyond Amalric’s suggestion; this another sense is in line with the cultural approach, implying communality, that I have adopted. *Memory, History, Forgetting –*

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533 Ricoeur 2000b, 47. (39).
534 Ricoeur 2000b, 563. (435).
535 Ricoeur 2004b, 186. (126).
536 Ricoeur 1960b, 325. (349).
537 Amalric 2011, 17. – It has already been mentioned above that this tendency is by no means limited to Ricoeur’s “later” anthropology.
538 Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348-349).
539 Amalric 2011, 17.
published after *Oneself as Another* and before *Course of Recognition* – fits into Amalric’s description when extending “the idea of appropriation [that is: ascription, attribution] from the theory of action to a theory of memory.”

Self-designation, an action itself, by personal pronouns and other similarly functioning expressions of ordinary language is connected to our capacity to remember. *Memory, History, Forgetting* repeats this conviction by arguing that ordinary language with its possessive forms “such as ‘my,’ ‘mine,’ and all the rest […] offers valuable assistance here with the notion of ascribing psychical operations to someone.”

Psychical operations, for example remembrance, are also acts that are attributable to a subject. In particular, Ricoeur argues that “asserting the possession of memories as one’s own constitutes in linguistic practice a model of mineness for all psychical phenomena.” The act of self-designation, therefore, is linked to the capacity to remember through linguistic mediation – the notion of my self is gathered in the midst of language that clarifies my relation to my acts by ascribing those very acts to me as their agent. Our “first task” is then, again, “not to begin but, from the midst of speech, to remember; to remember with a view to beginning” as Ricoeur states in *The Symbolism of Evil*. To repeat again, our task as self-searching human subjects is therefore truly to remember what was “learned.” I maintain that this all necessitates a public, or socio-cultural, understanding of re-membering.

Jean-Luc Amalric leaves between the lines that the step from appropriation to reappropriation is taken through the public sphere of ordinary language in all its fullness. This step – that I emphasize – from private to public, from solitude to being-with, is perhaps surprising but not unprecedented. Referring to Peter Strawson and Edmund Husserl,
Ricoeur argues in *Memory, History, Forgetting* that first of all “it is this capacity to designate oneself as the possessor of one’s own memories that leads to attributing to others the same mnemonic phenomena as to oneself, whether by the path of *Paarung*, of *Einfühlung*, of other-ascription, or something else.”\(^546\) Put differently, the phenomenology of remembering opens itself towards the social. A suggestion that presents itself here lets us in a way “see afresh,” as called for by the “first task” of remembrance: remembering is not restricted to an individual but includes the public, social sphere as well. In the wake of Aristotle’s double definition of human being as both *ζώον λόγον ἔχων* and *ζώον πολιτικόν* – both speaking and communal animal\(^547\) – I see no reason why this reappropriation of the public discourse should not also be called re-membering, that is, reconnecting with the fellow members of human society by linguistic mediation.

To clarify what I mean by re-membering as socio-cultural reconnecting – the idea that fundamentally I am a member of a culture that speaks – I follow Ricoeur’s argumentation a bit further. In their “declarative phase,” Ricoeur argues, memories themselves enter “into the region of language”: as pronounced they are “already a kind of discourse.”\(^548\) Ricoeur’s plea, or his other wager, not only places us again at “the origin of our speaking being,” but reinforces how we reappropriate reflectively our effort to exist.\(^549\) Ricoeur argues already in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* that “to think is to speak to myself, to will is to command myself.”\(^550\) Later in *Time and Narrative* he maintains that ordinary language is the treasury of expressions of authentic human experience.\(^551\) His voice in *Memory, History, Forgetting* is then loud and clear: “What is pronounced in this discourse


\(^{547}\) Aristotle 1984, 1253a.8-18. (*Politics*).

\(^{548}\) Ricoeur 2000b, 158. (129).


\(^{550}\) Ricoeur 1949, 47. (47).

\(^{551}\) Ricoeur 1983, 98. (62).
occurs in the common language, most often in the mother tongue, which, it must be said, is the language of others.\footnote{Ricoeur 2000b, 158. (129).} The \textit{language of others}, I emphasize, hovers all over remembering, because it is the treasury of mediated human experience.

Language is indisputably cultural, it is common and social. Even my proper name, that which seems most unique and proper to me, opens me to this cultural sphere – my proper name is a mediation that is given to me by someone else, other than myself. “This word of the other, placed upon an entire life,” Ricoeur argues, “confers a linguistic support, a decidedly self-referential turn, to all the operations of personal appropriation gravitating around the mnemonic nucleus.”\footnote{Ricoeur 2000b, 159. (129).} In other words, remembering requires cultural-linguistic support that ultimately refers to others. Perhaps not the memories themselves then, but my capacity to remember has been given to me by others as a cultural collective, especially in the consideration of Ricoeur’s explications that emphasize others and the language to which I am born – which precedes my existence.

To solidify my case that has already brought us close to affirming Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture, let me remind us that the argument from memory to the language of others leads Ricoeur to the notion of “the ones close by” (\textit{les proches}). For the purposes of this text, I have called this a movement from forgetfulness to re-membering. The “phenomenology of the capable human being” is not understandable without this detour into the social and historical other of linguistic conditions. Simplifying just enough for the benefit of crystallizing the line of Ricoeur’s thought, I maintain that self-recognition opens itself to – and conversely is opened by – what Ricoeur calls the “multiple orders of

\footnote{Ricoeur 2000b, 158. (129).} \footnote{Ricoeur 2000b, 159. (129).}
belonging or respective orders of standing.”554 In brief, memories of a situation occur within a situation: “it is always in historically limited cultural forms that the capacity to remember can be apprehended.”555 Ricoeur maintains that this is a “legitimate supposition.”556 In conclusion, there is no capacity to remember without a socio-cultural-linguistic situation with a self-affirmed historical trajectory.

Remembering – that is, rediscovering our cultural situatedness – becomes then re-membering by which self-attestation is made possible. There is more to this idea, however, since “the ones close by” are those to whom I have already related at birth and before I was given my name, and also those to whom I will relate after my death in their memories of me – and who, between birth and death, acknowledge my being in the mode of being-with.557 Ricoeur argues in Memory, History, Forgetting very clearly that the “I can” rests on this mutual recognition of a person’s capabilities in the relations with those “close by”:

My close ones are those who approve of my existence and whose existence I approve of in the reciprocity and equality of esteem. This mutual approbation expresses the shared assertion that each one makes regarding his or her powers and lack of powers, what I termed attestation in Oneself as Another. What I expect from my close ones is that they approve of what I attest: that I am able to speak, act, recount, impute to myself the responsibility of my actions.558

In connection with the idea of necessary sociality, recognition is in recollection set on the path of mutuality as contextuality. This is why Course of Recognition pairs remembering and promising, which “need to be considered together within the living present of self-recognition” because of their many common features,559 only to find out that “the relation to
the other is so strong in the case of promises that this feature can serve to mark the transition between the present chapter and the one that will follow, on mutual recognition. To make a note about the path of our analysis, I will certainly to some extent follow the same transition, but emphasizing Ricoeur’s conviction that the act of promising presupposes mutuality, and that the same mutuality holds for remembering as well. It also has a “strong” relation to “the other.”

The case of promising highlights the underlying reference to the other in remembering. More evidently than in remembering, however, promising is linguistic and includes a presumption of ethical conduct. This makes promising-acts, the prime examples of speech-acts, more manifestly akin to social practices that rest on symbolic mediations – which, for their part, “contribute to the instituting of the social bond” by the exercise of “representations which human beings make of themselves and their place in society.” As Ricoeur points out, promises then are also on the way to social justice, rights, and liberty, which are less evidently inherent in the case of remembering. This move towards mutuality, however, marks a decisive shift in Ricoeur’s argument from the level of individuality to that of cultural collectivity: the path of recognition leads us from forgetfulness to the threshold of re-membering. For us, this is the moment of “letting appear” Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics. Put differently, the question of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture cannot be avoided anymore.

560 Ricoeur 2004b, 188. (127-128).
564 Ricoeur 2004b, 217-218. (148). – The fact that the theme of collective memory has an invaluable place in Memory, History, Forgetting, leads me to point out that I have briefly discussed the notion of collective memory in an earlier publication (Helenius 2012b, 327-335.) I recommend, however, that the reader should become acquainted with the texts by Jeffrey Andrew Barash, who has published extensively of the issue. Cf. Barash 2010; Barash 2012.
7. THE COURSE OF CULTURAL FORMATION

As we have seen in the preceding chapter of this dissertation, Ricoeur understands recognition as re-membering in the sense of re-collecting contextualized mutuality. This crucial shift toward a hermeneutic of culture, which is the main aim of this dissertation, is made explicit with Ricoeur’s rhetorical question in Memory, History, Forgetting. In it Ricoeur calls for a fresh start by insisting on focusing on a community rather than on an individual. “There is a moment when one has to move from I to we,” he writes, “but is this moment not original, in the manner of a new beginning?” Ricoeur indicates that the foundation for the possibility of recognition is the shared condition and the context of meaning, that is, culture.

The shift to the fundamental shared level of meaning is, however, a difficult one for Ricoeur. Puzzled by the aporia of first person constitution in the case of individual consciousness and communalization in that of collective consciousness, Ricoeur resorts in Memory, History, Forgetting to ordinary language “to identify the linguistic region where the two discourses [of individual and communal] may be made to intersect.” The ordinary language in its fullness – the language of “others” and of the “ones close by” – is once again at the epicenter of Ricoeur’s thoughts. Collective consciousness, Ricoeur argues, “can result only from a process of objectification on the level of intersubjective exchanges.” Language both objectifies and gathers together by explaining and retaining common memories that ground “holidays, rites, and public celebrations” which Ricoeur uses as examples of instances when written history anchors the collective existence. In sum, Ricoeur maintains

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566 Ricoeur 2000b, 152. (124).
568 Ricoeur 2000b, 145. (119).
569 Ricoeur 2000b, 145-146. (119-120).
that a collective memory is a part of my meaning-giving context as a collection of traces of common experiences. In the final analysis, this context is nothing but one’s culture.

This path from individual memory to collective memory opens for Ricoeur anew a whole set of questions: those of history and of historiography. Traversing the epistemology of history and the critical philosophy of history, Ricoeur reaches the ontological hermeneutics of our historical condition. Although Ricoeur intends to discuss with Martin Heidegger the structure of within-time-ness, Innerzeitigkeit, he cannot do this without a reference to historicity, Geschichtlichkeit. “It is around the theme of Geschichtlichkeit that the debate between ontology and historiography tightens.” In other words, historicity means critically conceived situatedness in human history.

It comes as no surprise that philosophical descriptions of historical situatedness vary. The notion of historicity leads Ricoeur also to consider Hegel’s contribution to the philosophy of history, since “Heidegger’s use of the term is inscribed within a semantic history inaugurated by Hegel.” Hegel’s introduction to the Philosophy of History, “Reason in History,” crowns the “conceptual epic” of equating history and reason, Ricoeur writes. “It is under the aegis of the dialectic of the objective Spirit that the pact between the rational and the real is sealed, the pact that is said to be an expression of the highest idea of philosophy.” The idea of the objectifying dialectics of historical reason, which is only found in a philosophical analysis concerning being, is unmissable. As many of his critics and Ricoeur himself maintain, for us, “after Hegel,” the notion of historicity – to which we were lead quickly after having made the shift “from I to we” – requires that we

570 Ricoeur 2000b, 163. (132).
573 Ricoeur 2000b, 394. (300).
take into account Hegel's *History of Philosophy* as well as his broader work.\textsuperscript{574} This discussion that examines Ricoeur's relation to Hegel will show us the implicit cultural hermeneutics on which Ricoeur bases the whole 2004 work on recognition. Put differently, this chapter – even though not yet fully explaining it – finalizes the “letting appear” of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of culture.

Let me again begin with some problematizations, however. Even if I have been critical of some aspects of Gonçalo Marcelo’s analysis of *Course of Recognition*, I acknowledge that he is correct in pointing out that Ricoeur situates himself also within a trail of thought “after Hegel.”\textsuperscript{575} The emphasis on “after” comes from explaining – as Ricoeur does himself in *Time and Narrative III* – that he does not think against Hegel, nor like Hegel. Ricoeur’s own philosophical course is carried out in the wake of Hegel’s philosophy, that is, after him.\textsuperscript{576} The important question for us as Ricoeur’s readers is, whether Ricoeur’s philosophizing “after Hegel” also means philosophizing in the wake of Hegel’s philosophy of cultural formation.

At the first sight, Ricoeur’s philosophy as “after Hegel” seems only to have a critical meaning. Despite maintaining a post-Hegelian attitude, Ricoeur’s hermeneutics is irrevocably influenced by Kant’s critical philosophy. Consequently, for Ricoeur interpretation is a function of finitude rather than that of totality. Ricoeur’s admission, that “the finitude of the philosophical act that makes up the self-understanding of the historical consciousness,” proves a Kantian as well as a Hegelian influence.\textsuperscript{577} Even in philosophy, there are no methods capable of total, absolutizing mediation. Hegel’s absolute history, the

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\textsuperscript{574} Ricoeur 2000b, 482-491. (370-376).
\textsuperscript{575} Marcelo 2011, 114.
\textsuperscript{576} Ricoeur 1985, 298. (206).
\textsuperscript{577} Ricoeur 1985, 298. (206). Ricoeur, quite obviously, also refers to Gadamer’s *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*. Cf. Ricoeur 2000b, 388. n1. (569. n2); Ricoeur 1985, 300-346. (207-240).
realization of freedom as the supreme narrative, is therefore an impossible totalization.\(^{578}\) In this sense, “after Hegel” means for Ricoeur an “exodus from Hegelianism,” leaving Hegel behind, “quitting Hegelianism.”\(^{579}\) While admitting that the notion of mediation is important for his own philosophical enquiry, Ricoeur announces in *Time and Narrative* his deep mistrust in Hegel’s totalizing philosophy of history.

Ricoeur maintains, nevertheless, that he is still drawn to Hegel’s philosophy, arguing that he philosophizes “in that post-Hegelian Kantian style I favor.”\(^{580}\) Actually, before renouncing Hegel in *Time and Narrative III*, Ricoeur even confesses that he is tempted by Hegel’s philosophy of history, that he has been “seduced by the power of Hegel’s thought.”\(^{581}\) The self-actualization of the Spirit advocates, in its “hard and obstinate struggle with itself,” a unitary historical consciousness – in the face of which human time becomes a singular collective unity. “History of the world,” as Ricoeur summarizes Hegel’s position, “is in essence ‘the expression (die Auslegung) of the Spirit in time.’”\(^{582}\) In the view of this totalization, the reciprocal “interweaving of history and fiction in the refiguration of time” that is proposed in *Time and Narrative* would be rendered unproblematic, and is therefore tempting as a philosophical idea.\(^{583}\)

Despite the appeal, Ricoeur does not fully answer the call of Hegel’s philosophy. Ricoeur’s insistence on maintaining an “open-ended, incomplete, imperfect mediation” as well as his early expressed fondness of “Kantian sobriety”\(^{584}\) leads Ricoeur to

\(^{579}\) Ricoeur 1985, 298, 300. (206, 207).
\(^{582}\) Ricoeur 1985, 290. (200).
\(^{583}\) Ricoeur 1985, 279. (192).
\(^{584}\) Ricoeur criticizes both Kant and Hegel but places himself “after” them, however. In his texts the emphasis is, occasionally, closer to either one, depending on the argument. The 1955 essay “Retour à Hegel”
abandon Hegel, to “leave him behind.” In this sense I am empathetic when David Rasmussen writes that “Ricoeur was always somewhat uncomfortable” with the Hegelian tradition. It appears, however, that Ricoeur renounces la tentation hégélienne far too hastily; perhaps just to deny its seducing power and its irresistible call. Jean Greisch, for example, cannot but comment that “despite everything that separates Ricoeur and Hegel, the two thinkers share the conviction that ‘the way of the spirit is primarily mediation, it is detour.’” Insofar as Ricoeur’s own philosophy – a philosophy of “the long route” to Dasein – is concerned, his recurring comments on Hegel are perhaps necessary detours themselves.

7.1 The Course of Recognition and Anerkennung

Let us move next into discussing Ricoeur’s ambivalent relation to Hegel. Despite the fact that Ricoeur “renounced” Hegel in Time and Narrative III, my claim is that the “Hegelian temptation” remained intact for him. Some twenty years later the whole third study of Course of Recognition, which focuses on mutual recognition, grounds itself in Hegel’s concept of reciprocal recognition, Anerkennung. Jean Greisch even suggests that “the translation that provides a rhetoric image of this dynamic undecidedness: “Je me demande, ici, si la sobriété kantienne n’est pas plus vraie que l’ébriété hégélienne.” Ricoeur 1992, 178.

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585 Ricoeur 1985, 300. (207).
586 Rasmussen 2010, 192.
588 Greisch 2010, 91.
589 Ricoeur 1969, 10. (6).
590 Ricoeur 2004b, 223. (150). – The question of the importance of Hegel’s thought is also decisive in terms of distinguishing Ricoeur’s philosophy from some other proponents of hermeneutics, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer. David Vessel’s essay “Paul Ricoeur’s and Hans-Georg Gadamer’s Diverging Reflections on Recognition,” for example, points out that in spite of its relevance in Truth and Method, the concept of Anerkennung was not decisive for Gadamer, but that he “abandoned” the term instead. According to Vessel, Gadamer thus lacks an account of mutuality based on recognition; Gadamer’s focus is on the Aristotelian philia as the exalted form of miteinandersein instead. From Ricoeur’s point of view, this amounts to “the recognition of superiority” instead of the culturally facilitated and yet agapaeic mutual recognition. Cf. Vessel 2011.
would best do justice to the work of thought to which Ricoeur invites his readers would be *Unterwegs zum Anerkennen.* \(^{591}\) Well before Greisch, however, Morny Joy had already argued that Ricoeur theorizes recognition “within a specific Hegelian context.” \(^{592}\) Naturally, the possibility of Ricoeur’s Hegelianism leads us to proceed cautiously, since we also need to find out to what extent Ricoeur gives in to the Hegelian temptation regarding *Anerkennung* or *reconnaissance.*

We need to take into account two major restrictions when we begin the analysis of Ricoeur and *Anerkennung.* First of all, in the context of *Course of Recognition,* Ricoeur’s reading of Hegel is placed between the “Hobbesian challenge” to the notion of recognition as the violent state of nature – by which the theme of searching for peace under the sign of fear-motivated calculation and contract becomes apparent\(^{593}\) – and Axel Honneth’s “systematic renewal” of Hegel’s argument on the struggle for recognition in terms of love, personal rights and social esteem. \(^{594}\) Ricoeur maintains that Hegel’s *Anerkennung* constitutes both a historical and conceptual link between these two thematics of recognition. \(^{595}\)

Second, Ricoeur does not focus on *The Phenomenology of Spirit,* even though that would be expected on the basis of the well-known master-slave dialectics Alexandre Kojève emphasizes as a basic analysis of the process of recognition, and on the basis of Ricoeur’s familiarity with the *Phenomenology* itself. \(^{596}\) In all the “surprises” Arto Laitinen draws out of

\(^{591}\) Greisch 2010, 90.
\(^{593}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 246-247. (167).
\(^{596}\) Ricoeur 2006, 175-180.
Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition*, he is correct in pointing out that Ricoeur hardly mentions Hegel’s *Phenomenology*. For Laitinen, this lack is philosophically striking: “Ricoeur does not discuss the most famous passages on recognition in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but focuses solely on Hegel’s earlier texts.” Our analysis needs to explore, therefore, why Ricoeur avoids taking up the theme of recognition in the context of the *Phenomenology*, even though the analysis – especially in its Kojèveian sense – is well-known for him, as we will see later in this chapter. Since the first restriction of placing Ricoeur’s reading of Hegel between Hobbes and Honneth merely concerns the flow and genealogical tone of Ricoeur’s overall argument, I open my own examination from the second, Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel’s major works.

According to Ricoeur, the three functions of *Anerkennung* – Hegel’s concept of recognition – are found in its entire conceptual development. Ricoeur argues that the concept of *Anerkennung* 1) guarantees a “duplication of subjectivity” by establishing a relation between self-reflection and intersubjectivity, 2) maintains a dynamism that is found in a process from the negativity of disdain to the positivity of reciprocity, and 3) makes possible a systematization of the theory of recognition in the articulation of the concept’s hierarchical instantiations in largely socio-political institutions. The concept’s formative maturation from reciprocity to more specific hierarchizations in form of ethical life witnesses, in fact, its proper meaning.

Ricoeur’s admission, that the conceptual development of *Anerkennung* is significant, would lead us to mainly consider Hegel’s philosophy from the *Phenomenology of*
Spirit (1807) to the Philosophy of Right (1820/21). Ricoeur argues himself that the Phenomenology “closes the period at Jena with a bang,” after which there opens a process of the diversification of institutionalization up to the Philosophy of Right. Despite these “successive elaborations of Anerkennung,” Ricoeur insists that he needs to resort to the texts of Hegel’s Jena period in order to maintain a “hope of seeing resources of meaning disclosed that were not exhausted in Hegel’s later, more accomplished books, up to and including Principles of the Philosophy of Right.” Without directly mentioning Axel Honneth’s possible influence to his decision, Ricoeur, once again, bets on a “wager,” that is, he leaves the shift of his argument philosophically unjustified. Despite having acknowledged the importance of the whole conceptual development of the concept, Ricoeur turns to argue that an incipient stage of Hegel’s Anerkennung is, allegedly, more fruitful.

Ricoeur’s position is doubtful at best. Leaving aside, for example, his 1974 essay “Hegel aujourd’hui” that demonstrates good overall comprehension of Hegel’s philosophy, Ricoeur tries to convince his reader at the outset of Course of Recognition that he is not a Hegel specialist. Instead of acknowledging his own merits, Ricoeur merely announces that he follows the path of Hegel-scholarship set by both Jacques Taminiaux and Axel Honneth. While claiming that he tries to avoid Alexander Kojève’s influential Hegel interpretation – that places the master-slave dialectics of recognition and therefore also the

601 Ricoeur 2004b, 254. (172). – Interestingly, however, Ricoeur implies in his Lectures on Ideology and Utopia that in spite of certain differences in emphasis, some key themes of Hegel’s 1805-06 Jena lectures - such as Anerkennung and Sittlichkeit - are later developed, for example, in the Phenomenology. Ricoeur 1986b, 227-228.

602 Ricoeur 2004b, 256-257. (173-174).


604 Ricoeur 2004b, 253, 256. (171, 173-174).

605 Ricoeur 2006. – The 1974 essay was republished in a special Ricoeur edition of Esprit (2006: mars-avril). Ricoeur maintains in the essay that despite of his critical assessment of Hegel’s absolute Spiritualism, he is also fascinated by Hegel’s philosophy. In addition, Ricoeur characterizes himself as “un historien de Hegel.”

Phenomenology at the epicenter of Hegel’s thought⁶⁰⁷ – Ricoeur explains, in a manner resembling to Honneth’s terminology, that there is a connection between the Jena-Hegel’s “intellectual situation” and that of our own.⁶⁰⁸ In brief, Ricoeur argues rather vaguely that Hegel’s position during his years in Jena “can be characterized by the major heritages that are honored and that are still in many ways ours today.”⁶⁰⁹ Ricoeur wishes, in other words, to sketch a matrix of philosophies that would be somewhat shared between Hegel of Jena and present-day philosophers.⁶¹⁰ This broad outline, however, does not explain the reasons why Ricoeur feels it justified to set aside, for example, the Phenomenology and the Philosophy of Right.

Rushing directly to Hegel’s System of Ethical Life (System der Sittlichkeit, 1802/03) and “Realphilosophie II” (Jenenser Philosophie des Geistes, 1805/06), much like Axel Honneth in his own reading of Hegel,⁶¹¹ Ricoeur moves on to discuss Hegel’s theory of reciprocal recognition in these early texts. The seed of the struggle for recognition, Ricoeur claims, is found in the System of Ethical Life in the form of a natural drive to return to the Absolute – by the detour of work and the consequent exchange of goods – and subsequently to the formal recognition of the person as a free being in the real relations of domination and servitude.⁶¹²

The drive-guided realization of natural human potentialities, culminating in the child of a


⁶⁰⁸ Honneth connects Mead’s thought to his examination in The Struggle for Recognition by stating that “One of the theories that forms a bridge between Hegel’s original insight and our intellectual situation can be found in the social psychology of George Herbert Mead.” Honneth 1995, 70.

⁶⁰⁹ Ricoeur 2004b, 257. (174).

⁶¹⁰ Ricoeur 2004b, 257-258. (174-175). – Ricoeur alludes to Kant’s idea of individual autonomy, to the confrontation of the political philosophies of Machiavelli and Hobbes - from which Ricoeur draws the idea of the struggle for reciprocal recognition - and also to the Greek preference of πόλις over an individual as well as Fichte’s influence on Hegel. He leaves out, however, Hegel’s 1801 and 1802/03 texts on Schelling and Jacobi, which, again, is quite surprising.

⁶¹¹ Honneth’s explication and renewal of the “struggle of recognition” begins by analyzing Hegel’s System of Ethical Life (Honneth 1995, 16, 18-30.) and Realphilosophie II (Honneth 1995, 31-63.).

⁶¹² Ricoeur 2004b, 259-260. (176-177).
family, bring about the threshold of the absolute ethical life of “the people” (Volk) and its governance by the system of justice, through which reciprocal recognition takes place. Mutual trust has then the final say over servitude.\textsuperscript{613} Still, Ricoeur insists that Hegel’s model in \textit{System of Ethical Life} is speculative rather than concrete and it therefore differs from Ricoeur’s own problem of recognition.\textsuperscript{614}

Hegel’s \textit{Realphilosophie II}, in contrast, leads Ricoeur to focus on the idea of the self-recognition of the Spirit (\textit{der Geist}) in its reality. “It will therefore be a matter of the coming – or rather the return – of the Spirit to itself,” Ricoeur summarizes, “under the heading of the major distinction between Ideality and Reality.”\textsuperscript{615} The realization of the Spirit in its “outward” expressions and the Spirit’s subsequent return to itself through this detour through the “other” are now again in Ricoeur’s abstract conceptual palette. Hegel maintains in \textit{Realphilosophie II} that recognized being (\textit{anerkanntes Seyn}) is enabled not only by the Spirit’s concept of itself (\textit{Begriff}),\textsuperscript{616} but precisely by its self-objectification in labor (\textit{Arbeit}),\textsuperscript{617} since works individualize the Spirit in a “self-propelling formation or education” (\textit{ein sichbewegende Bilden}), and also results in exchange by which this individual then becomes recognized: “All that I have, I have through work and exchange, that is, in being recognized,” Hegel argues.\textsuperscript{618} In brief, the movement of externalization in reality is complemented by the Spirit’s corresponding re-internalization.

\textsuperscript{613} Ricoeur 2004b, 261-263. (177-179).
\textsuperscript{614} Ricoeur 2004b, 263-264. (179).
\textsuperscript{615} Ricoeur 2004b, 264. (180).
\textsuperscript{616} The relations between the Spirit and its object (\textit{Gegenstand}), Being and concept (\textit{Begriff}), are stated in the first sentence of \textit{Realphilosophie II} by which Hegel opens his analysis of the Spirit “according to its concept.” Hegel connects later in the section “Subjective Spirit” the notion of concept to cognition as self-objectification: “Cognition (\textit{Erkennen}) means to know the objective in its objectivity as [one’s] Self (\textit{das Gegenständliche in seiner Gegenständlichkeit als Selbst}): [that is, the] conceptualized content [of the self] (\textit{begriffner Inhalt}), the concept (\textit{Begriff}), is the object (\textit{Gegenstand}) of the self.” Hegel 1969, 179, 201.
\textsuperscript{617} Hegel 1969, 197. – Hegel argues that work is self-objectification (\textit{sich-zum-Gegenstande-machen}) in reality because it is “one’s making oneself into a thing (\textit{sich-zum-Dinge-machen}).” Work is therefore also mediation, \textit{Vermittlung}, by which the Spirit reflects its contents.
\textsuperscript{618} Hegel 1969, 213, 217.
I emphasize that in *Course of Recognition* Ricoeur acknowledges Hegel’s passive-active sense of being recognized through re-internalized externalization. Ricoeur maintains that Hegel’s model of recognition requires the “long detour” of “the course (parcours) of moments of the realization of the Spirit and the description of the return of the Spirit to itself in its ipseity.” First of all, then, Ricoeur indicates that his understanding follows Hegel’s dialectical model of recognition. The significance of Ricoeur’s allusion to the Spirit’s “ipseity,” which reconnects with Ricoeur’s own work, is not immediately evident, however. The *ipse*-self – which Ricoeur defines in *Oneself as Another* as the narratively formed selfhood in contrast to an *idem*-identity, that is, the mere permanence of self-identity as “same” – is according to Ricoeur only formed in the dialectics between the self and its other. Otherness, Ricoeur argues in *Oneself as Another*, is constitutive to selfhood: “the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought without the other, that instead one passes into the other, as we might say in Hegelian terms.” Ricoeur, therefore, also stresses the detour through the other, and he echoes this conviction in *Course of Recognition*. In brief, the subject’s self-recognition is dependent on being recognized in reality by the other-than-the-self.

*Course of Recognition* points out that during the Spirit’s threefold passage of formation from universalization to actualization – that is, to alienating externalization (*Entäußerung*) – and furthermore to subsequent re-internalization (*Erinnerung*), the tone of Hegel’s vocabulary in *Realphilosophie II* changes from recognition to reconciliation. First, at the level of universalization, where the Spirit stands against its concept (*Begriff*), the totality of ethical life in general (*Sittlichkeit überhaupt*) is formed by the idea of right at the loving state of

619 Ricoeur 2004b, 265. (180).
620 Ricoeur 1990, 2-4. (2-3)
621 Ricoeur 1990, 14. (3).
being recognized, where the universal and individual coincide.\textsuperscript{622} Second, in actualization, the universal state of “being-recognized,” \textit{Anerkanntsein} as abstraction, is surpassed by the Spirit at the level of universal Self in terms of the contract (which presupposes language, work, and exchange), and furthermore as the self-certain Spirit in the constitution of the State which objectifies the Spirit in the various ways of governing (\textit{Regierung}) the absolute individuality of a people (\textit{des Volks}).\textsuperscript{623} Finally, in re-internalization, the Spirit is “freedom fulfilled” ultimately as the absolutely free Spirit that already as self-certain further creates its own content in art, religion, and philosophy, which as the Spirit’s work are means of alienating self-objectification but also mediations of the Spirit’s most proper essence. As such they lead the Spirit to its full self-knowing in re-internalizing reflection. In sum, freedom is gradually achieved in the Spirit’s cultural formation (\textit{Bildung}).\textsuperscript{624}

While taking this mediated course of self-realization through work, the Spirit figures itself and so also finds itself. “The absolutely free Spirit, which has taken back into itself its determinations,” Ricoeur summarizes the last section of the \textit{Realphilosophie II}, “will henceforth produce a new world, a world that has the \textit{figure} [\textit{Gestalt}] of itself, where its work lies within itself, and where it accedes to intuition of the \textit{self} as itself.”\textsuperscript{625} Inasmuch as being-recognized is the Spirit’s own movement and natural to it, this self-recognition takes place in the cultural detour which for the Spirit is its “other.” In Hegel’s words, in this other – “in the form of something existent” – the Spirit becomes “its own calming (\textit{ruhendes}) work of art, the existing universe, and world history.”\textsuperscript{626} The externalizing-reinternalizing movement of


\textsuperscript{623} Ricoeur 2004b, 268-271. (183-185). Cf. Hegel 1969, 182-183, 213-263. – For Hegel, speech (\textit{Sprache}) posits as \textit{being} (\textit{seyendes}) that which is internal to the Spirit, and speech is therefore the true being of the Spirit as the Spirit in general (\textit{Geist überhaupt}).


\textsuperscript{626} Hegel 1969, 273.
the Spirit, or remembering, is fixed in its objectifying concept, it is laid to rest in a “reobtained immediacy” (wiederhergestellte Unmittelbarkeit). The Spirit both determines and understands itself when finding itself in its figure.

Recognition, the Spirit’s articulated knowing of itself as its unity, is at all its levels dependent on the Spirit’s free creation and self-formative enunciation of itself in its concept, that is, dependent on mediation which in the final analysis is always cultural and objectifying – der sich entfremdete Geist. Still, Ricoeur argues that the Realphilosophie II with its ontotheology of “the Spirit in its Idea” is merely “a speculative source for contemporary reflections” dedicated to the theme of recognition. In other words, Ricoeur maintains that Hegel’s Realphilosophie II is speculative and not “concrete” because of the very fact that the Spirit articulates itself.

Course of Recognition thus dismisses Hegel’s philosophy as metaphysical speculation; Ricoeur maintains that Jena-Hegel’s thought is a mere “powerful speculative instrument, one that puts the resources of the negative at the service of a process of the actual realization of consciousness or of Spirit.” Thanks to this “militant, conflictual” approach which according to Ricoeur holds the negativity of struggle and contestation in a key place, Ricoeur asks rhetorically – alluding at the same time to Hegel’s terminology in the Phenomenology – whether Hegel ends up having “an infinite demand” of recognition, “a kind of ‘bad infinity’” of an unceasing search for recognition. If the Spirit needs to recognize itself in its labor and its works, when does this process reach its proper end? The Spirit’s total self-recognition appears as an “insatiable quest” which, Ricoeur argues, will only result

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627 Hegel 1969, 272.
628 Ricoeur 2004b, 265. (180-181).
629 Ricoeur 2004b, 316. (217).
630 Ricoeur 2004b, 317. (218).
in an “unhappy consciousness” – because in its movement the Spirit has doubled itself and therefore has become “estranged within itself” as Kultur as Hegel defines it in the *Phenomenology.*

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It is now clear for us that Ricoeur reads his Hegel from a precise point of view, that is, from the viewpoint of negativity. I would have to admit, however, that this approach to Hegel’s Jena texts is confusing. Rather than with Hegel’s texts of the Jena period, I propose, Ricoeur seems to have a problem with Hegel’s later works and their interpretations. While making final comments on the forms of social recognition Ricoeur refers to the *Philosophy of Right,* but he also makes a quick transfer to its corollary text – on “Objective Spirit” – in Hegel’s *Encyclopaedia:* “Our doubt has to do […] with this region of Objective Spirit and the models of recognition that arise within it.” Hegel’s later, major texts become then enmeshed with *System of Ethical Life* and *Realphilosophie II.*

Ricoeur introduces another such intertextual link when he transfers the notion of the Objective Spirit back to the context of the *Phenomenology.* Ricoeur locates the problem of the “unhappy consciousness” from the *Phenomenology* “within these limits” of “this region of Objective Spirit.” Even though Ricoeur insisted on focusing on texts from Hegel’s years in Jena, and to set aside Hegel’s “later, more accomplished books,” he is indeed

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631 Ricoeur 2004b, 318. (218).; Hegel 2008, 187. (§206, §207). – According to Hegel the unhappy consciousness (*das unglückliche Bewußtsein*) is the consciousness which has “doubled” itself because it desires and works. Just when the unhappy consciousness “thinks itself to have achieved victory and to have achieved restful unity with [its] other consciousness, each must once again be immediately expelled from the unity.” Hegel 2008, 187, 196. (§207, §218).


635 Ricoeur 2004b, 256-257. (173-174).
steering *Course of Recognition* back to both the *Phenomenology* and to *The Philosophy of Right*. Ricoeur’s language also implies that he, in fact, analyzes in *Course of Recognition* the concept of *Anerkennung* in its entire conceptual development, despite the efforts to restrict the scope of his analysis only to Hegel’s texts written in Jena.636

It would be, perhaps, too harsh a criticism to state that Ricoeur’s reading of Jena-Hegel’s texts fails, as that would imply that Ricoeur did not know what he was doing. In contrast to such claims, I maintain that Ricoeur’s emphasis of negativity, both in the sense of a “struggle” or “conflict” and as Hegel’s unhappy “speculation,” was an intentional choice for the sake of his own argument. When Hegel is portrayed as a straw man, it is easier for Ricoeur to take distance from the German philosopher of *Kultur*, with whom he shares more than he cares to openly acknowledge in the lines of *Course of Recognition*.

### 7.2 Re-cognition: A Ricoeurian *Anerkennung*

Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel’s post-Jena works is still for us an unresolved problem that must be addressed; it is this analysis that affirms the claims I have made with regard to Ricoeur’s way of reading Hegel. Ricoeur’s conceptual-historical undecidedness in applying Hegel’s term *Anerkennung* leads us to consider Alexandre Kojève’s role in the later French reception of Hegel’s ideas, particularly with regard to the dialectics of recognition. Ricoeur’s Hegel analysis, in which he highlights the aspect of negativity, or the struggle, even in its muted forms such as misrecognition, would have benefited greatly if Ricoeur had examined those few famous passages from the *Phenomenology* on which Kojève focuses his attention: §185-§188 on the struggle for recognition and §189-§196 on master-slave dialectics. Similarly, the

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636 Ricoeur 2004b, 256-257. (173-174).
politically more elaborated *Philosophy of Right* would have been an appropriate source for Ricoeur, especially in the light of its last and the most extensive part that concerns the structures of ethical life, *Sittlichkeit*.\(^{637}\) Ricoeur's own argument takes on this kind of tone particularly when analyzing the notions of just peace and “suitable action” (*l'action qui convient*).\(^{638}\) Even though Ricoeur claims to limit the examination in *Course of Recognition* to Hegel's Jena texts, the temptation of Hegel's masterpieces — the *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Right* — appears irresistible to Ricoeur.

Insofar as the notions of struggle and ethical life are concerned, let me also point out that Ricoeur could have focused on both the *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Right*. I have argued above that Ricoeur's own analysis, however, brings forth “our actual experience of what I [that is, Ricoeur] shall call states of peace.”\(^ {639}\) Instead of examining the never-ending conflict, Ricoeur wishes to “turn to truces, sunny breaks (*l'éclaircies*),” that is, to our experiences of peaceful recognition that are conceptualized by *αγάϖη* and represented symbolically by mutual gift-exchange.\(^ {640}\) This wish, however, connects to a body of material that Hegel provides for us in his above-mentioned major works.

I would like, at this point, to emphasize that the notion of loving peace becomes a challenge for Ricoeur's Hegel-interpretation. Hegel, after all, does not philosophize only the negative moment, even though Ricoeur already maintains in *History and Truth* that Hegel opened the path for philosophies that “made negation the spring of reflection, or which even identify the human reality with negativity.”\(^ {641}\) The Kojèvean approach, which places the dialectical struggle for recognition at the core of the

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\(^{639}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 318. (218).

\(^{640}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 318. (218).

\(^{641}\) Ricoeur 1967a, 336. (305).
Phenomenology, is only one possible interpretation to Hegel’s work.\textsuperscript{642} The phenomenology of the Spirit, as Hegel’s philosophico-metaphysical science, aims at the restoration of the truth of “what is,”\textsuperscript{643} but, as Hegel states in the preface, “the true exists only in what, or rather exists only as what, is at one time called intuition and at another time called either the immediate knowledge of the absolute, or religion, or being – not at the center of the divine love, but the being of divine love itself.”\textsuperscript{644} All epistemologico-metaphysical models presented in the history of philosophy ultimately speak of divine and gracious being.

Hegel argues that this truth-giving love, \textit{Liebe}, is necessarily active, since “an inactive love has no being and is for that reason surely not what one has in mind here.”\textsuperscript{645} Love, as active, has only a particular task: it aims at “removing an evil from someone and imposing some good for him.”\textsuperscript{646} Instead of objectifying, love subjectifies – it reconciles and renders meaningless the struggle for recognition in which the other is a threat to my subjectivity. In brief, love forgives, and forgiving, in turn, is “to recognize as good (\textit{als gut anerkennt}) what had been determined in thought to be bad.”\textsuperscript{647} Instead of conceiving the other as an object, the other is another subject. Even when taking into account Hegel’s distinction between sentimental and the “spiritual” love, it is, nevertheless, possible for us to maintain that this loving model of recognition in the \textit{Phenomenology} does not draw its essence from the struggle for recognition as Kojève maintains but from love as recognition that does not “see” differences but sets them aside instead.

The triad of love, forgiveness, and recognition brings us then to the Absolute Spirit, the crux of Hegel’s \textit{Phenomenology}. An extraordinarily important passage from this work

\textsuperscript{642} Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 256. (173).
\textsuperscript{643} Hegel 2008, 7. (§7).
\textsuperscript{644} Hegel 2008, 6. (§6).
\textsuperscript{645} Hegel 2008, 380. (§424).
\textsuperscript{646} Hegel 2008, 380. (§424).
\textsuperscript{647} Hegel 2008, 611. (§670).
expresses Hegel’s ultimate conviction that in a forgiving act of recognition of love (ein Anerkennen der Liebe) the opposition between the self and its other becomes insignificant: “The word of reconciliation,” Hegel writes, “is the existing spirit which immediately intuits in its opposite the pure knowledge of itself as the universal essence, intuits it in the pure knowledge of itself as singularity existing absolutely inwardly – a mutual recognition which is the absolute Spirit (ein gegenseitiges Anerkennen, welches der absolute Geist ist).”648 The Absolute Spirit is mutual recognition under the concept of loving reconciliation that turns back from objective differences to the substantially there-being of subjects who only in their “being-for-another” (Sein für Anderes) become self-standing “beings-for-themselves” (Für-sich-seins).649

It is my conviction that this loving model of recognition resembles the one proposed by Ricoeur under the sign of αγάϖη, which “knows nothing of comparison and calculation.”650 When Ricoeur insists that the “states of peace, with αγάϖη at their head, are [not only] globally opposed to states of struggle that are not summed up by the violence of vengeance […], but also and principally […] those struggles having to do with justice,”651 he could be merely echoing Hegel’s understanding that the loving word of reconciliation, das Wort der Versöhnung, opens the realm of true mutual recognition. Again, Ricoeur also maintains that “αγάϖη speaks,” that love enters into language and proclaims itself in language.652 Were it not for the fact that Ricoeur insisted in only reading Hegel’s early work, we could think that Ricoeur is simply following Hegel’s insight in his Phenomenology when arguing for loving mutuality.

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650 Ricoeur 2004b, 321. (220).
651 Ricoeur 2004b, 321. (220).
652 Ricoeur 2004b, 323-324. (222-223).
This daring suggestion of Ricoeur’s remodeling of Hegel is strengthened by Ricoeur’s brief note in *Memory, History, Forgetting*. While discussing forgiveness and forgetting in the very last section of the work, Ricoeur admits that the essence of Hegel’s work is not in the struggle. In the *Phenomenology*, for example, “forgiveness rests on a reciprocal standing down of the parties, on each side giving up its partiality.”653 To restate, Ricoeur acknowledges in *Memory, History, Forgetting* that the struggle is not the last word in Hegel’s analysis, which in the final phase culminates in mutual recognition based on forgiveness in the transition from Spirit to Religion. In sum, Hegel’s idea of forgiving love that recognizes is not unknown for Ricoeur.

In an attempt at self-critique, it might be objected that once having introduced the alternative model of “clearings” or “sunny breaks” with the notion of love, Ricoeur particularizes mutual recognition in *Course of Recognition* by reducing it to social gestures in exchanges. This section that precedes Ricoeur’s conclusions, it could be argued, captures the essence of Ricoeur’s own gift-symbol model of recognition and, therefore, the alleged affinity with Hegel’s loving model of recognition appears to be a deviant interpretation. In other words, Ricoeur moves on from the idea of love and focuses the theme of mutual recognition on gift exchanges. “From here on,” Ricoeur states as he makes way to this new analysis, “I shall compare the exchange of gifts to commercial exchange,” meaning that true mutual recognition is constituted by gifts, and mere reciprocity between social agents making transactions follows from commercial exchange.654 The same distinction Ricoeur makes between exchanging gifts and commercial exchanges, however, leads me to question this attempted self-criticism.

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653 Ricoeur 2000b, 653. n52. (606. n52).
Ricoeur’s affinity with Hegel cannot be questioned by focusing on exchanges, as the notion of gift and the idea of their exchange – even in a ceremonial setting – are also familiar to Hegel's *Phenomenology*.\(^{655}\) Hegel, in other words, does not exclude these kinds of non-commercial relations between the self and its other. I turn next, however, to the *Philosophy of Right*, which would have been another potential source for Ricoeur to advance his argument on the struggle for recognition. As it appears, the notion of gift is also well-known in the *Philosophy of Right*.

When analyzing Hegel’s *System of Ethical Life*, Ricoeur indicates that contracts – administered by the system of justice – imply an indirect recognition of individual subjects.\(^{656}\) The same indirect recognition, however, is also affirmed by the *Philosophy of Right* which defines the concept of contract (Vertrag) as “the means whereby one identical will can persist within the absolute difference between independent property owners.”\(^{657}\) A person remains as one independently of ownership, and therefore the contracting parties are to each other “immediate self-subsistent persons.”\(^{658}\) Because the contract retains and depends on individuality, contractual relationship implies recognition in the contract.

Let me press this point further. Hegel makes a connection – which Ricoeur ignores – between the indirect recognition of one’s person through contract and gift-giving in sections §76 and §80 of the *Philosophy of Right*, where he distinguishes gifts from trade-off. “Contract is *formal*,” Hegel writes, “when the double consent whereby the common will is brought into existence is apportioned between the two contracting parties so that one of them has the negative moment – the alienation of a thing – and the other the positive

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\(^{656}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 262-263. (178-179).

\(^{657}\) Hegel 1967, 58. (§74); Ricoeur 2004b, 260. (176-177).

\(^{658}\) Hegel 1967, 58. (§75).
moment – the appropriation of the thing. Such a contract is gift (Schenkungsvertrag). In contrast to this gift, which is based on contract-like exchange where one agrees to give and another agrees to receive, there is another type of contract-based exchange, which relates to property and its commercial value. According to Hegel a contract “may be called real when each of the two contracting wills is the sum of these mediating moments [that is, both the alienation and the appropriation of a thing] and therefore in such a contract becomes a property owner and remains so.” Hegel calls this second style of contract a trade-off (Tauschvertrag). In other words, if a contract includes the exchange that is reciprocal, then it is mere trade-off, but if the exchange is willingly initiated from each side individually, then this form of exchange fulfills the formal requirement of contract but must still be considered different from commercial exchange. It is therefore a gift by which the other subject is recognized; it is love at the level of exchange.

Hegel, as also Ricoeur, draws a clear line among the kinds of contractual relationships, gifts or trade-offs, in which the persons are recognized. In short, a gift-giver does not expect something in return whereas in trade-off he does. This idea parallels that of Ricoeur in Course of Recognition: “the generous practice of gift giving, at least in its ‘pure’ form,

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659 Hegel 1967, 59. (§76).
661 Hegel 1967, 59. (§76). – Knox translates the German word “Tausch” as “exchange” but trade-off is evidently much clearer as it correctly indicates a commercial-style exchange. As a more philosophical remark, let me mention that the typology of contracts which Hegel presents in §80 follows this distinction between a gift and a trade-off. Hegel stresses that this classification is not based on “external circumstances” but is derived “from distinctions lying in the very nature of contract.” Hegel then catalogues gift-style contracts as a proper gift of a thing (eigentlich Schenkung), a free loan of a thing (das Leihen als Verschenkung), and a testament-style “gift of service” (Schenkung einer Dienstleistung überhaupt), a kind of safe-keeping of a conditionally donated property. The trade-off style contracts differ from these gifts according to Hegel, because they include the notion of exchange value: it is either a simple exchange of a thing for a similar one, or purchase or sale (Kauf oder Verkauf). To these Hegel adds letting or leasing (Vermietung), and also the contract for wages (Lohnvertrag), that is, productive capability or services provided in exchange of a pay (Lohn). In contrast to gifts, all these trade-offs take their reference in commercial value. Hegel 1967, 62. (§80).
neither requires nor expects a gift in return.”¹⁶⁶² For his part Ricoeur then distinguishes the exchange of gifts from commercial exchange, as noted above, and argues that the relationship between those who exchange gifts is mutual whereas in the case of commercial exchange the relationship is reciprocal.¹⁶⁶³ I cannot stress enough that Ricoeur defines this contrast between mutuality and reciprocity “as a fundamental presupposition of my central thesis concerning the idea of symbolic mutual recognition.”¹⁶⁶⁴ In other words, Ricoeur introduces the crucial distinction between mutuality and reciprocity by using an example of gift-giving that is in opposition to trade-off (that can be understood as a reduction of love to justice). This distinction resembles very much the one proposed by Hegel.

I maintain, therefore, that the example of gift-exchange through which Ricoeur examines the notion of mutuality could have been adopted from Hegel’s Philosophy of Right rather than, through Axel Honneth, from Marcel Mauss’s work The Gift (that Julian Pefanis holds as Kojèvean).¹⁶⁶⁵ In his struggle against the Hegelian temptation, Ricoeur clearly has an urge to distance himself from Hegel with whom he feels perhaps too close an affinity. This could be why, for example, David Rasmussen pays attention to Ricoeur’s discomfort with the Hegelian tradition.¹⁶⁶⁶ If approached from an empathetic point of view, however,

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¹⁶⁶² Ricoeur 2004b, 320. (219).
¹⁶⁶³ Ricoeur 2004b, 338. (233).
¹⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 327-328. (225); Ricoeur 2000b, 622. (480). – Julian Pefanis makes an interesting remark in Heterology and the Postmodern with regard to certain interconnections between Kojève’s Hegel-interpretation and some French contemporary thinkers: “Mauss’s gift is phenomenological - notwithstanding the structuralist gloss it has received - a mediator of inter-human relationships governed by a (Hegelian) desire for recognition, negation, and mastery; the phenomenology of the gift is indeed akin to certain propositions in Hegel. Whilst there is no specific reference to Hegel in Mauss, Lyotard claims that there is a ‘condensation’ of the phenomenological Mauss and the structuralist Lacan in the concept of symbolic exchange as employed by Baudrillard, and that this condensation can be traced back to a common source, chapter 4 of Hegel’s Phenomenology of Mind. The mediator here is surely Georges Bataille in his reading of Kojève’s Hegel, even as Lacan himself condensed Hegel and Freud in his early psychoanalytic studies.” (Pefanis 1991, 30.) Let me mention, however, that in our discussions Richard Kearney has expressed his reservations to Pefanis’s claim.
¹⁶⁶⁶ Rasmussen 2010, 192.
Hegel offers a backbone even for Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of mutual recognition, showing Ricoeur’s deep debt to Hegel underneath his discomfort.

It is not always evident with which Hegel Ricoeur takes an issue – Hegel himself or perhaps Kojève’s or Honneth’s later interpretation of him. Ricoeur admits adopting a precisely negative reading: the notion of being-recognized is read “with a strong emphasis being given to the negative forms of refusal of recognition, to disrespect,” in other words, as a struggle for recognition leading to the master/slave relation. Ricoeur admits of reducing Hegel’s argument and Honneth’s later interpretation of it to the struggle which does not grant subjectivity to the other but denies it, negativizes it in objectifying it. “The following section,” Ricoeur writes when opening the Honneth-analysis, “will be a discussion centered on the very idea of struggle, coming from Hegel.” If it is the case after all that Ricoeur reads Hegel with Kojève’s struggle-oriented eyes, then his discomfort is understandable, but still not acceptable if taken to the level of internal need to renounce Hegel.

It is now important to stress that I do not equate Ricoeur’s philosophy with that of Hegel. On the contrary, I acknowledge that there are severe philosophical differences between them. The general problem for Ricoeur clearly is Hegel’s “monological approach,” that the Spirit itself is “set over against itself in differentiating itself,” that is, the Spirit objectifies itself and becomes the other to itself. In spite of his conception of dialectical formation, Hegel emphasizes the Spirit’s unity of subsistence, whereas Ricoeur stresses the unceasing and tensional plurality of relations in the sense of with-being and being-among. In

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667 Ricoeur 2004b, 316. (217).
668 Ricoeur 2004b, 276. (188).
Course of Recognition this pre-existing cultural sociality draws, therefore, Ricoeur to examine
Axel Honneth’s “systematic renewal” of Anerkennung as love, law, and the social respect;
Ricoeur shares with Honneth the dislike of the metaphysics of the Absolute.\textsuperscript{670} Even though
Honneth’s reading of Hegel is – according to Ricoeur – not totally free from the
metaphysical influence, it is at least “half-speculative, half-empirical” and therefore, Ricoeur
claims, closer to his own approach.\textsuperscript{671} Ricoeur, let me re-emphasize, is not totally Hegelian.

To make a distinction between Ricoeur and Hegel, whose similarity I have
stressed so far, let me turn now to consider briefly Axel Honneth’s stance in all this. It is,
after all, the case that Ricoeur admits being influenced by Honneth’s Hegel-renewal. In turn
being influenced by Hegel’s Jena texts and George Herbert Mead’s “postmetaphysical” social
psychology, Honneth develops in The Struggle for Recognition a threefold model of reciprocal
recognition – love, rights or justice, and solidarity or social esteem.\textsuperscript{672} This course of social
recognition, Ricoeur points out, very much resembles that of Hegel’s System of Ethical Life, a
text that Honneth analyzes before presenting his own social philosophical “renewal.”\textsuperscript{673} Still,
Ricoeur expresses his indebtedness to Honneth rather than to Hegel as he follows the same
structure in Course of Recognition.\textsuperscript{674} This structural similarity, however, can easily deceive
Ricoeur’s readers. Even though Ricoeur explicitly adopts more than a clue from Honneth to
his own critical Hegel-interpretation, his course of social recognition\textsuperscript{675} does not completely
match up with Honneth’s. While Honneth emphasizes the political aspect of “value-

\textsuperscript{670} Ricoeur 2004b, 274-275. (186). – Despite the fact that Hegel and Honneth differ from each other in
their respective relations to metaphysics - Hegel’s model is ontotheological whereas Ricoeur labels Honneth’s
model as postmetaphysical - Ricoeur acknowledges, however, that Hegel’s course of recognition in System of
Ethical Life is “similar to the one proposed by Axel Honneth.” Furthermore, Ricoeur also connects Honneth to
\textsuperscript{671} Ricoeur 2004b, 275. (187).
\textsuperscript{672} Honneth 1995, 71-130.
\textsuperscript{673} Ricoeur 2004b, 264. (180); Honneth 1995, 16-30.
\textsuperscript{674} Ricoeur 2004b, 273-275. (186-187).
\textsuperscript{675} Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 296. (203).
communities’ in the end of his triad, Ricoeur highlights the ethicality of political life, “the Hegelian concept of Sittlichkeit in its broadest sense.” Despite maintaining a similar structure, Ricoeur’s application of Hegel’s Jena texts then deviates from that of Honneth most notably when distinguishing mutuality from reciprocity (that concerns merely social relations instead of persons), and pointing out those “sunny breaks” of social recognition also.

In searching for those “clearings” of good will under the aegis of αγάϖη, I maintain, Ricoeur does not follow Honneth, but he, in a way, revitalizes Hegel in his own way by his very “broadening” of the scope of Sittlichkeit. Ricoeur also indicates this in the closing of the so-called little ethics in Oneself as Another. His conception of “critical φρόνησις” both “repeats” and “mediates” Sittlichkeit stripped of its Spiritualism. I argue that this “broadening” shows Ricoeur’s return to Hegel’s initial insight. Ricoeur even confesses his affinity to Hegel at the level of the Philosophy of Right. Despite certain metaphysical restrictions, “Hegel’s philosophical project in the Philosophy of Right remains very close to my own views,” Ricoeur admits in Oneself as Another. The focus of Ricoeur’s interest is precisely in Sittlichkeit:

We then admitted [in the seventh study of Oneself as Another] that it was only in a specific institutional milieu that the capacities and predispositions that distinguish human action can blossom; the individual, we said then, becomes

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676 Honneth 1995, 121-130.
677 Ricoeur 2004b, 294. (201). – Ricoeur, actually, acknowledges that he has “stopped at the threshold of politics in the precise sense of a theory of the state,” and excuses this shortcoming by referring to Hegel’s Philosophy of Right in which the notion of the state is related directly to the ethical Idea and also to recognition. (Ricoeur 2004b, 316-317. (217).) This does not, however, prevent, for example, Antoine Garapon from discussing Ricoeur’s philosophy of recognition from a precise political point of view, as Ricoeur incorporates the political aspect to his conception of recognition through institution. In terms of Course of Recognition, however, Garapon’s emphasis on “reconstructive justice” that is exercised “in the political sphere” appears more as an application rather than an inclusion justified by Ricoeur’s earlier works such as Oneself as Another, The Just, and Reflections on the Just. Cf. Garapon 2006, 231, 246-248.
678 Ricoeur 2004b, 318. (218).
human only under the condition of certain institutions; and we added: if this is so, the obligation to serve these institutions is itself a condition for the human agent to continue to develop. These are all reasons to feel indebted to Hegel’s work of hierarchizing the modalities of the actualization of freedom in the Philosophy of Right [that is, family, civil society, and state]. To this extent, and to this extent alone, the notion of Sittlichkeit [...] has never ceased to instruct us.\(^{681}\)

Hegel’s notion of ethical life is unquestionably in Ricoeur’s philosophical interests. Admittedly, then, Ricoeur not only criticizes Hegel but adopts a substantial body of thought from him as well.

The notion of Sittlichkeit, or ethico-political situatedness in living history, opens a path for Ricoeur to search for the agapeic “clearings” of freedom and good will. Ricoeur is well aware, however, that Hegel’s System of Ethical Life, for example, argues that mutual trust overcomes servitude, and that in ethical life – which has its absolute truth as the system of the modern constitutional State – “the individual exists in an eternal mode.”\(^{682}\) This ethico-political reality surpasses the individual in its systems of need, administration of justice, and disciplining cultivation, all of which – despite a certain “empirical oscillation” – highlight ethicality beyond mere calculative reciprocity.\(^{683}\) From this point of view Hegel appears to confirm rather than to denounce that the moral motivation, or ethicality, Ricoeur searches for in the midst of struggle is indeed real and not illusory at all.\(^{684}\)

Ricoeur’s apparent Hegelianism runs even deeper than already explicated, however. Besides System of Ethical Life and its “sunny break” of Sittlichkeit, another such “clearing” is found in the Realphilosophie II. In it recognition takes place with reference to love (Liebe) because – Ricoeur himself quotes Hegel – “the individuals are love,” and their being-

\(^{682}\) Hegel 1979, 143, 150.; Ricoeur 2004b, 262. (178).
\(^{683}\) Hegel 1979, 151, 167, 173, 176.
\(^{684}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 318. (218).
for-another (füreinander sein) is therefore the beginning of being-recognized.\footnote{Ricoeur 2004b, 267. (182).} Love, as self-negated being-for-another in which “each knows itself immediately in the other,” is according to Hegel elementary to *Sittlichkeit*.\footnote{Hegel 1969, 201-202.} Even though Hegel describes a movement from love to struggle, from immediate cognition to proper recognition\footnote{Assefa 1987, 61.} – from *erkennen* to *an-erkennen* – this movement does not abolish the claim that the movement itself towards *Anerkennung* and *Sittlichkeit überhaupt* springs forth from love that facilitates the movement from *natürliche* to *bürgerliche Sittlichkeit*, or from the natural condition to societal being.\footnote{Hegel 1969, 209, 212. – In contrast to Axel Honneth’s struggle-oriented reading (Honneth 1995, 5, 33, 37-49, 52, 56, 62.), Hegel scholar and translator Leo Rauch, for example, is firmly convinced that Hegel’s *Realphilosophie II* is a philosophy of loving mutuality, and not of pervasive conflict. “In the 1806 Jena lectures,” Rauch points out, “the interrelation of selves is not struggle but love, wherein recognition occurs not in a reciprocal and conscious bestowal of selfhood, but in the fact that each party knows itself immediately in the other (i.e., without consciously affirming it), and makes this real in the interrelation.” According to Rauch, for the Hegel of *Realphilosophie II* recognition takes place “in implicit mutuality, not in conflict.” Recognition, then, is fundamentally social, and there is no need for the struggle for recognition – except perhaps to some extent in the movement of externalization, that is, self-objectification through labor. Furthermore, the social setting of recognition is then all-pervasive, and the only real threat to being recognized is in dehumanization by alienated labor. As Rauch summarizes, in the *Realphilosophie II* “one’s very being is a recognized being (*anerkanntes Seyn*) […] individuality is then itself the product of social existence.” The notion of socializing love, therefore, culminates the whole of *Realphilosophie II*. (Rauch 1987, 51-52.)}

The concept of love, I maintain, annuls the struggle even between Ricoeur and Hegel. Hegel’s concept of *Anerkennung* appears surprisingly expansive, at least in comparison to the struggle-focused and therefore reductive Kojèvean interpretation. While Kojève and Ricoeur reduce in their respective interpretations the Hegelian recognition to struggle, Hegel’s *Anerkennung* has a wider scope of meaning: loving recognition that grounds

\footnote{On the other hand, Samuel Assefa criticizes Rauch’s Hegel interpretation by arguing that in the *Realphilosophie II* the struggle and recognition are equiprimordial whereas in the *Phenomenology* the notion of struggle argumentatively precedes the dialectics of recognition. Even if I agree with Assefa that there is a difference between the models of recognition in *Realphilosophie II* and in the *Phenomenology*, his criticism does not do away with Rauch’s contribution of the notion of love to Hegel reception. Rauch’s interpretation illuminates another whole kind of approach to Hegel not entirely clouded by the Kojèvean emphasis on the struggle. Hegel indeed integrates love, and the mutuality based on it. In addition, as pointed out earlier in this dissertation, the *Phenomenology* favors the idea that the loving model of recognition prefers no struggling opposition but recognition - after being forgiven - which overcomes distinction. I therefore ask again, is this not what Ricoeur discusses under the notion of *αγάϖη*-love which “knows nothing of comparison and calculation”? Assefa 1987, 62.; Hegel 2008, 696. (§772.); Ricoeur 2004b, 321. (220).}
mutuality. Put differently, this is reconciliation between the Spirit and its other under *ein Anerkennen der Liebe*, “loving recognition” or “recognition by love.”

All the more strikingly, Ricoeur is well aware of this model of recognition that has set all opposing distinctions aside. Unlike *Course of Recognition*, which is quite guarded with respect to Hegel's post-Jena texts, *Oneself as Another* echoes the conviction that Hegel’s notion of recognition is not limited to the struggle. Discussing Hegel’s analysis of moral conflict within Sophocles’ *Antigone*, Ricoeur admits that in the *Phenomenology* Hegel achieves a notion of recognition that surpasses mere reciprocity. Instead of retaining the idea of many-sided struggle, as in *Antigone*, according to Ricoeur, Hegel overcomes it by introducing the notion of forgiveness:

If one must, at some point, “renounce Hegel,” his treatment of tragedy is not the place to do so; if Hegel is reproached with having imposed a “synthesis” upon all the divisions that his philosophy displays the genius for discovering or inventing, this synthesis is certainly not drawn from tragedy [i.e., the fiction forged by Sophocles that is one of conflicts]. And if some fragile reconciliation is announced, it finds its meaning solely in the genuine reconciliations that the *Phenomenology of Spirit* will encounter only at a much more advanced stage of the dialectic. We cannot fail to note, in this connection, that tragedy is mentioned only at the start of the vast itinerary that occupies all of chapter 6, entitled “Geist” (indicating that this chapter is homologous with the work as a whole): the genuine reconciliation occurs only at the very end of this itinerary, at the outcome of the conflict between judging consciousness and acting consciousness; this reconciliation rests on an actual renunciation by each party of his partiality and has the value of a pardon in which each is truly recognized by the other (*vériablement reconnu par l’autre*). Now it is precisely this reconciliation through renouncement, this pardon through recognition (*pardon par reconnaissance*), that tragedy – at least the tragedy *Antigone* – is incapable of producing.

The struggle exemplified by the tragedy is not the last word in Hegel’s analysis any more than the struggle of the master and slave; it is reserved for forgiveness and reconciliation.

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690 Ricoeur 2004b, 253-256. (171-174).
Recognition, Ricoeur summarizes, is achieved when partiality is renounced, when the struggle is surpassed by mutuality – particularity by universality.\textsuperscript{693} According to Ricoeur’s reading of Hegel in \textit{Oneself as Another}, I argue, the act of forgiving recognition of love is the crux of the matter. Ricoeur’s notion of \textit{Anerkennung} in \textit{Course of Recognition} as pertaining only to conflictual recognition becomes then severely disputed.\textsuperscript{694}

Both Hegel and Ricoeur achieve the notion of recognition as ethical life in the light of love: the Hegelian \textit{Anerkennung} includes the moment of \textit{Sittlichkeit} that, in turn, facilitates \textit{Anerkennung} under the thematics of the Objective Spirit. Furthermore, Hegel’s progression in the \textit{Phenomenology} from consciousness to being self-conscious (\textit{Selbsbewu̇ßtsein}) requires that the subject becomes recognized. Hegel famously argues in the \textit{Phenomenology} that “self-consciousness is in and for itself because and by way of its being in and for itself for an other; that is, it is only as recognized (\textit{ein Anerkanntes}).”\textsuperscript{695} The path from consciousness to self-consciousness requires this mutuality, which ultimately sets the subjects free from the struggle,\textsuperscript{696} as the consciousnesses “recognize themselves as mutually recognizing each other.”\textsuperscript{697} For Hegel, this is the “pure concept of recognition” that is then set to play in the actualization of the various historical shapes of consciousness, in ethical life as politico-

\textsuperscript{693} As Ricoeur’s 1951 essay “Pour la coexistence pacifique des civilisations” demonstrates, in political reality the question of partiality is a difficult one; a peaceful co-existence between “civilizations” such as the “American” and the “Soviet” political system can only be based on a cultural critique (“\textit{une critique de civilisation}”) that recognizes the idea that all socio-political systems are only modes of “human becoming” and “becoming human” – \textit{l’avènement human}. Cf. Ricoeur 1951, 408-419.

\textsuperscript{694} Ricoeur 2004b, 276. (188).


\textsuperscript{696} Hegel 2008, 165. (§181). “- aber gibt es das andere Selbsbewu̇ßtsein ihm wieder ebenso zurück, denn es war sich im Andern, es hebt dies \textit{sein} Sein im Andern auf, entläßt also das andere wieder frei.” – The “struggle unto death” quite obviously poses a challenge to this reading of Hegel. It should not be left unnoticed, however, that it is precisely the \textit{passing the test of the struggle} that is important for Hegel. It is through the struggle that each \textit{proves his worth} to himself, and that both \textit{prove their worth} to each other, but this aims to freedom: “it is solely by staking one’s life that freedom is proven to be the essence.” Cf. Hegel 2008, 168-169. (§187-§188).

\textsuperscript{697} Hegel 2008, 167. (§184). “Sie anerkennen sich als gegenseitig sich anerkennend.”
ethical situatedness in living history.\(^698\) Ricoeur’s emphasis is the same, ethico-politically – or, culturally – facilitated Anerkennung.

For Ricoeur and in the end also for Hegel, recognition is returning to realize the sunny breaks of good will upon which my being-here depends.\(^699\) Recognition is, therefore, about remembering, both in the sense of socially re-membering oneself to one’s communal situatedness in which one is recognized, and in the sense of fully remembering again our politico-ethical situation that calls for a loving attitude towards other members of the cultural community. For Ricoeur also, Anerkennung and Sittlichkeit become discernible through each other.\(^700\) To maintain an argumentative distance to Hegel, that is, to give an impression of avoiding the “Hegelian temptation,” Ricoeur adopts in Course of Recognition an unnecessary Kojèvean approach – even when claiming to avoid Kojève’s interpretation altogether. In sum, the sunny break of Ricoeur’s good will is clouded by misrecognition.

7.3 Ricoeur and Cultural Formation

Enabled by our preceding analysis of Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel, it is now time to make explicit Ricoeur’s presuppositions with regard to the notion of culture, or Bildung. This discussion will connect the earlier idea of re-membering with our Ricoeur-Hegel analysis from a cultural point of view. Put differently, this section completes the “letting appear” of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics in the context of his last work. Let me continue, therefore, our reading of Course of Recognition, in which Ricoeur focuses on Hegel’s concept of Sittlichkeit.

\(^{698}\) Hegel 2008, 166-167. (§184-§185).

\(^{699}\) Morin Joy maintains in her 2003 essay that “Ricoeur’s invoking of Hegel’s work […] portrays a process of mutual affirmation without any desire for eliminating or integrating the other.” Even though Joy responds to the Kojèvean challenge, or its emphasis on “destructive negativity,” it is a simplification to argue that Ricoeur’s conception of Anerkennung does not recognize the moment of struggle. For this very reason Ricoeur can only allude to the “sunny breaks,” and not to any pure mutuality devoid of differentiation. Joy 2003, 518-519.

\(^{700}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 294. (201).
from the point of view of social esteem when arguing that this esteem “sums up all the modes of mutual recognition that exceed the mere recognition of the equality of right among subjects.”

The notion of social esteem, I emphasize, is far from being a universal without contextual variation, however. Ricoeur points out that Honneth – reiterating Hegel’s philosophy – already connects social mediation, symbolic constitution, and the notion of culture together: “By stating that these relations of [social] esteem vary over time, [Honneth] opens the way to a multidimensional exploration of social mediations considered from the point of view of their symbolic constitution; the cultural conception that a society has of itself makes up the values and ethical ends in question in each case.”

The cultural context, Ricoeur argues, determines esteem at the fundamental level.

Institutionalized organization that mediates by ensuring communicability at the different levels of social life – the “orders of recognition” Ricoeur already discussed in *La critique et la conviction* – does not exclude differences in personal opinion in relation to individuals’ social standing. Still, this cultural context guarantees a certain cohesion that helps maintain social stratum. Larger-scale sociocultural entities such as cities or “worlds,” as Ricoeur calls them, are not, however, fully above critical thought since individuals can make a passage from one sociocultural context to another. Specific social settings and models of institutionalized organization can and even should be criticized. Ricoeur maintains that “disputes and differences of opinion do not consist solely in disagreements over the standing of individuals; they have to do also with the reliability of physical mechanisms [such as

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701 Ricoeur 2004b, 295. (202).
702 Ricoeur 2004b, 295. (202).
704 Ricoeur 2004b, 296-299. (203-204).
utilities, commerce and various institutions] that give consistency to some ‘situation that works.’”\textsuperscript{706} The varying concrete forms of sociocultural entities, their institutionalized settings, are not beyond criticism, but the general need for such contexts is incontestable.

To summarize, the reliability and consistency of a cultural context is disputable particularly at the institutional level of specific sociocultural entities. Ricoeur argues that these entities with their “mechanisms” are, nevertheless, necessary from the practical point of view: “Sheltered by these limited forms of consensus, different individual ways of living come from a ‘phronesis’ applicable to the variety of situations of ‘deliberation’ (to use an Aristotelian vocabulary).”\textsuperscript{707} In other words, a sociocultural entity provides a meaningful and organized context for human action that is carried out at the level of individuals who, in turn, are then conceived as social agents aiming at common good, however it might be defined in each context.

Besides different cultures with their own institutional settings, Ricoeur acknowledges that it is possible for different cultures to have developed “within one and the same institutional setting”; he calls this multiculturalism.\textsuperscript{708} The notion of struggle, notably present in the case of differences of personal opinion, then seems to make its way back to Ricoeur’s theory of different individual cultures. Ricoeur argues that multiculturalism, which in itself indicates communal distinctions within communities, makes apparent the battle against discrimination that results from a minority’s “demand for equality on the social plane.”\textsuperscript{709} In fact, Ricoeur claims, in the case of “the politics of recognition” – by which he means institutionalized procedures of “reverse” discrimination described by Charles Taylor –

\textsuperscript{706} Ricoeur 2004b, 305. (208).
\textsuperscript{707} Ricoeur 2004b, 305. (208).
\textsuperscript{708} Ricoeur 2004b, 311. (212-213).
\textsuperscript{709} Ricoeur 2004b, 311. (213).
“the demand for universal recognition proceeds from a differentiated cultural background” in contrast to the dominant or hegemonic cultural setting.\footnote{Ricoeur 2004b, 314. (215). Cf. my remarks on multiculturalism in chapter one of this dissertation.} The struggle for recognition has then shifted to a collective level of underprivileged or under-esteemed groups or minorities while still pertaining to the level of individuals as well. “It is collectively, one could say, that we demand an individualizing recognition,” Ricoeur maintains.\footnote{Ricoeur 2004b, 313. (214).} Put differently – to revitalize again the imagery of Aristotle’s \textit{Politics} – a human being, a \textit{ζώον πολιτικόν} even more than bees,\footnote{Aristotle 1984, 1253a.8-18. (\textit{Politics}).} identifies himself as re-membered: an individual requires to be recognized as a member of a socio-cultural collective.

The notion of the struggle, however, is still worrisome. As noted above, the struggle for recognition is surpassed by mutuality as the need of the cultural, and the act of forgiving recognition of love prevails in this common conditioned sense of recognition through formation: language, for example, functions only when it is shared as a mutual condition. Nevertheless, the “pure concept of recognition” is set in play only in ethical life as politico-ethical situatedness in living history.\footnote{Hegel 2008, 166-167. (§184-§185).} Despite having focused on those “clearings” Ricoeur has reminded us of, the darker side of human reality, its dissymmetrical character, has not been abolished. Quite the contrary, in fact, as Ricoeur himself acknowledges, “a just distance is maintained at the heart of mutuality.”\footnote{Ricoeur 2004b, 376-377. (263).} Ricoeur maintains – in contrast to Gadamer, as George H. Taylor emphasizes\footnote{G. H. Taylor 2011, 104-107, 112-115.} – that there is a fundamental dissymmetry even at the level of most agapeic recognition. In other words, I cannot become the other as if letting the other overshadow myself in the communalization of our horizons: there remains an unbridgeable gap between these two even when a “sunny break” is witnessed. In the end,
then, it is Ricoeur who reduces love to dissymmetrical relations and not Hegel. “The struggle for recognition,” Ricoeur argues blatantly, “perhaps remains endless.” In any case, then, trying to simply do away with the struggle is not helpful, as I have already argued in relation to Gonçalo Marcelo’s reading of Course of Recognition. Rather, its function as educative and self-revealing experience should be understood.

Although he does not restate it in Course of Recognition, Ricoeur has claimed that taking the “short route” from here to the there of loving harmony is not adequate to the philosopher’s task. Instead, he proposes the “long route” of mediation that correlates with the unceasing task of becoming a self. Let me remind us of Jean Greisch’s remark that Ricoeur and Hegel therefore “share the conviction that ‘the way of the spirit is primarily mediation, it is detour’.” Clarifying the nature of this detour in his essay “Hegel aujourd’hui,” Ricoeur maintains that from a rationalist and a humanist points of view the Phenomenology of Spirit “could be considered as a novel on culture, in a philosophical form. […] It is a theory of culture.” The conflict, the struggle, finds its place precisely in this arduous but also rewarding cultural detour that only in its final phase surpasses the “one-sidedness” of individuals, as Ricoeur maintains in Oneself as Another while reading Hegel’s Phenomenology:

If there is a sense to all this [in Antigone], it is not “for them” but “for us.” “For them,” disappearance in death; “for us,” the indirect lesson of this disaster. The calm reconciliation sung by the chorus cannot take the place of pardon. The one-sidedness of each of the characters, including Antigone, excludes any such mutual recognition (reconnaissance mutuelle). This is why Hegel moves from Antigone to Oedipus Rex, in which he sees the tragedy of ignorance and of self-recognition concentrated in the same tragic individual. Self-consciousness takes another step forward here, without reaching the sort of

717 Ricoeur 1969, 10-11. (6-7).
718 Greisch 2010, 91.
reconciliation proposed at the end of chapter 6. One must first cross through the conflict tied to culture (Bildung), which is that of “spirit alienated from itself” (der sich entfremdete Geist), in order to apprehend this outcome.\footnote{Ricoeur 1990, 288-289. n1. (248. n13).}

Both Ricoeur and Hegel argue that tragic stories are not full descriptions but limited steps for us to understand an aspect of our condition: the full self-consciousness is reached only in a final reconciliation as having-been-forgiven – Hegel connects this with religion and with absolute remembering (Erinnerung) in a timeless reconciliation (Versöhnung). The conflict, or the arduous detour of self-consciousness, is tied to individual cultures, Ricoeur argues in the wake of Hegel, and in order to attain the forgiving recognition of love one must first accept this indirect cultural detour. In taking that detour it becomes understood that I must first become objectified, before being capable of reaching a reconciled notion of being the necessarily cultured social human being I am.

*The Phenomenology of Spirit* aims at “der Weg die Erinnerung der Geister,” that is, to the recollection of the path of the Spirit’s historical-cultural unfolding of itself in its different shapes.\footnote{Hegel 2008, 735-736. (§808).} This is why Hegel’s work also provides means for prefiguring Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics. Hegel insists, quite famously, that the path consciousness needs to undergo “is the detailed history of the cultural formation of consciousness.”\footnote{Hegel 2008, 75. (§78). “Geschichte der Bildung des Bewußtseins selbst zur Wissenschaft.” – Despite the difference of approach and style of analysis, this task comes close to that of Cassirer’s. He demands in his *Essay on Man* that “our objective is a phenomenology of human culture.” This is then examined “by concrete examples taken from man’s cultural life.” Cassirer 1974, 52.} Hegel also analyzed a course of recognition, but such a recognition must also be facilitated by a cultural shape – or rather, cultural shapes. The notion of Bildung, figuring or formation, is therefore essential as it explains how the Spirit’s unfolding of itself and the subsequent return to itself is mediated.
As stated above, it is evident that Ricoeur follows in *Course of Recognition* this path of historical-cultural unfolding while analyzing Hegel’s *Realphilosophie II.* In brief, self-recognition takes place in the cultural detour that for the Spirit is its “other,” and it finds rest in a “reobtained immediacy” only though that “other.” In order to understand the conflict, therefore, we must understand the cultural “detour” to which it is bound. This task is in the interest of this whole dissertation, but it can be shifted to the proper, ethico-political level by briefly analyzing Ricoeur’s use of the concept of culture in *Course of Recognition.*

Again, Ricoeur does not give any precise definition of the term “culture” in *Course of Recognition.* As we have seen, he intentionally avoids such definition when insisting that “there is no reason, in this context, to oppose [the word culture] to the idea of civilization.” Instead, Ricoeur seems to accept the idea that culture is an elementary and therefore not fully explicable aspect of our everyday world of life – cultural facts such as sciences are in this presupposed world. As seen above, however, Ricoeur frequently uses the term and its derivatives in such a manner that more articulated features of culture are implied. Although not providing a concise definition himself, Ricoeur’s cultural concept appears to affirm that culture has a variegated context of meaning and of human action, and therefore has both synchronic and diachronic mediation as its major function.

Cultural variation is indisputable. Ricoeur’s discussion of multiculturalism includes the notion of differentiated cultural backgrounds, and contrasts the dominant cultural setting with the alternating cultural settings of minorities. Even if the contrast internal to an institutional setting is not always apparent, it is taken for granted. Charles

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724 Hegel 1969, 272.
Taylor asserts, as quoted by Ricoeur in *Course of Recognition*, that “the supposedly neutral set of difference-blind principles of the politics of equal dignity is in fact a reflection of one hegemonic culture.” In addition, the non-political aspects of human life can also challenge the cultural cohesion maintained by various social structures, including institutions. Sexuality, for example, poses one of these challenges. Ricoeur claims that “in any culture, erotic love may remain rebellious toward the institution and toward the discipline of desire that this institution tries to establish.” Even within one institutional setting, the possibility for cultural variation persists.

In spite of its variability, culture functions as a context of meaning and meaningful or “suitable” action. The statements which imply both the action of an agent and his or her motive, taken as “action sentences” by Ricoeur in contrast to “closed attributive propositions” such as “A is B,” gain their overall meaning only within such a context. Human action, Ricoeur argues, is understandable only when it is interpretable in a particular culture: “[T]he open-ended structure of the [action] sentence invites an interpretation of gestures as a function of the broadest possible context of circumstances, rules, and norms belonging to a culture.” Human action is distinguishable from mere causal happening of events because in it there is an intention, a reason for acting.

In other words, human action becomes meaningful only when a motive that is in accordance with what Geertz calls a “thick” cultural understanding becomes legible in it. “The concept of imputation,” for example, “could be articulated only in a culture that, on

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728 Ricoeur 2004b, 314. n1. (281. n49).
the other hand, had pushed the causal explanation of natural phenomena as far as possible, up to and including the human sciences, and that, on the other hand, had elaborated a moral and juridical doctrine where responsibility is framed by well-worked-out codes, balancing offenses and punishments on the scales of justice.”

A culture is needed for “mapping” the motivational layer of human action onto meanings. Put differently, a cultural context, due to its explanatory power, or symbolic thickness, makes possible the meaningfulness of action.

Even though the individual capacities to act remain important for the phenomenology of being capable, Ricoeur also advocates the idea of social capacities. Social practices are “components of action in common,” and it is possible to ascribe to them “the sphere of those representations which human beings make of themselves and their place in society.” Social practices, in other words, are communally instituted forms of actions. These representations, Ricoeur claims, are then not “abstract ideas floating in some autonomous space, but, as said, symbolic mediations contributing to the instituting of the social bond.” Ricoeur makes explicit the implied notion of the context in and through which both the symbolic mediations and the instituting of the social bond take place when describing his analysis as an “exploration of the social forms of the power to act within the framework of the cultural history of collective representations.” In brief, the cultural framework pertains to action both at the level of individual members of a society and at the level of their collective practices.

Following Ricoeur, the cultural context of an action should, therefore, be understood as the general mode of particular communal life. Although its structural level –

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733 Ricoeur 2004b, 200. (135).
734 Ricoeur 2004b, 202. (137).
735 Ricoeur 2004b, 205. (139).
economical, political, and juridical systems – is certainly important, this communal life is not limited to them but includes the affective level of human life as well. In philosophical terms this is quite acceptable. “Does Hegel not devote a long discussion to the institutions appropriate to the broad affective realm that he places under the heading of love? This is the case for parent-child and husband-wife relations, and even of the family itself, seen as the educator for our first point of initiation into culture,” Ricoeur points out. The affective aspect of human life – love, in particular – is a part of culture. Just as “the family constitutes a form of living together,” the cultural context constitutes a form of structured communal life which retains a strong connection to affections by providing means of realizing them in life through marital and other alike social bonds.

A culture therefore also mediates. The aspect of diachronic mediation as renewing cultural-historical evolution, or “renaissance,” is apparent, especially in the light of “the cultural history of conflicts,” to use Ricoeur’s term. These cultural conflicts – not necessarily wars or other physical confrontations between nations or rival groups – have an important role in that diachronic process which has led, for example, to the contemporary Western culture; just consider the paradigmatic encounter between Athens and Jerusalem: “these two cultures, which would contain nothing exceptional for an eye not situated anywhere in particular, constitute the first stratum of our philosophical memory.”

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736 Ricoeur 2004b, 280. (191).
737 Ricoeur maintains in a discussion in July 19, 1958 that history is a continuous process of renewal, and that it is therefore impossible to objectify it in a manner historians do: “L’histoire n’est possible que parce qu’il y a toujours renaissance et que l’historien est lui-même un moment de cette renaissance. Je ne pourrais pas faire l’histoire de l’Antiquité si l’Antiquité était une chose tout à fait morte, qui ne m’intéresserait plus, qui ne serait plus un objet historique. C’est parce que le passé est toujours repris, parce qu’il ne cesse de revivre notre présent, que l’histoire comme telle est possible.” Ricoeur, Kula, Madaule, Toynbee, Chatelet, Goldmann, Gieysztor, & Kolakowski 1961, 175.
738 Ricoeur 2004b, 289. (198).
739 Ricoeur 1960b, 26-30. (20-23); Ricoeur & LaCocque 1998, 16-17. (xvii-xviii). – Ricoeur both respects and supersedes Tertuallian’s famous criticism of philosophy as presented in De praescriptione haereticorum. What should be noted is that in the very same passage Tertuallian explicitly refers to the question of evil that is the
Encounter resulted in the stage of a “third man,” Ricoeur argues in an essay “Faith and Culture” (1957); “this ‘third man,’ this cultivated Christian, this believing Greek, is ourselves.”

Encounters like these are as much caused in confronting the pressure from differing cultures as they are internal to a particular culture itself. “It turns out that [the sixteenth century] is the century in which Western culture hesitated among several cultural heritages and created new models for life to which we are still indebted,” Ricoeur comments in Course of Recognition. The notion of conflict, although irreducible, cannot therefore overcast cultural continuity.

In sum, the diachronic mediation of cultural history is not merely conflictual. Ricoeur himself demonstrates the strength of continuity by choosing “ancient Greece as [his] starting point” – as Hegel did. Even though temporal distance induces cultural differences,

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guiding theme of Ricoeur’s The Symbolism of Evil. However, Tertullian’s approach is to defend the “first naïveté” that clearly is already facing a threat coming from the side of philosophical thought. Ricoeur, in contrast, does not want to by-pass this apparent distanciation from the first naïveté but is willing to pursue a “post-critical” task that would be taking a critical reader to a “second naïveté”. Tertullian’s position - an apologetical defence of faith - is rather categorical and worth to be cited in this context in length:

“The same subject-matter is discussed over and over again by the heretics and the philosophers; the same arguments are involved. Whence comes evil? Why is it permitted? What is the origin of man? And in what way does he come? Besides the question which Valentinus has very lately proposed – whence comes God? Which he settles with the answer: From enthymesis and ectroma. Unhappy Aristotle! Who invented for these men dialectics, the art of building up and pulling down; an art so evasive in its propositions, so far-fetched in its conjectures, so harsh, in its arguments, so productive of contentions – embarrassing even to itself, retracting everything, and really treating of nothing! Whence spring those ‘fables and endless genealogies,’ and ‘unprofitable questions,’ and ‘words which spread like a cancer?’ From all these, when the apostle would restrain us, he expressly names philosophy as that which he would have us be on our guard against. Writing to the Colossians, he says, ‘See that no one beguile you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, and contrary to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost.’” Tertullian 1957. (The Prescription Against Heretics, VII)
cultural affinities in many cases prevail. In other words, Ricoeur recognizes an underlying cultural kinship. Quoting Bernard Williams, Ricoeur acknowledges that “the ancient Greeks ‘are among our cultural ancestors, and our view of them is intimately connected with our view of ourselves.’” The notion of “cultural ancestors” itself implies that cultural mediation, at least in its diachronic sense, is not overwhelmingly conflictual but instead reconciles us with our inherited past that molds our self-understanding.

Cultural continuity as mediated by history therefore resembles the idea of the temporal course of recognition. Recognition despite the temporal distance requires something pervasive, however: a thing, a capacity, or an idea that remains diachronically. Ricoeur defines human action, for example, as such a “constant,” or a presupposed condition, in the cultural framework. Culture pertains to human action only insofar as this action pertains to culture. Because of this interdependence, we still recognize human beings in Greek epic and tragic literature as responsible agents. Ricoeur thus also agrees with Williams that “an agent’s recognition of his power to act, his agency, constitutes a cultural constant that confirms a transcultural readability of the classics of Western culture.” The notion of personal agency, in other words, opens the path of a diachronic continuity between temporally distinct cultures.

Only because of the shared set of values and the shared understanding of “recognizing responsibility,” however, the notion of agency is capable of assuming the role of a cultural constant. Thanks to a conceptual “thematic trajectory” the idea of responsible action and self-recognition is shared between the ancient Greeks and the moderns. First of all, then, we are able to affirm that the moderns are – to use Ricoeur’s words – part of a

743 Ricoeur 2004b, 111. (70).
745 Ricoeur 2004b, 111-112. (70).
“still-vibrant cultural heritage”\textsuperscript{746} and that “there are goods, which [Michael Walzer] calls ‘shared values,’ whose nature makes them nonvenal.”\textsuperscript{747} Secondly, to return to Ricoeur’s gift-exchange parallel, these “goods” are diachronically mediated contexts of meaning which we have received as “gifts” from our ancestors since the shared values are indeed “without price.”\textsuperscript{748} I argue that this understanding, which relies on objectification of values as transculturally and transhistorically inherited “gifts,” is ultimately what “recognizing responsibility” as an agent within a historical trajectory, that is, in a diachronic cultural mediation, is about.

In a similar manner, synchronic mediation among the concurrent members of a culture objectifies social bonds. To hold on to the notion of love, a figure of this synchronic mediation can be drawn from Ricoeur’s analysis of Honneth’s Hegel-renewal: “We can say that lovers recognize each other by recognizing themselves in models of identification that can be held in common.”\textsuperscript{749} Synchronic cultural mediation, then, hinges on the “relations of relative dependence,” as Ricoeur calls them, which in the face of the dialectics of dependence (“emotional fusion”) and autonomy (“self-affirmation in solitude”), resort to mutually acceptable accounts of identification. In other words, the “maintained order [of these relations], in the strongest sense of the word, is supported by mediations, principally from language and culture, that recall the ‘transitional objects’ of childhood discussed by D. W. Winnicott [as Axel Honneth points out].”\textsuperscript{750} As children find their favorite toys helpful in channeling their emotions, human beings in general find cultural

\textsuperscript{746} Ricoeur 2004b, 338. (233).
\textsuperscript{747} Ricoeur 2004b, 338. (233).
\textsuperscript{748} Ricoeur 2004b, 338-339. (233). – Ricoeur makes an interesting cultural remark when defining \textit{sans prix}: “That of what is ‘without price’ is posed in our culture by the relation between truth - or at least the search for truth - and money.” Ricoeur 2004b, 339. (234).
\textsuperscript{749} Ricoeur 2004b, 278. (190).
\textsuperscript{750} Ricoeur 2004b, 278. (189-190); Honneth 1995, 98-107.
objects necessary in gaining self-understanding. Social relations hold because of synchronic cultural mediation enabling these means of objectification.

In brief, again, Ricoeur implies in *Course of Recognition* that social relations are maintained in the synchronous mediation through the commonly shared means of identity, or the objectifying cultural models (*les objectivations culturelles*). The whole sociocultural complex, therefore, functions as an "order of recognition," while also bringing together "the media system and its impact on the cultural reproduction of societies, and on the scientific system considered from the point of view of its institutional organization." Synchronic cultural mediation in the form of cultural reproduction is for that reason an essential aspect of the "systems' taken as the leading paradigms for the social world, integrated into communicative activity." The social world rests on cultural objectification that facilitates self-recognition through cultural mediation.

Having now summed up Ricoeur's understanding of the diachronic and synchronic aspects of cultural mediation – and its necessity for recognition – we have come well past the point of "letting appear" Ricoeur's cultural hermeneutics. In Ricoeur's conception of cultural mediation, like Hegel's idea of cultural figuration or formation (*Bildung*), cultural objectification forms the basis of self-identification. Hegel argues in the *Phenomenology* that "it is cultural formation by virtue of which the individual here has validity and actuality," recalling for us Ricoeur's notion of cultural mediation. In addition, according to Hegel cultural figuration is mediation (*Vermittlung*):

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751 Ricoeur 2004b, 278. (190).
752 Ricoeur 2004b, 299. (204).
753 Ricoeur 2004b, 298. (204).
754 Ricoeur 2004b, 298. (204).
It [that is, Bildung] is at the same time the middle term (das Mittel), that is, the transition into actuality of the substance which has been rendered into thought as well as the transition of determinate individuality into essentiality. This individuality culturally educates itself (bildet sich) into what it is in itself and only by doing so is it in itself, does it have actual being-here (wirkliches Dasein).\textsuperscript{756}

Individuality, that is, self-recognized being-here, which includes the notion of identity, is possible only through cultural mediation in an outwardly expressive (Äußerung)\textsuperscript{757} and re-collective (Er-Innerung)\textsuperscript{758} process of formation or figuration. The Spirit is educated of its true character by its objectification in culture and by the subsequent re-internalization of the objective notion (Begriff) it gave of itself. Only by this objectifying cultural-conceptual detour can the Spirit become self-conscious. “Being [that is understood] is absolutely mediated (absolut vermittelt),” Hegel summarizes in his famous preface to the Phenomenology.\textsuperscript{759} Ricoeur’s only objection could concern the depth of emphasis on the word “absolutely.”

Hegel’s ultimate thesis is that being – even a subject’s personal being – can only be comprehensible through cultural-linguistic mediation.\textsuperscript{760} Cultural formation or figuration, in other words, is the process of becoming fully aware of oneself and one’s full potential by way of re-internalized objectifying or alienating mediation (entfremdende Vermittlung).\textsuperscript{761} According to Hegel, to become “for itself” (für sich selbst) is to become an object (Gegenstand) “in [the Spirit’s] own eyes,” but in a manner of becoming an immediately “mediated object (vermittelter), which is to say, it must be a sublated object reflected into

\textsuperscript{756} Hegel 2008, 443. (§488).
\textsuperscript{757} Hegel 2008, 282. (§317).
\textsuperscript{758} Hegel 2008, 735. (§808). – Pinkard translates Er-Innerung as “inwardizing re-collection.”
\textsuperscript{759} Hegel 2008, 33. (§37). – Hegel’s definition of mediation is worth citing here: “[M]ediation is nothing but selfmoving parity-with-itself, or it is a reflective turn into itself, the moment of the I existing-for-itself, pure negativity, that is, \textit{simple coming-to-be}. The I, or coming-to-be, this act of mediating, is, precisely in terms of its simplicity, immediacy in the process of coming-to-be and is the immediate itself.” Hegel 2008, 18. (§21).
\textsuperscript{761} Hegel 2008, 442-443. (§487).
This objectifying mediation that includes the moment of re-appropriation is cultural in both diachronic and synchronic sense:

Each individual also runs through the culturally formative stages of the universal spirit, but he runs through them as shapes (Gestalten) which spirit has already laid aside, as stages on a path that has been worked out and leveled out in the same way that we see fragments of knowledge, which in earlier ages occupied men of mature minds, now sink to the level of exercises, and even to that of games for children, and in this pedagogical progression, we recognize the history of the cultural formation of the world sketched in silhouette. This past existence has already become an acquired possession of the universal spirit; it constitutes the substance of the individual, that is, his inorganic nature. – In this respect, the cultural figuration of the individual (die Bildung des Individuums) regarded from his own point of view consists in his acquiring all of this which is available, in his living off that inorganic nature and in his taking possession of it for himself. Likewise, this is nothing but the universal spirit itself, that is, substance giving itself its self-consciousness, that is, its coming-to-be and its reflective turn into itself.  

In brief, the Spirit’s self-educative progress is culturally mediated figuration: a self figures out who one is in the very figuring of it. To restate Hegel’s main idea – by using Ricoeur’s summary of the *Phenomenology*’s chapter on the Spirit in *From Text to Action* – “consciousness becomes universal only by entering into a world of culture, mores, institutions, and history.”  

Self-recognition is equal to recognizing oneself in the re-appropriated “history of the cultural formation of the world,” which implies an indirect mutual recognition as well.

Because of its structural elements, culture implies reciprocity. Given the distinction between reciprocity and mutuality Ricoeur makes in *Course of Recognition* as well as the nature of donated cultural heritage that forms “the substance of the individual,” however, it is appropriate to refer to it precisely as the context for mutuality. Cultural-linguistically mediated being – the Spirit with its concept (Begriff) – carries with itself the idea itself.”

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764 Ricoeur 1986a, 283. (229).
of making possible by giving the possession of ethical self-understanding in the form of pedagogical progression.767 “Spirit is ethical actuality,” Ricoeur observes in From Text to Action.768 At the end of the Spirit’s self-realization as re-internalized culture, the notion of ethicality has been totally internalized.

Put differently, re-appropriation is placing oneself both diachronically and synchronically on the path of re-cognition, *An-erkennung* – recognizing oneself in all one’s works as expressions of objectified humanity. I maintain that Ricoeur’s course of recognition is ultimately this path, and not the lexically instructed “surface” of the progression from identity to self-recognition and further to mutual recognition that *Course of Recognition* describes. That we actually are already placed on the diachronic course, however, is made apparent only speculatively. As Hegel summarizes, “the series of its shapes (Gestaltungen) which consciousness runs through on this path is the detailed history of the *cultural formation* of consciousness up to the standpoint of [philosophico-phenomenological] science.”769 Hegel’s understanding is that the succession of the different figures or shapes the Spirit assumes is not apparent to the Spirit itself but only to the scientists of the phenomenology of the Spirit. Similarly, Ricoeur argues that the course of recognition can only be understood from the viewpoint of philosophical thought that – while progressing from identity to self-recognition, and further to mutual recognition in gratitude – is not so much a “discourse about recognition” but rather “that of recognition.”770 The true course of recognition, in other words, is not the analytical study of the various meanings of the term “recognition,” as

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768 Ricoeur 1986a, 283. (229).
769 Hegel 2008, 75. (§78).
Laitinen implies, but understanding or living the recognition in the hermeneutic process itself that educates us of our own, collectively formed and individually internalized or re-appropriated mode of being.

Only at the end of this course does the reward of a “reobtained immediacy” surpass all arduous struggle for recognizing oneself in the very process of this philosophical thought. Hegel explains this processuality by using a metaphor of a winding path:

When we wish to see an oak with its powerful trunk, its spreading branches, and its mass of foliage, we are not satisfied if instead we are shown an acorn. In the same way, science, the crowning glory of a spiritual world, is not completed in its initial stages. The beginning of a new spirit is the outcome of a widespread revolution in the diversity of forms of cultural figuration (Bildungsformen); it is both the prize at the end of a winding path and, equally as much, is the prize won through much struggle and effort. It is the whole which has returned into itself from out of its succession and extension and has come to be the simple notion (einfache Begriff) of itself.

For both Hegel and Ricoeur, the final prize of second immediacy is indeed at the end of a winding path; only cultural figuration or formation will lead a subject to proper self-understanding, which also includes the notion of the other ones, since the cultural context determines the suitability or “fittingness” of one’s values and actions. The detour of objectification and mediation is unavoidable. After having then realized the possibility of den langen Weg der Bildung in Ricoeurian terms, or after letting appear his cultural hermeneutics, the course of cultural figuration has only begun for us when disclosing Ricoeur’s cultural understanding.

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771 Laitinen 2011.
772 Hegel 1969, 272.
774 Hegel 2008, 63. (§68).
8. Reflections on *Re-con-naissance*

This part concludes with the notion that Ricoeur advances a cultural-linguistic course of recognition. After having traversed some proposed ways of reading Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition*, the idea of symbolic recognition as linguistically mediated re-membering, and the Ricourian *An-erkennung* as cultural figuration, the question of the cultural nature of Ricoeur’s “course” exposed itself to us. Ricoeur’s “long way” through cultural objectification parallels Hegel’s detour of cultural formation.

I first emphasized the linguistic side of the issue in the form of symbolic language as a response to some of Ricoeur’s critics who fail to fully express the depth of symbolic and cultural recognition: Arto Laitinen, Gonçalo Marcelo, Jean-Luc Amalric, and also Jean Greisch. To close the circle, then, the fullness of language and the pedagogics of cultural mediation, are but two sides of the same coin. As Hegel argues in the *Phenomenology*, “the unity of the concept [...] into which consciousness has distilled itself becomes actual in this mediating movement, whose simple existence as the middle term [in culture] is language (*die Sprache*).”775 Language, according to Hegel, is cultural, and mediation takes place in the fullness of discourse.

I should stress, however, that language, like culture, nevertheless represents only the perfected alienation of the Spirit and not yet the re-collected Absolute Spirit: “the language of brokenness (*Zerissenheit*) [of the Spirit in its alienating expression] is the perfected language of this entire world of cultural formation as well as its true existing Spirit.”776 Without cultural-linguistic alienation the whole notion of the “winding path” and the “prize” at the end of it would remain empty. Re-membering, as I have argued, is made possible by

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776 Hegel 2008, 470. (§519).
this course of recognition. Hegel’s “inwardizing re-collection” of Er-Innerung,\textsuperscript{777} or what Ricoeur indicates with the re- of reconnaissance, requires the moment of reflection that is enabled by self-alienation (Entfremdung) in the Spirit’s “outward,” cultural-linguistic expression (Entäußerung).\textsuperscript{778}

Hegel’s teleological model of consciousness is well-known to Ricoeur. In On Interpretation Ricoeur states that Hegel’s phenomenology of Spirit is “a description of the figures, categories, or symbols that guide the developmental process along the lines of a progressive synthesis,” thus letting us know that Ricoeur, perhaps, understands Hegel’s project.\textsuperscript{779} This synthetic movement, Ricoeur furthermore acknowledges, is dual: “The dispossession comes first, the reaffirmation only at the end.”\textsuperscript{780} The moment of re-affirmation or re-appropriation is nevertheless crucial, as it ultimately defines the adult, absolute Spirit. What is important is “the internalization of this [dialectic] movement [of the Spirit], which must be recaptured in the objective structures of institution, monuments, works of art and culture.”\textsuperscript{781} As the Spirit unfolds itself in its educative self-realization it must, however, assume a cultural figure or shape (Gestalt), as this figure mediates the innate need for self-recognition; “culture is born (que naît une culture) in the movement of desire.”\textsuperscript{782} This desire for self-realization, in other words, leads the Spirit to form itself by assuming a cultural-linguistic shape in order to progressively re-cognize itself in it in the moment of re-internalization (Er-Innerung).

\textsuperscript{777} Hegel 2008, 735. (§808).
\textsuperscript{778} Hegel 2008, 438. (§483).
\textsuperscript{780} Ricoeur 1965a, 447. (463).
\textsuperscript{781} Ricoeur 1965a, 448. (463).
\textsuperscript{782} Ricoeur 1965a, 449. (465).
The struggle for recognition – and not for power\textsuperscript{783} – should then, according to Ricoeur, be read inversely as “recognition through struggle.”\textsuperscript{784} As Ricoeur argues in *Course of Recognition*, the struggle cannot be avoided\textsuperscript{785} whereas the “prize” is within the reach of a searching consciousness who gradually becomes more and more aware of the fullness and possibilities of his or her being, yet never reaching the ultimate end. This “prize” of self-consciousness that, nevertheless, remains a task, is therefore the “gift” of mutuality given by diachronic and synchronic cultural-linguistic mediation; mutuality that transcends reciprocity because it gives, even though it gives through the detour, or through the other. In the end, my personal being-here, my individuality depends on this indirect mutual recognition through cultural objectification that facilitates re-membering.\textsuperscript{786} The emphasis is therefore in the first term, recognition through struggle, and not the last one, that is, in struggle that, nevertheless, cannot be undone in the lived human reality. The clearings, “where the meaning of action emerges from the fog of doubt,”\textsuperscript{787} are perhaps not completely “pure,” but they testify of the positive and yet the unceasing process of becoming a human self.

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In the very end of this part, let me briefly return to my own working hypotheses. In terms of those proposed theses at the end of part one, I argue, I have in this part two begun to ground the theses from two to five. The call in *Course of Recognition* to return to Ricoeur’s earlier texts indicates that although the subject-centered progress from identity to self-recognition and furthermore to mutual recognition is important, the question of Ricoeur’s “course” of

\textsuperscript{783} Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 451-452. (466-467); Ricoeur 1986b, 227, 263.  
\textsuperscript{784} Ricoeur 1965a, 455. (471).  
\textsuperscript{785} Ricoeur 2004b, 355. (246).  
\textsuperscript{786} Ricoeur 2004b, 278. (190).  
\textsuperscript{787} Ricoeur 2004b, 318, 355. (218, 245).
recognition is better approached at the level of cultural figuration as objectifying formation. A deeper analysis of Ricoeur's earlier texts will, therefore, provide further material for the explication of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics.

On the basis of our analysis, however, we are already entitled to assume that the “phenomenology of being able” – which culminates in Ricoeur’s notion of *l’homme capable* – requires the support of cultural hermeneutics. This hermeneutic of culture recasts Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel; he is not merely a figure to be renounced but rather an essential forefigure to Ricoeur’s conception of culture. Lastly, this examination has paid attention the notion of *les objectivations culturelles*. The idea of “cultural objectification,” and the corollary “cultural objects,” is therefore already familiar to us, but only a further examination will reveal its role for both Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture and his anthropological phenomenology. This is now the winding path for us.
Part III

Recognizing Selfhood in Cultural Objectivity
Part one, which introduced the general problematics of this dissertation, included a discussion of Ricoeur’s relation to cultural anthropology, and in particular with his affinity with Ernst Cassirer and Clifford Geertz. The assertion made in that part was that, according to Ricoeur, human action is always cultural-symbolically mediated. Part two, which engaged with recent interpretations of Ricoeur’s philosophy and especially with the discussion of recognition, then confirmed the assertion by analyzing Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of symbolic recognition and the underlying notion of cultural mediation as self-formation. This led to a concluding consideration of Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel and the notion of cultural objectification.

I have pointed out above that Ricoeur argues that cultural objectification forms and maintains social relations. *Course of Recognition* asserts that the “maintained order [of the social relations of relative dependence], in the strongest sense of the word, is supported by mediations, principally from language and culture, that recall [D. W. Winnicott’s definition of] the ‘transitional objects’ of childhood.” As a result, Ricoeur maintains that cultural mediation includes the notion of cultural objects and objectification, which ground the commonly shared human identity as objectifying cultural models; *les objectivations culturelles* as he calls them. The social world, I concluded, rests for Ricoeur on cultural objectification as self-recognition through mediation – much like Hegel’s idea of cultural figuration or formation (*Bildung*).

The current part continues to examine the idea of objectivity and objectification while shifting the tone of argumentation from asserting the importance of cultural hermeneutics for Ricoeur’s thought to demonstrating Ricoeur’s involvement with

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789 Ricoeur 2004b, 278. (190).
the theme from the very early works to the latest ones. I emphasize that the close reading of Ricoeur's work, modeled by his own “analytical reading of Freud” in *On Interpretation*, is intentional: I wish to *show* rather than declare that reading Ricoeur results in maintaining that his work ultimately is a hermeneutic of culture. I maintain that there is indeed a cultural hermeneutic *parcours* that becomes evident in the course of our consecutive steps. While the idea of reading will eventually gain a meaning of its own as hermeneutic *relecture*, this careful reading of Ricoeur's work serves as a scholarly corrective in understanding what that work ultimately was about as a whole.

In spite of firmly holding on to the idea that the cultural hermeneutic path runs through the whole of Ricoeur's work, I have decided to proceed by offering two succeeding readings of it. This current part analyzes Ricoeur's works to the threshold of his alleged “linguistic turn,” and part four continues the inquiry by starting with *The Living Metaphor* as the most prominent manifestation of that turn. Even if Ricoeur had openly acknowledged his debt to Hegel, Ricoeur maintained that he favored a “post-Hegelian Kantian style” of philosophizing. This part takes seriously the challenge presented by this odd characterization while inquiring into the role of Kant's philosophy in Ricoeur's hermeneutics of cultural objectification. I argue that in his cultural hermeneutics, Ricoeur reconciles these

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790 Even though I apply terminology widely utilized by Ricoeur scholarship, Ricoeur himself was not always content with the term “linguistic turn.” In his 1995 reply to David Stewart, for example, Ricoeur maintains that besides human action, he has always been interested in language, and therefore he sees more continuity than turns in his philosophy: “One can consider language to be the organizing focus of many [of my] investigations. In this regard, there is no reason to speak of a linguistic turn; the *saying* of willing, the *saying* of the symbol, and so on, are already at issue in my earliest works.” Ricoeur 1995g, 444-445.

791 Ricoeur 1995c.

792 Ricoeur 1985, 312. (215); Ricoeur 1969, 402-405. (412-414); Ricoeur 1986a, 251. (200).
two thinkers – often seen as incommensurate in Kant’s strong anti-metaphysical attitude and Hegel’s systemic “Spiritualism.”

In addition, I will also point out in this part that the theme of recognition is developed and discussed by Ricoeur well before *Course of Recognition*. I will, therefore, agree with Morny Joy’s statement in her 2003 essay, namely, that “the notion of recognition, though largely unthematized, has been a vital element in Paul Ricoeur’s reflections since his early work.” In contrast to Joy, who alludes to an essay written in 1965, and discusses *Oneself as Another* (1990) and *Le juste* (1995), I demonstrate, however, that Ricoeur’s theme of recognition is grounded in the analyses of objectivity in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (1949), and explicitly developed and discussed – particularly in relation to the notion of culture – in Ricoeur’s subsequent works *Fallible Man* (1960), and *On Interpretation* (1965).

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793 Joy 2003, 519.
794 Joy 2003, 519-526.
796 I have already discussed Ricoeur’s *The Symbolism of Evil* (1960) in sections 2.3, 3.1, 6.2, and 6.3. – My argument in the current part of this dissertation is not completely a novelty as Ricoeur-scholars have argued before in favor of thematic continuity in Ricoeur’s works. Placing an emphasis on cultural recognition and cultural hermeneutics is, however, not widely discussed among Ricoeur scholars. In contrast to David Pellauer, who in his *Guide for the Perplexed* leaves out entirely the works preceding *Oneself as Another* (Pellauer 2007, 126.), Jean Greisch (whom also Gonçalo Marcelo follows, cf. Marcelo 2011, 112, 128.) finds Ricoeur’s early work to be relevant, but narrows his scope to the hermeneutics of the symbol, which he conceives as possibly already containing “the seed of the problem of recognition.” (Greisch 2010, 92.) David M. Kaplan, for his part, stresses the problem of human capability as Ricoeur’s core theme in his oeuvre, implying that this theme has its roots as early as in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*. Kaplan’s approach is, however, strictly anthropological. (Kaplan 2010, 113-114, 123.) This is close to Jean-Luc Amalric’s position that Ricoeur’s anthropology (“entrée sur les différentes modalités de l’expérience du ‘Je peux’”) – which Amalric sees to be culminating on the analysis of recognition – is fundamentally continuous, and it has three phases starting from the analyses of *Philosophie de la volonté* (especially *Fallible Man*), and followed by more “constructive” takes on *Oneself as Another*, and *Course of Recognition*. (Amalric 2011, 12-13, 17.) Amalric acknowledges the role of intersubjective relations in self-identification (“la question de la relation à autrui comme condition de possibilité de cette formation identitaire du soi”), but does not go beyond demanding a “poetico-practical” approach. (Amalric 2011, 23.)

Both Kaplan and Amalric thus miss the question of culture and approach the question only from the side of philosophical anthropology. In fact, Kaplan even asserts that “Ricoeur already took a global view of social justice and the international institutions that could promote our rights to capabilities. But he never explicitly took on problems of development, nor did he explicitly address human deprivation and misery in poor countries. He never related our right to capabilities to a critique of political economy, to a critique of social and cultural life, to problems of resource and environmental management, or to questions of the meaning and nature of civilization itself. Those were not his explicit philosophical or political concerns.” (Kaplan 2010, 127.)
This validation of my first working hypothesis also strengthens my second thesis that in order to read Ricoeur’s work appropriately, the “course” of recognition should be approached at the level of Ricoeur’s work as a whole rather than solely focusing on his 2004 work *Course of Recognition*. As a result, the third thesis – that Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of being able” requires the support of a cultural hermeneutics – will be discussed in a more detailed manner: I demonstrate that the philosophical anthropology of *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, which examines subjectivity in the light of objectivity, leads Ricoeur to discuss the notion of cultural objects and cultural objectification more elaborately in *Fallible Man* and in *On Interpretation*. This demonstration, that will view objectification as positive instead of simply alienating, takes into account Ricoeur’s assertion that his philosophy is not only post-Hegelian but also influenced by Immanuel Kant. This part will then also argue my fourth working thesis, that Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture recasts his relation not only to Hegel but to Kant as well.

Engaging with Ricoeur’s discussion of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787) and *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1798), I will argue in this part three that Ricoeur uses Kant’s notion of an object for cultural hermeneutic purposes. The

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Although Kaplan is right in pointing out that also Ricoeur had his limits as a philosopher, Kaplan is most certainly mistaken in many of these accusations.

Besides Marianne Moyaert - who (while criticizing Axel Honneth) explicitly uses Ricoeur’s work in favor of cultural minorities, and to support multicultural dialogue (cf. Moyaert 2011, esp. 98-103.) - David Rasmussen offers a rather different take in terms of those concerns raised by Kaplan (Rasmussen 2010, 196.): “The concept of narrative identity developed in *Onself as Another* preserves the nonidentical relation between self and self, and between self and other. One need say only that such a concept or model enables an encounter with non-Western or nondemocratic cultures that allows for sufficient difference so that the identity of the other is not reduced to the identity of the self. The result would be the preservation of certain asymmetry of interpretation. In Ricoeur’s book *The Just*, narrative identity has precisely this function. As such, narrative identity can play a constructive role that, instead of reducing other cultures to our own, enriches the overall significance of the story in which the cultures of the world play the part of the protagonists. However, that very narrative identity that can account for difference, given its temporal exposition as theory of interlocution, requires a certain respect for the other. And in the respect for the other, one acknowledges both the rule of sincerity and the capacity to fulfill it. In this sense, the universality of human rights is acknowledged. That means that the acknowledgment of diversity simultaneously involves the attribution of human rights.”

797 Ricoeur 1985, 312. (215); Ricoeur 1969, 402-405. (412-414); Ricoeur 1986a, 251. (200).
possibility of recognition is fundamentally grounded in this notion of an object, as I have claimed above in thesis five. Ricoeur follows Kant’s metaphysical standpoint in its “limitedness” – that is, possible experience and cognition is limited to objects as appearances and not to things in themselves (an sich) – and this explains Ricoeur’s conviction that a total, absolutizing mediation in a Hegelian manner is inconceivable. Ricoeur combines, as Kant does, symbolization (viz. conceptualization) with understanding. Ricoeur, however, also transcends Kant’s position when insisting that a subject’s full understanding of his situated condition is not only rational-epistemological as Kant argues but also onto-existential, that is, “the real a priori synthesis” adheres to the “ontological constitution” as Martin Heidegger’s famous Kant-book maintains. In Ricoeur’s words, “objectivity indicates this synthetic [ontological] constitution itself as a uniting of meaning to presence.” This conviction leads Ricoeur in the end to insist – as I maintain in my sixth working thesis – that the foundational and grounding poetic nucleus of human culture is found in and by the cultural objects which invite reflection that is unreserved to consider this ontological truth (and not only a mere ontic one).

In sum, to briefly explain the outline of this part, chapter 9 will argue that according to Ricoeur’s The Voluntary and the Involuntary our engagement in being is necessarily objective, since subjectivity is, paradoxically, explained by objectivity. Chapter 10, which focuses on Fallible Man, will confirm this assertion in the light of Ricoeur’s discussion of Kant’s works, The Critique of Pure Reason in particular. Furthermore, the discussion of Ricoeur’s factual post-Kantianism will provide an analysis of cultural recognition – reconnaissance through “cultural objectivity” – in relation to Kant’s Anthropology. In this analysis

800 Ricoeur 1960a, 57. (39).
objectivity will gain an inherently positive, enabling role in self-formation. Put differently, recognition becomes a possibility through the interpretation of cultural objects, or “les signes de l’homme.” Chapter 11 capitalizes this model of cultural recognition by analyzing *On Interpretation* as a hermeneutic of culture. In this course of recognizing Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy, this part three of the dissertation also highlights the fact that Ricoeur introduces the notion of *reconnaissance* – precisely as mutual recognition – in the 1960s. Ricoeur’s critics have failed to fully recognize that Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition* is not only in line with *Time and Narrative* and *Oneself as Another*, but that it is deeply rooted in Ricoeur’s early work, as I shall show.
9. ANTHROPOLOGY AND OBJECTIVITY

9.1 The Reflective Self: Prereflective Imputation and Self-objectification

Understanding the significance of objectivity for Ricoeur’s anthropology necessitates that we recall Ricoeur’s affiliation with the reflexive tradition of thought. Ricoeur states, in an intellectual autobiography, that he was initiated into French reflexive philosophy already in 1930s, “akin to German neo-Kantianism,” as he describes it. According to Ricoeur the two main figures of this tradition were Maine de Biran and Jean Nabert, and especially “Nabert was to have a decisive influence on me in the 1950s and 1960s,” Ricoeur concludes. I have already argued in chapter 5 that both Nabert and Ricoeur hold that although acknowledging the “originating affirmation” and its Ricoeurian variant, the self is not intuitively constituted in the manner of Cartesian philosophy. The difference between Nabert and Ricoeur, however, lies in Ricoeur’s firm conviction that reflection is always interpretation.

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801 Ricoeur 1995b, 6.
803 I will use the term “reflexive” – rather than “reflective” – to refer to reflexive philosophy. The alleged theoretical difference between “reflection” and “reflection” has continued to cause confusion, however, since in English language the root for both of these terms is the same. The Oxford Dictionary of English maintains that the noun “reflexion” is an archaic spelling of “reflection.” The widely used Webster’s Third International Dictionary of the English Language simply mentions that “reflection” is a British variant of “reflection.” Both dictionaries argue that the noun “reflex” originates from Latin reflexus, that is, “a bending back,” and from reflectere, “bend back.” (“Oxford Dictionary of English” 2012.; “Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language: Unabridged with Seven Language Dictionary” 1986.)

According to the Oxford Dictionary the adjective “reflexive” denotes a pronoun that refers back to the subject of the clause in which it is used, as well as means an action performed as a reflex, without conscious thought. In this sense the adjective repeats the meanings of the noun “reflex,” which is an (automated) action that is performed without conscious thought as a response to a stimulus, but also a thing which is determined by and reproduces the essential features or qualities of something else. Webster, however, adds to these meanings the sense of being directed back upon the mind or its operations, yet at the same time maintaining that such introspective sense of “reflex” still holds without necessarily the intervention of consciousness (Webster conflates the two terms when maintaining that the adjective “reflexive” means marked by or capable of reflection, that is, it means “reflective.”)
Jean-Luc Amalric, for example, argues that Ricoeur’s anthropology is at the same time reflective and hermeneutical. The internal conflict of the self is overcome in reflective interpretation that concerns all signs, symbols, and actions in which “our act of existing,” as Amalric calls it, is objectified. Amalric’s argument covers Ricoeur’s works from the early phenomenological writings to the very late hermeneutical ones. “In *Fallible Man, Oneself as Another*, and *Course of Recognition*,” Amalric states, “it is the same method of detour by objectification that Ricoeur practices, so as to guarantee an irreducible distinction between

The verb-form “to reflect” means to throw back (heat, light, or sound) without absorbing it, as by a mirror, but in addition to that it also means to embody or represent (something) in a faithful or appropriate way. In contrast to “reflex,” it furthermore means to think deeply or carefully about something, that is, conscious action. The *Webster Dictionary* even adds a sense of remembering, or to remember with thoughtful consideration, or coming to recollect, realize, or consider in a course of thought. The noun “reflection” then both denotes the throwing back by a body or surface of light, heat, or sound without absorbing it, or a thing that is a consequence of or arises from something else, but also a serious thought or consideration as well as an idea about something, especially one that is written down or expressed. According to *Webster*, “reflection” can mean a thought, an idea, or an opinion formed or a remark made as a result of meditation, just as it can also mean consideration of some subject matter, idea, or purpose often with a view to understanding or accepting it or seeing it in its right relations. A further definition restates the introspective sense by maintaining that “reflection” means also contemplation of the contents or qualities of one’s own thoughts or remembered experiences. “Reflective” is therefore an adjective denoting an action or a subject concerned with ideas or with introspective pondering in the sense of thoughtful or deliberative. The *Oxford Dictionary* follows this sense when it defines “self-reflection” as a serious thought about one’s character and actions.

Following the suggested distinction between “reflexion” and “reflection,” I will maintain in this dissertation that the term “reflexion” denotes an action that precedes self-consciousness, whereas “reflection” is always a self-conscious act of mind. Jean Nabert’s philosophy, for example, is reflexive since it grounds itself in an “originating affirmation” which is - although not being an immediate intuition and certainty of one’s own subjectivity in the full sense of Descartes’ *cogito* - still a post-Kantian reinterpreration of it. Nabert’s *cogito* is polyvalent, it is the conditioning and constituting *act* of consciousness upon which the empirical or “concrete” consciousness, which in turn finds itself in its works, is grounded. In other words, Nabert’s originating affirmation is the productive positing of the self at its source, or “pure consciousness,” for the conceptual-empirical realization of the self that could be called the concrete, “real consciousness.” This pure, “indefinable” consciousness, however, is attainable only through the real consciousness - it is “the inner light of experience,” an indubitable certitude of “I am.” Nabert thus extends from Kant’s intellectualist transcendental unity of apperception, which loses certain subjective intimacy of experience and is therefore “pure nothing,” to concrete human experience in which personality seeks and realizes itself in its acts - and finds the originating affirmation as its own principle. (Nabert 1969, 41-56.) For the same reason I will also use reflexive as a technical term referring to the post-Kantian French tradition that has been widely called “reflexive philosophy” (*la philosophie réflexive*). In distinction, I will also maintain that although Paul Ricoeur recognizes the influences of this tradition in his own work, he also distinguishes himself from it, because he insists that all self-understanding is based on interpretation and therefore on self-conscious mental action by which the subject gradually forms a narrative understanding of his own subjectivity (the *ipse*-self). Ricoeur summarizes this conviction in the last words of his 1962 essay “Nabert on Act and Sign”: “to use other words, which are not Nabert’s but which his work encourages: reflection, because it is not an intuition of the self by the self, can be, and must be, a hermeneutics.” Ricoeur 1969, 221. (222).
immediate ego (le moi immédiat) and reflective self (le soi réflexif).” Amalric maintains, in other words, that Ricoeur’s Fallible Man was already pre-hermeneutical in this indirect, or “detouring” sense, even as an explicitly phenomenological work.

I agree with Amalric on Ricoeur’s methodological continuity – or that the hermeneutic “wager” in The Symbolism of Evil, for example, was not a total overturn – but I also propose that Ricoeur’s reflective anthropology can be drawn even earlier from his first major work, that is, from Ricoeur’s major doctoral thesis The Voluntary and the Involuntary.

In this work Ricoeur explores the two-sided phenomenon or experience of being both capable and bound (situé) – the human condition of “a general reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary,” as he calls it. It is impossible to cover the whole of this massive work in passing, but the tone of Ricoeur’s thought and his key ideas can be made clear, however. Drawing heavily from Gabriel Marcel’s religious existentialism as well as also applying Edmund Husserl’s phenomenological philosophy with a Nabertian spin, Ricoeur strives to examine a subject’s “fundamental possibilities,” that is, those possibilities that are available to a situated, reflecting subject.

Ricoeur’s project of “phenomenology of being able,” I argue, dates back to The Voluntary and the Involuntary. Already in this early work Ricoeur stresses the idea that a human being finds himself in and through his capabilities: “in projecting myself as the subject

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805 Amalric 2011, 17. – Amalric acknowledges, however, that the anthropology developed in The Voluntary and the Involuntary rests already on the notion of shattered cogito: “… ce que montre tout d’abord la phénoménologie de l’expérience volontaire développée dans Le Volontaire et l’Involontaire, c’est que notre expérience est intérieurement brisée parce que le cogito est toujours aux prises avec une alterité irréductible qui est celle du corps propre, du désir et de la vie.” Amalric 2011, 14.
806 Amalric 2011, 18.
808 Ricoeur wrote, as customary, two doctoral theses. The minor thesis was a translation of and a highly appreciated commentary on Edmund Husserl’s Ideen I, and the major thesis was the Marcelian-Jaspersian Le volontaire et l’involontaire. Cf. Reagan 1996, 17.
809 Ricoeur 1949, 260. (276).
810 Ricoeur 1949, 7, 18. (3, 15).
of an action, I affirm myself capable of that action […] I feel myself capable (*je me sens capable*), as an incarnate being situated in the world, of the action which I intend in general.”811 Ricoeur argues – in the wake of Kant’s discussion of the third antinomy of reason812 – that the capable human being, *l’homme capable*, is born for himself in the inescapable dialectics of necessity and freedom. *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* prefigures, therefore, the theories of capable human being that Ricoeur elaborates, for example, later in *Fallible Man, Oneself as Another*, and *Course of Recognition*.

In the course of these analyses of *l’homme capable* Ricoeur maintains that self-understanding is not immediate but reflective. The French phrase “*je me sens capable*” already implies this conviction, but Ricoeur insists explicitly in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* that the Self (*le Soi*) is “a product of separation,” and that it is fallacious to argue for the radical autonomy of the self – Ricoeur re-examines this idea again in *Oneself as Another* as *idem* and *ipse* identities.813 In brief, “the Self is an alienated I,” Ricoeur maintains in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*.814 Furthermore, a subject is not posited by himself but by his necessary social situation of which the most fundamental sign is that I am born from another human being. “I do not posit myself,” Ricoeur summarizes, “I have been posited by others.”815 Actually, the whole context of my life – and not only my parents in the line of ancestors – is involuntary. “Just as I have not chosen my body, I have not chosen my historical situation,” Ricoeur declares.816 My self, my personhood, is available to me only reflectively in a situation.

811 Ricoeur 1949, 189. (203).
814 Ricoeur 1949, 32. (29).
The early Ricoeur already argues for a radically anti-Cartesian “decentering” (décentrement) of subjectivity. Perhaps one of the most dramatic expressions of this conviction is Ricoeur’s description of a subject’s relation to the whole of life: “I am not the center of being. I myself am only one being among beings. The whole which includes me is the parabola of being which I am not. I come from all to myself as from Transcendence to existence.”

Ricoeur concludes that the self is not auto-constituted but given as set against the vast horizon of the whole life that surpasses me. In sum, the self is not immediate but only reflectively given in the face of the other.

Despite maintaining the reflective anti-Cartesian sentiment, Ricoeur avoids arguing for a total annihilation of the “I” as the locus of self-identification. Following the Husserlian-Heideggerian understanding of intentionality, in The Voluntary and the Involuntary Ricoeur defines the notion of “being capable” with regard to the idea of a project: “The project is to-do, the capacity is capacity for doing.” Capacity, in other words, is defined as having the possibility of actualizing the project. “What I project,” Ricoeur then points out, “is possible only when the sense of capability (pouvoir) gives its thrust (donne son élan) and its force to the purely potential designation of the action which I am to do.”

Put differently, the basic intentionality of the “I” locates the capable subject – the “I” that is the subject pole of one’s acts. The possibility of doing “concerns also the being of the subject who projects the doing,” Ricoeur states, “for in doing something, I make myself be (je me fais-être); I am my own capacity for being (pouvoir-être).” The “I” is the identifiable locus of the capable self, but following Ricoeur this locus is revealed only reflectively: “je me fais-être.” The basic

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817 Ricoeur 1949, 444. (472).
818 Ricoeur 1949, 53. (54).
819 Ricoeur 1949, 53. (54).
intentionality of the “I,” in other words, is a needed presumption but – as Ricoeur himself notes – it in itself calls for a “reversal,” a “turning back” (*rebroussement*) to reflection.\(^{821}\)

Self-designation and affirmation, Ricoeur argues, is always reflective, and its conditions must be such that reflection is made possible. Taking the French transitive verb “je me decide à” – I make up *my* mind to – as his guide in the question of self-reference, Ricoeur works his way from explicit cases of self-affirmation to its conditions. Passing through the conscious and verbal affirmation to the feeling of responsibility, and furthermore to commitment (*l'engagement*) – which, according to Ricoeur, “crows the highest self-affirmation”\(^{822}\) as it combines myself and the project – Ricoeur reaches the idea of “the prereflective imputation of myself,” that is, the originating self-reference that has not developed into empirically grounded reflective self-observation. The possibility of self-reflection and the possibility or the judgment of responsibility, he argues, are contained in this prereflective ascription, the originating affirmation of the “I,” which facilitates self-observation by keeping a firm relation between the self and the object of intention.\(^{823}\)

Two major points emerge from this analysis. First, the duality of the prereflective ascription between the “I” and the object of its intention enables the whole intentional, or projecting action. Second, a self-affirmative subject, a self, is achieved only indirectly by this intentional objectification, that is, by those intentional acts which objectify the “I” and facilitate the reappropriation of those acts as manifestations of the self. “The self is not complete in itself,” Ricoeur claims, “in particular it does not will itself in a void but in its projects.”\(^{824}\) To achieve the notion of the self, my endeavors, or my projects – as

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\(^{821}\) Ricoeur 1949, 54. (55).
\(^{822}\) Ricoeur 1949, 56-57. (58).
\(^{823}\) Ricoeur 1949, 57. (58-59).
\(^{824}\) Ricoeur 1949, 57. (59).
Heidegger calls *Dasein’s* constant being-ahead-of-himself\(^{825}\) – will have to be taken into account. “I affirm myself in my acts,” Ricoeur summarizes, “I project my own self into the action to be done.”\(^{826}\) In short, the self finds the “I” as the locus of personal identity that in itself is achievable only in reappropriation.

Such projecting implies that before action the “I” commits itself – *il s’engage* as Ricoeur puts it in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* – as well as binds itself (*il se lie*) to the object that results from the action to be done. Using Heideggerian language, Ricoeur argues that projecting, in which the “I” makes itself into an object, is preconscious and preobservable self-objectification on the basis of which conscious self-recognition is possible:

[The “I”] throws itself ahead of itself in posing itself as the object, as a direct complement of the project. In projecting myself thus, I objectify myself in a way, as I objectify myself in a signature which I will be able to recognize (*je pourrai reconnaître*), identify as mine, as my sign.\(^{827}\)

The prereflective ascription as both commitment and as the subject-pole in self-objectification is, therefore, an active and initial source of self-affirmation as Jean-Luc Amalric argues in his Ricoeur analysis.\(^{828}\) Even though I recognize myself only reflectively, that is, in observing myself in my acts which objectify my subjective being-here, the prereflective “I” remains as the unchangeable core of my identity, or, in other words, as the unreflectible precondition of my self.

As the self’s condition, the “I” cannot be detached from it; self-identification requires this connection. Ricoeur acknowledges that the projected self can take over the

\(^{826}\) Ricoeur 1949, 57. (59).
\(^{827}\) Ricoeur 1949, 57-58. (59).
\(^{828}\) Amalric 2011, 15, 20-21. – I maintain, however, that Ricoeur presents his application of Nabert’s “originating affirmation” already in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* and not later as Amalric argues.
projecting “I” – that there is the risk of “exiling my self into the margins of its acts”829 – but argues that this separation from being a subject to an objectified subject is prevented by the “voiceless consciousness” (la conscience sourde) that all acts spring forth from their subject-pole, from the “I,” that is, from the primordial locus of identity. This voiceless “I,” however, remains completely mute as a projecting self if the subject does not view it through the projected self. “I affirm myself as the subject precisely in the object of my willing,” Ricoeur insists with a Kantian-Husserlian undertone: the intended object stands against my own subjectivity.830 Only as a projected and objectified self can the projecting “I” find its voice and identity, that is, in reflection.

9.2 An Authentic Choice as Practical Action

The preceding section has emphasized the reflective style of Ricoeur’s philosophy as an opening up toward the notion of objectivity. This section capitalizes on that style in a manner that brings us again close to the philosophy of culture. Ricoeur’s analysis expands from intentional projects to practical, cultural action that acknowledges both the world of physical objects and the objects of actions. Just as the will actualizes itself only in its projects,
self-identifying reflection also does not take place in a void but in a situation.\footnote{Cf. Ricoeur 1949, 57. (59).} The self affirms itself capable, identifies itself, “as an incarnate being situated in the world,” Ricoeur states.\footnote{Ricoeur 1949, 189. (203).} In brief, a self-conscious \textit{homme capable} is a result of acting in the cultural world in which my intentions are actualized.

Let me now also bring up the theme of Ricoeur’s Kantianism, implicit in the preceding examination. Ricoeur’s theoretical affinity with Kant unveils in the conviction that although “being situated,” or being tied to empirical intuition, gives the possibility for self-affirmation, it also limits a human being’s understanding of himself: “I am not divine understanding; my comprehension is limited and finite.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1949, 165-166. (174). Cf. Kant 1999, III.B145, B150. (KrV).} According to \textit{The Voluntary and the Involuntary} a human being never achieves a total notion of himself – Kant argues this particularly in the Paralogism section of \textit{The Critique of Pure Reason}\footnote{Kant 1999, III.Bxxvii, B153-158, A341-A366. (KrV).} – but always finds himself “in a corporeal, historical situation, because he stands neither at the beginning nor at the end but always in the middle, \textit{in medias res}.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1949, 166. (175).} Ricoeur calls this state of incompleteness the “genuine condition” of human beings, “\textit{la condition véritable},” the authentic state of being a human.\footnote{Ricoeur 1949, 165. (174).} It is in this situation of never-ending acts that a person self-identifies through reflection.

Self-identification is not an easy task but an unending one, as a subject is contested by all impulses, perceptions, and stimuli, including those coming from the social sphere of life. Ricoeur’s subject is never a solipsistic one but always concerns with-being and

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\textsuperscript{831} Cf. Ricoeur 1949, 57. (59).
\textsuperscript{832} Ricoeur 1949, 189. (203).
\textsuperscript{834} Kant 1999, III.Bxxvii, B153-158, A341-A366. (KrV).
\textsuperscript{835} Ricoeur 1949, 166. (175).
\textsuperscript{836} Ricoeur 1949, 165. (174).
being-among. Human history, and the contemporary social topography which reflects it, add to the challenge of indeterminacy already implicit in being incarnated in the world. Ricoeur maintains that daring and risking are inseparable from the process of individualization that gathers the notion of my self, my personhood:

Social topography projects itself in contradictory affective signs and painful alternatives [or choices]. Familial, professional, cultural, sporting, artistic, religious, and all such associations, tear us apart so that a person has to create his own unity, his independence, his originality, and to dare his own style of life. The person is born (nait) from this distortion among the conflicts of duties.

Ricoeur argues, in other words, that with-being and being-among disperse a subject by throwing him in an unavoidable state of making a choice; this necessity to choose while being torn apart is a fundamental trait of the voluntary and the involuntary. The unity of one’s own style of life, one’s own personality, is not given but gradually formed. Individual consciousness is unified in the midst of a disjointed and shattered society, which threatens to scatter the subject by mutually non-coherent sets of demands, obligations, and appeals. Paradoxically, a subject does not decide himself in a void but precisely in a social and cultural situation that in itself threatens to tear the subject’s unity apart.

In terms of our discussion in this dissertation, let me point out that for Ricoeur choice facilitates self-recognition. In summing up the unavoidable step from hesitation to choice, Ricoeur states in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* that an “authentic choice assumes an authentic debate among values which are not invented but encountered.” An authentic choice also maintains, in Ricoeur’s words, both the possibility

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837 Ricoeur 1949, 407-416. (433-443). – Ricoeur argues in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* that each individual consciousness is not independent from the social history of humankind, and that this results the accumulation of social history that is carried in contemporary consciousnesses: “all the ages of humankind are thus represented within our consciousness.” Ricoeur 1949, 141. (148). Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 239. (161-162).
838 Ricoeur 1949, 141. (148).
839 Ricoeur 1949, 171. (180).
of being in agreement with oneself – thus also recognizing oneself as “I recognize (reconnais) my line of conduct in the new decision”\textsuperscript{840} – and the possibility of taking a risk. Ricoeur argues that these two possibilities, which pertain to received, suggested or imposed existence (viz., encountering values or other’s choices) and willed, self-chosen human existence (viz., recognizing oneself in one’s decision), are reconciled in one’s practical act which has the acknowledged self as its subject. “To exist is to act,” Ricoeur maintains.\textsuperscript{841} A “project” is a mere intention of action but a practical act is authenticating that intention, testing and verifying it in the corporeal world, thus taking on risk as well as choosing one’s own self.\textsuperscript{842} In sum, “I ‘recognize’ (reconnais) the empty intention in the full act.”\textsuperscript{843} In other words, the intention remains an idea until it has been realized, put to test in the practical world that recognizes only actions and not silent intentions. In practical action, therefore, the choice actualizes itself and becomes my \textit{authentic choice}. In short, the step from hesitation to authentic choice, from imposed existence to self-recognized human existence, is made in practical action.

Since practical actions gain their signification only by their objects, Ricoeur also calls that action “expressive”: voluntary action expresses the object of a person’s will, and therefore also his self-affirmation in his acts, insofar as that action pertains to its intended object.\textsuperscript{844} Even though Ricoeur is mainly interested in intentional, voluntary actions

\textsuperscript{840} Ricoeur 1949, 161. (169). – Ricoeur clarifies his statement of the correlation between an authentic choice and self-recognition by also mentioning that “I recognize myself,” \textit{je me reconnais moi-même}.

\textsuperscript{841} Ricoeur 1949, 316. (334).

\textsuperscript{842} Ricoeur 1949, 187-188. (201-202). – A practical act includes muscular movement, although it is difficult to describe how will and bodily movements are combined. Ricoeur argues therefore that “the acid test of a philosophy of the will is indisputably the problem of muscular effort.” Ricoeur 1949, 291. (308).

\textsuperscript{843} Ricoeur 1949, 191. (206).

\textsuperscript{844} Practical action, or transforming my environment by altering my object-relation, is done in a corporeal world, that is, in the world of physical objects and objects of actions. Ricoeur argues that the personal body, “my own body,” is already an indication of the fact that subjectivity cannot dismiss this dimension of being human. A subject’s personal body is, as Ricoeur defines it in \textit{The Voluntary and the Involuntary}, “an original relation of subjectivity to the world.” Being a subject in the world includes the notion of having my own body:
– in contrast to non-voluntary actions such as reflexes – some automated bodily actions such as “cigarette rolling”\textsuperscript{845} are also expressive due to their basic voluntary origin. In other words, these actions manifest the personality of their subject. “The smoker who automatically rolls a cigarette knows very well that he does it ‘expressly’,” Ricoeur states, “because he is capable of recognizing (reconnaître) his act as his and to take it up again as a focal act.”\textsuperscript{846} A smoker might have perfected his skills of cigarette rolling to the level of automation, but this still does not prevent of thinking cigarette rolling as an intentional, expressive act.

As argued above, however, social topography necessitates and guides person-formation that in itself pertains to practical action by which a subject’s personal character is expressed and “tested.” Read in connection with this idea of practical action, the notion of topography means that the environment of my action is not blank but a cultured one. Approaching Henri Bergson’s notion of \textit{homo faber}, the constructive human being who, besides physical artifacts, makes indefinitely variable linguistic tools,\textsuperscript{847} Ricoeur argues

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\item I use it in action. “Acting,” however, “is a way in which a subject relates himself to objects,” by bringing a change to these relations in using the personal body. Ricoeur therefore maintains that practical action is “a transformation of my environment itself,” but in such a way which combines doing with its intent – the doing “passes over” into its object as Ricoeur describes it. “The pragma is this complete correlate of doing.” Practical action, in other words, is not mere “doing” but “doing” in the light of its object. Ricoeur 1949, 194, 196. (208, 210).

\item Ricoeur, perhaps surprisingly, returns to this particular example multiple times in \textit{The Voluntary and the Involuntary}. Cf. Ricoeur 1949, 38, 187, 313. (39, 201, 331).

\item Although the term “\textit{homo faber}” was already used as a description of a human being in Latin literature, it is most commonly associated with the French philosopher Henri Bergson (1859-1941). For the purpose of the present study, his critical understanding of \textit{homo sapiens} and seeing humans as “producing beings” - presented in \textit{L’évolution créatrice} (1907) - is well worthy to be cited at length: “As regards human intelligence, it has not been sufficiently noted that mechanical invention has been from the first its essential feature, that even to-day our social life gravitates around the manufacture and use of artificial instruments, that the inventions which strew the road of progress have also traced its direction. […] A century has elapsed since the invention of the steam-engine, and we are only just beginning to feel the depths of the shock it gave us. But the revolution it has effected in industry has nevertheless upset human relations altogether. New ideas are arising, new feelings are on the way to flower. In thousands of years, when, seen from the distance, only the broad lines of the present age will still be visible, our wars and our revolutions will count for little, even supposing they are remembered at all; but the steam-engine, and the procession of inventions of every kind that accompanied it, will perhaps be spoken of as we speak of the bronze or of the chipped stone of pre-historic times: it will serve to define an age.

If we could rid ourselves of all pride, if, to define our species, we kept strictly to what the historic and the prehistoric periods show us to be constant characteristic of man and of intelligence, we should say not \textit{Homo}
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forcefully that since subjects are primordially constituted by with-being and being-among, human action is also re-acting to former actions:

Our civilized milieu is particularly complex: it is peopled with the products of human action. Fields, marks, tables, books, etc., are the same time tasks and utensils involved in new actions. Since the milieu of human behavior has itself been produced by behavior, man reacts to his own works. This eminently technical character of the human milieu and of human action depends, as we know, on the fact that man works with tools to produce the “artificial” objects of his civilized needs and even of his vital needs. This is why man’s action is typically “artificial”: it is technē, mother of arts and techniques. 848

I don’t intend to reword this whole dense passage but only emphasize Ricoeur’s idea that a human being “reacts to his own works,” he re-acts while pro-jecting, and the idea that the milieu of practical action is the cultured world. From these Ricoeur concludes that the world is presented to me as a human subject “as horizon, as theater, and as a matter of my actions.”849 By “habits of civilization and culture” as generally acquired forms of practices and imposed social rhythms850 my practical action, in other words, relates to general human object-setting – to habitual action – that guides the authentication of my intentions as it reacts to the cultural milieu in which I am corporeally situated. In that theater of cultural milieu – that, according to History and Truth, also constitutes the “human time” as the “time of works”851 – I present myself to the others but also to myself in objectifying myself in my practical action and reflecting upon the meaning of those actions to my own subjectivity. In sum, the cultural world is the stage for me to present my self to myself by forming sapiens, but Homo faber. In short, intelligence, considered in what seems to be its original feature, is the faculty of manufacturing artificial objects, especially [intellectual] tools [such as symbols] to make tools [such as language], and of indefinitely varying the manufacture [e.g. in discourse].” Cf. Bergson 1975, 153-154, 172-178.

848 Ricoeur 1949, 197. (211-212).
849 Ricoeur 1949, 198. (212).
850 Ricoeur 1949, 265, 271. (281, 287). – Ricoeur also argues that “habit is the most perfect instrument in civilizing the body.” Ricoeur 1949, 297. (314-315).
851 Ricoeur 1967a, 82. (82).
“artificial” objects, through which I can reflectively gain an understanding of my cultural and vital needs.

9.3 The Spell: the Detour of Objectivity

For the sake of the discussion that follows in chapter 10, it is important for us to pay attention to the fact that Ricoeur’s early anthropology frequently returns – as we have seen – to the notions of object, objectification, and objectivity. The inheritance of Kantian thought shines through in Ricoeur’s claim that my subjectivity, my acting self, is always and only through the objectivity of objects.852 The phrase “to exist is to act” applies, according to Ricoeur, “to me in terms of effort,” but also “to things in terms of the resistance they offer me.”853 The “resistance” Ricoeur discusses in The Voluntary and the Involuntary refers to Maine de Biran’s idea that a subject’s intentional action is countered by the constantly present “alien terminus” which resists the subject’s efforts.854 A subject remains captive to things and matters at hand: in human experience of life no pure subjectivity is possible. This is why Ricoeur asserts that “an object is not non-self but a presence of an other.”855 A subject is constantly in the presence of other-than-its-subjectivity. Ricoeur also argues in The Voluntary and the Involuntary that “an act can be understood only as intention, that is by its object.”856 Insofar as I act intentionally, I objectify myself in my actions, I work in a world of objects to produce objects, that is, I intend to express my subjective self in an objective manner.

853 Ricoeur 1949, 316. (334).
854 Ricoeur 1949, 316. (334-335).
855 Ricoeur 1949, 316. (334).
856 Ricoeur 1949, 321. (343).
Subjecting oneself to the presence of an other, to the texture of experienced reality, is consenting, according to Ricoeur’s “third cycle” of analysis in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*. In contrast to deciding and acting, Ricoeur argues that consenting “acquiesces to necessity,” that it silently assents that the condition of my willing is already given and therefore involuntary. Consenting is thus a more concealed form of the will’s relation to the involuntary than deciding and acting, in which the involuntary, or all that is necessarily “given” and received, is more apparent. In brief, Ricoeur defines the task of the whole of *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* by three guiding ideas – reciprocity, subjectivity, and conciliation – which form an argumentative succession and therefore also the structure of the work: “the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary, the necessity of going back beyond psychological dualism and seeking the common standard of the involuntary and the voluntary in subjectivity, and finally the primacy of conciliation over paradox.” What I can will appears only in connection with what cannot be willed, but my will also manifests my subjectivity, my personal life among all life – this subjectivity, which acknowledges the involuntary, reconciles the paradox of necessity and freedom. Ricoeur maintains that this inevitable reciprocity between the human voluntary and involuntary is overcome in consent which reconciles human nature and the freedom of human will within situatedness.

Ricoeur notifies his readers that consenting to situatedness is not doing away with a person’s will, however. According to Ricoeur’s definition, consenting is “*un engagement dans l'être,*” an engagement in being, a constant note to self – made when exercising the will – of being necessarily involved in being, that is, of being situated. Ricoeur argues that this

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858 Ricoeur 1949, 319. (341).
859 Ricoeur 1949, 322-323. (344-345).
860 Ricoeur 1949, 323. (345).
engagement and involvement (which, unlike the human will, are incorruptible because consenting is not a question of possession but of necessity) is an inevitable aspect of willing: “wise men have always construed the cognition (connaissance) of necessity as a moment of freedom.” To consent, Ricoeur emphasizes, “is still to do,” albeit it is also “adopting” all determinations that ground my subjectivity. Ricoeur therefore adheres to “Kant’s warning that there is no freedom without law.” The human freedom is engagement with necessity and consenting to its lawlike determinations. A determined subject, however, is not a subject-like object but a willing subject engaged in living being.

Besides Ricoeur’s treatment of a living subject, the notions of object and objectivity pose a problem for his philosophical inquiry. Despite the statement that willingly moving my body affirms a continuity of freedom and nature, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary remains a challenge for his philosophical anthropology. Ricoeur admits that “the involuntary [which presents itself naturally as an objective reality among the objects of the world] seems in principle to demand an objective treatment and there seems to be no common standard between object and subject.” Besides conceiving a subject as an object in the world, Ricoeur points out that an objective analysis of a subject proposes this same dilemma.

Being determined to make a voluntary choice – which also is an objective, fundamental human condition – should, according to Ricoeur, be accurately described in non-subjectivizing terms. How could a subject’s experience, however, survive in the face of such scientific objectivity, Ricoeur ruminates, and returns then to the idea of my body:

861 Ricoeur 1949, 322. (344).
862 Ricoeur 1949, 323-324. (345-346).
863 Ricoeur 1949, 170. (179).
864 Ricoeur 1949, 324-325. (347-348).
865 Ricoeur 1949, 325. (348).
“Total objectification of man is an invitation to betray the responsibility I have for my body itself.”

It is the Marcelian mystery of “my own body” (mon corps propre) that resists all attempts to reduce my subjective-bodily experience to mere objective explanation. Following his mentor Gabriel Marcel, Ricoeur argues that objective problematization fails to retain a connection to what Marcel calls the mystery of living existence.

Let me turn this reading of The Voluntary and the Involuntary to its closing by summing up the notion of the “spell” of objectivity; even if Ricoeur strongly emphasizes the ideas of objects, objectification, and objectivity, subjectivity still remains the core of his thought in the work. The “full scope” of living human experience, “une expérience intégrale du Cogito,” remains his task from the beginning to the very end. If a subject would submit completely to objectivity, or if instead of describing the intersubjectively experienced human condition one were to try to explain it objectively, it would be impossible to reintroduce subjectivity – Ricoeur argues in a Kantian manner – since “to conceive an object is to conceive of it under a law; a partial or permissive determinism makes no sense.”

Categorical determinism, in other words, does not allow relativism or subjective variation. If determinism is adopted, a subject is in this sense “lost,” since the subject’s subjectivity has no significance; it is a mere object itself without real freedom. Objective necessity is in Ricoeur’s final analysis pure causality that, for this reason, applies “only between object and object.” The use and function of such objective explication of the human condition subjectively encountered then becomes a problem for Ricoeur, who explicitly wishes to retain a connection to a living experience of a subject: the human subject vanishes otherwise.

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866 Ricoeur 1949, 326. (348).
868 Ricoeur 1949, 12, 456. (8, 485-486).
871 Ricoeur 1949, 328. (351).
A universalizing explanation does not reach the heart of my subjective experience of freedom but empties it completely.

Subjectivity cannot be understood solely in terms of objectivity. The “spell of objectivity,” of which Ricoeur warns his readers, is to forget or neglect the subjective experiences of necessity; “a mode of our existence,” as Ricoeur defines this necessity “within” us. The necessity “within” is, Ricoeur points out, the only necessity that is coherent with the idea of consent. Only the experienced necessity “can be matched with the freedom of consent, for only an internal experience can be partial with respect to freedom and call forth an act of the will which it completes,” he insists. The paradox, however, still remains: the delicate balance of the voluntary and the involuntary – at the level of description/explanation: subjectivity and objectivity – should be maintained, and reducing objectivity to a subjective quasi-objectivity would also avoid the richness of the paradox.

In terms of what follows later in this dissertation, it is also important to pay attention to the fact that Ricoeur overcomes the either-or of subjectivity/objectivity by introducing a dialectics of being human that acknowledges a subject’s existence as a task in life. Existence as an exercise of freedom is, already in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, described as an endless process: “I am always in the process of beginning to be free, I have always begun to live when I say ‘I am.’” The fundamental argument for this resolution – which retains the focus in a subject whose self remains a task – is given in the following passage that not only clarifies why the detour through (scientific) objectivity is necessary for an understanding of the human condition, but also forecasts Ricoeur’s much later

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872 Ricoeur 1949, 327. (350).
873 Ricoeur 1949, 329. (351).
874 Ricoeur 1949, 326, 393-394. (349, 419).
875 Ricoeur 1949, 415. (441).
discussions of the necessary dialectics of scientific explanation and hermeneutic-existential understanding.  

Furthermore, for the sake of this current part three of this dissertation, let me also reconnect with the theme of Ricoeur’s Kantianism; it springs forth once again in this same passage when he alludes to the universal categories, such as causality, and their function to enable experience:

Does [the idea] that [necessity can be the locus of our responsibility] mean that in reverting from the objective to the subjective we lose the benefit of scientific knowledge of character, of the unconscious, and of life? Not at all; we experience nothing subjectively unless we try, at the risk of failure, to conceive of it along causal lines. The detour through objective knowledge is necessary; at its limits we begin to sense necessity for us and in us. It is always a definite objective knowledge which lends its inadequate language to Cogito’s experience. We shall thus be led to retain the language of causality as an index of that investment of freedom by necessity subjectively experienced; in this sense we are, we shall say, determined by our character [which situates me, casts me into individuality], our unconscious, and our life. This is expressed in the fine term, human *condition*, which articulates well the necessity to which I yield by the very fact that I have not chosen to exist. But we must not lose sight of the improper and indirect character of such language: it is transposed from the level of explanation, where causal necessity is not limited and made complete by any freedom, to the level of the lived where necessity is the condition of a freedom.  

Ricoeur insists here that even though the subject’s living experience of his freedom is at the crux of his interest, it is necessary for him to take an argumentative detour through objectivity. Only by this detour, or, rather, in the light of the Kantian objective, does Ricoeur’s notion of the self as a task – which correlates with the idea of human condition – become apparent and henceforth understandable.

The objective description renders the subject’s experience intelligible by conceptualizing and universalizing it, but it remains inadequate for the same reason.

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876 Ricoeur 1983, 187-194. (132-137); Ricoeur 1986a, 137-182, 197-211. (105-143, 156-167).
Ricoeur’s philosophy of decentered subjectivity can only be paradoxical as he himself admits. The objective detour is necessary to gain an understanding of a subject’s condition as both receptive and productive: “Freedom is not a pure act. It constitutes itself in receiving what it does not produce; values, capacities, and sheer nature.” As in *Course of Recognition* over fifty years later, receiving therefore becomes in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* “the pivotal category” on which a subject’s freedom depends. Subjectivity is, paradoxically, explained by objectivity when the notion of subjectivity is regained in the midst of necessitating conditions. The dialectics of subjectivity and objectivity, in which *hopeful consent* – Ricoeur refers to the postulates of Kant’s practical philosophy – takes place as a “yes” that is “won from the no,” therefore results in the conciliation with paradox Ricoeur was searching for. Even if overcoming the paradox then becomes possible, it cannot be emptied but only accepted in consent.

Alluding to Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* Ricoeur thus maintains in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* that “the beginning of philosophy is a Copernican revolution which centers the world of object on the Cogito: the object is for the subject.” Instead of thinking how the subject conforms to objects, Ricoeur adopts Kant’s famous “Copernican revolution” for subjectivity itself in claiming that the object must conform to the constitution of the subject. “This entire work,” Ricoeur asserts, “is carried out under the sign of that first [philosophical] Copernican revolution.” As Ricoeur maintains later in

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878 Ricoeur 1949, 444. (472).
879 Ricoeur 1949, 454. (484).
880 Ricoeur 2004b, 351. (243).
881 Ricoeur 1949, 22. (19).
883 Ricoeur 1949, 443. (471).
884 Cf. Kant 1999, III.Bxvi-xvii. (*KrV*).
885 Ricoeur 1949, 443. (472).
Course of Recognition, this revolution is the “founding act of critical philosophy.”ˈRicoeur’s own application of critical philosophy locates itself after this revolution.

In conclusion, therefore, I maintain that The Voluntary and the Involuntary “had already begun Ricoeur’s rethinking of Kant” as Pamela Sue Anderson also argues in her own analysis.ˈ As we have seen, the whole of The Voluntary and the Involuntary is thoroughly Kantian, manifested by Ricoeur’s requirement that a firm relation – maintained by prereflective imputation as a transcendental condition – between a subject and the objects, for this subject, facilitates reflective observation.ˈ The most convincing testimony of Ricoeur’s situatedness in the Kantian tradition, including and beyond the first Critique, is his concluding definition of human freedom, which is determined by Kantian “limit concepts,” or limited to the realm of possible experience: “our freedom is only human and reaches a complete understanding of itself only with respect to some limit concepts which we also understand in general as Kantian ideas, regulatory, and not constitutive, that is, as ideal essences which determine the limit degree of essences of consciousness.”ˈ Human freedom is experienced freedom and thus limited to the possible experience regulated by the transcendental conditions Kant laid out in the first Critique. It is also, however, the same freedom that Kant postulated in the second, and attempted to reconcile with necessity in the third Critique. Freedom, in other words, is regulated, conditioned freedom, but it still is thinkable as freedom.ˈ

Ricoeur’s dialectics of being human, however, intentionally avoids adopting an exclusively Kantian position, and transcends its epistemological tone by insisting on a

ˈAnderson 1993, 10-11, 45-46, 50-54.
“second revolution”: reflection which takes into account a subject’s bodily experience “frees us from an intellectualism which pays attention only to impersonal structures of knowledge (categories of understanding and ideas of reason).”891 In a manner similar to the existential phenomenology of Gabriel Marcel, *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* expresses the worry that focusing solely on the transcendental conditions of experience and cognition – the “universal conditions which make knowledge in general possible” as Ricoeur defines them – renders the personal, subjective level of experience meaningless, and overlooks the embodied person under the transcendental conditions of “I think.”892

Ricoeur’s critical Kantian attunement remained throughout his works. *Course of Recognition*, Ricoeur’s work at the other end of his career, repeats this idea of the importance of personal experience when calling for an expansion to Kant’s transcendental idealism that would recognize “the situation of the subject and the subject in situation.”893 Objectivity facilitates self-recognition, but the transcendental analysis of the conditions for the possibility of experience is not enough: Ricoeur also considers the living subject’s experience. In particular, universalizing language does not reckon the social experience of being a living subject. Ricoeur argues, therefore, in his essay “Science and Ideology” that “all objectifying knowledge about our position in society, in a social class, in a cultural tradition, and in history is preceded by a relation of belonging upon which we can never entirely reflect. Before any critical distance, we belong to a history, to a class, to a nation, to a culture, to one or several traditions.”894 The experience of belonging to a context is not exhausted in

891 Ricoeur 1949, 318. (337).
893 Ricoeur 2004b, 90-91, 93. (58, 60).
objective explanation as conceived in Kant's transcendentalism. Ricoeur argues, as we have seen, that the objective detour is needed for a subject’s self-understanding, which has to include the level of personal experience as onto-existentially situated.

Now that we have introduced Ricoeur's affinity with the neo-Kantian reflexive philosophy as well as Ricoeur's critical allusions to Kant, his self-definition as a “post-Hegelian Kantian” philosopher is perhaps already less enigmatic. *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* follows Kant in regulating the realm of human understanding by demanding the objectivity of objects as the condition for the subjectivity of subject, yet still insists that the universal explanation of the human condition is not enough for understanding the concrete experience of being a situated subject. This subject can only recognize itself, and hence begin to understand itself, by constantly taking the detour through objectivity which extends far beyond being only a transcendental condition of cognition.
10. **THE OBJECTS OF HUMAN WORKS**

In this chronological survey of Ricoeur’s works, let me now move on to his subsequent monograph *Fallible Man*. It continues the problematics of *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* while also striving to grasp the spheres of human experience that were “bracketed,” or put aside, in the preceding work: fault and the conditions of human fallibility. This second volume of *Philosophie de la volonté* that began with *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* – or, actually, the first part of the second volume – provides a study of the structures of human reality and therefore “represents a broadening of the anthropological perspective of the first work, which was much more extensively a study of the structures of the will,” as Ricoeur himself makes the distinction between the tasks of these two works.

In *Fallible Man* Ricoeur makes a clear distinction between a theoretical and the practical “stage” of an anthropology of human disproportion, that is, between the transcendental synthesis and the practical synthesis as he calls them using Kantian language. Although these both refer to “synthesis” in their respective manners – in knowing and in acting – the practical one is capable of opening the third stage of Ricoeur’s analysis in *Fallible Man*, namely, that of human affects, or “the philosophy of feeling.” In this threefold structuring of his *Fallible Man*, Ricoeur perhaps could be said to allude to Kant’s three *Critiques*: *The Critique of Pure Reason* defines the necessary conditions for the possibility of cognition and possible experience, *The Critique of Practical Reason* those of...

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895 The other part of the second volume of *Philosophy of the Will* is *The Symbolism of Evil*, published separately but at the same time as *Fallible Man*. As Ricoeur had anticipated in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* to publish a trilogy under the title of *Philosophy of the Will* (*The Voluntary and the Involuntary* being volume one of this trilogy), this decision has caused much confusion ever after the separate publication of the two parts of the second volume. The third volume was never published, but Ricoeur scholars seem to hold on to the idea that Ricoeur’s work that follows *The Symbolism of Evil* can be thought of as an extended “third volume” of *Philosophy of the Will*.

896 Ricoeur 1960a, 11-12. (xliii).

897 Ricoeur 1960a, 64. (47).

human freedom and moral action, and *The Critique of Judgment* those of the harmonious interplay of cognitive powers to which the feeling of pleasure is connected.\(^999\) In terms of the progression of knowing, acting, and feeling, the structure of Ricoeur’s *Fallible Man* simulates the structure of Kant’s critical works.

The overall Kantian tone of Ricoeur’s *Fallible Man* is not mere speculative observation, however. Ricoeur draws the order of the “deduction of the categories of fallibility” in *Fallible Man* from Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* – more precisely, from the triad of the categories of quality Kant introduces in the section commonly called metaphysical deduction, or “the clue to the discovery of all pure concepts of the understanding”: reality, negation, and limitation.\(^900\) Ricoeur argues that he transposes Kant’s categories “onto the level of a philosophical anthropology so as to systematize the language employed throughout the course of this book.”\(^901\) This three-part “course” of *Fallible Man*, in brief, follows themes of 1) knowing, focusing on “thing,” 2) acting, focusing on “a person,” and 3) feeling, focusing on “cultural passions” – which parallels the structure of Kant’s critical works. Ricoeur, in other words, maps Kant’s transcendental epistemology onto his own work and claims that he bases the philosophical anthropology he develops in *Fallible Man* on the first of Kant’s *Critiques*.

Despite Ricoeur’s professedly unorthodox reading of Kant,\(^902\) *Fallible Man* is saturated with Kant’s philosophy beyond the critical works: it turns against the critical works with the help of Kant’s *Anthropology*. Ricoeur’s engagement with Kant’s philosophy amounts

\(^{999}\) Kant 1999, V.171-179, 195-198. (*KdU*).

\(^{900}\) Kant 1999, III.A78-80/B104-106. (*KrV*).

\(^{901}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 152. (135). – Ricoeur’s continuing commitment to *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, however, is apparent when he translates the Kantian triad to originating affirmation, existential negation, and human mediation. Ricoeur maintains in the concluding study of *Fallible Man* that this interpretation correlates with his own triad of knowing, acting, and feeling analyzed in the length of the same work. Ricoeur 1960a, 152-157. (135-141).

\(^{902}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 151-152. (135).
to, I maintain, not only an anthropology of a fallible human being, but also to a corresponding philosophy of culture which concretizes the notion of object in *Fallible Man*. I will demonstrate that according to Ricoeur a subject becomes recognized and gains an understanding of being a capable human being – *l'homme capable de faillir* – only in the light of this philosophy of culture that is grounded in the idea of cultural objectivity. I maintain, therefore, that *Fallible Man* prefigures with yet another overlapping triad of consciousness, self-consciousness, and cultural recognition the much later triad in *Course of Recognition*, namely, the triad of identity, self-recognition, and mutual recognition. The focus of this chapter, however, is on the Kantian tones of *Fallible Man* which participate in the broader philosophy of mediated cultural recognition this dissertation has laid out so far.

This chapter 10, and section 10.3 in particular, holds a central place in the dissertation. While following the structure of Kantian-Ricoeurian triads, it specifies Ricoeur’s understanding of cultural objectivity that necessitates a hermeneutic of culture. I will focus in section 10.1 on consciousness by notions of knowing, phenomenon, schema, and reality – this thematic corresponds with *The Critique of Pure Reason*. Second, in 10.2 I will examine the level of self-consciousness in terms of “practical mediation”: acting and personhood. Section 10.2 thus parallels with *The Critique of Practical Reason*. Third, section 10.3 reconciles the rift between the “theoretical” (*viz.* nature or reality) and the “practical” (*viz.* freedom) approaches by centering on cultural recognition in its analyses of affects and cultural passions. Even though Ricoeur in this third phase moves away from Kant’s critical works to the *Anthropology*, the section 10.3 still accords with *The Critique of Judgment*, in which a peculiar

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903 Ricoeur 1960a, 161. (145).
feeling of pleasure indicates the reconciling, harmonious interplay of the cognitive powers, and in which Kant presents his cultural theory.  

10.1 The Synthesis under Objects: the Formal Unity of Consciousness

Ricoeur opens his argument in *Fallible Man* with a reflection he calls transcendental, because it starts with the notion of an object; “it is a reflection that begins with the object […], reflection upon the object.”  

Ricoeur’s line of reasoning is easier to comprehend if the main thesis of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* is explained first. The crux of Kant’s transcendental deduction – his most important inquiry into the faculty of understanding – lies in the so-called reciprocity thesis (§17 of B-edition) that argues for necessary conditions that hold both for a cognizable object and cognizing subject, and in Kant’s definition of an object: it is “that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united.”  

In other words, cognizing a determinate object requires that the pure concepts of understanding be applied to the given intuition, thus synthesizing the sensibly given intuition under the concepts of understanding that belong to one and self-same consciousness. The object, in sum, stands as a litmus test for philosophical anthropology, that is, for a philosophical understanding of a subject.  

To further clarify Ricoeur’s approach, I will explain the heart of Kant’s reciprocity thesis briefly. Since everything manifold in an intuition – or the sensibly given variegated material that is “offered” for synthesis under the pure conditions of time and

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904 Kant 1999, V.177-179, 431-434. (*KdU*).
905 Ricoeur 1960a, 36. (18).
906 Kant 1999, III.Axvi. (*KrV*).
907 Kant 1999, IIIB138. (*KrV*).
908 Kant 1999, III.B137. (*KrV*).
909 Ricoeur 1960a, 35-36. (17).
space - must necessarily refer to the “I think” in the same subject in whom the manifold is found, all the manifold of intuition necessarily stands under the condition of original synthetic unity of apperception, that is, under one unified consciousness. In Kant’s words, “all unification of representations requires unity of consciousness in the synthesis of them.” Kant concludes that the formal unity of consciousness is therefore “that which alone constitutes the relation of representations to an object in their objective validity, and consequently is that which makes them into cognition and of which even the possibility of the understanding depends.” In sum, the transcendental unity of apperception, or the necessary synthetic unity of consciousness, and the determinate combination of the manifold of given intuition – that is, synthesis upon the object in its concept – are interdependent. Put differently, Kant argues that the subjectivity of a subject, and the objectivity of an object are reciprocal.

This brief elucidation of one of the key ideas in The Critique of Pure Reason clarifies what Ricoeur means when he asserts that he initiates a genuinely philosophical anthropology “by means of a reflection of a ‘transcendental’ style, that is, a reflection that starts not with myself but with the object before me, and from there traces back to its

910 Kant 1999, III.B33-73, A76-77/B102, B129-130, B136. (KrV).
911 Kant 1999, III.B137. (KrV).
912 Kant 1999, III.B137. (KrV). – In terms of rigor, let me mention that my brief summary of Kant’s reciprocity thesis does not include Kant’s full argument, that is, his argument for the other direction from sensible intuition to transcendental apperception. The relation between pure apperception and an object, in fact, must be argued from this other direction as well in order it to hold: 1) The original synthetic unity of apperception is “entirely independent from all conditions of sensible intuition.” Because the pure form of sensibility is not cognition but only gives the manifold, it is, therefore, of this given manifold of intuition that a subject must “synthetically bring about a determinate combination” for there to be cognition. This means that the unity of apperception requires that in a cognition there is a synthesis of representations, as 2) “the unity of this [synthetic] action is at the same time the unity of consciousness in the concept.” The synthesis of the manifold is possible only as a synthesis under the concepts. But then, 3) as the synthetic unity in the concept is, in cognitions, possibly only by the manifold that is given in an intuition, it is also so that “thereby is an object first cognized” (since “an object is that in the concept of which the manifold of a given intuition is united”). Kant 1999, III.B137-138. (KrV).
conditions of possibility.” Ricoeur, in other words, uses Kant’s transcendental epistemology in highlighting the radical disproportion, or shatteredness, of a subject: an anthropological reflection can only start with the object that stands in contrast to the subject. A subject is at best an intermediary, Ricoeur argues in *Fallible Man*, “discovered reflectively upon the object.” Ricoeur’s initial stance is, therefore, transcendental in its orientation to the object, although he wows at the outset of this analysis to expand and enlarge reflection on the human condition to the levels of action and affection – the transcendental reflection is perhaps necessary but insufficient.

The strength of Ricoeur’s transcendental reflection is at the same time its limitation: it is reflection that begins with and concerns objects. “The synthesis that [this reflection] reveals and inspects will be a synthesis only in the object, in the thing,” Ricoeur points out; it reveals “a synthesis that is merely intentional, projected outside, into the world, into the structure of the objectivity it makes possible.” As Kant did, Ricoeur admits that this power of synthesis – rooted in the transcendental imagination – can be called “consciousness,” but Ricoeur clarifies that this consciousness is “not for itself.” Even if the transcendental reflection allows us to discuss consciousness, this consciousness “remains purely intended, represented in [its objective] correlate.” An analysis of the necessary conditions for the possibility of cognition, Ricoeur argues, does not give a full comprehension of the concrete experience of the human condition.

Even though the transcendental analysis functions only as an acknowledged philosophical starting point for further reflection, Ricoeur still argues that this analysis points

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913 Ricoeur 1960a, 25. (5).
914 Ricoeur 1960a, 25. (5).
915 Ricoeur 1960a, 35. (17).
916 Ricoeur 1960a, 36. (18).
917 Ricoeur 1960a, 36. (18).
out the most fundamental disproportion, or shatteredness, of a human subject: a finite understanding resulting from a subject’s perspectival receptivity. “Kant was not wrong,” Ricoeur maintains, “in identifying finitude and receptivity: according to him the finite is a rational being that does not create the objects of its representation but receives them.”

Ricoeur, in other words, follows Kant’s statement that the limit of possible experience is constituted by the given manifold of empirical intuition. This receptivity – already referred to a number of times in this dissertation – is according to *Fallible Man* the “primary modality” of human mediation. Again, then, a human being receives before he gives productively in return.

A subject is first of all bound to empirical intuition, or sense perception, but this receiving of empirical raw data is also limited by its perspective. Ricoeur points out that an appearance “refers me back to my point of view”; that is, an object is nothing more than a *phenomenon* cognized from a point of view, and not a thing in itself, a *noumenon*. In other words, the object refers back to the subject as “a finite center of perspective” as Ricoeur defines it. In sum, “to perceive from here is the finitude of perceiving something, the point of view is the ineluctable initial narrowness of my openness to the world.” This primal human finitude – being bound to receiving – is unconquerable according to Ricoeur.

Ricoeur argues, however, that the finite human understanding is countered by an infinite human will. Strikingly, “it is finite man himself who speaks of his own finitude,” Ricoeur notices and maintains that human finitude is conceivable only when it has become a

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918 Ricoeur 1960a, 38. (20).
919 Kant 1999, III.A239/B298. (*KrV*).
920 Ricoeur 1960a, 38. (20).
921 Ricoeur 1960a, 39. (21).
922 Kant 1999, III.A235-260, B294-315. (*KrV*).
923 Ricoeur 1960a, 39. (21).
924 Ricoeur 1960a, 41. (23).
discourse on finitude. This discourse transgresses my finite perspective, steps over or beyond a subject’s fundamental finitude by invoking the question of the human infinitude. For sure, “a non-situated view or Übersicht does not exist,” Ricoeur reaffirms, but still the idea that I am able to express my “onesidedness” contests this finitude. In brief, “this transgression is the intention to signify,” as “in the sign dwells the transcendence of the λόγος of man.” The possibility of conceptualization and discourse carries a subject over or beyond from his initial and unavoidable situatedness. “I am not merely a situated look or gaze (regard situé),” Ricoeur argues, “but a being who intends and expresses as an intentional transgression of the situation.” I intend, I will, and when I express this willing I declare that I am able to adopt a “non-point of view,” that is, an indefinitely applicable view in the world of meaning.

Even if a subject’s first condition is to receive, this does not imply that a subject would remain completely mute in his experience. “In being born I enter into the world of language that precedes me and envelops me,” and language “transmits intention (visée),” whereas sight (vision) does not, Ricoeur reasons. Saying, and in general signifying, transcends all appearances – or “the undetermined objects of empirical intuition” as Kant defines them – and therefore also a subject’s perspective. The ultimate infinitude in signifying is, however, found in judgments, or in “functions of unity among our representations,” to use Kant’s definition. According to Ricoeur, a judgment such as “Socrates is walking” is a movement that linguistically transgresses the human finitude.

925 Ricoeur 1960a, 42-43. (24-25).
926 Ricoeur 1960a, 44, 46. (26, 28).
927 Ricoeur 1960a, 45. (26-27).
928 Ricoeur 1960a, 45. (27).
929 Kant 1999, III.A20/B34. (Kr V).
930 Kant 1999, III.A69/B94. (Kr V).
931 Ricoeur 1960a, 50. (32).
Let me make a brief pause here. A relating clarification that already prepares us for the part four of this dissertation concerns these judgment statements. Both Kant and Ricoeur point out that judgments use verbs as copulas: “The verb is what makes the sentence ‘hold together’ since it ascribes the attributed signification to the subject of attribution by means of its supplemental signification.” The copula “glues” attribution and subject together, thus forming a judgment in which the attributed signification supplements the already given meaning. According to Ricoeur, however, the “supplementarity” of copulative verbs also extends to their capacity to “supra-signify,” by which Ricoeur means that copulas are both relational and existential; they transmit the additional attribution, but they also posit existence by asserting being: “‘Socrates is walking’ means that the walk ‘exists now’ and that the walk is ‘said of’ Socrates.” For Kant the copula indicates the necessary transcendental unity, whereas for Ricoeur a copula has the function of supra-signification.

The copular verb, in Ricoeur’s terms, is affirmative: first, it affirms the relational-existential conditions in the judgment, and second, it also implies a correlation between a judging subject’s volitional act (that is, the primary intention of signifying), and

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932 Ricoeur 1960a, 44. (26).
933 Ricoeur 1960a, 49-50. (32). – Ricoeur refers to Aristotle’s *Peri Hermeneias* but it should not be forgotten that Kant’s transcendental deduction (in the B-edition of the first *Critique*) also refers to the copula “is” which safeguards the notion of transcendental unity. Having reached the mutual interdependence between the transcendental unity of apperception and the objects of experience through concepts, as well as having shown that this has an objectively valid ground, Kant has to implement the notion of judgment (since understanding is a faculty for judging; cf. Kant 1999, III.A69/B94.) Thus, having investigated the pure, i.e., non-empirical, relations of given cognitions in judgments Kant finds that “a judgment is nothing other than the way to bring given cognitions to the objective unity of apperception.” The copula “is” in judgments (which Kant also understands more broadly than logicians) indicates this relation of the representations to original apperception and its necessary unity: its aim is “to distinguish the objective unity of given representations from the subjective.” Furthermore, the copula “designates the relation of the representations to the original apperception and its necessary unity, even if the judgment itself is empirical, hence contingent” (Kant 1999, III.B141-142.) Kant concludes that only through this necessary unity of apperception – which is objectively valid (§18) – can there be an objectively valid relation between the given representations, that is, a judgment.
934 Ricoeur 1960a, 50. (32).
the “objective moment of the verb”\(^ {935}\) in its function of supra-signifying (that is, the predication which concerns an object for the judging subject). This second affirmation of a correlation between an act and a signification, Ricoeur points out, is an affirmation of “the correlation of the [infinite] will and the [finite] understanding.”\(^ {936}\) Ricoeur’s conclusion is therefore that the infinity of the will extends in judgments, or in a subject’s speech, to the understanding.

Reminding the reader that the previous “interlude” not only leads us to what follows in this chapter but also relates to our discussion in part four, let me now reiterate the theme of finitude/infinitude in the light of Ricoeur’s discussion of judgments. The question now concerns the necessity of synthesis. Ricoeur names the “disproportion” of the infinitude of expression and finitude of perception as the “duality of understanding and sensibility,” and claims that the discovery of such disproportion necessitates an intermediary third term that would reconcile these two incommensurable conditions, or at least draw them together.\(^ {937}\) To continue tracing Ricoeur’s Kantianism, Ricoeur expresses in *Fallible Man* his support for the idea that the third term between finite appearances (empirical intuition) and the infinite discourse (concepts of understanding) is *pure productive imagination* in the manner that Kant defined it in *The Critique of Pure Reason* — “The principle of the necessary unity of the pure (productive) synthesis of the imagination prior to apperception is the ground of the possibility of all cognition, especially that of experience.”\(^ {938}\) Based on this revolutionary conception of the productive a priori synthesis of the imagination, Ricoeur admits that “it is not by chance that our anthropology of the finite and the infinite

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\(^{935}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 54. (36).

\(^{936}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 50-54. (32-37).

\(^{937}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 55. (37).

\(^{938}\) Kant 1999, III.A118. Cf. B151-152. (*KrV*).
encounters Kant at this stage of its development.” In short, Ricoeur argues that Kant overcame the seemingly insurmountable duality of empirical finitude and rational-idealistic infinitude with the transcendental function of imagination.

Put differently, in *Fallible Man* Ricoeur finds Kant’s explication of the transcendental conditions of cognition – in which the productive imagination is the proper “faculty for determining sensibility *a priori*” – philosophically relevant, just as he did later in the opening study in *Course of Recognition*. In both of the works he relies especially on Kant’s *schematism* as an attempt to reconcile empirical intuitions with concepts of understandings, and in both *Fallible Man* and in *Course of Recognition* Ricoeur even goes as far as to directly quote *The Critique of Pure Reason*:

> If to judge is to subsume an intuition under a concept, “there must be some third term, which is homogenous on the one hand with the category, and on the other hand with the appearance, and which thus makes the application of the former to the latter possible. This mediating representation must be pure, that is, void of all empirical content, and yet at the same time, while it must in one respect be intellectual, it must in another be sensible. Such a representation is the transcendental schema.”

By recalling Kant’s definition of a transcendental schema, Ricoeur explains how Kant’s idea of productive imagination, introduced in the transcendental deduction, is applied in cognition. As Kant clarifies, “the schema is in itself always only a product of the imagination,” since the transcendental imagination is the fundamental faculty of a synthesis *a priori*, and therefore a necessary condition for cognition in general.

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939 Ricoeur 1960a, 58. (40-41).
941 Kant 1999, III.B152. Cf. A120. (*KrV*).
942 Ricoeur 2004b, 63-105. (36-68).
943 Kant 1999, III.A137-147/B176-187. (*KrV*).
944 Ricoeur 1960a, 58-62. (41-45); Ricoeur 2004b, 78-86. (49-55).
946 Kant 1999, III.A123-124; A140/B179. (*KrV*).
Both Kant and Ricoeur maintain, however, that in contrast to the pure forms of intuition (time and space), and the pure concepts of understanding (categories), the pure imagination as the condition for applying categories to appearances remains an enigma in itself: “the ‘third term’ remains obscure, hidden, and blind.” The transcendental function of imagination is “blind but indispensable” condition \textit{a priori}, just as “the schematism is ‘an art concealed in the depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze,’” as Ricoeur again repeats Kant’s words from \textit{The Critique of Pure Reason}. The third, mediating term (either the transcendental imagination, or the schema as its product and as “a monogram of pure \textit{a priori} imagination”) is not intelligible in itself. The schemata is, Ricoeur argues in the wake of the first \textit{Critique}, “an \textit{application} of the categories to the phenomena,” because the concepts of understanding remain the necessary condition for all formal unity in the synthesis – in which a schema, in accordance with its concept, is a pure mediating representation between the categories of understanding and sensible intuition.

As a result of Kant’s assertion that the third or mediating term is an application of the categories to appearances, Ricoeur argues that the paradox of finitude-infinitude has only been “sharpened by a more subtle approximation,” since the synthesis that is brought about by the pure imagination is still constituted only in the objectivity of the object. Consequently, I must return to an interlude in \textit{Fallible Man} that precedes Ricoeur’s analysis of pure imagination, a text that highlights the necessity of objects in their objectivity. “Objectivity is nothing other than the indivisible unity of an appearance and expressibility;

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{947} Ricoeur 1960a, 62. (45).
\item \textsuperscript{948} Ricoeur 1960a, 59. (41, 42). Cf. Kant 1999, III.A78/B103; A141/B180-181. (\textit{KrV}).
\item \textsuperscript{949} Kant 1999, III.A141-142/B181. (\textit{KrV}).
\item \textsuperscript{950} Ricoeur 1960a, 61. (44). Cf. Kant 1999, III.A139/B178. (\textit{KrV}).
\item \textsuperscript{951} Ricoeur 1960a, 60, 63. (43, 45). Cf. Kant 1999, III.A145-146/B185-186. (\textit{KrV}).
\end{itemize}
the thing shows itself and can be expressed,” Ricoeur maintains, but notices, however, that “the thing (la chose) points to man as point of view and as speech.”952 Even though an appearance is determined in the synthesis of “meaning and presence,” that which appears becomes legible as a determined object. Ricoeur strongly insists that “the objectivity of the object is by no means ‘in’ consciousness; it stands over against it as that to which it relates.”953 Ricoeur, in other words, stresses the synthesis of the manifold of intuition, or the thing’s becoming an object for consciousness, rather than the transcendental apperception, or the a priori synthetic unity of consciousness, in the manner Kant does. As a result, Ricoeur argues that “the objectivity of the object is constituted on the object itself.”954 For Ricoeur, in other words, the synthesis concerns that which appears, and to which a meaning is given, that is, an object in its objectivity, as opposed to Kant who emphasizes the formal condition of the one and self-same consciousness.955

Even if Ricoeur’s Kantian attunement is evident, the difference between the two thinkers is also explicit and definitive: Kant considers the formal conditions of possible experience, whereas Ricoeur focuses on the actual or “concrete” experience of a living subject in the presence of things. Ricoeur acknowledges that an object stands over against consciousness and, as Kant proposes, actually results in “the very consciousness that the pure ego acquires of this synthesis.”956 Ricoeur argues, however, that this Kantian transcendental consciousness is nevertheless not yet real, empirical consciousness but merely its formal condition: “[The transcendental] consciousness is not yet the unity of a person in

952 Ricoeur 1960a, 55-56. (37-38).
953 Ricoeur 1960a, 56. (38).
954 Ricoeur 1960a, 56. (38).
956 Ricoeur 1960a, 56. (38).
itself and for itself; it is not one person; it is no one.”957 The unity of transcendental synthesis, Ricoeur stresses, is “not yet self-consciousness, not yet ‘man.’”958 In other words, an object is the formal condition of an equally formal consciousness that lacks any empirical personality: “The consciousness philosophy speaks of in its transcendental stage constitutes its own unity only outside of itself, on the object. […] Consciousness spends itself in founding the unity of meaning and presence ‘in’ the object.”959 The transcendental consciousness is only consciousness in general, Ricoeur concludes, but Kant’s analysis of this formal condition of consciousness still represents for Ricoeur the first stage of a philosophical anthropology that tries to locate the experienced human “disproportion.”960

Ricoeur’s emphasis also differs from Kant in its reference to the notion of onto-existential “presence,” in which consciousness is, however, achieved. According to Fallible Man, consciousness is “a middle ground (milieu) between the infinite and the finite by delineating the ontological dimension of things, namely, that they are a synthesis of meaning and presence.”961 This definition that refers to the mode of being of things – literally, their “le mode d’être”962 – indicates that Ricoeur is not completely aligned with Kant’s critical enterprise. In contrast to Kant’s transcendental approach, Ricoeur connects consciousness directly to the ontological status of “things,” thus fully exposing the difference between his and Kant’s standpoint: “consciousness makes itself an intermediary primarily by projecting itself into the thing’s mode of being.”963 If for Kant an object is an essential part of the

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957 Ricoeur 1960a, 63. (45-46).
958 Ricoeur 1960a, 55. (37).
959 Ricoeur 1960a, 63. (45).
960 Ricoeur 1960a, 63. (46).
961 Ricoeur 1960a, 56. (38).
962 Ricoeur 1960a, 56. (38).
963 Ricoeur 1960a, 56. (38).
transcendental conditions of cognition, for Ricoeur the ontological presence of things represents the same necessity in relation to consciousness.

Before this dissertation moves on to the succeeding stages of Ricoeur’s threefold anthropology, I will have to address his break away from Kantian transcendentalism, as it explains the reasons why Ricoeur judges the transcendental analysis, necessary in itself, to be insufficient. In a very clear explanation of why the synthesis between “meaning and presence,” rather than one between “understanding and sensibility,” guides his reading of Kant’s first Critique, Ricoeur converges with Heidegger’s Kant-book – whose critical insights he also recalls in the Kant-section of Course of Recognition – in insisting on a “concretizing” expansion of such a transcendental approach. In short, Ricoeur argues – in a similar manner as Cassirer was shown to argue in our introductory remarks – that Kant’s epistemologically oriented critical philosophy is a far too narrow approach for a philosophical anthropology that is concerned about the living subject in his

964 Ricoeur 2004b, 91-95. (59-61).
965 Ricoeur’s statement is free from doubt and confusion: “The point where I differ from Kant is clear: the real a priori synthesis is not the one that is set forth in the “principles,” that is, in the judgment that would be prior to all the empirical propositions of the physical domain. Kant reduced the scope of his discovery to the restricted dimensions of an epistemology. The objectivity of the object is reduced to the scientific aspect of objects belonging to a domain carved out by the history of the sciences. But criticism is more than epistemology, transcendental reflection is more than an exploration of the scientific nature of the objects of science. The real a priori does not appear even in the first principles; it consists in the thing’s objectival character (rather than objective objectif), if objective means scientific), namely that property of being thrown before me, at once given to my point of view and capable of being communicated, in a language comprehensible by any rational being. The objectivity of the object consists in a certain expressibility adhering to the appearance of anything whatsoever. This objectivity is neither in consciousness not in the principles of science; it is rather the thing’s mode of being. It is the ontological mode of those ‘beings’ which we call things. Heidegger – whom we shall eventually refuse to follow – is right in saying [in Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics] that the Copernican revolution [that Kant proposed] is first of all the return from the ontic to the ontological, that is, from the ‘thing’ considered as a ‘being’ among ‘beings’ […] to its ontological constitution. Objectivity indicates this synthetic constitution itself as a uniting of meaning to presence. In order for something to be an object, it must conform to this synthetic constitution: ‘Ontic truth conforms necessarily to ontological truth. There again is the legitimate interpretation of the meaning of the ‘Copernican revolution.’” Ricoeur 1960a, 56-57. (38-39).
or her being. The epistemological horizon has to be expanded to also cover the cultural human life.\textsuperscript{966}

Instead of the \textit{a priori} conditions for cognizing an object, Ricoeur’s own focus is on the “objectival” character of things that are set over against, and even “thrown” before me as a living subject. The second philosophical Copernican revolution Ricoeur searches for in \textit{Fallible Man} therefore grounds itself in the first philosophical one, introduced by Kant, but it also transcends this transcendental analysis by insisting on a more comprehensive opening to the question of human condition. “The whole epistemological conception of objectivity tends to make the ‘I-think’ a function of objectivity and imposes the alternatives to which we referred at the outset: either I am ‘conscious’ of the I-think but do not ‘know’ it, or I ‘know’ the ego, but it is a phenomenon within nature,” Ricoeur clarifies in his essay “Kant and Husserl”; “This is why Kant’s phenomenological description tends toward the discovery of a concrete subject who has no place in the system.”\textsuperscript{967} Knowing, a necessary starting point for such reflection, or its formal ground, is only one aspect of a human subject who partakes in being. The synthesis as “joining together,” with which \textit{Course of Recognition} crystallizes Kant’s idea of identifying recognition (\textit{Rekognition}),\textsuperscript{968} however, already leads us to pay attention to this synthetic “grasping” or “joining together” as the moment of “\textit{con},” as in \textit{reconnaissance}. Further analysis in this chapter will reveal how this formally introduced moment of \textit{re-connaissance} comes to play in the concrete experience of a living subject.

\textsuperscript{966} Cf. section 2.3 of this dissertation as well as Cassirer 1974, 43.
\textsuperscript{967} Ricoeur 1954, 53. (Ricoeur 1967b, 185.).
\textsuperscript{968} Ricoeur 2004b, 63, 70-86. (36-37, 42-55). – Ricoeur argues that “for Kant, to recognize […] is to identify, to grasp a unified meaning through thought. […] For Kant, to identify is to join together.”
10.2 Ideal Self-consciousness and the Enigma of Respect

The gap between Kant’s “pure” transcendental reflection and Ricoeur’s “concrete” comprehension of human subjectivity is evident. Ricoeur maintains in *Fallible Man* that “the transcendental stage furnishes only the first stage of a philosophical anthropology”; this is why he tries to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the human condition by also reflecting action and feeling.\(^{969}\) Ricoeur reassures that these approaches, however, still reflect a human subject’s “non-coincidence with himself” just as in the transcendental stage, albeit now in the “orders of action and feeling,” or at the practical and affective levels.\(^{970}\) The initial task of investigating the human condition as fallibility remains therefore intact throughout *Fallible Man*.

Even though the task pertaining to the human condition remains the same, Ricoeur opens the investigation into the practical and affective aspects of the human life-world that are missing from the abstract transcendental framework. Such a transcendental “nexus of things especially lacks the presence of persons with whom we work, fight, and communicate, and who stand forth on the horizon of things, on the setting of pragmatic and valorized objects, as other poles of subjectivity, apprehension, valorization, and action,” Ricoeur maintains. “In this new stage the ‘person’ and no longer the ‘thing’ is the object that serves us as a guide.”\(^{971}\) As in the second part of *Course of Recognition*, “Recognizing Oneself,” Ricoeur focuses in this second stage of his analysis in *Fallible Man* on action, will, and feeling, a triad which results in self-consciousness and emphasizes a social point of view.\(^{972}\) According to Ricoeur, the transcendental analysis we have seen – with which he begins both

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\(^{969}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 25. (5).

\(^{970}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 25-26. (5-6).

\(^{971}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 65, 67. (47-48, 50).

Fallible Man and Course of Recognition, however – culminates in the necessary conditions for the possibility of mediation, and it achieves a merely pure consciousness without personality or living experience.

When Ricoeur amplifies his analysis from the transcendental object or “thing” to the “person,” he also opens an extension to ethics by redefining the notions of finitude, infinitude, and mediation. Ricoeur bases the “practical finitude” of character, or “the limited openness of [a subject’s] field of motivation taken as a whole,” on the transcendental notion of perspective, and bases the “practical infinitude” of happiness, or the “infinite end” of the subject’s oriented field of motivation, on signification. The “practical mediation” – which will be our focus here – opens the discussion to another whole realm by asking for “the constitution of the person by means of ‘respect.’” Like transcendental imagination, respect in Ricoeur’s analysis is also torn by its inner duality; it is a “paradoxical intermediary” between the infinitude of happiness and the finitude of character.

This duality is, however, an “ethical duality” because it presupposes relations to other human beings, and its analysis therefore also draws support from moral philosophy – especially from Kant’s Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, and The Critique of Practical Reason. In other words, Ricoeur’s analysis of the “practical mediation” of respect implies a step from individual to communal, while it retains a firm connection to Kant’s philosophy. This groundlaying analysis will later build up into a consistently ethico-political stance. As George H. Taylor maintains, “Ricoeur shows us how objectification, including

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973 Ricoeur 1960a, 77. (60).
974 Ricoeur 1960a, 85. (68).
975 Ricoeur 1960a, 67. (49-50). Italics added.
976 Ricoeur 1960a, 90. (73).
977 Ricoeur 1960a, 67, 80-82. (50, 63, 65).
978 Ricoeur never leaves this stage of "practical mediation" behind but continues its analysis, for example, in the extended discussion of the basis of self-esteem and Kant's moral philosophy in the study eight of Oneself as Another. Cf. Ricoeur 1990, 239-264. (205-227).
objectification of values in institutions, can be something not only positive but necessary in order for values to flourish.\textsuperscript{979} This ethical extension from transcendental objects to persons follows Kant’s correlating move from the first to the second\textit{ Critique.}

Ricoeur’s notion of a “world of persons” stands at the center of the shift to the communal. According to Ricoeur, however, this human world “expresses itself through the world of things by filling it with new things that are human works.”\textsuperscript{980} As I will show in section 10.3, Ricoeur does not divide the world of “things” and the human world into two distinct and non-communicative spheres, but places them in a dialectical relationship in which each can be found only in the other. This move towards \textit{intersubjectivity} by means of the “world of things” rests on Ricoeur’s assertion that the unrestricted side of my character, that is, the \textit{openness} of my total field of motivation, “is my fundamental accessibility to all values of all men in all cultures.”\textsuperscript{981} Put differently, the communal “world of persons” necessitates the cultural medium of the “world of things,” in which a human subject demonstrates human intentionality by his or her work, and is able to recognize the same intentional characteristic of other works belonging to this world of things, thus inferring that there are other beings equipped with a similar kind of motivational basis. This culturally demonstrated intentionality is the “fundamental accessibility” to the “world of persons.”

By calling this openness a subject’s \textit{humanity} – which, in contrast to a human social collective, is “the human quality of man”\textsuperscript{982} – Ricoeur maintains that the phrase “nothing human is foreign to me” is explained by the field of motivation, because the field

\textsuperscript{979} G. H. Taylor 2010a, 3. – George H. Taylor’s view parallels that of Axel Honneth in \textit{The Struggle for Recognition}. Honneth maintains, following G. H. Mead, that the social relations of recognition have “not only a negative, transitional function but also a positive (that is, consciousness-forming) function.” Honneth’s account also includes the legal order that is of Taylor’s particular interest. Cf. Honneth 1995, 26, 59, 79-80, 94, 118, 164, 172-175.; G. H. Taylor 2010b.

\textsuperscript{980} Ricoeur 1960a, 65. (48).

\textsuperscript{981} Ricoeur 1960a, 77. (60). Cf. Ricoeur 1960a, 87. (70).

\textsuperscript{982} Ricoeur 1960a, 87. (70).
covers all the possible human intentions. Human intentionality, as demonstrated by works encountered in the “world of things,” is a shared human quality. As a result of this, “I am capable of every virtue and every vice; no sign of man is radically incomprehensible, no language radically untranslatable, no work of art to which my taste cannot spread.”983 A subject’s character and his or her humanity are therefore defined in terms of each other: “character is the narrowness of the ‘whole soul’ whose humanity is openness.”984 In other words, a subject’s total field of motivation defines his or her individual character, and also connects him or her with the principle of humanity that grounds the world of persons and sets a paradigm for a person’s own being.

Even though character and humanity are ultimately conjoined and not mutually exclusive notions, the idea of humanity leads Ricoeur to call for pre-ethical equality – the idea of humanity as the summing up of human quality grounds the possibility of intersubjectivity.985 In Ricoeur’s words, “my humanity is my accessibility in principle to [all] human outside myself; it makes every human alike to me.”986 This humanity, however, is realizable only in a subject’s character, since a person lives his or her humanity through it. “Everything human – ideas, beliefs, values, signs, works, tools, institutions – is within my reach in accordance with the finite perspective of an absolutely singular form of life,” Ricoeur states.987 The human disproportion appears thus here again in an evolved form, as all the human “outside” refers not to a subject’s personal character but to his or her human quality. Ricoeur insists that “it is not my character or my individuality that I consider when I

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983 Ricoeur 1960a, 77. (60-61).
984 Ricoeur 1960a, 78. (61).
985 The idea of humanity discussed in Fallible Man is not the same as humanism but, rather, the universal approach to everything human. Of Ricoeur’s discussion of humanism and culture, cf. Ricoeur 1956. (Ricoeur 1974, 68-87.)
986 Ricoeur 1960a, 77-78. (61).
987 Ricoeur 1960a, 85. (67).
come upon the signs of man, but the humanity of those signs.” 988 The character is the limitation of a subject’s openness to that which is human, but the challenge set by “my humanity” invokes me to relate to all those alike in humanity.

Ricoeur’s analysis of respect is not, therefore, an isolated analysis but is built up from the preceding argumentation. After Ricoeur has established this link between a subject and the idea of humanity, he opens the discussion of respect with it. Again, rather than focusing on human beings or their collective, Ricoeur understands humanity as a principle, or as “the mode of being on which every empirical appearance of what we call a human being should be patterned.” 989 The Kantian undertone of Ricoeur’s language reveals that he also continues, yet at the same time deepens, the analysis which held the objectivity of a thing in focus: “Humanity is the person’s personality,” Ricoeur argues, “just as objectivity was the thing’s thingness.” 990 In other words, Ricoeur prescribes humanity as the necessary condition for a subject’s personality. The human character is therefore, Ricoeur sharpens his definition, connected with the idea of humanity; it is “a perspective on humanity” rather than a petrified portrait of a singular human being. 991 Put differently, the idea of humanity specifies the human character.

Instead of continuing the language of human character, Ricoeur’s discussion of respect focuses on the redefined notion of synthesis; in particular, he emphasizes the “practical synthesis” of character and happiness. Ricoeur maintains that this synthesis between the finite openness of one’s total existence, and the ultimate end of a subject’s total intention is based on the person, by which he means “the Self (le Soi) that was lacking to

988 Ricoeur 1960a, 85. (67-68).
989 Ricoeur 1960a, 87. (70).
990 Ricoeur 1960a, 87. (70).
991 Ricoeur 1960a, 88. (70).
consciousness in general.”

Foregrounding the analysis of narrative *ipse-self* in *Oneself as Another* — which he continues in *Course of Recognition* under the notion of character — Ricoeur argues, however, that this self only aims at itself, since the person is “a projected synthesis that seizes itself in the representation of a task.” Even though the “person” is then a corrective to Kant’s abstract definition of a pure consciousness, it is still not a total comprehension of one’s self: “the person is not yet consciousness of Self for Self; it is consciousness of self in the representation of the ideal of the Self.” The person, Ricoeur argues, is a project that a subject represents to himself; this project, which draws together my finiteness and the ideality of my representation in my humaneness, is the synthesis out of which the notion of respect arises.

Kant did not extend the notion of transcendental synthesis pertaining to the objects of cognition to the level of the human person — in *Groundwork* Kant actually distinguishes rational persons from natural things. Ricoeur claims, however, that Kant’s critical philosophy is still “very instructive” for his own elaboration of synthesis; he refers to Kant’s definition of a person as an objective end whose existence does not have only relative value but is “an end in itself,” when he redefines practical synthesis as the “synthesis of reason and existence.” The idea of a rational being’s rationality as an unrelativizable end, and the rational being’s being having absolute worth, to follow Kant’s language, gives Ricoeur a definition of the end that was left open in the preceding steps of his argument.

The intentional self — previously defined in terms of its openness to the idea of humanity — Ricoeur now defines in the light of this end in itself to which the self’s project is

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992 Ricoeur 1960a, 86. (69).
994 Ricoeur 1960a, 86. (69).
996 Ricoeur 1960a, 88. (71).
ultimately directed, the end which Ricoeur freely borrows from Kant. For Ricoeur, this redefinition of the self also marks a crucial shift from consciousness to self-consciousness:

The Self as a person is given first in an intention. In positing the person as an existing end, consciousness becomes self-consciousness. This self is still a projected self, as the thing was the project of what we called “consciousness.” Self-consciousness is, like the consciousness of the thing, an intentional consciousness. But whereas the intending of the thing was a theoretical intention, the intending of the person is a practical intention; it is not yet an experienced plentitude but an “is to be” (“à-être”); the person is an “is to be,” and the only way to achieve it is to “make it be” (la “faire être”).

The end, although clarified, does not render the self fulfilled or completed, according to Ricoeur. The Ricoeurian self still remains a task, but the now acknowledged end presupposes a subject who constitutes and thus maintains Kant’s objective principle of a universal practical law. In other words, when defining self-consciousness, Ricoeur also presupposes a rational subject who necessarily conceives his or her own existence as an end in itself. This principle refers to the subject as a Kantian “person,” which Ricoeur then defines as self-consciousness.

Kant’s notion of person, however, is not a living subject who requires self-consciousness, but merely an ideal of such a person, a rational being (ein vernünftige Wesen) defined by the principles of reason. Kant is very clear that the foundation, or ground (der Grund), of the objective principle of the will that serves as a universal practical law is this: die vernünftige Natur existiert als Zweck an sich selbst, “rational nature exists as an end in itself.” In other words, reason necessarily embraces itself and its principles; it could not suggest otherwise without subjecting itself as a means instead of an end. Ricoeur’s affinity with this definition of a person is questionable at the least; “The only intelligible world in which I can

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1000 Kant 1999, IV.429. (Grundlegung).
‘place’ myself is the one with which I have complied through respect, [...] but upon entering into this world (Verstandeswelt), I can ‘neither see nor feel myself in it (mich hineinschauen, hineinempfinden),’” Ricoeur acknowledges in his 1954 essay “Kant and Husserl.”¹⁰⁰¹ Ricoeur defends himself, therefore, in Fallible Man in a prolonged footnote, in which he acknowledges that he “uses Kantianism freely” and that his writing “betrays Kantian orthodoxy.”¹⁰⁰² Ricoeur also insists, however, that he brings out “the Kantian philosophy of the person that is outlined in the Groundwork and stifled in The Critique of Practical Reason.”¹⁰⁰³ In sum, Ricoeur’s application of Kant’s practical philosophy is, for reasons I will next explain, interpretative rather than pure and conventional.

The step Ricoeur takes with Kant’s practical philosophy brings him closer to the philosophical setting within which he aspires to operate. Kant’s governing practical principle, the second formulation of the famous categorical imperative, denotes a shift from rational principles to a practical law that has an ethical import: “Act so as to treat humanity (die Menschheit), whether in your own person or in that of any other, always as an end [and] never only as a means.”¹⁰⁰⁴ The clear ethical demand opens the rational principles of reason to will, which – to use Kant’s terminology – calls for a sovereign legislator in the kingdom of ends, and consequently also requires the respect and duty to follow the moral law laid down by the rational subject exercising his will, free from natural inclinations, as a universally legislative will.¹⁰⁰⁵ Ricoeur’s argument that “The synthesis of the person is constituted in a specific moral feeling that Kant called respect,”¹⁰⁰⁶ thus changes the ideal of the person to an ethical affection. Both Kant and Ricoeur, however, take a leap – Kant from pure reason to

¹⁰⁰¹ Ricoeur 1954, 67. (Ricoeur 1967b, 200.).
¹⁰⁰² Ricoeur 1960a, 90.n7. (72-73).
¹⁰⁰³ Ricoeur 1960a, 90.n7. (73).
¹⁰⁰⁴ Kant 1999, IV.429. (Grundlegung).
¹⁰⁰⁶ Ricoeur 1960a, 89. (72).
will, Ricoeur from Kantian reasoning to human affections – but in *Fallible Man* they do it together.

Kant might insist that Ricoeur is misguided in overreaching to the level of affections, since the respect Kant discusses is merely subjective adherence, or volitional coherence, with the rational-moral law. Kant writes in the *Groundwork* that “the legislation itself which assigns the worth of everything must for that very reason possess dignity, that is, an unconditional incomparable worth; and the word respect [or attention] (*Achtung*) alone supplies a becoming expression for the valuation which a rational being must have for it [that is, for the legislation].”\(^\text{1007}\) In brief, Kant states that a rational being must respect the rational law as his or her condition. Ricoeur has, however, prepared himself for such an attack, since he admits that he is “fully aware here of changing the gist of the Kantian analysis of respect; for Kant, respect is respect for law, and the person is nothing but an example.”\(^\text{1008}\) Ricoeur’s counterattack focuses on the leap Kant makes:

[The Kantian] *respect* is a paradoxical ‘intermediary’ that belongs both to sensibility, that is, to the faculty of desiring, and to reason, that is, to the power of obligation that comes from practical reason. […] Respect is in itself the obscure thing that Kant calls an *a priori* incentive of which we can speak only by drawing together opposed terms without showing its true unity.\(^\text{1009}\)

Kant’s term “respect,” taken in itself, is unfounded, Ricoeur asserts, as it reduces rational principles to a paradox that mediates between the two mental faculties. “The enigma of respect,” Ricoeur summarizes his criticism, “is indeed that of the practical synthesis of reason and finitude, therefore that of the third term.”\(^\text{1010}\) Like transcendental imagination,

\(^{1007}\) Kant 1999, IV.436. (*Grundlegung*).  
\(^{1008}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 90.n7. (72).  
\(^{1009}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 90. (73).  
\(^{1010}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 91. (74).
respect is a “hidden art” – but also a necessary condition for the possibility of rational-moral maxims of action.

Ricoeur defends Kant’s leap to will, however, perhaps to justify his own leap to affection. Reason as a principle is pure but would not reach the realm of action. “It would be not practical but only critical in the moral sense of the word,” Ricoeur argues. Kant’s joining of the will and reason would be necessary: the faculty of desire, will, would have to be “touched” by reason in order to become respectful, and only in this manner can reason guide the will’s maxims of action. “It is therefore necessary to forge the idea of an a priori feeling,” Ricoeur argues, “that is, one produced by reason, the reason [itself] becoming an ‘incentive’” – a subjective ground on which a will can act (die Triebfeder) – “to make this law itself a maxim.” This a priori feeling is respect. As Ricoeur summarizes in Course of Recognition, “for Kant, respect is the one motive that practical reason imprints directly on affective sensibility.”

The results of such a “forging” are devastating for Ricoeur, however: the “paradoxical constitution” of respect, as Ricoeur calls it, binds it to reason, and thus limits possibilities to reflect on the very feeling which binds practical synthesis altogether. Steering towards the notions of human “fragile experience” and human “disproportion,” which interest him in Fallible Man, Ricoeur surmises that this weakness in Kant’s notion of “person” benefits his own philosophical exploration:

In respect I am an obeying subject and a commanding sovereign; but I cannot imagine this situation otherwise than as twofold belonging, “so that the person as belonging to the world of sense is subject to his own personality so far as he belongs to the intelligible world.” Into this twofold belonging is written the possibility of a discord and what is, as it were, the existential “fault” that

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1011 Ricoeur 1960a, 91. (74).
1013 Ricoeur 2004b, 290. (198).
causes man’s fragility […] [that is,] a situation of war between man and man, between man and himself.\textsuperscript{1014}

Guided by Kant’s analysis of the person, Ricoeur concludes liberally that human practical experience is in the mode of always already shattered, that the primordial practical condition of a human being is that he is “already divided against himself.”\textsuperscript{1015} Respect, however, the constitution of the form of the person as much as the “fragile synthesis” of it, drives Ricoeur towards the notion of feeling.

Let us take some breath here. Even though Ricoeur has now examined the theoretical and practical conditions of human experience, the possibility of human affectionate disproportion remains to be studied. The direction for subsequent analysis has been set, however. I have pointed out above in passing that Ricoeur maintains that “the world of persons expresses itself through the world of things by filling it with new things that are human works.”\textsuperscript{1016} The human world that correlates with the living experience of a subject is not limited to ethical ideals, but includes real actions in the present moment, in the presence of other, equally real subjects and a multitude of things. Ricoeur indicates that his ultimate interest concerns this social world of action, as one of his definitions of “practical synthesis” also references this social dimension of human experience:

In the form of the person, I intend a synthesis of a new kind: that of an end of my action which would be, at the same time, an existence. An end, consequently a goal to which all means and calculations of means are subordinate; or, in other words, an end in itself, that is, one whose value is not sub-ordinated to anything else; and the same time an existence that one apprehends, or, to be more precise, a presence with which one enters into relations of mutual understanding, exchange, work, sociality.\textsuperscript{1017}

\textsuperscript{1014} Ricoeur 1960a, 91-92. (75).
\textsuperscript{1015} Ricoeur 1960a, 93. (76).
\textsuperscript{1016} Ricoeur 1960a, 65. (48).
\textsuperscript{1017} Ricoeur 1960a, 88. (71). Italics added.
Although the Kantian approach satisfies the condition of inferring “my existence” from “my action,” it is still merely a transcendental description of the conditions under which the person, a purely rational being (*ein vernünftige Wesen*), is able to define his mode of being by choosing – necessarily – in accordance with the principles of an absolute rational-moral law. Ricoeur’s recurring notion of work in *Fallible Man*, however, implies that the question for him includes an inquiry that strives towards the experience of a living subject, or “the ‘acting and suffering’ human being,” as Ricoeur defines it in *Course of Recognition*, who fails and succeeds and gradually defines himself in and through his work. This inquiry into the living subject that is constituted by the cultural world of works is next in my focus.

### 10.3 Cultural Objectivity and the “Signs of Being Human”

Ricoeur argues in *Course of Recognition* that socioeconomic, sociopolitical (including juridical), and (institutionalized) sociocultural complexes can be understood as “orders of recognition.” According to Ricoeur’s explication of Axel Honneth’s three “patterns of intersubjective recognition” (*die Muster der Anerkennung*) – love (or the economics of filiation), law or rights, and social esteem or solidarity – each of these various “organized mediations” indirectly recognizes a subject by granting a status or standing as a social agent. The triad of these “orders of recognition” Ricoeur’s *Course of Recognition* analyzes is, therefore, not unique as it continues the discussion formerly carried out by Jean-Marc Ferry, from whom Ricoeur derives his terminology, and Axel Honneth, whom Ricoeur criticizes in his

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1018 Ricoeur 2004b, 109. (69).
work. In addition, Ricoeur’s triad of orders echoes an earlier triad in his own work that also focused on the idea of being recognized, explicitly from the viewpoint of cultural objectivity as positive facilitation. This earlier triad that grounds and explains the later “orders” is of my interest in this section.

Fallible Man, under the title “Affective Fragility,” presents a triad that follows the same arranging as that of Course of Recognition; the economics of having, politico-juridical power, and culturally gained esteem are all social in nature. In addition, in its general progression from consciousness to ideal self-consciousness, and furthermore to mutual recognition in cultural objectivity, Fallible Man prefigures the line of Ricoeur’s argument in Course of Recognition. Despite these similarities between Ricoeur’s early and late work, I argue that Fallible Man brings forth more explicitly the necessity of cultural philosophy than Course of Recognition, which implies but does not elaborate on this openly. This section focuses on the connection Fallible Man draws between anthropology of authenticity, or concrete human experience, and philosophy of mediating cultural objectivity, especially at the level of fundamental, yet fragile affections.

Before reaching the notion of culture in this analysis, another deviation or detour is necessary for us to clarify Ricoeur’s conception of affections and their fragility. Luckily, however, there is no need to dwell in Ricoeur’s prolonged remarks on feeling (sentiment), since Ricoeur summarizes the main idea well himself: “by means of feeling, objects touch me.” For Ricoeur, feeling is a quasi-objective mode of relating and situating

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1021 Ricoeur 2004b, 296-299. (203-204).
1022 Ricoeur 1960a, 105. (89). – Ricoeur opens the synthetizing stage of analysis in Fallible Man by Plato’s idea of θυµός (thymos, spiritedness) which is the middle term between sensuous desire and reason, and “the living transition from βίος [bios, life or “a way of living”] to λόγος [logos, word or reason].” (Ricoeur 1960a, 98, 107-108, 111, 123-124. (81-82, 91-92, 95, 107-108).) Ricoeur understands thymos in a transitory manner, whereas Plato argues in Republic that it has a mediating as well as a governing character when assisting reason in presiding over the desiring part. Plato 1993, II.439d-441c. (Republic).
oneself ontologically. In other words, it is “the very adherence of existence to the being whose thinking is reason.”

According to Ricoeur, feelings are synthetic as they are both affections and intentions, and their correlates are quasi-objects as “it is on the things elaborated by the work of objectification that feeling projects its affective correlates, or its felt [and evaluative] qualities.” Feeling is profoundly dual and cannot be reduced to either one of its aspects.

Feelings are inherent in human reality and experience, Ricoeur argues, noticing that they receive “a functional justification only in a perspective of adaptation to the biological and cultural environment.” Feeling expresses “my adhering to this landscape,” Ricoeur clarifies, but it is also “a function of the recovery of the person’s equilibrium [or the person’s psychological balance],” and its analysis therefore explicates a subject’s relation and readaptation to the conditioning, received situation. Feelings, however, are not merely regulative in their adaptive function but ultimately “ontological;” that is, they “reveal the identity of existence and reason.” Feelings, Ricoeur maintains, personalize reason in their synthesis of intention and affection, and open it to question his socio-cultural condition. This connection between “feelings of being in one’s place in society” and critical reason is a radically new opening in the quest of fundamental human condition:

If one could say that man’s life, work, and even intelligence consist in solving problems, he would be wholly and radically definable in terms of adaptation. But more fundamentally man is a being who poses problems and raises questions – if only by bringing into question the very foundations of the

1023 Ricoeur 1960a, 119. (103).
1024 Ricoeur 1960a, 100. (84).
1025 Ricoeur 1960a, 104-106. (88-90).
1026 Ricoeur 1960a, 115. (99).
1027 Ricoeur 1960a, 105. (89).
1028 Ricoeur 1960a, 115. (99).
1029 Ricoeur 1960a, 118. (102).
1030 Ricoeur 1960a, 116. (100).
society that bids him to adapt himself quietly to its system of work, property, law, leisure, and culture.\textsuperscript{1031}

My feelings about the conditions, or the situation, I live in, question the meaningfulness of this very situation. In other words, feeling expresses my belonging in a manner that is capable of opening that situatedness to critical evaluation.

It is against this background of the onto-existential pertinence of feelings, or sentiments, that Ricoeur studies the trilogy of “interhuman, social and cultural” passions, which he defines as quests for having, power, and esteem, in one of the most intriguing sections of \textit{Fallible Man}. According to Ricoeur, these quests occur in “typical situations of a cultural milieu and a human history,” highlighting the living experience of a disproportionate self.\textsuperscript{1032} The section containing these passages – to which Ricoeur refers in \textit{On Interpretation}\textsuperscript{1033} – again conjoins Ricoeur and Kant’s philosophy (although no longer the critical one).

Ricoeur’s analysis is based on Kant’s concept of the three cultural passions or “manias” (\textit{die Leidenschaften}) as laid out in \textit{Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View}: ambition (\textit{Ehrensucht}), dominion (\textit{Herrschsucht}), and avarice (\textit{Habsucht}). This analysis of the perverted manias for honor, authority, and possession\textsuperscript{1034} – to which Kant refers in \textit{The Critique of Judgment}\textsuperscript{1035} – focuses on these desires, which hinder or distort the use of reason. Passions as hidden human dispositions, or desires, are always in affiliation with those purposes that reason sets, but as perverted inclinations they are “without exception evil.”\textsuperscript{1036} Kant’s understanding is that passion, as a weakness leading to servile submission, collides with the

\textsuperscript{1031} Ricoeur 1960a, 117. (101).
\textsuperscript{1032} Ricoeur 1960a, 127. (111).
\textsuperscript{1033} Ricoeur 1965a, 487-488. (507).
\textsuperscript{1034} Kant 1999, VII.265-274. (\textit{Anthropologie}). Cf. Kant 1999, VIII.20-21. (\textit{Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte}).
\textsuperscript{1035} Kant 1999, V.432-433. (\textit{KdU}).
\textsuperscript{1036} Kant 1999, VII.267. (\textit{Anthropologie}). – According to Kant, affects (\textit{Affekt}) are distinct from passions (\textit{Leidenschaft}) in the manner that their objects are easily substitutable. Passions are sensible desires that are more pervasive inclinations, and, therefore, more severe perversions that threaten the free use of reason.
concept of freedom, which is established by reason alone: “Ambition is a weakness of people, which allows them to be influenced through their opinions; dominion allows them to be influenced through their fear; and avarice allows them to be influenced through their own interest.” These three acquired passions, which arise “from the culture of humankind,” are according to Kant possible only for human beings and concern interhuman relations.

Ricoeur’s discussion of these cultural passions is in many ways the heart of this dissertation as they express the necessity of cultural objectivity in a search for the human constitution. Ricoeur argues that the three perverted inclinations (-sucht) indicate an authentic Suchen, that is, a fundamental human quest (requête) that takes the threefold cultural form of a search for having (avoir), power (pouvoir), and esteem (valoir). Put differently, Ricoeur maintains that the specifically human quests for having, power, and esteem connect to a primordial search for an authentic mode of being. In itself, this primordial search, which Ricoeur calls an “imagination of the essential,” remains an assumption of an unperverted primordial condition, or “an innocent kingdom,” which precedes the empirical state of “having fallen.” Ricoeur’s theologically-inclined language should not obscure the fact that he does not allude to a theologically describable (that is, otherworldly) state of being but to a pure state of human situatedness, that is, the human cultural condition as the very authentic Suchen, or search, for the primordial constitution of being human. Whether this “search” is perverted or not, it is nevertheless a search or a quest of a cultural kind.

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1037 Kant 1999, VII.272. (Anthropologie).
1038 Kant 1999, VII.268. (Anthropologie). Culture is not merely a framework for perversions of reason but also a context of culturation. In Kant’s own words from Anthropologie: “[Because] there is an inclination to desire actively what is unlawful [that is, because ] […] a person is destined by his reason to live in a society of other people, and in this society he has to cultivate himself, civilize himself, and apply himself to a moral purpose by the arts and sciences.” Kant 1999, VII.324-330. (Anthropologie).
1039 Ricoeur 1960a, 127-128. (111).
1040 Ricoeur 1960a, 128, 160. (112, 144).
Ricoeur’s analysis of the cultural passions completely alters the meaning of the preceding, preparatory analyses in that it explains why the notions of object and objectivity have been under such a detailed scrutiny. The transcendental synthesis of appearance and concept, and the practical synthesis of reason and desire are mere preparation under the thematics of objectivity for this final examination that calls for a cultural analysis, which Ricoeur deems necessary for his anthropology of fallibility and fallenness:

If our theory of feeling (sentiment) is valid, the feelings that gravitate around power, having, and esteem ought to be correlative with a constitution of objectivity on a level other than that of the merely perceived thing. To be more precise, they ought to manifest our attachment to things and to aspects of things that are no longer of a natural order but of a cultural one. The theory of the object is by no means completed in a theory of representation; the thing is not merely what others look upon. A reflection that would end the intersubjective constitution of a thing at the level of the mutuality of seeing would remain abstract.\textsuperscript{1041}

Ricoeur’s firm conviction is that the concrete experience of a living subject does not exclude affections, but that sentiments express the essential human experience of situatedness, and their analysis therefore clarifies the transcendental and pure practical analyses of being constituted in the presence of objects and practical principles (such as the idea of humanity represented in persons). He argues, therefore, that the human world, in which a living subject operates, is inherently cultural, and for this reason the cultural passions – which express situatedness as interiorized – help explain this fundamental condition:

We must add the economic, political, and cultural dimensions to objectivity; they make a human world out of the mere nature they start with. The investigation of authentic human affectivity, therefore, must be guided by the progress of objectivity. If feeling reveals my adherence to and my inherence in aspects of the world that I no longer set over against myself as objects, it is necessary to show the new aspects of objectivity that are interiorized in the feelings (sentiments) of having, power, and esteem.\textsuperscript{1042}

\textsuperscript{1041} Ricoeur 1960a, 128. (112). Cf. Ricoeur’s essay “Nature and freedom” that discusses culture as “the naturalizing of freedom” and as “the second nature.” Ricoeur 1962, 134-137. (Ricoeur 1974, 40-45.).

\textsuperscript{1042} Ricoeur 1960a, 128-129. (112).
Although objectivity, redefined, still functions as Ricoeur’s guide and criterion for the forthcoming investigation of primordial affections, the overturn of objectivity by cultural passions is quite complete: only by this cultural analysis – which takes into account the “making” of the human world – does the authentic human quest of trying to understand the fundamental human disproportion reach the level of “truly” human.

Consequently, the most concrete notion of the self is achievable only within the same context of analysis, that is, in the realm of cultural passions. Ricoeur insists that both distinguishing an individual self and articulating the relationship between individual selves requires the support of the “objectivity that is built on the themes of having, power, and esteem”; this is why he also calls these aspects of human experience “roots of self-affirmation.” Again, then, Ricoeur emphasizes in the concepts of having, power, and esteem the fundamentally indirect character of achieving the notion of a self; there is no immediate intuition of one’s own being. The human subject “is constituted only in connection with things that themselves belong to the economic, political, and cultural dimensions.” The objectivity of these “things” and quasi-things allows intelligibility without completely distorting the existential level of experienced subjectivity. A human subject, a self capable of reflection, is found only in this redefined objectivity, that is, through the cultural objectivity of these three Kantian cultural passions.

The leading idea for Ricoeur in the threefold analysis of having, power, and esteem is that a human subject recognizes himself only in and through the various cultural

1043 Ricoeur 1960a, 129. (113).
1044 Ricoeur 1960a, 132. (116).
1045 Ricoeur 1960a, 129. (113).
1046 Kant also points out a connection between human abilities and culture. Cf. Kant 1999, VII.329. (Anthropologie).
forms his being assumes and the “monuments” he has produced, and which stand over and against himself by objectifying the experience of his own being. As Ricoeur’s 1962 essay “Nature and Freedom” states, “freedom is potency only by means of a fundamental objectification in works.” Inasmuch as all cultural manifestations are at least quasi-objective, they also are for Ricoeur at least quasi-material. Although the search proceeds from “things” such as human products or artifacts and commodities to institutions, and furthermore to “proper” cultural works such as human ideas, the relation to some “thingness” does not disappear. The exalted levels of cultural achievements manifest themselves only corporeally in the world as “emergences of corresponding human feelings.” In addition, the more sublime the level of human products, the more apparent the essentiality of interhuman relations becomes. To use the words of George H. Taylor, “the productive capacity of externalization is positive.” Considered from the point of view of this positive figuring, the threefold analysis – which I will next introduce by focusing on each of its moments respectively – also leads Ricoeur to conclude that intersubjectivity gives a person the possibility of attaining himself as a human being.

1047 Ricoeur 1962, 135. (40).
1048 Ricoeur 1960a, 129. (113).
1049 G. H. Taylor 2010a, 8.
1050 This is a suitable place to mention that Fallible Man, which refers to Husserl’s phenomenology, also utilizes Husserlian themes well known to Ricoeur on the basis of his Husserl-analyses. The notion of intersubjectivity is inherently important for Husserl in his Ideen II and especially later in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation; the human lifeworld includes cultural objects and it presupposes intersubjectivity. For example, Husserl conceives a “true thing” as an object that “maintains its identity within the manifolds of appearances belonging to the multiplicity of subjects.” Furthermore, an intersubjective givenness is a necessary condition for the Ego to be recognized: “For a psychic being to be, to have Objective existence, the conditions of possibility of intersubjective givenness must be fulfilled. Such an intersubjective experience-ability, however, is thinkable only through ‘empathy’, which for its part presupposes an intersubjectively experienceable Body that can be understood by the one who just enacted the empathy as the Body of the corresponding psychic being.” Intersubjectivity, however, is not a sufficient condition as Husserl also requires that Lebenswelt is inherently cultural: “He who sees everywhere only nature, nature in the sense of, and, as it were, through the eyes of, natural science, is precisely blind to the spiritual sphere, the special domain of the human sciences. Such a one does not see persons and does not see the Objects which depend for their sense on personal accomplishments, i.e., Objects of ‘culture.’ Properly speaking, he sees no person at all, even though he has to do with persons in his attitude as a naturalist psychologist.” Husserl 1989, 87, 101, 201. Cf. Ricoeur 1967b, 64-68, 130-142.
The Quest for Having

The search for the constitution of the self begins by acknowledging that before being able to discuss human alienation one would have to presuppose a self “having” itself – Ricoeur, in other words, assumes that the primal identity is formed in self-objectification. In the thematization that recalls John Stuart Mill’s concept of homo oeconomicus, the “economic human,” Ricoeur argues that the self makes of its own self a primordial economic object, that is, it “has” itself by claiming identity in an economic manner: “the ‘I’ constitutes itself by founding itself on a ‘mine.’” This grounding notion of an economic object, or an object of economic interest, also differentiates the properly human needs from the animal “simple needs” (le simple besoin), which are directed towards natural objects, and for which the

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1051 The term “homo oeconomicus” that Ricoeur uses in The Voluntary and the Involuntary (Ricoeur 1949, 111. (116).) is commonly associated with the critical reception of John Stuart Mill’s 1836 essay “On the Definition of Political Economy, and on the Method of Investigation Proper to It.” Defining “political economy” as a narrower science than “social economy” Mill “brackets” all the aspects of human nature except that of desiring wealth: “What is now commonly understood by the term ‘Political Economy’ is not the science of speculative politics, but a branch of that science. It does not treat of the whole of man’s nature as modified by the social state, nor of the whole conduct of man in society. It is concerned with him solely as a being who desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging of the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end. It predicts only such of the phenomena of the social state as take place in consequence of the pursuit of wealth. […] Political Economy considers mankind as occupied solely in acquiring and consuming [socially sustaining] wealth.” (Mill 1874, 137-138.) Let me also point out that in his own brief discussion of homo oeconomicus, Marcel Hénaff, however, refers to Adam Smith instead of J.S. Mill. Adam Smith is most well-known not for his economic anthropology, but his economic philosophy of “the invisible hand” that, according to Smith, naturally structures human co-operation through the marketplace without pre-established patterns. Hénaff 2010, 16-18, 110-111, 157-159, 348-349. Cf. A. Smith 1984, 184-185.; A. Smith 1979, 72-81, 456.

1052 Ricoeur 1960a, 129. (113). – Ricoeur’s emphasis on the body as “mine” could, of course, also be seen through the lens of Lockean liberalism. In chapter five of his Second Treatise of Government Locke maintains that property ownership is a natural right that has its ground in a person’s physical body: “Though the earth, and all inferior creatures, be common to all men, yet every man has a property in his own person: this no body has any right to but himself. The labour of his body, and the work of his hands, we may say, are properly his. Whatsoever then he removes out of the state that nature hath provided, and left it in, he hath mixed his labour with, and joined to it something that is his own, and thereby makes it his property. It being by him removed from the common state nature hath placed it in, it hath by this labour something annexed to it, that excludes the common right of other men: for this labour being the unquestionable property of the labourer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough, and as good, left in common for others. […] From all which it is evident, that though the things of nature are given in common, yet man, by being master of himself, and proprietor of his own person, and the actions or labour of it, had still in himself the great foundation of property; and that, which made up the great part of what he applied to the support or comfort of his being, when invention and arts had improved the conveniencies of life, was perfectly his own, and did not belong in common to others.” Locke 1995, 287, 298.
correlative feeling is an “oriented lack,” as Ricoeur defines the shortage of sustenance indicated by instincts. In contrast to natural objects, an economic object is “an available good” (un bien disponible) that according to Ricoeur is characterized by its very availability “for me.” The affective interiorization of the external relation between the “I” and the economic object is a correlate of this mode of relating.

Ricoeur restates, however, the distinction between animal environment and the human world in terms of work, as he claims that the transformation from one environment to another is “obviously related” to it. According to Ricoeur a human being is distinguished from the other animals because the essence of his needs is different, and the difference between these needs is itself brought about by human production in the form of establishing an economic relation to things, that is, treating natural objects as possessions. Consequently, Ricoeur defines as human being as the Working Human: “Man, because he produces his subsistence, is a being who works.” In Ricoeur’s analysis, it is the working human being who establishes this economic relation to things. Natural objects thus become possessions which connote control and dependence, and which therefore also imply certain “otherness” in the very form of the object “on which I make myself dependent.” This otherness reintroduces the idea of a shattered ego: the possibility of no-longer-having (ne-plus-avoir) forms a breach in the constitution of the economic “I” who works to have and to gain sustenance.

Ricoeur argues that having also defines interpersonal relations. Possessing distinguishes the “I” from another “I,” since excluding “mine” from “yours” differentiates

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1053 Ricoeur 1960a, 129-130. (113-114).
1054 Ricoeur 1960a, 130. (114).
the “I” and the “you” in relation to their respective “spheres of belonging,” or contexts of having. Reiterating the analyses of *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* Ricoeur also states that one’s body is an “occupied spatiality” by which one enters into the world of things as economic objects.\(^{1057}\) In other words, Ricoeur maintains that goods and commodities of all kinds pertain to me in this body which is the nexus of my spatial occupation. The “economic human” is therefore primordial and passionate about having; “I cannot imagine the I without the mine, or man without having,” Ricoeur concludes.\(^{1058}\)

*The Quest for Power*

As indicated by the notion of control, the quests for having and power are intertwined, but, Ricoeur states, not reducible to each other. They differ in that the quest for power implies two sets of problems: those of political power and those of socio-economics.\(^{1059}\) Ricoeur’s exposition of the set of socio-economic problems re-examines work as “owning and controlling the means of production,” “domination,” “work force,” and “alienation”\(^{1060}\) — Ricoeur’s allusions to Marxist philosophy are evident as explicated by his 1956 essay “What does ‘Humanism’ mean?” that discusses the “peril of the ‘objectification’ of man in work and in consuming.” According to Ricoeur, this type of alienation “poses a social and, finally, a political problem; objectification, a cultural problem.”\(^{1061}\) The set of problems of political power introduces the idea of institutions as objectifications of the human quest for power. Both sets, however, include relations of subordination.

\(^{1058}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 132. (115).
\(^{1059}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 132. (116).
\(^{1060}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 132-134. (116-117).
\(^{1061}\) Ricoeur 1956, 86-87. (Ricoeur 1974, 74.)
In brief, Ricoeur argues that political structures are means of control over socio-economic structures, and that they necessarily imply “the power of man over man.” This power-structuring as the organization of institutions is the “new ‘object’” for Ricoeur, since he maintains that institutions objectify the political power as its manifestations; Ricoeur’s essay “The Tasks of the Political Educator” stresses later that “each historical group only appropriates its own technical and economic reality through [these political] institutions.” As *Fallible Man* clarifies, through social roles individuals are adopted under “all the modalities of influence, control, direction, organization, and compulsion,” and this manifold exercise of power is objectified in institutions. “The ‘object,’” Ricoeur argues, “is nothing other than the form in which the interhuman relation of power is realized.” Institution, in this political sense, is therefore for the early Ricoeur a socially adopted form of exercising power and control in a society.

A member of a society – no matter his or her “peculiar rationale” as *Fallible Man* observes – is set in relations which draw their objectivity from human orderings. Consequently, he points out, the self relates to “a new layer of objects that may, in broad sense, be called cultural.” These objects have a positive role, Ricoeur maintains, because they function as “ordering principles” which, in themselves, do not invoke the use of force. In human praxis, Ricoeur argues, this distinction between power and violence is lost, however, and political power is perverted. When a subject is adopted into systems of such cultural objects, that is, when a person becomes alienated from the structurally non-violent

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1062 Ricoeur 1960a, 134. (118).
1063 Ricoeur 1965c, 80. (Ricoeur 1974, 274.)
1065 Ricoeur 1960a, 135. (119).
1066 Ricoeur 1960a, 135. (119).
power, “man becomes alienated from himself.” Still, the same objectivity (for which feelings of power are the correlative interiorization) also “ground[s] man as a political animal.” Put differently, according to Ricoeur, a human being is fundamentally a socio-political being.

*The Quest for Esteem*

Ricoeur’s analysis of the third human quest in *Fallible Man* fully opens the realm of cultural recognition – or, in the language of *History and Truth*, “the cultural sphere of mutual recognition” (sphère culturelle de la reconnaissance mutuelle). Neither the reciprocally exclusive relations of having, nor the hierarchical and asymmetrical relations of power reach the level of the quest for worth, or “the quest for esteem in another’s opinion” as Ricoeur defines it in *Fallible Man*. This most primordial quest is also the constitutive one for a human subject who, according to Ricoeur, becomes for the first time recognized as an individual self: “It is there [in the realm of interpersonal relations] that I pursue the aim of being esteemed, approved, and recognized. My existence for myself is dependent on this constitution in another’s opinion.” Ricoeur clarifies the quest for worth as the desire to exist and to be acknowledged.

The quest for esteem is not, however, a subject’s mere desire to be recognized, but includes a fundamental mutuality that establishes the ground for the fulfillment of gained esteem. For this reason, Ricoeur characterizes the quest for esteem as “the true passage from

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1067 Ricoeur 1960a, 136. (119-120).
1068 Ricoeur 1960a, 136. (120).
1070 Ricoeur 1960a, 136. (120).
1071 Ricoeur 1960a, 137. (121).
consciousness to self-consciousness.” The key moment in this analysis of esteem is Ricoeur’s emphasis on the *received* recognition upon which human subjects are founded. Ricoeur summarizes his conviction clearly: “My ‘Self,’ it may be said, is received from the opinion of others that establishes it. The constitution of subjects is thus a mutual constitution through opinion.” Once again, as later in *Course of Recognition*, receiving is “the pivotal category” on which a subject’s self-consciousness depends. The quest for esteem, as *Fallible Man* defines it, is, in other words, “the quest of recognition (*reconnaissance*).”

Even though he has distanced himself from Kant’s initial analysis of the three passions in *Anthropology*, Ricoeur maintains a Kantian tone by holding on to the idea of “objectivity” from *The Critique of Pure Reason*. With regard to this particular quest for recognition, however, Ricoeur resorts to Kant’s *Groundwork*, in which a rational being is defined as an objective end in himself. “Kant gives the name of humanity to this objectivity,” Ricoeur argues; “the proper object of esteem is the idea of man in my person and in the person of another.” In other words, by expanding the notion of objectivity Ricoeur stretches the register of his analysis to recognition, while still claiming to follow the trail of Kantian philosophy. More importantly, by using this mixed notion of objectivity, Ricoeur is capable of joining together the diverse elements of his analysis of the quest for esteem:

I expect another person to convey the image of my humanity to me, to esteem me by making my humanity known to me. This fragile reflection of myself in another’s opinion has the consistency of an object; it conceals the objectivity of an existing end that draws a limit to any pretension to make use of me. *It is in and through this objectivity that I can be recognized* (*je puis être reconnu*).  

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1072 Ricoeur 1960a, 137. (121).
1073 Ricoeur 1960a, 137. (121).
1074 Ricoeur 2004b, 351. (243).
1075 Ricoeur 1960a, 138. (122).
1076 Ricoeur 1960a, 138-139. (122-123).
1077 Ricoeur 1960a, 139. (123). Italics added.
As Kant’s categorical imperative denies using other rational subjects merely as means, Ricoeur reasons, everyone must treat others as ends in themselves. They will have to “esteem me” and “make my humanity known to me,” that is, make my being-an-end-in-myself known to me. In this esteem the others offer to me in their opinions or statements with regard to my personhood, I can then “read” the objective truth that I truly am an existing being and an end in myself. This objective recognition – which is fragile only because I infer it in my subjectivity – gives me therefore the notion of being a self or a person, that is, a human being with self-consciousness.

This “formal objectivity,” however, would again render a living subject’s experience insignificant, if not supplemented with a correlating notion of “material objectivity,” or cultural objects which mediate the notion of esteem. Again, Ricoeur’s insistence on not suspending the subject’s concrete experience necessitates this “materializing” of esteem and recognition. These objects differ from the economic and political ones in the respect that they can be seen as media for self-expression in general, and therefore as proper cultural works. Ricoeur’s definition of the “works of the mind,” which echoes Bergson’s concept of *homo faber* who produces intellectual tools, pushes him then to the no-man’s land between philosophical anthropology and cultural philosophy:

> “Works” of art and literature, and, in general, works of the mind (*l’esprit*), insofar as they not merely mirror an environment and an epoch but search out man’s possibilities, are the true “objects” that manifest the abstract universality of the idea of humanity through their concrete universality.\(^{1079}\)

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\(^{1079}\) Ricoeur 1960a, 139. (123).
Ricoeur, in other words, argues that the notion of humanity – a subject’s being-an-end-in-himself – is manifested in those “highly expressive” works that pertain to a human being’s fundamental quest or *Suchen* of expressing himself most accurately and most authentically. This, ultimately, is the cultural institution of which Ricoeur is interested in; *History and Truth* maintains that even though “it is not very common to speak of ‘institutions’ in respect to culture, such as with regard to political, social, or economic life, yet the profound meaning of the institution appears only when it is extended to the images of man in culture, literature, and the arts.” These works that institute the idea of humanity are concrete and yet universal because as works of imagination they always remain in the mode of the “possible” – they explore human possibilities – as art and literature demonstrate.

This “material objectivity” of genuinely “true works,” which reveal a subject to himself and mediate the idea of humanity to others, is, therefore, cultural. As Ricoeur puts it later in an interview, “it is from the depth of a certain culture that I approach a new object of the culture.” In brief, therefore, the “material objectivity” is culture, as also *History and Truth* argues: “The struggle for recognition is pursued by means of cultural realities. […] This quest for mutual esteem (*d’estime mutuelle*) is pursued through images of man (*images de l’homme*); and these images of man [which are embodied in cultural works] constitute the reality that is culture.” As George H. Taylor points out, Ricoeur’s conception of cultural objectivity is, therefore, not restricted to mere reification. The formal objectivity of a subject’s being-an-end-in-himself is quasi-materialized in cultural works which bear witness

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1080 Ricoeur 1960a, 76-77. (59-60).
1081 Ricoeur 1967a, 129. (126).
1082 Ricoeur 1960a, 160-161. (144); Ricoeur 1956, 88-89. (Ricoeur 1974, 78-80.)
1083 Ricoeur & Nakjavani 1991, 446.
1084 Ricoeur 1967a, 121. (118-119).
1085 G. H. Taylor 2010a, 7.
to my being-an-end-in-myself, and by which I can be recognized, although indirectly, in
others’ opinions concerning them.

The objectivity attained at the level of the quests of having and power still
prevails at this level of being recognized in the quasi-material “thingness” of these “works”
of the human spirit, which also presuppose human relations through institutions. In their
reference to the very idea of humanity, however, these “true” cultural works differ from
mere possession and authority. As Ricoeur insists in his 1957 essay “Place de l’oeuvre d’art
dans notre culture,” in art “it is only and always of human that is the question.”
Referring to the theatrical forms of art that represent the human itself in an artistic way,
Ricoeur maintains that unlike at the level of economics and politics that manifest the human but do
not generalize the notion of being human as an end in itself, “each work of art outlines and
proposes a possible world, and as every possible world is a possible environment for a
possible human being, in each time it is human being, the virtual center of this world, that is
in question.” Unlike the works of having and power, the “proper” cultural works of art
are therefore intersubjectively constitutive in their concrete universality as they enable
mutuality by mediating the “idea of humanity” – the idea of the human quality – through
this cultural objectivity that is “a vast imaginary experimentation of the most impossible
possibilities of being human.” As *Fallible Man* stresses, such cultural objectivity that is
manifested in the works of art as well as all the human works that are centered around this
idea of humanity, facilitates becoming a human being:

Cultural objectivity (*l’objectivité culturelle*) is the very relation of man to man
represented in the idea of humanity (*l’idée d’humanité*) [that is properly

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1086 Ricoeur 1957b, 8.
1087 Ricoeur 1957b, 7-8.
1088 Ricoeur 1957b, 8.
1089 Ricoeur 1957b, 8.
In sum, an anthropological analysis of the triad of human passions conceived as affective fundamental human quests for having, power, and esteem has led Ricoeur to the “very relation of human to human,” that is, to the notion of cultural objectivity. Only cultural expressions as conceivable manifestations of human possibilities furnish the abstract idea of humanity—a subject’s being-an-end-in-himself generally—and bring it to life. A subject’s constitution is therefore utterly cultural, as “the relation to self is an interiorized relation to another,” Ricoeur states in *Fallible Man*.\footnote{Ricoeur 1960a, 140. (124).} An authentic interiorization of this mutuality that is mediated by cultural objectivity (that stresses not the economic or the political structure, but the interpersonal connection between a human and another human in the idea of humanity), however, is possible only in the mode of affections which synthetize the living human experience onto-existentially:

The universal function of feeling is to bind together. It connects what knowledge divides; it binds me to things, to beings, to being. Whereas the whole movement of objectification tends to set a world over against me, feeling unites the intentionality, which throws me out of myself, to the affection through which I feel myself existing. Consequently, it is always shy of or beyond the duality of subject and object.\footnote{Ricoeur 1960a, 147. (131).}

Recognition, in the manner Ricoeur understands it, is therefore best described as re-*con-*naissance, as the synthetic moment of grasping or putting together, “*con*,” in and under

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\footnote{1090 Ricoeur 1960a, 140, 157. (123-124, 141). Cf. Ricoeur 1957b, 5-7.}
\footnote{1091 Ricoeur 1960a, 140. (124).}
\footnote{1092 Ricoeur 1960a, 147. (131).}
objectivity that materializes the idea of humanity and renders it interiorizable (*viz.* Erinnerung). The interiorization of this idea, however, leads us to notice the fragility of the affective synthesis of the person. A human being, “mediator of the reality outside of himself,” Ricoeur maintains, is “a fragile mediation himself,” and remains therefore an endless task for himself.1093 “In himself and for himself man remains torn,” Ricoeur summarizes.1094 The unity of the self is maintained in reflection enabled by cultural objects, “the signs of being human,”1095 which mediate the idea of self in their concreteness. The notion of the self is, in other words, a task for interpretation instructed by the cultural.

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1093 Ricoeur 1960a, 156. (140).
1095 Ricoeur 1960a, 85. (67).
11. A HERMENEUTIC OF CULTURAL OBJECTS

Our path of reading Ricoeur has reached the point of cultural objectivity. The analysis of The Voluntary and the Involuntary led us to think that subjectivity is, as explained by Kant, only achievable by facing objectivity. The succeeding reading of Fallible Man then clarified that understanding subjectivity is dependent on cultural objectivity in particular. As we have seen, this cultural objectivity transforms to human interrelatedness, since the “idea of humanity” that defines being human is manifested through cultural expressions, including institutions, which demonstrate the human possibilities. The preceding discussion has, therefore, led us to the threshold of Ricoeur’s full-blown hermeneutic of culture in On Interpretation that re-reads the quests for having, power, and esteem explicitly from a cultural hermeneutic point of view. This hermeneutics, as Charles Taylor, Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan maintain, lent to the interpretive turn of the social sciences.\(^{1096}\)

11.1 Toward a Hermeneutic Reflection on “the Signs of Being Human”

Before getting to Ricoeur’s “analytic” and the succeeding hermeneutic of culture, let me emphasize the importance of “con” in re-con-naissance as the con-joining of life (βίος) and the foundational unifying principle of intelligibility (λόγος) in cultural-linguistic communication. “Con,” which normally means jointly or together, in Fallible Man also connects the synthetic unity of appearance and concept, the practical unity of character and humanity, and the affective unity of being among beings. All three connotations, however, point to a common denominating meaning, that is, to communication which adds another level of “con” to our examination. As the Oxford English Dictionary explains, the everyday meaning of “the

imparting or exchanging of information” includes the Latin noun *communicatio* and the verb *communicare*, “to share,” or “to participate mutually.”¹⁰⁹⁷ In general, synthesis requires communication between the elements of which it consists – their com-bination (*con-junctio*) as Kant points out¹⁰⁹⁸ – but Ricoeur seems to maintain that the cultural synthesis also enables communication as discourse which con-joins in a fundamental manner.

As I have argued in section 10.2, Ricoeur holds that in their concreteness “the signs of man,” and especially the “works of the mind,” mediate the idea of humanity.¹⁰⁹⁹ In correlation, the fundamental but limited openness to everything “human” led Ricoeur to maintain that in theory “no sign of man is radically incomprehensible, no language radically untranslatable, no work of art to which my taste cannot spread.”¹¹⁰⁰ The unity of the self is upheld only in reflection enabled by cultural objects, which themselves express unity in the idea of humanity. Put differently, the differentiation of selves through individual limitedness, or the “otherness of consciousnesses” (as Ricoeur calls it in *Fallible Man*), is “relative to a primordial identity and unity” which precede otherness.¹¹⁰¹ As a result, I argue, the “works of the mind or human spirit,” *les œuvres de l'esprit*,¹¹⁰² are signs which communicate the fundamental unity of humanity under this condition.

For Ricoeur, the human community, or the material representation of the social collective, is only one aspect of humanity that is an essentially comm-unicative human quality of a person. Ricoeur refines his position in *Fallible Man*, arguing that this unity in the notion of humanity “makes possible the understanding of language, the communication of

¹⁰⁹⁸ Kant 1999, III.B129-131. (KrV). – Marcel Hénaff uses a similar kind of wordplay in his *Price of Truth*.
¹⁰⁹⁹ Ricoeur 1960a, 85, 139. (67, 123).
¹¹⁰⁰ Ricoeur 1960a, 77. (60-61).
¹¹⁰¹ Ricoeur 1960a, 154. (138).
¹¹⁰² Ricoeur 1960a, 139. (123).
culture, and the communion of persons.”

In short, language and cultural communication also pertain to humanity as an idea. In fact, Ricoeur maintains that language and culture are means of communication by which the social community is held together, since “in being born I enter into the world of language that precedes me and envelops me.” A human subject is therefore primordially “a being who intends and expresses as an intentional transgression of the situation.”

A social collective stands firm only on the basis of its articulated identity through the works of the human mind. Even at its most elementary levels it can become a community, a shared social context, only if the sustaining principle is communicated; one can think of the expression “I do” in a wedding ceremony as a performative example. Cultural-linguistic communication is therefore more essential to humanity as an idea than the material or biological bonds that nevertheless are included in it as pertaining to the animal world in which human subjects still participate.

Despite his preference for the idea of humanity, Ricoeur locates cultural-linguistic communication between the extremities of ζωή, life, and λόγος, reason. As Ricoeur maintains in his 1962 essay “Nature and Freedom,” the opposition “between the human act of culture and nature considered as violence in man, or as spontaneity in living organisms and as mute existence in mere things” has to be challenged. Even though “nature is that which is, pure and simple, as opposed to that which is said,” freedom and nature intersect in cultural works that include communication. This cultural “relation of mediation between freedom and nature is more fundamental than the relation of

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1103 Ricoeur 1960a, 154. (138).
1104 Ricoeur 1960a, 45. (27).
1105 Ricoeur 1960a, 45. (27).
1106 Ricoeur 1960a, 98, 123. (81-82, 107).
1107 Ricoeur 1962, 134. (Ricoeur 1974, 38-39.)
1108 Ricoeur 1962, 126. (Ricoeur 1974, 25.)
opposition.” Ricoeur argues in *Fallible Man*, accordingly, that “in the sign dwells the transcendence of the λόγος of man.” Put differently, the communication of the idea of humanity takes place in the “works of the mind or human spirit” as signs of this idea that qualifies a subject’s human existence. In Ricoeur’s words, the “fundamental unity of λόγος” that is the originating principle of reason is, however, relative to the “difference in λέγειν,” the difference “in speaking,” or the different discourses (which all signify, but only by referring to that what is signified). The Greek word λόγος, meaning word or constituting principle, is put to signs in λέγειν, meaning to lay in order, to gather, to reckon, to speak, or to utter. The difference and multitude of these utterances – which still order life while gathering it in signs – points to the cultural fact that there is no universal speech but there are only historical, local, and particular discourses and cultures that manifest the human aspect of being situated in life (βίος).

Put differently, as Ricoeur maintains in his 1975 introduction to the UNESCO publication *Les cultures et le temps*, the common cultural condition is manifested in cultural diversity as forms of discourse; the unity of λόγος is gathered only in the difference of λέγειν. The distinction between λόγος and λέγειν, also thinkable as the Saussurean distinction between language (*langue*) and discourse (*parole*), leads Ricoeur to argue in *Fallible Man* that “the unity of humanity is realized nowhere else than in the movement of

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109 Ricoeur 1962, 137. (Ricoeur 1974, 43.)
110 Ricoeur 1960a, 46. (28).
111 Ricoeur 1960a, 139. (123).
114 Ricoeur 1975c, 19, 21, 23, 25.
communication.” Communication, in brief, is the coming of the idea in human discourse; the idea of humanity is brought about as discourse. “Speech,” Ricoeur maintains, “is the human destination,” that is, the human quality can only be lived out as expressed. Discursive action, in other words, is necessary for the humanity of a human being. Consequently, a human subject is “a plural and collective unity in which the unity of destination and the difference of destinies are to be understood through each other.” Even though a human subject engages in situated discourses – the subject’s openness is limited – they are still discourses that find their unity in the very communicating of the idea of humanity as culture. In sum, then, the cultural “world of language” unified in λόγος is both my origin and my destination, my ἀρχή and my τέλος.

As I have argued above, Ricoeur maintains in Fallible Man that cultural synthesis enables communication as discourse which conjoins: it glues the human community together, but, more fundamentally, connects human subjects with the idea of humanity. In addition, I maintain that for this reason Ricoeur opens On Interpretation by stating that “there is an area today where all philosophical investigations cut across one another – the area of language.” Not forgetting nor underestimating the hermeneutic “wager” in The Symbolism of Evil, discussed in parts one and two of this dissertation, I argue that Fallible Man necessitated, by conjoining the “unity of humanity” and the “movement of communication,” the shift of emphasis from pre-hermeneutical phenomenology to hermeneutics of language and culture. “Perhaps for the first time,”

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1116 Ricoeur 1960a, 154. (138).
1117 Ricoeur 1960a, 159. (143). – Ricoeur parallels the thought proposed by Martin Heidegger, who in his 1931 lecture course on Aristotle gives four different qualifications or modes to logos. Pol Vandevelde, in his Heidegger analysis, explicates these modes as alethic truth-telling, categorizing address, concomitant saying (mit-sagend) of a being, and lastly as the power of discursive configuration.
1118 Ricoeur 1960a, 154. (138).
1119 Ricoeur 1965a, 13. (3).
1120 Ricoeur 1960b, 324-326, 330. (348-351, 355).
Ricoeur then comments in *On Interpretation*, “we are able to encompass in a single question the problem of the unification of human discourse.”¹¹²¹ This problem presents itself, however, for Ricoeur initially in *Fallible Man*.

Moreover, Ricoeur’s interest in Freud – the major figure in *On Interpretation* – can be seen as an extension of the analysis of primordial affections in *Fallible Man*, but also as having been motivated by his interest in culture. Unlike the lengthy discussion of Freudian determinism of the unconscious in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*,¹¹²² *On Interpretation* treats Freud’s work not for psychological but for philosophical reasons “as a monument of our culture, as a text in which our culture is expressed and understood,” that is, as “an interpretation of culture.”¹¹²³ The first of the guiding questions Ricoeur sets for the work concerns “the interpretation of the signs of man.”¹¹²⁴ As also confirmed by the lengthy 1965 essay “Psychoanalysis and the Movement of Contemporary Culture” that maintains its focus on cultural hermeneutics,¹¹²⁵ *On Interpretation* proposes a cultural philosophy instead of merely examining psychoanalysis. Although *On Interpretation* materially consists of two distinct parts that share Freud as their common denominator – an analytic reading, and a subsequent philosophical interpretation of Freud’s work – it is “a discussion with Freud”¹¹²⁶ rather than of Freud, in which Ricoeur elaborates and broadens his cultural analysis by addressing directly the question of culture. Seemingly paralleling the opening of his 1965 colloquium

¹¹²¹ Ricoeur 1965a, 13-14. (3-4).
¹¹²³ Ricoeur 1965a, 7-8, 14. (xii-xiii, 4). Cf. Pellauer 2007, 44, 49.; Eckholt 1999, 97-98. – Richard J. Bernstein makes a similar kind of point in his very recent essay “Ricoeur’s Freud”: “Against the prevailing view that Freud began his psychoanalytic investigations with a focus exclusively on the analytic situation of curing individual patients and only turned to problems of culture in his later writings, Ricoeur argues that the interpretation of culture was always evident in Freud’s writings. He also argues that when Freud introduces the Death Instinct and pursues its consequences in the great struggle of Eros and Thanatos, there is a radical transformation in the psychoanalytic understanding of culture. Psychoanalysis as an interpretation of culture becomes an intrinsic aspect of all culture.” Bernstein 2013, 133.
¹¹²⁴ Ricoeur 1965a, 8. (xii).
¹¹²⁵ Ricoeur 1969, 122-159. (121-159).
¹¹²⁶ Ricoeur 1965a, 13. (3). Italics added.
presentation “Psychanalyse et culture,” Ricoeur maintains that his task is not to elaborate psychoanalytic interpretation theory but respond to it instead from a cultural hermeneutic point of view.  

As a result, Ricoeur’s discussion of culture is by no means limited to Freud. In the philosophical interpretation of Freud (which Ricoeur explicitly separates from reading Freud’s work exegetically) Ricoeur places the Freudian “archeology of the subject” in dialectics with the Hegelian “teleology of the subject.” In other words, Ricoeur theorizes an “implicit teleology” in Freud and an “implicit archaeology” in Hegel to explicate a dialectics by which a human subject’s cultural-linguistic condition is explicated. Once again, therefore, On Interpretation – only subtitled as an Essay on Freud and misleadingly translated as Freud and Philosophy: an Essay on Interpretation – is not primarily a work focusing on Freud, but on developing a philosophy of culture. Ricoeur’s use of Hegel’s philosophy, which takes the question of culture very seriously, only strengthens Ricoeur’s ultimate goal.

Before analyzing Ricoeur’s entrance into the hermeneutic of culture in On Interpretation, I want to rediscuss briefly the role of Kant’s philosophy, as it helps explain Ricoeur’s situatedness within the philosophical tradition he felt the most comfortable with. In Fallible Man Ricoeur aspired to base his analysis on Kant’s transcendentalism, but repeatedly broke with the “Kantian orthodoxy,” whereas On Interpretation represents more clearly Ricoeur’s detachment from Kant’s critical philosophy and his explicit affiliation with post-Kantian reflexive philosophy.

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1127 In his December 1965 presentation at the Critique sociologique et critique psychanalytique colloquium in Paris, Ricoeur makes it clear that his response to psychoanalytical hermeneutics is a cultural hermeneutics: “Après les contributions des psychanalystes, mon intervention ne peut avoir qu’un but: rendre possible le passage d’une interprétation psychanalytique à une interprétation non psychanalytique, par exemple sociologique, de l’oeuvre d’art et en général de l’oeuvre de culture.” Ricoeur 1970, 179.
1128 Ricoeur 1965a, 9, 71. (xii-xiii, 63-64).
1129 Ricoeur 1965a, 444-446. (459-462).
1130 Trans. by Denis Savage.
Although the theme is lightly developed, throughout On Interpretation Ricoeur suggests possible correspondences between Kant’s and Freud’s ideas.\(^{1131}\) The most notable of these thematic parallelisms is the affinity Ricoeur sees between the Kantian sublime – a peculiar intellectual feeling of pleasure (das Wohlgefallen) analyzed in The Critique of Judgment\(^ {1132}\) – and Freud’s notion of sublimation, that is, the libido’s directing itself to a non-sexual (substitute) satisfaction.\(^ {1133}\) Even so, Ricoeur still refers to Kant’s epistemological transcendentalism as a model for his own philosophical examination of the “Freudian realism of unconscious,”\(^ {1134}\) and in the wake of The Symbolism of Evil, he also connects his continuing interest in symbolic language – to “justify cultural contingency”\(^ {1135}\) – with Kant’s third Critique and its analysis on beauty as the symbol of morality.\(^ {1136}\) As seen with Fallible Man, however, Ricoeur’s Kantianism is not of an orthodox kind, but utilizes Kant’s thought quite liberally in formulating ideas of his own. In a similar manner, it appears as if Ricoeur’s remarks on Kant in On Interpretation would be tangents of his cultural analysis.

Ricoeur’s interest in culture correlates with his situating of himself in the post-Kantian rather than Kantian philosophy. Even though Ricoeur agrees with Kant that self-consciousness as immediate, intellectual intuition is ruled out by the transcendental conditions of cognition (Kant argues in The Critique of Pure Reason that a subject is in relation to him- or herself only “as [he] appears to [him]self”\(^ {1137}\)), Ricoeur modifies Kant’s standpoint

\(^{1131}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 121, 124, 177, 182, 185, 202, 221, 263, 422, 433-434. (116, 120, 176, 182, 185, 204, 225, 265, 435, 448-449).
\(^{1132}\) Kant 1999, V.244-247. (KdU).
\(^{1134}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 418-420. (431-433).
\(^{1135}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 50. (42).
\(^{1136}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 45-46. (37-38). Cf. Kant 1999, V.351-354. (KdU). – Kant also states in the Critique of Judgment that “only culture can be the ultimate purpose that we have cause to attribute to nature with respect to the human species.” Kant 1999, V.429-434. (KdU).
\(^{1137}\) Kant 1999, III.B152-159. (KrV).
by emphasizing that self-consciousness can only be attained reflectively. In turn, Ricoeur
defines reflection in *On Interpretation* as an effort or as a task of achieving self-consciousness
in the light of the objects which mediate the notion of the self:

Reflection is the effort to recapture the Ego of the Ego Cogito in the mirror of
its objects, its works, its acts. But why must the positing of the Ego be
recaptured through its acts? Precisely because it is given neither in a
psychological evidence, nor in an intellectual intuition, not in a mystical vision.
A reflective philosophy is the contrary of a [Cartesian] philosophy of the
immediate. The first truth – *I am, I think* – remains as abstract and empty as it
is invincible; it has to be “mediated” by the representations, actions, works,
institutions, and monuments that objectify it. It is in these objects, in the
widest sense of the word, that the Ego must lose [that is, displace or
“decenter” itself] and find itself.\(^{1138}\)

In the manner of the reflexive tradition, Ricoeur distinguishes himself from Kant by
demanding an expansion of the idea of objectivity: it is “in the widest sense of the word”
that the objectifying actions would have to be considered. The self, Ricoeur maintains, has to
be recovered in *all* its acts, first and foremost the cultural-linguistic ones, and not only in the
analysis of the transcendental conditions of (self-)cognition. As Ricoeur argues in *History and
Truth*, “we know the [human] spirit only in the works of this spirit, in cultural works, each of
which demand our friendship (*amitié*).”\(^{1139}\) Ricoeur’s conception of reflection, while focusing
on the self’s intellectual acts in the cultural works – acts that “bear witness” to “our effort to
exist and our desire to be”\(^{1140}\) – is therefore a step away from Kant’s transcendental
epistemologism toward the manner Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Jean Nabert elaborated
Kant’s ideas.\(^{1141}\) In this sense Ricoeur could be said to think in the wake of Kant’s
philosophy, that is, “after” Kant, just as he philosophizes “after” Hegel.\(^{1142}\)

\(^{1138}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 51. (43-44).
\(^{1139}\) Ricoeur 1967a, 78. (74).
\(^{1140}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (46).
\(^{1141}\) In terms of Ricoeur’s self-definition as a “post-Kantian” philosopher, it is exactly this narrowness of
Kant’s critical philosophy that he maintains as the main reason for contesting the Kantian “orthodoxy”: “It is
in opposition to this reduction of reflection to a simple [epistemological] critique that I say, with Fichte and his
Ricoeur’s discomfort with the epistemological orientation of Kantianism results in his repositioning of himself in relation to the reflexive tradition of Maine de Biran and Jean Nabert, and insisting that the positing of self is a task; it is not given but always in the making. For this reason, Ricoeur explains, reflection has to become interpretation. Because the meaning of a subject’s acts as cultural works “remains doubtful and revocable,” reflection “calls for an interpretation and tends to move into hermeneutics.” Ricoeur’s decision to examine culture correlates therefore firmly with the hermeneutic mode of approach. In order to recover the notion of the self, the shattered and decentered self would have to be retrieved from the objects it has set; this retrieving is nothing but interpretative reappropriation of these objects as cultural signs of the self:

Reflection must become interpretation because I cannot grasp the act of existing except in signs scattered in the world. That is why a reflective philosophy must include the results, methods, and presuppositions of all the sciences that try to decipher and interpret the signs of man. […] In positing itself, reflection understands its own inability to transcend the vain and empty abstraction of the I think and the necessity to recover itself by deciphering its own signs lost in the world of culture.

To restate, in *On Interpretation* Ricoeur argues that the notion of self is possible only as a hermeneutical task, this is, as an interpretation that focuses – by whatever means – in “reading” and decoding culture as a representation of humanity. Ricoeur’s terminology shifts later from interpretation to “reading” (*la lecture*), but they both address the issue of appropriation. In an 1982 interview with Philip Fried, for example, Ricoeur describes the same process of mediated self-recognition in terms of reading: “Proust says in *Time Recovered, Time Regained* that the reader is the reader of himself when he reads a book. So, in fact, I am taught by the work of art to read myself in terms of the work of art. This is linked to a conviction of mine that I am not an ego, an ego which is finished. I am an unfinished ego, and therefore, what I call myself, the self of myself, is in fact the pupil of all the works of art, works of literature, works of culture which I read, which I loved, which I understood. And therefore, it’s a kind
therefore, the embarrassing observation that a total comprehension of the self is
unachievable. “In order to operate,” Ricoeur maintains, “reflection must take to itself the
opaque, contingent, and equivocal signs scattered in the cultures in which our language is
rooted.”\footnote{1147} In the concrete reflection of the contingent “signs of being human,” however,
the self recognizes itself (\textit{elle se reconnaît}) “as an \textit{Aufgabe},” that is, as an arduous task to be
resolved amidst a threefold “crisis” of reflection, interpretation, and language.\footnote{1148}

\section*{11.2 An Analytic of Culture}

After the introductory remarks that shifted us toward a hermeneutic of culture, let us now
begin reading Ricoeur’s own reading and analysis of Freud. As we will see, his subsequent
interpretation of it is not devoid of dialectical oppositions. \textit{On Interpretation}, to begin with,
portrays Freud’s psychoanalytical theory as reductive, demystifying, and in opposition to a
hermeneutic restorative of the sacred. As such the theory represents the “school of
suspicion” whose other “masters of destruction” are Marx, and Nietzsche.\footnote{1149} Despite their
differences, Ricoeur argues, all three thinkers are united by the culmination of their
respective analyses in the idea of “false consciousness,” that is, in the separation of
consciousness and meaning.\footnote{1150} According to Ricoeur, this destruction of a consciousness
that understands itself is a new beginning, however, since the three masters open the path to

\footnote{1147} Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (47).
\footnote{1148} Ricoeur 1965a, 53-55, 61-63. (45-46, 48, 54-56).
\footnote{1149} Ricoeur 1965a, 67-68. (59-60).
\footnote{1150} Ricoeur 1965a, 40-41. (32-33).
the idea that “understanding is hermeneutics,” and that meaning is recovered in the hermeneutical “deciphering” of the expressions of consciousness.\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 42. (33). – Oliva Blanchette offers in his \textit{Philosophy of Being} a correlating discussion of the necessity of the indirect exercise of judgment. Blanchette 2003, 56-65.}

Ricoeur maintains that of the three masters, all intellectually insightful in their respective ways, Freud should be considered as \textit{primus inter pares} since “the Freudian question as questions of language, ethics, and culture” establishes thematic connections to the issues discussed by Marx and Nietzsche. Of these “three interpretations of culture” Ricoeur chooses Freud as the figure by whom the question of culture is examined.\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 68. (60).} Ricoeur’s concern with culture rather than Freud’s theories is already evident in his “analytical reading” of Freud; this “analytics” section of \textit{On Interpretation} gives a central role – and a structural place – to the interpretation of culture as well as providing a “systematic view” of it.\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 160. (156).} In addition, the analytics section opens with a study that examines interpretation in psychoanalysis and has a preparatory function “for the study of cultural phenomena”; the concluding study of Freud’s reformulated instinct theory enables Ricoeur, in turn, “to complete the theory of culture.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 70-71, 75. (62-63, 65).} In sum, Ricoeur considers Freud as a means for examining the cultural condition of being human.

Even though Ricoeur emphasizes that the “analytics” is an inquiry that can be read separately from the rest of \textit{On Interpretation}, he also maintains that it is preparation for the succeeding “philosophical interpretation” that surpasses the level of Freudian psychology. Since Ricoeur already adopts a cultural perspective in this “analytics,” I will touch upon it before carving out Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics in the interpretive “dialectics” section of \textit{On Interpretation}. As Freud’s psychological speculation lies outside the...
scope of my current interest, my reading of Ricoeur’s “reading of Freud” is restricted to those traits that have significance in the formulation of his hermeneutic of culture.

After an excursion through Freudian psychology in *On Interpretation*, Ricoeur concludes by paying tribute to the idea of the “hidden”, that is, Freud’s concept of the unconscious. Instinctual desires are “always prior to language and culture,” Ricoeur summarizes, but it is, however, “impossible to realize this pure economics [or the psychological organization of the desiring drives] apart from the representable and the sayable.”¹¹⁵⁵ Both metapsychologically and psychologically, Freud’s thematization of psychological structures culminates in the notion that the primordial psychical drives force themselves to consciousness by “representatives” (*Repräsentanz*), which Ricoeur understands analogically to be the representation of ideas.¹¹⁵⁶ In other words, the unconscious that in itself remains hidden “is continued into what are known as derivatives,” through which the unconscious becomes indirectly recognized.¹¹⁵⁷ The cultural representations are necessary even at the most basic level of becoming recognized.

Ricoeur’s analysis of Freud’s theory of consciousness keeps the cultural in its sight by insisting that “to become conscious is to become an object of perception.”¹¹⁵⁸ Becoming conscious is relative to the antecedent objects of instincts “through which the instinct is able to achieve its aim [of satisfaction],” since the notion of such objects opens the possibility of narcissistically placing the ego itself as an aim of instinct.¹¹⁶⁰ This narcissistic

¹¹⁵⁵ Ricoeur 1965a, 151-152. (150).
¹¹⁵⁶ Ricoeur 1965a, 152. (150).
¹¹⁵⁷ Ricoeur 1965a, 152-153. (151).
¹¹⁵⁸ Ricoeur 1965a, 125. (120). – This objectification rests on three resisting conditions: 1) the self-regulation of psychical systems, 2) the interpretation of dream-works as fulfillment of a repressed existence that asks for subsequent and auxiliary interpretation of symbols, and 3) the psychological “topography” of preconsciousness, unconsciousness, and consciousness. Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 94, 98-99, 108, 112-113, 120, 122-123. (86, 90, 92, 101-102, 106-107, 115, 117-119).
¹¹⁶⁰ Ricoeur 1965a, 127-130. (123-126).
identification with an object – that makes the ego (Ichtrieb) symmetric with the object (Objektrieb) – results in cultural inventiveness; Ricoeur explains that the psychic processes which exalt either the object of desire (idealization) or the object-libido by redirecting it to non-sexual satisfaction (sublimation) dwell at the origins of aesthetic and cultural creativity.\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 132-136, 151-152. (128-129, 131-133, 149-150).}

Ricoeur’s subsequent analysis of Freud’s interpretation of culture, therefore, argues for an extension from the dream-world to the cultural one – from the “oneiric” to the sublime. Paralleling his claim in the 1965 colloquium presentation “Psychanalyse et culture,” in which Ricoeur stated that the proper research object of psychoanalysis is not the psychic drive itself but “the relation of desire with culture,” Ricoeur maintains in \textit{On Interpretation} that the psychoanalytical theory of culture is an application of the method of deciphering dreams and neuroses. Just as dreams and neurosis are interpreted with a view to the repressed, art, morality, and religion convey a subject’s instinctual desires, albeit sublimated ones: “the psychoanalysis offers to the interpretation of culture the submodel of wish-fulfillment (\textit{Wunscherfüllung}); the psychoanalytic interpretation of culture generalizes this prototype of all cultural phenomena.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 157-159. (153-155).} This cultural orientation of the psychoanalytical theory is not, however, a mere by-product of the interpretation of dreams. The confrontation of the libido with the non-libidinal object of its desire establishes the libido as “situated within a culture” and, from the viewpoint of a series of socially formative roles: personal, impersonal, and suprapersonal, this triad is Ricoeur’s equivalent of the “topography” of weak ego, anonymous id, and controlling superego.\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 159-160, 181-187. (155-156, 181-187).} The difference
between Freud’s “second topography” of ego, id, and superego, and the first of preconsciousness, unconsciousness, and consciousness is that the first was completely focused on instinct, whereas the new topography views the libido as being “subject to something other than itself,” that is, culture.  

Ricoeur argues that the Freudian conception of aesthetic creativity is, through its detour in culture, a means of collective self-understanding. In Ricoeur’s reading of Freud, the analysis of culture begins with aesthetics and then moves to socio-political institutions, including morality and religion. Pointing to the esteem psychoanalytic aesthetics holds for poetry, or creative writing, and visual art as prominent forms of aesthetic substitute satisfaction, Ricoeur stresses that works of art are created psychical derivatives. This emphasis almost already takes him away from the “analytic” to the “interpretative”: “the fantasy, which was only a signified absence, […] finds expression as an existing work in the treasury of culture.” Ricoeur holds that the works of art are representatives of the instinct – or, in Ricoeur’s words: “a disappearing of the archaic object as fantasy and its reappearing as a cultural object” – but inasmuch as they are “symptoms,” or projections of psychic drives and conflicts, in their expressivity they also “cure” the satisfaction that is constantly searched for. As a durable, materialized “cure,” however, the works of art also “communicate this meaning to a public, and thus open man to a new self-understanding.” This communication rests on the symbolic value that the work of art conveys; it is a gathering place of experienced reality and fantasized wish-fulfillment. “The work of art goes

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1165 Ricoeur 1965a, 160. (156).
1167 Ricoeur 1965a, 175. (174).
1168 Ricoeur 1965a, 308. (314).
1170 Ricoeur 1965a, 175. (175).
ahead of the artist,” Ricoeur maintains: “it is a prospective symbol of [his] personal synthesis and of man’s future. [...] The only thing that gives a presence to the artist’s fantasies is the work of art; and the reality thus conferred upon them is the reality of the work of art itself within a world of culture.”\textsuperscript{1171} In sum, Ricoeur’s reading of aesthetic substitute satisfaction results in an understanding of culture as a collective means of existential self-recognition.

Ricoeur’s discussion of aesthetics extends to one of psychic and social control, that is, to the institution of morality. Sophocles’ tragedy of \textit{King Oedipus} – which Ricoeur rightly defines as a “struggle for self-recognition”\textsuperscript{1172} – is well-known to us because of Freud’s famous interpretation, crystallized in the notion of Oedipus complex. Ricoeur asserts that Freud’s reading of the tragedy is both “an individual drama and the collective fate of humanity, a psychological fact and the source of morality, the origin of neurosis and the origin of culture.”\textsuperscript{1173} The Oedipus complex, in other words, is an idea drawn from a Greek tragedy, but it also helps explain human destiny as a “universal drama,” which, according to Ricoeur, in turn brings forth “one of the most formidable cultural institutions,” the incest taboo.\textsuperscript{1174} The prohibition of incest is made indirectly explicit in the cultural myth, but the myth also creates culture by instituting the idea that sexual instincts must find the object of their satisfaction outside familiar relationships.

Ricoeur concludes that sublimation is also repression.\textsuperscript{1175} Repression, viewed as a correlate to substitute satisfaction, is therefore – paradoxically – an element of essentially expressive culture: “repression and culture, intrapsychical institution and social institution,

\textsuperscript{1171} Ricoeur 1965a, 176-177. (175, 177).
\textsuperscript{1172} Ricoeur 1965a, 363. (371).
\textsuperscript{1173} Ricoeur 1965a, 188. (188).
\textsuperscript{1174} Ricoeur 1965a, 189-190. (190).
\textsuperscript{1175} Ricoeur 1965a, 224. (228).
coincide in this exemplary case.\textsuperscript{1176} The psychological and cultural origins of humanity are inseparable, Ricoeur infers, but culture that is erected by the force of primordial sexual instincts also has the function – the same as the superego\textsuperscript{1177} – of restricting and overseeing these instincts so that their potentially destructive power remains under control.\textsuperscript{1178} The correlate of this “mortifying” repression, or this “renouncing of archaic practices,” as Ricoeur calls it, is institutionalization that introduces cultural practices so as to also set ideals, including morality and religion, by which the drives in their force become apparent and part of articulated human reality.\textsuperscript{1179} Culture, especially in form of religion that is both a regulating illusion and an ultimate wish-fulfillment, therefore, also protects against the supremacy of nature.\textsuperscript{1180}

The cultural phenomena of art, morality, and religion, however, remain separated from each other in Ricoeur’s analysis of Freud until the introduction of Θάνατος (Thanatos), the death instinct. Before opening the last phase of the “analytics” that focuses on this re-elaboration of instinct theory, Ricoeur argues that only this expansion to Thanatos unifies all the libidinal phenomena, or cultural representations of instinctual desires, under one endeavor, that is, under the battle between the self-expressing life-drive and the pathological death-drive.\textsuperscript{1181} Ricoeur quotes Freud as saying “everything living dies for internal reasons … the aim of all life is death,” in order to explain this radical drive to die.\textsuperscript{1182} Correspondingly, “all of life’s organic developments are but detours toward death, and the so-called conservative instincts are but the organism’s attempts to defend its own fashion of

\textsuperscript{1176} Ricoeur 1965a, 190. (191).
\textsuperscript{1177} Ricoeur 1965a, 244. (249). – Ricoeur maintains that “culture is just another name for the superego.”
\textsuperscript{1178} Ricoeur 1965a, 193. (194).
\textsuperscript{1179} Ricoeur 1965a, 195, 205. (196, 207).
\textsuperscript{1180} Ricoeur 1965a, 244-249. (249-254).
\textsuperscript{1181} Ricoeur 1965a, 256. (258).
\textsuperscript{1182} Ricoeur 1965a, 285. (290).
dying, its particular path to death."\textsuperscript{1183} Life, in itself, is only a path to death, and \textit{Ερως} (\textit{Eros}), the sexual instinct, is the only resisting power in this individualized journey toward it.\textsuperscript{1184} The death instinct, therefore, calls for a complete reinterpretation of the role of culture.

In the face of an inevitable – and even wished – death, culture represents the working of \textit{Ερως} that desires to create life and render it satisfactory. "The process of culture," as Ricoeur quotes Freud, "is a modification which the vital process experiences under the influence of a task imposed by \textit{Ερως} and necessitated by \textit{Ανάγνωση}, [that is,] the inevitability of reality [more commonly spoken of a necessity]."\textsuperscript{1185} Culture, in other words, is the necessary realm of the struggle between the destructive death-drive and the productive life-drive. The consequent paradox between the drive to this cultural process, \textit{Ερως}, and the restricting incentive of culture leaves the ego dissatisfied, however. Ultimately, as Ricoeur summarizes, this is the working of the death instinct, or "the anticultural instinct," that renders the ego hostile towards everyone else.\textsuperscript{1186} This conflict at the social plane is only secondary or derivative as the primordial conflict takes place at the instinctual level. Culture, Ricoeur interprets, is a state of "declared war" between \textit{Ερως} and \textit{Θάνατος}.\textsuperscript{1187} In Freud’s words, “the evolution of culture may therefore be described as the human species’ struggle for existence.”\textsuperscript{1188} The struggle, however, gains control over the individuals, “mortifies” them, and leaves them indefinitely dissatisfied in the “sense of guilt produced by culture.”\textsuperscript{1189}

\textsuperscript{1183}Ricoeur 1965a, 285. (290).
\textsuperscript{1184}Ricoeur 1965a, 286. (290-291).
\textsuperscript{1185}Ricoeur 1965a, 298. (303).
\textsuperscript{1186}Ricoeur 1965a, 298-299. (303-305).
\textsuperscript{1187}Ricoeur 1965a, 300. (306).
\textsuperscript{1188}Ricoeur 1965a, 300. (305). Translation modified on the basis of Ricoeur 1965a, 243-244. (248-249).
\textsuperscript{1189}Ricoeur 1965a, 301-303, 316. (306-309, 323). Translation modified on the basis of Ricoeur 1965a, 243-244. (248-249).
In Freud’s thought, according to Ricoeur, culture is the realm of the battle between the two primal giants.\(^{1190}\)

Freud’s idea of the death-instinct, however, transfers the discussion of instincts and their essence completely to the symbolic plane: in order to analyze their function, instincts must be objectified in myths. Ricoeur points out that “all direct speculation about the instincts, apart from their representatives, is mythical.”\(^{1191}\) In a way this speculation, which by aestheticizing the notion of instincts uses a romantic tonality rather than a scientific one,\(^{1192}\) reduplicates (in its mode of symbolization) the unsatisfiable quest of desire, because speculation arises from dissatisfaction that needs to be expressed. After all, it is also a desire to make apparent the hidden structures of the human psyche, to articulate them in speculation. “Desire, as an insatiable demand, gives rise to speech,” Ricoeur maintains.\(^{1193}\) Desire, in other words, finds its ways in its search for satisfaction in sublimation; in this case, in the very cultural means of substitute satisfaction, that is, in the form of myths that help explain the very origin and essence of that desire.

Even though Ricoeur does not suggest that Freud would have made a turn to aesthetics and, in fact, denies altogether that Freud would have had an aesthetic world view,\(^{1194}\) Freud’s discussion of primal instincts through the symbols of \(E\delta\omicron\) and \(\Theta\alpha\omicron\alpha\tau\omicron\omicron\) nevertheless testifies to the unavoidable aestheticism; the “unnameable” realm of instincts is approachable and articulable only indirectly in mythical language. “Through symbolism,” Ricoeur maintains, “the fantasies of the abolished past are recreated in the light of day.”\(^{1195}\) Symbols cannot substitute for the clarity of exact description, but – as Ricoeur argues in the

\[^{1190}\text{Ricoeur 1965a, 160, 289, 300. (156, 293, 305).}\]
\[^{1191}\text{Ricoeur 1965a, 305. (311).}\]
\[^{1192}\text{Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 254. (255-256).}\]
\[^{1193}\text{Ricoeur 1965a, 316. (322).}\]
\[^{1194}\text{Ricoeur 1965a, 326. (334).}\]
\[^{1195}\text{Ricoeur 1965a, 325. (332).}\]
wake of Freud – they still help us, as the only available means of maintaining the movement towards the resolution of the enigma presented by instincts:

The symbolic resolution of conflicts through art, the transfer of desires and hatreds to the plane of play, daydreams, and poetry, borders on resignation; prior to wisdom, while waiting for wisdom, the symbolic mode proper to the work of art enables us to endure the harshness of life, and, suspended between illusion and reality, helps us to love fate.\(^{1196}\)

Put differently, as I will explain in more detail in chapter 14, Ricoeur’s analysis of Freud invites the working out of the human “unnameable” in critical “understanding,” rather than mere explaining, interpretation which takes symbols and especially poetic expression as its nexus.\(^{1197}\) The implied idea that this poetico-symbolic resolution of the enigma of primal human constitution is an acceptable human fate stands out, however, as a suggestion that crosses the borders of mere “analytics.” At this point, after having noticed the necessary cultural element in the Freudian archeology of the subject, Ricoeur’s reading of Freud transforms itself from questioning the psychological human condition to a full cultural hermeneutics in the form of a dialectics that concludes in his examination of the mytho-poetic function of language.\(^{1198}\)

### 11.3 A Hermeneutic of Culture

Placed after the “problematics” and the “analytics” sections, the “dialectics” section of *On Interpretation* represents an intermediary in a philosophical process of what Ricoeur calls “revealing man’s structures or *fundamental possibilities*” on the first page of *The Voluntary and the

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\(^{1196}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 328. (335).
\(^{1197}\) Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 325. (332).
\(^{1198}\) Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 335. (343).
As seen in chapter 9, the notion of self-objectification in “making myself be” opened the path toward the discussion of cultural objectivity in *Fallible Man* analyzed in chapter 10. Chapter 11 has so far shown Ricoeur’s problematization of the question of culture that follows from these steps – self-objectification, cultural objectivity, and question of culture – Ricoeur has pursued in his preceding works. Ricoeur’s phenomenological anthropology, which required a detour through cultural objectivity, now turns into a hermeneutic of culture, necessitated by the quest of revealing the human “fundamental possibilities.”

Ricoeur’s organization for this “Dialectics” section consists of two parts: he portrays first Freud’s psychoanalysis as “an archeology of the subject.” He argues, however, that this archeology implies the complementing “teleology of the subject” – because “in order to have an *ἀρχή* a subject must have a *τέλος*.” These two approaches to the human subject constitute the dialectic at the concrete level of human experience, between coming from and going to somewhere. As such, they also constitute the “properly dialectical” level of the philosophical interpretation for Ricoeur. He emphasizes the importance of this “dialectics of recognition” (*la dialectique de la reconnaissance*), which holds “the mytho-poetic formations of culture” at the epicenter, by treating the whole interpretative re-examination precisely as “Dialectics.”

Despite its indisputable centrality, Ricoeur stresses that the dialectics of archeology and teleology (which in itself culminates in the *internal* dialectics of both Freudian

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1199 Ricoeur 1949, 7. (3).
1202 Ricoeur 1965a, 444. (459).
1204 Ricoeur 1965a, 334, 445. (342, 460).
psychoanalysis and Hegelian phenomenology) is still “only a transition […] to a symbolic understanding that would grasp the indivisible unity of its archeology and its teleology in the very birth (naissance) of discourse (parole).” This transition is enabled by the fact that both Freud’s psychoanalysis and Hegel’s phenomenology maintain that “language is the being-there of the mind” in their respective theories that a self becomes recognized through interpretative work, and also by Ricoeur’s conviction that a symbol is “the concrete ‘mixture’ in which we read the double exposure of archeology and teleology.” The dialectical conflict, in other words, is concretized in a symbol that is an authentic expression of human condition; these symbols, however, crave for interpretative reflection. The “Dialectics” section is therefore for Ricoeur a means of reaching the hermeneutical level of “concrete reflection” that is capable of facilitating the examination of a human being in the context of the Whole – the only context in which, I argue, a Ricoeurian subject ultimately becomes recognized.

*The Indirect Approach: Feelings as a Key to the Creation of Sense*

At the outset of the hermeneutic of culture, *On Interpretation* states that the aim is not to formulate a general hermeneutics but only to integrate conflicting hermeneutics –

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1205 Ricoeur 1965a, 446, 477. (461, 495). – I have analyzed Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel in chapter 7. That examination, however, focused in Ricoeur’s texts that were published after *Time and Narrative III* in which Ricoeur “renounces” Hegel (Ricoeur 1985, 280-299. (193-206)). Ricoeur’s application of Hegel’s phenomenology in *On Interpretation* precedes this “renouncement” and was for this reason left out from my analysis. Needless to say that the section of Hegelian phenomenology in *On Interpretation* strengthens my thesis that Ricoeur, as a “post-Hegelian Kantian” philosopher, considers Hegel’s philosophical work as a major tenet for his own philosophy. In *On Interpretation* Ricoeur assumes The Phenomenology of the Spirit as his “guide” while summarizing the work’s idea by stating that “consciousness is simply the internalization of this [externalizing] movement [to shapes or figures of consciousness], which must be recaptured in the objective structures of institutions, monuments, works of art and culture.” Ricoeur 1965a, 447-456. (462-472).

1206 Ricoeur 1965a, 334-335. (342-343).

1207 Ricoeur 1965a, 373-376, 476. (383-386, 494).

1208 Ricoeur 1965a, 334-335, 475. (342-343, 493).
represented by archeology and teleology – into one reflection.\textsuperscript{1209} I argue that this dialectically based reflection in the end correlates with the so-called secondary naïveté. Put differently, Ricoeur’s \textit{On Interpretation} does not focus on the question of hermeneutics \textit{per se}, but explicates the reasons why the hermeneutic turn in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} was necessary; the postcritical naïveté is interpretation – “it is in hermeneutics that the symbol’s gift of meaning and the endeavor to understand by deciphering are knotted together.”\textsuperscript{1210} Reconfirming this earlier assertion, Ricoeur is firmly convinced that “the concreteness of language which we border upon through painstaking approximation is the second naïveté of which we have merely a frontier or threshold knowledge.”\textsuperscript{1211} In other words, the secondary, postcritical innocence (\textit{naïveté seconde}) to which Ricoeur aspired in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} is acquirable in the hermeneutics of symbolically rich language, or in the “attitude of listening to language” that surpasses the simple “hearing” of trivialities, as Ricoeur rephrases it in \textit{On Interpretation}.\textsuperscript{1212} As Ricoeur maintains later in 1975, such a postcritical attitude turns the critical distanciation into a productive distance in culture that first and foremost animates one’s comprehension of cultural situatedness in general.\textsuperscript{1213} In sum, the internally dialectical reflection becomes the secondary naïveté in cultural interpretation.

Let us focus, therefore, on language in all its “fullness.” Symbolic language – by which Ricoeur means all forms of language that retain equivocity in contrast to formalized univocal languages, such as symbolic logic\textsuperscript{1214} – is “rich” because it verbalizes the human desire to express in its fullness, albeit in a situation. In more precise terms, “symbols present the projection of our [human] possibilities onto the area of imagination,” Ricoeur

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1209} Ricoeur 1965a, 476. (494).
  \item \textsuperscript{1210} Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (351).
  \item \textsuperscript{1211} Ricoeur 1965a, 477. (495).
  \item \textsuperscript{1212} Ricoeur 1960b, 25-26, 326-328. (19, 350-353); Ricoeur 1965a, 477. (495-496).
  \item \textsuperscript{1213} Ricoeur 1975c, 40-41.
  \item \textsuperscript{1214} Ricoeur 1965a, 54-61. (47-54).
\end{itemize}
maintains; this is their authentic function.\textsuperscript{1215} Symbols are authentic, in other words, because they involve a correlation between that which is expressed and the subject who expresses his situated being in the very expression. For this reason, in their “creation of meaning” that is at the same time already “a living interpretation,”\textsuperscript{1216} symbols are also revealing with regard to the subject: they are true “signs of man” to use Ricoeur’s words. In short, “symbols involve a schema of becoming oneself that opens up to what the symbols disclose [that is, the process of self-consciousness].”\textsuperscript{1217} Symbolic language in its creativity is, therefore, existentially revealing, but at the source of this revealing expressivity is human desire.

Ricoeur’s approach to the creative moment in symbols is therefore indirect. He asserts that a direct analysis is utterly impossible; instead, a philosophical analysis of this creative moment has to be guided by an analogical analysis, that is, by an analysis of desire, or of feeling, which is – as explicated in *Fallible Man* – also a “mixture” of life and idea, quasi-origin and quasi-destination.\textsuperscript{1218} This analysis of feeling pertains to a subject placed in a situation that admits an origin and a destination. For this reason, *On Interpretation* explores again the “authentic Suchen” drawn from Kant’s *Anthropology*, or the constitutive human quest that takes the threefold cultural form of searching for having (*avoir*), power (*pouvoir*), and esteem (*valoir*).\textsuperscript{1219} In other words, the analysis of this threefold quest in *Fallible Man* is re-examined in *On Interpretation* taking into account the dialectics of ἀρχή and τέλος, because the creative source of symbolization is that of the original search for a subject’s humanity.

\textsuperscript{1215} Ricoeur 1965a, 478. (497).
\textsuperscript{1216} Ricoeur 1965a, 486. (505).
\textsuperscript{1217} Ricoeur 1965a, 479. (497-498).
\textsuperscript{1218} Ricoeur 1965a, 487. (506).
\textsuperscript{1219} Ricoeur 1965a, 487-488. (507); Ricoeur 1960a, 127-128. (111).
Re-interpretation: the Quests for Having, Power, and Esteem

Ricoeur’s analysis of having, power, and esteem in *Fallible Man* already emphasizes that recognition is possible only through cultural objectivity. The dialectical polarity of a subject’s origin and destiny, which also explicates the human condition of being “torn” in his or her task of becoming an authentic self, necessitates, however, that this threefold analysis of “fragile mediation” – based on Kant’s remarks on cultural passions – is reread through this newly introduced dialectics. The gravity of being an alienated self, a self fundamentally unaware of its own constitution, is fully exposed after Freud, that is, after the “master of destruction” and an advocator of “false consciousness.” For the sake of clarity, I will next introduce this re-reading of having, power, and esteem by pairing Ricoeur’s re-reading of each of these with his correlating philosophical elaboration of Freud.

Let us begin with having. Ricoeur’s use of Marx’s conception of economic alienation to explain his idea of economic objectivity – the sphere of having – echoes the conviction of the self’s fundamental alienation. While in *Fallible Man* Ricoeur only assumes a Marxist tone late in the discussion of the realm of power (as I explained in 10.3), *On Interpretation* opens the section on the re-interpretation of having with Marx, by relating the idea of “economic objectivity” to Marx’s conception of “economic alienation.” Ricoeur argues that the feeling of alienation is tied to cultural objects as objects of having, and that it makes a subject “an adult” while making him capable of non-libidinal, sublimed “adult alienation.” Paradoxically, becoming capable of being alienated is therefore also a mode of becoming self-conscious:

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1220 Ricoeur 1960a, 156-157. (140-141).
1221 Ricoeur 1965a, 41. (33).
1222 Ricoeur 1965a, 489. (508).
We may say, then, that man becomes self-consciousness insofar as he experiences this economic objectivity as a new modality of his subjectivity and thus attains specifically human “feelings” relative to the availability of things as things that have been worked upon and appropriated, while at the same time he becomes an expropriated appropriator.\textsuperscript{1223}

In brief, the human work that forms a subject’s relation to the objects that can be called economic, alienates him from himself, but also gives him the notion of being an alienated self.

Ricoeur points out that the Freudian exploration of “the substructures of our affects” does not alter this economic analysis, but confirms it instead by explicating the determining power of human instinctual desires with regard to objects of economic valuation. Freud’s interpretation of having is a libidinal one, and it too reveals a displacement of (erotogenic) feelings onto cultural objects. This takes place in the pregenital formation of the ego. In particular, Ricoeur refers to Freud’s analysis that draws a correlation between a person’s excrement and valuation of gold and money.\textsuperscript{1224} The constitution of the economic object in self-recognition therefore remains, Ricoeur concludes.

The second sphere, \textit{power}, repeats the idea that the evolvement of self-consciousness is constituted in objectivity. Alluding to Hegel’s “objective Spirit,” which again echoes the idea of alienation, Ricoeur argues that the institutionalized structures of commanding and obeying bring a human being into existence, make him “an adult” who struggles against being alienated. The objective power-structures also open the possibility of considering more the object, power, rather than the subject – instead of being helpful societal means of structuring human community, the institutions become ends in themselves. Nevertheless, Ricoeur argues, this mode of cultural objectification is necessary for self-

\textsuperscript{1223} Ricoeur 1965a, 489. (508-509).
\textsuperscript{1224} Ricoeur 1965a, 491-492. (511-512).
recognition: “one can say that man becomes human insofar as he can enter into the political problematic of power, adopt the feelings that center around power, and deliver himself up to the evils accompanying that power.”1225 Still, the structures of power threaten to objectify the subject so completely that he becomes a mere index, a chip tossed around in the arena of political play.

The Freudian analysis again confirms the objectification of power. Ricoeur points out that according to the Freudian interpretation the social groupings are held together by ideas drawn from an “invisible leader” who, however, only represents redirected “love instincts.”1226 This leader-object, the “dreaded primal father,” has replaced the individuals’ ideal-egos, and they are therefore reciprocally connected with each other in this new object of group ideal. The imminent threat of reducing oneself to just another “group-individual” thus correlates with the idea of institutionally subdued subjects. Ricoeur’s conclusion in the quest for power is therefore the same as in the quest of having: the Freudian analysis re-enforces the outcome of the “phenomenological” analysis.1227

The third sphere, the quest for esteem, is more clearly an intersubjective matter than the two preceding quests of the primordial human “Suchen.” The sphere of having pertains to a self’s relation to things, the sphere of power to objectified, dominated subjects, and the sphere of esteem, finally, to the self’s relation to culture and through it to other human beings as human: “The constitution of the self is not completed in an economics and a politics, but pursues itself in the region of culture,” Ricoeur argues.1228 Even if a subject could gain self-understanding in the light of economic or political objectivity, it would

1225 Ricoeur 1965a, 490. (509).
1226 Ricoeur 1965a, 493. (513).
1227 Ricoeur 1965a, 494. (514).
1228 Ricoeur 1965a, 490, 502. (509, 523).
remains an alienated one. The quest for esteem is “the quest of recognition” (la quête de la reconnaissance), and only in the mode of being recognized, in the mode of received recognition, a subject becomes a person. “My existence for myself is dependent on this constitution of self in the opinion of others; my ‘self’ is shaped by the opinion and acceptance of others,” Ricoeur insists in On Interpretation, just as he did in Fallible Man.

More forcefully than in Fallible Man, however, On Interpretation asserts that this recognition requires cultural objects – including law, art, and literature which most purely manifest the human esprit – by which esteem in others’ opinion is given, and that “the exploration of human possibilities extends into this new kind of objectivity.” In particular, Ricoeur emphasizes those possibilities given in aesthetic expression: “Even when Van Gogh sketches a chair, he at the same time portrays man; he projects a figure of man, namely the man who ‘has’ this represented world.” Human respect of the self for the self is formed through these kinds of cultural objects, or “works and monuments” that manifest the idea of humanity, or the human quality, and which invoke a multifaceted relation between a subject and these objects which not only express a producing subject’s capabilities, but also elevate the notion of these capabilities to the level of the idea of humanity thus rendered appropriable for the self seeking to be recognized as a capable human being.

A person's worth as a human being is given indirectly through culture, it is “received” by those objects which concretize the human esprit, and mediate the notion of self-respect to those subjects who appropriate the idea of higher human capabilities by interpreting these “true” objects of culture precisely as signs of capable human being: I can

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1229 Ricoeur 1965a, 502. (523).
1230 Ricoeur 1965a, 490, 502-503. (510, 523); Ricoeur 1960a, 137. (121).
1231 Ricoeur 1965a, 490. (510).
I esteem myself, because I conceive this sketch of a chair as a sign of being capable, and being thus capable of surpassing the state of the immediate satisfaction of my desires, that is, as a sign of human quality that both assures me that such sublimation is possible, and challenges me to similar achievements at this level of cultural objectivity – to further other’s self-recognition through their own reception of this cultural recognition.\textsuperscript{1233}

The same structure of cultural recognition is evident in Ricoeur’s reinterpretation of Freud, which somewhat lets go of the notion of esteem while focusing again on the tragedy of \textit{Oedipus Rex}. After pointing out that for Freud the drama does not narrate an individual’s destiny but a collective human destiny (because it ultimately speaks of “oedipal” primal desires), Ricoeur argues that the tragedy is interpretable as one “of self-consciousness, of self-recognition.”\textsuperscript{1234} Rather than centering upon Oedipus as a child, Ricoeur maintains, the tragedy portrays the adult Oedipus, the king facing the truth, or recognizing himself more properly through his socio-cultural condition. While describing this process of recognition in the drama, the tragedy itself – a cultural monument – functions as means of recognition for its readers. This dual idea of recognition, this “double function,” Ricoeur points out, is also included in Freud’s analysis of the drama. Quoting Freud, Ricoeur maintains that “the poet, while uncovering Oedipus’ fault, obliges us to consider ourselves, and to recognize those same impulses that, though suppressed, still remain.”\textsuperscript{1235} The drama, in other words, is a cultural object that enables self-recognition.

Put differently, cultural objects are the media through which esteem, or \textit{mutual recognition}, is formed. Ricoeur argues for the necessity of this mutual recognition not only in

\textsuperscript{1233} Consequently, if a human subject is to lose himself, to “destroy” himself as Ricoeur mentions, this level of esteem is the proper level for such self-degradation as a failure in the process of “receiving” recognition. Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 491. (510).
\textsuperscript{1234} Ricoeur 1965a, 495-496. (515-516).
\textsuperscript{1235} Ricoeur 1965a, 496-498. (518).
Course of Recognition, but already in Fallible Man, where he theorizes that “the constitution of subjects is a mutual constitution (constitution mutuelle) through opinion [concerning cultural works].” On Interpretation repeats Ricoeur’s conviction of recognition through culture while stressing the mediating function of “highly” expressive works that manifest the human esprit: “It is through the medium of these [painted, sculptured, or written] works or monuments that a certain dignity of man is constituted, which is the instrument and trace of a process of reduplicated consciousness, or recognition of the self in another self (reconnaissance du soi dans un autre soi).” In short, the realm of cultural objects is the realm of mediated mutual recognition that manifests the idea of humanity and constitutes human dignity.

Mytho-poetics: the Creation of Cultural Meaning

After having now drawn a connection between Ricoeur’s early anthropology and the necessary hermeneutic of culture he develops in On Interpretation, a relating problem appears to us that leads us to continue our reading of Ricoeur’s work. Ricoeur namely bases the mediating power of cultural objects upon their symbolic function. Sophocles’ drama, or “the symbol created by Sophocles,” for example, “reveals, in the work of art itself, the profound unity of disguise and disclosure, inherent in the very structure of symbols that have become cultural objects.” The human quest for esteem is fulfilled through this symbolism; cultural objects, which on the one hand are signs of sublimation, are on the other hand means of esteem because they symbolize the human effort to exist. Ricoeur’s re-interpretation of the threefold Suchen thus transforms the discussion into one of symbols. Leaving the theme of...

1236 Ricoeur 1960a, 137, 139-140. (121, 123-124).
1237 Ricoeur 1965a, 503. (523). Italics added.
1238 Ricoeur 1965a, 499. (519).
esteem gradually (his sudden remarks of esteem at the end of the re-examination only call attention to this suspension while merely repeating the words of *Fallible Man*[^1239]), Ricoeur indicates that the re-examination had only a relative value: the core of cultural hermeneutics is not in economics, politics, nor – surprisingly – in esteem. It is in symbols and in the symbolic function of cultural objects. Ricoeur therefore returns, and we with him, to the question of the creation of meaning by moving on to the theme of mytho-poetics.

In sum, Ricoeur’s re-elaboration of the threefold *Suchen* as well as the relation between the archaisms of dreams and cultural objects leads him to notice their common essence: symbolization. Ricoeur concludes that “the area in which the concrete dialectic [of disguise and disclosure] must be elaborated is that of language and its symbolic function.”[^1240] This idea that linguistic-symbolic, or “mytho-poetic,”[^1241] function constitutes a generally unifying realm – the most fundamental “con” to use the terms of this dissertation – connects the “archeological” and “teleological” aspects of the self, the affective origin and the objectified destiny, with each other. In other words, the mytho-poetic function of language constitutes self-recognition in the cultural objects that also convey primordial human desires.

Ricoeur’s proposition of the poetic essence of culture both recapitulates and redirects the lengthy discussion by invoking the poetic as that which both gives meaning and preserves its meaningfulness. While summarizing his hermeneutic of culture Ricoeur thus also sets the task of defining the poetic function:

I propose therefore that cultural phenomena should be interpreted as the objective media in which the great enterprise of sublimation with its double value of disguise and disclosure becomes sedimented. Such an interpretation opens up to us the meaning of certain synonymous expressions. Thus the term “education” designates the movement by which man is led out of his

[^1239]: Ricoeur 1965a, 502-503. (523); Ricoeur 1960a, 137, 139-140. (121, 123-124).
[^1240]: Ricoeur 1965a, 502. (522).
[^1241]: Ricoeur 1965a, 500. (520).
childhood; this movement is, in the proper sense, an “erudition” whereby man is lifted out of his archaic past; but it is also a Bildung, in the two-fold sense of an edification and an emergence of the Bilder or “images of man” which mark off the development of self-consciousness and open man to what they disclose. And this education, this erudition, this Bildung function as a second nature, for they remodel man’s first nature. In them is realized the movement so well described by Ravaisson in the limited example of habit; this movement is at the same time the return of freedom to nature through the recapture of desire in the works of culture. Because of the overdetermination of symbols, these works are firmly tied in the world of life (monde de la vie): it is indeed where id was that the ego comes to be. By mobilizing all our childhood stages, all our archaïsms, by embodying itself in the oneiric, the poetic keeps man’s cultural existence from being simply a huge artifice, a futile “artifact,” a Leviathan without a nature and against nature.\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 503. (524). – Ricoeur’s allusions to Bildung are quite sudden, since he has referred to the term in On Interpretation only twice in passing in the sense of “formation.” (Ricoeur 1965a, 148, 203. (146, 204).) Rather than referring to these allusions he has made in analyzing Freud, the present context suggests that Ricoeur refers to Hegel’s sense of cultural formation, or culturing, Bildung. Ricoeur would not, however, be the only hermeneutic thinker to resort to Hegel’s sense of culturing. In general, as George H. Taylor has remarked examples recall the fact that the journal Consciousness is not tied to his philosophy of world history.” One indication of this difference is that Ricoeur refers to Hegel’s sense of cultural formation, or cultur}

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Cultural phenomena, or cultural objects, utilize poetic expressivity in mediating human desire, and give a context for self-objectification and subsequently enriched self-consciousness. Since the self is not immediate but shattered, all cultural objects, or works, express the human incapability to be directly self-recognized – while, in turn, providing means for one’s self-recognition and understanding under the thematics of humanity and mutuality.

The cultural objects, by which this newly reformed understanding of one’s being is acquired, are, as means of human expressivity, alienating, however. As objects, they stand over and against the subject, who is then threatened with “losing” the notion of his own being in the objectivity of those objects: “Freedom becomes alienated in alienating its own mediations, economic, politic, cultural; the servile will, one might add, mediates itself by passing through all the figures of our incapability that express and objectify our capability to exist.”

Against this threat of becoming alienated, Ricoeur argues, the poetic maintains a firm connection to a subject’s living experience that desires expression. At the same time, however, the poetic functions as means of objectifying; that is, cultural objects gain their objectivity only through symbolization.

Gadamer’s “playful” and “conversational” Bildung, cultur-ing, of a hermeneutical self – that is both dialectical and dialogical – is never complete. (Cf. Gadamer 1989, xxxiv-xxxv, 9-10, 15, 97-100, 281, 290, 293, 301-306, 346, 367-368, 389-390.)

Metaphysically speaking, then, Ricoeur is much closer to Gadamer than to Hegel. I would misrepresent Ricoeur’s hermeneutics, however, if I did not point out that his critique of Gadamer’s concept of tradition (Überlegung) in Time and Narrative III retains, in the wake of Horkheimer and Adorno, a connection to the approach that includes the idea of the necessary critical assessment of one’s traditionality, only through which understanding is possible. (Cf. Ricoeur 1985, 318-332. (219-227.)) Ricoeur’s critical cultural hermeneutics that, in contrast to Gadamer’s Heideggerian emphasis on ontological understanding and belongingness (Zugehörigkeit), stresses more the critical, or objective, moment in the necessary duality of both explanation and understanding (ríc. Erklären and Verstehen), and is, therefore, also distinct from that of Gadamer. Even Merold Westphal, who defends Gadamer from oversimplifications regarding this issue, maintains that “distanciation does not get much respect in Gadamer’s hermeneutics, which is overwhelmingly devoted to belonging.” (Westphal 2011, 43, 53.) Of the recent reassessment between Gadamer and Ricoeur, cf. Ritivoi 2011, 69-82.; G. H. Taylor 2011, 105-111.

Ricoeur 1965a, 525. (547.)
The poetic creativity will be in our focus in chapter 13, that is, in the opening chapter of the next part in this dissertation. The current chapter has, however, already led us to the threshold of this new stage of analysis by emphasizing that sublimation ultimately concerns the poetic “images of being human.” The problem that remains for us relates to the implied objectification. The poetic has the double function as the means of expressivity/objectivity, that is, it both expresses and invigorates what is expressed. In other words, the poetics maintains human cultural existence both as cultural and as a subject’s mode of existence; it objectifies the experience of being a living subject onto the cultural plane, thus letting the expression and reappropriation of this existence to take place. This cultural existence under the poetic function\(^{1244}\) is the ultimate “con” to which I have alluded in this dissertation; it is the poetic unity between a subject and his or her cultural objects. An important outcome of this chapter 11 is, therefore, that the creation of cultural meaning is utterly dependent on this poetic function that enables the intelligible expression of human interiority and communicates the idea of humanity.

\(^{1244}\) Ricoeur understands the poetic imagination as enabling human expressivity and as the ability to reappropriate the manifestations of being a living subject. Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 522. (544).
12. REFLECTIONS ON RE-CON-NAISSANCE

After presenting the problem of Ricoeur’s cultural thought in part one of this dissertation, and after having confirmed in part two that the assertion of Ricoeur as a philosopher of culture gains support in the light of his Course of Recognition, this part moved into reading Ricoeur’s work as a philosophy of culture. The interim conclusion at the end of part two, that Ricoeur’s phenomenology of l’homme capable requires the support of a cultural hermeneutics, rested on the notion of les objectivations culturelles, but this idea of “cultural objectification” and of the corollary “cultural objects” was still left undefined. The aim of this part was to clarify how the idea of cultural objectification brings together, or con-joins, Ricoeur’s phenomenological anthropology and his hermeneutic of culture.

Starting the reading of Ricoeur’s work from his very early texts, we have seen in chapter 9 that The Voluntary and the Involuntary argued that human subjectivity is only explained by objectivity. The analysis of Fallible Man in chapter 10 confirmed the necessity of objectification by explicitly lending support from Kant’s critical philosophy, in which the necessary correlation between the objectivity of an object and the subjectivity of a subject is defined as the transcendental condition for all self-cognition – in other words, their synthetic com-bination (con-junctio). Ricoeur’s unorthodox reading of Kant’s transcendental philosophy resulted in his redefining his relation to Kant’s position, however. The definition Ricoeur gives for his own mode of philosophizing – that it pursues a “post-Hegelian Kantian style”1245 – helps explain Ricoeur’s insistence on cultural objectivity, which Kant does not emphasize. Hegel’s phenomenology includes the idea of cultural objectification and mediation, but Ricoeur draws the theoretical basis for this objectification in culture from

1245 Ricoeur 1985, 312. (215); Ricoeur 1969, 402-405. (412-414); Ricoeur 1986a, 251. (200).
Kant’s critical work rather than Hegel’s systemic and totalizing phenomenology. This dual transgression, Ricoeur’s post-Hegelianism and post-Kantianism, was then capitalized on in chapter 11 that examined *On Interpretation*. Our conclusion was that Ricoeur maintains in *On Interpretation* that a hermeneutic of culture is necessary for the phenomenology of being able.

While making explicit the shift in Ricoeur’s emphasis from phenomenological anthropology to cultural hermeneutics, this part also argued that the model of mutual recognition Ricoeur discusses in *Course of Recognition* was already introduced in his early works. The primacy of *received* recognition was latently present in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, but chapter 10 exposed that *Fallible Man* prefigured Ricoeur’s argument in *Course of Recognition*. Besides structural resemblances, both *Fallible Man* and *Course of Recognition* conclude with cultural, or mutual, recognition as *being recognized*, that is, with the idea that recognition is enabled by cultural objectivity that grounds the human subject and facilitates self-recognition. As we have seen in chapter 11, *On Interpretation* continued to examine recognition under the theme of a dialectics of recognition that accompanies the idea of recognition through culture; it is in this dialectics insisting interpretation that the human dignity is constituted as “a process of reduplicated consciousness, or recognition of the self in another self (*reconnaissance du soi dans un autre soi*)”.1246

This mutualizing cultural objectivity that con-joins and therefore allows the sociocultural re-membering that was argued in part two, results in maintaining that Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture is describable as a hermeneutics of re-*con*-naissance – the synthetic moment of “*con*” under cultural objectivity is literally com-*munication* in its radical meanings of making common, sharing, and mutual participation. In particular, the “works of the

1246 Ricoeur 1965a, 503. (523).
[human] spirit,” les oeuvres de l'esprit,” are cultural signs that communicate the fundamental unity of humanity, but only because they stand out as symbols of concordance – or of the necessity of shared condition – in the unavoidable living experience of primordial discordance. Culture, in its objectivity, configures the human experience of being alive, or of being a living, acting, and suffering human subject. By doing so, culture mediates the notion of being capable (of failing), and thus renders this experience appropriatable for a human subject, for whom self-recognition is an unceasing task – a hermeneutical task that is only possible under the objectifying condition of a cultural “con.”

This part has, therefore, replied to the first five of those working hypotheses I have presented at the very end of part one. The theme of recognition is indeed developed and discussed by Ricoeur well before Course of Recognition (thesis 1). This indicates that the “course” of recognition should be approached at the level of Ricoeur’s work as a whole, instead of restricting this notion only to the discussion of Ricoeur’s very late work (thesis 2). Accepting this broader conception of the “course” also results in the observation that Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of being able” – which culminates in the notion of l’homme capable – necessarily requires the support of a cultural hermeneutics (thesis 3), which recasts Ricoeur’s relations to Hegel and Kant (thesis 4). Making this hermeneutic of culture explicit begins by pointing out that the notions of “cultural objectivity” and “cultural objects” have a meaning that goes beyond Ricoeur’s phenomenological anthropology; the possibility of recognition through culture is fundamentally grounded in them (thesis 5).

Ricoeur 1960a, 139. (123).

George H. Taylor comes close to this claim in his 2010 conference presentation by conjoining objectification as institutionalization with configuration: “As we turn to Ricoeur, my more ultimately objective in the present part is to show this relation between spirit and institutionalization in the positive objectification that we might call, following Time and Narrative, the configurational stage of mimesis.” G. H. Taylor 2010a, 4.

Even though this part has argued that poetic imagination forms the basis for cultural existence, it also enables the synthesis between a subject and his or her cultural objects (I called it therefore the ultimate “con”). This poetic function was merely noticed in relation to the mytho-poetic creation of cultural meaning, and not yet properly defined. The hypothesis that this foundational poetic nucleus of human culture is found only indirectly in and by cultural objects (thesis 6), has, however, been thus made worthy to be considered. I have also asserted (in my thesis 7), however, that this poetic nucleus, as an opening up of a language of the possible, is a necessary condition for the possibility of an adequate self-understanding. The fact that the present part in this dissertation has identified the problem of the poetic constitution of culture, challenges us to continue this reading of Ricoeur as a philosopher of culture. As I will argue in the following part four, the poetic enables human action that in its mutualizing cultural condition gives birth to a human self who recognizes himself as an ethico-political subject.
Part IV

The Etho-Poetic Essence of Culture
Ricoeur, in a 1978 interview with Richard Kearney, argues that there is an indirectly approachable “nucleus” of a culture that holds in the specific identity of that culture. This foundational mytho-poetic condition shapes the ways of institutionalization as it precedes all cultural formation or figuration:

It is my conviction that one cannot reduce any culture to its explicit functions – political, economic and legal, and so on. No culture is wholly transparent in this way. There is invariably a hidden nucleus which determines and rules the distribution of these transparent functions and institutions. [...] There is an opaque kernel which cannot be reduced to empirical norms or laws. This kernel cannot be explained in terms of some transparent model because it is constitutive of a culture before it can be expressed and reflected in specific representations or ideas. It is only if we try to grasp this kernel that we may discover the foundational mytho-poetic nucleus of a society. By analyzing itself in terms of such a foundational nucleus, a society comes to a truer understanding of itself; it begins to critically acknowledge its own symbolizing identity. The mythical nucleus of a society is only indirectly recognizable.\textsuperscript{1250}

Put differently, the poetic “nucleus” of a culture constitutes, as a condition for cultural expressivity and its reflection, cultural being-here that is manifested as works. Besides construed expressions of cultural identities – “a culture tends to understand itself by crystallizing its convictions in key-words,” Ricoeur argues in \textit{The Living Metaphor}\textsuperscript{1251} – all ideas and artifacts, or representations of this poetic condition, are symbols of the hidden foundation from which cultural being originates. In addition, Ricoeur also implies in this passage that “reading” human action as a symbol that requires deciphering is necessary for cultural self-understanding and identification, or, in other words, self-recognition.

Ricoeur’s assertion of the poetic core of culture parallels Freud’s conception of unconsciousness; both of them become knowable only indirectly by the symbols which “cover” and yet manifest them at the same time. Just as “the symbolic resolution of [instinctual] conflicts through art, and the transfer of desires and hatreds to the plane of play,

\textsuperscript{1251} Ricoeur 1975d, 114. (111).
daydreams, and poetry” in its own way leads towards understanding the psychical human condition, the human works in culture and as culture can be conceived as symbolic resolutions of the enigma of primal human constitution. These symbols, in both cases, presuppose the condition of poetic expressivity, however. The idea of a poetic “nucleus” that covers itself with symbols and myths, or with the “mytho-poetic formations of culture,” reassures that the core of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics lies in the question of the poetic creation of meaning.

I have already argued in part three that, according to Ricoeur, the mytho-poetic essence of culture enables self-recognition in cultural objects – they convey the primordial levels of human existence. In other words, the threefold cultural *Suchen*, or the quest for finding the essence of humanity, rests on symbolization, or, put differently, mytho-poetic creativity. For this reason, *On Interpretation* insisted that cultural phenomena should be interpreted as the objective media that “remodel” the human natural condition, because “this movement is at the same time the return of freedom to nature through the recapture of desire in the works of culture.” Cultural objects are symbols of liberating human creativity that is essentially poetic. Still, these cultural objects are objects that merely “remodel” the experience of being a living subject; they are “firmly tied in the world of life.” The poetic does not, therefore, exclude or shun the “unnamable” in a subject’s experience, but “keeps man’s cultural existence from being simply a huge artifice, a futile ‘artifact,’ a Leviathan without a nature and against nature,” as Ricoeur argues in *On Interpretation*. This firm, yet
symbolized, connection to the living existence is why self-recognition in cultural objects is possible in the first place.

Because of Ricoeur’s conviction that cultural objects are signs of creative human existence as well as symbols of primordial human constitution, this part analyzes Ricoeur’s assertion that culture is essentially poetic first from a linguistic point of view. In the 1978 interview cited above, Ricoeur explicates the relation between language, poetics, and the possible by arguing that there is a need for “a third dimension of language, a critical and creative dimension, which is directed towards neither scientific verification nor ordinary communication but towards the disclosure of possible worlds.”

Ricoeur designates this third dimension as “the poetic” one, and insists that “the adequate self-understanding of man is dependent on this third dimension of language as a disclosure of possibility.”

Even though Ricoeur maintains that the self has to be recovered in all its acts, or, that the poetic “nucleus” is recognizable by a variety of means – such as discourse, human praxis, or the distribution and hierarchization of social institutions – he still prioritizes the cultural-linguistic ones as explications of this expressivity.

As Ricoeur also maintains in the same interview, the myth is “the bearer of possible worlds,” because it is “essentially symbolic,” and therefore myths “speak to man as such.” A discourse that does not shy away from symbolic meanings is for Ricoeur the prime example of expressivity that conveys existential meanings; in discursive action an idea of reason (λόγος) encounters the reality of life (βίος) in symbols. Again, as I argued in the chapter 11, for Ricoeur the idea of humanity is brought about as such equivocal discourse.

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1257 Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 124.
1258 Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 124.
1259 Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 118.
1260 Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 122-123.
Instead of only reproducing meanings, the poetic expression seeks new ways of describing the living human experience of being, that is, the concrete human existence in its social and political dimensions. As Frederick Lawrence summarizes, Ricoeur understands language “as a kind of institution of institutions, which offers a primordial model for distributive justice.” For this reason, Ricoeur insisted in *The Symbolism of Evil* that the poetic shows itself to us as “expressivity in its nascent state”; the symbolic discourses manifest creation of meaning and culture.

Despite their differences with regard to the methods of regaining ontological understanding, Ricoeur’s elucidation of such *ποίησις* seems to resemble Martin Heidegger’s convictions. Both of these thinkers hold that the poetic work creates by discovering. Already in *Being and Time* (which Ricoeur claims to “rule” Heidegger’s later philosophy), that is, before Heidegger’s subtle *Kehre*, or his readdressing the ontological

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1261 Lawrence 2003, 504. – This dissertation will eventually also discuss Ricoeur’s etho-poetically grounded ethico-political thought, especially in chapters 14 and 15. In relation to Frederick Lawrence’s reference to distributive justice, however, let me propaedeutically mention that Johann Michel’s analysis of Ricoeur’s Rawls-based hermeneutics of justice is a clear exposition of that particular issue. Cf. Michel 2006, 383-420.

1262 Ricoeur 1960b, 21. (14).

1263 Ricoeur argues in his well-known essay “Existence et herméneutique” that even though he gives a full credit to Heidegger’s “short route,” he would have to retain the more arduous “long route” that remains at the level of critical reflection: “There are two ways to ground hermeneutics in phenomenology. […] The short route is the one taken by *an ontology of understanding*, after the manner of Heidegger. I call such an ontology of understanding the ‘short route’ because, breaking with any discussion of *method*, it carries itself directly to the level of an ontology of finite being in order there to recover *understanding*, no longer as a mode of knowledge, but rather as a mode of being. […] The long route which I propose also aspires to carry reflection to the level of an ontology, but it will do so by degrees, following successive investigations into semantics and reflection.” (Ricoeur 1969, 10, (6-7).) Ricoeur, quite obviously, portrays Heidegger as based on *Being and Time*, and does not take into account, for example, Heidegger’s Zollikon seminars (1959-1969) that included prolonged discussions on method. Cf. Heidegger & Boss 2001, 79-113, 127-136.

1264 In Heidegger’s case this is based on his understanding that *λόγος* brings about a-lethic disclosure, or “letting something be seen” (*αϖοφαίνεσθαι*). Heidegger 1967, 32-34. (28-30).

question by “turning” from Dasein’s constitution to the poetics of being. Heidegger argues that “as the existential constitution of the disclosedness of Dasein, expressive articulation (Rede) is constitutive for the existence of Dasein.” Put differently, understanding the fundamental human condition as be-ing in being requires articulation that explicates this condition and renders it comprehensible by putting it into language as a discourse (Sprache). Being and Time maintains that this expressive articulation closely relates to both Dasein’s situatedness as the mode of relating (Befindlichkeit) and of poetry as Dichtung.

Articulation (Rede) is the “significant” parsing of the intelligibility of being-in-the-world, to which belongs being-with, and which maintains itself in a particular way of heedful being-with-one-another. [...] Being-with is “explicitly” shared in expressive articulation (Rede) [as communication]. [...] The outspokenly undisguised is exactly the being-out-in-the-world (Draußensein), that is, the corresponding manner of [Dasein’s] attunement (its disposition), that pertains to the full disclosure of being-in-the-world. The lingual indication of attuned being-in’s awoval belonging to expressive articulation lies in intonation, modulation, in the tempo of talk, [or, in short,] “in the manner of speech (in der Art des Sprechens).” The communication of the existential possibilities of attunement (Befindlichkeit), that is, the disclosing of existence can become the appropriate purpose of “poetic” articulation (der “dichtenden” Rede).

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1266 In his letter to William Richardson, intended as a preface to Richardson’s work on the development of Heidegger’s thought, Heidegger maintains that he is willing to accept the thesis of his “Turn” only on the condition that there is no decisive and definitive rupture between his earlier and later work, but that the later (“Heidegger II”) is incipient in the early phase (“Heidegger I”). (cf. Heidegger 2003, xiii-xxii.) Ricoeur argues for the same continuity from Heidegger I to Heidegger II in his 1968 essay “Heidegger and the Question of the Subject.” (Ricoeur 1969, 223, 227, 230-232. (224, 229, 232-234.)) William Richardson, despite maintaining that a clear difference remains between what he calls “Heidegger I” and “Heidegger II,” still argues that both the earlier and the later phase of Heidegger’s thought are rooted in the “Ur-Heidegger”: “if Heidegger I reverses his perspective in order to become Heidegger II, the reason is not that the effort went bankrupt but that the thinker simply left one place in order to gain another along the same way.” Richardson 2003, xxxiii-xxxiv, 628-633. Italics added.


1268 Heidegger argues in §34 of Being and Time that “the existential-ontological foundation of discourse (Sprache) is language (Rede).” Heidegger 1967, 160. (150). – Some translations use “discourse” or “talk” for Heidegger’s term Rede, and “language” for Sprache. In terms of following the intention of the both Rede and Sprache, I draw my own translation from the clue provided by Ricoeur: “Discourse is the counterpart of what linguists call language systems or linguistic codes. Discourse is an event of language [that is, that language is either spoken or written].” Like Rede (Talk) is the condition for Sprache (Speech), articulation is the condition for discourse, that is, for the various actual uses of languages. As a result, I translate Rede as “articulation” and Sprache as “discourse” or “speech.” Cf. Ricoeur 1986a, 184. (145).

1269 Heidegger 1967, 162. (152).
Being and Time, in other words, opens up the possibility to think that Dichtung is a condition for interpreting Dasein’s manner of being-in-the-world-with-others (Befindlichkeit), and that this is why it is more fundamental than psychology, anthropology, historiography, or any other of those particular articulations Heidegger mentions in §5 in the same work. The later Heidegger, or “Heidegger II,” then maintained that “the world’s destiny is heralded in poetry” as “poetic composition is truer than exploration of beings” – truly, we can summarize Heidegger’s position, dichterisch wohnt der Mensch auf dieser Erde. Even though many critics, such as Johann Michel, have found a “strong resonance” between Ricoeur’s poetics and that of the “second Heidegger,” we will see in this part four that Heidegger’s notion of the poetic dwelling does not, nevertheless, completely match up with that of Ricoeur.

In spite of the early discussions of culture in the 1919 summer lectures in Freiburg that indicate Heidegger’s awareness of various philosophies of culture, his attitude to culture and cultural objects is very different from Ricoeur’s. In his analysis of the everydayness of Dasein, Heidegger insists in Being and Time that his interpretation of Dasein

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1270 Heidegger 1967, 16. (14). – In contrast to Pol Vandeveld, who understands “der ‘dichtenden’ Rede” as both a non-instrumental mode or an instantiation of language and a mediation between Rede and Sprache, I maintain that Rede, to use Vandeveld’s words, “is the articulation of the significability of the world” precisely because it is poetic (dichtend). Rather than understanding Dichtung, poetry, as a particular mode of articulation (that is, as Poesie), I argue that Heidegger’s allusion to “der ‘dichtenden’ Rede” in §34 of Being and Time clarifies that Rede is the existential condition for Sprache, or “the communication of existential possibilities of attunement,” only because all articulation is poetic. Rede, I claim, can have Sprache as its “purpose” only because all articulation is both creative and dis-covering – this Dichtung is an essential function of Rede as the existential Vorstruktur for Sprache. I also maintain, therefore, that in Heidegger’s 1934-1935 lecture course on Hölderlin, the relation between poetry and phenomenology is not inverted, as Vandeveld argues, but that Heidegger’s focus is sharpened in terms of Dichtung; it is the “founding discourse.” Vandeveld 2012, 94-97, 118-119. Cf. Mirković 2011, 174-175.


1272 Heidegger 1976, 339. (Heidegger 1977b, 219.)

1273 Heidegger 1976, 363. (Heidegger 1977b, 240.)


1275 Michel 2006, 294, 297-298.

“has a purely ontological intention and is far removed from any moralizing critique of everyday Dasein and from the aspirations of a ‘philosophy of culture’ (‘kulturphilosophischen Aspirationen’).”

As also indicated by Heidegger’s exegeses of Hölderlin’s poems, poetic dwelling overcasts the notion of cultural work. Even though the working human subject is “full of merit” when “establishing himself on the earth” by work, all this is, according to Heidegger, “never more than the consequence of a mode of poetic dwelling.” If poems as art works are interesting, they are such only because they highlight “thinking of Being,” and open humans to their dwelling that is poetic. This ontological clearing, or lighting, is the essence of poetry (Dichtung), and cultural artifactiness is not in the focus of Heidegger’s thought – except under the critique of Machenschaft or machination.

1277 Heidegger 1967, 167. (156). – Kevin A. Aho contributes a complementary analysis in his 2009 work Heidegger’s Neglect of the Body. Aho points out that Heidegger’s discomfort with culture in Being and Time relates to the notion of inauthentic ‘They’: “In Chapter IV of Division I of Being and Time, Heidegger explains why Dasein should not be interpreted in terms of the concrete actions of a ‘subject’ or ‘I.’ According to Heidegger, Dasein is more like a ‘mass’ term that captures the way human activity is always shared, communal; ‘being-in-the-world’ is already ‘being-there-with-others’ (Mit-dasein) (BT, 152). Dasein, in this regard, is properly understood in terms of what it does, going about its daily life, ‘taking a stand on itself,’ handling equipment, talking to friends, going to work, and getting married (BP, 159). ‘For the most part,’ as Heidegger says in Being and Time, ‘everyday Dasein understands itself in terms of that which it is customarily concerned. ‘One is’ what one does’ (BT, 283). Heidegger is stressing the fact that our prereflective everyday dealings are shared. I am engaged in the acts and practices that ‘They’ are or ‘Anyone’ (das Man) is engaged in. And if I am what I do, then I am an indistinguishable ‘Anyone.’ When Heidegger asks ‘Who is it that Dasein is in everydayness?’ the answer is ‘Anyone.’ [The anyone] is the ‘realist subject’ of everydayness’ (BT, 166). In my everyday life, I am a teacher, a husband, or a father because I have been ‘absorbed’ (aufgehen) and ‘dispersed’ (zerstreuen) into the discursive roles, habits, gestures, and equipment of others (BT, 167). Others assign meaning to my life. They make me who I am. Thus Dasein is ‘existentially’ or structurally being-with-others, a ‘They-self’ (BT, 155). But who are ‘They?’ Heidegger explains: ‘The ‘who’ is not this one, not that one, not oneself [man selbst], not some people [einige], and not the sum of them all. The ‘who’ is the neuter, the ‘They’ [das Man].’ (BT, 164) The anonymous ‘They’ or ‘Anyone’ refers to a totality of interconnected relations: customs, occupations, practices, and cultural institutions as embodied in gestures, artifacts, monuments, and so forth. This totality of relations gives meaning to beings; it is on the basis of these relations that things can show up or count in determinate ways. Thus ‘Anyone’ determines in advance the possible ways that I can understand or interpret the world (BT, 167).” Cf. Aho 2009, 20.


1279 Heidegger 1981, 41-43, 144-151. (58-61, 165-172). Cf. Richardson 2003, 443, 460-464, 469-471. – In his 1943 exegesis of Hölderlin’s Anrufungen, for example, Heidegger states that it is “only through poetry” that “there is a founding.” It is thus the poet who “becomes the founder of the history of a humanity [as] he prepares the poetic upon which a historical humanity dwells as upon its own ground.” Furthermore, “the poet stands between men and gods.” The poet, “thinking like a mortal […] puts the highest into a poem.” In other words, “the poets consecrate the earth.” Heidegger 1981, 106, 123, 148. (130, 145, 170).

This critical stance describes Heidegger’s overall standpoint: Even though he in *Being and Time* defines *Dasein’s* constitutive mode of being-in-the-world as taking care of things in their everydayness, Heidegger did not regard cultural objects relevant to the alethic phenomenological analysis as objects – describing the objectively present things “in” the world in their respective “outward appearances” remains solely at the ontic level of beings (as beings essentially unlike *Dasein*), and never reveals the ontological level of be-ing of beings in which Heidegger is interested. In *The Origin of the Work of Art*, for example, Heidegger then contrasts his understanding of art as “the spring that leaps to the [alethic] truth of what is, in the work,” and a cultural understanding of art that, according to him, reduces it merely to a “commonplace cultural appearance.”

Ricoeur’s notion of cultural objects, or the “signs of man” (*les signes de l’homme*) – through which, Ricoeur argues, a human subject becomes aware of his own constitution – represents therefore for Heidegger mere ontic culture falling short of disclosing onto-poetic dwelling.

These different understandings of the poetic provide a basis for the analyses of this current part of this dissertation. Even though Roberto J. Wallton’s 1973 essay “Cultura, existencia y logica transcendental” – the first one known to me to discuss Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy – focuses on phenomenology and not poetics, his essay, nevertheless, already

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4. Heidegger 1977a, 66. (Heidegger 2001b, 75.) – Heidegger’s criticism relates to his objection of such conceptions of art that consider it in terms of subject-object dichotomy: “Art is the setting-into-work of truth. In this proposition an essential ambiguity is hidden, in which truth is at once the subject and the object of the setting. But subject and object are unsuitable names here. They keep us from thinking precisely this ambiguous nature, a task that no longer belongs to this consideration[, namely, that art lets truth originate].” (Heidegger 1977a, 27, 65. (Heidegger 2001b, 40, 74-75.)). Of Heidegger’s alethic conception of truth in *The Origin of the Work of Art* as originating disclosure, openness, lighting, and enowning, cf. Tobias Keiling’s concise analysis. Keiling 2011.
contrasts Ricoeur’s views with those of Heidegger. My question in this part is that if the essence of culture is, as Ricoeur claims, poetic, then how does he respond to the challenge set by Heidegger II? Ricoeur’s approach, which retains a firm connection to the idea of *post-critical naïveté*, helps explain why his cultural philosophy is both post-Hegelian and post-Kantian, but also recasts Ricoeur’s relation to Heidegger (as proposed above in thesis 4 at the end of part one). As I have shown, however, both Ricoeur and Heidegger argue that an authentic human subject is born poetically (*viz.*, *naissance*). By contrasting Ricoeur’s poetics with that of Heidegger’s, this part four analyzes the foundational *poetic nucleus* of human culture that, according to Ricoeur, is found only indirectly in and by cultural objects (thesis 6). In addition, this part argues that this poetic nucleus, as an opening up of a language of the possible, is a necessary condition for the possibility of an adequate self-understanding (thesis 7). As such, that is, as being an opening up of the possible, the poetic also reveals the ethotic (*ήθος*) as equally constitutive for a cultural human subject. This essentially ethopoetic culture that is manifested in ethico-political institutions then sums up Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture in the appearing of a cultural and ethical subject, or, in the moment of “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject” (thesis 8).

As an attentive reader will notice, this part four not only discusses Ricoeur’s relation to Heidegger, but it also echoes and deepens the triad of knowing, acting, and

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1286 Wallton opens his essay on cultural existence by discussing the prospects of Husserlian phenomenology, and moves then into Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of symbolic language, in order to contrast it with Heidegger’s fundamental ontology of Dasein. On Wallton’s discussion of Ricoeur as well as his relation to Heidegger, cf. Wallton 1973, 41-42, 48-58.

1287 Even though the adjective form of “ethos,” that is, “ethotic,” is not widely used in English language, it has had a long philosophical use, especially in relation to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* that discusses “ethotic arguments.” According to Alan Brinton’s summarizing definition these ethotic arguments are “the kind of arguments or techniques of argument in which *ήθος* is invoked, attended to, or represented in such a way as to lend credibility to or detract credibility from conclusions which are being drawn.” Brinton maintains that “in ethotic argument the aim is to transfer (or to shortcircuit the transfer of) credibility (or lack thereof) from some person or persons to a conclusion. Whenever *ήθος* is appealed to, attacked, or otherwise employed with an aim toward producing such effects, argument is ethotic.” Brinton 1986, 246. Cf. Budzynska 2012.
cultural affections that was analyzed in particular in chapter 10 of this dissertation. To briefly outline the structure of this current part, chapter 13 will examine Ricoeur’s notion of the poetic as the creation and understanding of meaning (viz. knowing). Mirroring Ricoeur’s philosophy to Martin Heidegger’s so-called later phase, I will utilize Ricoeur’s 1975 work *The Living Metaphor* as a main source in this discussion. Chapter 14 continues this thematics, but Ricoeur’s essays in *From Text to Action* extends its scope by focusing on the question of social action as poetically grounded (viz. action). The final analytic section of this dissertation, chapter 15, then draws mainly from *Oneself as Another*, and moves into the notion of ethopoetics, or, into the idea of recognizing one’s self as ethico-political through the socio-cultural context in which the self is situated (viz. culturally instituted affections). Chapter 15 will close with a “reversal,” however, by which I mean a re-reading of Ricoeur’s work from the point of view of the Wholly Other. As I will argue at the very end of this part, this course of analysis brings about the notion of the culturally facilitated birth (*naissance*) of an ethico-political self that is capable of recognizing him or herself as such cultural self (*re-connaissance*).

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1288 I should note that in a way the structure of this part four follows the order of Richard Kearney’s crystallization of Paul Ricoeur’s poetic hermeneutics: “Thinking poetically, acting poetically, dwelling poetically are all modalities of imagining poetically. They are ways of realizing the fundamental possibilities of what we are.” Kearney 2004, 175.
13. **Poetics and the Becoming of Cultural Being**

13.1 **The Poetic Ricoeur: the Origin**

Even though Ricoeur’s alleged “linguistic turn” is commonly placed in *The Living Metaphor*, the frequently recurring notion of poetics derives its Ricoeurian meaning from his early rather than his later works.\(^{1289}\) Ricoeur maintains, in an interview with Charles E. Reagan, that *The Living Metaphor*, for example, is an explication of and an extension to his project of the poetics of the will that was anticipated in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*.\(^{1290}\) This early work expresses Ricoeur’s openness for “a poetics of being and of the will in being” – une ‘poétique’ de l’être et de la volonté dans l’être – as his aid in understanding the human condition.\(^{1291}\) According to *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, the eidetic method that Ricoeur nevertheless applies in that work is insufficient in describing the ontology of a situated subject; the phenomenological “pure description” functions as a mere propaedeutic for a more comprehensive poetics of the will.\(^{1292}\) To expose the ontological rootedness of a subject’s living experience, *les racines ontologiques*, Ricoeur would need to surpass any phenomenology of the will that serves as a preparatory stage for this anticipated deep analysis, namely, for a poetics of the will *in being*. Ricoeur’s dissatisfaction with all abstractions and bracketing is that they necessarily objectify life (βίος) that in itself is non-objectifiable and non-articulable.\(^{1293}\) The poetics of being would lessen, if not even avoid, this problem.

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\(^{1289}\) The definition Ricoeur gives, for example, in *From Text to Action* follows Aristotle’s *Poetics* and focuses on the art of composition: “We can term poetics – after Aristotle – that discipline which deals with the laws of composition that are added to discourse as such in order to form of it a text that can stand as a narrative, a poem, or an essay.” This definition also used in *The Living Metaphor*, is, however, far too limited as an approach to Ricoeur’s poetics that has an existentially revealing function. Ricoeur 1986a, 13. (3); Ricoeur 1975d, 18. (12).


\(^{1291}\) Ricoeur 1949, 443. (471).


\(^{1293}\) On Ricoeur’s discussion of the two confronting requirements of philosophical thought, namely clarity and depth (*la clarté et la profondeur*), cf. Ricoeur 1949, 18-20. (15-17).
Ricoeur reveals an essential element of this poetics with his use of Gabriel Marcel’s terminology when describing the fundamental mode of being as the “highest mystery.”\textsuperscript{1294} For Ricoeur, who in \textit{The Voluntary and the Involuntary} openly acknowledged the influence of Marcel’s work,\textsuperscript{1295} this idea of corporeal and yet mysterious participation in presence as a present is instrumental in reverting from objectifying explanation to understanding a subject’s living experience: “I participate actively in my incarnation as a mystery. I need to pass from objectivity to existence.”\textsuperscript{1296} This “mysterious relation of participation in the Whole” cannot be emptied by turning it into knowledge, but it would have to be approached by means such as “the poetry of admiration” instead.\textsuperscript{1297} The poetics Ricoeur aspires to as his aide would avoid problematizing distanciation from the very root of being itself, rendering this poetics thus “suitable to the new realities that need to be discovered” beyond mere objectifying description.\textsuperscript{1298} This poetics, that appears as quite Heideggerian, would thus reveal “the art of conjuring up the world of creation” as well as “the order of creation,”\textsuperscript{1299} unlike constantly running up against the explanatory limits of

\textsuperscript{1294} Ricoeur 1949, 32-33. – In his 1933 work \textit{Position et approches concrètes du mystère ontologique}, translated as \textit{On the Ontological Mystery}, Marcel introduces a distinction between mysteries and problems. For Marcel a mystery “encroaches upon its own data, invading them, as it were, and thereby transcending itself as a simple problem,” because mystery relates to being in the \textit{presence} of something non-nameable, that is, in the presence of “a reality rooted in what is beyond the domain of the problematical \textit[i.e. distanced and potentially resolvable] properly so called.” In contrast to a mystery, a methodologically articulated problem – limited by this same approach – admits a solution because it objectifies and externalizes this reality in which a subject participates as an intellectual, sensuous, and affective being. According to Marcel, however, “no apprehension of ontological mystery in whatever degree is possible except to a being who is capable of recollecting himself.” The notion of mystery guards one from unintentionally slipping into reductive rationalizations, but it still requires a subject capable of self-recognition. Marcel 1991, 19, 21, 23.; Gallagher 1962, 21, 31, 36, 38-39.

\textsuperscript{1295} Ricoeur 1949, 18. (15). – \textit{The Voluntary and the Involuntary} is dedicated to “à monsieur Gabriel Marcel, hommage respectueux.”

\textsuperscript{1296} Ricoeur 1949, 18. (14). – Ricoeur analyzes “flesh” or one’s body again in \textit{Oneself as Another}, in which he also claims that the phenomenology of “I can” must retain a connection to “an ontology of one’s own body.” Ricoeur 1990, 134-135, 369-380. (111, 319-329).

\textsuperscript{1297} Ricoeur 1949, 445. (472-473).

\textsuperscript{1298} Ricoeur 1949, 32. (30).

\textsuperscript{1299} Ricoeur 1949, 32-33. (30).
phenomenological eidetics that has lost the element of ontological mystery in problematic analysis.

Because of the ontologically revealing task of Ricoeur’s poetics, he intentionally resorts to “scientifically suspect language,” or equivocal expressivity. According to *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, the “poetry of admiration” connects with “a lyric tradition to which belong the final philosophy of Goethe, the final philosophy of Nietzsche, and especially R. M. Rilke’s *Sonnets to Orpheus* and *Duino Elegies.*” Ricoeur argues that this ontologically unreserved orphic “intoxication” provides a poetic reconciliation – under the mode of “as if” – between subjectivity and totality: “In myth a philosophy of man and a philosophy of the Whole encounter each other in symbolization; all nature is an immense ‘as if.’” In brief, *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* already necessitates the use of symbolic language, in which the shift from objectivity to existence takes place.

Unlike the orphic poets, for whom “existence is still enchanted and sacred,” Ricoeur acknowledges, however, that the modern age is “prosaic and skeptical.” This scientific skepticism leads one to comprehend symbolic language as symbolic, that is, critical modernity conceives symbolic language as equivocal and inexact, which draws a difference between Ricoeur and Heidegger. The naïveté Ricoeur searches for in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* is not a primary but a secondary one, in a word, post-critical. Critical modernity does not need to “fear the great Orphic poetry” but can use it as a resource instead, because such poetry has been conceived as “a limit which I neither can nor dare reach.”

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1300 Ricoeur 1949, 393. (419).
1302 Ricoeur 1949, 449-450. (478).
1303 Ricoeur 1949, 447. (475).
1304 Ricoeur 1949, 447. (475).
possibilities imbedded in mythic-symbolic language, now understood to apply the “as if” function, become apparent only after having been noticed through criticism.

*The Symbolism of Evil*, published ten years later, continues this thematics by examining the human experience of evil that would again need the support of a poetics in revealing being as be-ing. \(^{1305}\) Ricoeur argues that the task of philosophical hermeneutics is “to elaborate existential concepts – that is to say, not only structures of reflection but structures of existence, insofar as existence is the being of man.” \(^{1306}\) A human subject, Ricoeur maintains, does not subsist but finds itself within being, and has a correlating need to express this belongingness. Ricoeur’s explicit call for a post-critical ontology leads one to assume that symbols have an onto-existential function, which in the language of *The Symbolism of Evil* can be described as “an appeal by which each man is invited to situate himself better in being.” \(^{1307}\) Symbols, Ricoeur insists, “speak of the situation of the being of man in the being of the world.” \(^{1308}\) Symbols, then, are expressions of being, and hermeneutics is a means of opening up this poetic language of human situatedness.

As already argued in chapters 2 and 6 of this dissertation, *The Symbolism of Evil* emphasizes that “the symbol gives rise to thought,” \(^{1309}\) or, that the post-critical secondary naïveté is achievable in understanding interpretation through the detour of scientific explanation; “it is by interpreting that we can hear anew.” \(^{1310}\) This plea for critically informed understanding of the human condition through symbols – only noticed as symbols by a critique of them – resulted in the so-called “wager,” \(^{1311}\) namely, Ricoeur’s full admission of


\(^{1306}\) Ricoeur 1960b, 331-332. (356-357).

\(^{1307}\) Ricoeur 1960b, 331. (356).

\(^{1308}\) Ricoeur 1960b, 331. (356).


\(^{1310}\) Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (351).

\(^{1311}\) Ricoeur 1960b, 330. (355).
the creative use and interpretation of symbolic language that ultimately manifests culture that is both “poetic” and “critical” as Ricoeur also maintains in “What Does ‘Humanism’ Mean?” In short, *The Symbolism of Evil* stresses that equivocal language is the medium for re-gaining the onto-existential meaning in creative interpretation. The gift of symbolic language, as I have maintained in chapter 6, is “a better understanding of man and of the bond between the being of man and the being of all beings” given in “a creative interpretation of meaning,” that is, in the hermeneutics of symbols.

An aspect of Ricoeur’s symbol theory that I haven’t yet emphasized concerns his claim that authentic symbols, that situate a human being in being, are grounded in the poetic essence of symbols. Whether the symbols utilize religious (i.e. cosmic) or psychic (i.e. oneiric) mode of expression, according to Ricoeur they still are based in poetic expressivity: “The structure of the poetic image is also the structure of the dream when the latter extracts from the fragments of our past a prophecy of our future, and the structure of the hierophanies that make the sacred manifest in the sky and in the waters, in vegetation and in stones.” A symbol becomes authentic thanks to the poetic coming-into-an-image that responds to the need to express the living experience of being human. In brief, the poetic representation is a needed condition for symbolic expression – the poetic image enables symbolization by bringing expressivity to experience. According to *The Symbolism of Evil*, a poetic image remains therefore “a process for making present,” that it is “much closer to a verb than to a portrait.” Such poetic symbol “shows us expressivity in its nascent

\[\text{1312 Ricoeur 1956, 88-92. (Ricoeur 1974, 78-86.)}\]
\[\text{1313 Ricoeur 1960b, 324, 330. (348-349, 355).}\]
\[\text{1314 Ricoeur 1960b, 330. (355).}\]
\[\text{1315 Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (348).}\]
\[\text{1316 Ricoeur 1960b, 17-20. (10-13).}\]
\[\text{1317 Ricoeur 1960b, 21. (14).}\]
\[\text{1318 Ricoeur 1960b, 20. (13). Italics added.}\]
state,” because “in poetry (la poésie) the symbol is caught at the moment when it is a welling up of language, ‘when it puts language in a state of emergence.’” As in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, Ricoeur maintains in *The Symbolism of Evil* that poems are capable of authentically expressing the human situation of being in the world.

In the wake of introducing the notion of poetic image in *The Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur then substitutes in *On Interpretation* “poetic symbolism” with “poetic imagination.” In Ricoeur’s words, the “grace” of poetic imagination results in considering “Speech as Revelation.” According to Ricoeur it is discourse (la parole), the correlate of poético-productive expressivity, “in which the advancement of meaning occurs.” The creation of meaning utilizes the mytho-poetic imaginary, but it realizes itself properly in “nascent speech,” or discourse in its state of finding expression (la parole à l'état naissant). Ricoeur, in other words, returns to the idea of poetic discourse, but enriched with the idea of productive poetic imagination that not only enables existentially pertinent expression but creates meaning, or, *gives birth* to the discourse that “speaks out” and reveals the mysterious human condition.

At this point – having reached again Ricoeur’s *On Interpretation* – this poetic path crosses with the earlier analyses in this dissertation. As I pointed out in chapter 11, the creation of cultural meaning, according to Ricoeur, is based on the mytho-poetic function of language. The poetic imagination could be necessary for such functionality, but, as Ricoeur maintains, the poetic advancement of meaning *in discourse* remains his question. Again, Ricoeur concludes that behind the human *Suchen* an arena is exposed, in which the question

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1319 Ricoeur 1960b, 21. (14).
1320 Ricoeur 1965a, 24. (15).
1321 Ricoeur 1965a, 43-44, 529. (35-36, 551).
1322 Ricoeur 1965a, 522. (543).
1323 Ricoeur 1965a, 522. (544).
of the creation of meaning should be analyzed as “language and its symbolic function.” Only this analysis will clarify how “the grace of imagination” as advancement of meaning is at the same time a mytho-poetic exploration of our relationship to beings and to Being – that is, how the surplus of meaning is the surplus of human being.

13.2 The Birth of Meaning as the Becoming of Our Being

Ricoeur’s analysis of the birth of equivocal meaning in *The Living Metaphor* addresses the unresolved issue of his earlier works. Rather than being a “linguistic turn” the work clarifies the question of symbolization Ricoeur introduced already in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary.* “Metaphor,” Ricoeur argues in *The Living Metaphor,* “is to poetic language what the model is to scientific language.” The “key study,” as Ricoeur calls it, of this 1975 work focuses on metaphor and the semantics of discourse, and unlocks the hermeneutic question of the creation of meaning, or, the question of semantic innovation. According to Ricoeur, this “hermeneutics of metaphor” requires that the notions of productive imagination and metaphor’s iconic function, or poetic image, be reinterpreted in the light of “the ποίησις of language” that surpasses the levels of the form and sense of metaphor, and analyzes “the reference of the metaphorical statement as the power to ‘ redescribe’ reality.” This hermeneutic analysis that centers on metaphoric language has the function of unconcealing how poetic discourse comes about; Ricoeur maintains that an analysis of how

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1324 Ricoeur 1965a, 502. (522).
1325 Ricoeur 1965a, 529. (551).
1326 Ricoeur 1949, 449-450. (478).
1327 Ricoeur 1975d, 302. (240).
1328 Ricoeur 1975d, 8. (4).
1329 Ricoeur 1975d, 10-11. (6-7).
the literal meaning is suspended in a metaphor helps explain the constitution of poetic discourse.\textsuperscript{1330}

As indicated by his earlier works, Ricoeur connects the advancement of meaning ("surplus of meaning") to the advancement of being ("surplus of being"). The Living Metaphor states, in particular, that language has a reflective capacity that relates to being: "Kant wrote that something must be for something to appear. We are saying that something must be for something to be said."\textsuperscript{1331} Ricoeur's ontological assertion is strengthened by his demand that for a language to signify, it needs such a function – revealed by speculative discourse – that grounds the referential function ontologically:

Language designates itself and its other. This reflective character extends what linguistics call meta-linguistic functioning, but articulates it in another discourse, speculative [i.e., philosophical] discourse. It is then no longer a function that can be opposed to other functions, in particular to the referential function; for it is the knowledge that accompanies the referential function itself, the knowledge of its being-related to being.\textsuperscript{1332}

Language itself calls for reflection and ontological situatedness. To fully understand the implications of this statement, it is necessary to examine briefly Ricoeur's basic arguments concerning metaphors that explicate the overall tensional nature of his hermeneutics.

Ricoeur studies the metaphoric use of language by placing it in a dialectical process. At the theoretical level, he proceeds from semiotics to semantics and, finally, to hermeneutics. At the level of metaphorical statements, he follows the path from a word to a sentence and finally to language \textit{per se}.\textsuperscript{1333} Moreover, Ricoeur places the substitutive "word" and contextual "interaction" theories of metaphor in a dialectical relationship. For Ricoeur, these theories form a dialectic pair that reflects the totality of the problematics of

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{1330} Ricoeur 1975d, 10-11. (6).
\textsuperscript{1331} Ricoeur 1975d, 386. (304).
\textsuperscript{1332} Ricoeur 1975d, 385. (304).
\textsuperscript{1333} Ricoeur 1975d, 7, 10. (3, 5-6).
\end{footnotesize}
language. At the same time, Ricoeur aims to bridge the theories by placing the metaphor in connection with both a substituted word and a sentence (that is, its context). This becomes possible when the relationship between a word and its context are seen from the viewpoint of *polysemy*. With this term, Ricoeur means a certain semantic elasticity or expandability of discourse, namely, its capacity to “acquire new significations without losing [its] old ones.” Language, Ricoeur argues, is semantically elastic.

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

This interplay between a word and its context has two diverging directions. In a process that I call “univocization,” the sentence achieves meaningfulness by limiting the “semantic capital” of its words in such a way that the semantic potential of each word is reduced to one acceptation, which makes it compatible with the newly formed meaning of the whole sentence. Consider, for example, the sentence “Socrates is a wise man.” In the case of a metaphor – which Ricoeur understands as “a semantic event that takes place at the

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1334 Ricoeur 1975d, 161-171. (125-133).
1335 Ricoeur 1975d, 217. (170).
1336 Ricoeur 1975d, 167. (130). – As much as there is a “play” in the copula, and a play between the word and the sentence, there is also a “play” played by a poet; “[a poet] is that artisan who sustains and shapes imaginary only by a play of language (*le seul jeu du langage*).” Ricoeur 1975d, 167, 268. (130, 211.); Ricoeur 1965a, 167. (165). This notion can be taken as being inspired by Kant’s third *Critique* and the “free play of imagination,” which is an aspect of Kant’s thought Richard Kearney is quite obviously willing to highlight. Cf. Kearney 2001, 172.
point where several [incongruent] semantic fields intersect” – this process can be understood as inverse: there are no suitable potential senses that would make the expression meaningful. We can consider, then, the sentence “Socrates is a stingray.” For Ricoeur, this implies that “it is necessary, therefore, to retain all the acceptations allowed plus one, that which will rescue the meaning of the entire statement.” For example, the word “stingray” has to be given an additional meaning that refers to a personal capacity of making someone stunned and astounded; only then the entire sentence becomes meaningful. Put differently, a signification needs to be added to achieve a meaningful expression. In this “metaphorization” or “equivocization,” the tension between the utterance and its context produces a semantic surplus that then leads to the meaningfulness of the entire expression.

In sum, a metaphor illustrates semantic creativity, the ability to produce new meanings, which – according to The Living Metaphor – is connected to the “iconic character” of metaphor that discloses its ultimate reference in the paradoxical, or “tensional,” mode of “is” and “is not”; it is a dialectic expression both of the ontological naïveté and of the critical approach (la démythisation). This “is as” of a metaphor, Ricoeur argues, is connected both

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1337 Ricoeur 1975d, 127. (98).
1339 Ricoeur 1975d, 168. (131). – After having learned the nature of the “semantic innovation” based on the process enabled by the polysemic character of language (Ricoeur 1975d, 126-127. (98-99)), it has also become possible to connect both the nominalist, noun-focused substitution theories (Aristotle, Pierre Fontanier) and discursive, context-focused interaction theories (Ivor Richards, Max Black, Monroe Beardsley) to each other. Ricoeur’s contribution is to show that these two approaches do not really oppose each other, since they describe a metaphor from different perspectives: on one hand a word is a lexeme, on the other it is a part of discourse. (Ricoeur 1975d, 201. (157).) Substitution theories examine the impact of the dynamics of a metaphorical expression on the lexical code, i.e., on the semiotics of this expression, whereas interaction theories focus on the semantics of metaphorical expression. However, as the metaphor arises from a semantic impact facing a word in its context – amid a semantic crisis – it would suffice to require that a metaphor should be defined in connection with the semantic approach. Ricoeur takes this to mean that the metaphorical meaning, as being a value created by the context, is “non-lexical.” (Ricoeur 1975d, 217-220. (169-172).) The metaphorical meaning cannot be drawn from known significations.
1340 Ricoeur 1975d, 238-242, 310-313, 321. (187-191, 247-249, 255-256). – With the notion of “iconic character” Ricoeur relates to a view pursued by Paul Henle, namely, that a metaphor can be understood in an analogical manner: “to speak by means of metaphor is to say something different ‘through’ some literal meaning.” (Ricoeur 1975d, 239. (188).) A metaphor linguistically expresses an object or an event which in some
to “saying as” and “seeing as.” This iconicity, then, also has its correlate in poetic praxis. Ricoeur states that “thinking in poetry is a picture-thinking.” This means, for example, that a poet “is that artisan who sustains and shapes imagery only by a play of language.” Poetic images rest on the polysemic character of language, which becomes figurative speech by using its “is as” function also in the mode of “seeing as.”

A shift from polysemy to poetic images and “seeing as” leads us, finally, to consider again the question of onto-existential import. According to Ricoeur, who at this point draws both from Kant’s schematism and especially from later Wittgenstein, the pictorial capacity of language (“seeing as”) is, first, related to reception — the idea of received understanding is then, again, an insurmountable aspect of Ricoeur’s analysis. Anticipating the refigurative aspect of the threefold mimesis in *Time and Narrative I*, Ricoeur announces in *The Living Metaphor* that the “seeing as” is exposed in the act of reading. The semantics of a metaphorical expression is, therefore, reaching its limits and about to turn to hermeneutics. The question of being arises in connection with this idea of a metaphorical statement as an image inviting interpretation.

Respect is analogous to this metaphorical expression - hence borrowing, through Paul Henle, the term “icon” from C.S. Peirce (cf. Ricoeur 1978, 149-150.; Peirce 1932, 157.) This iconic function, or character (le caractère iconique), thus gives birth to a parallel structure which by semantically challenging the limits of vocabulary extends these limits with a “surplus” produced by the intended semantic crisis (“a planned category mistake”). (Ricoeur 1975d, 250-251. (196-197).) When Ricoeur then applies Marcus Hester’s theory of metaphors, this thought of an “iconic,” i.e. figurative, character takes on a different, in a sense more “literal” meaning. Poetic language seen as a verbal icon (l’icône verbale) – which reveals the non-verbal factor inside a semantic theory – is a method for constructing images.

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1341 Ricoeur 1975d, 269. (212).
1343 Ricoeur 1975d, 268-269. (212); Ricoeur 1983, 117, 121. (77, 80). – I should mention that in *The Living Metaphor* Ricoeur relies on the argumentative support provided by Marcus Hester. Ricoeur proposes that the “seeing as”-operator or, rather, the experience-act of “seeing as,” and the imagining function clarify each other. As such, it also helps to clarify the birth of a metaphorical meaning. Ricoeur quotes: “The same imagery which occurs also means.” And in turning back to Kant and his famous dictum, Ricoeur argues: “seeing as' quite precisely plays the role of the schema that unites the empty concept and the blind impression.” So understood, “seeing as” unites the verbal and non-verbal, it is the fusion of sense and imagery. In brief, it “designates the non-verbal mediation of the metaphorical statement.” Ricoeur 1975d, 268-271. (212-214).
As Ricoeur stated already in *On Interpretation*, however, interpretation and reflection coincide.\(^{1344}\) It is the poetic image that opens up the whole sphere of being while discovering it in reflection. Using once again the words of Gaston Bachelard’s *The Poetics of Space* (1957), just as he did in both *The Symbolism of Evil* and *On Interpretation*, Ricoeur argues in *The Living Metaphor* that there is a direct relation between poetic images and reflection on being:

Bachelard has taught us that the image is not a residue of impression, but an aura surrounding speech: “The poetic image places us at the origin of the speaking being.” The poem gives birth to the image; the poetic “becomes a new being in our language, expressing us by making us what it expresses; in other words, it is at once a becoming of expression, and a becoming of our being. Here expression creates being (*l’expression crée de l’être*) … one would not be able to meditate in a zone that preceded language.”\(^{1345}\)

Put differently, the question of the “very birth (*naissance*) of discourse (*parole*)”\(^{1346}\) is not separable from the question of becoming a human being. Ricoeur maintains that poetic expressivity “makes us” while being the “becoming of our being.” The poetic, in other words, gives birth to a human subject by enabling recognition (*reconnaissance*) in reflection.

### 13.3 Critical and Ontological Poetics

While *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* announced a search for the “fundamental human possibilities,”\(^{1347}\) *The Living Metaphor* argues that these possibilities originate from the poetic: “Is it not the function of poetry to establish another world – another world that corresponds to other possibilities of existence, to possibilities that would be most deeply our own?”\(^{1348}\)

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\(^{1344}\) Ricoeur 1975d, 271-272. (213-215); Ricoeur 1965a, 59-60. (52-54).


\(^{1346}\) Ricoeur 1965a, 334. (343).

\(^{1347}\) Ricoeur 1949, 7. (3).

\(^{1348}\) Ricoeur 1975d, 288. (229).
a manner that resembles Heidegger’s suggestion of the appropriate purpose of “poetic” articulation as “the communication of the existential possibilities of attunement, that is, the disclosing of existence.”\textsuperscript{1349} Ricoeur argues that the profundity of human existence is disclosed in a poetic statement that works as a metaphorical image of a subject’s own being. The poetic image, to restate, is a processual event of becoming (more) self-conscious of one’s own being in the reflection necessitated by the very expression. A poem is, Ricoeur maintains, “in the language of Heidegger, a way of finding oneself among things \textit{(Befindlichkeit)}.”\textsuperscript{1350} The human possibilities, crystallized in the notion of \textit{l’homme capable}, originate from and are founded in the poetic.

Ricoeur’s allusion to Heidegger’s terminology is not coincidental; besides analyzing Heidegger’s use of metaphors, the final study of \textit{The Living Metaphor} examines the ontological implications of poetic language, and concludes by discussing the poetic approach of Heidegger II.\textsuperscript{1351} In poetry, Ricoeur summarizes Heidegger’s understanding of it, “the word is brought forth from its origin”; poetry “makes the world to appear.”\textsuperscript{1352} Despite Ricoeur’s uneasiness with any “naïve ontology,” his affinity with Heidegger is recognizable in his analysis of the relation of language to reality. Language, for Ricoeur, appears “as that which raises the experience of the world to its articulation in discourse, that which founds communication and brings about the advent of man \textit{(fait advenir l’homme)} as speaking subject.”\textsuperscript{1353} In brief, Ricoeur maintains that language articulates the human experience of

\textsuperscript{1349} Heidegger 1967, 162. (152).
\textsuperscript{1350} Ricoeur 1975d, 288-289. (229).
\textsuperscript{1351} Ricoeur 1975d, 323, 356-361, 392-399. (257, 280-284, 309-313). – Ricoeur acknowledges that Heidegger criticized metaphors as means of metaphysical \textit{Übertragung}. Ricoeur points out, however, that “the constant use Heidegger makes of metaphor is finally more important than what he says in passing against metaphor.” Moreover, “when Heidegger hears non-dissimulation in \textit{a-lithiea}, the philosopher creates meaning and in this way produces something like a living metaphor.” Ricoeur 1975d, 357, 370-371. (280, 292).
\textsuperscript{1352} Ricoeur 1975d, 361. (284).
\textsuperscript{1353} Ricoeur 1975d, 385. (304).
being-in-the-world. Ricoeur’s kinship with Heidegger is apparent in his plea that an ontological understanding of human condition requires articulation in discourse.\footnote{Cf. Heidegger 1967, 160. (150).}

Utilizing the idea of “tensional” truth, Ricoeur argues, however, that articulation is not separable from the reflective capacity of language, that is, its ability to consider itself by the means of distanciation. Put differently, the notion of “dialectic” truth necessitates a rejection of an immediate ontology, while retaining a connection with the critical.\footnote{Cf. Ricoeur 1975d, 374-375. (295).} According to Ricoeur, language is primordially “installed” in being, but he also maintains that it “becomes aware of itself in the self-articulation of the being which it is about.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1975d, 385. (304).} The reflective capacity of language accompanies its referential function; this intra-linguistic reflective distanciation then facilitates the peculiar ontological “knowledge” that language is “being-related to being.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1975d, 385. (304).} Ricoeur argues, nevertheless, that articulation expresses being as be-ing, that is, it is the becoming of being in expression – Ricoeur even reverses the order between language and its reference to being and its articulation:

When I speak (je parle), I know that something is brought to language. This knowledge is no longer intra-linguistic but extra-linguistic; it moves from being to being-said (de l’être à l’être-dit), at the very time that language itself moves from sense to reference.\footnote{Ricoeur 1975d, 386. (304). – Ricoeur borrows the term “extra-linguistic” from Gottlob Frege. Mary Gerhart mentions that this terminological loan has been criticized by many as Ricoeur’s antipositivist hermeneutics and Frege’s positivism deviate greatly from each other. However, Gerhart sees that Frege assists Ricoeur in some key issues: “Frege’s distinction [between sense and reference] allows Ricoeur to attend to two functions of metaphor: (1) its production of new meaning in the semiotic systems of signs, and (2) its denotation of a world to which the new meaning refers. In other words, Ricoeur utilizes the Fregean distinction between sense and reference to clarify the opposition between the semiotic and the semantic and shows that the one is irreducible to the other. The opposition is important for an understanding of metaphor because in the past, metaphor as word has been ‘divided between a semiotics of lexical entities and a semantics of the sensence’.” Gerhart however also admits that “Ricoeur is not without reservations about Frege’s work.” (Gerhart 1995, 223-224.) As it turned out, also Ricoeur himself became rather dubious later on: “I would say today that […] I am no longer satisfied by what I wrote in chapter 7 of The Living Metaphor. First of all, borrowing from Frege the distinction between sense and reference (or denotation) appears to me to go outside the bounds of Frege’s logical semantics.” Ricoeur 1995k, 234.}
Such onto-existentially revealing articulation would not be possible, however, without the critical moment that is able to appreciate the becoming of being in the being-said. Even though Ricoeur maintains that language is “the being-said of reality,”\(^{1359}\) that it is being that is articulated and expressed, this ontological “knowledge” or understanding is attainable only in and with the critical, because the ontological vehemence of expression becomes apparent only in such distanciation.

In short, then, Ricoeur’s relation to Heidegger’s hermeneutics of being is ambiguous. When noticing that actuality – which according to Ricoeur also includes all its possibilities through an interplay between the actual and the possible\(^ {1360}\) – has meaning only in the critical, or speculative, discourse concerning being, Ricoeur points out that “the polysemy of being” (\(\textit{la polysémie de l’être}\)) signifies the ultimate reference of poetic discourse, although this can be articulated only in a speculative discourse.\(^ {1361}\) The poetic and the speculative are in a dialectical relationship with each other: the poetic leads us to recognize a certain tension of being ("being-as" conceived as the same and the other); whereas the speculative construes this tension critically – metaphor works at the very intersection of speculative and poetic discourses.\(^ {1362}\) In brief, the dialectical conflict of these discourses defines a difference between Ricoeur’s critical “metaphorical ‘as’” and Heidegger’s ontological “hermeneutic ‘as’” as Gert-Jan van der Heiden summarizes.\(^ {1363}\) Ricoeur maintains, nevertheless, in a Heideggerian undertone, that “lively expression is that which

\(^{1359}\) Ricoeur 1975d, 386. (304).
\(^{1360}\) Ricoeur 1975d, 389-390. (307).
\(^{1361}\) Ricoeur 1975d, 389. (307).
\(^{1362}\) Ricoeur 1975d, 212, 377, 398-399. (166, 298, 313).
\(^{1363}\) Heiden 2010, 148-149.
expresses the living existence,” which explains why Ricoeur held his phrase *la métaphore vive*, the living metaphor, so important.

While criticizing but also borrowing from Heidegger, Ricoeur reaches the threshold of a post-critical “first philosophy,” namely a philosophy that would illustrate the ontological in referential relation. Since Ricoeur’s approach includes the notion of interpretation, the ontological is not immediately conceivable, however. The extra-linguistic is expressed in poetic language and appropriated hermeneutically. As argued by *The Symbolism of Evil*, *On Interpretation*, and *The Living Metaphor*, it is only in interpretation that the ontological becomes attainable. Furthermore, there are two levels of interpretation: First, the expression itself is a coming-into-words of being, an innovative and dynamic articulation of being that is experienced; it is therefore also evoking and establishing a world of possibilities by eclipsing the natural order and remaking reality in redescription. Ricoeur summarizes: “An experience requests to be expressed.” Second, this innovative expression is appropriated in interpretation by canceling out its impossible literal meaning and invoking its “living” onto-existential meaning as a manifestation of being in be-ing. This displaying and explicating the world to which the poetic expression refers is therefore also a hermeneutic reappropriation of one’s existence: “the process of interpreting is pursued at the level of modes of existing.”

The ontological is revealed only in dual interpretation; Ricoeur’s “first philosophy” is hermeneutics that in its critical fashion nevertheless shares with Heidegger the call that comes from being as be-ing.

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1364 Ricoeur 1975d, 61. (43).
1365 Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 127.
Put differently, Ricoeur argues that this critical, yet ontologically “restorative” hermeneutics\textsuperscript{1370} is grounded in the possible intersection of the speculative and poetic discourses. The hermeneutical conflict is unsurpassable, but it invites “concrete reflection” as Ricoeur already maintained in \textit{On Interpretation}.\textsuperscript{1371} Paradoxically, aided by the speculative, the poetic discourse brings to language “a pre-objective world in which we find ourselves already rooted, but in which we also project our innermost possibilities.”\textsuperscript{1372} This notion of the world as the source of being is inherently important, because it functions as an extra-linguistic referent – it is the correlate of signified meaning. As such, it is a necessary condition for the possibility of speech: “We must dismantle the reign of objects in order to let be, and to allow to be uttered, our primordial belonging to a world which we inhabit, that is to say, which at once precedes us and receives the imprint of our works (\textit{nos oeuvres}).”\textsuperscript{1373} In short, the poetic discourse reveals our being-in-the-world while, however, being also “our work,” which in its interpreting expressivity brings about critical distance to the “pre-objective” world, and immediately cuts us off from the world as the source of being. A human being does not live in the immediacy of being but in the world of cultural distance; his being is mediated by language and work that are grounded in the poetic and the ontological.

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\textsuperscript{1370} Ricoeur 1965a, 36-40, 445. (28-32, 460).
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\textsuperscript{1371} Ricoeur 1965a, 61-63. (54-56); Ricoeur 1975d, 383. (303). – On the basis of the “opposite pull of rival demands” between the poetic and the speculative discourses Mary Gerhart asserts that there is a distinction between the “immediate ontology of the symbol” in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} and the “critical ontology” in \textit{The Living Metaphor}. She explains that “\textit{La métaphore vive} preserves the tension between an immediate ontology and a critical ontology arrived at through a relative pluralism of modes of discourse and modes of use.” (Gerhart 1995, 225.) Even though I understand the reasons for Gerhart’s assertion, I would have to point out that Ricoeur is explicit in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} that the immediate naïveté, or “the sunken Atlantides,” has been lost in modernity, but through critical hermeneutics – and in interpreting – a second immediacy, “the postcritical equivalent of the precritical hierophany,” is still within our reach. The symbols, which are in the first place understood to be symbols only after critical distanciation, do not convey an immediate ontology but they reveal their onto-existential meaning only in interpretation. In terms of “ontological tones” Ricoeur is therefore consistent when \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} and \textit{The Living Metaphor} are compared with each other.
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\textsuperscript{1372} Ricoeur 1975d, 387. (306).
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\textsuperscript{1373} Ricoeur 1975d, 387. (306).
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Such a poetic discourse that sets up the world while giving means to expressing our belonging-ness to it, however, brings Ricoeur to the threshold of the Hölderlinian-Heideggerian “Worte, wie Blumen,” the notion of words as flowers: “the ‘flowers’ of our words […] utter existence in its blossoming forth.”\textsuperscript{1374} Much like Heidegger, who criticized reducing \textit{wie} to mere comparison that would reduce “this poetic expression to a ‘herbarium, a collection of dried-up plants,’”\textsuperscript{1375} Ricoeur maintains that poetry “articulates and preserves the experience of belonging that places man in discourse and discourse in being.”\textsuperscript{1376} Poetry explicates the human condition as being-in-being and being-in-language in the manner Heidegger’s \textit{The Origin of the Work of Art} explains \textit{Dichtung} as founding bestowing, grounding, and beginning that have their corresponding modes of preserving (\textit{Bewahrung}). Ricoeur’s understanding of poetic language draws close to Heidegger’s understanding of the poetic work: “for a work is in actual effect as a work only when we remove ourselves from our commonplace routine and move into what is disclosed by the work, so as to bring our own being itself (\textit{unser Wesen selbst}) to take a stand in the truth of what is.”\textsuperscript{1377} In the end, therefore, Ricoeur’s conception of the poetic is much akin to that of Heidegger. The experience of “belonging” is, however, made apparent only in a critical, speculative distanciation. Without this critical distance, the poetic would remain only lived and not understood. Ricoeur argues, moreover, that this distance is not foreign to the poetic but quite natural to it: “poetic discourse, as text and as work, prefigures the distanciation that speculative thought carries to its highest point of reflection.”\textsuperscript{1378} Even though language

\textsuperscript{1375} Ricoeur 1975d, 361. (284).
\textsuperscript{1376} Ricoeur 1975d, 398. (313).
\textsuperscript{1377} Heidegger 1977a, 62. (Heidegger 2001b, 72.)
\textsuperscript{1378} Ricoeur 1975d, 398-399. (313).
discloses being at its coming-to-presence as blossoming, the being-as is not simply “is” but is tensional – and, therefore, also “is not.”

Ricoeur remains, therefore, uncompromisingly reserved with regard to Heidegger’s ontological hermeneutics; Heidegger’s approach appears to him as a mere inspiring temptation.\(^{1379}\) “With Heidegger’s philosophy,” Ricoeur argues in his essay “The Task of Hermeneutics,” “we are always engaged in going back to the foundations, but we are left incapable of beginning the movement of return that would lead from the fundamental ontology to the properly epistemological question of the status of human sciences.”\(^{1380}\) Put differently, Ricoeur maintains that Heidegger’s work is not able to respond to this challenge: “how can a question of critique in general be accounted for within the framework of a fundamental hermeneutics?”\(^{1381}\) In brief, Ricoeur criticizes Heidegger’s ontological hermeneutics of evading the question of philosophical criticism.

Being reserved, however, does not mean that Ricoeur would be incapable of using Heidegger’s later texts pedagogically. As Ricoeur admits in the opening lines of his

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\(^{1379}\) Cf. e.g. Ricoeur 1969, 23-28. (19-24); Ricoeur 1975d, 393. (309). – Ricoeur's 1978 article on metaphors argues for a connection between poetic language and emotions. This dense text is highly illuminating and it suggests that there is a certain “split reference” at work in poetic language. The meaning of the Heideggerian “temptation” becomes well highlighted in this text: “On the basis of this analysis of the split structure of poetic feeling, it is possible to do justice to a certain extent to a claim of Heidegger’s analytic of the *Dasein* that feelings have ontological bearing, that they are ways of ‘being-there,’ of ‘finding’ ourselves within the world, to keep something of the semantic intent of the German *Befindlichkeit*. Because of feelings we are ‘attuned to’ aspects of reality which cannot be expressed in terms of the objects referred to in ordinary language. Our entire analysis of the split reference of both language and feeling is in agreement with this claim. But it must be underscored that this analysis of *Befindlichkeit* makes sense only to the extent that it is paired with that of split reference both in verbal and imaginative structures. If we miss this fundamental connection, we are tempted to construe this concept of *Befindlichkeit* as a new kind of intuitionism - and the worst kind! - in the form of a new emotional realism. We miss, in Heidegger’s *Daseinanlyse* itself, the close connections between *Befindlichkeit* and *Verstehen*, between situation and project, between anxiety and interpretation. The ontological bearing of feeling cannot be separated from the negative process applied to the first-order emotions, such as fear and sympathy, according to the Aristotelian paradigm of catharsis. With this qualification in mind, we may assume the Heideggerian thesis that it is mainly through feelings that we are attuned to reality. But this attunement is nothing else than the reverberation in terms of feelings of the split reference of both verbal and imaginative structure.” Ricoeur 1978, 158.

\(^{1380}\) Ricoeur 1986a, 94. (69).

\(^{1381}\) Ricoeur 1986a, 95. (69).
essay “Phenomenology and Hermeneutics,” his philosophy is not only post-Kantian and post-Hegelian, but also a philosophy “with” Heidegger and “after” Heidegger.1382 “Here, as elsewhere,” Ricoeur states, nevertheless, that “I shall not adhere to the letter of Heidegger’s philosophy but shall develop it for my own purposes.”1383 Despite Ricoeur’s comments in The Living Metaphor that Heidegger’s later works are inescapably ambiguous in their internal struggle that both resorts to and cancels out thought,1384 his critical reading of later Heidegger’s work silently affirms that Ricoeur’s hermeneutics comes close to that of Heidegger II.

Ricoeur rubs shoulders with Heidegger only because they share the same philosophical concern: understanding the unfolding of life. This sharing, or “thinking with,” bursts out occasionally quite surprisingly. The Living Metaphor, for example, seeks support for the view that it is acceptable to comprehend Heidegger’s term Ereignis as a “philosopher’s metaphor” that retains the critical distance Ricoeur requires.1385 Reading Ereignis together with es gibt, Ricoeur argues, “announces every blossoming of appearing under the connotation of ‘gift’; Ereignis and es gibt mark the opening and the unfolding by reason of

1382 Ricoeur 1986a, 39. (25).
1383 Ricoeur 1986a, 49-50. (33).
1384 Ricoeur 1975d, 395-398. (311-313).
1385 Ricoeur 1975d, 394-395. (310). – Ricoeur argues that the “philosopher’s metaphor” is distinct from a “poet’s metaphor,” since he maintains that a philosopher is firmly tied to the speculative discourse. The whole passage, in which Ricoeur struggles with the distinction he wants to maintain between speculative and poetic, is worthy to be cited in length: “What is remarkable, in this short text [Heidegger’s Aus Der Erfahrung des Denkens, 1947], is that the poem does not serve as an ornament to the philosophical aphorism, and that the latter does not constitute the poem’s translation. Poem and aphorism are in a mutual accord of resonance that respects their difference. To the imaginative power of thought-full poetry, the poet replies with the speculative power of poetizing thought. Certainly the difference is infinitesimal when the philosopher approves a thinking poetry – that of poets who themselves write poetically on language, like Hölderlin – and when he responds in a thinking that poetizes, ‘semi-poetic thinking.’ But even here, speculative thought employs the metaphorical resources of language in order to create meaning and answers thus to the call of the ‘thing’ to be said with a semantic innovation. A procedure like this has nothing scandalous about it as long as speculative thought knows itself to be distinct and responsive because it is thinking. Furthermore, the philosopher’s metaphors may well resemble those of the poet – like the latter, they diverge from the world of objects and ordinary language – but they do not merge with the poet’s metaphors.”
which there are objects for a judging subject.” \textsuperscript{1386} In the end, Ricoeur claims, Heidegger juxtaposes but does not confuse philosophical discourse with the poetic one – Ricoeur concludes by using Heidegger’s words from \textit{What is Philosophy?} (1956):

\begin{center}
\begin{quote}
Between these two [\textit{viz.} thinking and poetry, or, speculation and poetics] there exists a secret kinship because in the service of language both intercede on behalf of language and give lavishly of themselves. Between both there is, however, at the same time an abyss for they “dwell on the most widely separated mountains.” \textsuperscript{1387}
\end{quote}
\end{center}

Based on this idea of uncoverable rift, Ricoeur affirms that Heidegger’s words capture well the “very dialectic between the modes of discourse.” \textsuperscript{1388} At the same time, however, Ricoeur profiles Heidegger’s hermeneutics as ontologically non-naïve; Heidegger, in fact, “is part of the lineage of speculative philosophy,” his philosophy is not opposed to but part of that metaphysical thought Heidegger criticized. Even if Heidegger did not succeed in surpassing or annulling the metaphysical tradition, the value of his attempt to poetically analyze the becoming of being “lies in its contribution to the continuous and unceasing problematic of thinking and of being.” \textsuperscript{1389} This same problem animated Ricoeur’s own investigations in \textit{The Living Metaphor}.

In sum, as much as the poetic animates speculative reflection, the poetic discourse also depends on the possibility of distanciation provided by the speculative. These two are not, then, just “the most widely separated mountains” but truly have “a kinship,” albeit a tensional one. Ricoeur concludes, therefore, that the “is as” grounds our experience of being torn between life and thought: “What is given to thought in this way by the ‘tensional’ truth of poetry is the most primordial, most hidden dialectic – the dialectic that

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\textsuperscript{1386} Ricoeur 1975d, 393, 397. (309, 312).
\textsuperscript{1387} Ricoeur 1975d, 398. (313).
\textsuperscript{1388} Ricoeur 1975d, 398. (313).
\textsuperscript{1389} Ricoeur 1975d, 397. (312).
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reigns between the experience of belonging as a whole and the power of distanciation that opens up the space of speculative thought.”

The understanding that I am alive is possible only by maintaining a critical distance (λόγος) from life itself (βίος), that is, by letting life appear through culture and as culture.

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1390 Ricoeur 1975d, 399. (313).
14. Poetics of Cultural Action

The theme of action that I will re-examine in this chapter widens the idea of the poetic constitution of culture. I have already showed in chapter 10 that Ricoeur establishes a connection between action and culture in *Fallible Man*. As Marcel Madila-Basanguka points out, however, Ricoeur’s conception of culture expands the idea that symbolic language is both representation and praxis; culture is not limited to being the human condition but includes practical action. This current chapter, therefore, also draws us close to chapter 2, in which I discussed Ricoeur’s relation to Clifford Geertz and Ernst Cassirer.

Ricoeur acknowledges in *On Interpretation* that Cassirer’s notion of “the symbolic” designates “the common denominator of all the ways of objectivizing, of giving meaning to reality.” Cassirer, in other words, focuses on the universality of cultural forms as the unifying condition of culture. Cassirer maintains that self-knowledge is tied to the symbolic forms – such as language, science, art, and religion – as processes of culture that articulate the human experience while providing means of its expression in human action, through which a human subject finds himself as a capable subject in the philosophically explicated “unity of the creative process.” In the various workings out of this foundational process that, according to Cassirer, defines culture as “progressive self-liberation,” a cultural subject “discovers and proves a new power – the power to build up a world of his own, an ‘ideal’ world.” Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of cultural symbols, presented in *The Symbolism of Evil* and in *On Interpretation*, is therefore continuously present in this discussion, albeit more discreetly that in the previous ones. In addition, this chapter echoes Ricoeur’s critical

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1392 Ricoeur 1965a, 20. (10).
1393 Cassirer 1974, 1, 3, 70.
1394 Cassirer 1974, 228.
attraction to Ernst Cassirer’s philosophy of symbolic forms that includes the idea of self-
knowledge as culturally mediated self-recognition.

The idea of recognizing one's capabilities as an opening up of fundamental human possibilities, however, blooms in the realm of the poetics of *action*. As mentioned in chapter 2, Ricoeur admits in *Memory, History, Forgetting* that he is indebted to Clifford Geertz for “the concept of mediated symbolic action.”

Ricoeur’s affinity with Geertz’s anthropology, however, also brings in the idea of culture as a “thickly” describable context of action.

Semiotic processes are not only conditioned by culture but culture is the context for pursuing them. “Action is symbolic just like language,” and these both attain their signification by interpretation within a cultural context. The idea of the hermeneutics of texts as a model for the hermeneutics of human actions, argued in *From Text to Action*, capitalizes on this notion.

### 14.1 Explanation-Understanding as a Clarification of “Tensional” Poetics

Before getting to the proper practical level of action, an intermediary step will have to be taken in the form of critical mediation through interpretation; this will be Ricoeur’s model for understanding the poetic in human πραξις. Extending the previous discussion of the poetics of language, I maintain that Ricoeur transposes the primordial dialectics of βίος and λόγος onto the level of the dialectics between the poetic and the speculative. These two dialectics are not, however, “mute” but they produce a surplus as an opening up of

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1395 Ricoeur 2000b, 279. n 71. (546. n 76).
1397 Ricoeur 1986b, 255-256.
understanding in the creation of meaning, or, a correlating surplus as an opening up of the world of belonging.

In spite of Ricoeur’s objections to Heideggerian terminology, I call Ricoeur’s tensional dialectics of being as “presencing in absensing,” as it is – to use the words of Gert-Jan van der Heiden – “productive distancing” that Ricoeur has in focus. The creation of meaning, and of being in meaning, is enabled by making explicit the event of meaning-creation itself. “The concept of distanciation is the dialectical counterpart of the notion of belonging,” Ricoeur argues; “to interpret is to render near what is far (temporally, geographically, culturally, spiritually).” My terminological giving in to Heidegger is not devastating for Ricoeur, however, as he always stresses the importance of critical distanciation, in the consideration of which alone the notion of belongingness is comprehensible. Ricoeur’s tensional, or “critical,” hermeneutics, that is, his model of interpretation that requires the support of critical distanciation under objectifying explanation – just as poetics requires speculation – clarifies, however, both his dialectical conception of poetics and his critique of Heidegger’s “short route” of hermeneutics.

Ricoeur’s critical approach is describable as a conception of interpretation that stands in contrast to Wilhelm Dilthey’s dichotomy between explanation (Erklärung) and

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1398 Heiden 2010, 72-73, 76, 152. – Gert-Jan van der Heiden summarizes Ricoeur’s affinity with Heidegger’s in-der-Welt-sein as follows: “Poetic language is the medium of understanding our being-in-the-world par excellence.” (Heiden 2010, 84.) In Heiden’s related analysis, however, the notion of fiction (taken as the “is-not” aspect of “as if”) seems to be stressed in such a manner that it threatens to leave the “is” aspect of “as if” aside quite completely. Heiden understands that in distanciation the experienced “everyday world” is suspended. The poetic task of language, however, is not only to describe an imaginary world, i.e., that of possibilities, but precisely to understand the living experience of the world (the “is”). It is this distanciation in language that Ricoeur discusses in relation to “is not” – and not a literary genre of fiction which only highlights this dimension of “alienation.” Heiden is thus correct when he later states: “the genuine concern of poetics is not language as such but rather the disclosure of our own existence.” For Ricoeur, poetics reveals a surplus of being. Heiden 2010, 140.

1399 Ricoeur 1986a, 51. (35).

1400 Cf. Ricoeur 1969, 10. (6-7).
understanding (Verstehen), and Heidegger’s reformulation of it.\footnote{Dilthey’s proposition, as clarifying the epistemology of human sciences and historiological knowledge in particular, sets, according to Ricoeur’s essay “The Task of Hermeneutics,” a “heavy opposition” between the models of explanation used by natural sciences that analyze the physical world (Naturwissenschaften), and the model of understanding required by human sciences that analyze the world governed by human mentality or spirit (Geisteswissenschaften). The human sciences might not use the same pattern of methods and explanation as the natural sciences, Dilthey argues, but that does not mean that the human sciences would not have a defensible model of approach to the questions they pose – on the contrary, the model of understanding is the appropriate approach for the questions of human comportment in a sociocultural world, and the creation of meaning in that fundamentally historical world. Creating a rift between the natural and the human sciences, however, results in a problem of denying the explanatory power of critical, scientific enterprises – they have no value in terms of understanding the human condition, and this, in turn, expects too much from the human sciences. Ricoeur criticizes Dilthey’s account for necessitating that life itself “contains the power to surpass itself through meaning,” that life as human spirit “grasps life” in its own self-expression. This attitude that separates understanding from explanation, was, according to Ricoeur, in a way replayed in Heidegger’s hermeneutics. Ricoeur 1986a, 82-83, 86-87. (59, 62-63). Cf. Ricoeur 1992, 451-456.} Heidegger’s fault, Ricoeur maintains in “The Task of Hermeneutics,” was to transpose the problem of Dilthey’s epistemological hermeneutics to the level of ontological hermeneutics. The difficulty that for Dilthey remained internal to epistemology – between its two modes – is with Heidegger restated in the form of a distinction between ontology and epistemology. “With Heidegger’s philosophy,” Ricoeur argues, “we are always engaged in going back to the foundations, but we are left incapable of beginning the movement of return that would lead from the fundamental ontology to the properly epistemological question of the status of the human sciences; a philosophy that breaks the dialogue with the sciences is no longer addressed to anything but itself.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1986a, 94. (69). – David Pellauer points out that Ricoeur was willing to move “to a philosophical anthropology closer to that implicit in Heidegger’s being-in-the-world.” Pellauer warns, however, that this “is not to say that Ricoeur simply accepted Heidegger’s position. It is well known that he thought that Heidegger’s leap to a fundamental ontology came at the price of not being able to deal with real epistemological questions, such as those involved in the practice of historical research and writing. And there is more than a hint that Ricoeur thought that Heidegger was most helpful in having recognized what was at issue, rather than that Heidegger had resolved every question involved in it.” Pellauer 2010, 47.} Put differently, Heidegger reformulates the Diltheyan position by demanding a rift between ontological understanding and its epistemological explication.\footnote{Cf. Michel 2006, 155-162.}
Heidegger, Ricoeur explains in his essay “On Interpretation,” encloses understanding at the primordial level of belonging that does not yet recognize the subject-object dichotomy required by epistemological distanciation:

[According to Heidegger,] we find ourselves first of all in a world to which we belong and in which we cannot but participate, that we are then able, in a second movement, to set up objects in opposition to ourselves, objects that we claim to constitute and to master intellectually. *Verstehen* for Heidegger has an ontological signification. It is the response of being thrown into the world who finds his way about in it by projecting onto it his ownmost possibilities. Interpretation, in the technical sense of the interpretation of texts, is but the development, the making explicit of this ontological understanding, an understanding always inseparable from a being that has initially been thrown into the world. The subject-object relation[,] Heidegger maintains[,] is thus subordinated to the testimony of an ontological link more basic than any relation of knowledge.\(^{1404}\)

Heidegger’s ultimate shortcoming, according to Ricoeur, was to not see that his conception of *Verstehen* stresses the ontological at the cost of explication. “For Heidegger,” Ricoeur summarizes in “Philosophical and Biblical Hermeneutics,” “understanding is diametrically opposed to finding oneself situated [that is, the explication of one’s situatedness], to the very extent that understanding is addressed to our ownmost possibilities and deciphers them in a situation that, itself, cannot be projected because we find ourselves already thrown into it.”\(^{1405}\) Heidegger, in short, by-passed the epistemological requirement of critical explanation as purely ontic misconception, and formulated his ontological conception of understanding in such a manner that it pertains to the pre-critical state of thrownness, or being-in-the-world.

\(^{1404}\) Ricoeur 1986a, 28. (14-15).
\(^{1405}\) Ricoeur 1986a, 128. (97). – Ricoeur also defines the term understanding (*compréhension*) in an ontologically rich manner. According to his essay “Explanation and Understanding,” “understanding testifies to our being as belonging to a being that precedes all objectifying, all opposition between an object and a subject.” This understanding is, however, never detachable from explanation that opens up one’s understanding of one’s belongingness only in the movement of distanciation. Ricoeur 1986a, 181-182. (143).
Ricoeur’s proposition of an alternative critically informed conception of interpretation – in his essay “What is a text?” – is based on the idea that appropriative interpretation in which a human subject “begins to understand himself” is mediated by explanation instead of being opposed to it. Ricoeur argues that the linguistic conditions explicated by structuralism, for example, already point out that explanation and interpretation are situated along the same hermeneutical arc, rather than dichotomously opposed to each other. Even though structural analysis falls short, in the end, in explaining linguistic phenomena, Ricoeur maintains that it is still able to distinguish a naïve interpretation from a critical one by unveiling the challenges opened up by the semiotics and the semantics that objectify the whole process of retrieving meaning – the text itself orients interpretation that is intralingual: “the intended meaning of the text is not essentially the presumed intention of the author, the lived experience of the writer, but rather what the text means for whoever complies with its injunction.” Ricoeur argues that Dilthey’s and Heidegger’s conceptions of interpretation do not take this challenge of a text seriously; Heidegger, in particular, emphasizes the completing preservation of the work (Bewahrung) in such a manner that, as Pol Vandevelde comments, it “runs the risk of eclipsing the text to the extent that the interpreter no longer confronts the work as something that

\[1406\] Ricoeur 1986a, 152. (118).
\[1408\] Ricoeur emphasizes the idea that language is not an enclosed structure but firmly connected with the cultural world that has a semantic effect. In *The Living Metaphor*, for example, Ricoeur insists that meaning is determined by the social: “The appearance of new natural and cultural objects in the field of naming; the deposit of beliefs in key-words; the projection of social ideals in emblematic words; the reinforcement or lifting of linguistic taboos; political and cultural domination by a linguistic group, by a social class, or by a cultural milieu – all these influences leave language, at least at the level of semantics of the word […] to the mercy of social forces whose effectiveness underlines the non-systematic character of [language as a] system.” Ricoeur 1975d, 163. (127).
\[1409\] Ricoeur 1986a, 155-156. (121-122).
offers a resistance.”¹⁴¹⁰ In contrast to such hermeneutics, Ricoeur’s objective or critical conception of interpretation is grounded in the text itself that opens a path of thought to follow; interpretation as the appropriation of meaning is an act of the text rather than on the text.¹⁴¹¹

Ricoeur further explains this dialectics between explanation and understanding in “The Model of the Text.” Reminding us of our analyzes of objectivity in parts two and three of this dissertation, Ricoeur maintains that the “objectivity” of the text is constituted by “1) the fixation of the meaning, 2) its dissociation from the mental intention of the author, 3) the display of non-ostensive references, and 4) the universal range of its addressees.”¹⁴¹² These traits comprise the paradigm of reading by providing a platform for explanation: “from this ‘objectivity’ derives a possibility of explaining,” or, that explanation is “the appropriation of textual objectivity.”¹⁴¹³ The text that for Ricoeur is “an analogue of la langue,”¹⁴¹⁴ in its so described objectivity, is a condition for interpretation – in other words, the intralingual moment of explanation is a condition for understanding, it mediates understanding: “Understanding is entirely mediated by the whole of explanatory procedures that precede it and accompany it.”¹⁴¹⁵ Understanding, Ricoeur argues, is dependent on the objective conditions that pertain to the text that is to be understood.

¹⁴¹⁰ Vandevelde 2012, 126, 138-139. Cf. Heidegger 1977a, 62-63, 65-66. (Heidegger 2001b, 72-73, 75.) – Vandevelde also comments on Heidegger’s understanding of texts that disdains their cultural artifactiness. In contrast to Ricoeur, for whom the objectival character of a text facilitates understanding, Heidegger conceives the same objectival appearing of a text as a mere object: “Heidegger only has contempt for a text understood as a configuration of signs. This he regards as mere appearance (Schein), the necessary appearance of the saying of being itself. This saying, says Heidegger, is not first present in libraries, bookshops, and print shops. Before this, it is held in the intimate space of the language of a people. For Heidegger, as soon as the poem is a text it becomes simply vorhanden, present-at-hand, an object of study and concern, the occasion of idle talk.” Vandevelde 2012, 127.

¹⁴¹¹ Ricoeur 1986a, 156. (122).
¹⁴¹² Ricoeur 1986a, 199. (157).
¹⁴¹³ Ricoeur 1986a, 199. (157).
¹⁴¹⁴ Ricoeur 1986a, 206. (163).
¹⁴¹⁵ Ricoeur 1986a, 211. (167). Italics added.
Put differently, Ricoeur repeatedly emphasizes that “there is no self-understanding that is not mediated by signs, symbols, and texts” that function as explanatory means for the task of achieving understanding of the concrete human condition. As a result, Ricoeur “remains faithful” to the Heideggerian position that language conditions human existence in its articulation; “language is the originating condition of all human experience.” Language, Ricoeur agrees with Heidegger, is a necessary existential condition, without which the concrete human experience would indefinitely remain “mute” and unarticulated. Ricoeur’s critique of Heidegger points out, however, that this language itself, in its fundamental function of disclosing existence, distances from the “root” of existence as its “critical” evaluation or articulation. In other words, Ricoeur stresses that language, in its articulating and mediating function, both discloses and encloses human experience seeking expression.

Without agreeing in the end with either de Saussure or Heidegger, Ricoeur uses, among other means, structuralism in criticizing any ontological hermeneutics that would be “too direct.” Understanding, that still remains Ricoeur’s goal, requires explanation, but Ricoeur maintains that explanation requires understanding too; interpretation as a whole consists of these two movements that form the full hermeneutical circle that in itself pertains to poetic disclosure. “The non-ostensive reference of the text is the kind of world opened up by the depth semantics of the text,” Ricoeur argues; “what we want to understand is not something hidden behind the text, but something disclosed in front of it.” The text, in other words, functions as an “explanation” only if it is “understood,” that is, when the text

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1416 Ricoeur 1986a, 29. (15).
1418 Ricoeur 1986a, 211. (167).
1419 Ricoeur 1986a, 208. (165).
itself is allowed to disclose a world for its reader, or to propose a world of possibilities with regard to the readers’ belongingness: “to understand a text is to follow its movement from sense to reference” – this is the very mediation between explanation and understanding.\footnote{Ricoeur 1986a, 208. (165).}

In short, explanation develops understanding, and understanding envelops explanation.\footnote{Ricoeur 1986a, 181. (142).}

Interpretation has to start with the objectivity of the text, but the appropriation of this objectivity, or explanation, is only opened up by understanding the disclosure of a world that is given by the text.

In sum, Ricoeur argues for a hermeneutic model that conjoins explanation and understanding rather than opposes or even separates them with each other. Heidegger’s flaw was to focus on understanding and set aside the critical moment of explanation that, nevertheless, grounds the whole of understanding. The conflict of interpretations is internal to interpretation itself, which, nevertheless, has the poetic function of disclosing a world of belonging. “Understanding,” Ricoeur maintains, “has less than ever to do with the author and his or her situatedness.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1986a, 209. (165).} Instead, the world opened up by the text is disclosed for its reader, who re-situates in the disclosed world which has then also become a world of possibilities. “It is always someone who receives, makes his or her own, appropriates the meaning for him or herself,” Ricoeur maintains, and adds that “if the subject is called upon to understand him or herself in front of the text, this is to the extent that the text is not closed upon itself but open unto the world, which it redescribes and remakes.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1986a, 168. (131-132).} Ricoeur’s
model of explanation-understanding, in other words, reiterates his conception of “tensional” poetics that also covers the sphere of human πράξης.\footnote{1424}

14.2 Poetic Work: from Discourse to Cultural Action

Even though Ricoeur’s analysis of the conditions for interpretation as explanation-understanding explicates Ricoeur’s idea of tensional poetics, as it restates his criticism on Heidegger, it only has a clarificatory function in the context of this dissertation that uses Heidegger simply as a point of comparison. What is most important for this current analysis of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture is his conviction that the model of explanation-understanding extends from texts and discourses to human action that in the final analysis is always cultural, thus including ethics as well as politics.\footnote{1425} “The theory of the text is but one of the ‘places’ where the present debate [about the dialectic between explanation and understanding] can be instructed,” Ricoeur argues in “Explanation and Understanding”; “the theory of action is another.”\footnote{1426} As he maintains elsewhere in From Text to Action, hermeneutics that in its primary sense means an examination of “the rules required for the interpretation of the written documents of our culture,”\footnote{1427} should therefore be broadened to cover the whole cultural sphere of action.

Making way for this new hermeneutic approach, Ricoeur refers in “Explanation and Understanding” to the pair of μύθος and μίμησις in Aristotle’s Poetics, and

\footnote{1424} Cf. Ricoeur 1975d, 399. (313).
\footnote{1427} Ricoeur 1986a, 183. (144).}
argues that some texts have action as their referent: “Poetry shows humans as acting, as in act.” In short, poetic discourse is about action, it takes action “as its reference, redescribes it, and remakes it.” In other words, Ricoeur locates an extension of the models of interpretation that focus only on texts in the intertwining of poetry about human action and human creativity as action manifested in poetry. This correlation then leads him to conclude that “an action, like a text, is an open work, addressed to an indefinite series of possible ‘readers.’” An action, Ricoeur argues, has meaning only when interpreted, that is, when the human work is worked on in interpretation.

Put differently, Ricoeur transposes the theme of explanation-understanding to the human order of living. For this reason I cannot agree with Margit Eckholt that “poetics and praxis stand in a dialectical relationship in Ricoeur’s cultural understanding.” In contrast to Eckholt’s reading, Ricoeur already maintains in his first preface to History and Truth that “saying and doing, signifying and making are intermingled to such an extent that it is impossible to set up a lasting and deep opposition between ‘theoria’ and ‘praxis.’” Ricoeur’s conclusion in the essay “Work and Word” (Travail et parole) in History and Truth is also unmistakably clear: “every human civilization will be both a civilization of work AND a civilization of the word.” According to the later Ricoeur, then, the practical extension of the explanation-understanding model of hermeneutics is necessitated by the fact that despite the connections at the level of poetic discourse, the linguistic approach proves to be insufficient for the full analysis of human situatedness, or for the “reflection on the

1428 Ricoeur 1986a, 175. (138). – Even though it could be expected, Ricoeur does not discuss speech acts in this context. One possible mediation between utterances and practical action is, however, performative discourse that is briefly analyzed in Oneself as Another. Ricoeur 1990, 56-60. (41-44).
1429 Ricoeur 1986a, 176. (138).
1430 Ricoeur 1986a, 175. (138).
1431 Eckholt 2002, 16.
1432 Ricoeur 1967a, 9. (5).
1433 Ricoeur 1967a, 233. (219).
The linguistic approach, in its limitedness, however, points to this level of “living experience” of a subject, at which the dialectic of explanation and understanding is encountered again: “Linguistic analysis quickly uncovers much more radical questions; what is the being that makes possible the double allegiance of motive to force and to sense, to nature and to culture, to βίος and λόγος? […] Human being is as it is precisely because it belongs both to the domain of causation and to that of motivation, hence to explanation and to understanding.” The notion of human reality as “in-between” life and its poetico-practical articulation shows the limits of linguistic approach by revealing a more foundational aspect of articulation as practical culture in general.

Even though Ricoeur makes this shift from the interpretation of texts to the interpretation of human action, he also argues that a connection remains when texts are approached from the side of action: “human action is in many respects a quasi-text; it is externalized in a manner comparable to the fixation characteristic of writing.” In addition, such externalized action has characteristics similar to a text: “In separating itself from its agent, action acquires an autonomy similar to the semantic autonomy of a text; it leaves a trace, a mark; it is inscribed in the course of things and becomes an archive, a document.”

In short, Ricoeur maintains that the hermeneutics of a living human subject, in his or her condition of being “in-between,” or being in the “mixed” quasi-discourse of life and its

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1434 Ricoeur 1986a, 181. (143).
1435 Ricoeur 1986a, 169-172. (133-135). – Ricoeur’s rare essay on human sexuality, “Sexualité: la marveille, l’errance, l’énigme” (1960), equates sexuality with non-lingual expressivity and claims that this practical action facilitates mutual recognition: “The essential conquest of this [contemporary] ethic of marriage is to have put into the forefront the value of sexuality as a language without words (comme langage sans parole), as an organ of mutual recognition (comme organe de reconnaissance mutuelle), and of mutual personalization – in brief, as expression.” Ricoeur 1967a, 201. (Ricoeur 1964, 135.)
1436 Ricoeur 1986a, 175. (137-138).
1437 Ricoeur 1986a, 175. (138).
articulation as action (in other words, belonging and distanciation) utilizes the explanation-understanding model in clarifying his or her own situation. The critical model of interpretation remains the same, whether one focuses on texts or actions.

This correlation between text and action is further clarified in “The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text.” The subtitle is misleading, as Ricoeur argues that all human action can be conceived as meaningful when it meets the condition of objectification that he correlates with “the fixing that occurs in writing” – this enables the readability of action. Like discourse that, according to Ricoeur, is 1) situated as an “instant of discourse,” 2) is self-referential, 3) actualizes the symbolic function of language, and in which 4) the exchange of messages, or communication, takes place, human action is a) an event that leaves a “trace,” b) ascribable to an agent or agents, c) can have (symbolic) importance beyond mere action-event and the social conditions of its production, and d) is “open” to constant reinterpretation and re-evaluation at the level of human praxis. In short, an action is also an appropriable “Aus-sage,” a “speaking out,” or an utterance of a human agent. In addition, a subject understands him or herself, therefore, in the action that arises from the motivational basis that is construed and “distanced” in that same event of action:

What seems to legitimate this extension of understanding the meaning of a text to understanding the meaning of an action is that in arguing about the meaning of an action I put my wants and my beliefs at a distance and submit them to a concrete dialectic of confrontation with opposite [sociocultural] points of view. This way of putting my action at a distance in order to make sense of my own motives paves the way for the kind of distanciation which occurs with what we called the social inscription of human action and to which we applied the metaphor of the “record.” The same actions that may be put into “records” and henceforth “recorded” may also be explained in different

1438 Ricoeur 1986a, 191. (151).
1440 Ricoeur 1986a, 190-197. (150-156).
1441 Ricoeur 1986a, 185-186. (146-147).
ways according to the plurivocity of the arguments applied to their motivational background.\textsuperscript{1442}

All human action, in other words, becomes meaningful in objectifying the acting person’s wants and beliefs and giving them a shape of a “record” that can then be explained (in a sociocultural sphere) as a correlate of this motivational basis: “the texture of action is transposed into a cultural text.”\textsuperscript{1443} Through this “putting at distance” as the very “fixing that occurs in writing,” and its corresponding modes of explaining, action also enables self-understanding. Ricoeur maintains that appropriation is self-interpretation, or understanding one’s self better.\textsuperscript{1444}

Such a personal “reading” of one’s action is, however, always cultural; Ricoeur already reminds us of this condition of appropriative interpretation in the essay “What is a Text?”. Even though the idea is implied by Ricoeur’s conceptions of \textit{Aus-sage}, of fixing, and of record, the essay brings the content of these concepts explicitly in connection with the “concrete reflection” that is at once about appropriation enabled by distanciation:

On the one hand, self-understanding passes through the detour of understanding the cultural signs in which the self documents and forms itself. On the other hand, understanding the text is not an end in itself; it mediates the relation to himself of a subject who, in the short circuit of immediate reflection, does not find the meaning of his own life. Thus it must be said, with equal force, that reflection is nothing without the mediation of signs and works, and that explanation is nothing if it is not incorporated as an intermediary stage in the process of self-understanding.\textsuperscript{1445}

The explication of being situated in a culture is a condition for self-understanding; the work of human works as action-discourse is the mediation of self-understanding. As Ricoeur summarizes elsewhere in \textit{From Text to Action}, “we understand ourselves only by the long

\textsuperscript{1442} Ricoeur 1986a, 204. (161).
\textsuperscript{1443} Ricoeur 1986a, 245. (195).
\textsuperscript{1444} Cf. Ricoeur 1986a, 152. (118).
\textsuperscript{1445} Ricoeur 1986a, 119. (118-119).
detour of the signs of humanity deposited in cultural works.” The “reading” of one’s action is grounded in this cultural distanciation.

The hermeneutical function of distanciation as practical action that objectifies itself in works is the externalizing part of mediation by which one begins to understand oneself differently. The mediation that deepens self-understanding relies, however, on the re-internalizing appropriation of the world – or, rather, its re-appropriation – that is disclosed by action-discourse, that is, of that “world of the work” in the light of which the seeing-oneself-differently, or the constitutive birth of the self, becomes possible. What is reappropriated is a proposed world or action that is revealed or discovered by the work. “To interpret is to explicate the type of being-in-the-world unfolded in front of the text [as a work],” Ricoeur argues, drawing us again close to comparing Ricoeur’s appropriative hermeneutics of human works – grounded in the model of explanation-understanding – to Heidegger’s hermeneutics. Despite the moment of distanciation, the self that is constituted by the disclosed world finds him or herself in this moment of reappropriation as being-in-that-proposed-world-of-possibilities.

The poetic function of human works correlates with the redescription and recreation of reality pertaining to the linguistic works; Ricoeur calls this a mode of distanciation that is the counterpart of reappropriation. As with fictional narratives and poetic language par excellence, “new possibilities of being-in-the-world are opened up within everyday reality.” In reappropriation, or “understanding at and through distance,” the everyday reality in its givenness is transfigured, so that the “modality of being-given” is

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1446 Ricoeur 1986a, 116. (87).
1447 Ricoeur 1986a, 117. (88).
1448 Ricoeur 1986a, 114. (86).
1449 Ricoeur 1986a, 115-116. (86-87).
1450 Ricoeur 1986a, 115. (86).
transposed or metamorphosed to that of “power-to-be.”\textsuperscript{1452} As Ricoeur maintains in his discussion with Charles E. Reagan, he keeps insisting that “what is ultimately important in the text and in the work of art in general is not the object which it depicts but the world that it generates.”\textsuperscript{1453} Heidegger expresses this unconcealment in \textit{The Origin of the Work of Art} in a manner that seemingly resembles that of Ricoeur: “It is due to art’s poetic nature that, in the midst of what is, art breaks open an open place, in whose openness everything is other than usual.”\textsuperscript{1454} Heidegger, however, discusses “the unconcealedness of what is, and that means, of Being,”\textsuperscript{1455} whereas Ricoeur focuses on the human subject who faces the task of understanding him or herself in the world lit up by the cultural work.

\textsuperscript{1452} Ricoeur 1986a, 115. (86).
\textsuperscript{1453} Ricoeur & Reagan 1996, 107.
\textsuperscript{1454} Heidegger 1977a, 59. (Heidegger 2001b, 70.)
\textsuperscript{1455} Heidegger 1977a, 59-60. (Heidegger 2001b, 70.) – Pol Vandevelde argues that in the \textit{Origin} “the world of things is the starting point of the investigation; […] things no longer represent an inauthentic background against which Dasein can understand itself, as was the case in \textit{Being and Time}.” (Vandevelde 2012, 129.) I maintain, however, that Heidegger explicitly renounces the level of things in the \textit{Origin} in order to highlight alethic \textit{Dichtung} as art’s poetizing “work.”

In the 1956 Addendum to the \textit{Origin}, Heidegger insists that the work moves deliberately “on the path of the question of the nature of Being.” Heidegger maintains that the \textit{Origin} concerns the Being-question rather than aesthetics in its modern sense that presupposes subject-object dichotomy: “Reflection on what \textit{art} may be is completely and decidedly determined only in regard to the question of \textit{Being}.” This \textit{Frage nach dem Sein} overcasts all other explications of the \textit{Origin} – it is the very \textit{origin} of the work of art and not a work of art which Heidegger is interested in. Still, the \textit{Origin} is also a reflection on what art is, even though this reflection remains open-ended; “what art may be is one of the questions to which no answers are given in the essay,” the Addendum states bluntly.

The earlier-written Epilogue that was added to the original 1935/36 lectures softens, however, the impression of Heidegger’s disinterest in the question of art itself. Even if the puzzle pertaining to art is far from resolved in the \textit{Origin}, Heidegger’s work has to do with “the riddle of art, the riddle that art itself is.” The question of the nature of art, Heidegger claims, is part of that puzzle. Consequently, Heidegger’s response to Hegel’s proposition that art remains for us “something past”—that art does not vividly speak of the formation of the Spirit anymore in the age of philosophy—is that the final judgment of the truth of Hegel’s claim will have to be postponed; art can perhaps still invigorate our existence. For all those who are influenced by Greek philosophy “there is concealed a peculiar confluence of beauty with truth,” Heidegger argues. For this reason, as Heidegger maintains elsewhere in the \textit{Origin}, “art lets truth originate.” Beauty, in other words, is not conceivable apart from the \textit{a-thesis} notion of truth, or truth as the dis-closure of what is. The truth Heidegger discusses in the \textit{Origin} is \textit{not adequatio}—the correspondence between mind and the objects of reality—but \textit{die Wahrhaftigkeit des Seins}, “the truth of Being.” The riddle, again, pertains to art that \textit{is}, but according to Heidegger’s Epilogue it is not wholly insignificant that it is \textit{art} that is.

Even though \textit{The Origin of the Work of Art} examines the notions of thing, work, truth, and art, it invites to recognize the poetic nature of all works of art. Heidegger’s distinction in the \textit{Origin} between poetry (\textit{Dichtung}) and poesy (\textit{Poesie}) even calls into question an affiliation between the poetics of being and a poetic work of art; Heidegger indicates that even art as a whole could not possibly exhaust the essence of poetry (\textit{Dichtung}) in the
Ricoeur could well agree with Heidegger’s statement that “production is possible only in objectification,” but not fully with Heidegger’s objection that “objectification, however, blocks us off against the Open.”¹⁴⁵⁶ For Ricoeur, the self, or the capable human being, is unreachable to the very end, but the process of beginning to understand the human condition rests on distanciation in the openness of otherness, that is, in the concomitant critical objectification and poetic disclosure in the mediations that are cultural works. “The metamorphosis of the world in the play [of la lecture or “reading”] is also the playful metamorphosis of the ego,” Ricoeur maintains, but “the metamorphosis of the ego implies a moment of distanciation in the relation of self to itself; hence understanding is as much disappropriation as appropriation.”¹⁴⁵⁷ In sum, therefore, the moment of cultural distanciation in works is a necessary condition for the understanding of one’s self, that is, for the birth of a self-accountable living subject.

¹⁴⁵⁶ Heidegger 1977a, 293-294. (Heidegger 2001d, 113.) – Heidegger also argues in his 1946 essay “What are poets for?” that a “self-assertive” human being is the “functionary of technology.” Heidegger criticizes the modern condition for closing the paths of disclosing the relation of Being to human (“By building the world up technologically as an object, man deliberately and completely blocks his path, already obstructed, into the Open.”), and conjoins objectification and production as a plague of the age of technology: “Not only does [a self-assertive subject] face the Open from outside it; he even turns his back upon the ‘pure draft’ by objectifying the world. Man sets himself apart from the pure draft. The man of the age of technology, by this parting, opposes himself to the Open. […] What is deadly is not the much-discussed atomic bomb as this particular dead-dealing machine. […] What threatens man in his very nature is the view that technological production puts the world in order, while in fact this ordering is precisely what levels every ordo, every rank, down to the uniformity of production, and thus from the outset destroys the realm from which any rank and recognition could possibly arise.” Heidegger 1977a, 293-295. (Heidegger 2001d, 113-115.)

14.3 Toward the Poetics of Sociocultural Action

In contrast to Heidegger’s suspicion of culture – explicated in his criticism of *Machenschaft* or modern technological production\(^{1458}\) – we have seen that the notion of cultural work is crucial for Ricoeur’s philosophy of the poetic. Even though the discussion in this dissertation has seemingly moved away from the “signs of being human” to the question of language, and from the “highly expressive” works of art and literature to the dialectic of “mixed discourses,” the notion of *les œuvres de l’esprit* is now even more relevant than in the previous chapters of this work. As seen above, articulation extends from texts to human action. In short, then: the human works are meaningful objects necessary for a subject’s constitution in reflection. “I find myself only by losing myself,” Ricoeur summarizes this necessity of objectification for subjectification.\(^{1459}\)

The works of art and literature, for example, as (quasi-)material works in the world of objects function as indications of human capabilities. The earlier discussion of λόγος and the universality of meaning, as well as the recent discussion of reappropriation, point out, however, that the capability to signify, or to give a personally pertinent existential meaning to these works in their “reading,” is even more significant. As Ricoeur puts it in “What is a Text?”: “In hermeneutical reflection – or in reflective hermeneutics – the constitution of the *self* is contemporaneous with the constitution of *meaning*.\(^{1460}\) This opening has led us to the realm of the proper works of the mind: to the realm of

\(^{1459}\) Ricoeur 1986a, 117. (88).
\(^{1460}\) Ricoeur 1986a, 152. (119).
communication, discursive action, the poetic discovery of the possible, and finally to reflection, or to “reappropriating the act of existing” that we deploy in works.\textsuperscript{1461}

Admittedly, the works of human \textit{esprit} are poetic because they create the possible by discovering it in the dual act of distanciation-appropriation. “To understand a poem,” or to reflect the richness of a poem’s meanings, is to “rediscover the spirit of the song beneath the text which leads divination from here to there.”\textsuperscript{1462} According to Ricoeur, however, this revealing rediscovery is only possible in interpretation lit up by the speculative, and only as such roots a person to being by articulating this belongingness: “reflection must become [poetico-speculative] interpretation because I cannot grasp the act of existing except in signs scattered in the world.”\textsuperscript{1463} Ricoeur maintains that human understanding is always necessarily mediated in the human works as signs.

A cultural sign – a poem, an institution, or a cellphone\textsuperscript{1464} – that conveys a meaning as based on human work is enriched by another work of the human mind that enlivens it by articulating its significance to a person’s existence in his or her hereness and to his or her self-understanding as a capable human being; this is the essence of appropriation for Ricoeur. Heidegger, in contrast, holds another opinion. All the merits due to cultural building (\textit{bauen}), “all the works made by man’s hands and through his arrangements,” can,

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{1461} Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (46).
\item \textsuperscript{1462} Ricoeur 1949, 380-381. (405). – Ricoeur’s essay “The Nuptial Metaphor” in \textit{Thinking Biblically} is also worth reading for; it analyzes the Song of Songs as a metaphorical interplay in which the figures of love, both immanent and transcendent, refer to one another. Cf. Ricoeur & LaCocque 1998, 411-457. (265-303).
\item \textsuperscript{1463} Ricoeur 1965a, 54. (46). Italics added.
\item \textsuperscript{1464} A quite recent work \textit{Evocative Objects: Things We Think With}, edited by Sherry Turkle, is an unusual but illuminating approach to the notion of objects: it is a series of studies from the point of view of active partnership with everyday objects. (Cf. Turkle 2007.) Although stressing the side of technology, David M. Kaplan’s essay “Thing Hermeneutics” refers to \textit{Evocative Objects}, and discusses whether Ricoeur’s hermeneutics could be expanded to cover the human-technology relations from the viewpoint of (technological) artifacts. From my own viewpoint that emphasizes cultural objectivity this “extension” is most certainly possible. Kaplan 2011, 234-240.
\end{footnotes}
according to him, “never fill out the nature of [poetic] dwelling (wohnen).” Ricoeur, for his part, argues that “dwelling” in the Open of saying and naming is not a level of being that is in any way separable from “building”; building is the struggle of dwelling. There is no “real sense of bauen, namely dwelling,” as Heidegger claims, that would have “fallen into oblivion.” Following Ricoeur, building is dwelling, but not in a manner Heidegger proposes when he emptied building “in its original sense” into more foundational dwelling. “We are dwellers,” Heidegger maintains, but Ricoeur could respond by using Heidegger’s own words: we are builders who “must ever learn to dwell,” who must ever search anew the meaning of their building.

Retrieving meaning, Ricoeur points out, is a struggle, it remains a task: “One of the aims of all hermeneutics is to struggle against cultural distance, […] making one’s own what was initially alienated.” The moment of disappropriation accompanies reappropriation, and it is a task for a human subject to “gather” him or herself again, to put him or herself together again, to be born again as a renewed self, amidst of all cultural objects with and among which a subject lives his or her life.

In sum, then, I argue that the unceasing art of interpreting the cultural signs is the ultimate work of the mind that continuously knits together the internal and the external, the speculative and the poetic, and the meaning and the world, while delicately voicing a person’s existence to him or herself as being-in-the-world, and communicating the mode of his or her existence as a capable human being. This poetico-speculative disclosure, I maintain, is the most authentic oeuvre de l’esprit that Ricoeur’s philosophy brings forth:

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1465 Heidegger 2000, 193-196, 206. (Heidegger 2001c, 213-216, 225.)
1466 Heidegger 2000, 148-150. (Heidegger 2001a, 144-146.)
1467 Heidegger 2000, 150. (Heidegger 2001a, 146.)
1468 Heidegger 2000, 163. (Heidegger 2001a, 159.)
1469 Ricoeur 1986a, 153. (119.)
Revelation in Interpretation, or, put differently, the work of reappropriating a world of action in the appropriative “reading” of cultural works as “texts.” In contrast to Heidegger’s ontological conception of ἐργον, in which Being is at its poetic work, and which portrays cultural objectivity and “building” as a threat for comprehending poetic “dwelling” as the disclosure of the truth of be-ing,1470 the reflective work of interpretation Ricoeur describes –

1470 Heidegger’s definition of work in The Origin of the Work of Art, for example, is rooted in his conception of the advent (or be-coming, ad-ventus) of the truth of Being. The mediating term between this be-coming as ἀλήθης appearing - in which the beautiful lies according to Heidegger - and actuality understood as reality, and furthermore as experienced objectivity, is ἐργον, work, which is. The work, in other words, dwells between Being and beings. The work, “in the manner of ἐκβάλλειν,” or efficient activity, is the appearance of truth as ἀλήθης in the mode of truth setting itself into the work. “Appearance (das Erscheinen) - as this being of truth in the work and as work - is beauty,” Heidegger summarizes.

Put differently, beauty is the appearance of truth setting itself into the work. In this sense, Heidegger argues, in the Epilogue, “the beautiful belongs to the advent of truth.” To analyze this becoming (das Sichereignen) of the truth of Being as his grounding question, Heidegger’s leading problem is therefore “to bring to view this work-character of the work.” The Epilogue argues that the Origin concerns not only an origin, but in particular the origin of the work of art.

Heidegger’s journey in the Origin through the notions of thing, work, truth, and art invites us to notice the poetic nature of all works of art. It is feasible to maintain that the Origin is more poetics than aesthetics of being, that is, it concerns more expressing Being than art and beauty. In the end, therefore, I argue that Heidegger’s conception of the work of art as work remains trivial. Instead of ἐργον, the essence of Heidegger’s thoughts on work lays in ἐκβάλλειν, or the effectuous mode of presence. As Michail Pantoulias also points out, it is “the ἐκβάλλειν of ἐργον” that is in Heidegger’s focus: “Das aristotelische Wort ἐκβάλλειν bezeichnet eben diesen aktivischen Zustand: dass man am Werk ist, weswegen es am häufigsten im Dativ vorkommt (ἐκβάλλειν).” According to Heidegger, “to be a work means to set up a world,” and “the work as work, in its presencing, is a setting forth.” Heidegger’s interest is directed to the duality of aufstellen and herstellen, in the light of which the notion of work as a work loses its immanent value. The secondariness of the notion is also indicated in that the notion of striving (Streit) - which arises from this duality of setting up and setting forth - replaces the notion of work; the work is “striving the strife” (Besetzung des Streits) to set up and set forth, that is, to let truth happen in this striving “in which the unconcealedness of beings as a whole, or truth, is won.” (Heidegger 1977a, 30, 31, 36, 42, 69. (Heidegger 2001b, 43-44, 48, 54, 79.); Pantoulias 2011, 154-158.)

In sum, I maintain that Heidegger does not fully elaborate the notion of work as a work, because he understands, for example, an art work to be at work only when it maintains the function of dis-closing the becoming of the truth of Being as essentially onto-poetic dwelling (ποιησις); it is not the thingly character of a work but dwelling as precensing that Heidegger stresses. I admit, however, that Pol Vandevelde, for example, complements this remark by pointing out in his own analysis that Heidegger was not completely dismissive of labor (Arbeit). In his 1933 address to German students (“Der deutsche Student als Arbeiter”) Heidegger defines labor as a determination of the “happening” of becoming a self: “As worker the human being is brought out and set in the manifestness of beings and of their joinings.” According to Vandevelde’s analysis, labor is thus a mode of social articulation: “The labor we perform decides the manner in which we assume our being as a people. Labor is the setting into work of a people through which we resolve ourselves toward our identity.” Labor, therefore, has its main function as revealing the historicity of being-here; it is the “setting into work of the happening” that as “an articulating comportment brings together the [historically manifested (Überlieferung) ontological] situatedness and the understanding.”

As Vandevelde then argues, “although history is made through the labor of human beings, history is not in their hands, for human beings are only one of the parameters of the happening.” Moreover, Heidegger shifts his position when turning to his 1934-1935 lecture course on Hölderlin – poetry “takes over the role of labor.”
a true ἔργον τοῦ ἄνθρωπον\textsuperscript{1471} – grounds the person as a capable human being in giving him or her in poetico-speculative articulation a cultural horizon of humanity within which existential reappropriation exults.

To restate, after *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur emphasizes the role of the active “reader,” or the role of an experiencing subject, who interprets his own being while expressing it in action – actions are “interpreters of conduct”\textsuperscript{1472} – and consequently considers the subject’s own life as a text that opens a redescribed world.\textsuperscript{1473} The extended analyzes of human action in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* that include a discussion of understanding and explanation of action – as a subject’s action “in the world ‘through’ his body”\textsuperscript{1474} – are then reformulated in Ricoeur’s later philosophy.\textsuperscript{1475} “It is to the extent to which the entire world [of action] is a vast extension of our body as pure fact that it is itself the terminus of our consent,”\textsuperscript{1476} Ricoeur argues in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, implying that self-recognition and self-understanding become possible only if one acts and brings his or her “project” to the world while confronting it at the same time. “Moving and consenting means confronting reality with the entire body to seek expression and realization in it; […] this is an engagement in being.”\textsuperscript{1477} Only in this dialectic of effort and consent that is manifested in practical action and then reappropriated, does a subject gain a notion of him

\textsuperscript{1472} Ricoeur 1986a, 244-245. (194-195).
\textsuperscript{1473} Ricoeur 1990, 180-193. (152-163).
\textsuperscript{1474} Ricoeur 1949, 212. (226).
\textsuperscript{1475} Ricoeur admits the connection between *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* and *From Text to Action* in his 1990 interview with Charles E. Reagan: “If I [in *From Text to Action*] extend linguistics from the theory of the text, written language, to the problem of action, in a sense, it comes full circle, since I started with *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, which was already a kind of theory of action in a phenomenological mode. So I return to my starting point.” Ricoeur & Reagan 1996, 117.
\textsuperscript{1476} Ricoeur 1949, 321. (343).
\textsuperscript{1477} Ricoeur 1949, 323. (345).
or herself as a person capable of action in this engagement in being – my self, my
personhood, is available to me only in the reflective “reading” of it in a concrete situation.

This poetic aspect of human πράξις is what From Text to Action discusses and
clarifies to a greater extent. Taking further distance from Heidegger’s poetics of being,
Ricoeur argues in “Imagination in Discourse and in Action” that “a step is taken in the
direction of the poetics of the will; [namely,] the step from theory to practice.”1478 The essay
does not, however, restrict itself only to the question of applying semantic innovation to
action that redescribes reality and in turn gives the “I can,” as it extends to the field of
intersubjective action and social imaginary. As later in his reply to Joseph Bien, Ricoeur
maintains that the “point-source of all the resources of a capable human being” is the public
space; these resources “can be realized only within the πόλις.”1479 By now stressing the social
sphere, Ricoeur does not, however, cut himself off from his earlier arguments.

Ricoeur’s reply to Charles E. Reagan confirms that the inclusion of social
sphere of action is in a direct continuity with his early poetics of will: “Charles Reagan has
no difficulty showing that what is involved is less a change of front than a shift of emphasis,
to the extent that the philosophy of will was already at its inception a philosophy of action,
with the twofold stipulation that the role of social institutions was not considered and, by the
same token, the public character of action was not stressed.”1480 This later extension to social

1478 Ricoeur 1986a, 213. (168). – In contrast to Ricoeur, Heidegger holds poetic language always as primary
articulation. For example, in his 1936 essay Höllderlin and the Essence of Poetry Heidegger argues that the priority
given to language rests on its task of making beings manifest and preserving them: “language (Sprache) [as
conversation (Gespräch)] first grants the possibility of standing in the midst of the openness of beings.” For
Heidegger, language is thus “the highest event of human existence” as “human existence is ‘poetic’ (dichterisch)
in its ground.” Heidegger points out, therefore, that for the above reason a mere cultural approach to poetics is
undeniably insufficient - even though “poetry is the primal language of a historical people,” the poetic dwelling
is the most grounding, and not cultural “building” or appearing; “poetry is the sustaining ground of history, and
therefore not just an appearance of culture (eine Erscheinung der Kultur), above all not the mere ‘expression’ of the


1480 Ricoeur 1995f, 346.
imagery through its criticism is unavoidable in terms of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture as it finds the constituting role of social practices in questioning them. Heidegger, in contrast, does not hold the socio-practical aspect as central to his conception of the poetics of being.

Arguing further in “Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity” that empathy (Einfühlung) grounded in the productive imagination results in “pairing” (Paarung) of a subject’s field of historical existence with those fields that belong to other selves similar to the first person experience, Ricoeur maintains that this “transfer through imagination of my ‘here’ into ‘there’” constitutes intersubjectivity as analogical apperception. As Ricoeur maintains in “Imagination in Discourse and in Action,” an understanding of this “analogical tie that makes every human being like myself” is, however, only enabled by the critical detour of certain “imaginative practices” such as ideology and utopia. Following

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1481 Even though I maintain that Ricoeur’s focus is on cultural imagination that is discussed in the following pages in this dissertation, let me briefly clarify the notion of social imagination by using Charles Taylor’s essay “What Is a ‘Social Imaginary?’” Taylor maintains, much like Ricoeur, that poetic forces, in the social mode, guide human operation even before any theorizing about it, because social imagery functions as the common platform that facilitates common practices and the shared sense of their legitimacy. In addition, Taylor’s essay clarifies why the etho-poetic nucleus, of which Ricoeur discusses, remains hidden: “By social imaginary, I mean something much broader and deeper than the intellectual schemes people may entertain when they think about social reality in a disengaged mode. I am thinking, rather, of the ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations. […] Our social imaginary at any given time is complex. It incorporates a sense of the normal expectations we have of each other, the kind of common understanding that enables us to carry out the collective practices that make up our social life. This incorporates some sense of how we all fit together in carrying out the common practice. Such understanding is both factual and normative; that is, we have a sense of how things usually go, but this is interwoven with an idea of how they ought to go, of what missteps would invalidate the practice. […] What I’m calling the social imaginary extends beyond the immediate background understanding that makes sense of our particular practices. This is not an arbitrary extension of the concept, because just as the practice without the understanding wouldn’t make sense for us and this wouldn’t be possible, so this understanding supposes, if it is to make sense, a wider grasp of our whole predicament: how we stand to each other, how we got to where we are, how we relate to other groups, and so on. This wider grasp has no clear limits. That’s the very nature of what contemporary philosophers [such as Hubert Dreyfus and John Searle] have described as the ‘background.’ It is in fact that largely unstructured and inarticulate understanding of our whole situation, within which particular features of our world show up for us in the form of explicit doctrines because of its unlimited and indefinite nature. That is another reason for speaking here of an imaginary and not a theory.” C. Taylor 2004, 23-25.


1483 Ricoeur 1986a, 228-229. (181).
Cornelius Castoriadis, Ricoeur maintains that social imagery is a part of the function of productive imagination, but recognizing its “pairing function” requires critical evaluation that is possible only in form of ideology critique – by which he means an interpretation that admits of cultural and historical situatedness in the reinterpretation of one’s cultural heritage.

Ricoeur holds that social imagery itself is mediated, but recognizing its pertinence requires another, critical mediation that is based on the Cassirerian notion that “society is an effect of symbolism.” Any social group, Ricoeur maintains in “Imagination in Discourse and in Action,” forms itself or gathers itself around an ideological image it has given as a constantly re-interpretable and thus self-maintaining representation of itself:

The emerging pathology of the phenomenon of ideology comes from its very function of reinforcing and repeating the social tie in situations that are after-the-fact. Simplification, schematization, stereotyping, and ritualization arise out of a distance that never ceases to grow between real practice and the interpretations through which the group becomes conscious of its existence and its practice. A certain lack of transparence of our cultural codes indeed seems to be the condition for the production of social messages.

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1484 Ricoeur & Kemp 1981, 163-164.
1485 Cf. Ricoeur 1986a, 306. (248). – Despite utilizing the term “critique of ideology” that is commonly related to the Frankfurt school, Ricoeur refers to Karl Mannheim’s 1929 work Ideologie und Utopie. George H. Taylor, in his introduction to Ricoeur’s Lectures on Ideology and Utopia, maintains that Ricoeur critically expounds Mannheim’s idea that ideology and utopia belong to a common conceptual framework. (G. H. Taylor 1986, xv-xvi, xx-xxiii). Ricoeur, who in his own introduction in Lectures on Ideology and Utopia acknowledges his indebtedness to Mannheim (Ricoeur 1986b, 2-3, 8-9, 312-314.), both refers and alludes to the Frankfurt school (that remained critical of Mannheim’s sociology of knowledge as a science with its own presuppositions, i.e., its own ideology) in many of his essays in From Text to Action. The most concise discussion of it can be found in the essay “Hermeneutics and the Critique of Ideology” that models and also surpasses the Gadamer-Habermas debate. (Ricoeur 1986a, 333-377. (270-307)). Cf. Ricoeur’s essays on Mannheim and Habermas in Lectures on Ideology and Utopia, as well as Ricoeur’s “Note on the History of Philosophy and the Sociology of Knowledge” in History and Truth that discusses the legitimacy and the limitations of the sociology of knowledge in general. (Ricoeur 1986b, 159-180, 216-253, 269-284; Ricoeur 1967a, 60-65. (57-62)). Ricoeur’s late presentation at the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (2002), and the subsequent essay “Que la science s’inscrit dans la culture comme ‘pratique théorique’” relates to these other texts as it discusses “the cultural values of science,” and especially science as an epistemic project in the Western culture (or “the project of the instauration of the épistémé”) that has been affected and has had an effect on other cultural practices, such as politics and ethics. Cf. Ricoeur 2003.; Brown 1978, 56-57.
1486 Ricoeur 1986a, 230. (182).
Put differently, Ricoeur argues that the ideology of a social group as its lived identity is constantly formed in a “reading” of it in social practices in such a manner that enforces this adopted social coherence “in which men live and think.”

Culture, yet another mediation in itself, is the contextual platform of these practices that are then uncritically interpreted from an ideological point of view.

Ricoeur complexifies this analysis of the culturally situated social bond, however, by contrasting ideology with utopia, thus reformulating the idea of “tensional” poetics. Utopia, as “the imaginary project of another society, of another reality,” has the function of contesting the experienced and lived social reality, that is, of introducing possibility into social imagery. In contrast to an ideology, or integration, that “operates behind our backs, rather than appearing as a theme before our eyes,” a utopia, or otherness, unveils the social condition from the point of view of “a hermeneutics of the being-able-to-be (pouvoir être)” – for this reason Ricoeur places the dialectics of ideology and utopia in the realm of cultural imagination: “the labyrinth of [social] relations [through cultural expressions] is cultural imagination.”

Following Ricoeur, a utopia is then not pure otherness but a mode of rethinking and redescribing social relations; it is “the exact counterpart of our initial concept of ideology, considered a function of social integration; […] it performs the function of

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1488 Ricoeur 1986a, 308-309. (251).
1489 Ricoeur 1986a, 231. (183).
1490 Ricoeur 1986a, 309. (251).
1491 Ricoeur 1986a, 369. (300).
1492 Ricoeur 1976c, 51. – Ricoeur is very explicit in his use of the term “cultural imagination”: “Je voudrais placer cette dialectique [de l'idéologie et de l'utopie] dans le cadre conceptuel d'une théorie de l'imagination culturelle, dont la tâche serait de rendre compte aussi bien de la polarité entre utopie et idéologie que des ambiguïtés propres à chacun des termes. Le paradoxe du problème est en effet que chaque terme déploie un éventail de fonctions et de rôles, s'étendant d'un pole constituant à un pole quasi pathologique. C'est la tâche d'une herméneutique de l'imagination dans ses expressions culturelles de débrouiller les fils qui reliant les expressions constitutantes et les expressions déformantes de l'une avec les formes constitutantes et déformantes de l'autre. Ce labyrinthe de relations est l'imagination culturelle.” Cf. Ricoeur 1986a, 379. (308); Ricoeur 1986b, 1, 3, 323.n1.
social subversion." In contrast to instrumentalized ideologies for the sake of maintaining social coherence and structure, these are comparable to the "is" of a poetic image, utopias maintain the social imagery open to an "other" that introduces a possible variation and redescription of social reality; they function as the "is not" of social images. This social transfiguration in the dialectic of adopted ideology and proposed utopia (as a critique of ideology), or the dialectic of "is" and "is not," I conclude, restates the tensional poétique de l'être et de la volonté dans l'être at the level of sociocultural practices.

This sociocultural poetics reiterates the tensions between the lived life and critical thought, βίος and λόγος, or necessity and possibility, but one of its major results is, again, to open up the notion of belonging. The sense of belonging is achievable only through the critical detour in which a utopia points out the condition of being situated in a history, a tradition, an ideology, or, in a word, in culture. This knowledge of belonging, that cannot be totally reflected – it is not completely comprehensible at the level of description – remains utterly mute and silent unless an opening to the other is first made under the notion of "other." Still, following Ricoeur's essay "Science and Ideology," I argue that the ultimate function of sociocultural poetics, which includes the moments of contestation and redescription, is to reveal this condition of belonging in distanciation:

All objectifying knowledge about our position is society, in a social class, in a cultural tradition, and in history is preceded by a relation of belonging upon which we can never entirely reflect. Before any critical distance, we belong to a history, to a class, to a nation, to a culture, to one or several traditions. In accepting this belonging that precedes and supports us, we accept the very first role of ideology, that which we have described as the mediating function of the image, the self-representation. Through the mediating function, we also participate in the other functions of ideology, those of dissimulation and

1493 Ricoeur 1986a, 232. (184); Ricoeur 1986b, 16-17.
distortion. But we now know that the ontological condition of preunderstanding excludes the total reflection that would put us in the advantageous position of nonideological knowledge.\footnote{1497 Ricoeur 1986a, 328. (267).} The muteness of ideological preunderstanding can be surpassed in the critical distance of utopia, Ricoeur maintains, but the very condition of cultural belonging is what is revealed by this distance. In fact, Ricoeur speaks of this opening up of a cultural world of belonging as the “correct usage” of the critique of ideology; it is as necessary as it is an unceasing task, a process that will always have to begin anew.\footnote{1498 Ricoeur 1986a, 330-331. (269).}

This constant beginning anew of cultural hermeneutics is not trivial in any respect; it is the most grounding task one could think of in the modern context of thought. “Nothing is more necessary today than to renounce the arrogance of critique,” Ricoeur insists elsewhere in \textit{From Text to Action}; “to carry on with patience the endless work of distancing and renewing our [ethico-]historical substance.”\footnote{1499 Ricoeur 1986a, 331. (269).} Understanding the \textit{Da} of \textit{Dasein} is, as I have already stressed, enabled only indirectly in the postcritical reappropriation. Heidegger’s fault, Ricoeur restates, was to commit to a “forestructure of understanding” \textit{(Vorstruktur des Verstehens)}\footnote{1500 Heidegger 1967, 148-153. (139-144). Cf. Vandevenlede 2012, 86-87.} so completely that he did not consider the options that would be opened by this postcritical moment; Heidegger emphasized the movement from epistemology to the ontological forestructure of understanding, and not the way back to the level of epistemology. “This is unfortunate,” Ricoeur maintains, “since it is on the return route that hermeneutics is likely to encounter critique, in particular the critique of ideology.”\footnote{1501 Ricoeur 1986a, 341-342. (276-277). Cf. Ricoeur 1986a, 363-364. (295-296).} Only the route of postcritical hermeneutics, Ricoeur holds, gives a full understanding of \textit{Da} or belongingness. Following the critical moment of de-construction,
“re-construction is the path of understanding,” Ricoeur maintains – all this is summed up in Ricoeur’s concept of “cultural imagination.” In short, *l’imaginaire culturel* as the basis for a sociocultural poetics of practical action is a condition for the birth of a situated subject in the fullness of *Da.*

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1502 Ricoeur 1986a, 368. (299).
15. Etho-poetics: the Essence of Cultural Existence

15.1 Appropriated Identity and the Ethics of Narrations

As argued in the previous chapter, the poetic pertains to social action. This expansion to the social realm is, however, only an intermediate phase of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics that ultimately assumes a particularly ethico-political sense. As for Kant and Hegel, there is for Ricoeur a continuity from “individual capacities for action to social capacities for collective action,” but also from social agency to social responsibility. To use Ricoeur’s words from *Time and Narrative I*, “poetics does not stop borrowing from ethics.” Action, Ricoeur argues, is not only always symbolically mediated, but also originally ethical.

Put differently, the foundational nucleus of culture is both mytho-poetic and ethical as Ricoeur maintains in “Universal Civilization and National Cultures”: “what I shall call for the time being the creative nucleus of great civilizations and great cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret life, I shall call in advance the ethical and mythical nucleus of humanity.” This “nucleus,” however, has to be understood in a broad ethopoetic sense. Ricoeur’s another essay from the 1960s, “The Tasks of the Political Educator,” emphasizes that this “ethical singularity which is a power of creation linked to a tradition, to a memory, to an archaic rooting” is best described as “an *ήθος*” that is “the concrete heart of civilization.” Poetics, according to Ricoeur, therefore includes an originating ethotic (*ήθος*)

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1505 Kaplan 2010, 112. – Later in the same article Kaplan rephrases his position: “In *The Course of Recognition*, Ricoeur uses the idea of social capabilities as a transitional concept to link the epistemological sense of recognition to its moral-political sense.” (Kaplan 2010, 117.) Kaplan is correct in his reading, but a reservation will have to be made in terms of understanding the role of a society. As Ricoeur argues in *Oneself as Another*, “society is always more than the sum of its members,” by which he means that the societal structuring or institution surpasses individuals as a condition of their individuality. Ricoeur affirms, however, continuity between individual, interpersonal, and societal levels of life. Ricoeur 1990, 233-234. (200-201).


1508 Ricoeur 1965c, 85. (Ricoeur 1974, 281.)
perspective.\textsuperscript{1509} This foundational etho-poetic “nucleus,” however, will have to be distinguished from the social and practical “ethico-political horizon” that, according to Johann Michel, remains the ultimate end of Ricoeur’s practical philosophy.\textsuperscript{1510} To reiterate, the distinction that I will hold in this chapter differentiates between the hidden etho-poetic nucleus and its ethico-political manifestations in a culture.

My intention, I should point out, is not to discuss Ricoeur’s ethics, but its cultural hermeneutic presuppositions and implications instead; my interest is in clarifying the conditions of the “ethico-cultural order” Ricoeur already mentions in \textit{History and Truth}.\textsuperscript{1511} As this part four has approached the issue at the level of poetics, using Martin Heidegger’s hermeneutics as a point of contrast, I will follow this path to its end. This decision will, nevertheless, eventually lead us to open the question of Ricoeur’s political thought as well. The political renewal of society was not a foreign idea to him as demonstrated, for example, by his co-signing the pamphlet “Faire une nouvelle société” in May 22, 1968 at the heat of the student revolts and workers’ strikes.\textsuperscript{1512} Ricoeur’s texts witness, Adriaan Peperzak points out, that for Ricoeur ethics is “never isolated from the basic questions of society and politics.”\textsuperscript{1513} Ricoeur does not, therefore, consider ethics as a secluded realm of life, but connects it with “the existential, social, political, cultural, religious, and historical conditions” of the “actual situation” of a living, acting, and suffering subject.\textsuperscript{1514} The human utopias are

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\item[1509] Cf. my explanation of the adjective “ethotic” in the beginning of part four of this dissertation.
\item[1510] Michel 2006, 285, 295-296, 351, 353. – Michel’s comprehensive analysis of Ricoeur’s understanding of tensive ethico-political practices focuses on “the moral dilemmas,” “the political paradoxes,” “the conflicts of justice,” and “the ambivalences of law.” Michel calls these the “normative philosophy of Paul Ricoeur,” and maintains that this philosophy mediates between Ricoeur’s philosophical anthropology and his hermeneutic of social sciences. Michel 2006, 289-467.
\item[1512] Ricoeur & alii 1968.
\item[1514] Peperzak 2010, 18.
\end{footnotes}
brought about by cultural-political means, Mauricio Beuchot summarizes Ricoeur’s line of thought.\textsuperscript{1515} Ricoeur’s inclusion of these practical aspects of \(\text{ποίησις}\), or his \textit{etho-poetics} as I call it,\textsuperscript{1516} further distances Ricoeur from Heidegger, who does not insist on the importance of ethical or political aspects but criticizes them instead – as he did with regard to the notion of culture.

After already being suspicious about ethics in \textit{Being and Time},\textsuperscript{1517} the end of Heidegger’s \textit{Letter on Humanism} (1946) – in which he presents poetic dwelling by using the metaphor of “the house of Being in whose home man dwells”\textsuperscript{1518} – addresses the question of possibly writing “an ethics” as Heidegger was asked to do by his “young friend.”\textsuperscript{1519} Heidegger maintains that ethics, as all disciplined modes of thought such as logic, physics, and ontology, is a waned and withered mode of thinking.\textsuperscript{1520} The more foundational thinking Heidegger himself is after “inquires into the truth of Being,” and is therefore “neither ethics nor ontology; thus the question about the relation of each to the other no longer has any basis in this sphere.”\textsuperscript{1521} Put differently, Heidegger argues that ethics, even as \(\text{ήθος}\), is not

\textsuperscript{1515}Cf. Beuchot 1992, 137-141.
\textsuperscript{1516}The term “etho-poetics” converges but is not equivalent with Michel Foucault’s similar term that finds its first expression in the analysis of sexual experience. Even though Michel Pawel Markowski states that Ricoeur and Foucault theorized against each other (Markowski 2003.), both Ricoeur and Foucault, however, ground subjectivity in the \(\text{ήθος}\) of human \(\text{πραξις}\) that also finds a firm connection between ethics and politics. (Cf. Rajchman 1986, 167-170.) I should mention, in addition, that Kelton Cobb opens the question of ethics with the notion of \(\text{ήθος}\) when applying Ricoeur’s hermeneutics in his analysis of a theology of culture. Cobb draws this notion from Paul Tillich, however, thus limiting the scope of analysis to the ethical and does not, therefore, consider the political: “Ethics is the science of ethos.” According to Cobb, Ricoeur’s contribution was to clarify this ethical expression of \(\text{ήθος}.\) Cobb 1994, 52-58, 348-350, 358, 441-442, 449-450, 463.
\textsuperscript{1517}Heidegger 1967, 16. (14).
\textsuperscript{1518}Heidegger 1976, 313, 358-362. (Heidegger 1977b, 193, 236-239.)
\textsuperscript{1519}Heidegger 1976, 353. (Heidegger 1977b, 231.)
\textsuperscript{1520}Heidegger 1976, 353-357. (Heidegger 1977b, 232-235.)
\textsuperscript{1521}Heidegger 1976, 357-358. (Heidegger 1977b, 235-236.)
rigorous enough for him as thinking that thinks be-ing; instead, ethics leads to ontic error.\textsuperscript{1522} Ricoeur, on the other hand, could not disagree more.

Ricoeur’s etho-poetic understanding leads me to argue that his poetics is post-Heideggerian in the sense Ricoeur himself describes it in the essay “Phenomenology and Hermeneutics”; even though it is a philosophy “with” Heidegger, it is still pursued in the mode of “after” him.\textsuperscript{1523} Ricoeur’s notion of originating poetics correlates with that of Heidegger, but its essential extension to ethico-practically expressed \( \text{"éthos"} \) shows the limit of Heidegger’s project. In contrast to Ricoeur’s poetics that includes ethics, it is indeed a too “short path” to be-ing as it dismisses the concrete human experience of social existence that reflects ethicality and politicality already in the form of living under social commandments.

The inclusion of this ethico-practical \( \text{"éthos"} \), which also includes the political aspect of \( \pi\nu\alpha\xi\zeta\varsigma \), not only directs Ricoeur’s poetics to another course compared with Heidegger’s, but also clarifies the importance of cultural hermeneutics. As Ricoeur holds already in \textit{The Voluntary and the Involuntary}, a society, or our primordial “with-being,” has a function only if it has a presence in the individual consciousness through social imperatives, which are impressed in it “in an original affectivity” (\textit{une affectivité originale}). Ricoeur mentions that there is “a specific fear or respect” which guides us towards “a sense of

\textsuperscript{1522} The closest Heidegger comes to ethics in the realm of poetics is in the 1951 text “…Poetically Man Dwells…,” at the end of which he alludes to “kindness” (\textit{die Freundlichkeit}) which, however, is not ethical but concerns the poetic becoming of be-ing. As long as the arrival of this kindness “stays with man’s heart,” a human being is able to “measure himself not unhappily against the godhead.” Heidegger means that a human being dwells authentically, or “humanly on this earth,” only if he remains “heedful” of the poetic, that is, the poetic is appropriated according to its measure as the “original admission of dwelling.” Heidegger’s interests lay, therefore, firmly in the being-question as indicated by his earlier texts; ethics, in other words, is not a question in his poetics of being. Heidegger 2000, 206-208. (Heidegger 2001c, 225-227.)

\textsuperscript{1523} Ricoeur 1986a, 39. (25).
commandments.”

The main idea here is that this original affectivity relates to the Other, that is, to a presence that surpasses my individual being:

What, then, is the affectivity in terms of which consciousness becomes sensitive to social imperatives? The great affective transformation is the encounter with something superior, with a transcendence, not only in the improper, horizontal sense of an alternative alongside me, but also in the proper, vertical sense of an authority above me.

The social requires an ideal transcendence as its governing force; the notion of authority surpasses that of the lived social reality. The notion of justice, for example, arises from the “principle of a decentering of perspective by which the perspective of the other – the need, the claim, of the other – balances my perspective.”

The Other, Ricoeur argues, in the form of an Other that exceeds the level of horizontal or socio-temporal perspectives, grounds ἥθος and orients a person’s social existence.

Prefiguring the ethics of Oneself as Another, Ricoeur affirms in The Voluntary and the Involuntary that the Other is represented, however, in everyone other than me: L’autre est un toi, “the other is a you.” As later on, Ricoeur maintains that this representation has its full validity only when recognized in social institutions: “in practice my own life is humbled by the values put into action by institutions and structures jointly constituted by the diverse demands of individual men.” Justice and equality as ideal dispositions are not “dead abstractions” but have a necessary connection to institutionalized intersubjectivity; they are, even when presented as formally as Kant’s categorical imperative, “living rules of the integration of persons into a ‘we’.”

Making a strongly anti-Cartesian claim, Ricoeur then

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1524 Ricoeur 1949, 118. (123).
1526 Ricoeur 1949, 120. (126).
1527 Ricoeur 1949, 121. (126).
1528 Ricoeur 1949, 121. (126).
1529 Ricoeur 1949, 122. (127-128).
affirms the fundamental social character of the human mode of being: “The being of the subject is not solipsistic, it is being-in-common (être-en-commun).” According to the early Ricoeur, I become “me” only within a “we,” that is, only in a cultural community that materializes and preserves the transcendental Other.

The sense of a certain nearness with Aristotle – openly acknowledged in Oneself as Another – gets stronger as Ricoeur considers in The Voluntary and the Involuntary the practical limits of this social mode of being. According to Ricoeur, “the zone of social,” or the level of civic intersubjective relations, has its “lower limit” in slavery which has lost the notion of just, and its “upper limit” in friendship. Like Aristotle, Ricoeur argues that friendship is not a public relation but a private one, in which the notion of justice is not applicable, because friendship creates and manifests freedom in a full poetic mode that ultimately remains unreachable for a social whole:

There are some encounters which do not simply present me with reasons for living which I can evaluate and approve but which truly function as a conversion of the heart of willing and have the force of a genuine spiritual begetting. Such encounters create freedom. They are liberating. Friendship or love between two people can do that. Thereafter, the very nature of the bond between myself and yourself is profoundly changed: it is no longer a social, public relation, but an essentially private relation which exceeds the rule of justice. [...] The effect of a friend on the very heart of willing, which is in a sense a “seminal” action, belongs already to the order of the “poetics” which we are at present holding in suspension. [...] Undoubtedly it is the essence of intersubjectivity to be an unstable tension between the relation of master and slave and the relation of communion. [Such socio-]political responsibility, however, is the zone in which freedom can never have an alibi, either in the tyranny of [Machiavelli’s] prince or in the dictatorship of the [Heidegger’s] They, and in which the transformation of all civic bonds into friendship is a Utopia.

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1530 Ricoeur 1949, 122. (128).
1532 Ricoeur 1949, 123. (128-129).
The full transcendence of the Other would be materialized socially if a person’s relations all could be characterizable as friendships. This ultimate goal or possibility is, however, unattainable as it remains a horizon that always retreats in an ever expanding social consciousness.

Just as in explaining the necessity of an indirect approach to the poetic nucleus of a society, Ricoeur maintains that the ἡθός aspect of this nucleus can be recognized only indirectly: “We can, to be sure, state it radically, that the other is what counts, but this value of the other is always seen indirectly, through a labyrinth of social situations in which it becomes fragmented into incommensurable values: equality and hierarchy, justice and order, and so on.” Put differently, The Voluntary and the Involuntary argues – as History and Truth, Oneself as Another, and The Just later – that the idea of the other as “a you,” or a friend, is conceivable only through the reality of le concitoyen, that is, a fellow citizen who is both a neighbor and a socius. Consequently, the process of becoming “I” is dependent on the institutionalized “being-in-common” in a cultural and ethico-political community. By justice, Ricoeur argues in an interview with Yvanka Raynova, “politics can be strictly connected to ethics, because politics is strictly concerned with institutions that connect individuals who will never become friends.” Only by taking the institutionally mediated sociability, or the “institutional frame,” into account, one can reach the idea of being ethical. “We dream of the reconciliation between politics and friendship,” Ricoeur maintains in History and Truth. The ethotic nucleus of culture is, likewise, approachable only through its institution.

1533 Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 117-118.
1534 Ricoeur 1949, 123. (129).
1536 Ricoeur & Raynova 2003, 674.
1537 Ricoeur 1967a, 126. (123).
Ultimately, Ricoeur clarifies, the ethotic and the poetic are fundamentally intertwined with each other. The “key point” in the recognition of social responsibility, Ricoeur argues later in *Course of Recognition*, “is located at the juncture between the instituting of the social bond, understood as what is at stake in social practices, and the collective representations that constitute its symbolic mediations.”\(^\text{1538}\) The social bond is formed symbolically through the mediation of shared representations that instil an ethico-political aspect into “being-in-common,” in which one is able to recognize him- or herself. This conjoining symbolism is not utopian in the sense of a “pure” or an unattainable reality but in the Ricoeurian sense of “opening up the possible” that is the very condition for ethico-political being-with. “These representations symbolize the identities by which the social ties being instituted are knotted together,” he insists.\(^\text{1539}\)

The poetic making of the social bond is ethico-political in its essence, but its formation, however, takes place in a narrative mode, in which the ethotic and the poetic are found through each other. As Ricoeur also maintains in *Course of Recognition*, only a “narrative unity of life” is able to ground the notion of a “good life.” Put differently, an ethico-political qualification is attributable to a subject’s life only if it is held together across a time sequence in a narrative form.\(^\text{1540}\) The cultural hermeneutic relevance of this assertion becomes apparent, if moving into the discussion of Ricoeur’s “little ethics” in *Oneself as Another* is approached from the viewpoint of *Time and Narrative III*, in which the notion of narrative identity is introduced.

The narrative identity – or *ipse* identity, that is, “ipseity” – Ricoeur discusses in *Time and Narrative III* is, according to him, the assignment of a specific practical identity that

\(^\text{1538}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 206. (139).
\(^\text{1539}\) Ricoeur 2004b, 206. (139).
is the “fragile offshoot issuing from the unity of history and fiction.” The narrative can change over time, but it is, nevertheless, capable of designating an agent, both at the level of individuals and at the level of human communities, since it provides self-constancy in form of the story of a life. This story of a life, Ricoeur maintains, implies that the self and one’s understanding of it are attainable only through cultural “examinations of life” as he calls these identity-forming narrations:

The self of the self-knowledge is the fruit of an examined life, to recall Socrates’ phrase in the *Apology*. And an examined life is, in large part, one purged, one clarified by the cathartic effects of the narratives, be they historical or fictional, conveyed by our culture. So ipseity refers to a self instructed by the works of the culture that it has applied to itself (*par les œuvres de la culture qu’il s’est appliquées à lui-même*). Ricoeur affirms, in other words, that an articulation or examination of life will have to pertain to a narrative that holds the identity of a person together under the symbolic mode of expression. Ricoeur claims, second, that this identity-formation is thoroughly circular: a self is “both a reader and the writer of its life” as he also maintains in *Time and Narrative III*. Third, Ricoeur confirms, again, the necessity of cultural objectification that enables the interpretative act of reading as the process of appropriative self-recognition. In brief, *un sujet se reconnaît dans l’histoire qu’il se raconte à lui-même sur lui-même; “a subject recognizes himself in the story he tells about himself.”* Again, the self is not attainable directly, but only indirectly through those “readable” objectifications that as cultural works are clues for the narration of a person’s existence.

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1542 Ricoeur 1985, 356. (247). – Ricoeur repeats in his 1991 essay “Life in Quest of Narrative” his conviction of the unsurpassable role of culture: “We never cease to reinterpret the narrative identity that constitutes us, in the light of the narratives proposed to us by our culture. […] In place of an *ego* enamoured of itself arises a *self* instructed by cultural symbols, the first among which are the narratives handed down in our literary tradition.” Ricoeur 1991b, 32-33.
1544 Ricoeur 1985, 357. (247).
As I have already intimated, however, Ricoeur extends the scope of narrative identities from the level of individuals to that of social collectives. As individuals, human collectives also require the support of narrative identities that maintain social coherence:

The notion of narrative identity also indicates its fruitfulness in that it can be applied to a community as well as to an individual. We can speak of the ipseity of a community, just as we spoke of it as applied to an individual subject. Individual and community are constituted in their identity by taking up narratives that effectively become for them their history.\(^ {1545} \)

Both an individual and a community, Ricoeur argues, gain an understanding of their respective identities by taking a detour through culture in which their identities are manifested and objectified in such a way that a person’s or a community’s existence can be appropriated in reflecting upon those cultural works that narrate the mute but experienced life. Ricoeur already maintains in 1981 that “there is no knowledge of the self that does not make itself through the detour of signs, symbols, and cultural works; the stories (les histoires) that are being told, and the histories that a historian writes, are the most continuous (permanentes) of these cultural expressions.”\(^ {1546} \) Just as individuals, Ricoeur then maintains in Time and Narrative III, historical communities draw their respective identities from the

\(^ {1545} \) Ricoeur 1985, 356. (247).

\(^ {1546} \) Ricoeur & Kemp 1981, 155. – Ricoeur is very explicit about the connection between the (quasi-)historical narrations and self-identity or self-recognition: “Notre propre existence est inséparable du récit que nous pouvons faire de nous-même. C’est en nous racontant que nous nous donnons une identité. Nous nous reconnaissions nous-mêmes dans les histoires que nous racontons sur nous-mêmes: les histoires, vraies ou fausses d’ailleurs – peu importe! – les fictions aussi bien que les histoires exactes, disons vérifiables, ont cette valeur de nous donner une identité.” (Ricoeur & Kemp 1981, 156-157.) Silvia Pierosara, in his essay on Ricoeur, pays attention to this implicit relation between narratives and self-recognition as mediated by histories: “When a group [or a culture] asks for recognition, it asks that its own way of looking for significance be given space and accepted as a site of meaning. Recognition, for this reason, is more than a recognition of mere existence; it is a recognition of value, expressed in the significance of a [historical] narrative. In other words, in order to gather the moral implications of recognition, it is necessary to presuppose that the object of recognition is a narrative, both in individual and in collective cases.” (Pierosara 2011, 81.) In brief, Pierosara argues that besides “linguistic hospitality” outlined by Ricoeur, there must be “narrative hospitality” which makes an inter-cultural dialogue possible. Cf. Cassirer 1974, 206.
reception of those narratives they had produced – as can be seen, for example, in the case of biblical Israel.\textsuperscript{1547}

But as biblical Israel was not only a particular community but a full and effective culture, Ricoeur repeatedly maintains that also “cultures create themselves by telling stories of their own past.”\textsuperscript{1548} *Time and Narrative II* supports this further extension and circularity by admitting that “we have no idea of what a culture would be where no one any longer knew what it meant to narrate things.”\textsuperscript{1549} A culture, Ricoeur maintains, is also constituted by narrations, that is, by cultural works. The circularity of Ricoeur’s argument is therefore as overwhelming as it is complete. Narratives, however, are “never ethically neutral,” as Ricoeur argues in *Oneself as Another*,\textsuperscript{1550} and they therefore have the double function of both constituting a culture and representing its Other. The foundational nucleus of a culture, constitutive of it before its expression, is etho-poetic.

### 15.2 The Birth of an Ethico-Political Self: Cultural Recognition

In contrast to Heidegger’s dismissive attitude toward ethics, Ricoeur emphasizes that an appropriate philosophical examination of the dialectics of the same and the other, or of βίος and πράξεις (as an extension of λόγος in the mode of φρόνησις), is achievable only with the inclusion of the ethical.\textsuperscript{1551} Ricoeur’s so-called little ethics (*la petite éthique*), that is, studies seven to nine in *Oneself as Another*, provide a dialectic, “the richest of all,” that undertakes its “fullest development.”\textsuperscript{1552} By closing off our own analysis of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{1547} Ricoeur 1985, 357. (247-248).
  \item \textsuperscript{1548} Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 138.; Ricoeur & Kemp 1981, 165.
  \item \textsuperscript{1549} Ricoeur 1984, 48. (28).
  \item \textsuperscript{1550} Ricoeur 1990, 167. (140).
  \item \textsuperscript{1551} Ricoeur 1995d, 16-18. (xiv-xvi).
  \item \textsuperscript{1552} Ricoeur 1990, 30. (18).
\end{itemize}
culture with this ethico-political dialectics – summarized with his definition of ethical intention as “aiming at the good life with and for others in just institutions”¹⁵⁵³ – we comply with Ricoeur’s thesis that narratives have a transitional or mediating function between description and prescription.¹⁵⁵⁴ Prefigured earlier in chapter 7 in our discussion of Sittlichkeit, the final opposition between Ricoeur and Heidegger will be a result of this inclusion that concludes with the idea of l’homme capable as having the capability to recognize oneself as an ethico-political – that is, a narrated and a narrating – character in an essentially etho-poetic culture.¹⁵⁵⁵

The key moment of Oneself as Another lies in its study seven, which connects the levels of subjectivity, intersubjectivity, and institutions wherein human subjects live. After having argued that the first of the three “components” of ethical intention is the Aristotelian – ethico-cultural rather than biological – “good life” as the long-term practical object of this aim,¹⁵⁵⁶ and that the second component is solicitude, as reflectively given self-esteem and consciousness of life in “living together” (or “with and for others”) that leads to

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¹⁵⁵⁴ Ricoeur 1990, 32, 167, 180-199, (20, 140, 152-169). – Arguing against David Hume’s proposition that description and prescription are entirely different, Ricoeur maintains that the narrative approach moves us into the proper realm of cultural existence by incorporating the ethical dimension to meaning-creating human action; description and prescription are suffused with each other. Ricoeur is explicit about intentionally breaking Hume’s law, according to which normative claims cannot be drawn from descriptive statements. (Cf. Ricoeur 1990, 200-202, (169-171).) Hume presents his law or his “guillotine,” generally summarized as “no ‘ought’ from ‘is’,” in the Treatise of Human Nature (book III, part I, section 1): “In every system of morality which I have hitherto met with, I have always remarked, that the author proceeds for some time in the ordinary way of reasoning, and establishes the being of a God, or makes observations concerning human affairs; when of a sudden I am surprised to find, that instead of the usual copulations of propositions, is, and is not, I meet with no proposition that is not connected with an ought, or an ought not. This change is imperceptible; but is, however, of the last consequence. For as this ought, or ought not, expresses some new relation or affirmation, it is necessary that it should be observed and explained; and at the same time that a reason should be given, for what seems altogether inconceivable, how this new relation can be a deduction from others, which are entirely different from it. But as authors do not commonly use this precaution, I shall presume to recommend it to the readers; and am persuaded, that this small attention would subvert all the vulgar systems of morality, and let us see that the distinction of vice and virtue is not founded merely on the relations of objects, nor is perceived by reason.” Hume 1995, 469.


¹⁵⁵⁶ Ricoeur 1990, 202-203, 208-211. (172, 177-180).
similitude between myself and another “as myself,” Ricoeur moves into analyzing the third component, emphatically just institutions. As Ricoeur argues later in his preface to The Just, this schematization places the question of justice philosophically in a modern sense, but as Reflections on the Just clarifies, the idea of justice as a moral rule and as an institution should to be read in the light of ὅσιανον – what is right and righteous.

Institutions not only function technically by exercising justice in judicial sense, but they bring about and maintain the state of right by framing practical action; this function of institutionalized imperative that imposes rules on πρᾶξις, as well as the duty to follow them, is the Kantian element in Ricoeur’s ethics. Living well, Oneself as Another insists, is obviously not limited to subjectivity, nor to interpersonal relations, but necessarily extends to the level of social

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1558 Ricoeur 1995d, 13-14. (xii); Ricoeur 2001c, 7, 10, (1, 4); “The Classic Greek Dictionary” 1951. – The essays included in Political and Social Essays (Ricoeur 1974.), Lectures on Ideology and Utopia (Ricoeur 1986b.), Lectures 1: autour du politique (Ricoeur 1991a.), Le juste (Ricoeur 1995d.), and Le juste 2 (Ricoeur 2001c.) demonstrate Ricoeur’s growing interest in the political philosophy, especially from the 1980s onwards. Even though Johann Michel, for example, is correct in pointing out that from very early on Ricoeur wrote essays in political philosophy, I maintain that Ricoeur becomes more elaborate in his political thought only after the shift of emphasis from critical Marxism to Rawlsian liberalism (cf. Michel 2006, 383.). In short, in the wake of Rawls-Nozick debate, Ricoeur also engages critically with the political theories of such prolific thinkers as Hobbes, Kant, Hegel, Weber, Arendt, Weil, Patočka, Rawls, Habermas, and Taylor. As the “placing” of justice in the preface to The Just, and Ricoeur’s earlier analyses in Fallible Man and in On Interpretation (which locate the political quest in contrast with the economic one, neither of which reach the proper level of esteem and mutuality) suggest, however, Ricoeur’s political philosophy is a clarificatory extension (in the mode of Arendt’s inter homines esse as constitution by the public space of common interests) to the hermeneutics of the capable human, l’homme capable, who reaches a notion of him or herself as a “real citizen” in and through cultural mediation. Ricoeur maintains, in the opening pages of The Just, that the question “who is the subject of rights?” is a necessary subquestion of “who?” is a capable human worthy of respect and esteem. I will, therefore, bypass Ricoeur’s political philosophy for the most part, but do so only for the purposes of delimiting the scope of examination. I emphasize, nevertheless, the importance of political institution in Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics. According to Ricoeur, there is no culture without institution that is also political in nature; it is a necessary “order of recognition” without which “individuals are only the initial drafts of human persons.” Cf. sections 10.3 and 11.3 of this dissertation; Ricoeur 1995d, 29-40, 151-161. (1-10, 100-108); Ricoeur 2001c, 33-34. (25); Ricoeur 1991a, 15-92.

1559 Cf. Ricoeur 1987, 104-108. – Ricoeur admits in the same essay, “The Teleological and Deontological Structures of Action: Aristotle and/or Kant?,” that even though the realm of practical action, or πρᾶξις, “may provide the appropriate framework of thought within which justice can be done to both the Aristotelian and Kantian, the teleological and deontological moments of morality,” it is “presumptuous to aim at a kind of conciliation between Aristotle and Kant, namely between an ethics of virtues linked to the qualitative plurality of the goods themselves, and an ethics of moral obligation which reduces the good to the right and the right to the dutiful because of violence.” Ricoeur’s final words are, therefore, cautiously suggestive and definitely inconclusive: “If this presumption should be given up, how could we avoid becoming schizophrenic with one Aristotelian half-brain and another Kantian half-brain?” Ricoeur 1987, 99, 111.
institutions that provide the possibility of fair ethical structures such as justice and equality.\footnote{1560}

An institution, according to Ricoeur, is “the structure of living together as this belongs to a historical community.”\footnote{1561} Institution, as structuring the ἴθισ of living with others, is therefore irreducible to interpersonal relations, or to living with. The sense of (in)justice, for example, is enabled by this institutionalization of the ἴθισ of the good, and it is, in turn, represented by the judicial system, or “the legal” as Ricoeur calls it.\footnote{1562}

\footnote{1560} I would like to emphasize here the notion of social institution, as it is distinguishable from cultural formation. In \textit{Time and Narrative I}, for example, Ricoeur distinguishes between human collectives and culture. The term “society” refers to a particular organized community, whereas culture “covers all of the achievements stemming from social creations and implicated in individual use that are transmitted by a tradition: language, techniques, arts, philosophical or religious attitudes and beliefs, insofar as these diverse functions are included in the social heritage of the various individuals living within a particular society.” Culture, Ricoeur maintains in \textit{Time and Narrative I}, concerns these general functions that resemble Cassirer’s understanding of the same issue, whereas the notion of society includes practical institution. The notion of institution becomes then problematic, as Ricoeur seems to understand it as societal structuring rather than cultural figuration or formation. This puzzling distinction becomes less enigmatic as soon as it is noticed that Ricoeur opens an extended discussion with this idea presented in Maurice Mandelbaum’s work on historical knowledge, and claims that historiography concerns societal orders: “General history takes as its theme particular societies, such as peoples and nations, whose existence is continuous; special histories take as their theme abstract aspects of culture such as technology, art, science, religion, which lack continuous existence and which are linked together only through the initiative of the historian who is responsible for defining what counts as art, as science, as religion.” In the end, therefore, it is “Mandelbaum’s notion of society in its opposition to that of culture” that Ricoeur discusses. As Ricoeur later clarifies, the cultural forms have no significance without reference to a particular historical and social entity “which are bearers of these functions.” Cultural functions do not have an existence of their own but they can be found only in “first-order entities, to which acting individuals have belonged and in which they have participated through their actions and interactions.” This idea in no way contradicts the thesis that cultural mediation, irreducible to particular societies, is a necessary condition of becoming an ethical subject. Ricoeur 1983, 272-274, 284-285. (195-197, 204-205). Cf. Ricoeur 1990, 332. (286).

\footnote{1561} Ricoeur 1990, 194. (194).

\footnote{1562} Ricoeur 1990, 231. (197-198). Cf. Ricoeur 1991a, 176-195. – Although related to the approach that has been adopted in this dissertation, the extension of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics to the legal framework is not in my explicit focus. I base this decision to Ricoeur’s own conviction that culture cannot be reduced to “its explicit functions – political, economic and legal, and so on,” even though culture as an unavoidable condition and context is manifested through them in institution (Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 117-118.). I would like to point out, however, that the legal or judicial hermeneutics is not an unconnected and separate field of critical thought, but a specific explication of Ricoeur’s overall cultural hermeneutics. As Johann Michel maintains, this judicial approach – that as a particular science constitutes an important viewpoint to the sociocultural whole – allows, for example, a philosophical discussion between Ricoeur and Ronald Dworkin (Michel 2006, 432-438.). In addition, the question of recognition through exercised justice includes a legal framework. Michel argues, nevertheless, that this legal or judicial approach rests on the sociocultural conditions, on which this dissertation work focuses in particular: “Cet acte de reconnaissance mutuelle [à savoir, une reconnaissance de l’autre comme sujet de droit] suppose en outre des conditions sociales et culturelles pour être pleinement réalisé. C’est là, peut-être où la portée de l’idéal de Ricoeur peut décevoir: la reconnaissance entre des parties en conflit supposerait le partage de valeurs communes, des liens socioculturels plus forts que le conflit entre
“Institutional mediation,” Ricoeur insists, “is indispensable,” as communal sharing or distribution of any kind “cannot but help pass through the institution.” Ethical intention, in other words, requires the support of institution that – thanks to the notion of belonging and the correlating ethical idea of mutual indebtedness – extends from the interpersonal solicitude or care for the equality of “each.”

Ricoeur points out, however, that when discussing the relations between the universal self, the plurality of persons, and the institutional environment, it would be pretentious not to pay attention to the “tragic” character of situated human action and the resulting conflictual confusion that is also of a moral nature. The complexity and diversity of life, Ricoeur argues, contest moral principles that are based on institution; the inevitable confusion relates to πραξις that takes into account the human situatedness in the various institutional mediations. Even though Oneself as Another does not want to “add a political philosophy to moral philosophy,” political practices, therefore, still belong to the same problematics that is discussed under the notions of ἕθος and of morality as its institution. As The Just also clarifies, these political aspects (πόλις) belong to ipseity understood as the concrete identity of “a real citizen” as narrated through cultural figuration and formation.

Again, then, the idea of just distribution that pertains to both ethical and political realms, for example, faces the conflictual reality of the diversity of life – “the conflict here is between the universalist claim and the contextualist limits of the rule of particulariores.”

According to Ricoeur, the dialectic of this ethico-political situatedness results in a paradox of form and force, by which he means the dynamics between the controlling drive of institution or political structures (viz. form) that delimits the domination of political agency (viz. force). It is this “paradox” that explains the reason why Ricoeur has to seek the “sunny breaks” or l’éclaircies later in Course of Recognition. In such a conflictual ethico-political reality, mutual recognition never finds itself as pure: “Whereas form finds its expression in the constitution’s approximation of the relation of mutual recognition (reconnaissance mutuelle) between individuals and between the latter and the higher agency, force finds its mark in all the scars left by the violent birth of all states that have become states of law.” Form is contested by force, and vice versa, but the very structuring, the institution, is already a step away from mutual recognition that is only “approximated” in a state’s constitution that institutes its political structure. Still, only this formation enables recognition, albeit in a distanced or indirect mode that replays the conflict between the universal claim of mutuality and the contextual limits of structured life.

This conflictual reality of sociopolitical life is inevitable, but it is balanced by the paradox that is as much part of the problem as it is part of the solution – it points to the necessity of practical action. As Ricoeur puts it in Oneself as Another, “political discussion is without conclusion, although it is not without decision. […] The debate over ‘good’ government is an integral part of the political mediation through which we aspire to a full life, to the ‘good life.’”

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1567 Ricoeur 1990, 293. (251-252).
1568 Ricoeur 1990, 299. (257).
1569 Ricoeur 1990, 299. (257).
1570 Ricoeur 1990, 300-301. (258).
exercised practical wisdom, φρόνησις, seeking just behavior suited to each particular case, pertains to both politics and ethics in situation.\textsuperscript{1571} Although not using the word Sittlichkeit explicitly, Ricoeur concludes that this ethical life in just institutions is “critical solicitude” tested by the conflicts of living together.\textsuperscript{1572} Solicitude remains abstract and detached if not exercised in practical action that faces the reality of a structured life.

These considerations have led us to the culmination point of this analysis, namely, to the idea of naissance, or the birth of l’homme capable/faillible as an authentic ethico-political self. The “complementing and correcting” deontological amendment Ricoeur makes in Reflections on the Just to his more teleological “little ethics” of Oneself as Another sharpens the idea of imputability, or of holding oneself accountable. This “capacity” that “passes through moral obligation” – or that is given by the anterior “fundamental” reality of ethical imposition, and tested in applying it in the “posterior” field of practical wisdom and action – ultimately defines the capable human being.\textsuperscript{1573} The fragile “affirmation-attestation” of the self is formed as this fundamentally received ethico-political “I can”: “I can take myself to be the true author of acts assigned to my [narrative] account.”\textsuperscript{1574} Put differently, the self is given in the conflictual affirmation and attestation of the fundamental imputation. The conflict, or the reality of conflicts, is in turn encountered in the contextual actualization of living together, that is, in the “practical mediation capable of surmounting the antinomy [between universalism and contextuality].”\textsuperscript{1575} This argument, however, leads Ricoeur to maintain moral autonomy as a task rather than a given. In spite of his stronger emphasis on Kantian

\textsuperscript{1571} Ricoeur 1990, 302, 312-313, 318. (259-260, 268-269, 273). – Referring to political and judicial institutions, Ricoeur points out that “the φρόνησις is not necessarily one individual alone.” Cf. G. H. Taylor 2010a, 5-6.; Fisher 2011, 158-163.
\textsuperscript{1572} Ricoeur 1990, 318. (273).
\textsuperscript{1573} Ricoeur 2001c, 8-9, 55-68. (1-3, 45-57).
\textsuperscript{1574} Ricoeur 2001c, 25-26, 289-297. (17-18, 249-256).
\textsuperscript{1575} Ricoeur 1990, 318-319. (274).
deontology in *Reflections on the Just*, Ricoeur sets aside the notion of agent’s autonomy in the manner that, for example, Kant’s moral philosophy proposes.  

As I have demonstrated throughout this dissertation, Ricoeur emphasizes that ipseity as well as autonomy have to be approached *en fin de parcours*, “at the end of the course,” instead of assuming the place of beginning in (moral) selfhood. Ricoeur’s 1991 essay “Life in Quest of Narrative” stresses that poetically grounded narrations, which “teach” a subject of the connection between the ideas of ethical conduct and human happiness, belong to the realm of “phronetic understanding” instead of a theoretical or universal one. Ricoeur maintains, therefore, in *Oneself as Another* that human autonomy, which “in the final analysis defines moral selfhood,” has to be approached “through the rule of justice on the plane of institutions and the rule of reciprocity on the interpersonal plane.” It is only in the given “framework of a culture of consideration,” as Ricoeur phrases it in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, that – also environmentally conscious – moral responsibility and goodwill emerge. This autonomy, Ricoeur stresses, “can no longer be a self-sufficient autonomy,” since it is dependent on the dialogical and cultural exteriority that is the very condition of an autonomous ipse-self. The moral selfhood, or ethical ipseity, is a task that emerges in the conflicts of actual socio-practical, that is, cultural life; it is best manifested “in interpersonal relations governed by the principle of respect owed to persons.”

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1576 Cf. Ricoeur 2001c, 85-86, 98. (72, 83).
1578 Ricoeur 1991b, 23.
1581 Ricoeur 2000b, 616-619. (476-478); Ricoeur 1991a, 270-293.; Ricoeur 2001c, 9, 64. (3, 53).
1582 Ricoeur 1990, 320. (275).
and in institutions governed by the rule of justice.”

Put differently, an ethico-political self, capable of mutual recognition, is born in the unavoidable concrete contestations of a situated living together. This cultural condition of contextual mediations in instituted human \( \pi\rho\alpha\zeta\zeta \) is the universal condition of becoming \( l'homme capable de faillir \).

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Though a long and arduous argument has just reached its major culmination point, that is, having reached an explication of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture in the form of describing the cultural condition for the becoming of an authentic human being who is capable of failing as an ethico-political subject, we must extend this analysis further and draw out the related idea that has also been examined at length in this dissertation: recognition and, in particular, cultural recognition. Borrowing the words of Margit Eckholt, I maintain that Ricoeur’s work as a whole can be described as being \( \text{auf dem Weg zu einer Kultur der Anerkennung} \), “on the way to a culture of recognition.”

In his final remarks to the question “how a living subject or a self comes to be?,” Ricoeur re-examines the notion of narrative identity in the light of the term responsibility that repeats the idea of “reading” oneself in one’s practical acts, or “assuming the consequences of one’s actions, that is, holding certain events to come as delegates of oneself, despite the fact that they have not been expressly foreseen and intended.”

Ricoeur’s point is made quickly, but for us the statement that follows is invaluable: “These

1585 Eckholt 1999, 110. – Eckholt discusses “the culture of recognition” in the context of the study nine in \( \text{Oneself as Another.} \)
1586 Ricoeur 1990, 341. (294).
events are her work, in spite of herself.” As Ted Klein cites, Ricoeur understands ethics as an “odyssey of freedom across the world of works.” These cultural works get their meaning “within the framework of civil law and penal law,” as Ricoeur maintains, since “the bearing of our acts […] extends beyond that of our projects.” In other words, the meanings of our “works,” and the possibility of attributing our acts as works, is culturally mediated.

The cultural framework – in this case judicial – also leads Ricoeur, however, to consider the relating idea of indebtedness that contributes to understanding responsibility as “recognizing one’s own indebtedness (reconnaître son propre être en dette) with respect to that which has made one what one is, which is to hold oneself responsible.” Introducing this retrospective element and combining it with the previous prospective element of responsibility results in an examination of the notion of present, since “holding oneself responsible is […] accepting to be held to be the same today as the one who acted yesterday and who will act tomorrow.” Put differently, Ricoeur returns to the question of narrative identity, but in form of a narrative identity that assumes responsibility, that is, as a moral identity.

One’s recognition of this moral identity, or, in other words, one’s recognition of oneself as a moral subject, is enabled by cultural objectification as the movement of institution. The end of Ricoeur’s study nine in *Oneself as Another* testifies to this cultural condition, but also fleshes out the idea that the notion of narrative identity is fully understood only in connection with mutual recognition:

1587 Ricoeur 1990, 341. (294).
There are limit cases, comparable to the puzzling cases of narrative identity, where identification in terms of the usual corporeal or psychological criteria becomes doubtful, to the point at which one says that the defendant in criminal law has become unrecognizable. In these limit cases, self-constancy, a synonym for *ipse*-identity, is assumed by a moral subject who demands to be considered the same as the other than he or she appears to have become. But this responsibility in the present assumes that the responsibility of the consequences to come and that of a past with respect to which the self recognizes its indebtedness are integrated in this nonpointlike present and in a sense recapitulated in it.

This self-constancy, irreducible to any empirical persistence, perhaps contains the key to the phenomenon that we skirted above and then set aside, although it is incorporated in a common definition of imputation, namely that to impute is to place something “on someone’s account.” It is as though our acts were inscribed in a great book of accounts, registered there, preserved there. Perhaps this metaphor of inscription and registration expresses the objectification of what we just called the recapitulation in the present of the responsibility for consequences and of the responsibility for indebtedness. Self-constancy, objectified in this way, in the image of an interlinking of all of our acts outside of us, has the appearance of a fate that makes the Self its own enemy. […]

If I nevertheless had to name a category that corresponded to the categories of imputability and responsibility […], I would choose the term recognition (*reconnaissance*), so dear to Hegel in the Jena period and throughout the subsequent course of his work. Recognition is a structure of the self reflecting on the movement [of institution] that carries self-esteem toward solicitude and solicitude toward justice. Recognition introduces the dyad and plurality in the very constitution of the self. Mutuality (*la mutualité*) in friendship and proportional equality in justice, when they are reflected in self-consciousness, make self-esteem a figure of recognition (*une figure de la reconnaissance*).  

To restate Ricoeur’s emphasis, *ipse*-identity, or selfhood, is attainable only through cultural objectification (*viz.* *Entäußerung*) in the appropriation of which the self reforges itself as an ethico-political subject by recognizing its responsibility in the instituting of it, that is, in the movement of ascribing one’s cultural acts to oneself (*viz.* *Erinnerung*) that opens the course of recognition going from self-esteem to justice and mutuality.

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The primordial quest for “esteem in another’s opinion”\textsuperscript{1593} or for “received recognition”\textsuperscript{1594} – also defined in \textit{Fallible Man} and \textit{On Interpretation} as the grounding human \textit{Suchen} – extends to culturally objectified mutuality that is the mediation for the constitution of selfhood.\textsuperscript{1595} The culturally mediated movement of “recognition of the self in another self (\textit{reconnaissance du soi dans un autre soi}),”\textsuperscript{1596} as \textit{On Interpretation} phrases it, is explicated in \textit{Onself as Another} and in \textit{The Just} to be ethico-political that despite its tensional lineament is still characterizable as the sunny break or clearance of mutuality. Culture, necessarily shared as an unsurpassable condition, is therefore definable as based on its etho-poetic nucleus that is objectified or expressed in ethico-political institution, that is, as the situated realm of mediated mutual recognition that manifests the idea of humanity, and constitutes human dignity.

When \textit{Course of Recognition} readdresses – after \textit{Memory, History, Forgetting}\textsuperscript{1597} – the question of recognition and mutuality, it is thus only an exclamation point in a long series of \textit{works} that in itself, as Ricoeur’s works indirectly disclosing the etho-poetic, \textit{is a course of cultural recognition} in and through which a reader is able to “find” him or herself as an ethico-political subject – or to “receive” this identity through narrative understanding. This receiving is the birth, \textit{naissance}, of the self as a concrete “real citizen.” Applied to this dissertation, having begun in part two with an analysis of Ricoeur’s \textit{Course of Recognition} and having then traversed a full cycle that has examined the course of a Ricoeurian \textit{Anerkennung} as cultural recognition and ethical life, the now regained notion of \textit{recognition} has become that of \textit{Sittlichkeit}, or ethico-political situatedness in living history, stripped of unnecessary Spiritualism. This full

\textsuperscript{1593} Ricoeur 1960a, 136. (120).
\textsuperscript{1594} Ricoeur 1960a, 137-138. (121-122); Ricoeur 1965a, 502. (523).
\textsuperscript{1595} Ricoeur 1960a, 127-128, 137. (111, 121); Ricoeur 1965a, 487-488, 490, 502-503. (507, 509-510, 523).
\textsuperscript{1596} Ricoeur 1965a, 503. (523).
\textsuperscript{1597} Cf. Ricoeur 2000b, 554-574. (427-443).
course of analysis has then become the “Hegelian concept of *Sittlichkeit* in its broadest sense” as Ricoeur defines it in *Course of Recognition*. Only in this figuration that includes the ethical, is a path opened for Ricoeur to philosophically emphasize the possibility of agapeic “clearings” of freedom and good will – the metaethical “poetics of *αγάϖη*” belonging to an economy of the gift, recognized, but left bracketed in *Oneself as Another*.

### 15.3 The Limit: *le Tout Autre*

We have almost completed the analytical task set for this dissertation work. The theme of *αγάϖη* leads us, however, to the final stage of examining Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics, namely, to finding its proper limit. *Αγάϖη*, or generous giving without expecting anything in return, ruins the idea of reciprocity. Ricoeur emphasized this already in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* in terms of love and friendship as “an essentially private relation which exceeds the rule of justice.” As Ricoeur argues in *Course of Recognition*, however, as soon as *αγάϖη* is not taken as illusory or hypocritical but as “a construct allowing description of actions carried out by persons in reality, or a partially realizable ideal, a utopia, or a deception,” it faces the challenge or the test of credibility in the dialectics of love and justice. In the reality of cultural mediation, interpersonal relations are not fully characterizable in terms of pure

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1598 Ricoeur 2004b, 294. (201). – *Oneself as Another* expresses this affinity directly: “We then admitted [in the seventh study] that it was only in a specific institutional milieu that the capacities and predispositions that distinguish human action can blossom; the individual, we said then, becomes human only under the condition of certain institutions; and we added: if this is so, the obligation to serve these institutions is itself a condition for the human agent to continue to develop. These are all reasons to feel indebted to Hegel’s work of hierarchizing the modalities of the actualization of freedom in the *Philosophy of Right* [that is, family, civil society, and state]. To this extent, and to this extent alone, the notion of *Sittlichkeit* […] has never ceased to instruct us.” Ricoeur 1990, 296-297. (254-255). Cf. Ricoeur 1990, 396-397. n3. (344-345. n51).  
1599 Ricoeur 1949, 123. (128).  
1600 Ricoeur 2004b, 323. (221). – Ricoeur quotes Luc Boltanski.
mutuality, that is, exclusively understood from the point of view of love that does not expect anything reciprocal in return.

The Otherness of Heidegger

The reality of human relations is dialectical. In the end, the distance between my self and the others, or the fundamental dissymmetry between subjects in the form of the otherness of other people, does not remain unendurable but dialectical as Ricoeur proposes in the concluding study ten of Onself as Another. This particular dialectic of the self and its other, however, constitutes only an aspect of a larger dialectic that takes place between the Same and the Other. The “philosophy of the Same” includes a “philosophy of the Other,” and vice versa; “the movement from the Same toward the Other and that from the Other toward the Same are dialectically complementary.”

The other, who understands my experience of flesh (Leib) as an objectified body (Körper) – as Ricoeur states by resorting to Husserl’s terminology – can nevertheless, by analogy, become to me my “kind,” mon semblable, that is, not me but someone like me as a living, desiring, and suffering subject. This “marvel of analogical transfer” from one’s self to the other is a “pairing” (Paarung), however; a movement that acknowledges, by analogy, the flesh of another. Put differently, without losing sight of the notion of dissymmetry, the “same” of the self reaches out to the otherness of the “other.”

The “other,” in turn, reaches out to the “same,” Ricoeur argues, as he criticizes the philosophy of the Other by Emmanuel Lévinas. For Lévinas the Other, as radical exteriority, is diametrically opposed to the Same: “when the face of the other (le visage

1601 Ricoeur 1990, 393. (340).
d’autrui) elevates itself to face me (s’élève face à moi), above me, it is not an appearance that I can include within the sphere of my own representations. This Other commands, because it is the epiphany of absolute exteriority that places it above any mode of relation. The radicality of the Other, then, becomes the source of one’s ethical comportment, that is, the origin of one’s response in the form of responsibility, implying a subject capable of assuming this responsibility of substituting the I for the Other, and, therefore, also a reception on the part of the one responding to the call of the Other. The radical exteriority of the Other, Ricoeur argues in Oneself as Another, will have to be interiorized; the Other, put differently, includes the possibility of an opening toward the Same.

Ricoeur brings together these two complementary dialectics of the Same and the Other in his analysis of conscience, which is “at once inside me and higher than me.” It is this analysis that concludes our discussion of the relation between Ricoeur and Heidegger, but it also leads us to the threshold of the “other” of cultural hermeneutics. First, we are called to recognize the limitedness of Heidegger’s ontologically oriented hermeneutics, and second, to conceive Ricoeur’s tensional hermeneutics as the dialectics of the Same and the Wholly Other.

Let us focus on Heidegger first. Drawing from Heidegger’s ontological analysis of conscience in sections §54-§60 of Being and Time, Ricoeur maintains in Oneself as Another that Heidegger offers a good description of the otherness in form of conscience (Gewissen)

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1605 Ricoeur 1990, 394. (342).
that is at both internal and external to a living subject. Dasein calls itself in conscience, so “the call comes from me,” and still “from beyond and over me”: Der Ruf kommt aus mir und doch über mich. Put differently, Dasein finds, in the mode of conscience, the other that is Dasein itself; “Es” ruft, “It’ calls,” yet without words. The silent call indicates uncanniness in the face of be-ing, that is, an ontological “being-in-debt” or “being-guilty,” Schuldigsein. Phrased differently, Dasein, as being thrown to existence, finds itself as being in debt when facing its being in be-ing. In Heidegger’s words, dieses “schuldig” als Prädikat des “ich bin” auftaucht, “this ‘guilt’ appears as a predicate of ‘I am.’” The call “from me and over me,” even though exemplary in this duality, is for Heidegger only an onto-existential indicative.

This direct onto-existential approach to conscience is too hasty a move for Ricoeur; it leads him to emphasize that “there is no clearer way of abolishing the primacy of ethics.” The total annulment of ethical being-with and being-among exemplifies Heidegger’s ultimate failure in describing Dasein’s fundamental constitution: “unfortunately, Heidegger does not show how one could travel the opposite path (parcourir le chemin inverse) from ontology toward ethics.” Instead of his hasty ontologization of conscience that results in its “demoralization” as well as undermines the notion of one’s ownmost possibilities and concrete authenticity as an ethical subject, Ricoeur proposes that conscience signifies “being-enjoined by the Other.” This “Other,” Ricoeur stresses, manifests itself as the culturally conditioned situation – requiring practical wisdom – in which the subject finds him or herself:

1611 Ricoeur 1990, 403. (349).
1612 Ricoeur 1990, 403. (349).
1613 Ricoeur 1990, 404-405. (351).
Conscience, as attestation-injunction, signifies that the “ownmost possibilities” of Dasein are primordially structured by the optative mood of living well, which mood governs in a secondary fashion the imperative of respect and links up with the conviction belonging to moral judgment in situation. If this is so, the passivity of being-enjoined consist in the situation of listening in which the ethical subject is placed in relation to the voice addressed to it in the second person. To find oneself called upon in the second person at the very core of the optative of living well, then of the prohibition to kill, then of the search for the choice appropriate to the situation, is to recognize oneself as being enjoined to live well with and for others in just institutions and to esteem oneself as the bearer of this wish. The otherness of the Other is then the counterpart, on the dialectical level of the “great kinds,” to this passivity specific to being-enjoined.

Put differently, without the otherness of the culturally manifesting Other, a subject cannot find him or herself as an authentic subject – that is, as an ethical subject who faces the need of utilizing practical wisdom and making decisions in that situation. “Being-enjoined,” Ricoeur maintains, is “the structure of ipseity.” The situation imposes the subject as a φρόνιµος, born to oneself as a conscience that reflects the unavoidable need to decide according to the ethical intention of living well with and for others in just institutions. Heidegger’s failure was to too lightly dismiss this very structure that manifests the Other, and through which one becomes an authentic subject in the concreteness of living and suffering.

As to the nature of this Other, or “the source of injunction,” Ricoeur openly admits in the very last pages of Oneself as Another that a philosopher has no tools beyond the transgenerational extension of the Other as the “other people.” As explained in section 7.3 of this dissertation, Ricoeur maintains that synchronic being-with extends to diachronic being-with – that is, the past and also future generations – but he also points out

that philosophical open-mindedness requires that the imposing Other is by no means limited to such a historical condition. The Other, as a condition, is not only transgenerational but also transcultural; a living God, perhaps, as Ricoeur mentions. In the end, therefore, a philosopher encounters the mystery and not the problem of the Other. “With this aporia of the Other,” Ricoeur writes in Oneself as Another, “philosophical discourse comes to an end.” A discourse other than one of speculation, Ricoeur maintains by thus carrying out the same hope of discovering a new kind of search as the poetic Heidegger did, would be required for understanding this “metacategory” of otherness.

Reversal: Retrospection to the Essential

After having now settled the reasons for which Ricoeur philosophizes “after” Heidegger and yet “with” him, I am contested – as Kelton Cobb and, in particular, Marcel Madila-Basanguka in his Poétique de la culture: imagination, éthique et religion chez Paul Ricoeur (1996) – to take into account the possibility of “the Wholly Other,” le Tout Autre, or the transcending element that surpasses the horizontal and establishes the expectation of the transcendent vertical dimension of authority. Unlike Cobb and Madila-Basanguka, and unlike David E. Klemm and William Schweiker, however, I won’t extend my own analysis into the theology of culture that could well be construable on the basis of Ricoeur’s philosophical...

\[1617\] Ricoeur 1990, 409. (355).
\[1618\] Cf. Ricoeur 1992, 74-75.
\[1619\] Ricoeur 1990, 409. (355).
\[1621\] Cf. Appendix 2.
\[1622\] Cf. Ricoeur 1990, 299-300, 366, 394. (257, 316, 342); Ricoeur 2001c, 71-75. (60-63). – Ricoeur argues in “The Paradox of Authority” that the modern crisis of political authority and political recognition (properly: the lack of it) is rooted in the loss of the legitimating foundation drawn from the vertical dimension. A functional institutional authority, Ricoeur maintains, is both vertical and horizontal. Ricoeur 2001c, 109-123. (92-105).
\[1623\] Klemm 1993; Schweiker 1993.
work that clearly manifests the fruitful encounter between Jerusalem and Athens, to which Ricoeur repeatedly alludes in his texts.⁶²⁴ Even though Ricoeur’s “double life” (as Boyd Blundell calls the philosopher Ricoeur’s religiosity⁶²⁵) – or his “well-installed bipolarity” as Ricoeur himself calls it in *Critique and Conviction*⁶²⁶ – more than indicates openness to such an investigation, Ricoeur remains a philosopher to the very end despite also having written extensively on biblical hermeneutics, the hermeneutics of the sacred, and the limits of philosophy.⁶²⁷ In his philosophical work, Jean-Luc Amalric comments, Ricoeur adopts agnosticism and suspends responding, (I emphasize,) to the question of the absolute.⁶²⁸ In

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⁶²⁶ Ricoeur, Azouvi, & de Launay 1995, 15-17, 211-256. (5-6, 139-170).
⁶²⁸ Amalric 2011, 23. – Even though Ricoeur’s work includes, for example, extensive analyses on biblical hermeneutics, he maintains, nevertheless, that his aim and style of analysis has always been strictly philosophical. As Ricoeur emphasizes in his 1995 reply to David Stewart, the problem of the interpretation of religious language is a task for philosophy, and it should therefore not be excluded from the field of investigation: “Religious language, carried in this way to the level of speculative thought, places itself among the objects of philosophy, under the category of the philosophy of religion. And it is in this sense that I speak of it in my essays on the philosophy of religion of Kant, of Hegel, of Rosenzweig, and of Lévinas. My episodic discussions concerning Karl Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer are therefore to be situated entirely on the periphery of my philosophical field of investigation of religious thematics.” (Ricoeur 1995g, 445-446.)

This emphasis does not prevent Ricoeur from maintaining elsewhere that his philosophical position at points intersects with a religious worldview: “In the final pages of *Oneself as Another*, I risk the formulation of a philosophical agnosticism concerning the radical origin of the injunction speaking through the voice of consciousness. I do not try to conceal the fact that there is an affinity between my hermeneutic philosophy and a determined religious position. I have explained elsewhere the difference between the nonphilosophical sources of philosophy and philosophical arguments. But this horizon must not be perceived as a ‘place’ that religion itself would occupy and permeate. Religion, too, has its horizon: Love and Hope. In this sense, it is the horizon common to philosophy and religion. But they speak of it in each case differently.” (Ricoeur 1995l, 569-570.)

The posthumously published *Fragments* confirm this “double life.” Even though Ricoeur mentions that he is “a Christian who expresses himself philosophically,” he also insists that he maintains these two realms of life separate (quite literally as life and thought): “I am not a Christian philosopher, as rumor would have it, in a
In addition, Ricoeur’s religiosity could be described as an “anatheistic post-religious faith” invigorated by a “Eucharistic hope” as Richard Kearney proposes. In the view of this suspension that also distinguishes Ricoeur from Hegel in openly recognizing the question of the absolute but consistently refraining from giving a final response (as demonstrated with the last remarks of this section), I confine my task to show the ultimate limit of cultural deliberately pejorative, even discriminatory sense. I am, on one side, a philosopher, nothing more, even a philosopher without an absolute, concerned about, devoted to, immersed in philosophical anthropology, whose general theme can be placed under the heading of a fundamental anthropology. And, on the other, a Christian who expresses himself philosophically, as Rembrandt is a painter, nothing more, and a Christian who expresses himself through pictures, and Bach a musician, nothing more, and a Christian who expresses himself through music.” (Ricoeur, Abel, & Goldenstein 2007, 107, 110. (69, 72). Cf. Ricoeur 1994, 247-256.) On this basis I do not agree with David Kaplan’s depiction of Ricoeur as “a French hermeneutic philosopher and theologian.” (Kaplan 2010, 112.) Even though the Golden Rule, for example, extends to both realms (cf. Ricoeur 1994, 273-279.; Ricoeur 1995a, 293-302.), Ricoeur maintains that la philosophie reste philosophie, “philosophy remains philosophy,” as he states in a 1948 essay; “philosophy remains therefore free to the extent that neither this nor that philosophy can ever call itself Christian; there is no orthodoxy in philosophy.” (Ricoeur 1994, 240.)

As to Ricoeur’s self-description as “immersed in philosophical anthropology,” I am not denying that Ricoeur’s philosophy is, at large, anthropologically oriented. I maintain, however, that this anthropology necessitates a philosophy of culture. Even though Ricoeur utilizes French phraseology, in Fragments he also refers to himself as “le philosophe de métier et de culture, le penseur de culture philosophique.” (Ricoeur, Abel, & Goldenstein 2007, 108.) In good faith one can read this as Ricoeur’s own confirmation of the thesis I am pursuing, namely, that Ricoeur was also a philosopher of culture.

To return to Oneself as Another, in the light of Ricoeur’s worry concerning the study 10 (cf. above), it becomes even more interesting that the last two Gifford Lectures delivered by Ricoeur in 1985-86 included two studies on biblical hermeneutics. Even though the lectures formed the basis of the 1990 work, these two lectures were not included in it as Ricoeur notes himself in the introduction to Oneself as Another: “The primary reason for excluding them, which may be debatable and even perhaps regrettable, has to do with my concern to pursue, to the very last line, an autonomous, philosophical discourse.” (Ricoeur 1990, 35-38. (23-25).) These two lectures on biblical hermeneutics were published separately in Amour et justice (2008). 

Kearney 2010b, 30-40.; Kearney 2010a, 71-76. – Cf. Kearney’s discussion of the anatheist transreligiosity. Even though Ricoeur, a devout Christian, would probably not be willing to infer a full relativist position out from his own position, Kearney develops — referring to Ricoeur later in the section — this outcome under the themes of “interconfessional hospitality” that is a result of religious self-criticism. Kearney 2010a, 166-181.

Ricoeur criticizes Hegel in his 1963 essay “Philosopher après Kierkegaard” for restricting religion to a pre-philosophical stage in the systemic becoming of the Spirit that is ultimately defined as absolute reflection (in its concreteness), whereas Kierkegaard should be criticized for his emphasis on the religious phase that does not give credit to the necessity of structure and mediation. Ricoeur places himself as a philosopher, critically, between these antagonistic positions by maintaining that 1) philosophy is always in relation to non-philosophy in the Kierkegaardian sense of irrational experience, 2) it should concern a subject’s concrete existence at the level of personal decisions, but 3) it should also view itself in the light of the paradox arising from the conflict between Hegelian absolutism and Kierkegaardian existentialism: “La science n’est pas tout. Mais, outre la science, il y a encore la pensée. La question de l’existence humaine ne signifie pas la mort du langage et de la logique; au contraire, elle requiert une surcroît de lucidité et de rigueur. La question: Qu’est-ce qu’exister? ne peut être séparée de cette autre question: Qu’est-ce que penser? La philosophie vit de l’unité de ces deux questions et meurt de leur separation.” Ricoeur 1992, 43-45.
hermeneutics, or the threshold of the Wholly Other, that is explicitly drawn by Ricoeur himself.

Locating the limit of Ricoeur's hermeneutic of culture as the question of the Wholly Other provides a brief complementing retrospection to Ricoeur's work, reading it “backwards” from the end to the beginning. Unlike what we did in part three and in the preceding chapters of this part four, generally following the chronological order of Ricoeur’s works, I commit a double reversal. Instead of following Ricoeur’s works in a chronological order, I move into reading them with the understanding of what has already been said above. Second, instead of reading Ricoeur as a philosopher of culture – taking into account Ricoeur’s “double life” – I move into reading Ricoeur as a philosopher of the Wholly Other. David Stewart, for example, argues that it is the question of religious language that is at the heart of Ricoeur's work, and in his reply to Stewart, Ricoeur admits that “there is no doubt that the religious experience expressed in stories, symbols, and figures is a major source of my taste for philosophy.” I will show that this second reversal, which re-enacts the tension between the hermeneutic of the sacred and the hermeneutic of culture that I introduced in section 3.1, puts our previous reading to a test, which, in the end, will paradoxically confirm the value of our first reading.

To truly begin from the “other side,” I start this reading “in reverse” beyond the end, beyond Ricoeur’s physical life, with the posthumously published sketch of *Vivant jusqu’à la mort.* Even though this scattered and incomplete draft could be read as an indication of finally giving in to Heidegger’s fundamental ontology under the thematics of

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1632 Ricoeur 1995g, 443.
1633 Trans. *Living Up to Death* (by David Pellauer, 2009). From hereon the English title is used.
being-unto-death – since “death is truly the end of life in time; survival is the others”\textsuperscript{1634} – it testifies more convincingly of “the Essential (l’Essentiel) common to every religion” that guides Ricoeur “throughout this mediation.”\textsuperscript{1635} In the face of death, he maintains in a Jaspersian manner, the transreligious “Essential” reveals itself as immanent transcendence.

This “Essential” is silently present in Ricoeur’s pamphlet \textit{Sur la traduction},\textsuperscript{1636} that is, in Ricoeur’s last published work while he was still alive. Following the opening problematics of his essay “From Interpretation to Translation” in \textit{Penser la Bible},\textsuperscript{1637} Ricoeur repeatedly declares in \textit{Sur la traduction} that “after Babel, ‘to understand is to translate.’”\textsuperscript{1638} As Richard Kearney mentions in his introduction to its English translation, however, Ricoeur has in mind not only translation from one language to another, but also the condition of acquiring one’s self in the “translation” from facing its Other.\textsuperscript{1639} The ultimate question of translating the onto-existential \textit{untranslatable}, such as the unknown Name of God,\textsuperscript{1640} therefore deepens these discussions of overcoming cultural-linguistic borders in spite of linguistic strangeness or cultural otherness,\textsuperscript{1641} but also refers to the realm of mysteries and of the ontological “Concealed” as the incommunicable and as the untranslatable \textit{par excellence}.\textsuperscript{1642}

As further examined in the essay “Naming God” included in \textit{Lectures 3: aux frontières de la philosophie} – which covers many of Ricoeur’s texts from philosophy of religion

\begin{footnotesize}
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1635 & Ricoeur, Abel, & Goldenstein 2007, 43. (14). Cf. Ricoeur 2010b, 37. \\
1636 & Trans. \textit{On Translation} (by Eileen Brennan, 2006). From hereon the English title is used. \\
1638 & Ricoeur 2004c, 44, 50-51, 59. (24, 28, 33). – Ricoeur adopts the phrase from George Steiner. \\
1639 & Kearney 2006, xii-xx. \\
 & Hengel 2003, 249-257, 265. \\
1641 & Ricoeur uses translation between languages as the model of crosscultural communication already in his earlier texts such as his 1965 essay “The Tasks of the Political Educator.” Cf. Ricoeur 1965c, 85-86. (Ricoeur 1974, 282.). \\
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to biblical hermeneutics – this “untranslatable” or “unnameable” is the Sacred that surpasses reflective comprehension and is approximable only in poetic expression.\footnote{Ricoeur 1994, 281-305. (Ricoeur 1995a, 217-235.)} This Unnameable, put differently, is the awful and yet awesome Wholly Other, or the noumenal \textit{mysterium tremendum et fascinosum}, as Rudolf Otto writes,\footnote{Otto 1936, 42-43. Cf. Ricoeur 1995a, 49.; Éliade 1968, 8-13.} that defines the realm of faith and necessitates polyvocal discourses as interpretations explaining the sublime that breaks into human experience. These founding events of encounter, Ricoeur maintains, establish a “community of interpretation,” which then “recognizes itself as enrooted” through the very “naming of God” that remains a symbolic response.\footnote{Ricoeur 1994, 290-291. (Ricoeur 1995a, 224-225.)}

Passing now over Time and Narrative and The Living Metaphor, these quick steps allow us to move further back into Ricoeur’s long 1975 essay “Biblical Hermeneutics” that shows “that the limit-expressions of religious language are appropriated in the redescription of that which we might correlativeley call the \textit{limit-experiences} of man, and that these limitlexperiences, redescribed by the limit-expressions of religious language, constitute the appropriate \textit{referent} of this language [that is, the Wholly Other].”\footnote{Ricoeur 1975a, 107-108, 121-122, 127-128.} The idea of Wholly Other that enters into language as a transgressing redescription then moves us into the final sections of On Interpretation, which takes up, again, the symbolism of the sacred. “It must be confessed,” Ricoeur admits, “that our method of thought does not enable us to capture the depth (\textit{le fond}) of religious symbolism, but only allows us to have a frontier view of it.”\footnote{Ricoeur 1965a, 504. (425.)} The question of the origin of faith resides outside the scope of philosophical inquiry. As this Source is, nevertheless, indicated by expressions in culture, it becomes a limit problem, a question that represents the Wholly Other in cultural examination. The “dialectics of
recognition” (la dialectique de la reconnaissance)\textsuperscript{1648} that holds “the mytho-poetic formations of culture” at its epicenter\textsuperscript{1649} – analyzed in section 11.3 of this dissertation – is subject to a greater dialectics of the cultural Same and the sacred Wholly Other.

The dialectic between cultural \(\alpha\rho\chi\eta\) and cultural \(\tau\varepsilon\lambda\omicron\omicron\zeta\) that constituted the “properly dialectical” level of the philosophical interpretation for Ricoeur,\textsuperscript{1650} functions at the level of the “Same” in terms of cultural being-here. The “archeology” and “teleology” of a subject as culturally situated are still focused on the human condition as coming from and going to somewhere. Although Ricoeur asserts that he is not able and not even willing to directly extrapolate reflective thought to its radical origins in being, he still maintains that the question of faith – which, according to \textit{On Interpretation}, belongs to the “Poetics of the Will” – “points to” the Wholly Other (\textit{le Tout-Autre}) that is examined in the theological realm of the Beginning and the End:

\begin{quote}
Compared to this archeology of myself and to this teleology of myself, genesis and eschatology are Wholly Other. To be sure, I speak of the Wholly Other only insofar as it addresses itself to me; and the kerygma, the glad tidings, is precisely that it addresses itself to me and ceases to be the Wholly Other. Of an absolute Wholly Other I know nothing at all. But by its very manner of approaching, of coming, it announces itself as the Wholly Other than the \(\alpha\rho\chi\eta\) and the \(\tau\varepsilon\lambda\omicron\omicron\zeta\) which I can conceptualize in reflective thought. It announces itself as Wholly Other by annihilating its radical otherness. […] This is where the question of faith becomes a hermeneutic question, for what annihilates itself in our flesh is the Wholly Other as \(\lambda\omicron\rho\omicron\omicron\zeta\).\textsuperscript{1651}
\end{quote}

The dialectical hermeneutic of culture itself is, according to Ricoeur, fully understandable only in relation to a dialectics of Genesis and of the Eschaton, that is, in a dramatization of human condition such that it surpasses it altogether.\textsuperscript{1652} This dramatization, or this

\textsuperscript{1649} Ricoeur 1965a, 334, 445. (342, 460).
\textsuperscript{1650} Ricoeur 1965a, 444. (459).
\textsuperscript{1652} Ricoeur 1957a, 250-251.; Ricoeur, Azouvi, & de Launay 1995, 253-254. (168-169); Ricoeur 1946, 27.
invocation of human speech as interpretation, is where the Wholly Other manifests itself culturally. As Ricoeur’s predecessor at the University of Chicago, Paul Tillich, phrased it: der tragende Gehalt der Kultur ist Religion und die notwendige Form der Religion ist die Kultur, “religion is the supporting substance of culture, and culture is the necessary form of religion.”\textsuperscript{1653} The radical Origin and the radical End become discernible through the archeology and the teleology of a human subject, which, in turn, become comprehensible by finding their ultimate limit in the radical Beginning and End.

If not totally graspable, the totality of being – approximated in the fullness of symbolic language – can be approached by means of dialectical hermeneutics: “Creation and eschatology present themselves as the horizon of my archeology and the horizon of my teleology.”\textsuperscript{1654} Unlike cultural creations, the horizons of radical Beginning and of radical End cannot become possessed objects; they are, nevertheless, approachable through the symbols of the sacred that objectify the sense of the transcendent Other by utilizing equivocal and yet contextualized expressions:

\textsuperscript{1653} Tillich 1924, 17. – Even though Ricoeur utilizes Tillich’s conceptions, he emphasizes that he still remains on the side of philosophy, and more precisely in the Kantian sphere of thought: “These last remarks [concerning the extension of the philosophy of action beyond the overly narrow limits of Kant’s practical philosophy] lead me to the question of the extension of my theory of symbolism in the sphere of the sacred. I will say first of all that this vocabulary is not mine but that of the philosophy of religion of Mircea Eliade and, up to a certain point, that of Paul Tillich. I assume it myself as one of the ‘places’ where the symbol exceeds the linguistic and semantic structure that ties it to metaphor. But, for me, this ‘place’ does not occupy some intellectual or spiritual intuition that would actually violate the Kantian asceticism of a philosophy of limits.” Ricoeur 1995l, 569.

\textsuperscript{1654} Ricoeur 1965a, 505. (526). – One mediation between these two realms, immanent and transcendent, is prophecy; a prophet is an archetypal figure of a “responsive self,” as Ricoeur maintains in the final 1986 Gifford lecture. Just as in On Interpretation, Ricoeur examines this theme sporadically in long texts such as The Symbolism of Evil, but his essay “Sentinel of Imminence” in Thinking Biblically offers a more thorough study of it. As the final appeal at the very end of the essay implies, the text demonstrates that even though philosophy always remains at the side of immanence, it becomes a part of this prophecy through the hermeneutics of its symbolic meaning. Ricoeur also argues this in his 1972 essay L’herméneutique du témoignage, which is included in Lectures 3. The two gems of Lectures 3 are, however, his two essays on the scope of philosophy as possible prophecy: Philosophie et prophétisme I & II were originally published already in the 1950s. Ricoeur & LaCocque 1998, 223-245. (165-183); Ricoeur 1965a, 478, 508. (496-497, 528-529); Ricoeur 1994, 118-122, 129-139, 153-185; Ricoeur 2008, 78-85. (Ricoeur 1995a, 262-267.) Cf. Kearney 2010a, 78-80.
From the viewpoint of the philosophy of reflection, which is a philosophy of immanence, the symbols of the sacred appear only as cultural factors mixed in with the figures of spirit. But at the same time these symbols designate the impact on culture of a reality that the movement of culture does not contain; they speak of the Wholly Other, of the Wholly Other than all history; in this way they exercise an attraction and a call upon the entire series of the figures of culture.\textsuperscript{1655}

Put differently, Ricoeur maintains in the final sections of \textit{On Interpretation} that the dialectics of the cultural Same and the sacred Wholly Other locates the human cultural understanding by showing its limits, and therefore also enables comprehension of the human condition: “The Cogito’s dependence on the ultimate, just as its dependence on its birth, its nature, its desire, is revealed only through symbols […] that function as [or supracultural] objects in addition to the world of culture.”\textsuperscript{1656} The culturally conditioned mode of being becomes relative to the Whole that encompasses and overwhelms the human comprehension; the cultural world is not the totality of being, but it is necessary for the human understanding of being. Just as the symbols of the sacred are not Being but “the symbolic exploration of our relationship to beings and to Being (\textit{notre rapport aux êtres et à l’Être}),”\textsuperscript{1657} it is in this cultural exercise of mytho-poetic expressivity that the birth of the meaning and the birth of an ethico-political self as having-also-encountered-the-Wholly-Other take place.

As \textit{On Interpretation} clarifies, Ricoeur’s earlier work on religious symbolism – \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} in particular – examined the “excess” of poetic expression that surpasses rational speculation and philosophical reflection. “A philosophical interpretation

\textsuperscript{1655} Ricoeur 1965a, 508. (529). – Ricoeur stresses, again, in the same context that he remains within the limits of philosophical reflection: “It is solely through its relation to the immanent teleology of the figures of culture that the sacred concerns this philosophy; the sacred is its eschatology; it is the horizon that reflection does not comprehend, does not encompass, but can only salute as that which quietly presents itself from afar.”

\textsuperscript{1656} Ricoeur 1965a, 508-510. (529-531). – Richard J. Bernstein discusses, in his very recent essay, Ricoeur’s conviction that “there is a pernicious cultural tendency to reify the Wholly Other - to make the sacred into some sort of divine object.” Bernstein 2013, 134-135.

\textsuperscript{1657} Ricoeur 1965a, 529. (551).
of symbols will never become absolute knowledge,” Ricoeur maintains; “the symbols of evil show in an exemplary way that there is always more in myths and symbols than in all of our philosophy.”\textsuperscript{1658} These “privileged symbols,” Ricoeur emphasizes in \textit{On Interpretation}, again, “teach us something decisive about the passage from a phenomenology of spirit to a phenomenology of the sacred,”\textsuperscript{1659} that is, of the dialectic between the cultural Same and the sacred Wholly Other. The inverted symbolism of the sacred in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} approaches the question of the totality of being in the form of fallen being or experienced evil – that is, from the viewpoint of having always already fallen.\textsuperscript{1660} This symbolism of evil is, nevertheless, as much a primordial expression of the metaphysical “excess,” or the Wholly Other, as the symbolism of the sacred.

The narrative character of myths, Ricoeur argues in \textit{The Symbolism of Evil}, points beyond itself to the mythical structure of an indivisible plenitude, or to a “cosmic whole” that is indicated in a “fundamental History” – historial, \textit{geschichtlich}, but not historical, \textit{historisch} 1661 – concerning the Beginning and the End.\textsuperscript{1662} This is the kerygmatic “primordial drama” from which the narrative form of one’s understanding of the world and the self originates:

The myths concerning the origin and the end of evil […] give us direct access to the primordially dramatic structure of the world of myths. We recall three fundamental characteristics ascribed above to the myths of evil: the concrete universality conferred upon human experience by means of archetypal

\textsuperscript{1658} Ricoeur 1965a, 506. (527).
\textsuperscript{1659} Ricoeur 1965a, 506. (527).
\textsuperscript{1660} Ricoeur 1960b, 13-16, 154-155, 158-159. (6-8, 163, 167-168). – \textit{The Symbolism of Evil} clarifies that in contrast to confession, for example, the mode of discourse pertinent to this condition of “experienced fall” is avowal (Ricoeur 1960b, 15, 46, 289-292, 325. (8, 42, 311-314, 350)). Ricoeur’s essay “Lamentation as Prayer” (in \textit{Thinking Biblically}) deepens these analyses by re-examining them under the notion of being “abandoned by God,” which, paradoxically, leads the suffering subject to a “questioning mode” of prayer that seeks God’s compassion in the face of evil, that is, “being with God” in the very act of lamentation. Cf. Ricoeur & LaCocque 1998, 279-304. (211-232).
\textsuperscript{1661} Cf. Ricoeur 1965a, 518-519. (540).
\textsuperscript{1662} Ricoeur 1960b, 157-161. (166-167, 169-170).
personages, the tension of an ideal history oriented from a Beginning toward an End, and finally the transition from an essential nature to an alienated history; these three functions of the myths of evil are three aspects of one and the same dramatic structure. Hence, the narrative form is neither secondary nor accidental, but primitive and essential. The myth performs its symbolic function by the specific means of narration because what it wants to express is already a drama. It is this primordial drama that opens up and discloses the hidden meaning of human experience; and so the myth that recounts it assumes the irreplaceable function of narration.

Just as a culture or a civilization has a “founding narration,” the transhistorical (or historical) mythical structure of the Beginning (Genesis) and the End (Eschaton) is the founding narration for the cultural condition. The “cosmic whole,” however, is discernible only through this narrated mythical structure that renders the concrete experience of being a living, acting, and suffering subject meaningful by placing it “into relation with the totality of meaning.”

Even David Stewart has to admit that it is “only through the mediation of these texts that we can have knowledge of God.” In spite the fact that it is plausible to insist that the question of religious language is at the heart of Ricoeur’s work, as Stewart does, there is no direct access to the sacred but only a distanciated, cultural one. As Ricoeur maintains in his 1957 essay “Faith and Culture,” the modern faith is that of a “third man,” or of a “cultivated Christian, believing Greek.” This faith of a secular age resides therefore in the dialectics of utopia and ideology that utilizes cultural imagination, Ricoeur argued in his 1969 colloquium presentation “L’herméneutique de la secularization: foi, idéologie, utopie.” The myths of evil as the inverted symbolism of the sacred, for example, re-

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1664 Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 149.
1665 Ricoeur 1960b, 160, 162. (169, 171).
1666 Stewart 1995, 438.
1667 Ricoeur 1957a, 246-247.
1668 Ricoeur 1976c, 50-51, 60-68. – Ricoeur argues in a 1967 essay “Urbanization and Secularization” that secularization is a cultural process that coincides with urbanization (whose essence is “a dense ramified network
enforce the limit between the cultural and its Other, but they also deepen the primordial
dialectic of the cultural Same and the sacred Wholly Other.

Even though this level of analysis – culture and its other – has been achieved
only at this point, this dissertation has already referred to *The Symbolism of Evil* and its
dialectical conceptions of the Other. Section 6.2 of this dissertation discussed this in
connection with “being recognized” as being, through symbols, “before an other,” or being
“before God” who loved us first. As I argued earlier, symbolic language in interpretation
makes us recognize ourselves, while revealing aspects of our being that are not directly
accessible to us. The dialectic of the Same and the Other, however, is unavoidable as I
maintained in section 3.1. The “first innocence,” or the ontological innocence of
experiencing the Covenant of the “cosmic whole,” is lost in the critical distanciation – in
“oblivion” or “forgetfulness” – endemic to culture and the cultural mode of being. The
“situation of modern culture” is de-centering and de-sacralizing, that is, the forgetfulness
(*l’oubli*) and “the loss of man himself insofar as he belongs to the sacred.” The sacred is

of interhuman relations”), the correlating technological organization (“the ‘metropolis’ is a ‘technopolis’”), and
the resulting laicization (that strips off the “mystical origins in the depth of the past” of human institutions).
The modern phenomenon of the city is, therefore, the venue for the “third man,” or for being secular, but it is
also his image or his face: “There is always an image of the city. Visualize the mythical images of the ‘civitas’;
the visible face of a heavenly patron (Babylon, Jerusalem, actually all of the civitates dei); and visualize also the
Greek identification of the city and the political unit (polis). But we have another and more modern image for
ourselves, a perception of the city which makes it the major witness to human energy: […] the city is the
complete artifact, the realized human project. This sign of human power is at the same time a sign of a force
essentially directed toward future. The city is always building, looking to its own future. The city is where man
perceives change as a human project, the place where man perceives his proper ‘modernity.’ […] The city is
truly the world which the gods have fled and where man is delivered unto himself, to the responsibility of total
expediency.” (Ricoeur 1974, 179-180, 184.) Following Ricoeur, the modern faith is the faith in the city instead
of the sacred. Instead of *Imago Dei* extended to the city as the “face of a heavenly patron,” the city has become

1669 Ricoeur 1960b, 55, 63-64. n15. (51-52, 61).
1670 Ricoeur 1960b, 325-326. (350-351).
therefore the Wholly Other whose radical otherness is revealed only after the loss of the
primordial innocence, the loss of the Covenant.\footnote{1672 Ricoeur 1960b, 12-13, 54, 61, 65, 71, 82. (5, 50, 58, 62, 69, 81).}

This radicalizing loss is not, however, as Ricoeur maintains in The Symbolism of
Evil, fully irreparable. “We moderns,” Ricoeur states, “aim at a second naïveté in and
through criticism.”\footnote{1673 Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (351).} The ontological richness of “the first innocence” and the state of
forgetfulness form a dialectic pair that calls for “understanding interpretation,”\footnote{1674 Ricoeur 1960b, 26-28, 325-326. (20-21, 349-350).} that is,
they call for a second innocence as the postcritical wondering of the “ciphers” that disclose
the fullness of cultural being in its limitedness.\footnote{1675 Ricoeur 1960b, 25-26, 326-328. (19, 350-353).} Put differently, cultural being as the
modern mode of being encounters its limits in the dialectics of the cultural Same and the
sacred Wholly Other. This is the message of the image Ricoeur reminds his readers of in The
Symbolism of Evil as well as later in Thinking Biblically: the encounter between Athens and
Jerusalem. This encounter, discussed in section 7.3 of this dissertation, not only “constitutes
the first stratum of our philosophical memory,” but it has become “the constitutive destiny
of our culture.”\footnote{1676 Ricoeur 1960b, 26-30. (20-23); Ricoeur & LaCocque 1998, 16-17, 336. (xvii-xviii, 331-332).} As Emmanuel Gabellieri also notices,\footnote{1677 Cf. Gabellieri 1998, 15-19, 22.} the conflict between Athens and
Jerusalem is not a struggle unto death but a symbol of a fruitful dialectic between the cultural
Same and the sacred Wholly Other that are recognized as cultural and as its Wholly Other
only in that critical dialectics.
We have responded above to the need of defining the ultimate limit of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics by outlining the dialectics of the Same and the Wholly Other. Yet again, I should note, we have reached a major culmination point in this lengthy discussion that has already gone way past the point of merely confirming the working theses set for this part in this dissertation. The idea of an indirectly recognizable etho-poetic nucleus of human culture that is a necessary condition for the possibility of an ethico-political self (theses 6-8) was discussed at length, and the latest examination served as an additional clarification of the general theme of the dissertation by pointing out its scope of application: even though culture functions as the means of self-understanding and recognition, that is, as the necessary historical condition of human self-consciousness, it by no means encompasses the total sphere of being. An ineffable element also remains in the human experience of being a

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1678 The limitedness of culture also becomes apparent in the light of “vertical recognition,” a theme to which I have subtly alluded in this chapter 15 of this dissertation. George H. Taylor has, in a recent essay, pointed out that before Course of Recognition (cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 307-310. (210-212).), Ricoeur examines the problem of political recognition in his 1996 essay “The Paradox of Authority.” The essay was later incorporated in Reflections on the Just (2001). Taylor emphasizes that Ricoeur’s continuing interest in the “paradox” or “enigma” of authority as both vertical and horizontal leads him to admit in Course of Recognition that “the vertical relation of authority [...] constitutes a thorn in the flesh of an enterprise like my own, deliberately limited to reciprocal forms of mutual recognition.” (G. H. Taylor 2013, 173. Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 310. (212.) Ricoeur’s essay explains in more detail why the “vertical relation” is such a “thorn” for his philosophy. Ricoeur maintains that political authority and recognition between a citizen and a state translates to the question of “vertical asymmetry,” that is, to the command-obey relation between the superior and the subordinate that, according to Ricoeur, in a modern context connects with the “crisis of legitimation.”

Referring to Hannah Arendt’s essay “What is Authority?,” Ricoeur contests her claim that authority “has vanished from the modern world” by proposing that the “original” enunciative authority has always taken use of institutional authority, and that the modern conception of authority is “rather the replacement of one historical configuration [namely the theological-political one] determined by a pairing of enunciation and institution by another configuration of the same two terms [that is, the rational-political one].” In order to preserve its “vertical” hierarchy and authority a state would have to lend support from the former religious paradigm, but the modern paradigm that rests on reason and publicity functions only at the horizontal level “of living together.” The diminution or removal of the vertical dimension results in, at the cultural level, the problem of the legitimation of political power – the religious authority cannot be converted to a secular one.

In terms of the theme of recognition, however, I would like to point out that this paradox or crisis of the foundation of political authority is a second order problematization of political recognition, as it approaches the required recognition between a citizen and a state from a metaperspective; Ricoeur asks if we ought, “taking advantage of the very idea of credit, like the later Rawls, admit a multiple foundation, a diversity of religious and secular, rational and Romantic traditions, that mutually recognize one another as cofoundational under the
living and suffering subject. This unnameable, incommunicable, or “untranslatable” points to some reality as the Wholly Other that remains a mystery for a reflecting human being.

Since our discussion has come to the last stance in this “post-Hegelian Kantian” understanding of the relation between the human mode of being and the totality of being, however, the question of the task of Ricoeur’s poetics now re-emerges. Not merely to complete this retrospective re-reading of Ricoeur’s work, but to reconnect with the beginning of this part four, which began as an examination of the poetic, let me add this last piece of the puzzle by concluding this retrospective analysis back to *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, in which Ricoeur originally presents the task of finding the poetic resolution for understanding the human condition and revealing the fundamental human possibilities.\(^{1679}\) Such a poetics would unconceal “the new realities that need to be discovered” of the “mysterious relation of participation in the Whole,”\(^{1680}\) or in “the order of creation.”\(^{1681}\)

Ultimately, Ricoeur argues, poetics would reveal the mystery of life:

> *Life (la vie) has an ambiguous meaning: it designates at the same time the animal order which is beneath and the whole surge coming from that which is higher than life. It is that which carries but also that which inspires \[viz. Latin *in-spirare*\]. In relation to the order of capabilities, it pertains at the same time to the order of limits and to the order of sources or creation. In this new sense life brings up a new method, namely, a “poetics” of will which we are here abstracting. One of the crucial, difficult problems posed by such “poetics” of double auspicies of the principle of ‘overlapping concensus’ and the ‘recognition of reasonable disagreements.’?*” According to Ricoeur, “within such a [cofoundational] framework with this double principle a role may be found for the authority of the Bible and that of ecclesiastical institutions – but not in such a way as to give rebirth to the lost paradigm of Christendom” (Ricoeur 2001c, 109-123. (93-105).)

Generally, then, Ricoeur’s aim is post-critical or “anatheistic” as Richard Kearney would comment on this issue. This post-critical approach that allows or recognizes the cultural is, in fact, explicitly admitted in *Course of Recognition*. Ricoeur states that he won’t examine the theme of proper vertical, that is, religious authority “in its full scope,” but instead “shall limit [him]self to the cultural aspect of authority \(l’aspect culturel de l’autorité\)” that brings about the whole paradox of institutionalized command-obey relations (Ricoeur 2004b, 308. (211).)

Again, therefore, even though culture functions as the means of self-understanding and recognition, it by no means encompasses the total sphere of being, and this limitedness is indicated, for example, in the “paradox” or “enigma” that the legitimacy of political authority constitutes.

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\(^{1679}\) Ricoeur 1949, 7, 443. (3, 471).


\(^{1681}\) Ricoeur 1949, 32-33. (30).
the will will be to know why the spontaneity of life from below (la vie d’en-bas) serves in turn as a metaphor for life from above (la vie d’en-haut), and what secret affinity unites those two meanings of the word “life.”  

The duality of life, at once carrying and inspiring – to rephrase the dialectic of the Same and the Other – remains an ambiguous mystery, but in spite of its ineffability it is not completely enclosed from human questioning.

The aspired poetics, however, would even reveal the “secret affinity” that connects the lower and the higher. The “spontaneity of life from below,” or βίος, as Ricoeur states, is a “clearing” in the sense of “a metaphor for life from above,” that is, of ποίησις that refigures and transfigures the experienced reality and provides a meaning for that mute life. Ultimately, the forms and the elements of life function as metaphors that enable symbolic reflection of the Whole surpassing individual existence. In contrast to such reflection that utilizes mytho-symbolic expressivity in taking nature as a clue for the “higher,” The Voluntary and the Involuntary maintains, however, that the full poetic approach would already “see the open,” or the presence of freedom, in myths:

A “poetics” of the will always finds the myth of the animal as the myth of innocence and freedom from care: “We’re not at one”, says Rilke in the Fourth Elegy, “we’ve no instinctive knowledge, like migratory birds.” The myth of the animal which “sees the open,” of the birds who neither sow nor reap, the myth of the lilies of the field, the myth of the child to which we cannot literally return – all these myths are parables, similes, in which the presence of freedom points through ciphers (par chiffre) to a certain beyond-the-self.

Put differently, Ricoeur states in a Jaspersian manner that the self is found in the poetic constitution, but only indirectly; it is only through the ciphers from beyond-the-self (au-delà
that this can be done. This is why Ricoeur maintains that “a philosophy of the subject and a philosophy of Transcendence – which is what a philosophy of man’s limitations is in the last resort – are both determined in one and the same movement.”1685 The self (the Same) and the beyond-the-self (the Other), in other words, would be found in each other in the poetics of being, because that poetics would altogether abolish the need for any philosophy of Transcendence since it already is in the full presence of this Trancendence: “A genuine Transcendence is more than a limit concept: it is a presence which brings about a true revolution in the theory of subjectivity. It introduces into it a radically new dimension, the poetic dimension.”1686 The poetics of being is, in sum, undivided participation with the beyond-the-self, in the full spontaneity of “life from above.”

It is apparent, however, that Ricoeur’s methodological capacities are far more limited. Even though from the poetic point of view “the leap from the self to existence and the leap to the being of Transcendence are but one and the same philosophical act,”1687 he has to acknowledge – in a distinctly Kierkegaardian tone of voice1688 – that philosophy does fragmenting knowledge. A unity of creation might be discovered by an entirely different dimension of consciousness than that which proceeds to ‘regional eidoetics’ of the Cogito and of nature. I, too, am a reader of ciphers, as Jaspers puts it. It is not accidental that a unity of inspiration animates the great medieval cosmologies: it is a unique desire which starts with God and returns to God through all the degrees of being. This unity, lost as knowledge, must be rediscovered in some other way in the ‘poetics’ of the will.” Ricoeur 1949, 399. (425).

1685 Ricoeur 1949, 440. (468).
1686 Ricoeur 1949, 456. (486).
1687 Ricoeur 1949, 440. (468).
1688 In his Concluding Scientific Postscript Kierkegaard discusses the need for ceaselessly repeated transition from ethical to religious subjectivity by using the famous notion of a “leap.” The term, however, should not cloud Kierkegaard’s actual point that concerns the unceasing becoming a self, or an authentic subject, by constantly placing, as if breaking from thinking that is mediated, one’s faith or interest in the actuality of life that realizes one’s ultimate potentialities: “To ask aesthetically and intellectually about actuality is a misunderstanding; asking ethically about another person’s actuality is a misunderstanding, since only one’s own is to be asked about. Here that in which faith (sensu strictissimo, which refers to something historical) differs from the aesthetic, the intellectual, the ethical, comes to light. To ask with infinite interest about an actuality that is not one’s own is to want to believe, and expresses, the paradoxical relation to the paradox. To ask aesthetically in this way cannot be done except thoughtlessly since, aesthetically, possibility is higher than reality; nor intellectually since, intellectually, possibility is higher than actuality; nor even ethically, since the individual has an infinite interest solely in his own actuality. – Faith’s analogy to the ethical is the infinite interestedness,
not reach this level but falls short in gaining such ontological fullness of the Whole. “From the point of view of a [phenomenological] doctrine of subjectivity,” Ricoeur admits in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, “the movement of deepening and reflection remains another leap, the leap towards the Wholly Other.” The indirect reflection, even as allowing certain “clearings,” can not avoid the struggle of interpreting the ciphers that first of all need to be conceived as the ciphers of the “higher” that always remains in the mode of otherness. Reflection, in other words, does not reach the onto-existential fullness but the threshold of that which is beyond full comprehension as it is the possible. The only option left for Ricoeur to use is to hold fast to the notion that “the spontaneity of life below serves as a metaphor for higher life,” even without fully knowing the reasons for their affinity.

Ricoeur’s prime wager, I propose, is therefore to maintain that philosophical reflection moves “from the lower to the higher,” that is, from the concrete, culturally mediated experience of a living and suffering subject to the threshold of the Wholly Other, or of making all that is possible real in the Other. Ricoeur’s philosophy of the Wholly Other, inasmuch as it exists, is “reversed” in its reading the ciphers from subjectivity to Transcendence as he himself characterizes it:

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something in which the believer differs absolutely from an aesthete, but in which he differs in turn from an ethicist through being infinitely interested in the actuality of another. [...] If existing cannot be thought and the one who exists nevertheless thinks, [...] what does this mean? It means that he thinks intermittently; he thinks before and he thinks after. Absolute continuity in thought is beyond him. [...] God does not think, he creates; God does not exist, he is eternal. Human beings think and exist, and existence separates thought and being, holds them apart from each other in succession. [...] The transition from possibility to actuality is, as Aristotle rightly says, κίνησις, a movement. This just cannot be said in the language of abstraction, or understood in it, for that language cannot give to movement either time or space, which presuppose it, or which it presupposes. There is a coming to a stop, a leap. If someone says that this is only because I am thinking of something definite and not abstracting, for otherwise I would see that there was no break, my repeated answer is: Quite right, considered abstractly there is no break, but then no transition either, for considered abstractly, everything is. On the other hand when time is given to movement by existence and I follow suit, then the leap appears in the way that a leap can appear: that it might come or it has been. [...] Faith is said to be the immediate; thinking [that is unavoidable] cancels the immediate.” Kierkegaard 2009, 271, 275, 278, 287, 291. Cf. Adams 2006.

1689 Ricoeur 1949, 440. (468).
We clearly reject the pretension of an overly zealous apologetics which would pretend to derive God from nature [like Thomism] or from subjectivity [like Cartesianism] by a simple rational implication. Thus we shall show rather the reverse impact of a philosophy of Transcendence (whose development we shall reserve for another, that is, some later work) on a philosophy of subjectivity. Our plan is limited to showing how, by starting with such a philosophy of Transcendence, philosophy of subjectivity is completed as a doctrine of conciliation. But by showing — rather than demonstrating — this completion, we are reading this philosophy of Transcendence, which erupts from above downward, in reverse. In reading it thus from the lower to the higher we shall discover the *response* of subjectivity [as in Marcel] to an appeal or a grasp which surpasses it.\footnote{1691}

The reversal, in other words, is to consent to the limits of human comprehension and freedom,\footnote{1692} and admit the possibilities given in the cultural movement towards but not into Transcendence; these possibilities as “responses” from “lower to the higher,” or human reactions to being recognized by the Essential, are, nevertheless, the fundamental human possibilities Ricoeur has set to analyze.\footnote{1693}

The fundamental human possibilities as “responses” or reactions to “being recognized” highlight the primordial human passivity which Ricoeur also discusses in the very end of his own “course” of recognition.\footnote{1694} Put differently, Ricoeur does not argue for pure activity void of institution but for the permanence of the task that is the response to being situated in a culture.\footnote{1695} Consciousness and self-understanding are not immediate but reflective, that is, they are received: “I am not the center of being. I myself am only one being among beings. The whole which includes me is the parable of being which I am not. I

\footnote{1691}{Ricoeur 1949, 440-441. (468-469). Cf. Marcel 1991, 38. – Gallagher summarizes Marcel’s notion of “response” in connection to another key term Marcel uses, namely, “creative fidelity”; the self-creation of the human self “is only conceivable in terms of a response to an invocation.” Gallagher 1962, 71.}

\footnote{1692}{Cf. Ricoeur 1949, 454-456. (484-486).}

\footnote{1693}{Ricoeur 1949, 7, 180-186. (3, 190-197).}

\footnote{1694}{Cf. Ricoeur 2004b, 10, 35, 359. (x, 19, 248).}

\footnote{1695}{Cf. Marcelo 2011. – I respond to Marcelo’s proposed reading of Ricoeur in chapter 5.}
come from all to myself as from Transcendence to existence.”

Consenting to this first truth of being recognized, and responding to this recognition means – I emphasize – consenting to one’s human condition as “after.” Even if one would not agree with Ricoeur’s thesis in the penultimate 1986 Gifford lecture that the self is refigurated in the mirror of the Scriptures and is therefore a “responsive self,” it is still the case that experienced life, in its duality of carrying and inspiring, precedes and surpasses me: “I experience life as having begun before I began anything whatever. Anything I can decide comes after the beginning – and before the end.”

Consenting to one’s human condition, in other words, is at least consenting to the necessity of being born. As Ricoeur summarizes: 

"Like birth, all necessity is prior to any actual act of the ‘I’ which reflects on itself.”

The necessity of being born “from all to myself” is nothing else but the culturally mediated becoming a self who is always “in the process of beginning to be free,” or in the process of “becoming what you are,” that is, in realizing one’s self as l’homme capable de faillir.

This consenting of the self, Ricoeur maintains, is therefore the counterpart of the admiration of the whole that is “the incantation of poetry which delivers me from myself

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1696 Ricoeur 1949, 444. (472). – Ricoeur maintains that the “coming from all to myself as from Transcendence to existence” is total and includes all epistemological and metaphysical levels (such as the ones explicated by Berkeley’s subjective idealism, Platon’s rationalist idealism, Kant’s transcendental idealism, and religion): “The world itself is ‘perfect’ until I think and wish, for it was there before I became aware of myself as perceiving. Innateness of knowledge, according to Plato, is attested in the myth of prior life, of reminiscence. The non-temporal nature of the intelligible character according to Kant expresses itself as a [transcendental] choice of myself prior to my life; finally, Divine Omnipotence (la Toute-Puissance divine), which is like a transcendent beginning, is the primordial past of predestination. This will be one of the themes of the Poetics of the Will.” Ricoeur 1949, 415. n1. (441).


1698 Ricoeur 1949, 415. (441).

1699 Ricoeur 1949, 415. (441).

1700 Ricoeur 1949, 415. (441).

1701 Ricoeur 1949, 450. (479).
and purifies me.” The dialectical circularity of consent and this admiration – the dialectics of the Same and the Wholly Other fully replayed at the level of culture – leads us to understand why Ricoeur stated in *Oneself as Another* that “philosophical discourse comes to an end” with the “aporia of the Other”: Consent by itself remains on an ethical and prosaic level; admiration is the cutting edge of the soul, lyric and poetic. This then is how incantation aids the will. It delivers it in the first place from its own refusal [of the illusion of sovereignty and of the denial of being conditioned] by humbling it. At the core of refusal is defiance and defiance is the fault. To refuse necessity from below is to defy Transcendence. I have to discover the Wholly Other which at first repels me [viz. Otto’s *tremendum*]. Here lies the most fundamental choice of philosophy: either God or I. Either philosophy begins with the fundamental contrast between the Cogito and Being in itself (*l’Être en soi*), or it begins with the self-positing of consciousness whose corollary is scorn of empirical being. But poetry does not think in concepts: it does not posit God as a limiting concept but veils him in myths.

Philosophy thinks in concepts, and this “self-positing” that easily leads to “conceptual hybris” is its ultimate failure. *La philosophie arrive toujours trop tard,* Ricoeur maintains; “Philosophy always comes on the scene too late.” Poetry and mytho-symbolic language do not do so; as interpretations calling for interpretation, they indirectly reveal for a reflective mind the threshold of the Wholly Other as the unsurpassable contrast and dialectic “between the Cogito and Being in itself.” This is why the preface to *Thinking Biblically* states that the pre-dogmatic forms of discourse, or such religious modes of thought “where the metaphorical language of poetry is the closest secular equivalent [to religious expressions],

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1702 Ricoeur 1949, 448. (476-477).
1704 Ricoeur 1949, 449. (477).
1706 Ricoeur 2001a, 118. (Ricoeur 1995a, 208.)
[...] give rise to philosophical thinking. Philosophy, Ricoeur maintains, is a response too, albeit a secondary and a limited one.

The metaphysical limitedness of thought, that becomes a struggle, does not have to imply that meaning is not achievable. Even though *la philosophie reste philosophie*, "philosophy remains philosophy," Ricoeur states in his 1948 essay "La condition du philosophe chretien" (included in *Lectures 3: aux frontières de la philosophie*) that "philosophy remains therefore free to the extent that neither this nor that philosophy can ever call itself *Christian*; there is no orthodoxy in philosophy." This conviction – or, rather, his "subtle blending of conviction and critique" – is restated in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* by maintaining that "in myth a philosophy of man and a philosophy of the Whole encounter each other in symbolization." *This gift of etho-poetic understanding* is given in and through the continuous interpretation of the symbols of consent and admiration, that is, through cultural mediation that, nevertheless, has confronted the hyperethical Wholly Other in its superabundance. Besides their struggle, there is a horizon that is common to philosophy and religion: love and hope.

Culture is not, therefore, only "the other" to the Wholly Other, or the "loss" of being in being; as *Course of Recognition* also affirms, there is hope because of the struggle.

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1708 Ricoeur 1994, 240.
1709 Ricoeur, Azouvi, & de Launay 1995, 11. (2).
1710 Ricoeur 1949, 449. (478).
1713 Ricoeur 2004b, 354. (245). Cf. Madison 1995, 89. – In contrast to Marcelo, who, in accordance with his proposition of "pure ethics," claims that Ricoeur’s "ethical utopia of recognition" is "driven by hope," I merely point out that the struggle implies hope that, perhaps, can not be found as "pure" either but only indirectly in terms of "resistance" (as *The Symbolism of Evil* analyzes, not the sacred that is not directly approachable or expressible, but the evil that is experienced and then symbolized). Cf. Marcelo 2011, 124.
In a short passage in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, that for some reason was left untranslated in English, Ricoeur puts this conviction in other words: “The mythics of the [origin of the] world lends to the doctrine of man the great metaphor of quasi-consent. That is why it isn't futile to invoke the inhuman to achieve the human.” Put differently, the human is achievable only in the invocation or admiration of the inhuman, or the Wholly Other that is enunciated in the myths of the origin of the world – the myths themselves function as if (that is, quasi) metaphors of consent. This invocation, in the final analysis, adds hope to consent, since “admiration is possible because the world is an analogy of Transcendence, but hope is necessary because the world is quite other than Transcendence.” Facing the “loss” of being and meaning, the truly human response has to imply hope.

Consent, Ricoeur argues in *The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, does have “its ‘poetic’ root in hope,” just as “decision [has its root] in love, and effort in the gift of power.” Ricoeur’s final perspective on the human world is, therefore, a hope – if not purely agapeic, still loving – that waits for the less constrained realization of possibilities:

Hope which awaits deliverance is consent put to the test. Immanent patience – which lives in the running – is a manifestation of transcending hope. [...] Though a fleeting distance always separates freedom from necessity, at least hope wills to convert all hostility into a fraternal tension within the unity of creation.

As also argued by *Course of Recognition*, in the reality of the multifaceted dialectics of life, between love and justice, hope is the poetic thrust of cultural existence; there is freedom.
only in the view of hope. This hope that “awaits deliverance” is the transcultural element that overcomes alienation by reassuring that aspects of a tolerating and sustainable world are already, in “fraternal tension,” being experienced in cultural life. A culture that has not consented to the Wholly Other, or a culture without hope, is therefore unthinkable, because it is meaningless. Just as lamentation, culture is a prayer seeking compassion in the face of struggle for agapeic generosity, that is, in the face of being capable of falling.

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1719 Cf. Gueye 2006, 81, 92.
16. Reflections on re-con-naissance

As a response to the puzzlement at the end of part three regarding the poetic constitution of culture, this current part focused on the gift of etho-poetic understanding that is given in and through culture. Widening the scope of the triad of knowing, acting, and cultural affections analyzed in chapter 10, this part four examined the poetics of meaning/being (chapter 13), the poetics of action (chapter 14), and the “poetics of the good” (chapter 15) that, as manifested in cultural ethos, is not reducible to a pure “poetics of agon.”

To summarize, Ricoeur maintains, first, that poetic redescription as the birth of meaning is the becoming of our being in the figurative merging of interpretation and reflection. Second, this critical model of interpretation as explanation-understanding extends from linguistic discourses to social human action that in the final analysis is always cultural. Third, social agency brings about the social responsibility of a “real citizen” as concitoyen, or the recognizing of one’s self as ethico-political through the cultural context in which the self is situated. Culture, therefore, has a dual meaning as both the unsurpassable condition (viz. Cassirer’s symbolic forms) and as the context of experienced life (viz. Geertz’s “thick” description of culture).

The course of this analysis has thus enabled us to notice the culturally facilitated birth (naissance) of an ethico-political self that is capable of recognizing him or herself as such. For this reason, this part has concluded our analytic reading of Ricoeur. After having progressed in parts three and four chronologically, in order to demonstrate (and not merely assert as in parts one and two) that Ricoeur’s philosophy constitutes a hermeneutic of culture, the end of chapter 15 confirmed the results of this analysis by making a double reversal: that of the question of culture to that of its “other” as well as that

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1720 Ricoeur 1990, 37. (25); Ricoeur 2001b, 471. (Ricoeur 2010b, 37.).
of the direction of reading Ricoeur’s work in retrospection. The result of this two-sided double reading – both chronological and retrospective, both “cultural” and “other” – can be summarized by focusing on the question that remains after examining the necessary preserved of the Wholly Other: is it not the case that the Poetic as an opening toward the Wholly Other indeed surpasses the hermeneutic of culture in Ricoeur’s philosophy?

It could well be argued that the thesis of Ricoeur’s philosophy as a philosophy of culture loses its value in the face of the Wholly Other and the turn to a poetic expression of the Wholly Other. Indeed, a culture without a notion of the Wholly Other is a culture without the means of survival; this notion is the ground for the transcending hope that “wills to convert all hostility into a fraternal tension within the unity of creation.”1721 The Wholly Other, therefore, seems to be the one Ricoeur is seeking as the ultimate ground of fundamental human possibilities. I am certain that scholars focusing on Ricoeur’s philosophy of religion, for example, would not only agree but insist that this indeed is the case. I maintain, however, that it would be too hasty a conclusion to refute Ricoeur’s work as a hermeneutic of culture. Instead, I argue, the notion of the Wholly Other reaffirms the necessity of such a hermeneutic; the Wholly Other, or “the Essential,” is not directly perceivable but only in a culture.

Ricoeur stresses in a Tillichian manner that even though the Wholly Other, as the source of etho-poetics, is the grounding of culture, culture is still the necessary form of any expressivity, including one of religion: “Just as everyone is born into a language (chacun naît dans une langue) and accedes to other languages only by a second apprenticeship, and most often, only through translation,” in Living up to Death he maintains that “the religious

1721 Ricoeur 1949, 452. (480-481).
exists culturally only as articulated in the language and code of a historical religion.”

Echoing the conviction already expressed in the 1966 essay “The Problem of Double Meaning,” namely, that “the most poetic, the most ‘sacred,’ symbolism works with the same semic variables as the most banal word in the dictionary,” Ricoeur disputes the possibility of any a-cultural expressivity. “Theology,” Ricoeur thus maintains in History and Truth, “is of necessity a cultural act which interferes with the whole cultural life of a nation or a civilization.” Arguing this, Ricoeur reiterates the claim we have seen in the closing of chapter 15: the necessity of culture as the condition for the approximating expression of the Wholly Other.

Emmanuel Gabellieri maintains, therefore, that Ricoeur’s hermeneutic principle seems to be la présence cachée du Verbe présent en toute culture, “the concealed presence of the Word in all culture.” The Wholly Other can only be presented as “concealed” in culture, as the culturally incarnated Word. “The path of the religious” – to borrow the subtitle of Ricoeur’s lecture published in Qu’est-ce que la culture? (2001) – is therefore, indeed, a “difficult” one:

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1722 Ricoeur, Abel, & Goldenstein 2007, 44. (15). Cf. Ricoeur 1994, 35-40, 42-45, 60-62, 64-67, 235-243. – Ricoeur clarifies in his 1975 essay “Biblical Hermeneutics” that the poetic function of language facilitates religious expressions: “[I] might have left the impression that religious language is a variety of poetic language and I will assume that characterization up to a certain point, on the condition that we do not identify ‘poetic’ and ‘aesthetic’ and that we respect the scope of the poetic function such as I have defined it, namely, as the power of making the redescription of reality correspond with the power of bringing the fictions of the imagination to speech. Because the poetic function of discourse was conceived in this way, the religious language of the parables is an instance of poetic language. However it is precisely on the basis of poetics that religious language reveals its specific character to the extent that the poetic function can appear, in an inverse sense, as the medium or the Organum of religious language.” Ricoeur 1975a, 107.

1723 Ricoeur 1969, 79. (77).

1724 Ricoeur 1967a, 178. (177); Ricoeur 1975a, 129-145. – The fact that theology is a cultural expression of religious truth, however, does not have to mean that theology or religion could not function as a cultural critique that opposes itself to the immanent human pursuits; they are secondary in the light of the transcendent authority of theology that promotes a supracultural communal existence. Cf. Ricoeur 1967a, 179-180. (178-179).

The idea of the groundless ground (l'idée de fond sans fond), the foundation in abyss, remains a limit-idea for the understanding. And the feelings themselves relative to the foundation go on to take shape within a framework of high culture (dans un cadre de haute culture), there to be articulated, each time differently, in what I would call a poetics of the good. The verdict must be accepted: the forms of the religious share the same state of dispersion and confusion as languages and cultures, the state recognized in the Babel myth.\footnote{Ricoeur 2001b, 471. (Ricoeur 2010b, 37.). Cf. Ricoeur 1946, 32-36. – Johann Michel discusses the term “fond d'être” in connection with Spinoza’s term “Conatus,” and also responds to Robert Midrashi’s critical objections to Ricoeur. Michel 2006, 106-119.}

As the human comprehension is limited, just as Kant argued, it is not possible to have direct intellectual intuition of the “Essential” that remains Wholly Other. The connection established at the level of affection, too, requires articulation as culture as well as its reappropriation – in Kantian terms, empirically grounded intuition. The notion of the Wholly Other, or the Limit, therefore reaffirms the necessity of a hermeneutic of culture. For philosophy, the question of foundational appropriation that always remains cultural is unavoidable.

Ricoeur’s terminology of the “groundless ground” brings us to a brief closing evaluation of his relation to Martin Heidegger. As we have seen, in their respective attempts to philosophically clarify this “groundless ground,” both thinkers make conceptual use of ποίησις. Heidegger’s notion of the poetic, however, does not match up with that of Ricoeur.

In contrast to Ricoeur who adopts an indirect path in acquiring quasi-poetic comprehension – a hermeneutic of culture that takes the cultural realm of objects as the symbol of the “Essential” – Heidegger remains critical of such an effort. The regained naïveté, Ricoeur maintains, can only be secondary or postcritical, and not original. Ricoeur’s critical hermeneutics, therefore, functions only at the cultural level, whereas Heidegger’s ontological hermeneutics pushes for more than just “seeing the Open.” The search for the birth of meaning, however, unites the two thinkers, and for this reason Ricoeur admits that despite
all criticism he philosophizes “with” Heidegger, albeit “after” him. The philosophy “after Heidegger,” proposed by Ricoeur, includes the “movement of return” that – in contrast to Heidegger’s suspicion of culture and his neglect of ethics – comprises a hermeneutic of ethico-political culture that is the only possible means for examining the becoming of an authentic subject in the concreteness of living, acting, and suffering.1727

In terms of the nine theses argued at the end of part one, it has then become possible to maintain that Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture not only recasts his relations to Hegel and Kant, but also to Heidegger (thesis 4). In addition, this current part allows us to uphold that the foundational etho-poetic nucleus of human culture can be found (only) indirectly in and by culture as an objectified reality (thesis 6). As I argued in thesis 7, this poetic nucleus, as an opening up of language to a possible ἐθῶς, is therefore a necessary condition for the possibility of an ethico-political self-understanding. Put differently, the actualization of this ethico-political understanding is the mutualizing “course of recognition” for all living, acting, and suffering subjects, and Ricoeur’s term “reconnaissance” should therefore be literally understood as recon-naisance, that is, as “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject” (thesis 8). The hermeneutical task of achieving a self in interpretative appropriation is facilitated only by cultural “naissance” over and above one’s natural birth. It is only in such cultural dwelling that self-recognition is possible for a human being.

1727 I should note that the current part four, therefore, also affirms Richard Kearney’s reading of narrative self-identity. In his own analysis of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics, Kearney maintains that there are “fundamental socialization processes through which a person acquires a self-identity capable of projecting a narrative into the world in which it is both an author and an actor.” This leads him to recognize that the “critical application of a self’s cultural figures to itself is a necessary moment in the hermeneutics of identity,” and that “narrative understanding is ethical because it is answerable to something beyond itself, so that even where it knows no censure (within the text), it knows responsibility.” Kearney 2004, 109, 112.
Culture, as a condition and as a context of dwelling, should be understood as the condition for the birth (naissance) of an ethico-political self in the reappropriation of laborious cultural formation or figuration. Culture, in brief, is the condition and the context of the fundamental human possibilities; the figure of being human is painted on the canvas of culture.

Culture is a condition: comme la naissance, toute nécessité est antérieure à l’acte même du “je” qui se réfléchit soi-même – “as birth, all necessity is prior to any actual act of the ‘I’ which reflects on itself.”

Culture is a context of dwelling: the necessity of being born “from all to myself” is the culturally mediated becoming to a self who is always “in the process of beginning to be free,” or in the process of “becoming what you are.” This unceasing becoming is the process of realizing oneself as l’homme capable de faillir in the reappropriation of one’s cultural world through the appropriation of one’s cultural works.

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1728 Ricoeur 1949, 7. (3).
1729 Ricoeur 1949, 415. (441).
1730 Ricoeur 1949, 415. (441).
1731 Ricoeur 1949, 450. (479).
Part V

The Fifth Act: *Re-con-naissance*
The aim of this fifth part differs from the introductory purpose of the first, the assertoric function of the second, and the analytic reading in the third and fourth parts of this dissertation (which responded to the claims made in the first two parts). In a way, the current part is distinct from, albeit still rooted in the whole previous discussion. This part, as I proposed in part one, argues that the critical moments of reconfiguration – propaedeutically explained in section 3.3 – are readable as the postcritical moments of re-, con-, and naissance. The current part five, put differently, rests on Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics but it also takes distance from it as its application, since, paradoxically, it reveals at the same time the depth structure of that very same hermeneutics.

In order to explain myself, let me adopt a peculiar “dramatic” point of view. First, there has been a train of thought running through the dissertation that so far has not been developed in our discussion – this path is indicated in the title of this part five as the “fifth act.” When focusing on action in modern dramatic poetry, Hegel claims in his Aesthetics that “the English, the French, and the Germans in the main generally divide a drama into five acts, where exposition falls into the first, while the three intervening acts detail the quarrels and reactions, complications, and struggles of the opposing parties, so that finally the fifth alone brings the confrontation to a complete conclusion.” Following Hegel’s insight, I have structured this dissertation to reflect the five-part exposition of a dramatic narrative. Instead of merely concluding, this last part functions “epilogically” as the fifth act of a play – written for English-speaking readers, but elaborating the thoughts of French and German philosophers. The decision to structure this work in this manner follows not only from respect for the shared conventions of the cultural-linguistic realms Hegel mentions, but also adds the hope that in this manner a poetic interplay, which places us

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1732 Hegel 2000, 1170.
at the origin of our cultural being, is set free to “re-co-ignite”\textsuperscript{1733} itself at the core of this academic work.

Second, I find strong indications in Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics that support, and even firmly suggest, the adoption of this kind of dramatic structure. Let us think, for example, of the way Ricoeur structures his own works. As I have argued elsewhere,\textsuperscript{1734} the surprise Ricoeur provides for his readers in the postscript (rather than conclusion, he insists\textsuperscript{1735}) of the whole of \textit{Time and Narrative} relates to pointing out the “hermeneutic gaps” in the course of the foregone discussion. Both the different levels of the aporetics of time and the replies of the poetics of narrative “constitute a meaningful constellation,” Ricoeur admits, but they do not form “a binding chain.”\textsuperscript{1736} Ricoeur is clear in stating that the move from one level of argumentation to another is something that is not propelled by the text itself.

Ricoeur’s remark in \textit{Time and Narrative III} pointing to \textit{the hermeneutic action of the present reader} provides the \textit{grande finale} in the search not only for Ricoeur’s conception of temporality, but also that of narrative interpretation. Even though the text includes hundreds of pages of analysis of different time conceptions, there is no traditional scholarly definition of time to be found at the end of the long text itself. Instead, the time conception set down by Ricoeur to demonstrate his conception of time is \textit{refigured by the reader} with Ricoeur’s lengthy and multifarious argument, that is, in the act of appropriative reading of the work itself. The whole of Ricoeur’s investigation, in fact, has been guided by the process of

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  \item \textsuperscript{1733} I thank Professor Oliva Blanchette for suggesting this coinage as an attempt to express the key term “re-con-naissance” in English language in such a manner that would avoid reverting to the overtly cognitive connotation of the term “re-cognition.”
  \item \textsuperscript{1734} Helenius 2012b, 335-342.
  \item \textsuperscript{1735} Ricoeur 1985, 349. (331. n1).
  \item \textsuperscript{1736} Ricoeur 1985, 391. (274).
\end{itemize}
reconfiguration, or the “threefold mimesis” – the “action [of the reader] is represented in the play by the plot,” as Ricoeur’s interpretation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* could be formulated.

Ricoeur alerts his own readers at the outset, in the very first pages of *Time and Narrative I*, that his aim is to dwell dramatically “in the field of action and of its temporal values.” This means, effectively, that he grafts a long and harduous argument with a notable amount of detours just to emphasize the experience that reading as action is interpretation: “I see in the plots we invent the privileged means by which we re-configure our confused, unformed, and at the limit mute temporal experience.” As if this instruction were not enough, Ricoeur emphasizes in his propaedeutic analysis of *mimesis*, or of re-figuration, that written works consist “of holes, lacunae, zones of indetermination,” and that “it is the reader, almost abandoned by the work, who carries the burden of emplotment.”

These notifications or refined warnings of textual “lacunae” are then cashed out at the end of *Time and Narrative III* when explaining the trick in the postscript that Ricoeur adds to his almost published trilogy:

> Let us cast one final glance over the path we have covered. [...] Indeed, nothing obliges us [as the readers of this work] to pass from the notion of narrative identity to that of the idea of the unity of history, then to the confession of the limits of narrative in the face of the mystery of time that envelopes us. In one sense, the pertinence of the reply of narrative to the aporias of time diminishes as we move from one stage to the next, to the point where time seems to emerge victorious from the struggle, after having been held captive in the lines of the plot. It is good that it should be so.

Put differently, what a reader of Ricoeur’s voluminous *Time and Narrative* has at the end of the completed whole is the *hermeneutic action of the reader himself* that provides both a resolution

\[1737\] Aristotle 1984, 1449b-1450a.14. (*Poetics*).
to the aporias and some adequacy to the inquiry: a κάθαρσις in the very basic sense of the term as Ricoeur maintains.\textsuperscript{1742} Although cast in the form of a philosophical work, Ricoeur actually presents in \textit{Time and Narrative} – with the generous aid of his reader-participants – the reduplication of a tragedy, in which the reader has played the role of a tragic hero.\textsuperscript{1743} The actual hermeneutic process of reconfiguration that is brought to a semi-closure in the reader’s act of refiguration, in other words, is the “poetic solution” Ricoeur repeatedly purports to be seeking in this highly intelligent drama.\textsuperscript{1744}

It is a hermeneutic task that a reader faces with \textit{Time and Narrative}, although the text itself seems to chain its reader mostly to the rigorous examination at the analytical level of the work. “Let us leave the scholarly exegetes to their scholarly naivety,” Ricoeur proclaims in \textit{Critique and Conviction}, however.\textsuperscript{1745} The positive result is gained, paradoxically, in the following of the argument that ends up with the frustration of the “inscrutability of time.”\textsuperscript{1746} The Gadamerian play of being played,\textsuperscript{1747} or the author-text-reader interaction in the reading of \textit{Time and Narrative}, however, is the positive outcome Ricoeur has sought: it is the manifestation of the human capacity for interpretative, creative action that is itself both narrative and temporal. The reader has been played poetically by the horizon of expectation arising from the text, but the same reader has been playing poetically in the space of his or her own unique experience that is opened up by his own interpretation. The work was designed, as a \textit{poetic demonstration}, to bring out in the Open the creative human refiguration of the world of living, acting and suffering through the appropriation of the text.

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  \item \textsuperscript{1743} Cf. Kaelin 1995, 239-240. – Eugene Kaelin analyzes the cathartic aspect of Ricoeur’s philosophy, but remains in a scholarly mode without being explicit that he too is a reader of Ricoeur’s work, and therefore undergoing the same cathartic process of which he writes.
  \item \textsuperscript{1744} Ricoeur 1983, 11-13, 103-105, 110, 128-129. (ix-xi, 66-67, 71, 86); Ricoeur 1985, 10. (4).
  \item \textsuperscript{1745} Ricoeur, Azouvi, & de Launay 1995, 278. (186).
  \item \textsuperscript{1746} Ricoeur 1985, 374. (261).
  \item \textsuperscript{1747} Cf. Ricoeur 1995j, 284.; Valdes 1995, 275-276.
\end{itemize}
Getting back to this dissertation, then, I maintain that Ricoeur’s poetic demonstration of reconfiguration is also our περιπέτεια and αναγνώσις, a reversal and a discovery, for “readers” in general, and for those of this work on cultural re-con-naissance in particular. Following Ricoeur’s ingenious plan of letting the reader provide the unity of μύθος or emplotment, I have also tried to demonstrate the unending process of reconfiguration and “reading” as our interpretative action, which necessarily requires the help of culture both as a condition and as a context. I have maintained that Ricoeur ultimately argues that culture is both the “horizon of expectation” and the “space of experience,” to borrow Reinhart Koselleck’s terms, as Ricoeur does. Because of this given cultural horizon for our experience, without which there are no means for human comprehension, “it is by interpreting that we can hear anew.” As Ricoeur argues in The Symbolism of Evil, the primitive naïveté, or “the sunken Atlantides,” has been lost, but through critical hermeneutics – that is, in interpretation – a second immediacy, “the postcritical equivalent of the precritical hierophany,” is within our reach. This interpretative appropriation, as detached from any a-cultural experience of being (which is impossible), cannot in turn detach itself from its cultural mode of being-here, and return to the pure immediacy of some Wholly Other, but it can begin to understand this necessary condition in the hermeneutic of culture as cathartic re-con-naissance.

As I maintained in chapter 3, appropriative interpretation, or reconfiguration, is always bound to culture as indicated by the “anchorages” of mimesis, the demand for both schematization and traditionality of mimesis, and the moment of refugration of mimesis. For

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1751 Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (351).
1752 Ricoeur 1960b, 325, 327. (349, 352).
this reason, I argued that Ricoeur’s model of threefold mimesis, or reconfiguration, serves us as a clue for the critical analysis of Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture. Following Dan Stiver’s synthetizing explication of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics (that I have explained in section 3.3 of this dissertation), part two of this dissertation was to schematize the prefigurative critical moment, part three the configurative critical moment, and part four the refigurative critical moment as readings of Ricoeur’s work. In each of these parts, however, subtle allusions to the moments of re-, con-, and naissance were made. The purpose of the current part, I have indicated, is to make way for a postcritical hermeneutics of cultural recognition that maps the hermeneutics of re-con-naissance onto the critical reconfiguration.

The spiraling towards the postcritical understanding of re-con-naissance is achievable only by appropriating a “text,” including this academic text, which in itself remains at the level of critical explanation.\footnote{Cf. Ricoeur & Fried 1991, 454.; Ricoeur & Roman 1991.} Warning the reader of the limitation that the “mapping” can, therefore, only be suggestive (since “it is the reader who completes the work inasmuch as […] the written work is a sketch for reading”\footnote{Ricoeur 1983, 117. (77).}), I have argued that this “fifth act” of the dissertation not only draws together the three moments of re-, con-, and naissance, but also proposes that re-con-naissance is a postcritical hermeneutic model of culturally mediated self-identity and self-understanding. Before going on to this “concluding” problematics, however, let me first respond – out of respect for academic conventions – to the research objectives that were set for this work to justify its scholarly appearance.
17. A RESPONSIVE SELF: SUMMATION OF REPLIES TO RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this brief summing up of the scholarly results of this dissertation – most of which I have already explicated during the course of the analysis – I will focus first on the general research objectives, and then move into discussing the nine theses made at the end of part one. As already explained in the general introduction, I have had two kinds of objectives in this dissertation: historical and philosophical.

The historical objective, I maintained, was to retrace the appearance of the notion of culture in the works of Paul Ricoeur, and to demonstrate that Ricoeur uses the term as part of his philosophical vocabulary. This objective was based on the assumption of a “resisting” attitude in French philosophy towards using the term “culture” or Kultur in its original German sense. According to Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, in the French context the words “la civilisation” and “social” were still preferred in the 1950s over “la culture” – for both historical and political reasons. If Kroeber and Kluckhohn were correct in their assertion that such resistance took place, it could have indicated that there are no adequate conceptual grounds for examining the philosophy of culture of any French philosopher preceding the mid-twentieth century or shortly after, that is, at the time Ricoeur’s career was taking off. The two questions that I proposed in chapter 1 were, therefore, 1) does Ricoeur

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1755 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 28-29, 147. Cf. Appendix 1. – The predominance of the words “la civilisation” and “social” can be affirmed on the basis of the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009), a French anthropologist to whom Kroeber and Kluckhohn also refer in their critical review (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 124, 163, 167-168.) Although his 1951 article “Language and the Analysis of Social Laws” in American Anthropologist is esteemed as “one of the most arresting statements on language and culture ever published” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 124.), this statement is misleading. Despite the fact that Lévi-Strauss had already been ten years in the United States, he still himself uses the word “culture” only incidentally (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1951, 156, 160.) but gives, actually twice, the definition of language as “a social phenomenon” (Lévi-Strauss 1951, 156.). Besides this, he frequently utilizes the word “social” in connection with “all social phenomena,” “the forms of social life” (which include art and religion), “socialized thought,” “social behavior,” “social organization,” “social group,” “social structures,” “social cohesion,” as well as “social existence.” In addition, Lévi-Strauss mentions “our contemporary civilization” in relation to “kinship systems” (Lévi-Strauss 1951, 161.).
use the term throughout his career or can one detect a shift toward using the term “culture” in his philosophical vocabulary?, and 2) are Kroeber and Kluckhohn correct in their statement that “resistance” took place to the use if this term? Let me respond to each of these questions briefly.

Even though Ricoeur’s early texts use the word “civilisation” quite infrequently (as is the case, for example, in “Le Chrétien et la civilisation occidentale,” 1946, that defines civilization and analyzes Western civilization from a Christian’s point of view,1756 and in “Pour une coexistence pacifique des civilisations,” 1951, in which Ricoeur does exercise, not a cultural critique, but a critique of political “civilizations”1757), his essays from the 1950s already use the term “culture” consistently, as we have seen. To mention only two in this context, “What does ‘Humanism’ Mean?” (1956) relates, in its gripping discussion, humanism with la vie de culture d’un people, or “the cultural life of a people,”1758 and “Place de l’oeuvre d’art dans notre culture” (1957) analyzes the role and function of art ultimately as cultural play, deliverance, and survival.1759 It has, therefore, become difficult to argue for a continued terminological “resistance” that would favor some other terms, such as “civilization,” instead of “culture.”

It is true, however, that Ricoeur is vague in the use of his terms; this is already apparent on the basis of chapter 2 and Appendix 3 of this dissertation that examined Ricoeur’s “culture/civilization confusion.” Even though Ricoeur also differentiates “disinterested” leisurely culture from the “laborious” and technological civilization,1760 he does not maintain that distinction consistently. As our chapter 2 argues, Ricoeur simply

1756 Ricoeur 1946.
1757 Ricoeur 1951, 409, 414.
1758 Ricoeur 1956, 84. (Ricoeur 1974, 68-69.)
1759 Ricoeur 1957b, 9-11.
1760 Ricoeur 1956, 85-90. (Ricoeur 1974, 71-81.)
announces in his 1965 essay, “The Task of the Political Educator,” that he “will not engage in the debate – as academic as sterile – on ‘civilization and culture.’” The later Ricoeur, as I pointed out, follows this decision in *Course of Recognition* by maintaining that there are no reasons for opposing the word culture to that of civilization. Kroeber and Kluckhohn could be right, therefore, to the extent that even though the precise German meaning of “Kultur” was known to Ricoeur at the latest in 1965, it did not fully eradicate the concept of “civilisation” from Ricoeur’s philosophical vocabulary. Ricoeur’s later essays – such as “Le dialogue des cultures: la confrontation des héritages culturels” (1997) that discusses intercultural tolerance, and “Cultures, du deuil à la traduction” (2004) that focuses on cultural pluralism and the possibility of cross-cultural understanding – demonstrate, however, that the term “culture” continued to have a firmer role in his terminology.

This seems to be a suitable moment for us to turn to the proper philosophical objective of this dissertation, namely, to the question of reconstructing Paul Ricoeur’s cultural theory in the form of the hermeneutics of cultural recognition. I have proposed that such a theory is necessary relative to Ricoeur’s more openly-argued and anthropologically oriented “phenomenology of being able.” On that basis I have claimed that this dissertation 1) demonstrates that Paul Ricoeur’s work includes a cultural hermeneutics, and that 2) a philosophy of culture is not only relevant but necessary for the understanding of both philosophical and cultural anthropology. Put differently, I have stated that all anthropological thought requires the support of cultural understanding, as no comprehensive anthropology is possible without the philosophical elaboration of the cultural

1763 Ricoeur 1965c, 79. (Ricoeur 1973b, 142-143.)
condition that concerns human situatedness. The reception of a cultural heritage is reaffirmed in the task of acquiring a notion of a human self, or, as a human task of freedom and the fulfillment of fundamental possibilities.

I will restate the previous in the form of a response to the nine theses that were laid out at the end of part one in this dissertation.\textsuperscript{1765} As my intention was not to examine these theses one by one, but rather to demonstrate their validity in the course of my argument, I will not break from this pattern and turn the discussion into an analytical re-examination of each thesis, as that fragmentation or disconnecting would result in the loss of the ultimate aim of this dissertation. Instead, let me follow the flow of the argument within which each of the theses was shown to hold. I will return to the two questions proposed just above after having reinstated the nine working theses that have guided the academic task in this dissertation.

Instead of beginning directly with the first thesis, our part two began by grounding theses two to five. Our analysis of Ricoeur’s \textit{Course of Recognition} (2004) made it apparent that we had a need to return to Ricoeur’s earlier texts. We read this need as an \textit{indication} that Ricoeur develops his conception of recognition before the work that places the

\textsuperscript{1765} At the end of part one I proposed nine working theses that would guide the process of responding to the philosophical objectives of this dissertation. I maintained that: 1) The theme of recognition is developed and discussed by Ricoeur well before the 2004 work \textit{Parcours de la reconnaissance}, translated as \textit{The Course of Recognition}. 2) Although the subject-centered progress from identity to self-recognition and furthermore to mutual recognition is important (cf. \textit{Course of Recognition}), the “course” of recognition should be approached at the level of Ricoeur’s work as a whole, and consequently at the level of cultural formation or figuration. 3) Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of being able” – which culminates in the notion of \textit{l’homme capable} – necessarily requires the support of a cultural hermeneutics. 4) This hermeneutic of culture recasts Ricoeur’s relations to such thinkers as Hegel, Kant, and Heidegger. 5) The notions of “cultural objectivity” and “cultural objects” have a major role for both Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture and his anthropological phenomenology, since the possibility of recognition is fundamentally grounded in them. 6) The foundational \textit{etho-poetic nucleus} of human culture, which Ricoeur mentions in his texts, is found only indirectly in and by these cultural objects. 7) This poetic nucleus, as an opening up of a language of the possible \textit{ήθος}, is a necessary condition for the possibility of an ethico-political self-understanding. 8) In summing up the course of recognition (which results from poetic expressions conceived as objects of culture), the term “reconnaissance” should be understood as “re-con-naissance,” that is, as “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject.” 9) The term “re-con-naissance” should be understood as a model of the hermeneutic of culture.
question under a sharpened focus, but also as a sign that instead of taking Ricoeur’s “phenomenology of being able” as a place to begin with, his “course” of recognition is better approached at the theoretical level of cultural figuration as objectifying formation (theses 2 and 3). For this reason it was necessary to undertake a discussion of Ricoeur’s relation to Hegel’s philosophy. Part two of this dissertation then revealed that Hegel is an essential prefigure for Ricoeur’s conception of culture (thesis 4a). This theoretical connection was in the end established in the notion of *les objectivations culturelles*, or the idea of “cultural objectification,” and its corollary concept of “cultural objects” (thesis 5). The part concluded with a restriction, however, that a further examination is needed for the proper conjoining of Ricoeur’s anthropological phenomenology and his hermeneutic of culture. For this reason it was argued that an analysis of Ricoeur’s earlier texts could potentially provide some clarity on the necessity of cultural hermeneutics.

Responding to the need of providing another reading of Ricoeur’s work, part three, which discussed the theses 1-5, and opened up the possibility of theses 6-7, took us from the end of Ricoeur’s philosophical career to its early phases. Beginning with *The Voluntary and the Involuntary* (1949), part three was able to demonstrate continuity from objectively grounded philosophical anthropology to a discussion of cultural objects and cultural objectification in *Fallible Man* (1960), and furthermore to a cultural hermeneutics in *On Interpretation* (1965). This confirms theses 3 and 5. In addition, part three not only responded to the first thesis argued at the end of part one, namely, that the theme of recognition is developed and discussed by Ricoeur well before *Course of Recognition*, but also strengthened the idea that the “course” of recognition should be approached as pertaining to Ricoeur’s work as a whole (thesis 2). As placing the “phenomenology of being able” and the “hermeneutic of culture” onto the same continuum of thought in part two, the same
reading, however, also took into account Ricoeur’s assertion that his philosophy is not only post-Hegelian but also influenced by Immanuel Kant. The idea of a synthesis between a subject and his or her cultural objects confirmed Ricoeur’s “post-Hegelian Kantianism,” but also revealed Ricoeur’s stance as post-Kantian (thesis 4b). Ricoeur transcends Kant’s position by insisting that a subject’s full understanding of his or her situated condition is not only rational-epistemological but also onto-existential in the manner Martin Heidegger maintains in his _Kantbuch_. This conviction led Ricoeur to argue for the grounding _poetic nucleus_ of human culture that is found in and by the cultural objects. This invites reflection open to this alethic truth as proposed in theses 6 and 7.

Part four continued the reading of Ricoeur’s work, therefore, by focusing first on the analysis of semantic innovation as well as on the poetic “surplus” of meaning and being Ricoeur argues for in _The Living Metaphor_ (1975). After this poetic grounding of our analysis in part four, the discussion moved into the practical expansion of hermeneutics, or the poetics of action, in _From Text to Action_ (1986), and further into the poetics of the good in _Oneself as Another_ (1990). Focusing on the ethico-political aspects of Ricoeur’s poetics in _Oneself as Another_, the extended reading of Ricoeur’s works was brought to completion by bringing it, through _The Just_ (1995) and _Reflections on the Just_ (2001), to the threshold of the “gifts” of _Memory, History, Forgetting_ (2000) and of _Course of Recognition_ (2004) discussed at some length in part two of this dissertation. In addition, the last analytic chapter of part four, chapter 15, provided a retrospective re-reading that began with the posthumously published _Living Up to Death_ (2007) and ended back with _The Voluntary and the Involuntary_ (1949). Confirming the thesis that the “course” of recognition should be approached at the level of Ricoeur’s work as a whole (thesis 2), part four therefore also responded to the poetic challenge set by part three.
In analyzing the foundational poetic nucleus of human culture that is found only indirectly in and by cultural objects (thesis 6), part four explained why Ricoeur’s stance is both post-Hegelian and post-Kantian by showing the poetic affinities between Ricoeur and Heidegger, who in the later phase of his philosophical career also esteemed poetics as means of onto-existential disclosure. Part four explained, in particular, that the “poetic nucleus,” as the opening up of a language of the possible, is a necessary condition for the possibility of an adequate self-understanding (thesis 7). As an opening up of the possible, however, the part pointed out that, according to Ricoeur, the poetic also reveals the ethotic (ηθος) as co-constitutive for a culture. This differentiates Ricoeur’s critical poetics from Heidegger’s onto-poetics (thesis 4c). Part four concluded, therefore, with the notion of essentially ethopoetic culture that is manifested in ethico-political institutions as human responses. It thereby closes off Ricoeur’s hermeneutic of culture in the appearing of a cultural and ethical subject, the “real citizen,” or, as the thesis 8 asserted, in the moment of “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject.”

These brief scholarly summaries of parts two, three, and four already respond to the questions proposed above: First, this dissertation does demonstrate that Paul Ricoeur’s work includes a cultural hermeneutics from its beginning to its end, and clarifies the reasons why Ricoeur has a need to include such a hermeneutics in his project of l’homme capable de faillir. These reasons point out the limited scope of an anthropological inquiry that, by focusing only on the question of the human subject, will paradoxically lose the very notion of it. A human subject, in brief, is in a state of “after” or “having received”; this already applies to the bio-physical condition of being born, as Ricoeur maintains in The Voluntary and the Involuntary. But it applies all the more to his or her diachronically and synchronically received heritage and cultural tradition.
Put differently, to reply to the second question concerning the necessity of a cultural hermeneutics, this dissertation also shows forth in its very “working out” the argument that a philosophy of culture is not only relevant but necessary for the understanding of both philosophical and cultural anthropology. Again, any anthropological question remains incomprehensible without the support of a cultural philosophy. The elaboration of cultural condition that concerns human situatedness as the reception of a cultural heritage – reaffirmed through the acquiring of a selfhood – is the only framework in which such a question can be asked; it concerns the human task of freedom and the fulfillment of fundamental human possibilities. The recognition of one’s self as ethico-political is enabled by the cultural context in which the self is situated. Culture, as I have maintained above, has a dual meaning: it is both a condition comparable to Ernst Cassirer’s symbolic forms, and also the context of experienced life as Clifford Geertz’s “thick” description of culture defines. These anthropologies utilize a conception of culture as well. The recurring birth of an ethico-political self is culturally facilitated.
18. RECONFIGURATION AND \textit{Re-Con-Naissance}

Even though the summing up of the scholarly results of this dissertation seems to close the circle of this text as an academic work by responding to and confirming the working theses I proposed at the end of part one, an attentive reader will notice that, in fact, only theses 1 through 7 have been dealt with above. I do mention thesis 8 as the high point of part four, but I do not, however, comment on the assertoric part of that thesis, namely, the claim that the term “\textit{reconnaissance}” should literally be understood as “\textit{re-con-naissance}.” Thesis 8 was only partially examined in the analytic reading of Ricoeur’s work, that is, by compressing it to the point of an analysis of “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject.” In addition, thesis 9 has not been dealt with at all. Put differently, I have so far not commented on the idea that the term “\textit{re-con-naissance}” can be understood as a postcritical model of the hermeneutic of culture. It appears that our summing up this dissertation work in a form of confirming its working theses is not yet complete. Besides being a condition and a context, culture also has to be seen an achievement.

I have repeatedly argued in this dissertation that the hermeneutic “spiraling” toward the postcritical understanding of \textit{re-con-naissance} is achievable only by the critical appropriation of a “text.” These “texts,” as we have seen, have to include all cultural phenomena and human action. The same necessity of appropriation applies, therefore, for the readers of \textit{this text}, which, as an academic dissertation, most clearly remains at the level of critical explanation, as, in fact, all cultural phenomena do. For this reason, I have insisted that this part, as the “fifth act” of this dissertation, can only be “suggestive” when drawing together the three moments of \textit{re-con-naissance} as a postcritical hermeneutic model of
culturally mediated self-identity and self-understanding, that is, as a culturally facilitated postcritical hermeneutics of recognition.

When I argue that the critical moments of reconfiguration are readable as the postcritical moments of re-, con-, and naissance, I refer to those moments of this lengthy analysis that conform to this tripartite structure. Following Hegel’s suggestion in Aesthetics that the first act of a play is an exposition, the three “intervening ones” complicate the issue, and the fifth act then steps above the quarrels, reactions, “and struggles of the opposing parties,” I have proposed that this dissertation can be read in the light of this dramatic structure. Parts two, three, and four of this dissertation form a whole that surpasses the most apparent structure of “asserting” Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics in parts one and two, and of “confirming” this hermeneutics with the analytical reading of Ricoeur’s work in parts three and four. Besides this academic structure of assertion (with some educated hypotheses) and confirmation (through a repeatable analysis), I am proposing a poetic structure that takes us to the threshold of postcritical re-con-naissance.

Without having constantly reminded the reader about it, I have maintained that the most foundational structure of this dissertation is as follows: Part one, as an extended introduction, alerts the reader of the postcritical aim of this dissertation (this is done especially in chapters 3 and 4). Parts two, three, and four – respectively – follow the analytics of the critical process of re-con-figuration (explained in section 3.3), while at the same time elaborating on the notion of re-con-naissance. The aim of the current part, or the “fifth act,” is to remind the reader of the culturally facilitated hermeneutics that takes place in and with this structure of this dissertation work, and so opens up the possibility of postcritical appropriation. This is why I have maintained above that the current part reveals the depth

structure of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics, but only from the point of view of “reading” this work as a “text.” The current part can in the end only suggest or point to such a postcritical depth structure that takes place in the reader’s own reconfigurative process as culturally enabled re-con-naissance.

Based on what I have just restated of the ultimate purpose of this dissertation, allow me, therefore, to briefly recall the hermeneutic process of reconfiguration that Ricoeur argues in the whole context of *Time and Narrative* as its poetic demonstration. Again, as I already summarized in chapter 3, a subject discovers him- or herself as a creative interpreter in the open-ended and recurring process of reconfiguration, or in the threefold mimetic process that begins with *pre*-figuration as the stage for prevalent practical experience, meets its demands in a *con*-figuration that takes place in the “emplotment,” or synthesis, and results in the *re*-figuration that returns to the thus enriched practical experience. This explication of a hermeneutic process, we may recall, focuses on the different aspects of μίµησις ϖράξεως. It draws together and oscillates between the practical ethico-political world and the poetic imaginary world:

That the praxis belongs at the same time to the real domain, covered by ethics, and the imaginary one, covered by poetics, suggests that mimesis functions not just as a break but also as a connection, one which establishes precisely the status of the “metaphorical” transposition of the practical field by the ἡμοθετί.

Put differently, the etho-poetic nucleus of culture is manifested in this hermeneutic process that retains a reference to the experienced and conditioning ethico-political world of a subject (*mimesis*) in the opening up of it in its explication (*mimesis*) that, then, in the appropriation of the explication, or in the “text,” enables the reappropriation of the ethico-political world of experience and action in the interpretative “reading” of this explication.

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1767 Ricoeur 1983, 76. (46).
(mimesis). As I have already maintained in chapter 3, this process that emphasizes the receptive-creative moment of mimesis is facilitated by culture, since the refigurative reception of a “text” or a “work” – that is, its appropriation – is the reappropriation of a world that “is a cultural world,” as Ricoeur also maintains. The process of reconfiguration, or the threefold mimesis, represents not only the hermeneutic act of combining different worlds, the ethico-political and the poetic, but also the processual mediation in culture in the moments of pre-con-figuration.

To explain the connection of these three moments of reconfiguration to the asserted postcritical moments of re-con-naissance, that is, to confirm the yet unconfirmed theses 8 and 9 of this dissertation, I will next focus briefly on each of these moments by leveling them with each other. Before beginning this new re-reading of the dissertation, let me remind the reader again that what I am about to propose remains fully at the critical level of reconfiguration as I have explained in section 3.3, by applying Dan Stiver’s synthesizing account of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics. The postcritical re-con-naissance as the birth of a cultural subject remains in suspension in the lines of this academic work that still, critically, facilitates such a becoming.

Re-membering the Prefiguration

Let me begin by anchoring this discussion in prefiguration. It will be recalled that, according to Time and Narrative I, prefiguration, or the “preunderstanding” of the ethico-political world of action, has three “anchorages.” Ricoeur emphasizes that understanding requires cultural structures that allow it. If something is left radically external, it will remain unknown for

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1768 Ricoeur 1983, 83-84. (50-51).
us.\textsuperscript{1769} The necessity of having a meaningful structure of action, symbolic structures as both conditions and contexts of that action, and the temporal character of the world of action warrant the comprehension of the world of practical action by “anchoring” it culturally.\textsuperscript{1770} In short, the prefigured world of action consists of the necessary prestructure of meaning, or of “[formal] cultural processes that articulate experience”\textsuperscript{1771} as required by those symbolic wholes that, in turn, are equally needed as “descriptive contexts for particular actions.”\textsuperscript{1772} The “prenarrative” structure of human experience as intratemporality (\textit{Innerzeitlichkeit}) complements these traits of the prefigured world of action, as both spatial and temporal manifold of action, by acknowledging the temporal requisite of cultural contextuality.\textsuperscript{1773} In brief, Ricoeur argues that a preunderstanding of the world of human action that is “common to both poets and their readers”\textsuperscript{1774} is necessary if one is to argue for the possibility of a shared life. The question of \textit{l’homme capable de faillir}, in other words, will also have to be traced back to these prefigurative beginnings, if the enigma of the fundamental human possibilities is to be resolved.

The notion of prefiguration as a necessary condition or as the beginning for the possibility of a “capable human” reconnects us with the idea of re-connaissance. As I explained in chapter 6, Ricoeur maintains that in the age of “modern forgetfulness” the human task is “to remember with a view to beginning.”\textsuperscript{1775} Remembering, however, is enabled by the very same beginning: chapter 6 also reveals Ricoeur’s “legitimate supposition” that “it is always in \textit{historically limited cultural forms} that the capacity to remember

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\item \textsuperscript{1769} Cf. Ricoeur 1990, 387-393. (336-340).
\item \textsuperscript{1770} Ricoeur 1983, 87-88, 100. (54, 64).
\item \textsuperscript{1771} Ricoeur 1983, 91. (57).
\item \textsuperscript{1772} Ricoeur 1983, 92-93. (57-58).
\item \textsuperscript{1774} Ricoeur 1983, 100. (64).
\item \textsuperscript{1775} Ricoeur 1960b, 324. (349).
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can be apprehended.” Again, there is no capacity to remember without a socio-cultural-linguistic situation as a condition and as a context that has a self-affirmed historical trajectory. These “multiple orders of belonging or respective orders of standing” are therefore also as much necessary forms of self-recognition as they are of remembering. They are the structure of cultural mediation.

To expand Ricoeur’s characterization of the task for moderns to remember “fully,” I maintain that the task is to gain a self-understanding by recognizing oneself through the act of acknowledging these necessary cultural conditions as the prefigured beginning of one’s comprehension and comportment. Remembering the prefiguration, put differently, is foundational cultural re-discovering; it is re-cognizing the state of being conditioned and contextualized – re-connaissance. As chapter 6 of this dissertation maintained, Ricoeur stresses that “memory is re-presentation, in the twofold sense of re-turning back, anew.” In this re-discovery, I argued, a human subject “finds anew,” and even “recharges” himself again, as Ricoeur also insists. In this re-membering a human subject recollects himself as being situated to situated being; it is re-connaissance. Remembering is therefore “finding anew” the cultural condition and context as the possibility of becoming a self. This conditioned becoming, however, is only the first opening to the foundational re-discovering.

Re-membering applies to all subjects claiming to live in a meaningful world of action as being conditioned and contextualized, that is, necessarily prefigured. Pointing to the necessary conditions for a human subject’s meaningful action, to its prestructure, re-

1777 Ricoeur 2000b, 162. (132).
1779 Ricoeur 1960b, 325. (349).
membering ultimately also reconnects all the fellow members of this cultural world of action. Re-membering is putting oneself back as a member of a whole culture. The most foundational re-discovering, I argue, is to re-member with this view to our sociocultural beginning that is facilitated and mediated by the “orders of belonging.” Just as the argument in chapter 6 from memory to the language of others does, our re-examination of prefiguration as re-connaissance leads us again to the dia- and syn-chronic “close ones” (les proches) or “those close by.” Re-membering, as foundational re-discovering, is both re-membering the state of being conditioned, and re-membering with all those being conditioned. This duality of re-membering, I maintain, is the foundational re-connaissance to which part two, working at the critical level of prefiguration, alludes.

Con-joining as Configuration

Even though prefiguration/re-connaissance provides a firm anchoring for us, it still focuses on the necessary prestructure of meaning. An explication of how re-membering comes about is therefore needed. I have argued that the moment of configuration responds to that challenge. Configuration, or the moment of “grasping together” that connects the moments of “preunderstanding” (prefiguration) and “postunderstanding” (refiguration), means emplotment in the manner of Aristotelian poetics, but it also has the Kantian meaning of a “function of unity among our representations.” Again, Ricoeur unites these two aspects of configuration by claiming that “we may speak of a schematism of the narrative

1780 Ricoeur 2000b, 162. (132).
1781 Ricoeur 1983, 102. (65).
1783 Ricoeur 1983, 103-104. (66); Kant 1999, IIIA69/B94. (KrV).
function.” But he also maintains that this peculiar schematism is “constituted within a history that has all the characteristics of a tradition.” Configuration, in sum, is a cultural function of unity that enables the actualization of the intratemporal condition of prefiguration as the creation of those narratives or “texts” through which a subject understands his or her situatedness within a historical tradition.

Part three led us to consider this cultural function of unity as synthesis that overcomes the fundamental polarity between subjectivity and objectivity by requiring a necessary correlation between the objectivity of an object and the subjectivity of a subject. As we were able to notice, however, Ricoeur also maintains that the cultural synthesis warrants communication as discourse which conjoins. Even if the cultural function of unity rests on the transcendental synthesis between a cultural subject and a cultural object – in the necessary synthetic combination (con-junctio) of the subject and the object – cultural function of unity as synthesis also necessitates communication between the elements of which it consists.

To re-emphasize the importance of cultural objectivity that facilitates recognition as re-con-naissance, let me briefly restate its relation to the function of unity that conjoins. As chapter 10 stressed, distinguishing an individual self and articulating the relationship between individual selves requires the support of cultural objectivity that functions as the universal ground of self-affirmation. The human subject, first of all, “is constituted only in connection with things that themselves belong to the economic, political, and cultural dimensions.” Drawing from Ricoeur’s analysis of this objectivity, which is

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1784 Ricoeur 1983, 106. (68).
1785 Ricoeur 1983, 106. (68).
1787 Ricoeur 1960a, 129. (113).
properly executed only at the cultural level, I maintained that a human subject recognizes himself as a self only in and through the cultural forms his being assumes and the “monuments” he has produced, monuments which stand over and against himself as objectifying the experience of his or her being as a cultural discourse that captures the “idea of humanity” as Ricoeur stated. This objective “standing over and against” applies, however, to all productive agents seeking to be recognized as estimable human subjects.

The “formal objectivity” in the idea of humanity, as part three of this dissertation argued, has to be complemented with the “material objectivity” of cultural objects that mediate the notion of esteem as the genuine “signs of being human.” The works of art and literature, along with all the other works that manifest animated human creativity, and through which the human possibilities are sought, are “the true ‘objects’ that manifest the abstract universality of the idea of humanity through their concrete universality.” The notion of humanity is manifested in these works that Ricoeur called “highly expressive”; these works as instances of cultural discourse reveal a creative subject to him or herself, as I maintained, but also mediate – or, communicate – the idea of humanity to other like agents, who, through this cultural objectivity, are able to find esteem as human subjects, that is, as subjects standing under the formal condition of being ends-in-themselves.

The formal objectivity of a subject’s being-an-end-in-himself is materialized in cultural works that are intersubjectively constitutive in their concrete universality; this concrete universality is the cultural discourse as com-munication that unifies or “grasps

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1789 Ricoeur 1960a, 85. (67-68); Ricoeur 1965a, 8, 54. (xii, 46-47).
1790 Ricoeur 1960a, 139. (123).
1791 Ricoeur 1960a, 76-77. (59-60).
together.” As we saw in chapter 10, quoting Ricoeur, “cultural objectivity (l’objectivité culturelle) is the very relation of man to man represented in the idea of humanity; only cultural testimonies endow it with the density of things, in the form of monuments existing in the world: but these things are ‘works.’” The unity in the culturally facilitated idea of humanity that is manifested in human works as cultural objects – through which a subject receives an understanding of being a human self as “being esteemed” – is, in other words, the material con-joining of the cultural subjects under the formality of cultural objectivity.

This cultural configuration as the foundational function of unity that communicates the con-joining of human subjects under the idea of humanity clarifies why recognition should be depicted as re-con-naisance. The cultural recognition as “being esteemed” is the mutual recognition of “being recognized”; cultural objectivity mutualizes by con-joining, and only this con-joining allows the sociocultural re-membering that has been proposed above. As I maintained in chapter 11, the foundational synthetic moment of “con” under cultural objectivity is literally com-munication in its radical meanings of making common, sharing, and mutual participation. In short, it brings about the fundamental concrete unity of humanity in the cultural objects as symbols of concordance in the living experience of primordial discordance.

Culture, I have summarized, configures the human experience of being alive, mediates the notion of being capable of failing, and thus renders this experience of being alive appropriable for a human subject. In its “concrete universality,” however, culture as configuration also necessitates the unification of all subjects under the same “figuring” – the cultural condition – that is manifested in the cultural contexts by which the human reality is mediated, and in which recognition takes place. This universal con-joining to the mutuality

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1792 Ricoeur 1960a, 140. (123-124).
of this condition is the necessary moment of re-con-naissance, to the recognition of which part three has invited us.

**Being Born with Refiguration: Naissance**

We could rephrase the moment of configuration/re-con-naissance by stating that culture, as objectified subjectivity, is a symbol of humanity. Put differently, the cultural function of unity applies poetic expressivity; that is, cultural objects gain their objectivity only through symbolization. As implied above, this objectivity does not complete the task of human “Suchen,” but enables it instead by giving a formulation under which the primordial task of searching for one’s self can be executed. The hermeneutic task of acquiring a human self is possible only under the objectifying condition of a cultural “con” that renders the experience of being alive, appropriable for a human subject in the mode represented by the worked out idea of humanity. The correlating moment of subjectified objectivity, however, brings the recurring process into a (semi)closure as a re-internalizing “retrieval”; the movement of re-subjectification is as much *Erinnerung* as it is *Wiederholung*.\(^{1793}\) Culture, as the symbol of humanity, only becomes the authentic symbol of humanity in its appropriation. Only if “the symbol gives the gift of thought”\(^{1794}\) – *donne à penser* – that is, only if culture gives rise to reflection, it can fulfill its function of opening up a world of fundamental human possibilities.

The moment of refiguration, or “reading,” is the interpretive application of configured prefiguration, that is, the placing of oneself into the cultural world of action as its restitution. As Ricoeur clarifies in his 1991 essay “Life in Quest of Narrative,” configuration

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\(^{1794}\) Ricoeur 1960b, 324, 330. (348, 355).
is “not completed in the text but in the reader and, under this condition, makes possible the reconfiguration of life by narrative.” Refiguration, in other words, is the appropriation of the world proposed by the configured “text,” through which the “reader’s” situation in a cultural world is reappropriated. The “reader” recreates the cultural world of action, and makes it his own – subjectifies it – in the act of interpretation that is bound to the objectivity of the “text.” As I have maintained, for Ricoeur this world of the “reader” – the one “in front of the text” – is far more important than any of those that could be assumed “behind the text.” Refiguration is both re-description and re-signification in the sense of subjective re-institution; refiguration as “reading” is therefore ultimately about the unending and recurring human creativity.

Refiguration, in short, is “making” as much as it is “remaking” in a cultural tradition, and as such it is also an increase or enrichment of being. The world deployed by this poetic work as work is a cultural world that describes at the same time “my ownmost powers” as a creative “reader.” As I have emphasized, this is the “poetic solution” Ricoeur was after in *Time and Narrative*; the hermeneutic action of the reader himself is the very κάθαρσις or the purgation, in which “the dialectic of inside and outside reaches its culmination point.” Refiguration depicted as such “poetic solution,” the aspects of which were examined in part four, explains Ricoeur’s statement in *The Living Metaphor* that clarifies this duality of making and remaking:

The referential movement is inseparable from the creative dimension; μίμησις is ποίησις, and ποίησις is μίμησις. […] So, μίμησις is the restitution of the human, not only essentially, but in a way that makes it greater and nobler. There is thus a double tension proper to μίμησις: on the one hand, the imitation is at once a

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portrayal of the human and an original creation; on the other, it comprises a restitution and a deplacement toward the high.\textsuperscript{1798}

The purifying poetic solution is to recognize, or to figure out, the figure of being human in the very figuring of it; \(\mu\acute{i}m\acute{e}sis\) is \(p\acute{o}i\acute{e}sis\), and \(p\acute{o}i\acute{e}sis\) is \(\mu\acute{i}m\acute{e}sis\). The appropriation of this “poetic image,” Ricoeur maintains, “places us at the origin of our speaking being, [in] expressing us by making us what it expresses.”\textsuperscript{1799} The culturally manifesting poetic activity as its own image – or as its icon, or \(\textit{Bild}\)\textsuperscript{1800} – opens up a path into the depths of human existence. It is the refigurative making and remaking of culture in the culture that is our cultural achievement.

As I argued in chapter 13, the question of the “very birth (\textit{naissance}) of discourse (\textit{parole})”\textsuperscript{1801} is indeed not separable from becoming human; poetic expressivity that is essentially etho-poetic cultural discourse manifested in ethico-political institution, “makes us” as being the “becoming of our being.”\textsuperscript{1802} Put differently, the essentially etho-poetic culture gives birth to a cultured ethico-political human subject by enabling recognition of this very becoming in refiguration or reappropriating reflection – this is what I have called recon-\textit{naissance}. The idea of \textit{naissance}, or birth of \textit{l’homme capable de faillir} as an authentic ethico-political self that I presented in part four, is the refigurative consenting to the necessity of one’s culturally conditioned existence that at the same time, nevertheless, is “the incantation of poetry which delivers me from myself and purifies me.”\textsuperscript{1803} The dialectical circularity of consent and this admiration of “the high” in interpretative reflection is the birth “from all to

\textsuperscript{1798} Ricoeur 1975d, 56-57. (39-40).
\textsuperscript{1799} Ricoeur 1975d, 272. (214-215).
\textsuperscript{1800} Cf. Ricoeur 1975d, 283. (224-225); Ricoeur 1983, 121-122. (80-81).
\textsuperscript{1801} Ricoeur 1965a, 334. (343).
\textsuperscript{1803} Ricoeur 1949, 448. (476-477).
myself” – or, refiguration/recon-naisance – that also completes the whole cultural dialectic of being culturally bound and beginning to be free.

Ultimately, it is to this completion as the birth of the “reader” that part four, while only working at the critical level of refiguration, was inviting you as the reader of this work. As Ricoeur maintains in “Life in Quest of Narrative,” it is “the act of reading” that “becomes the critical moment of this entire analysis; on it rests the narrative’s capacity to transfigure the experience of the reader.”

While arguing the critical moments of cultural re-con-figuration, this dissertation is largely readable as an invitation to a reflective achieving of the postcritical moments of re-, con-, and naissance. The critical reading of Ricoeur’s work in parts two, three, and four of this dissertation conveys an opening to the poetic free play of placing the reader of this work at the origin of our shared cultural being, that is, for “re-co-igniting” your creative capacities free in the midst of repeated re-readings in this academic work. The “dramatic” re-reading of the three middle parts in this “fifth act” of the dissertation reveals this work as merely critical exposition of a hermeneutic of culture, but it also suggests, as a yet another re-reading, that this work is being read as a work in a culture. Consequently, the very act of reading this work is to pursue the hermeneutic task of re-con-naissance as the recurring birth of a cultural subject. The act of reading this work that already reads and re-reads (and even re-reads itself), is, put differently, also the “reading” of this culture that

1805 Leaving aside the whole dissertation that is a reading of Ricoeur’s work, part two is the first reading of his work in the light of Course of Recognition. This first reading, is, however, contested in the second reading that consists of parts three and four that are readings of Ricoeur’s works in their own right. At the end of part four I committed a “double reversal,” and proposed to re-read Ricoeur retrospectively as a philosopher of the Wholly Other. All of this was re-read in this current part twice. First, in chapter 17, I summarized parts two, three, and four by responding to the academic working theses proposed at the end of part one. Second, this “academic” re-reading was surpassed in a “dramatic” re-reading that is the theme of the current chapter 18 of this dissertation. Finally, it is the current reader who yet again re-reads all of this as I try to demonstrate in the current section; this re-reading done by the current reader is ultimately the “another reading of Ricoeur’s work” that is indicated by the title of this dissertation.
allows the act of factual reading itself: this is the recurring naissance or birth of a cultural subject.

Following Ricoeur’s own re-reading of his *Time and Narrative*, this current work was also designed to bring out in the Open the human refiguration of the cultural world in which a human subject comes to him or herself. Even though this current chapter makes way for such a *postcritical hermeneutics of cultural recognition* by “suggesting” it and “pointing” to it, it too can merely repeat the conviction that the critical moments of pre-, con-, and refiguration are “readable” as the *postcritical* moments of re-con-naissance. The suggestive re-reading in this chapter, in other words, also remains at the critical level – not only because of being an academic work, but because of being a work in academic culture. The work of this “objectival” work, however, is to facilitate the spiraling toward the postcritical understanding of re-con-naissance in the appropriation of this text as a cultural “text.” Such an appropriation, I have maintained, is the reader’s own reversal and discovery – περιπέτεια и αναγνώρισις – as a “reader” in a culture. Above and beyond any a-cultural experience of being, the reader of this work has to be an appropriative “reader” of a cultural “text,” in whose critical realm the reader can begin to understand this critical hermeneutic of culture as personal and cathartic re-con-naissance.

In conclusion, the culturally enabled “becoming what you are,” or the figuring of oneself as l’homme capable de faillir, I maintain, is the course of recognizing the fundamental human possibilities. For this reason, the self-same becoming is best understood as the full cycle of re-con-naissance. Becoming human is the process of interpretative reflection that in itself also models the hermeneutic of culture; both of them are the very same unending becoming as re-con-naissance. The refigurative birth of the self in interpretative

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1806 Ricoeur 1949, 450. (479).
reflection is bound to and liberated by the configurative cultural con-joining that allows sociocultural re-membering in its dual sense of 1) re-membering the foundational human condition as situated in the cultural order of belonging, and 2) re-membering to the instituted sociocultural context in which a person – capable of failing as a real ethico-political citizen – aims to live well with others.

Having now grounded theses 8 and 9 of this dissertation in a hermeneutic of culture, let me recall, again, that this text remains fully at the critical level of reconfiguration as already explained in section 3.3. Even though I have maintained that literature belongs to those “highly expressive” works that manifest the idea of creative humanity, this work, this dissertation, is and remains a cultural object. The postcritical re-connaissance, or the birth of a cultural subject, cannot take place in the lines of this work except insofar as these lines are understood as symbols of creative action that – in the mediation of these lines – calls for interpretation and reflection. Only this interpretative action, or the act of “reading,” gives birth to a cultural subject.

Although I have “pointed to” re-connaissance as “having-been-born-as-an-ethico-political-subject,” and claimed, therefore, that the term re-connaissance should be understood as a hermeneutic model of culture, this text is not able to rid itself of the critical, objectifying conditions to which it is bound. Even though “in the act of reading, the receiver plays with the narrative constraints,” the cultural subject is, nevertheless, not born in the “text” but “in front of the text” instead, actualizing the “text” by “reading” it. The proper level of re-connaissance is the creative subject’s level, that is, the cultural “reader’s” level.

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To make my point clear, I will end this whole process of elaborating a cultural hermeneutic by returning to the critical. Based on reading Paul Ricoeur’s work, this dissertation was drawn up to function both at the level of historical and philosophical scholarly objectives, and also at the “dramatic” level of an actual hermeneutics that is cultural. Without losing the grip of the scholarly appearance that safeguards against any transgression contesting the critical, that is, against forgetting the condition of cultural objectivity, I will re-emphasize the critical and cultural guise by reminding us – also in appendix 4 that makes a conceptual comparison with re-con-naissance and Paul Claudel’s term co-naissance – of the contrast between reconnaissance and connaissance, that is, between recognition and mere cognition. This is our final “reversal”; it places us again firmly in the critical by leaving the “dramatic” suggestion behind us in this text.

It is not by accident that I have been emphasizing the notion of interpretative reflection when pointing to the postcritical. “It is by interpreting,” Ricoeur argues, “that we can bear anew.” Only interpretation can deliver us from the critical to the postcritical. At the same time, however, interpretation requires – as a token of its internal tension or conflict – the aid of reflection through which the explication of the possible transference from the critical to the postcritical is made. Seuls des êtres de connaissance sont des êtres de reconnaissance, Ricoeur insists in Fallible Man; “only knowing beings are recognizing beings.” It is not, therefore, by chance that “recognition derives from cognition.” This movement from cognition to recognition is the most apparent meaning for us human subjects, Ricoeur maintains in Course of Recognition. Still, Ricoeur argues, “to recognize” is not the same as

1809 Ricoeur 1960b, 326. (351).
1811 Ricoeur 1960a, 138. (122).
1812 Ricoeur 2004b, 18. (5-6).
“to cognize” – *reconnaissance* differs from *connaissance*. This ambiguous duality of *connaissance*, therefore, summarizes the tensional dialectics between the critical and the postcritical.

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Having now affirmed, in this philosophical analysis of birth-giving meanings, the notion of *re-con-naissance* as a model of cultural hermeneutics, let me close off this dissertation with Paul Ricoeur’s own words. His commencement address at Boston College in 1975 invites us to a final wordplay that cultures us as “readers.” Even though these speeches are given in ceremonies that conclude a period of a person’s academic journey – very much as my own case right now – the word “commencement” means, in both English and French languages, a beginning or a start.

Discussing the creative and founding function of cultural objects as symbols, as we have, Ricoeur addressed his audience – also preparing themselves for the then coming bicentennial of the American declaration of independence – by maintaining that it is in the re-enactment of “the symbolic existence of you as a nation that the memory of your foundation belongs.” The repeating of a nation’s imagery that sums up its cultural values, beliefs, and self-identity, confirms the nation in the present moment, Ricoeur maintained.

The recurring re-enactment Ricoeur speaks of can be summed up as *re-con-naissance*. Shifting from the level of nations to the level of citizens, and finally to that of the graduates, Ricoeur states, accordingly, that “the founding of an inner democracy remains a

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1814 Ricoeur 1975b, 19118.
task as much as a conquest of the past.” The “inner democracy” of a nation is a symbol, also as a verbal image, that bespeaks of the inner task of freedom of each and every human subject. “Life is memory and project,” Ricoeur tells the graduates. Human life, as based on re-con-naissance, is a project of re-membering, I have maintained. “Creative projects,” Ricoeur concludes, “emerge from a faithful memory.” Creative projects, I have maintained, emerge from cultural hermeneutics that re-members.

Am I, therefore, having been instructed by Ricoeur’s commencement speech, about to be faithful to the memory of this completed whole? Do I cherish this conquest that is now in the past? Do I retake the task of making manifest my own reflective capability, that is, my inner cultured freedom? As a token of my own, unceasing task of founding inner freedom, do I, out of respect for Ricoeur’s address at Boston College – my alma mater – provide, for example, another set of reflections as in the previous parts? My reply is justifiably ambiguous: no, but yes. Such reflections are for the reader to make, each in his or her own project of “inner democracy” and freedom. The reflections are for the cultured reader to make, “almost abandoned by this work” as Ricoeur maintains. This cultural facilitation, or benevolent abandonment, is your commencement and re-con-naissance.
Appendices
APPENDIX 1 – THE CONCEPT OF CULTURE AND ITS CONTENTS

The concept of “culture” is one of the key terms in this dissertation. I would have to acknowledge at the outset of this clarifying appendix, however, that there is no coherent or precise understanding of this term. As part of their own analysis of cultural construction, Scott Atran and Douglas Medin, for example, provide a recent discussion of the contemporary approaches to culture. Their somewhat disturbing conclusion – with which, however, I would have to agree – is that “there are no absolute standards for evaluating different notions about what constitutes relevant cultural contents or processes and how they should be studied.” There is no general definition of culture on the basis of which we would have the possibility of examining “a Ricoeurian variation” of it. To set the stage for this brief clarifying examination of the term “culture,” it is, therefore, useful to turn to Alfred L. Kroeber (1876-1960) and Clyde Kluckhohn’s (1905-1960) classical exposition Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions. Not only was it published almost concomitantly (1952) with Paul Ricoeur’s first major work Le volontaire et l’involontaire (1949), but it also includes 164 definitions and hundreds of descriptions that can be subsumed under these definitions of culture.

Although adopting a sociological and cultural-anthropological approach instead of particularly a philosophical one, Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s work still provides a broad variety of attempts to clarify the concept, and also a general discussion of how the concept of culture was and can be understood. We will, therefore, turn next to this analysis of the general features of a culture. To balance some of the temporal distance, however,

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1819 Atran & Medin 2008, 143-159.
1821 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 149. – From now on, I will give references at the end of each paragraph, so as to condense our discussion slightly.
Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s comments will be supplemented with those of Clifford Geertz (1926-2006) in his seminal work *The Interpretation of Cultures* (1973, republished in 2000). I will use Geertz’s work as a corrective simply because it was also well-known for Paul Ricoeur.

*The General Features of Culture*

Kroeber and Kluckhohn, both distinguished American anthropologists, “do not propose to add a one hundred and sixty-fifth formal definition,” but take their work instead as “a critical review of definitions and a general discussion of culture theory.” They cannot help, however, pointing out the most legitimate and important features of culture in a form of a summary: “we think culture is a product; is historical; includes ideas, patterns, and values; is selective; is learned; is based upon symbols; and is an abstraction from behavior and the products of behavior.” Also, on the basis of examining formal definitions and “less

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1824 Kroeber and Kluckhohn classify the 164 definitions they examine as descriptive, historical, normative, psychological, structural, or genetic. Each of these groups has its distinctive set of characteristics. Descriptive definitions take culture as a comprehensive totality and enumerate different cultural aspects – customs and habits are mentioned in most of them. Edward Tylor’s 1871 definition belongs to this class. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 44-45.) The definitions classified as historical place emphasis on social heritage or tradition. Heritage focuses on the product(s) received, and tradition to the affirmative process of receiving. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 48-49.) Normative definitions divide into two subclasses and they emphasize – on the basis of the concept of ‘customs’ – either a) rule, mode or way, or b) material and social ideals or values as reflected in behavior. Definitions thus imply “organicism” in the form of shared patterns, sanctioning control, a set of conventions, and “social ‘blueprints’ for action.” (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 51-54.) In contrast to the previous class, psychological definitions – which are also subdivided – focus either to a) adjustment, b) inter-human learning, c) habit, or d) impulses and attitudes. These definitions aim specifically to relate culture and the individual. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 56-60.) Structural definitions focus on implicit rather than explicit culture by stressing the patterning or organization of culture. They thus also take the notion of culture to be an abstraction, “a conceptual model” or “a system of designs for living.” These type of definitions bring forth the theme of an end or an aim which is implicitly manifested in the organizational structure. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 61-63.) In contrast to the previous category, genetic definitions emphasize culture as a) products or artifacts, b) ideas, or c) symbols. Genetic definitions – overlapping with the historical ones – revolve around the question “how has culture come to be?,” or “what are the factors that have made culture possible or caused it to come into existence?” As such, the notion of (“non-genetic,” i.e., not biologically transmitted) communicability is inherent to many of the definitions of this group. (Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 65-70.) As can easily be understood, besides Tylor’s classical attempt (insufficient in itself but valued by
concentrated” statements about culture, Kroeber and Kluckhohn offer a prolonged discussion of “certain general features or broad aspects of culture.” These features can be “conveniently grouped” and analyzed as a) integration, b) historicity, c) uniformity, d) causality, e) significance and values, as well as f) relativism.

Integration

With “integration” Kroeber and Kluckhohn mean a feature which is “more or less parallel to the tendency toward solidarity possessed by societies.” A need of sociocultural adaptation, that is, the multidimensional process of enculturation is thus highlighted first. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, however, emphasize – explicitly against Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942) and the functionalist view of cultural anthropology – that “integration is never perfect or complete, […] institutions can certainly clash as well as the interests of individuals.” The term “integration” must, therefore, be further clarified.

Drawing from the theories of Pitirim Sorokin (1889-1968), Geertz clarifies the meaning of “integration” by pointing out that it is possible to distinguish between two types of integration that are not identical with each other. The “logico-meaningful integration,” characteristic to culture, means “a unity of style, of logical implication, of meaning and value.” The “causal-functional integration,” characteristic of the social system, means in turn “the kind of integration one finds in an organism, where all the parts are united in a single causal web.” Failure to distinguish between these two will result in being not able to properly

its “establishing function” in terms of cultural sciences), there is no single definition that would have been accepted by all.

1825 Statements are grouped under headings of The nature of culture, The components of culture, The distinctive properties of culture, Culture and psychology, Culture and language, and Relation of culture to society, individuals, environment and artifacts.

1826 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 159.

1827 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 159.
distinguish between culture and a social system. Geertz thus stresses that “cultural structure and social structure are not mere reflexes of one another but independent, yet interdependent, variables.”

**Historicity**

The fact that Kroeber and Kluckhohn disregard the functionalist view in favor of a historical approach is understandable, as Kroeber’s theoretical assumption is that “cultural phenomena were on the whole more amenable to historical than to strictly scientific treatment.” Kroeber and Kluckhohn, then, discuss Heinrich Rickert’s (1863-1936) qualitative distinction between sciences (whose subject is nature) and history (whose subject is culture). Even though Kroeber “modified the Rickert position” by rejecting the strict dichotomy between the two and by adopting a “gradualist view,” Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s work affirms the emphasis on historicity – as well as social complexity – by stating that “culture is not a point but a complex of [temporally] interrelated things.”

Geertz also takes historicity into account but discusses rather of “cultural patterns” than phenomena. He defines these patterns as “historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives.” One of the definitions of culture that Geertz gives, emphasizes this historicity: “the culture concept […] denotes an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate,

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1830 Geertz 2000, 52.
perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.”

In short, according to Geertz, cultural interrelatedness is diachronic but also synchronic.

Uniformity

The temporal, social and structural complexity amounts to the difficulty of affirming that there are basic structural principles common to all cultures. In other words, it is difficult to argue that there are basic transcultural elements that result in phenomenal uniformities. Kroeber and Kluckhohn acknowledge that they have different understandings of this issue. While uniformities in culture seem to be attainable only by generalizing social phenomena – and thus a direct relation to the content of a particular culture is lost – it could be stated that there are “constant elemental units of form” such as “moral axioms.” Kroeber and Kluckhohn admit, however, that “many would insist that within one aspect of culture, namely language, such constant elemental units have been isolated: phonemes, and morphemes.”

An obvious limitation of Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s analysis is that this “automatic” – by which they seem to mean “self-evident” – aspect of culture, that is, language, is not further examined. In a sharp contrast to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, Geertz and his “symbolic anthropology” stresses the importance of signs and symbols precisely as these “constant elemental units.” Besides Geertz’s definition that emphasizes the “transmitted pattern of meanings,” Geertz’s turn to symbolic anthropology is well

1832 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 162-164.
1833 A brief and philosophically unpleasing discussion of the relationship between culture and language is included in the comment section of the statement group titled as “culture and language.” (Cf. Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 123-124.) Wagner, in contrast, provides a longer discussion of “the invention of language.” Cf. Wagner 1981, 106-115.
summarized in this explanation: “The concept of culture I espouse [...] is essentially a semiotic one.”

Causality

Affirming both cultural complexity and the difficulty to recognize cultural uniformities leads us to the assertion that insofar as cultural phenomena are understood as “emergents,” they arise from a number of causes – both cultural and non-cultural. The non-cultural causes, that Kroeber and Kluckhohn mention, relate to the natural environment (inorganic, organic, genetic), but also include the influence of “gifted individuals” as well as “strictly social factors” (such as the size and location of a given society). Although culture is not unrelated to these conditions and socio-biological necessities, Kroeber and Kluckhohn maintain that in trying to explain “any particular cultural situation,” the preceding conditions “must always necessarily be viewed as impinging on an already existing cultural condition.” According to their view, any culture has thus antecedent cultural-historical conditions that lead one to describe cultures as “adaptive, selective, and accumulative.”

Clifford Geertz affirms the ideas of cultural accumulation and causality: “Undirected by culture patterns – organized systems of significant symbols – man’s behavior would be virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts and exploding emotions, his experience virtually shapeless. Culture, the accumulated totality of such patterns, is not just an ornament of human existence but – the principal basis of its specificity – an essential condition for it.” It appears that not only Kroeber and Kluckhohn, but Geertz also

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1834 Geertz 2000, 5.
1835 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 165-166.
supports the idea of “circular causality.” This support is most evident when Geertz considers the interaction between a culture and the people influenced by it.

Let me approach Geertz’s discussion of culturally facilitated interaction with the remarks Kroeber and Kluckhohn make of the same issue: “It is people that produce or establish culture; but they establish it partly in perpetuation and partly in modification of a form of existing culture which has made them what they are.” Put differently, psychology also contributes to the “causes” of cultural phenomena. This inclusion of psychic processes, however, complexifies the question of defining culture even more. Kroeber and Kluckhohn do not, therefore, seek to discover “cultural laws that will conform to the type of those of classical mechanics” but instead “cultural forms and processes” as generalizations and regularities that bring forth the “implicit culture” as the basis of human interaction in a culture. Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s assumption is that “every culture is a structure,” that is, a system of high complexity that has its own “ethos.”

Geertz follows this line of thought except for one clear difference: he does not mention “implicit culture” in the wake of Clyde Kluckhohn, but “a web of signification” instead. Geertz points out that “cultural systems must have a minimal degree of coherence, else we would not call them systems.” This inner coherence of a cultural system, however, does not justify understanding cultures as governed by cultural “laws” that would resemble the laws of nature: “Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis on it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of

1837 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 166-171.
meaning.” According to Geertz, the systemic element in culture is dependent of the structure, or a “web”, of meaning.

**Significance and values**

Kroeber and Kluckhohn maintain that the notion of ethos opens up the field “of those properties of culture which seem most distinctive of it and most important: its significance and its values.” Among the properties of culture, in other words, it is especially values that Kroeber and Kluckhohn emphasize: “they are the products of men, of men having bodies and living in societies, and are the structural essence of the culture of these societies of men.” What should be noted – with curiosity – is that according to Kroeber and Kluckhohn “values are part of nature, not outside it,” and that values and significances are not only subjective but also “objective in their expressions, embodiments, or results.” As such, values are also culturally transmitted. Even though there is a difference between an actual and an ideal culture as well as another difference between alternating value systems, Kroeber and Kluckhohn argue that “values provide the only basis for the fully intelligible comprehension of culture, because the actual organization of all cultures is primarily in terms of their values.” Kroeber and Kluckhohn then conclude that “if the essence of cultures be their patterned selectivity, the essence of this selectivity inheres in the cultural value system.”

It is rather apparent that, in contrast to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, Geertz stresses not so much values but significations. He understands the analysis of significations – or the “search of meaning” – as the core of cultural analysis that is, basically, its interpretation. Geertz, nevertheless, warns of “purifying” significations of their material

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1838 Geertz 2000, 5, 17.
complexity: “Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape.” Geertz’s position could thus be summarized in that any ethnography is interpretative in relation to the social discourse of which it is about.

Relativism

The notion of cultural selectivity, discussed above, leads Kroeber and Kluckhohn to the problem of relativism: “true understanding of cultures therefore involves recognition of their particular value systems.” According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, each particular culture has “its own idiosyncratic structure.” This peculiar structure of a culture does not mean, however, that cultural value systems would not overlap in a manner that retains the possibility that particular cultures are not “utterly disparate monads.” This transcultural overlapping is feasible also in the light of the structures for the satisfaction of basic necessities that are common to all human cultures. Kroeber and Kluckhohn point out that there are socio-biological necessities that by themselves already provide a framework for all cultures and guide the selection of cultural patterns – most evident in value contents. “The astonishing variety of cultural detail over the world” should thus not lead one to conclude that there are not “universalities [or ‘virtual universals’] in culture content” generally understood. Kroeber and Kluckhohn maintain that “cultural differences, real and important though they are, are still so many variations on themes supplied by raw human nature and by the limits and conditions of social life.”

This intriguing problem of relativism is taken up by Geertz when he mentions that anthropological analysis is “microscopic.” Geertz, nevertheless, warns against of committing oneself “to say that there are no large-scale anthropological interpretations of whole societies, civilizations, world events, and so on.”\textsuperscript{1842} He only wishes to point out that “the anthropologist characteristically approaches such broader interpretations and more abstract analyses from the direction of exceedingly extended acquaintances with extremely small matters.”\textsuperscript{1843} Geertz also problematizes, however, the question by contrasting biological unity with cultural variety: “The great natural variation of the cultural forms is, of course, not only anthropology’s great (and wasting) resource, but the ground of its deepest theoretical dilemma: how is such variation to be squared with the biological unity of human species?”\textsuperscript{1844} Geertz’s honest problematization not only summarizes the issue of relativism, but also questions the basis of all empirical cultural studies.

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Despite the fundamental confusion at the very root of cultural studies, there is a need to briefly conclude the discussion concerning general cultural features. Not extending this discussion any further, I will give this conclusion in the form of the “summarizing approximation” proposed by Kroeber and Kluckhohn. Although having pledged not to do so, they actually do give “the one hundred and sixty-fifth formal definition.”\textsuperscript{1845} At the same

\textsuperscript{1842} Geertz 2000, 21.  
\textsuperscript{1843} Geertz 2000, 21.  
\textsuperscript{1844} Geertz 2000, 22.  
\textsuperscript{1845} Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 157.
time, however, they admit that there is “no full theory of culture”\textsuperscript{1846} within which to apply their educated proposal:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.\textsuperscript{1847}

After having followed Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s exposition of the general features of culture, and Clifford Geertz’s extracted comments on these, I would have to affirm that this brief sketch is not philosophically pleasing. Having only described – from anthropologists’ points of view – certain broad, although frequently named features of culture, have we now understood the substance and significance of culture? Asked “why” and “how” rather than “what”? Brought forth the notion of cultural situation, situatedness, as a key to existential hermeneutics?

Instead of enumerating cultural aspects or features, I claim that we should be looking for the essence or the basic function of culture. This is what Ernst Cassirer also suggests: “A philosophy of culture begins with the assumption that the world of human culture is not a mere aggregate of loose and detached facts. It seeks to understand these facts as a system, as an organic whole.”\textsuperscript{1848} In contrast to an empirical or a historical approach, for a philosophical analysis of culture “its starting point and its working hypothesis are embodied in the conviction that the varied and seemingly dispersed rays may be gathered

\textsuperscript{1846} Of the problem of providing such a general theory of culture, cf. Geertz 2000, 24-28.
\textsuperscript{1847} Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 181.
\textsuperscript{1848} Cassirer 1974, 222.
together and brought into a common focus.” Cassirer, in other words, challenges us to look at the problem of culture in a different light. In order to see things clearly, a brief excursion to the genealogy of the concept of culture could, therefore, be useful. If Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s approximating definition above is insufficient, because it only enumerates general features of culture, maybe following the history of the concept – in a way the original task set by Kroeber and Kluckhohn – is more rewarding.

A Brief History of the Culture Concept

The concept of “culture” (lat. *colere* > *cultus* > *cultura*) as distinguished from “civilization” (lat. *civis* > *civicus* > *civitas*) is indisputably of German origin as well as relatively new in its modern meaning. The Latin *cultura agri*, a function of human societies, was semantically broadened first by Cicero when he wrote about *cultura animi*, and later by medievals when forming an idea of *cultura mentis*. The notion of “geistige” as well as “materielle Kultur” in the modern sense, however, can be traced back to the German language. I should acknowledge at the outset that the long dispute over the dichotomy between “Geist” (spirit) and “Natur” (nature) is not unrelated to the emergence of the distinction between “Kultur” and “Zivilisation,” but it contributed significantly to the modern formulation of the concept of culture.

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1849 Cassirer 1974, 222.
1850 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 4.
1851 Vaan 2008, 125. “to take care of, honour > habitation, cultivation > cultivation, care.”
1852 Vaan 2008, 116. “citizen (of one’s town) > pertaining to society/the civic order > an organized community, state”
1854 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 9-11, 18.
1855 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 16-17.
Kroeber and Kluckhohn recognize three main phases in this German development: 1) culture as a concept of eighteenth-century general history, which regarded culture as “progress in cultivation, towards enlightenment,” 2) a period from Kant to Hegel during which the concept of the Spirit outshone that of culture, and 3) the development after 1850 that finally led to the modern conception. Although it is the last phase which will get most of the attention in this context, it serves our purpose to briefly sketch each of these.

1) In discussing the impact of the general, or “universal,” histories of humankind to the formation of the modern concept of culture, Kroeber and Kluckhohn maintain that it was the work of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) that was the most influential. Despite acknowledging the groundwork done by Voltaire (1694-1778) with his *Essai sur les Moeurs et l'Esprit des Nations* (1769) and by Isaac Iselin (1728-1782) with his *Philosophische Muthmassungen über die Geschichte der Menschheit* (1768), as well as the contributions by Karl Franz von Irwing (1728-1801) and Johann Christoph Adelung (1732-1806) – who already utilized the word “Kultur” (or “Cultur”) in describing the idea of a historical perfection process, that is, cultivation – it was Herder’s voluminous *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1784-1791) that came to open the discussion of historical culture.

The concept of “Culture,” in the manner Herder used it, has already “a modern ring” for the anthropologists as the concept was understood in relation to “Humanität” and especially in relation to “Tradition.” The main meaning of Herder’s culture concept is, however, “a progressive cultivation or development of faculties.” Of the fourteen passages quoted by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, this one is the most descriptive one: “Let us not place a

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1856 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 18.
firm difference between Culture and Enlightenment, neither of which, if they are proper kinds, can be without the other.” Some crucial depth is added to this passage with Herder’s notion that “the philosophy of history which follows the track of tradition is actually the real human history.” It appears that for Herder the substance of the philosophy of history is culture as cultivation – but this is not so much a question of cultivating the faculties of individuals anymore but “Humanität” as a whole.

2) The second phase recognized by Kroeber and Kluckhohn focused more on the notion of spirit than revolved around the concept of culture. The current of thought running from Kant’s transcendental idealism to Hegel’s absolute idealism was almost contemporaneous with the first phase but it had an impact that was slightly more enduring. The earlier branch of philosophy of history, which culminated in the work of Herder, took the actual histories, institutions and customs as its point of interest. This other branch was, in contrast, more animated by the search of the supreme principle of such history. Although the concept of culture was not infrequently used by Kant, the pattern of thought was, according to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, in general terms “away from Cultur to Geist.” Without discussing in depth the impact and the ideas of the German idealism, Kroeber and Kluckhohn take it for granted that this shift culminated in Hegel’s notion of the absolute Spirit.

If Kant still understood the concept of “Cultur” in terms of “Civilisierung” as well as contrasted the “cultural skills and arts” (Künste der Cultur) with the “roughness” (Rohigkeit) of human nature, in the work of Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814) culture...
becomes “the employment of all abilities for the purpose of complete freedom, the complete
independence from everything which is not part of us, [of] our pure Self.”

With Hegel this already explicit notion of autonomous freedom – and, in turn, historical determinism – achieves its climax in the process of the self-realization of the Spirit. Kroeber and Kluckhohn deplore that “it is significant that Hegel seems never to have used the word culture in his Philosophy of History, and civilization only once and incidentally.”

Kroeber and Kluckhohn do not take into account, however, the necessary process of Entäußerung and Erinnerung that Hegel explicated in his Encyclopedias under the notion of Objective Spirit.

3) Kroeber and Kluckhohn argue that the Hegelian emphasis came largely to its end by mid-nineteenth century. The following hundred years, in opposition to the previous phase, can, according to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, be then called the century of Kulturphilosophie. Kroeber and Kluckhohn name a German anthropologist Gustav Friedrich Klemm (1802-1867) first as an intermediating figure between the eighteenth-century historical and the late nineteenth-century modern usage of the concept of culture, but also list Klemm’s voluminous Allgemeine Cultur-Geschichte der Menschheit (1843-1852) and Allgemeine Culturwissenschaft (1854-1855) as the works which opened this “third phase” of the German development. The change that took place is evident in Rickert’s 1899 thesis that “Naturwissenschaft” (natural sciences) is to be contrasted with “Kulturwissenschaft” (humanities and social sciences), in contrast to Wilhelm Dilthey’s (1833-1911) still idealistic suggestion of “Geisteswissenschaft.”

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1861 “die Übung aller Kräfte auf den Zweck der völligen Freiheit, der völligen Unabhängigkeit von allem, was nicht Wir selbst, unser reines Selbst ist.” Quoted by Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 24.
1862 Geertz mentions that there is “terrible,” reductive historical determinism “with which we have been plagued from Hegel forward.” Geertz 2000, 37, 361.
1864 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 24-25, 146.
prolonged examination of its own, it should not be left unnoticed that the century of
*Kulturphilosophie* can also be summarized as the century of culture-civilization dispute. It was
this dispute whose outcome was the German scientific notion of “*Kultur*,” distinct from
cultivation as well as from the English and French “*civilisation*.”

Drawing from a German philosopher and sociologist Paul Barth (1858-1922),
Kroeber and Kluckhohn state that Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) was the first – in his
posthumously published three-volume work *Über die Kawi-Sprache* (1836-1839) – to propose a
limitation to the concept of culture that had adopted “excessive breadth” as cultivation. Von
Humboldt understood culture as “the control of nature by science and by “*Kunst*” (evidently
in the sense of useful arts, *viz.* technology),” and civilization both as “qualitative
improvement” and as “the increased control of elementary human impulses (*Triebè*) by
society,” that is, as spiritual “ennoblement.” After also introducing the views of Albert
Schaeffle (1831-1903) and Julius Lippert (1839-1909), Kroeber and Kluckhohn summarize
that “culture refers to the sway of man over nature, civilization to his sway over himself.” In
Schaeffle’s terms the first is thus “the material-factual content of all ‘mannerly-being’ (*der
sachliche Gehalt aller Gesittung*), whereas the second is “the spiritual content” (*der geistige
Gehalt*).

Another way of relating the concepts of culture and civilization with each
other, however, already prevailed. Ferdinand Tönnies (1855-1936) distinguished between
*Volksstum* and *Staatstum*. The transition “from the culture of folk society to the civilization of
state organization” then in a way inverses the meanings of the two concepts. Tönnies
understood culture as “socially ‘organic’” (e.g. custom, religion, and art) and civilization as

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1866 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 15-17, 147. The word “Gesittung” is not an actual word in German
language. It has been coined together from “Gesinnung” (ideology, convictions, world view) and “Sitte”
(custom, tradition, manners, morality).
“mechanical” (e.g. law and science). Kroeber and Kluckhohn summarize his views by mentioning that “Kultur is what precedes and begets Zivilisation.”

Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) approached then the issue rather similarly: culture is creative becoming whereas civilization is the final, unproductive stage of this vitality – “the old age or winter” – and therefore “all civilization is fundamentally alike.” According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn’s exposition on Spengler, civilization for him is “merely a stage which every culture reaches […] it is the death of the culture on which it settles.” Spengler expressed his indebtedness to Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and took a culture to be distinctive and self-sufficient among other cultures – Nietzsche’s definition being in *David Strauss, der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller* (1873): “Culture is above all the unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of a people (eines Volkes).” For Spengler, in a similar manner, culture has a unifying function. Spengler understands the essence of culture, however, constitutively as “something wholly irreducible and unrelatable.” Kroeber and Kluckhohn assert, therefore, that Spengler saw cultures as “monadal”; they are wholly intelligible only to those living in that particular culture.

A turn to yet another direction is suggested to have taken place with the work of Franz Oppenheimer (1864-1943) and Alfred Weber (1868-1958). In contrast to preceding philosopher-sociologists they both understood civilization as material-technological and culture as spiritual-idealistic. Weber, who reacted against Spengler, understood civilization as “the objective technological and informational activities of society” and thus “accumulative

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1867 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 16-17.
1868 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 17, 26, 147.
1869 “Kultur ist vor allem Einheit des künstlerischen Stiles in allen Lebensäußerungen eines Volkes.” (Nietzsche 1995, III-1.159.) Kroeber and Kluckhohn (p. 27 n.72) state incorrectly that the definition is from Nietzsche’s *Geburt der Tragödie* (1872).
1870 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 26-27.
and irreversible.” Culture, in turn, is “non-additive” as well as subjective and unique.\textsuperscript{1871} Kroeber and Kluckhohn depict especially Weber’s Kultursoziologie (1931) as a prevenient expression of modern cultural anthropology. For Weber the social structure (of religion, art, knowledge, etc.) is only an expression (Ausdrucksform) of “essential manner-content” (Wesensgehalt) which, in turn, is “Kultur.” It was on the basis of this kind of emerging thought that the word “Kultur” had finally gained a dictionary definition as “the mode of being of mankind (die Daseinsweise der Menschheit) […] as well as the result of this mode of being, namely, the stock of culture possessed (der Kulturbesitz) or cultural attainments (die Kulturerrungenschaften).”\textsuperscript{1872}

This “inclusive sense” of the concept – implicit in Klemm and applied, for example, by Burckhardt, Hellwald, Lippert, Rickert, Frobenius, Lamprecht, Vierkandt, and Simmel – means that “culture constitutes the topmost phenomenal level yet recognized […] in the realm of nature.” Kroeber and Kluckhohn are quick to point out, like Clifford Geertz later on, that this priority does not have to lead hypostasizing the concept, to seeing it “as a distinctive substance or actual superorganism, and then to assume that it moves through autonomous, immanent forces.” In other words, Kroeber and Kluckhohn maintain that acknowledging that culture can be construed “as the characteristic mode of human existence or manifestation, as life is of organisms and energy of matter,” and therefore from the point of view of “emergent levels,” does not need to carry an “ontological implication” but rather “an operational view.” As such, however, “Kultur,” or “the distinctive ‘higher’ values or

\textsuperscript{1871} Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 17, 148.  
\textsuperscript{1872} Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 27.
enlightenment of a society,” was set against the French and the English term “civilization” as a novelty.\textsuperscript{1873}

Despite the English and French “resistance,” Kroeber and Kluckhohn mention that the concept was adopted relatively quickly in the North and Latin America as well as in Italy, Scandinavia, and the Netherlands. In Russia, Nikolay Danilevsky (1822-1885) had employed the term “culture” in the modern German sense as early as 1869 in a text titled as “Russia and Europe” that introduced his theory of “historical-cultural types.”\textsuperscript{1874} The standard definition is attributed to Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917), however, thanks to the opening lines of his – recently reissued – two-volume work \textit{Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom} (1871, 2010). What we should notice, however, is that “culture” is in Tylor’s context still paired with “civilization,” and that the definition is mostly descriptive as it enumerates different cultural aspects: “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”\textsuperscript{1875} Amid of all variations, this definition was, nevertheless, to become the most widely used one.

Let me conclude this historical survey by mentioning that even though this brief excursion to the history of the culture concept does not grant us peace of mind – as we seem to be in a loop of enumerating features of culture, or adding that they compose a “complex whole” – I believe that a more profound understanding of what “culture” can

\textsuperscript{1873} Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 26-28, 35-36, 146, 148-149. – Clifford Geertz maintains the same tone of voice in his own criticism of metaphysicalizing, behavioralizing, or cognitivizing culture. The proper object of cultural analysis is “the informal logic of actual life.” (Cf. Geertz 2000, 10-12, 17.) In relation to the English use of the term ‘culture’, Roy Wagner points out that the Latin origin was maintained through Middle English in which ‘cultura’ meant “a plowed field” – and even later comprehended from the point of view of “agriculture.” Wagner 1981, 21.

\textsuperscript{1874} Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 18, 29, 146-147.

possibly mean has been achieved in the last few pages. The fact of the matter that “Kultur”
denotes the human spirit as well as its becoming is enough for the time being – it is the task
of this dissertation then to explicate how “culture” can be understood, for example, from a
hermeneutic point of view.

Critical Application: the Case of French Resistance

Allow me to add a few critical remarks. It is not without significance that Tylor was English
and his work was published in London. This may have contributed to the fact that, from the
viewpoint of cultural studies, a relatively long silence followed Tylor’s definition. It was only
after 1920 that there flourished a more broad variation of the definitions of the concept of
culture. As well demonstrated by Kroeber and Kluckhohn, by the time of the publication
of their critical review of concepts and definitions, the concept of culture in its modern sense
was almost universally adopted and employed – only France was still considered to be
“resistive” in 1952. According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, in the French context the words
“la civilization” (“with its implications of advancement and urbanization”) and “social” were
still predominant over that of “la culture.”

It could well be that after having now outlined the modern, scientific use of
the concept of culture, there is no adequate ground for examining the cultural philosophy of
any French philosopher preceding the mid-twentieth century. As a concept that indisputably
has a German origin and thus a peculiar meaning – which somewhat parallels with the

1876 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 149-152.
1877 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 28-29, 147.
1878 Geertz takes rather there to be a set of different overlapping meanings, which “obscures a good deal
more than it reveals.” After having reviewed both the general cultural features and the brief history of the
concept of culture it could be said that his observation is in the right direction. Geertz 2000, 4-5.
French “la civilisation” – it could seem desperate to attempt an analysis of the cultural hermeneutics of someone, say Paul Ricoeur, who is equipped with a different conceptual mindset. It seems as even Kroeber and Kluckhohn would be cautious in doing this.

By adding a brief discussion of Lucien Febvre’s 1930 article “Civilisation: Évolution d’un mot et d’un groupe d’idées,” Kroeber and Kluckhohn emphasize the fact that since the work of Michel de Montagne (1533-1592) and René Descartes (1596-1650) – followed by Voltaire in 1740 and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1762 – the verb “civiliser” and the participle “civilisé” were being used. The noun “la civilisation” then appeared in Nicolas Antoine Boulanger’s (1722-1759) posthumously published L’Antiquité devoilée par ses usages, ou Examen critique des principales opinions, cérémonies & institutions religieuses & politiques des différents peuples de la terre (1766), followed by Nicolas Baudeau (1730-1792) in his work Ephémérides du Citoyen (1767). Even the plural form, les civilisations, was explicitly used by Pierre-Simon Ballanche (1776-1847) in 1819. It is the case, however, that the notion “la civilisation des sauvages” (and thus the implicit idea of distinguishable civilizations), for example, already precedes his work. Despite the fact that the term “la culture” was known and used in the eighteenth century France “to denote ‘formation de l’esprit,’” it is therefore the word “la civilisation” that captures the most attention – for historical as well as political reasons.1879

Supposing that in the early 1950s there was still hesitation and oscillation at best in the French context, it is still justifiable to claim that this resistance was about to fade away. In Paul Ricoeur’s case this can be seen, for example, in his later willingness to engage in the discussion concerning symbolic anthropology. His 1975 lecture on Clifford Geertz’s The Interpretation of Cultures – in which Geertz credits the work of Paul Ricoeur as a source of

inspiration — leaves no room for doubt: the concept of culture is being used by them both extensively in its “modern” sense. In his 1975 lecture on Geertz, Ricoeur not only shows profound interest in the work of the most influential contemporary cultural anthropologist, but also engages in the discussion and utilizes the concept of culture in a manner that most significantly differs from the “resistant” attitude described by Kroeber and Kluckhohn in 1952. Ricoeur’s use of the concept of “culture,” in his earlier texts, however, indicates that the French context might not have been quite as resistive as Kroeber and Kluckhohn maintain.

The question, then, whether it would be legitimate or relevant to ask the role of the concept of culture is, at least in Paul Ricoeur’s case, reduced to mere rhetorical gaucherie: most obviously it is more than acceptable. In terms of understanding Ricoeur’s work, asking the role of the concept of culture is necessary.

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1880 Geertz credits Ricoeur in providing an idea of “inscribing” action: “The ethnographer ‘inscribes’ social discourse; he writes it down.” It is Ricoeur “from whom this whole idea of the inscription of action is borrowed and somewhat twisted.” Geertz 2000, 19.

1881 The most obvious objection – that Ricoeur’s lecture was given in English language and that it falls within Ricoeur’s years at the University of Chicago (1970-1991) and hence under the influence of less resistant “cultural understanding” – can be countered by the notion that Ricoeur never left France for good but held seminars and lectures, as well as published most his main works of this period in Paris (e.g. *La métaphore vive*, 1975; *Temps et récit I-III*, 1983-1985; *Soi-même comme un autre*, 1990.) For example, in 1975 Ricoeur gave a seminar in Paris on the semantics of action, and in 1979 on the studies of narrative. It is also true, however, that he did not stay firmly in Paris either. During the years 1979-1985 “Ricoeur settled into an annual cadence: Christmas in Paris, lectures in Europe, spring term (March to May) in Chicago, late May and early June in Italy (Naples and Rome), July and August at his country home in Brittany, and a fall of intensive reading, writing, and lecturing in Europe.” Ricoeur’s “absence” from France does not thus straightforwardly mean “being present” in Chicago but should be seen merely as absence from the “media scene” as can be inferred on the basis of the description given by Charles Reagan: “The publication of this three-volume work [*Temps et récit I-III*] led to the ‘rediscovery’ of Paul Ricoeur in France. He burst back on the intellectual scene, with interviews in print and on television.” Reagan 1996, 41-46, 48.
Appendix 2 – Works on Ricoeur’s Cultural Hermeneutics

According to Frans D. Vansina’s extensive 1935-2008 primary and secondary bibliography of Ricoeur texts, there are only two dissertations and three monographs which indicate by their titles that they deal with the question of culture.\textsuperscript{1882} Except for one, all of them were written before Ricoeur’s last works. The two dissertations are from the 1990s. Kelton Cobb’s *Theology of Culture: Reflections on the Ethics of Tillich, Troeltsch and Ricoeur* (The University of Iowa, 1994) takes neither Ricoeur nor the philosophy of culture as its primary aim. Marcel Madila-Basanguka’s *Poétique de la culture: Imagination, éthique et religion chez Paul Ricoeur* (Institute Catholique de Paris, 1996) is more focused on cultural hermeneutics, but in the end adopts philosophy of religion as its culmination point rather than that of the concept of culture.

Two of the three monographs are, in turn, from the 1980s. The first, Pawel Ozdowski’s *Teoria kultury wobec hermeneutyki Ricoeura* (1984) has been published only in Polish, and it focuses on Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of symbols but from a very contextual point of view. Manuel Sumares’ *O sujeito e a cultura na filosofia de Paul Ricoeur: para além da necessidade* (1984/1987) is in Portuguese, and it balances between philosophical anthropology and cultural philosophy. In contrast to Sumares’ work, Jens Mattern’s rather recent *Zwischen kultureller Symbolik und allgemeiner Wahrheit: Paul Ricoeur interkulturell gelesen* (2008), in German, represents an applicative approach by focusing on the notion of interculturality.

I will next introduce each of these five works in the order of their publication. Before doing so I should point out, however, that the seventeen secondary articles and sections in edited books that are mentioned in Vansina’s bibliography will not be discussed here. These essays represent a broad variety of languages as well as academic interests: six of

\textsuperscript{1882} Vansina & Vandecasteele 2008, 343-431.
them were published in Spanish, five in English, two in French and in Portuguese, and one each in German and in Dutch.\textsuperscript{1883}

Not all the articles are relevant in terms of explicating Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics, but for example James F. Brown’s “Culture, Truth and Hermeneutics” \textit{(America: National Catholic weekly} 138, 1978), José Gama’s “Hermenéutica da cultura e ontologia em Paul Ricoeur” \textit{(Revista Portuguesa da filosofia} 52, 1996), and Margit Ekholt’s “Kultur – zwischen Universalität und Partikularität. Annäherung an eine kulturphilosophische interpretation Paul Ricoeurs” \textit{(Das Herausgeforderte Selbst: Perspektiven auf Paul Ricoeurs Ethik,} 1999) provide stimulating insights. But let me now turn back to the monographs and dissertations. By analysing the five works I have mentioned above, we also have a possibility to preview some essential themes relating to Ricoeur’s conception of culture.

\textit{Ozdowski: a Scientific-Marxist Approach}

Pawel Ozdowski’s \textit{Teoria kultury wobec hermeneutyki Ricoeura} (1984) is probably best described as a unique approach to Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics. In its page and a half summary in English – that does not engage itself directly with the contents of the work but rather takes a bird’s eye of view to it – Ozdowski states that the monograph aims to “apply and develop the theory of culture and the research methodology of culture being elaborated in the Poznań circle under the leadership of prof. J. Kmila.” In so doing, Odzowski contrasts this

\textsuperscript{1883} Vansina & Vandecasteele 2008, 343-409, 432-586. – The essays vary from Roberto J. Wallton’s “Cultura, existencia y logica transcendental: apofântica formal en la fenomenología” \textit{(I T A Humanidades} 9, 1973) to Maria Teresa Amado’s “A historia, parábola humana e da cultura classico-cristã occidental: o valor pelo sentido e aproproaçã” \textit{(A filosofia de Paul Ricoeur: Temas e percursos,} 2006).
scientific-Marxist “sociopragmatic kulture theory” \[sic\] with Paul Ricoeur’s hermeneutics.\textsuperscript{1884}

In the opening chapter, Ozdowski bases his exposition mostly on Ricoeur’s 1973 article “Creativity in Language: Word, Polysemy, Metaphor,” and subdivides his presentation of the Ricoeurian concept of symbolism to structuralism, phenomenology and transcendentalism, polysemy, eidetics of symbols, and erring in interpreting symbols.\textsuperscript{1885} Chapters two and three do not focus on Ricoeur but to the socio-pragmatic understanding of the concept of culture and to “conventional semantics.”\textsuperscript{1886}

In fourth chapter Ozdowski then in a way returns to Ricoeur and provides an interpretation of Ricoeur’s understanding of symbols by analyzing the ontological assumptions and the “grasp” of symbolic culture, metaphor as a foundation for conventionalism, metaphor in practice as well as its correspondence, polysemy, and finally Ricoeur’s conception of metaphor as fragmented reconstruction of symbolical experience. In this chapter Ozdowski does not, however, refer explicitly to any of Ricoeur’s works.\textsuperscript{1887}

Chapter five is, in turn, a presentation of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of symbols, and it gives an outline of this hermeneutics under the rubrics “from existentialism to hermeneutics,” “destructive hermeneutics and new philosophy,” and “amplificatory hermeneutics” (hermeneutyka amplifikująca). In this fifth chapter Ozdowski takes use of Ricoeur’s Philosophie de la volonté I and II (1949, 1960), of Histoire et vérité (first edition in 1955), of Ricoeur’s 1973

\textsuperscript{1884} Ozdowski 1984, 150. – To place Ozdowski to his own context it suffices to quote Ozdowski himself: “I am particularly interested in the more and more common form of the legalization of class domination which is manifested in the possibility of mass realization of the entertaining-consumer values in exchange for the loyalty of the masses towards the dominating class. This form of legalization of property and authority, eliminating religious and totalitarian-repressive legalizations spread the consumer philosophy of life. Many socially antifunctional dangers are the effects of this dissemination, to mention just for example the destruction of informal personal social ties which were originally based on non-consumer motivation.” Ozdowski 1984, 151.

\textsuperscript{1885} Ozdowski 1984, 6-25.

\textsuperscript{1886} Ozdowski 1984, 26-54.

\textsuperscript{1887} Ozdowski 1984, 55-71.
article “From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language,” as well as of *De l'interprétation: essai sur Freud* (1965) and of *Le conflit des interprétations* (1969).

Chapter six changes the key when outlining the hermeneutic tradition by summarizing the ideas of Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer and Habermas. This lengthy intermediating chapter concludes with a discussion that concerns the substance and functional uniformity of Heideggerian hermeneutics. Ozdowski’s final chapter, chapter seven, then examines Paul Ricoeur’s understanding of hermeneutics, and its relationship to overall hermeneutical tradition. Drawing especially from Ricoeur’s essay “Existence et herméneutique” (1965/1969) Ozdowski examines first the polarity between the epistemology of interpreting and the ontology of understanding, then moves on to discuss the destructive hermeneutics and ideology criticism, contrasts Ricoeur’s “amplificatory hermeneutics” with hermeneutical tradition, and finally brings forth the question of a new implementation of Christian ethics. In this very last discussion the focus is on Ricoeur’s relation to Kant, Gadamer, Habermas, Heidegger and Sartre.

What seems to be the most important achievement for the present inquiry in Ozdowski’s work is that he recognizes that “the function of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics is not limited to the cognitive-empirical application” but that it creates “a definite philosophy of life.” This definite “life philosophy,” in turn, is understood as “a standard or a proposal to the way and style of life referring to its specific highest values.” In terms of the scientific-Marxist tradition Ozdowski follows, “these instructions are a complex of directives defining the way of implementing new philosophy of life into culture in place of the old life philosophy whose continued acceptance in unchanged form endangers the stability of the

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1888 Ozdowski 1984, 72-85.
1889 Ozdowski 1984, 86-126.
1890 Ozdowski 1984, 127-143.
functioning of social practice.” Of these Western “life philosophy proposals,” such as Ricoeur’s, Ozdowski is then interested only as means, because “by restoring and persuading personal values [they] milden the above danger [of the dissemination of the consumer philosophy of life]” – even though they are not able to eliminate the source of their own “which is the class domination demanding legalization.”\(^{1891}\) Ozdowski’s work firmly testifies of cultural situatedness, but in a manner different from the task of this present dissertation.

_Sumares: a Socio-Political View on Culture_

Manuel Sumares’ _Para além da necessidade: o sujeito e a cultura na filosofia de Paul Ricoeur_ (1984/1987),\(^ {1892}\) in its turn, examines the theme of necessity in terms of culturally situated subject. Unfortunately, this highly interesting piece of philosophical work was published only in Portuguese and it doesn’t even contain the briefest summary in English. The work is more conventional, however, and clearly less ideological than that of Ozdowski’s – to whom Sumares unsurprisingly does not refer. Likewise, Sumares’ exposition is beautifully organized in six chapters that have an internal structure of their own. The chapters from one to three focus on Ricoeur’s pre-hermeneutical thought, whereas the chapters from four to six bring forth Ricoeur’s post-wager hermeneutical philosophy. Each of these two parts of Sumares’ analysis (pre-hermeneutical thought and hermeneutical thought) begins with a background chapter (chapters one and four), to be followed by a chapter focusing on the question of a subject (chapters two and five), and another chapter focusing on the question of culture.

\(^{1891}\) Ozdowski 1984, 150-151.

\(^{1892}\) Sumares’ work was first introduced as his doctoral dissertation in 1984 (Faculdade de Filosofia de Braga, Universidade Católica Portuguesa) but it was supplemented with Ricoeur’s then forthcoming _Temps et récit_ and subsequently published in 1987. Cf. Sumares 1987, 12.
(chapters three and six). Despite the structural neatness of this exposition, there still remain some disconcerting questions in relation to Sumares’ reading of Ricoeur.

Chapter one aims to introduce some of Ricoeur’s early works beginning with *Le volontaire et l’involontaire* and its dialectics of nature and freedom. Sumares is most interested in explicating Ricoeur’s dialectical understanding of philosophy as “liebenden Kampf” (in the wake of Karl Jaspers), the relation of philosophy to “non-philosophy” – such as mythico-poetically expressed experience of being human and methodologico-scientific thought – and the impossibility for the subject to subsist in herself because existing (be-ing) is something that cannot be conceived as a voluntary matter.\(^{1893}\)

Chapter two then focuses on the question of the subject in Ricoeur’s pre-hermeneutical philosophy. The most of chapter two explicates the early Ricoeur’s Marcelian application of Husserl’s eidetics, but Sumares also describes the Kantian trait in Ricoeur’s thought. In addition, Sumares points out the importance of intersubjectivity and “being-in-communion” (*l'être-en-commun*) as well as that of “my body” (*mon corps*). Having introduced these notions, he examines in particular Kant’s influence on Ricoeur by discussing Ricoeur’s presumptions in relation to the transcendental imagination, but especially the role of Kant’s practical philosophy and the notion of “being-intermediary” (*l'être-intermédiaire*) as an ontological condition for human being. A human being mediates internally in between nature and freedom, and it is this mediating – which aims at objectifying – that brings forth the interhuman domain of economics (having), politics (power) and culture (esteem).\(^{1894}\)

In chapter three Sumares tries to capture Ricoeur’s pre-hermeneutical understanding of culture. In drawing especially from *Histoire et vérité* but surprisingly also

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\(^{1894}\) Sumares 1987, 27-77.
from some post-wager articles published in *Political and Social Essays* – that is, texts written after Ricoeur’s hermeneutical turn as declared in *La symbolique du mal* (1960) – Sumares subdivides this examination to three sections: “personal contextualization of the question,” “the cultural matrix and the universal destiny,” and lastly “responsibility and the utopian perspective.” With the first section Sumares wishes to make a case for the influence of the “personalist” philosophy of Emmanuel Mounier (1905-1950). The second section examines the concept of culture but unfortunately does so by using Ricoeur’s article “Civilisation universelle et cultures nationales.” The essay is hopelessly unclear, and it was originally a conference presentation held in 1960, that is, it temporally correlates with Ricoeur’s hermeneutical turn. Sumares’ confusion becomes understandable in the light of the fact that Sumares actually uses the third edition of *Histoire et vérité* (1967), and not the first one published in 1955. The third section of this chapter three then discusses the notions of work, industrial civilization, as well as violence and politics. Sumares ends up, however, using Ricoeur’s post-wager political philosophy in support of his argumentation – leaving also aside some texts, for example, in *Le volontaire et l’involontaire* and *L’homme faillible*, that would have substantially helped him in the development of his own argument.\textsuperscript{1895}

Chapter four represents a change in Sumares’ perspective as it explicitly carries the reader to the realm of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of “critical participation” (*particiação crítica*). The analysis drawn from *La symbolique du mal*, *Le conflit des interprétations* (1969) and *Interpretation Theory* (1976) – and to a lesser extent also from *La métaphore vive* – is divided between the hermeneutics of symbols and the hermeneutics of texts (discourses). Sumares discusses Ricoeur’s critical stance to Martin Heidegger’s “direct” ontological hermeneutics, and Ricoeur’s critique of Wilhelm Dilthey’s distinction between explanation (*Erklärung*) and

\textsuperscript{1895} Sumares 1987, 79-111.
understanding (Verstehen). Sumares also alludes to Ricoeur’s discussion of onto-semantic innovation and “extralinguistic” reference in relation to Ricoeur’s metaphor theory.\footnote{1896 Sumares 1987, 113-160.}

Chapter five brings forth, again, the question of the subject, but this time from the point of view of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics. The leading idea for Sumares is that the subject is a situated interpreter of his own life. This subject is distinct from \textit{ego cogito}, because the interpreting subject is fundamentally “de-centralized” (\textit{fundamentalmente descentrado}) in his own being. According to Sumares, this fundamental alienation leads Ricoeur to the idea of an “archaeology” of the subject and of its dialectical counterpart, a “teleology” of the subject. Freudian psychoanalysis represents the archaeological perspective, whereas Hegel’s phenomenology of the Spirit represents that of teleology. These two philosophies tackle the same issue by proposing different approaches. Sumares complements this analysis of the dialectics of \textit{arché} and \textit{telos} with a discussion of the eschatological horizon. It is Ricoeur’s conviction that an \textit{arché} can only be set as against a genesis and a \textit{telos} as against an eschatology. In terms of analysing Ricoeur’s hermeneutical conception of the subject, Sumares thus discusses the symbols and myths of evil and their relation to a servile will (\textit{servo arbitrio}), but focuses also to the theme of freedom in the view of hope.\footnote{1897 Sumares 1987, 161-207.}

Chapter six then finally addresses the question of culture in the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur. Sumares subdivides his exposition to two discussions: he first focuses on Ricoeur’s interpretation of the Freudian hermeneutics of culture, and then on the cultural texture between ideology and utopia. It is both the theory of art – which Freud appreciated – and the notion of familial \textit{Sittlichkeit} (biologically and religiously understood), which get the most attention in the first section of Sumares’ chapter six. \textit{De l’interprétation} and \textit{Le conflit des}
interprétations are the two main sources in this analysis. The second section then makes a drastic turn and focuses on semantic action as exteriorization and intentional intervention (and hence also on speech-acts), on action and narrative configuration (in terms of Ricoeur’s threefold mimēsis), on narrative configuration and the experience of time (and thus on the question of understanding history and tradition), and finally on practical imagination and the dialectics of ideology and utopia (in carrying tradition through time). Besides the trilogy Temps et récit and especially its first volume, Sumares uses some of Ricoeur’s articles (such as “The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action considered as a Text,” 1971) as his source material.\footnote{Sumares 1987, 209-279.} Although having been published a year before Sumares’ work, Sumares does not take use of a collection of Ricoeur’s lectures on socio-political philosophy, namely, Lectures on Ideology and Utopia. Considering the final theme of Sumares’ exposition, this must be considered as a substantial lack in his otherwise well-structured exposition.

In conclusion it should be said, therefore, that Sumares reaches the level of describing the socio-political mode of being human, but not necessarily that of culture per se.\footnote{Cf. Sumares 1987, 283, 294.} Simply naming culture and its constitutive nucleus – values, symbolization, and creation of images\footnote{Sumares 1987, 289.} – does not quite reach the level of philosophical reflection. In short, Sumares does not provide an analysis of Ricoeur’s philosophy of culture but rather of different aspects of Ricoeur’s thought relating to such philosophy. Despite the fact that Sumares mentions, for example, that “practical imagination is constitutive for the cultural structuration,”\footnote{Sumares 1987, 278. “prática imaginária e factor constituínte da estruturação cultural”} and that he discusses “the symbolical system of culture,”\footnote{Sumares 1987, 279. “o sistema simbólico da cultura”} he does not define or explain the very usage of the term “culture” itself. Also, although Sumares
explicitly wanted to postpone the publication of his work in order to include the trilogy *Temps et récit* in his own analysis, he has – rather surprisingly – almost completely neglected Ricoeur’s *La métaphore vive*, published a good twelve years before his own work. Considering Sumares’ argument, he would have benefited noticeably if he would have included this important work to his own analysis – not to mention the same of some later works as *Parcours de la reconnaissance* (2004).

*Cobb: Supplementing a Discussion of the Theology of Culture*

In contrast to both Ozdowski and Sumares, Kelton Cobb’s doctoral dissertation *Theology of Culture: Reflections on the Ethics of Tillich, Troeltsch, and Ricoeur* (1994) represents a theological rather than a philosophical approach. According to Cobb, his work investigates the “ways in which theology of culture might fortify theological ethics’ grasp of cultural particularity without surrendering the effort to assert such universals as justice, human rights, and convictions about the unity of creation.”

It should, therefore, be no surprise that Cobb refers neither to Ozdowski nor Sumares. Cobb’s work is also structured in a manner that, for us, it is reasonable to focus only on the last part of his work. Although Cobb’s discussion of Tillich’s and Troeltsch’s cultural views is interesting, all three parts of the work are semi-independent and, according to Cobb, Tillich is the most prominent figure among the other philosophers.

From Ricoeur Cobb draws “an approach to interpreting cultural ‘texts’ by means of which the divergent values that compose a culture can, through recital, be coordinated into a narrative refiguring of one’s orientation to the world.”

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1903 Cobb 1994, xii-xiii.
1904 Cobb 1994, 5, 43.
Ricoeur’s role in the dissertation is that he helps “in retrieving the contributions of Tillich and Troeltsch and persuading us of their persisting viability.”\textsuperscript{1906} Cobb understands Ricoeur’s role only as a mediator.

After having briefly reenvisioned the theology of culture as theological ethics (chapter one), and introduced Paul Tillich’s theologies of culture (chapter two) as well as Ernst Troeltsch’s understanding of the ethical dimension of culture (chapter three), Cobb turns to Ricoeur’s hermeneutics as a means of cultural interpretation (chapter four). Cobb maintains that Ricoeur helps “sharpen my account of how the interpretation of cultural products is a moral act – one that culminates in the narrative recital of the deepest longings and ultimate values of a people.”\textsuperscript{1907} Cobb’s chapter on Ricoeur begins with an introduction to the theme of “hermeneutical detour,” as well as with the idea of action as interpretative text, and then proceeds to formulate Ricoeur’s “systematic ethics,” before finally moving into discussing an ethical theology of culture in the consideration of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics.

Besides describing Ricoeur’s overall structure of a hermeneutical process (summarized by Cobb as “understanding $\rightarrow$ explanation $\rightarrow$ appropriation”) and its revision in \textit{Time and Narrative I} (prefiguration/\textit{mimēsis}, $\rightarrow$ configuration/\textit{mimēsis}, $\rightarrow$ refiguration/\textit{mimēsis}), the key point of the first section of Cobb’s dissertation is that all cultural features, as based on actions, are interpretable texts: “When it is seen that values, institutions, customs, forms of political conduct, and even fashions function as cultural texts for Ricoeur, his reflections on the ‘reading’ and interpretation of these texts can be shown to be an especially useful tool for theology of culture.”\textsuperscript{1908} Ricoeur’s article “The Model of the

\textsuperscript{1906} Cobb 1994, 384.  
\textsuperscript{1907} Cobb 1994, 329.  
\textsuperscript{1908} Cobb 1994, 336.
Text: Meaningful Action considered as a Text” (1971) holds a central place in Cobb’s argumentation.\textsuperscript{1909}

The second section aims at giving an overview of Ricoeur's ethics as well as of the origin of values. Cobb argues that in contrast to Kant, Ricoeur takes values and duties not as constitutive to morality but they “emerge only at a later stage of ethics when the freedom of the other is encountered, when it becomes necessary to mediate between conflicting efforts to exist” – and these efforts are fundamentally expressed “in the density” of the works of an existing self.\textsuperscript{1910} Cobb summarizes Ricoeur’s conception of the source of ethics as the freedom’s desire to be: it is this desire that produces ethos conceivable in cultural symbols, images and values (which as core cultural “realities” constitute the hidden mytho-poetic nucleus of culture). The three features of Ricoeur’s ethics that Cobb examines more closely are: 1) the primary affirmation of the value of existence (an act manifesting itself through the effort to exist), 2) the dyadic structure of the ethical consciousness (distinction between “absolutely desirable” and “relatively possible”), and 3) the concept of ‘repetition’ (the “weight” of history, which leads one to recognize that he is morally responsible for his intended actions). The most significant primary sources in this second section are Ricoeur's article “The Problem of the Foundation of Moral Philosophy” (1978), and the English translations of his works *Time and Narrative III* (1985) and *Oneself as Another* (1990).\textsuperscript{1911}

In terms of the dissertation at hand, the third section of Cobb’s dissertation is the most interesting: in it Cobb analyzes Ricoeur’s theology of culture. Cobb does this by focusing, again, on three themes in particular: 1) Ricoeur’s notion of the “enlargement of

\textsuperscript{1909} Cobb 1994, 329-342.
\textsuperscript{1910} Cobb 1994, 344-345.
\textsuperscript{1911} Cobb 1994, 342-383.
being” through interpretation, 2) the synthesis of acts of valuation in emplotment, and 3) the triad of description, narration, and prescription as a means for analysing human existence.\textsuperscript{1912}

The first of these three themes is best summarized in Cobb’s remark that for Ricoeur “the subject acquires its way of being in the world in the first place through the act of reading,” and that “one’s world is compiled from the texts of one’s culture.”\textsuperscript{1913} This reading is interpreting – as is especially in the case of mytho-poetic narrations – and as such approaching a more complete understanding of being. This is also why the importance of the theme of emplotment and the critical interpretation of narrations bearing the “ontology of care” becomes apparent for Cobb in his dissertation.

The third theme, reconstruction of selfhood as teleologico-ethical existence – through describing the field of action, ascribing actions to characters in narration, and finally prescribing aim-carrying (such as “good life”) practices by these essentially mytho-poetic narrations – rests on the preceding themes but in a way also leads away from examining culture. According to Cobb, this third theme is best captured in Ricoeur’s famous “little ethics” (“petite éthique”): “to live the good life with and for others in just institutions.” This culmination point is justified in terms of Cobb’s own analysis, but it does not satisfy a need to analyze more deeply Ricoeur’s philosophy of culture. Cobb uses especially Ricoeur’s articles “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics” (1972/1974) and “Manifestation and Proclamation” (1974/1978), as well as \textit{Time and Narrative III} and \textit{Oneself as Another} as his textual sources.\textsuperscript{1914}

As a brief evaluation of Cobb’s dissertation – from the point of view of explicating Ricoeur’s philosophy of culture – it should then be pointed out, again, that Cobb

\textsuperscript{1912} Cobb 1994, 384-385.  
\textsuperscript{1913} Cobb 1994, 385-386.  
\textsuperscript{1914} Cobb 1994, 383-442.
Madila-Basanguka: the Ethico-Religious Core of Cultural Poetics

Marcel Madila-Basanguka’s dissertation *Poétique de la culture: imagination, éthique et religion chez Paul Ricoeur* (1996), unknowingly written as an archbishop-to-be, adopts the task of evaluating Ricoeur’s oeuvre quite exclusively through the idea of a philosophy of culture. As such, it clearly merits the highest place in an unofficial ranking of the works on Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy preceding the dissertation at hand – especially because it is able to draw out a “poetics of culture” from Ricoeur’s work. It is, therefore, quite unfortunate that it comprises only a very brief and a quite unpolished summary in English, since the work would clearly deserve – despite its limitations which relate to its affiliation with the philosophy of religion\(^{1916}\) as well as certain technical issues – a much wider audience than it has had as placed to the shelves of the library of *L’Institute Catholique de Paris*.\(^{1917}\)

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\(^{1915}\) Cobb 1994, 464.

\(^{1916}\) The very last chapter of the dissertation, which captures the high point of Madila-Basanguka’s analysis, is titled “La poétique de la religion.”

\(^{1917}\) There is currently a microfiche copy of Madila-Basanguka’s dissertation at the Boston College O’Neill Library. Of that, I am very grateful to the extremely competent library staff.
The four hundred fifty page dissertation, that is also known to Margit Eckholt, is well organized in three main parts. The first examines Ricoeur’s hermeneutical phenomenology, the second the hermeneutics of culture (especially from the points of view of W. Dilthey, E. Cassirer, and H-G Gadamer), and the third, the “heart” of the dissertation, outlines an approach to a poetics of culture as found in the works of Paul Ricoeur.

The first part consists of two chapters: the first analyzes Ricoeur’s existential hermeneutics of symbols, the second his method of reflexive-hermeneutical phenomenology. Chapter one in a way sets a tone for the whole dissertation by opening a view to Ricoeur’s work from *La symbolique du mal*. The main point for Madila-Basanguka is not, however, the semi-theological approach, most strongly highlighted at the very end of his dissertation, but the notion that “the human universe is a world of significations,” and that an analysis of symbolic signification as well as of symbols themselves is therefore needed. Besides *La symbolique du mal*, Madila-Basanguka also uses *De l’interprétation* in capturing Ricoeur’s theory of symbols. He adds, however, an anthropological note as well: a human subject can never come to a direct self-understanding, whereas this takes place only indirectly through the “signs of man” that bear symbolic meanings.

Chapter two continues to examine this condition by adopting a Cartesian point of view: that human existence is a “thinking being” (*un être pensant*). In opposition to Descartes, however, Madila-Basanguka maintains that Ricoeur demands the detour of reflection for the task of achieving self-identity and self-consciousness as being in between

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1918 Eckholt 1999, 100.
existence and thought. After having described reflection as appropriation, ethics, and interpretation, the question of hermeneutics – as well as that of the conflict of hermeneutics – becomes relevant. It is in the view of this conflict that a culturally grounded “concrete reflection” (reflexion concrète) opens up itself. Two the most used primary sources in this second chapter are De l’interprétation and Le conflit des interprétations.

The second part of Madila-Basanguka’s dissertation, focusing on summarizing the cultural hermeneutics of W. Dilthey, E. Cassirer, and H-G Gadamer, covers the three consecutive chapters respectively. As the author does not aim to give a “panoramic view” to the history of the philosophy of culture, but merely to offer a suitable contrast for schematizing Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of it, Madila-Basanguka takes these three and explicates some of the key aspects of their cultural understanding. Based mostly on the French translations of Dilthey’s Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften and Studien zur Geschichte des deutschen Geistes chapter three aims thus to draw out his notion of “objective Spirit” that, as in Hegel, intentionally retains a connection to the concrete life (der Realität des Lebens). Despite the opportunity, however, this notion is not directly compared to Ricoeur’s notion of “cultural objectivity” (l’objectivité culturelle) as presented in L’homme faillible, for example.

Chapter four then moves on to Cassirer and his philosophy of symbolic forms. The key text Madila-Basanguka uses, however, is the French translation of Cassirer’s An Essay on Man. Cassirer’s assertion that culture should be taken as a system of actions rather than exclusively as something speculative – since being is accessible only as

1924 Madila-Basanguka 1996, 148-149.
symbolically clothed action – seems to be at the core of Madila-Basanguka’s interest.\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 196-197.} Chapter five then examines Gadamer’s hermeneutics as presented in \textit{Wahrheit und Methode}. Although Madila-Basanguka also discusses the questions of tradition and \textit{Dasein}, his focus is on Gadamer’s notion of “play,” which he takes – guided by J. Huizinga – as the “paradigm of culture.”\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 247, 286.} Madila-Basanguka’s assertion, however, in the wake of Huizinga’s definition that culture is but the play of imagination,\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 288.} then opens a question whether his reading on Gadamer is quite too “Huizingian,” or whether the Huizingian notion outcasts the Gadamerian one altogether. For Madila-Basanguka’s benefit it would have to be acknowledged that he is not unaware of this move as he admits that it is probably worthy to “risk” reading Gadamer’s notion of tradition as a Huizingian play.\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 293.}

The heart of Madila-Basanguka’s dissertation, the third part, consists of three chapters that focus on culture as praxis and representation, the poetics of ethics, and the poetics of religion. Madila-Basanguka’s aim is a comprehension of a such being-in-the-world that understands culture as a reality of “new possibilities.” Madila-Basanguka maintains that this forms the core and soul (\textit{l’âme}) of each culture, which is then described as an “image of man.”\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 294.} This idea leads Madila-Basanguka first to emphasize the role of imagination, but only in connection to action as mediated by symbols.\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 295-296.} Madila-Basanguka presents, therefore, a strong Cassirerian style hypothesis: that all the spheres of human existence – including religion – are first and foremost symbolic systems.\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 295-296.}
Chapter six relies mostly on *Tempes et récit*, *Du texte à l’action* and *Soi-même comme un autre*, and it analyzes both the hermeneutics of human action (its practical signification, symbolic structure, and temporal character), and also – in the wake of Clifford Geertz – culture as representation. The key question lies in their intersection, that is, in their relation. Madila-Basanguka explains how imagination and social life relate to each other by using Ricoeur’s and Karl Mannheim’s analysis of ideology and utopia, that is, the forms of “social imagination.” Culture, in conclusion, “is not only significant action, a system of symbolic actions and representations, but it should also be defined as a living reality and creative capability.” Cultural reality is thus not only a condition but a process that connects the past values and symbols (tradition) to the present projects, which are in turn directed to future (innovation). Culture is as much a dialectics as it is a drama. Madila-Basanguka concludes that not having this tension signifies an end of a culture.

Chapter seven, by drawing again mostly from Ricoeur’s *Du texte à l’action* and *Soi-même comme un autre*, but also from Ricoeur’s *Lectures*, turns to the poetics of ethics. Madila-Basanguka conceives ethics as the primary aspect of culture, thanks also to Ricoeur’s well-known definition of ethical intention as “aiming at the good life with and for others in just institutions.” This ethical primacy in Madila-Basanguka’s dissertation is not only based on values and explicit moral norms, however, but also on an assertion that in ethics – and in politics – the productive role of imagination can be understood as a case *par excellence* in terms of evaluating human potentialities. Despite recognizing this ethical core, Madila-

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Basanguka extends the scope of his analysis and includes the political dimension of life under a certain “poetics.” It appears that this dimension of Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics attracts him the most, as it keeps a firm relation to institutions, economics, and other possible spheres of life pertaining to human praxis.\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 385.} This attraction is probably best captured in Madila-Basanguka’s summary that “human reality is political.”\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 388.}

As Ricoeur understands human freedom to be limited by transcendence, however, Madila-Basanguka argues that his political “poetics of ethics” has to be complemented with a “poetics of religion.” The final chapter, number eight, then examines religion, but not only from a cultural point of view. Despite alluding to Cassirer’s conviction that religion is at the root of cultural formation, and defining religion as “a cultural system that carries a particular vision of the world and orients individual’s behavior,” Madila-Basanguka turns to the questions of a hermeneutics of biblical faith, and living in a world created by God (“habiter ce monde de Dieu”) – instead of living in a cultural world.\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 392-394.} After outlining religion as a symbolic system, drawing heavily from the French translation of Clifford Geertz’s \textit{Religion as a Cultural System}, Madila-Basanguka takes on a theological approach and analyzes the “Wholly Other” (\textit{le Tout Autre}), which has been seen always to precede a human being, not as a linguistic-cultural condition but as a theological principle.\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 420-422.} – Madila-Basanguka asserts that “la foi peut […] être considérée comme une expérience du langage, l’expérience d’être créée par le verbe,” but also that “la foi est un don ou une grâce.”\footnote{Cf. Madila-Basanguka 1996, 434-435.}

In balancing between a philosophy of culture and a philosophy of religion,\footnote{Madila-Basanguka 1996, 434-435.} Madila-Basanguka then turns to an explicit examination of the relation between theology and politics, which finds its high point in the dialectics of love and justice.
In his own conclusion, however, Madila-Basanguka hits a key note when headlining his final remarks as “for a critical theory of culture.” Defining culture as praxis (human action), imagination, play, and thus also as an invention, Madila-Basanguka rests quite surprisingly, however, on the comments by Hannah Arendt, Johan Huizinga, and Paul Rabinow rather than those of Dilthey, Cassirer, Gadamer, or Ricoeur. Madila-Basanguka introduces, nevertheless, the idea of human capacity and capability (most intensively captured in Ricoeur’s phrase “l’homme capable”) as a résumé of the anthropology that has a necessary standing in relation to the “poetics of culture.” This poetics – pertaining most fundamentally to ethics but according to Madila-Basanguka also to politics and especially to religion – both reveals the various dimensions of human experience and transforms the subjects’ vision of the world.

Let me add a few critical remarks. Adopting a strongly Kantian stance Madila-Basanguka summarizes his own conviction that “culture should aim at human liberation.” Since this Kantian affiliation is not made explicit, however, a crucial limitation of Madila-Basanguka’s dissertation becomes apparent. In the course of his analysis Madila-Basanguka has downplayed Kant’s importance quite drastically, and yet the notion of culture as the “ultimate purpose of nature” (die letzte Zweck der Natur) that has a “view” to the final, rational-moral aim (Endzweck) – which does not reside in nature at all – is one of the most important phrases in the whole context of the third Critique. Moreover, the whole problem of the concept of culture itself is set aside. Furthermore, the structure of the analysis does not enable describing the change in Ricoeur’s attitude in relation to the concept

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of culture. In short, Madila-Basanguka’s dissertation is top of its class but not free from its own limitations. An important message, however, is also delivered for us with this ambitious piece of work. Madila-Basanguka mentions in the acknowledgements that “Professeur Paul Ricoeur” himself ratified the hypothesis of a strong cultural-philosophical reading of his work.1950

Mattern: Linguistic Interculturality in the Light of Ricoeur’s Hermeneutics

Lastly, Jens Mattern’s Zwischen kultureller Symbolik und allgemeiner Wahrheit: Paul Ricoeur interkulturell gelesen (2008), in German with no English summary, is based both on the views opened by a German translation of Ricoeur’s article “Civilisation universelle et cultures nationales” (1961/1974), and Ricoeur’s anthropological notion of “being-intermediary.” The aim of Mattern’s work is not to explicate Ricoeur’s cultural understanding but rather to highlight some essential features of multiculturnality or, more precisely, “intercultural thought” (interkulturell oder interkulturelles Denken) as well as the necessity of understanding philosophy not as trans- but intercultural (interkulturellen Philosophie). As such it indirectly replies to the questions proposed by Margit Eckholt’s brief 2002 pamphlet that culminates in the question of cultural plurality and theological hermeneutics,1951 and especially by Marcel Madila-Basanguka in the end of his own dissertation: intercultural and interreligious dialogue, inculturation, and cultural development.1952

After alluding in the introductory chapter to the variety of Ricoeur’s interests and his Jaspersian-style “liebende Kampf” – or Ricoeur’s “polylogischen Denken” – Mattern divides his book into three main sections, each of which take one particular “in-between” (Zwischen) under examination. This choice is based on Mattern’s conviction that Ricoeur should be presented as a thinker of “in-between” (als einen Denker des Zwischen).1953

The first, background section discusses 1) being in-between belongingness and differentiation (Zugehörigkeit und Distanzierung) from the point of view of the dynamical dialectics of self and its meaning (Jean Nabert’s influence), 2) centralization and decentralization of meaning and self (comparison of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics to those of Hand-Georg Gadamer and Martin Heidegger), as well as 3) being and speaking (Ricoeur’s critical relation to structuralism, Ricoeur’s notion of poetical mimesis). The main sources for this first section are the German translations of Le conflit des interprétations, La métaphore vive, Temps et récit I, and Du texte à l’action.1954

The second section of Mattern’s work focuses on the “in-between” of identity and otherness (Identität und Alterität) by focusing on questions of 1) the dialectics of identity and ipseity (Ricoeur’s notion of narrative identity), 2) of ethical search for good life and normative morality (Ricoeur’s “little ethics” and his relation to Kant’s practical philosophy as well as John Rawl’s ethico-political philosophy), and also 3) that of phenomenology and metaphysics (Ricoeur’s relation to Aristotle, Spinoza, Husserl, Lévinas, and Heidegger). The main sources for this section are the German translations of Soi-même comme un autre and of the 1990 article “Éthique et morale.”1955

The third – and surprisingly also the briefest – section then opens the discussion of being in-between cultural recollection and universal truth (*kulturellem Gedächtnis und allgemeiner Wahrheit*) from the point of view of the conflict of interpretations. This third section is further subdivided to two “in-betweens”: 1) manifold of perspectives and the demand of universality in philosophy, and 2) cultural symbolics and its truth (*kultureller Symbolik und der einen Wahrheit*). The first of these “in-betweens” reflects a loan from Kant’s third *Critique* (§59) that captures the essence of Ricoeur’s “wager,” that is, Ricoeur’s turn to the hermeneutics of symbols at the last pages of *La symbolique du mal*.1956 Besides the German translation of this early work, Mattern also refers to the German translations of *Le conflit des interpretations*, *La métaphore vive*, and *Temps et récit III*.1957

It is the very last subsection of Mattern’s book that directly addresses the theme of cultural symbolics and discusses intercultural understanding from a philosophical point of view. Mattern’s intention, however, is not to explicate Ricoeur’s cultural thought as such, but rather to take it as a philosophical examination of the possibility of intercultural dialogue. Mattern states that it is the fundamental heterogeneity of speech and especially its counterpart “linguistic hospitality” – which “welcomes” what remains foreign in translation and in communication generally speaking – that resides at the heart of his analysis. According to Mattern (who paraphrases Ricoeur), understanding transculturality is possible by taking into account the “cultural cores” (*kulturellen Kerns*) that ground ethnical groups through images, symbols, and myths (which, in turn, are seen as “the day dreams of a historical group”).

It is cultural symbolism, therefore, that both alienates (from other cultures) and also makes it possible to be human (by making it possible to gain an identity). It should thus be summarized that although the relationship between the same and the different in cultural exchange remains inadequately explained, there still is a certain correspondence between cultures and cultural condition. In other words, despite the differentiation and the consequent conflict of interpretations, there still remains belongingness to, or the need of, some core symbols and values. Mattern’s key sources in this very last subsection of his work are a German translation of Ricoeur’s article “Civilisation universelle et cultures nationales” (1961/1974), Ricoeur’s festschrift article to Karl Jaspers titled as “Geschichte der Philosophie als kontinuierliche Schöpfung auf dem Wege der Kommunikation” (1953) as well as a brief collection of Ricoeur’s articles on the problem of translation *Sur la traduction* (2004).

As a brief assessment of Mattern’s work I should mention, again, that despite being curiously interesting, this piece of philosophical work does not directly examine Ricoeur’s cultural concept. Likewise, the source material is fairly limited, and it is not analyzed in a chronological order either to highlight any possible changes if they were to occur in the course of Ricoeur’s oeuvre. Mattern makes no references to previous works reflecting some cultural-philosophical issues in the light of Ricoeur’s works. Most importantly, although focusing on intercultural issues, the term “culture” is left, again, without a clear definition or some broader problematization. It is for these reasons – somewhat plaguing all the works discussed above – that achieving this description as well as showing its relevance in connection to Ricoeur’s broader cultural understanding is a task left for the current dissertation. It should be pointed out, however, that although having to some

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extent used overlapping material, none of the writers above have explained their respective uses of primary sources in relation to Ricoeur’s philosophy of culture. This lack of systematic approach to Ricoeur’s work proposes a challenge to the whole of Ricoeur scholarship.
APPENDIX 3 – RICOEUR’S 1961 CULTURE/CIVILIZATION CONFUSION

In spite of the awkward ambiguity in his 1961 essay “Universal Civilization and National Cultures,” Paul Ricoeur also manages to provide a few definitions that can be used as a propaedeutics to Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy. For this reason, many of Ricoeur’s critics have used it in their explications of Ricoeur’s conception of culture. In order to point out a certain confusion in the reception of Ricoeur’s works – also in those scholarly interpretations that are open to a hermeneutic of culture – let me provide a critical assessment of this widely used essay. This analysis will explain part of the confusion that this dissertation overcomes.

First, Ricoeur mentions in his essay “the culture of consumption, from which we all benefit to some degree.” He pairs this world-wide culture – which displays “a way of living that has a universal character” – with the condition of contemporary cultures, and writes: “It is certain that a growing number of men are today approaching that elementary level of culture of which the most noteworthy aspect is the fight against illiteracy and the development of means of consuming and a basic culture.” In sum, according to Ricoeur, there is first of all a “basic culture” (la culture de base) in relation to providing basic necessities to people. Besides this, there is also an “elementary level of culture” (la culture élémentaire) in connection with the structure of successful education.

1961 Ricoeur 1961, 444. (276). – Ricoeur repeatedly refers to consumerism as a positive sign of this cultural progress in general. The “triumph of the culture of consumption,” however, is in the final analysis nothing but the “level zero” of the “culture of creation.” Consumer culture as consumerism represents a kind of cultural menace which, according to Ricoeur, can be likened to the peril caused by “nuclear destruction.” The first real step towards a culture, although still an elementary one, is therefore the ability to read and write. In a way the cultural threshold has then been achieved with these abilities which already differ from satisfying the immediate needs. (Ricoeur 1961, 442, 444, 447. (274, 276, 278).) It is noteworthy that Ricoeur repeats his criticism of the culture of consummation, or “vanity,” in his 1966 essay “Prévision économique et choix éthique” that is included in the third, enlarged edition of History and Truth. “Nous sommes de plus en plus dans la situation de consommateur qui consume, qui détruit les fruits de la créativité, laquelle se réfugie en quelques individus rares. […] Nous sommes de plus en plus consommateurs, et de mois en moins créateurs. Il y a là un péris très subtil et finalement mortel.” Ricoeur 1967a, 309-310.
As already stressed in its title, however, the guiding thread of Ricoeur’s article is in a dialectics of real particular cultures and a utopian universal civilization. While describing the seemingly Kantian thought of progressive universalization – which for Kant means precisely an “advancement of mankind” by making society a “moral whole” through teleological reason\footnote{Kant 1999, VIII.17-19, 26. (Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte); Kant 1999, V.435. (KdU).} – Ricoeur brings forth the idea that there is a creative nucleus of great cultures that works as the fundamental hermeneutical lens for all human beings:

The phenomenon of universalization, while being an advancement of mankind, at the same time constitutes [in the form of consumer culture] a sort of subtle destruction, not only of traditional cultures, which might not be an irreparable wrong, but also of what I shall call for the time being the creative nucleus of great civilizations and great cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret life, what I shall call in advance the ethical and mythical nucleus of humanity.\footnote{Ricoeur 1961, 445. (276). Cf. Ricoeur & Kearney 2004, 117-118.}

In other words, Ricoeur argues that the core of being a human is both ethical and mythical, but also that this core is challenged by a bogus \textit{(paucîtelle)} universalization such as the dissemination of Western consumerism.\footnote{Ricoeur 1961, 445-446. (276-277).}

By insisting, however, that an ethico-mythical nucleus forms the core of all cultures, Ricoeur adopts an attitude similar to that of Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn, the authors of the classical exposition \textit{Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions} (1952). They are convinced that “the actual organization of all cultures is primarily in terms of their values,”\footnote{Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 171-174.} and this is why “the study of culture must include the explicit and systematic study of values and value-systems.”\footnote{Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 156.} But Kroeber and Kluckhohn also point out that “sociologists have in general anticipated the anthropologists: recognition of
values as an essential element, and of the crucial role of symbolism." Cultural values and cultural symbols are studied by sociologists and cultural anthropologists with whom Ricoeur, a philosopher, apparently shares the primary focus of interest.

An imminent challenge seems to appear at the outset of this analysis: are we, when focusing on the ethico-mythical nucleus of great cultures – that is, onto values and symbolisms – silently uprooting Ricoeur from philosophy and planting him in sociology and cultural anthropology? As yet another cultural anthropologist Roy Wagner admits, “the concept of culture has come to be completely associated with anthropological thinking.”

A philosopher’s position – asking about the conditions of phenomena rather than their common denominators – is then indirectly announced as problematic in Ricoeur’s allusion to Edward B. Tylor’s seminal 1871 definition of the concept of culture: “It is not easy to grasp what is meant by the definition of culture as a complex of values or, if you prefer, of evaluations.”

So far, Ricoeur’s idea of the creative nucleus of great cultures is philosophically speaking a mere assertion, and resorting to either sociology or cultural anthropology might make Ricoeur’s position even more debatable.

Ricoeur begins, therefore, his own attempt at defining culture with some negations. First, the focus on cultural phenomena must be general enough: “We are too prone to look for the meaning of culture on an excessive rational or reflective level, for example, by starting with a written literature or an elaborated form of thought, as in the European tradition of philosophy.”

Although understanding culture in an “opera-house

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1967 Kroebner & Kluckhohn 1952, 156.
sense” is possible – as Roy Wagner puts it while remaining critical of such a reduction

for Ricoeur “the values of which we are speaking reside in the concrete attitude toward life, insofar as they form a system and are not radically called into question by influential and responsible people.”

Culture is not a particular manifestation or a tightly limited set of artifacts. It is a context and paradigm of meaning. In all this, however, the cultural anthropologists would probably agree.

Ricoeur’s vagueness is disconcerting, but his intention is quite graspable. Instead of taking culture as a set of elevated cultural achievements – those of “high culture” – Ricoeur maintains that culture should be understood as the ethothic ground ($\eta\theta\alpha\zeta$) of the shared structures of living together. Secondly, then, it is in this commonly shared disposition that the cultural nucleus resides, and not in the outward expressions of it:

It seems to me that if one wishes to attain the cultural nucleus, one has to cut through to that layer of images and symbols which make up the basic ideals of a people. […] Images and symbols constitute what might be called the awakened dream of a historical group. It is in this sense that I speak of the ethico-mythical nucleus which constitutes the cultural resources of a people.

To attain the ethico-mythical nucleus, the cultural core of a people, “one has to cut through” images and symbols by which it is covered. The cultural nucleus is like subconsciousness which remains mute, only speaking in the images and symbols which call for interpretation. The cultural content is not unrelated to these images, but the images are mere vestiges of it.

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1972 Ricoeur 1961, 447. (279). – Ricoeur, however, points out that he is not talking about *homo faber* but rather of *homo ethicus*: “Among the attitudes which interest us here, the most important are those concerning tradition, change, our behavior toward our fellow-citizens and foreigners, and more especially the use of available tools. Indeed, a set of tools, we said, is the sum total of all ways and means; consequently, we may immediately oppose it to value insofar as value represents the sum total of all goals.” Ricoeur 1961, 447. (279).
Here, then, we are able to find a possible difference between Ricoeur and an ethnographer. “All the phenomena directly accessible to immediate description,” in which cultural anthropologists are interested, “are like symptoms or a dream to be analyzed,” Ricoeur writes. Instead of observing and “inventing a culture” by ethnographical methods, Ricoeur argues that we need “an authentic deciphering, a methodological interpretation” in terms of human culture in general. This concrete attitude toward life, silent in itself but clothed in symbols which speak of its very essence, is approachable in philosophical interpretation.

Ricoeur, however, is far from out of the woods. The repeated notion of “a people” (un peuple), for example, is confusing. If I am correct in my reading, the “ethical and mythical nucleus,” somewhat comparable to Alfred Weber’s “Wesensgehalt,” essential content, should take the first place in our thoughts instead of giving it to a particular culture or subculture. For certain, Ricoeur did not introduce the idea of a cultural nucleus in relation to a particular national culture or in relation to a nation, but in reference to humankind. Still, there is an apparent tension in Ricoeur’s text between following a cultural anthropologist in relation to a particular culture, and a philosopher in relation to a general notion of human culture.

The question of the unity of humankind, for example, poses a problem for Ricoeur. He openly acknowledges that he is puzzled by this: “The strange thing, in fact, is

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1978 Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 17, 27, 148. – Kroeber and Kluckhohn depict especially Alfred Weber’s Kultursoziologie (1931) as a prevenient expression of modern cultural anthropology. For Weber the social structure (of religion, art, knowledge, etc.) is only an expression (Ausdrucksform) of “essential manner-content” (Wesensgehalt) which, in turn, is “Kultur.” It was on the basis of this kind of emerging thought that the word Kultur finally gained a modern dictionary definition as “the mode of being of mankind (die Daseinsweise der Menschheit) … as well as the result of this mode of being, namely, the stock of culture possessed (der Kulturbesitz) or cultural attainments (die Kulturerrungenschaften).”
that there are many cultures and not a single humanity.”^{1979} Ricoeur points out that already the factuality of different languages indicates that there has always been “primitive incohesion” among human beings, that humanity “is not established in a single cultural style but has ‘congealed’ in coherent, closed historical shapes: the cultures.”^{1980} In brief, as also Gary B. Madison points out, Ricoeur is torn between the idea of a common cultural root of humanity and the reality of multiple cultures.^{1981}

Ricoeur’s struggle then shifts to the level of particular cultures. The cultures, in the plural, are first of all “coherent and closed, constituted cultural wholes.” Secondly, they are according to Ricoeur “different contexts of civilization.”^{1982} These self-standing contexts of civilization are constituted by images and symbols which are, however, external rather than internal to the nucleus. This matrix of images and symbols “does not make up the most radical phenomenon of creativity” but “merely constitutes the outermost layer of it.”^{1983} Again, one could think of Alfred Weber’s “Ausdrucksform” – an expression of culture, or a cultural form of expression – in connection with Ricoeur’s explication.^{1984} The puzzle is encountered here again. Only by “cutting through” this layer of images and symbols can an understanding of a cultural whole be achieved, because “creativity eludes all planned anticipation.”^{1985} True creativity cannot be just repeating what has already been said and imagined, it is somehow deeper than that – and so is culture as a cultural whole.

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Ricoeur, however, refers to civilizations as well. He mentions that particular cultures are “different contexts of civilization,” implying that there is a clear difference between a culture and civilization. Unlike civilization, which by depositing tools “fosters a certain sense of time which is composed of accumulation and progress,” Ricoeur asserts that national cultures are “based upon a law of fidelity and creation.” Therefore, unlike civilization, “a culture dies as soon as it is no longer renewed and recreated.” For Ricoeur, civilization seems to mean the universal accumulation of technological means – since a technological invention “rightfully belongs to humanity” – whereas a culture must constantly be renewed by creative action. Here, then, the reader becomes puzzled. If civilization is a universal toolshed and culture is continuous recreation, why does Ricoeur then search for the “creative nucleus of a civilization,” and wonder “what will become of our [European] civilization when it has really met different civilization by means other than the shock of conquest and domination”? It appears that Ricoeur’s insight is severely limited by conceptual fog, and the distinction he would like to maintain between civilization and culture therefore falls apart.

In brief, it is too difficult for Ricoeur to hold the culture/civilization distinction. In a similar manner, Ricoeur’s description of cultural dynamism fails. According to Ricoeur, sounding actually quite Nietzschan, a culture is recharged by those

1992 Nietzsche 1995, III-1.159. – It should be pointed out, however, that Nietzsche defines culture in *David Strauß, der Bekenner und der Schriftsteller* (1873) not from the point of view of aesthetic individuality but in a manner that follows Herder’s aesthetic conception of “Geist des Volks”; “Culture is above all the unity of artistic style in all the expressions of the life of a people.” (“Kultur ist vor allem Einheit des künstlerischen Stiles in allen Lebensäußerungen eines Volkes.”) Kroeber and Kluckhohn state incorrectly that this definition is from Nietzsche’s *Geburt der Tragödie* (1872). Kroeber & Kluckhohn 1952, 27. n.72.
individuals who both apply and contest culturally adopted images and symbols in an artistic way. This, however, means scandalous deviation from “the language of everyday technical and political prose” in order to maintain novelty in creation – and not everyone can fill this role. Ricoeur stresses the need for “a writer, a thinker, a sage or a religious man to rise up in order to start culture anew and to chance it again with venture and total risk.” This is what Kelton Cobb describes as interpretative “enlargement of being” in Ricoeur’s cultural philosophy. Ricoeur had insisted earlier in the same essay, however, that “the values of which we are speaking […] are not radically called into question by influential and responsible people.” The question then remains, how to read Ricoeur when he now maintains that artists do call into question the “the stratum of fundamental images which have made the culture of his nation,” thus calling into question his cultural nucleus as well. In sum, an artist is not a conformist, but it remains unclear if he should be.

Artistic creation, however, is possible only within a cultural context, because the necessary “law of scandal,” creating previously unthought images, requires the artist to contest the ones portrayed at the most fundamental level of the artist’s culture. An artist’s task is to “bring about something which will be shocking and bewildering” – this Ricoeur defines as “the tragic law of the creation of a culture.” The law of a necessary dynamics of de- and re-construction within a cultural whole is thus “a law diametrically opposed to the steady accumulation of tools which make up the civilization.” Culture must be unique and

subjective in contrast to civilization, which is gained through an accumulation of objects, tools, and techniques.

A reader’s confusion in front of Ricoeur’s essay is already significant, but it is about to get even more severe. In an apparent contrast to the aesthetic dynamism proposed above, Ricoeur mentions an additional, Kantian-style condition. According to Ricoeur, this condition is even more important than the law of scandal, since “only a culture capable of assimilating scientific rationality will be able to survive and revive.” This requirement of the modern conception of rationality is, however, quite incompatible with Ricoeur’s initial criticism that “we are too prone to look for the meaning of culture on an excessive rational or reflective level.” Does Ricoeur then mean that this “scientific” rationality is an absolutely necessary condition for cultural continuity, but that it should not be taken to its extreme? This is not, however, what he seems to be arguing when he asks for “a faith which integrates a desacralization of nature and brings the sacred back to man,” and “a faith which values time and change and puts man in the position of a master before the world, history, and his own life.” Instead of relativizing the notion of rationality, Ricoeur now underlines it.

Ricoeur’s anthropocentric standpoint is not far from Kant’s declaration that a rational human being “holds the title of lord of nature,” because only a rational being is capable of giving the final, rational-moral purpose (Endzweck) to mechanistic nature. For Kant, culture is defined by this capability to set purposes, it is “the creation (Hervorbringung) of capableness in a rational being to set purposes in general (thus resulting in its

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This strong relation with rationality is the reason why Kant argues in the *Critique of Judgment* that only culture can therefore be the ultimate purpose of nature (der letzte Zweck der Natur), since only it is able to open for human beings a view to the final, rational-moral end which resides totally outside of nature.

Ricoeour, however, takes a step further when stating that faith in human and his intelligent capabilities is needed in order to “take up a technical exploitation of nature.” Here, Ricoeour does not sound like himself at all. What has happened to Ricoeour’s philosophy, whose holistic tendency appeals even to the most eccentric commentator such as Pawel Ozdowski? Ozdowski writes that “the function of Ricoeour’s hermeneutics is not limited to the cognitive-empirical application”; it creates “a definite philosophy of life.” This “life philosophy,” in turn, Ozdowski understands as “a standard or a proposal to the way and style of life referring to its specific highest values.” In a stark contrast to Ozdowski’s reading, Ricoeour’s emphasis in the 1961 essay – that only faith in human rationality “seems fit to survive and endure” – resembles the social Darwinist survival of the fittest and the correlating lack of values.

Even though the confusion already appears as thorough, I will continue this reading of Ricoeour’s essay to its conclusion – only to drive us to the point of utter frustration at the outset of our long course of analysis. Another type of problem that the essay presents relates to Ricoeour’s remark that the “coherent and closed, constituted cultural wholes” are not incommunicable since “the strangeness of man to man is never total.” Approached from the point of view of languages – in general, significations – it should be “voluntarily

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2005 Kant 1999, V.431. (*KdU*).
2006 Kant 1999, V.431. (*KdU*).
affirmed” that “there is no reason or probability that a linguistic system is untranslatable.”

In other words, Ricoeur argues in favor of intercultural communication. Sounding in turn quite Husserlian, Ricoeur maintains that it is possible to take a stranger to be similar to me in his or her human capacity by means of sympathy and imagination. Not only “man’s oneness” but also the human condition is brought about by being capable of adopting another’s point of view. Ricoeur writes: “To be a man is to be capable of this transference into another center of perspective.”

In the light of Ricoeur’s assertion of the closed cultural wholes, however, should we not infer that this transference is only possible between individuals who share a particular cultural context? If not, how exactly coherent and closed are the cultural wholes? Ricoeur argues in the same essay that what was said about language “is also valid for values and the basic images and symbols which make up the cultural resource of a people.”

Now, significations and values are limited to the cultural context of a people, and I assume that “man’s oneness” was to follow from that. Ricoeur maintains, in contrast, that the oneness follows from the human capability to self-alienate oneself.

Intercultural communication between closed, constituted cultural wholes is then a genuine problem for Ricoeur. So far it has been understood that cultural images and symbols are only workable within a cultural context, by artistic reworking made possible by imagination – and it was affirmed at the outset that “there are many cultures and not a single humanity.”

Although Ricoeur argues that there is a “primitive incohesion” among humankind, he also seems to insist that it is possible to somehow overcome this rupture between human beings. In spite of “the cultures” as “coherent, closed historical shapes,”

Ricoeur names sympathy and imagination (somewhat resembling then Husserl’s *Einfühlung*) as means for intercultural (in Husserl: intersubjective) communication.\textsuperscript{2015}

Moreover, sympathy and imagination are in connection with those cultural forms most commonly attributed to “high culture.” Even though Ricoeur begins with the idea of a silent cultural nucleus, he concludes by referring to the sublime forms of a culture: “only a living culture, at once faithful to its origins and ready for creativity on the levels of art, literature, philosophy and spirituality, is capable of sustaining the encounter of other cultures.”\textsuperscript{2016} The connection between the hidden “nucleus” and the apparent practical cultural forms, however, is not clear. In brief overall conclusion, therefore, all this leaves plenty of room to wonder what Ricoeur might have wanted to say about our cultural condition and its characteristics. For us, then, this utter confusion means that if we want to pursue the task of identifying Ricoeur’s cultural hermeneutics – to which the essay, nevertheless, invites us – we will have to, unlike some other Ricoeur scholars, resort to Ricoeur’s other texts and read them with critical open-mindedness.

\textsuperscript{2016} Ricoeur 1961, 452. (283).
APPENDIX 4 – PAUL CLAUDEL AND THE QUESTION OF RE/CONNAISSANCE

In our concluding analysis of re-connaissance in this dissertation, I have alluded to the close (Kantian) connection between cognition and recognition. Let me adopt a standpoint that is, perhaps, able to shed light on this problematics of connaissance – this analysis will further explain why I have claimed that this dissertation remains at the critical level, but that we as cultural beings are born by reading it as a text in a culture. This complementing analysis is also necessitated by the terminological closeness that re-connaissance has with some other similar kind of terms.

Even though August Brunner’s 1943 work La connaissance humaine could invite us to reconsider reconnaissance in the light of connaissance as an analogy of being, and the implied limits of philosophy in the face of the mystery of being,2017 Ricoeur does not seem to have written on Brunner, a German Jesuit, at all. A more fruitful approach to this critical comparison, I would maintain, is provided by Paul Claudel, a philosopher, a poet, and a dramatist, whom Ricoeur at least mentions in his works.2018 Moreover, Ricoeur and Gabriel Marcel reportedly discussed Claudel’s influence on Marcel, especially in terms of co-naissance.2019 Claudel’s insights could therefore help explain why this work as “pointing to” the postcritical always remains at the critical level. Claudel’s hyphenated notation of connaissance brings into question the notion of re-con-naissance that I have proposed in this dissertation.

2018 Ricoeur 1965a, 507. (528); Ricoeur 1969, 310. (314).
Claudel’s philosophy seems to come close to my own project in more than one way. His enigmatic *L’art poétique* (1907),\(^\text{2020}\) for example, is describable as a “theocentric cosmic philosophy” that establishes “an indissoluble link between the cosmos, humanity and God.”\(^\text{2021}\) Instead of an *ars poetica* that would be interested in poetic art aesthetically, Claudel’s *Poetic Art* is an *ars poetica mundi*, since his “chief objective is to explain to his readers his viewpoint concerning the origin, purpose and structure of the universe and humanity’s position and role therein.”\(^\text{2022}\) Claudel’s commentator, Larissa Bibbee, points out, however, that this broad objective is merely a preparation for Claudel’s argument that there is “the possibility of a meaningful type of poetry that would exemplify its fundamental ideas in symbolic terms.”\(^\text{2023}\) According to Claudel, the mystery of the whole is resolvable in poetic action, just as his title suggests.

In addition, the main section in *Poetic Art* announces that Claudel aims to provide “a new Art of Poetry of the Universe, of a new Logic,” or, rather, to point such an art.\(^\text{2024}\) The title of this main section, “*Traité de la co-naissance au monde et de soi-même,*” is very instructive of Claudel’s thought, but it is also extremely difficult to translate, as Claudel’s translator Renée Spodheim admits. Despite her good intentions, Spodheim’s suggestion, “Discourse on the affinity with the world and on oneself,” undermines the essential idea that is expressed with the term *co-naissance*, or “together-coming-to-be.” Instead of Spodheim’s failed translation, Claudel’s intention would be better maintained in “Treatise on coming to birth with the world and with oneself.” Spodheim is well aware of this incongruity, and adds a separate translator’s note that explains the struggle in trying to coherently translate some of

\(^{2020}\) Trans. *Poetic Art* (by Renée Spodheim, 1948). From hereon the English title is used.
\(^{2021}\) Bibbee 2005, 19.
\(^{2022}\) Bibbee 2005, 5.
\(^{2023}\) Bibbee 2005, 19.
\(^{2024}\) Claudel 1953, 35-36.
Claudel’s key terms and concepts: “In Indo-European, the root meaning to know (connaître) was homonymous with that meaning to be born (naitre). The author makes use of this double meaning, further combined with that of the Latin ‘cognatus’ (related by blood) in devising the word ‘co-naitre,’ which will be translated in different ways, according to the context.”

Claudel’s poetic Art, or “new Logic,” in sum, is opened up to or “pointed at” his analyzes of the “kinship between the words naitre and connaître,” as Claudel himself defines his task.

Claudel’s hermeneutics serves as a critical corrective for us by taking us to the root of my own thesis that argues for a naissance of a cultural subject. The word “naitre” that forms the basis for “connaître” can be translated, as Renée Spodheim suggests, “to come into the world,” whereas the second translates as “to know.” Is it not, therefore, with cognition that a human subject is “born into the world,” rather than through some interpretative re-membering in which one re-cognizes oneself as a cultural subject? Is it not a mere sophisticated phantasy that a person would come to be in a process difficult to describe, and yet would be unceasing as a merely external condition and context, rather than as an internal act and achievement? Is it not, ultimately, knowing that “I am,” as already forcefully argued by Descartes? Indeed, without this capacity of knowing, how could I ever claim that I am, and that the world is? Is not naissance as co-naissance, therefore, what I should have considered, instead of presenting a vague “dramatic” exposition of a subject’s intellectual activity as cultural re-con-naissance?

Instead of jumping to conclusions that would annul the aim set for this dissertation work, Claudel, in fact, reaffirms the validity of this work in his remarks. Despite

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2025 Claudel & Spodheim 1948, 39.
2026 Claudel 1953, 43.
2027 Claudel & Spodheim 1948, 39.
her good intentions, Spodheim’s translations are not always accurate in terms of Claudel’s overall approach. A path for the reaffirmation of the thesis of this dissertation is cleared in the opening remarks of Claudel’s analysis that focuses on the words naître and connaître: “We do not come into the world alone. To be born (naître), for everyone, is to be born together (connaître). All birth (naissance) is knowledge-of-being-born-together (connaissance).” Instead of stressing the cognizing subject, Claudel opens up by affirming the necessity of “con,” or, being con-joined. The “knowledge” Claudel discusses, under its three modalities, concerns the explication of one’s relatedness: 1) Crude knowledge (la connaissance brute) is of the relationship between things. 2) Non-rational knowledge gained by continuous sensual observation (la connaissance de constatation) guides one toward to the objective recreation of one’s own existence. Finally, 3) the intellectual knowledge (la connaissance intellectuelle) pertains to the creative word-images that evoke, or “call forth,” each object into being in relation to us. For Claudel, it is especially this third mode of “knowledge,” which sums up and integrates lower forms of knowing, that a spirited human being – il possède, joint à son corps, un esprit – comes to know him- or herself reflectively in the cultural objects produced: “these objects [such as a mechanism or a painting] become a kind of imprint of his form, the sign of his effort, which provokes effective or ideal repetition; [these objects are] the condition of his sensitivity and of his action.” Naissance, as in Claudel’s co-naissance, is therefore cultural re-con-naissance.

2028 Claudel 1953, 44.
2029 Claudel 1953, 44.
2030 Claudel 1953, 43, 49.
2031 Claudel 1953, 57-58, 64-65.
2032 Claudel 1953, 71-72, 79-82.
2033 Claudel 1953, 85-86, 94-96.
2034 Claudel 1953, 96.
The poetic art Claudel argues for is the art of creating cultural objects through which a human subject recognizes him or herself in self-creation or self-affirmation with others. All cultural objects fulfill this function, but the “master of all words,” the poet – according to Claudel – is the most befitted, however, to undertake the task of bringing the dynamically harmonious unity of being to our attention, and to bring about an understanding of our relation to ourselves and to the other. Only in the afterlife, Claudel maintains, do we become such poets, or “the makers of ourselves,” who are capable of pursuing the task of self-recognition directly, “without the empirical and hazardous accompaniment of external language.”

The poetic art, in other words, is cultural activity in and through which a human subject is able to begin to understand him or herself. Only in the afterlife is this understanding direct and immediate. In cultural life such an understanding is always critical and mediated – postcritical at best, if it blooms as poetic creativity.

To conclude, Claudel’s analysis of connaitre as naître reaffirms the notion of re-connaissance rather than renders it untenable. It is Claudel and not us, therefore, who should be corrected by bringing in the prefix “re-,” rather than neglecting it, and by modifying the terminology he applies. Even though a lexical analysis maintains a difference between reconnaissance and connaissance, Claudel’s depth analysis explains why connaissance is, in its

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2035 Claudel 1953, 111.
2036 Claudel 1953, 111. – Larissa Bibbee explains how the theological aspect plays along with the question of human self-consciousness: “A very important assertion of the theoretical discourse of the Art poétique is that humanity is (must be) actively involved in discerning as well as actually helping to form the complex system of relationships between themselves, the world and God. Some of the art analogies thus also call attention to man’s privileged role as active reader, spectator and/or composer (co-creator) of the reality that he experiences. [...] It is the poet who, through his vision and intellect, determines that the scene before his eye is a tableau, that is, a work of art deliberately created by the Divine Artist to be a sign of his wisdom and creative power. The human observer thus becomes the cause of the conglomeration and organization of the elements of the tableau: although God ‘programs’ things to come together, by themselves they only form an unfinished composition which the human observer must ‘complete’ by serving as the organizing nexus or central point of convergence where all lines and angles of the universe can come together. Besides being a spectator of the tableau of the natural world, the human being is also a reader of the text of nature.” Bibbee 2005, 9, 11.
actual practice in culture, based on *reconnaissance*. *Co-naissance*, the way Claudel explicates it, is culturally facilitated *re-con-naissance*. Claudel’s analysis of *co-naissance*, with its reference to the “externality” of language and culture, reminds us of the necessity that *re-con-naissance* is never noncritical but always limited by the critical as rooted in *re/connaissance*. It is, in short, the laborious coming-to-the-cultural-world in the tension of interpretative reflection.
Bibliography


