



διο και ο φιλομυθος φιλοσοφος πως εστιν: ο γαρ μυθος συνκειται εκ θαυμασιων. Aristotle, *Metaphysics Book I, 282b, 19*

Even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders

## **PAUL RICOEUR'S PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS SYMBOL: A CRITIQUE AND DIALECTICAL TRANSPOSITION**

Professor Emil J. Piscitelli, Anandale, VA, U.S.A.

### **I INTRODUCTION**

#### **I. Works**

If you tried to pin down the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, you would have a very hard time indeed. His thought has been dynamic and restless, shifting and passionate. He has self consciously used as his philosophical guide the model of an appropriative and critical dialogue with the classical ancient and modern, as well as what seem to be the significant contemporary philosophical positions. Ricoeur begins with a very early study of the existentialism of Marcel and Jaspers, and moves on to a personal assimilation of Husserlian phenomenology reinterpreted in terms of a Kantian philosophy of limits. From there he proceeds to a massive project of a philosophy of will in which we find a revised Husserlian eidetics, a revised Kantian philosophical anthropology, and the beginnings of a philosophy of religion in his study of religious myths and symbols. Throughout his career there are continual incursions into social and political philosophy. The discovery of the importance of religious myths and symbols marks a new beginning, for what starts as a digression into hermeneutics becomes the main theme of his latest project, a poetics of the will, with forays into a genetic-dialectical interpretation of Freudian psychoanalysis counterbalanced by a Hegelian philosophy of spirit 'corrected' once again by a revised Kantian philosophy of limits. Most recently Ricoeur's hermeneutic existential phenomenology has entered into a critical conversation with Nietzsche, French Structuralism, Anglo-American ordinary language philosophy, contemporary biblical criticism and theology, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Habermas, with a promise to incorporate into his own philosophical hermeneutics the entire Germanic movement into this field, a movement that stretches from Dilthey to Gadamer.

Behind the restless dynamism of Ricoeur's thought or, as he himself might say, in front of it, there is the religious vision of man in history before God, a vision that attempts to be existential, hermeneutical, critical, and for want of a better word, ontological. In the deepest sense Ricoeur's project is motivated by this religious vision. We could best describe Ricoeur's thought as a fundamental, hermeneutic, religious ontology in search of an adequate, appropriate, and comprehensive critical method. Up to this time the search has been impressive in extent, but by and large it has been a failure because he has tried to develop a position 'between' Kant and Hegel, making some adaptations from the philosophy of Heidegger.

Beginning from a phenomenological perspective and a commitment to phenomenology as the basic philosophical method, Ricoeur discovers as he moves more deeply into the problematic of human meaning

and human existence that Husserlian phenomenology is severely limited to a preliminary eidetic exploration of human meanings. Thus in *Fallible Man*, his revised Kantian anthropology, Ricoeur shifts his method to what he calls an 'empirics' in which, corrected by Kantian criticism, phenomenology explores the meaning of human existence as existentially given to experience and not just in terms of the idealities of human essence. Still Ricoeur discovers that he must move beyond even a revised Kantian transcendental 'empirics' to do full justice to the existential-historical dimension of human existence, for that would require the exploration not only of the structure of human fallibility, but also of the 'actual' emergence of human fault in history. Ricoeur comes to recognize that he is in search of a foundational hermeneutic of human existence, and for this reason he undertakes a hermeneutic philosophical reflection on the actual, existential, religious language of confession in *The Symbolism of Evil*. In his latest works Ricoeur attempts to work out a hermeneutic ontology in relation to Freudian psychoanalysis, Hegelian phenomenology of the spirit, and the phenomenology of religion, using a Heideggerian ontology as a guide. Ricoeur's philosophy has been preoccupied with the problem of revising and expanding but preserving the Kantian notion of limits: his quest for an adequate and critical method was an attempt to establish the limits of human understanding through a transcendently constituted eidetics, then the limits of the structure of finite human existence revealed by this transcendental reflection in an empirics, then the limits of human speech and language itself in his philosophy of religious myth and symbol, and in his complementary explorations of the human psyche in Freudian psychoanalysis and the human spirit in Hegelian phenomenology, and finally the limits of philosophical thought in his most recent excursions into hermeneutical philosophy in his study of the metaphoric imagination. Ricoeur's project of a search for an adequate and critical philosophical method stands or falls on his ability to revise and expand the Kantian notion of limits (Reagan, 1979, pp. 58-81; Ricoeur, 1975, pp.129-145).

## 2 The Problem of a Kantian Revision

If Kant's cognitional theory is inadequate to the actual performance of the human subject as knower, then both his epistemology and his notion of the limits of human intelligence and its consequences for metaphysics will be mistaken. If that is the case, then no revision of Kantian philosophy, however expansive to include the insights of psychoanalysis, the Hegelian philosophy of spirit, Heideggerian ontology, or contemporary hermeneutics, will ever be able to overcome the fundamental methodological oversights. They will simply be repeated in ever new and changing contexts (Lonergan, 1958).

A case can be made that Ricoeur's use of Kant's transcendental schematism of the imagination to constitute objectivity in *Fallible Man* is not much different from his use of the same epistemological Kantian faculty to illuminate the metaphorical process in language in a later work, *The Rule of Metaphor*. This Kantian schematism of the productive imagination is simply a conceptualistic device to bridge in a mechanistic way the empty *a priori* forms of the understanding with the purely empirical and immediate content of sense impressions. To use Ricoeur's language it is a 'third term', but it is one that is in no way phenomenologically anchored in cognitional experience. It is rather a postulate which Kant needs to bring together sense and intelligence in his theory of judgment. Note that this transcendental schema of the imagination is not the Aristotelian 'insight into phantasm', because Kant in no way recognizes an act of understanding distinct from the act of conception. For Kant, and we must conclude for Ricoeur, the human mind's grasp of the real remains bound to the level of sense impressions, it remains an immediate *Anschaung* however much it is informed by the *a priori* concepts of the understanding or synthesized with those concepts in the act of judgment (Lonergan, 1967, pp. 202-220).

There is, of course, an analogue in cognitional experience for the Kantian schematism of the productive imagination, but it is more like Aristotle's insight into phantasm than it is like the Kantian counterpart. For I am sure that anyone who has tried to understand something for the first time finds it difficult without some image or outline to aid the imagination which is under the guidance of the question, 'what are you talking about?' In other words, the 'productivity of the imagination' is a direct result of the prodding from above, as it were, that is initiated by our questions for understanding. It is precisely those questions and the act of understanding itself which are systematically overlooked by Kant's epistemology. There is nothing miraculous about the productivity of the imagination under the guidance of creative intelligence. It is even true that the imagination under the guidance of intelligent questions is the pivot point

between our immediate experience and the understanding that mediates between our questions and the answers that satisfy our desire to understand. However, it is not true as Kant claims that the productive imagination is somehow a combination of sense and intelligence, of impression and concept. Ricoeur's attempt to preserve the Kantian schematism of the transcendental imagination is doomed to the same fate as Kant's epistemology. Any attempt to use Kant's hypothesis of a 'third term' in a dialectical manner will remain a conceptualistic dialectic, that is, one that is unanchored in human cognitional experience. This is not to imply that there are no limits to human understanding, but rather that no limits can be set down *a priori* in a conceptualistic manner à la Kant. Human understanding remains finite in its performance and unlimited in its intention; the latter because there is no end to the questions for intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility that can be raised, the former because no human act of understanding will be able to understand everything about everything (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 133, 193-217, 218-267).

## II HERMENEUTIC ONTOLOGY

### 1 Heidegger's Phenomenology of Understanding

In Ricoeur's search for method his Kantian revisionism is not the only failure. Recognizing that Husserlian phenomenology as transcendental reflection yields only purely formal conclusions about the human subject, Ricoeur knows that he must revise the phenomenological method if he is going to develop a philosophy of the human subject in history. He calls this revision an hermeneutic phenomenology. He claims that he is going to 'graft hermeneutics onto a phenomenological method' (Ricoeur, 1974, pp. 3-11).

According to Ricoeur there are two ways to ground hermeneutics in phenomenology: a short route and a long route. The short route is Heidegger's ontology of understanding which breaks with all discussions of method and carries itself directly into an ontology of finite being in order to recover understanding not as a mode of knowing but as a mode of being. With Heidegger we are transported into ontology by a sudden reversal of the question of interpretation. Instead of asking how a knowing human subject understands, one asks rather: What kind of being is it whose being consists in understanding? In other words with Heidegger the foundational question about the meaning of human existence in the world is asked at the expense of the methodological question; he thus bypasses the whole issue of cognitional theory and the experience of the knower.

The cost of the Heideggerian end run is the elimination of transcendental method and cognitional theory, with the consequent loss of the differentiation of human consciousness. Thus Heidegger's hermeneutic ontology is a return to undifferentiated consciousness, not just in fact, but in principle. Because of the failure of Kantian and post-Kantian epistemologies, Heidegger concluded that epistemology was the culprit, instead of recognizing that the metaphysical and epistemological questions are predetermined by the underlying cognitional theories. For the underlying question of cognitional theory is: what am I doing when I am knowing? The epistemological question is: why is doing that knowing? The metaphysical question is: what do I know when I do it? Although transcendental reflection cannot avoid the epistemological and the metaphysical questions, neither can it develop an epistemology and a metaphysics adequate to the performance of human knowing without an adequate cognitional theory verified in the facts of human cognitive performance (Lonergan, 1973, pp. 7-8, 39-40).

If human intentionality is rooted in the desire to be, the desire to say, and the desire to know, then in effect instead of showing the continuity of and reconciling the desire to know with the desire to say, Heidegger has distorted human intentionality by suppressing or bypassing the desire to know in favor of the desire to say. When that happens, human discourse is restricted to mythic-symbolic language and the projects of the sciences, the human sciences and philosophy are reduced to distortions of authentic human speech. It is as if the rejection of Kantian conceptualism necessarily implied the rejection of all authentic conceptualizations as impossible. The effect of the Heideggerian rejection of all types of conceptualization is that the intention of mythic symbolic language itself is in danger of radical distortions and derailments because of the lack of a differentiated appropriation of its meaning and its truth. Heidegger's philosophy cannot escape the inadequate Kantian position on knowledge rooted in a mistaken cognitional theory simply by rejecting all forms of *Erkenntnistheorie*. Instead of moving into a critique of human subjectivity which will issue in the appropriation of the self as knower, Heidegger thinks he can catapult himself out of

the horizon of human knowing into the horizon of *Dasein*. For human understanding is not only a hermeneutic act, a foundational act of self-interpretation, it is also a part of the process of human knowing.

## 2 Ricoeur's Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Ricoeur is sensitized to these Heideggerian problems. He is especially aware of the impossibility of rejecting all types of conceptualization. Unfortunately he still believes that he can preserve the Kantian *Erkenntnistheorie*, at least in its broadest outlines. He sees no other option for preserving the gains of the sciences and reflective philosophy. Thus Ricoeur proposes to take what he calls 'the longer route' to a hermeneutic ontology. He proposes to carry reflection to the level of ontology by 'degrees'. He attempts to do this by successive investigations into modern semiotics, semantics, and a hermeneutical-historical reflection on the *cogito*. This "longer route to ontology seems no more acceptable than the Heideggerian short route. What kind of status would a reflection on semiotics and semantics have? If the reflection were scientific, then the conclusions would have to be limited to the science of language, albeit a human science. If the reflection were philosophic in the critical and methodic sense, then the conclusions and the procedures would be but one instance in a generalized empirical method of discovery tending in the direction of a more adequate cognitional theory and transcendental method. If the reflection were philosophical in the foundational hermeneutic sense, then speech and language would be recognized as constitutive of the self and as complementary to the self as knower just as the desire to say is complementary to the desire to know. Without the prior reflective appropriation of the desire to know, Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology remains a kind of Kantian hybrid like the transcendental schematism of the imagination which is neither sense nor intelligence, neither fish nor fowl (Lonergan 1958, pp. 340-341).

Ricoeur's reflection on the *cogito* is an attempt to reinstate the existential subject but now as constituted by language and at the same time obedient to the methodic demands of scientific knowledge. He wants to recover the existence of the existential subject without eliminating intelligence and rationality. However human intelligence and rationality remains under the cloud of a Kantian theory of limits. Ricoeur is forced to make some revisions of the Kantian critique, but they are by no means thoroughgoing. He discovers that to recover existence he must and does reject the Kantian purely formal and non-personal transcendental ego, the Husserlian monad which is neither historical nor strictly contingent, and the Hegelian infinite Spirit that swallows up both existence and history in its march. Ricoeur intuitively knows what he wants, but he cannot get it simply by eliminating what he does not want. His move into hermeneutical foundational inquiry will remain inadequate as long as he tries to retain in a revised form the Kantian theory of limits and thereby merely juxtapose in a conceptualistic dialectic the hermeneutic and foundational question of the interpretation of the self in language with the methods of the sciences of semiotics and semantics, or even the human science of hermeneutics. In other words until Ricoeur recognizes the need for an adequate critical cognitional theory which will uproot entirely the Kantian *Erkenntnistheorie* root and branch, and allow the self-appropriation of the knower and its expression in a critical, transcendental method, he shall never be able to reconcile critically the methods of the empirical and human sciences with the foundationally hermeneutic question of the interpretation of the self. For the key to a critical appropriation of the foundational hermeneutic question of the interpretation of the self is a knowledge of the self as knower, as well as speaker-hearer and lover-actor, in language and in history (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 547-649).

We can agree with Ricoeur that a fundamental hermeneutic ontology can arise out of a transcendental method recognized on the level of foundational inquiry as a transcendental hermeneutics. However we do not agree with Ricoeur that a Kantian transcendental method is grounded either in an adequate cognitional theory or in a critical appropriation of the self as knower. Thus we can also agree that a fundamental ontology must preserve the critical gains of the empirical and human sciences and sublimate those gains in a hermeneutic and philosophical reflection on the human subject as historically existent. But we cannot agree that it can do this by moving 'backwards' into an undifferentiated reaffirmation of mythical poetry and thought, or 'forwards' to a reflective word in a conceptual speech which has not appropriated its authentic grounds in understanding and reflective understanding or its motivation in mythic-symbolic self-understanding and commitment. The dialogue of spirit with spirit and of man with God, the faithful speech

of spirit, does not eliminate but purifies, takes up, and preserves the symbolic intention and story reference of myth as well as the reflective intention and objective reference of the concept (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 920,-997).

Ricoeur recognizes that an ontology separate from method as performance is beyond human possibilities. In other words an ontology of the Infinite is the privilege of the Infinite who alone has a knowledge creative of being itself. Still he has not completely freed himself from the Cartesian notion of self-creation, a self contradictory idea even when applied to God. Ricoeur's restriction of self-creation to the level of human language cannot escape that contradiction. In the most radical meaning of the term man creates neither language nor himself in language. This by no means eliminates all human creativity but shows it to be a dependent creativity (Ricoeur, 1974, pp.11, 19ff).

The grounding method for Ricoeur's ontology remains Kantian. As he puts it in his Kantian language: It is only within the movement of interpretation that we 'apperceive' the being we interpret. Apperception remains a 'perception,' the human subject remains in a stance of confronting himself and hence in principle divided against himself. We would rather say that the subject is present to himself in his experience of himself by questioning and understanding. Thus it is only in the movement of questioning and understanding that we become aware of ourselves as the beings who understand and know that we have our being in understanding and knowing (Ricoeur, 1974, p.19).

Ricoeur remains truer to Heidegger than we would have hoped, for he believes that, 'The ontology of understanding is implied in the methodology of interpretation, following the ineluctable 'hermeneutic circle' which Heidegger himself taught us to delineate.' However Heidegger's hermeneutic circle remains undifferentiated in principle and self-consciously excludes conversion and faith as irrelevant to human authenticity. I would argue that hermeneutic ontology is implied in a critical transcendental method grounded in the self-appropriation of the knower as the more differentiated is implied in the less differentiated. In other words it is an adequate, appropriate, and true transcendental method grounded in a cognitional theory verified by the performance of the subject as knower and appropriated by him that leads to an adequate differentiation of foundational inquiry and not vice versa (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 547-649, 920-997; Ricoeur, 1974, p. 19).

For Ricoeur's revised Kantian position as for Heidegger's end run around Kantianism the hermeneutic circle takes on the appearance of a kind of 'trap' in which human beings inevitably find themselves, because we can have no real self-knowledge on Kantian presuppositions, nor can we simply avoid the issue of genuine self-knowledge. I would argue that the recognition of the hermeneutic circle from the methodic viewpoint as understanding seeking faith or from the foundational hermeneutic viewpoint as the symbol giving rise to the reflective concept is not the helpless acknowledgment of a 'trap' in which human beings find themselves, nor is it the recognition of some pseudo-conceptual limits to be placed upon human being, human speaking, or human knowing, because of man's alleged inability to have objective knowledge of anything but appearances (Kant), nor is it an occasion for us to make necessity into a virtue in an Hegelian style, but rather the recognition of the hermeneutic circle as the basis for a real liberation of the being who has his being in thinking-knowing, speaking-hearing, and loving-acting. To recognize that we stand within the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith, the symbol and the concept, is to recognize a conditioned necessity. If we are going to understand, and more significantly if we are going to understand, know, and be ourselves, then we must be converted and be faithful. And on the other side if we are going to be faithful to authentic meaning, truth, and worth; if we are going to withdraw from the untruth of existence, then we must understand and know ourselves. The hermeneutic circle, then, is not a 'trap' in which we are caught but rather a way for us to rid ourselves of all traps and illusions, especially of the self illusions which Ricoeur calls false consciousness or what I would call radical inauthenticity (Piscitelli, 1977, passim).

### 3 The Three Ontologies of the Human Subject

When Ricoeur turns his attention to the human subject in contemporary thought in his search for a hermeneutic ontology, he discovers that there are three self consistent but conflicting ontologies of the human subject. The first is the **archeology** of the subject revealed by Freudian psychoanalysis in its 'regressive' analysis of human meaning in terms of desire and fear. The second is the **teleology** of the subject revealed in the Hegelian phenomenology of the Spirit in its 'progressive' analysis of human

meaning, not in what precedes but in what follows. The third is an **eschatology** of the human subject revealed in the phenomenology of religion in Eliade and Van der Leeuw in which man interprets himself through the signs of the sacred and utterly abandons himself to the command of the sacred. This latter is neither regressive nor progressive but includes both as Alpha and Omega, as the Holy One Who calls upon man manifests Himself to him as He Who commands his existence because He posits man's existence absolutely (Ricoeur, 1970, pp. 459-493, 524-531).

According to Ricoeur each of these ontologies offers complete but conflicting interpretations of the self. At the same time from a foundational viewpoint each remains a 'truncated' hermeneutic ontology because in Ricoeur's view no one can exclude any of the other ones. Each, in his opinion, is grounded in a particular irreducible existential function. Each reveals to philosophical reflection the multiple modalities of the dependence of the self: the **archeology** of the subject reveals the dependence of the self upon **desire**; the teleology of the subject reveals the dependence of the self upon **mediation**-achievement of the spirit; and the **eschatology** of the subject reveals the dependence of the self upon the sacred-**transcendent** (Ricoeur 1974, pp.19-22; 1970, pp. 344-352).

For Ricoeur these ontologies of the subject are irreconcilable. Even though he claims that true symbols contain all hermeneutics, nevertheless pessimistically he concludes that a philosophy beginning with a reflection on language can but glimpse the promised land of a unified ontology before dying like Moses. Evidently for Ricoeur, the knowing, speaking, reflecting, and loving subject is in effect incapable of intellectual, moral, religious, and Christian conversion, or if he is capable of such conversions, he is not able to talk about them or from within that horizon in philosophy. In Ricoeur we not only have a pluralism of ontologies but a fragmentation of ontology in principle. Here again is Ricoeur's Kantianism resurfacing (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 527).

If we look more closely and, I suggest, more critically at these so-called conflicting and fragmented ontologies, we will discover that the conflicts arise not from human experience alone, but from a misinterpretation and misappropriation of human experience in the cases of the Freudian, Hegelian, and religious phenomenological interpretations of the human subject. This is not to say that there is no archeology, teleology, and eschatology of the human subject, but that the archeology need not be Freudian, the teleology need not be Hegelian, and the eschatology need not be phenomenological. Furthermore archeology, teleology, and eschatology need not be a conflicting set of fragmented ontologies but may be three distinct but complementary dimensions of one and the same foundational hermeneutic ontology. This is precisely what a non-Kantian appropriation of the hermeneutic circle leads us to recognize. For at one and the same time a foundational hermeneutic ontology can be psychologically rooted in **desire**, in the desires to know, to say, and to be; it can be reflectively rooted in the intelligent recognition that human meaning lies in the progress of human spirit through the **differentiation** of consciousness, and in the **sublation** of the less differentiated in the more differentiated and authenticated in conversion, with the corresponding possibility of decline through lack of differentiation and conversion. Such a hermeneutic ontology can also be an existential and historic recognition of both the human self and the Holy **Transcendent** as self transcending, because self transcendence is revealed in the dynamic structure of intentionality expressed in religious symbols in language which intends the meaning and ultimately the reality of the Infinite as the Holy. Such a fundamental hermeneutic ontology grounded in a non-Kantian transcendental method would be able to embrace all the elements of an archeology, a teleology, and an eschatology of the human existential subject without leaving the subject either truncated or fragmented except insofar as the concrete subject is alienated from himself through a lack of intellectual, moral, or religious conversion (Lonergan, 1972, 235-266).

According to Ricoeur hermeneutic ontology occurs on a level beyond the level of reflective interpretation. However he insists it is not just an interpretation of interpretation or a theory of interpretation. We would agree that hermeneutic ontology reaches the level of self interpretation which amounts to a thematization of the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith or the symbol and the concept. He points out that the three hermeneutic ontologies, the archeology, teleology, and eschatology of the subject, do in a larger way what symbols do in a smaller way: they displace the meaning of the subject. In the hermeneutic ontologies the displacement of meaning occurs on a large scale because the meaning is

the total life-meaning of the self. Thus he claims an archeology of the subject displaces the meaning of the self or the origin of meaning back into my past, or back into desire and fear, or back into the unconscious, or back even into my body. Similarly the teleology of the subject displaces the meaning of the self forward into the achievements of the human spirit, or into the figures of the spirit. Likewise an eschatology of the subject displaces the meaning of the self utterly beyond the human, utterly beyond time and place into a Transcendent Who is wholly other than an arche or a telos which I can reflectively conceive, a wholly other Who paradoxically annihilates His wholly otherness when He addresses me as inmost to my heart (Ricoeur, 1970, pp. 54-55, 133-134, 376-391, 422-429, 439-463).

Ricoeur notices a dialectical relation between the archeology of the subject and its teleology as represented by Freud and Hegel respectively. For Freud links a thematized archeology of the unconscious with an unthematized teleology of the process of becoming conscious, while Hegel acknowledges the unsurpassable character of life and desire in spite of the fact that this unsurpassableness is always already surpassed in the true life of the spirit. Once again Ricoeur attempts to mediate this dialectic in a Kantian manner by means of his notion of a limit concept. For Kant any reflection on the Unconditioned is 'bound' to generate 'transcendental illusions.' Again Ricoeur wants to return from Hegel to Kant to preserve an ontology of the finite and the religious insight into the 'fact of radical evil.' Such a return, however laudable because of what he wants to avoid, is impossible. What is called for is a movement beyond both Kant and Hegel into a critical appropriation of transcendental method. For the desires to know, to say, and to be do not create 'illusions' when they are operating authentically but are rather the source of the elimination of all illusions. When the knower is satisfied with nothing short of a grasp of sufficient evidence as virtually unconditioned, when the speaker is listening in order to be faithful to the truth that reveals itself, when the lover loves the truth that comes through faithful language, then there can be no illusions. Ricoeur's 'revised Kantianism' prevents him from grasping the real unity underlying the conflicting hermeneutic ontologies. That real unity would come from a hermeneutic ontology that recognizes desire, spirit, and transcendence as constitutive of human being in the world (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 547-649).

What Ricoeur has called the 'de-centering of the self' common to the conflicting hermeneutic ontologies might more aptly be called self transcendence once it is freed from its Kantian framework. For the human subject is self transcending first in knowing when he attains the real in true judgments, then in speaking and listening when he speaks the truth in spite of his wishes and listens for the truth faithfully, finally in acting when he does what is really and truly good despite his desires and fears, having heard, spoken, and known what is truly of value and really worthwhile. This understanding of the subject as self transcending is missing from the Freudian, Hegelian, and phenomenological ontologies of the subject. It is essential to any comprehensive religious ontology of the subject. A religious ontology, an eschatology of the human subject, cannot avoid making the notion of a self-transcending subject thematic without deforming religious speech and derailing religious intentionality. A foundational, religious, hermeneutic ontology revealed in the unrestricted desire to know, to say, and to be goes beyond the truncated ontologies operative in psychoanalysis, Hegelian philosophy, and phenomenologies of religion insofar as the real that is known, the truth that is faithfully heard and spoken, and the action that is lovingly done is motivated by the real love and the wise word of a Self-Transcending God.

#### **4. The Structure of Symbol**

The religious notion of the self as self-transcending is the reflective appropriation of the structure and intentionality of the religious symbol. For the structure of the religious symbol is that the subject intends Transcendence. By preserving the primacy of religious, mythic-symbolic language, a religious, hermeneutic ontology could avoid the two Hegelian extremes of an impossible ontology of the Infinite and the reductionist dissolution of the religious symbol in the acid of the Hegelian *Begriff*. By preserving the real meaningfulness and truth of religious mythic-symbolic speech in a reflective thought which is motivated by human, religious intentionality, we can avoid the Kantian extreme of a human finitude overly limited by an abstract and formal conceptualism on the one hand, and positivism or naïve realism on the other. For even a 'revised' Kantian philosophy can think only 'as if' religious mythic-symbolic speech were meaningful and true, only 'as if' religious symbolic speech intends the Divine, and only 'as if' God exists

because we must 'think' that He does if we are going to continue to 'think' at all (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 399-488).

There is no way for Ricoeur to steer between Kant and Hegel or to be a 'post-Hegelian Kantian' and preserve the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith or the symbol and the concept to which he claims to be committed. For Hegel collapses the religious symbol into the reflective concept, faith into understanding, while Kant confuses understanding with conception and reduces religious understanding to the sensitive-imaginative representation or *Vorstellung*. Because Kant systematically overlooks the fact that understanding is always a response to a question (intentionality) and never a blind use of formal categories, he is forced to conceive faith as an immediate and purely subjective feeling. Thus in effect both Kant and Hegel eliminate one or other of the poles of the hermeneutic circle: Kant eliminates the understanding or concept pole and as a consequence offers an inadequate view of faith as unmediated feeling and an inadequate view of religious symbol which is reduced to a pre-linguistic level of imaginary representation. Hegel eliminates the religious symbol or faith pole and as a consequence offers an inadequate view of the understanding or concept pole as an understanding of the Infinite. There is no way to get between Kant and Hegel on the issue of the hermeneutic circle short of rejecting both and rethinking the whole issue of understanding and faith, the symbol and the concept. Ricoeur's imaginary movement between these two inadequate positions is bound to be a conceptualistic dialectic with no foundation in self-appropriation. Ricoeur knows what he wants: the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith, the symbol and the concept; he knows what he does not want: the elimination or subordination of either pole. However knowing what you want and what you do not want will not get you what you need.

It was Ricoeur's historical-philosophical study of the religious myths and symbols of evil which led him to recognize the centrality of the hermeneutic circle for a foundational ontology of the human existential subject in history. Ricoeur's greatest contribution to hermeneutic philosophy and to the philosophy of religion is his analysis of religious symbol as the key to an understanding of the religious language. For him the symbol is the central issue of a foundational hermeneutics: the problem of the meaning and truth of human subjectivity is the problem of the interpretation of the symbol and the symbol's interpretation of the human self. He speaks of symbols as having a 'double intention.' First there is a 'literal meaning' which is supposed to have an 'immediate reference' to the immediate world. However, built upon this 'first intention' there is a 'second intention' to which the literal or manifest sense points. He claims that by living in the first meaning I am led by it to the second intention. Primary symbols develop when man discovers in his immediate experience of the world a way of saying something about himself in relation to the ultimate reality of the sacred. For this reason symbols resist all reductive or literalist interpretations: there is no way to pry the second intention from the first intention of the symbol without destroying its power to reveal the meaning of the self. The symbol is this movement of primary meaning that makes us share in the latent meaning and assimilates us to it. The symbol is bound to its content for its double content is the basis of its power to reveal its deeper meaning. Myths are merely more elaborated symbols (Ricoeur, 1967, pp.14-18).

In his description of what a symbol is Ricoeur is still working in the Kantian framework for he conceives the symbol as a sensitive image that somehow comes into language. Still he recognizes that there are no free floating symbols outside of language in use. How he can square this with his near identification of the non-linguistic image and the primarily linguistic symbol is mysterious indeed. In fact once again it is the 'mystery' of the Kantian schematism of the imagination. Although he has correlated experience with symbol and assimilated the symbolic function of discourse with the intention of saying, Ricoeur has not worked out in any satisfactorily methodic way the crucial relations between these notions and the experience of intelligent, reasonable, and responsible speech, not to mention religious speech and its counterpart in listening. For example, although symbols arise out of experience, it is not clear what the nature of this experience is. Thought in the Kantian sense is ruled out for being abstract and purely formal. But similarly, immediate experience must be ruled out as being merely sensitive and as such incapable of linguistic intentionality. We are left with the Kantian compromise of an image that 'mediates' between both. But as we have seen, such a compromise illuminates nothing, but simply reiterates the problem of mediation and intentionality. Our suggestion would be the recognition that experience is multiple, for besides the immediate experience of objects of sense, there is the experience of the subject as present to

himself, the experience of questions, the experience of understanding, the experience of expression and so on. Besides the differentiation of these experiences there is the appropriation. Returning to the question about the symbol, it becomes clear that symbols are the expressions of understanding, and understanding mediates between the expressions and the prior questions, while questions mediate between the experience of the subject and his symbolically expressed understanding. Images of course come into the operation, but they are directed and illuminated by the questions, while they remain pre-linguistic and adequately distinct from symbols. Because of his Kantian framework Ricoeur systematically overlooks the real mediation points in the process: questions and insight. To the extent that the symbol is assimilated to the intention of language as saying it becomes linked to the question of the speaker, and through language as discourse it becomes a question for the hearer (Ricoeur, 1974, pp. 440-467).

With his discovery of the symbolic function of language in his meditation on religious symbols, Ricoeur moved into the burgeoning field of hermeneutics. He distinguished three dimensions to religious symbols: the cosmic, the psychic, and the poetic. The cosmic symbols, the most archaic form, 'project' meaning 'immediately' onto the world or cosmos. (Note the Kantian nominalist prejudgment.) Psychic symbols are given a 'subjective' reference in terms of 'objective' meanings 'projected' into the psyche. The poetic dimension of the symbol dramatizes meaning in the language of myth. The cosmic and psychic dimensions of symbol are simply a Kantian transposition of subject and object into the field of linguistic symbols. The poetic dimension of the symbol is described as 'the welling up of meaning into language,' 'putting language in the state of emergence.' The poetic dimension reveals the symbolic intentionality of language; it is the expressivity of symbol and the birthplace of language. Ricoeur discerns in his recovery of the symbol as the intention of language a recovery of the 'fullness of language.' Because language is primarily intentional and symbolic, he can show how the symbol gives rise to thought (concept) because it first gives rise to speech (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 10-18).

Ricoeur's recognition of the primacy of the poetic function of symbolic language gave some reason to hope that he was on his way beyond his Kantian presuppositions insofar as it seemed to be an opening toward the further recognition of the act of understanding as distinct from its symbolic expression. This, however, was not to be the case, for when he came to deal with the issue in his massive, scholarly work on metaphor and in his latest work on biblical hermeneutics, he retreated once again to Kant of the third critique, the *Critique of Judgment*. This issue was now even more serious because it concerned the reference of poetic and religious language. The question of the reference of language is the issue of judgment, and for Kant judgments simply do not attain the real in either the aesthetic or the religious domain. Ricoeur was left with a 'split reference' corresponding to the 'split intention' of symbolic language. The most he could hope to do was to shift attention from the immediate judgment to the context of judgments that reveal a world 'out in front of the text.' Then he had recourse to the notion of 'fictional redescription' to salvage the meaningfulness and truth of poetic and religious language. However, split references yield split worlds and we are not quite sure which one God created, or if He created both, why He needed two except to accommodate Kantian epistemology (Ricoeur 1975. pp. 107-109, I 18-128,143,145).

As he moves more deeply into philosophical hermeneutics, Ricoeur will be plagued by his need to revise Kant at every turn. Each new turn, each new insight, requires a more 'subtle' and 'creative' adaptation. None will quite meet the issue because what is needed is a whole new orientation and a clear break with the Kantian framework (Ricoeur, 1976, pp. 45-70).

Certainly a predominant interest of Ricoeur has been in the expanding field of philosophical hermeneutics. He has described interpretation as the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning of a text, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the 'literal' meaning of words, sentences, and works. This definition makes interpretation in the specialized sense a secondary linguistic function, because it is conceived as a work of reflective thought and of self-consciousness. However, I would argue that in its basic sense interpretation is a primary linguistic function, because every saying is already an interpretation. What Ricoeur wishes to describe is the relation between the reflective concept and the experiential and linguistic symbol. According to Ricoeur, reflective thought (concept) attempts to bring to speech again, but now within its control, the multiple intentions of the

primary act of saying (symbol). This second level of interpretation is built on the primary level insofar as the structure of language as discourse is already operative on this primary level (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 14-18).

### 5 The Structure of Language as Discourse

Following the brilliant French linguist, Emile Benveniste, Ricoeur is able to identify the structure of language as discourse to be that **Someone says something about something to someone**. We have further explored this structure to show that it can be integrated with a transcendental method to yield a differentiated approach to a fundamental hermeneutic ontology. Briefly the structure of language as discourse reveals that there are four clearly distinct dimensions of all speech in act. First, there is **subjectivity**, for someone speaks. Second, there is **intentionality**, for someone says something. Third, there is **reference**, for someone says something about something. Fourth, there is **intersubjectivity**, for someone speaks to someone (Ricoeur, 1974, pp. 83-88).

The problem, then, with the structure of language as discourse is that it is amenable to any philosophical appropriation in terms of a prior understanding of subjectivity, intentionality, reference, and intersubjectivity. If that prior understanding is Kantian as it is with Ricoeur, then there will be a bifurcation of an immediate subjectivity and a transcendental subject, a primary and 'literal' intention and a projected 'imaginative' intention, an immediate reference reducible to sense impressions and a 'remote' conceptual reference that is 'built' upon the immediate reference, and an intersubjectivity that suffers the same fate as subjectivity. However, if the structure of language as discourse is appropriated in accordance with a critical cognitional theory grounded in the self-appropriation of the knower and verified in the actual performance of the knowing subject, then subjectivity is the prior consciousness that the subject has of himself in his self presence which accompanies all conscious acts and the objects they attain. Subjectivity is simply the one who is conscious of objects through conscious acts. Similarly, intentionality simply calls attention to the fact that all conscious acts have an object. Intentionality is never immediate, but is always mediated by questions. Hence intentionality can be differentiated in terms of the three types of questions that I can ask: questions for understanding that intend meaning, questions for reflection that intend the truth, and questions for deliberation that intend the good. The three questions form a sublating set insofar as you cannot do what is really good unless you know what is really good, and you cannot know what is truly good unless you understand what is meaningfully possible. Reference is just another name for objectivity. And there are three dimensions of objectivity that make up the self-structuring activities of knowing: there is an empirical objectivity that corresponds to the data that is asked about; there is a normative objectivity in the directive exigences of intelligence and rationality that require the answers to our questions to be coherent and self consistent; and finally there is a conditioned absolute objectivity in the directive exigence of our reasonableness that requires the judgments we make to be grounded in sufficient evidence grasped by reflective understanding as a virtually unconditioned. Reference as a structure of language as discourse is then threefold, because objectivity is threefold. It is the limited achievement of the intentionality of the human subject insofar as something comes to be known. Reference simply is the answer to the question: What are we talking about? If you do not know what you are talking about because there is nothing that relates to your experience, or because you do not understand and express your understanding coherently, or because you have no reasonably compelling evidence for what you are claiming, then of course there will be a defect of reference in your discourse. Finally, intersubjectivity involves mutual or common experiences, questions, understanding, expressions, reflective understandings, judgments, decisions, and even possibly common commitments (Lonergan, 1967, pp. 221-239).

In contrast to this all too brief discussion of the structure of language as discourse grounded in a critical cognitional theory, there are Ricoeur's Kantian bifurcations of subjectivity, intentionality, reference, and we can assume intersubjectivity. For example, in his work on symbol he speaks of a double intentionality of the symbol: a primary or 'literal' intention, and a secondary or meaning intention. Similarly, in his latest work on metaphor he speaks of a double reference: the reference of language to the 'physical' world and the reference to the 'fictive' world. The latter, we already noted, raises the new specter of a deformed theory of 'fictional re-description' which can do justice neither to poetic nor religious discourse (Ricoeur, 1975, pp. 107-145; 1977, pp. 216-256).

Still, we would argue, the thematization of the structure of language as discourse does make a positive contribution to the field of philosophical hermeneutics provided it can be differentiated and appropriated by a critical transcendental method grounded in a cognitional theory verified in the actual performance of the human subject as knower. It is right to insist that the human subject is not only a knower but also a speaker-hearer and lover-actor; the human subject is an existential subject in history. Authentic cognitional subjectivity with its resulting authentic objectivity is only one dimension of human authenticity, albeit an essential and foundationally methodic one. Hence Ricoeur's insistence on the need for a hermeneutic ontology of the human historical subject is justified, and it is absolutely necessary for any religious understanding of human subjectivity, its truth, and its ultimate worth. We would add that such an ontology must be faithful to the authentic mediations of the desire to know, as well as the desires to say and to be, which are constitutive of human being in the world.

Specifically the structure of language as discourse can clarify the horizons of language in terms of the existential subject in history. For if corresponding to the structure of discourse as someone saying something about something to someone, there are the four functions of language in speaking and hearing: subjectivity, intentionality, reference, and intersubjectivity, then corresponding to each of the latter there is the language of the experience of the subject as subject (subjectivity), the language of the understanding of the subject as subject (intentionality), the language of the rationality and reasonableness of the subject as subject (reference), and the language of the deliberation and decision of the subject as subject, that is, the language of the historical, existential subject in the human community before God (intersubjectivity). Moreover, the functions of the structure of language as discourse can be functionally specialized or subordinated in favor of one function, so that even though all the functions are always operative, one is predominant over the rest. This can be the case because it is done in an unconscious and undifferentiated way, or consciously and in a differentiated way. The latter would require a methodic self appropriation of the structure of language as discourse. Finally, we would note that the structure of language as discourse is isomorphic to the structure of consciousness as experience, understanding, reflection, and deliberation-decision (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 998-1016).

With the differentiations of the horizons of language in terms of the structure of language as discourse, we can identify the following horizons of speech: The horizon of **myth** as the undifferentiated language of the experience of the subject as subject, or the horizon of **story** as the differentiated language of the experience of the subject as subject; the horizon of **symbol** as the undifferentiated language of the understanding of the subject as subject, or the horizon of the self consciously **poetic** aesthetic or religious understanding of the subject as subject; the horizon of the **word** as the undifferentiated language of the reasonableness of the subject as subject, or the horizon of the **concept** as the differentiated language of the rationality and reasonableness of the subject as subject; finally, the horizon of the **spirit** as the undifferentiated language of the deliberation and decision of the subject as subject, or the horizon of the **existential-historical subject** as the differentiated language of the same (Lonergan, 1974, pp. 69-86).

The dialectical correlation and critical mediation of the structure of language as discourse (subjectivity, intentionality, reference, and intersubjectivity) with the language of the subject as subject and the structure of consciousness (experience, understanding, reflection, decision) yielding the horizons of human language as myth, symbol, word, and spirit will illuminate Ricoeur's contribution to hermeneutic philosophy and the philosophy of religion in his great study of religious myths as well as show why he was incapable of appropriating those great discoveries. It is to that study, *The Symbolism of Evil*, that we must now turn. For the structure of consciousness, as well as the structure of language as discourse, remains empty until man begins to experience, to understand, to know, to listen, to speak, to love or hate, to act or refuse to act. Again the key issue is self-appropriation as well as self-constitution (Piscitelli, 1977, 547-649).

### III RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS

#### 1. The Three Symbols of Evil

Ricoeur believes that the symbols of evil have a privileged position in the history of religion and in religious discourse, because they express the concrete predicament of the existential subject. In his historical philosophical study of the myths of evil he discovers three basic or primary symbols that man

uses to express the meaning or impact of evil in his life: the symbols of **defilement**, **sin**, and **guilt**. These are to be understood as major themes, not images, of the religious myths or stories. In his reflection on the basic symbols of evil Ricoeur detects a progressive development: a movement from the external to the internal and from the 'objective' to the 'subjective'. This movement reveals a hierarchy of the primary symbols of evil: evil understood as defilement or impurity is 'objective' (a positive factor), but it is also 'external' (a negative factor); evil understood as sin, a breach of the divine law, is 'objective', an alienation from the Holy, but also 'internal' as self-alienation; finally evil understood as guilt is 'internal', reflecting the self-alienation of sin, but it is also subjective because it is an intimate feeling, a 'weight' on one's conscience which may or may not be grounded in responsibility. Thus the movement in the history of religion from defilement to sin to guilt is from the external to the objective, from the objective to the internal, and from the internal to the subjective. Ricoeur points out that the successive symbols carry over and sublimate the revelatory power of their predecessors. There is also a cumulative assimilation of the meanings of the symbols in the history of their development (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 25-150).

Ricoeur wants to show that the archaic development of cosmic, religious symbols is **isomorphic** with the constitution of the human **subject**. For him the historic evolution of religious symbols is in effect the history of human subjectivity in its attempt to understand and be itself. He argues that human consciousness can be known in its symbolic expression in religious language. Thus he discerns a circular relation between the primary symbols of evil: the symbol of sin illuminates the symbol of defilement while retaining something of defilement's 'opacity' which gives sin the power to signify; the more differentiated symbol of guilt explicates the symbol of sin, while guilt gains the power to signify by sublating the prior references of defilement and sin. The primary symbols tend, then, to resolve their meaning in relation to human subjectivity, and for this reason the circular movement of mutual symbolic interpretation, a kind of 'system' of symbols, on the reflective level becomes open to the temptation of an idealistic reduction of their meaning to an immanent and truncated subjectivity (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 151-157).

We have argued against Ricoeur's Kantian deformation of the notion of human intentionality and the symbolic function of language by pointing out that human intentionality is rooted in the threefold questioning power of the human mind and that the symbol is an expression of an act of understanding distinct from symbolic or conceptual expression. The symbol can be understood neither on the analogy of Kantian conceptualism nor by the reduction of the linguistic symbol to a pre-linguistic schematism of the imagination. Finally, the only way out of the charmed circle of a truncated and immanentized subjectivity is a recognition that the problem of linguistic reference is the problem of objectivity, which itself can be resolved only in terms of a recognition of the cognitional self-transcendence of authentic knowing that results from intelligent and reasonable judgments. Unfortunately, Ricoeur must return once again to the Kantian framework to make adjustments to deal with this problem of the 'idealism' of symbols.

By returning to Kant's *Essay on Radical Evil*, Ricoeur then traces the circular movement of religious symbols to a 'synthesis' in what he calls the symbolic concept of the 'servile will'. Once again Ricoeur has put all his money on the Kantian solution. Once again it turns out to be no solution at all, but a reiteration of the problem transferred to the mythic-symbolic context. For Ricoeur claims that the symbolic concept (a contradiction in his own terms because it mixes two levels of discourse) of the 'servile will' is the paradoxical notion of a bound freedom: a 'free rejection of freedom'. Even he recognizes that this notion is unthinkable on the reflective level but must be imported by the existential testimony of religious man in history. Supposedly the development of the symbol of guilt makes this alleged symbolic concept of a bound freedom inevitable. Thus it can be thought only indirectly as a reenactment of human experience on the level of reflection. The paradox of the enslaved will is the pure symbol's (self as symbol) tendency to make a circle with itself. Here Ricoeur's Kantianism is simply mirroring its own immanentist subjectivity. Though it is true that man can not remove himself from the reality of the human condition in reflection, still it does not follow that such reflection discovers itself to be imprisoned in itself any more than the religious symbolic language of men attests to this Kantian imprisonment. The religious man might attest that he cannot do what he knows he ought to do, but this does not mean that he does not know what he ought to do or cannot really know it. We can agree with Ricoeur that reflective men must return to the symbolic world of religious myth in order to understand religious truth, but we cannot see how the so-called 'limit-concept'

or 'symbolic-concept' of the servile will can illuminate that meaning or truth when it is itself meaningless and contradictory (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 155-157).

## 2. Myth

Ricoeur's discussion of myth focuses on the relationship between the symbol and experience. Symbols first emerge spontaneously in religious mythic discourse. Religious myth is the ritual-dramatic portrayal of man before the sacred. It is the narration of a fantastic history which symbolically includes all men in the concrete universal of a god, a hero, or a primordial man. Thus myth creates its own temporality by revealing the origin and fate of man in an imaginative portrayal of the human experience of subjectivity. Myth is the first linguistic exploration of the structure of human being: a naive onto-logic. The present existential experience out of which the myth emerges becomes meaningful in the narrative that recounts what 'happened' between the original state and the present state of man. So myth is the existential and expressive unfolding of man's understanding of himself before the sacred. Myth gives a reference or a world for the plenitude of meaning intended by the symbol, and this reference always lies beyond man's immediate experience. According to Ricoeur, myth-making is the antidote to the distress in which man finds himself: his own alienation. To reconcile this disunity man finds in himself, he must speak of and act out a world of the sacred which is not immediately given. Myth witnesses to both the longed for unity of man with the sacred, and the experience of its loss. It symbolizes his unity in terms of a beginning and an end of a fundamental existential history (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 161-174).

According to Ricoeur the only authentic interpretation available to thought is a symbolic exploration of myth given by myth itself. Thus myth resists an etiological interpretation or the gnostic tendency to treat mythic-symbolic language as a pseudo-speculative or conceptual exploration. It also resists an allegorical interpretation which would eliminate symbolic understanding completely and absorb it into conceptual language. Myth is motivated by but also gives rise to symbolic understanding. We can agree with Ricoeur here without accepting his Kantian framework. For it is precisely insofar as symbolic understanding is understood as *understanding* that it can be understood both to be irreducible to systematic understanding expressed in concepts, and to be the motivation of that conceptually expressed systematic understanding (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 164-171).

## 3. The Four Myths of Evil

Ricoeur's most important discovery in his study of the myths of evil in western culture is that they fall into four major types: the myths of chaos, the myths of the exiled soul, the tragic myths, and the Adamic myth. He calls the first three mythic types 'speculative' because they located the origin of evil in a situation which is prior to the (existential) experience of human decision and action. In contrast, the Adamic myth finds the origin of evil in the historic activity of man: Evil enters the world through man's free conscious acts. For this reason Ricoeur calls the Adamic myth 'reflective'. *Deliberative* might be a better term (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 171-174).

The myth of chaos or the cosmogonic myth of creation identifies evil with a disorder in the universe (chaos) and thus interprets creation as the salvation from chaos: creation is putting order (meaning-good) into the chaos (evil). In this myth the origin of evil is coextensive with the origin of good and with the origin of things. The creative act of the gods or heroes is their struggle (theogony) to bring order out of chaos. The cult re-enacts this divine struggle for order. The act of world-foundation is experienced in the cultic re-enactment as a liberating act. In the theogony the creative act appears to be both an act of divine power and an act of violence. This ambiguity between power and violence always remains in the myths of chaos (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 175-210).

Ricoeur notes that the myth of the exiled soul is the most 'philosophical' of the myths of evil because it comes down to us already transformed by the reflective thought of the Platonic and Neo-Platonic tradition. It is the philosophic transmission of a forgotten or lost Orphic drama of a primordial fall of a divine soul into an earthly body. This inner dualism and alienation of soul and body is unique to the myth of the exiled soul. In the myth man is divided in his essential being, In his earthly existence he forgets his original state and becomes imprisoned, in the passions of the body. The myth has ancient roots and is reminiscent of archaic Hinduism. Later Platonic philosophy modifies the myth by placing human

deliverance in a special kind of knowledge. In the myth the body becomes the symbol of felt conflicts from which a man can escape only by returning to his true inner nature: the soul. Human life on earth is experienced as intrinsically evil and man's only salvation is a spiritual purification by special knowledge. The myth of the exiled soul is the original source for the theme of the 'Fall of Man' which became fused with the biblical myth. It is also the source for the themes of wandering and forgetfulness developed in the Homeric *Odyssey* and so many other religious and philosophical traditions in the West (Ricoeur, 1967 pp. 279-305).

The tragic myth attains its full manifestation all at once in Greek tragic poetry. In the Greek tragedies the gods and men stand in opposition to each other and by this opposition the tragic myth introduces an ambiguity more serious than the violence-power ambiguity of the myth of the chaos. The new ambiguity is the mystery and anti-mystery of good and evil itself. In the tragic ambiguity the divine cannot be distinguished adequately from the diabolical nor can human virtue be distinguished adequately from hubris. The tragic myth sets up the problem of the *metaxy*, the in-between being of man who is neither merely an animal nor really a god. The tragic drama reveals that man is inevitably subjected either to a wicked god or a blind fate. In the action of the drama the fault of man that emerges is indistinguishable from the tragic existence of the hero. Even though a heroic human freedom tries to resist either the gods or fate, in the end man is crushed and the drama produces the tragic emotion of terror in the heart of the viewer. However, tragic terror initiates an aesthetic catharsis (salvation) which results in a compassionate understanding of the human condition. The tragic hero's greatness cannot be dissolved in the identification of the hero with the victim. Human deliverance comes through empathetic compassion of the spectator who participates in the sorrow and loss of the hero only to discover that the hero's destiny is in some sense also his own. The deliverance is the transformation of the viewer's self-understanding which leaves his destiny understood and affirmed but still unchanged. The tragic drama reveals that man cannot avoid suffering if he is to come to a true self understanding. There remains a basic opacity in the tragic myth, for human fault is indistinguishable from the finite existence of the hero. There can be no pardon possible for an inevitable fault and guilt that is given with human existence itself. Thus tragic salvation affirms that human freedom coincides with an understood, known, and accepted necessity. It can issue in a Stoic consent to necessity but there is no vision of human freedom beyond the necessary structure of human destiny. Hence human innocence and guilt cannot be unraveled in the tragic myth (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 211-231).

Ricoeur shows that the Adamic myth is unique in that it tries to distinguish the origin of good from the origin of evil and makes the good primordial over the evil. In the biblical account of the 'beginning,' God is Holy, Innocent, and Good, and Man comes from the hand of God as a finite, good, and innocent son of God. In the Adamic myth creation comes from God and is radically good. It is Adam as the 'First Man' who originates evil and his condition is homogeneous with ours. Adam, then, is Man symbolized and evil is the result of a deviant human freedom. Evil enters the world through man as a radically absurd event. In the Adamic myth evil is historic and existential and not structural and essential to man. Properly speaking we must say that in the Adamic myth evil is a deviation from the good and sin is a turning away from God. So the Adamic myth is not strictly speaking a 'Fall of Man' in the sense in which this is true in the exilic myth. Ricoeur points out that the Adamic myth calls for a radically ethical vision of the world. Evil originates in a human act of 'will' (freedom), and radical evil is a deviant will. As a consequence of this man takes upon himself full responsibility for his alienated condition. The myth goes on to say that man by his sin is responsible even for the disorder and corruption in the universe because he introduced this deviation into the divine order. The Adamic myth separates creation from eschatology with history: the 'beginning' was a-temporally constituted by God and the 'end' will be a-temporally reconciled by God. Between the beginning and the end is the history of Divine reconciliation. History is the place where God brings the beginning to an end. The biblical notion of history is the story of man's hope for deliverance and the reconciling acts of God. The Adamic myth views creation as proceeding from God and salvation as man's return to God. It understands that return as a recovery of authentic human freedom begun by God's love for man and brought to fulfillment by God Himself in man's love for God (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 232-278).

#### **4. Ricoeur's 'Second Reading' of the Myths**

We can see that Ricoeur's ideal-type analysis of the myths of evil first aims at revealing their symbolic power in illuminating human existence in the world. This revelation of the symbolic power of the myths represents a 'first reading' of them. This leads to Ricoeur's showing that the myths form a cycle in which different themes are emphasized or subordinated by different myths, and no one myth can incorporate all the themes in the same way. Ricoeur then proposes a 'second reading' of them by taking the Adamic myth and re-reading all the other myths in relation to it. In the second reading occurring now within reflective thought, Ricoeur makes a 'wager': by taking a stand within the Adamic myth, he will be able to understand and interpret the other three myths in their full symbolic meaning. So Ricoeur argues that the best way for us to hear and understand what all the religious myths have to say about the human condition is to take a stand and 'believe' in one of the myths. According to him, this reflective 'belief is a presupposition which is justified to the extent that philosophy must interpret the myths from within if it wants to understand the religious interpretation of human existence. His argument goes this way: since reflection cannot interpret the myths in other than a symbolic mode without reducing their meaning to literalisms or allegories, and since no one can live in all the mythic universes of discourse at the same time because they are irreducible one to the other, it follows that the only remaining option open to philosophy is to take a reflective stand by believing in one of the myths in order to understand the religious contribution to human self understanding (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 347-357).

Although what Ricoeur says is in some sense true: we cannot understand ourselves without believing and we can believe only by interpreting, still his understanding of belief, faith, and understanding remains under the control of an inadequate cognitional theory, and in effect it is either undifferentiated or improperly differentiated. He proposes to promote naive belief, which he claims is no longer possible in our post-critical age, to a second level of immediacy, a second naivete, a 'hermeneutic belief which is made possible in a post-critical age by hermeneutic method. This second immediacy arises from Ricoeur's transformed use of the Husserlian epoche (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 351-353).

First, there is no such thing as unmediated belief. Beliefs occur in the world mediated by meaning and constituted by values. Beliefs may be one's own or those of another. If they are one's own, then they are the expression of some kind of faith which is the result of a conversion: intellectual, moral, religious, or Christian. If they are another's beliefs, then either they result from a similar conversion in the other or they are inauthentic. Second, Ricoeur's notion of a 'second immediacy' or 'second naivete' arises from his inadequate conception of method and its founding cognitional theory, for he assumes that hermeneutic reflection 'perceives' (second naivete) the believer 'perceiving' (first naivete) the symbolic meaning in his belief. This is simply the nominalist prejudgment applied to the domain of interpreting texts. The reflective interpreter's belief in the belief of the believer is just a limited strategy for entering the world of the myth. Once these hermeneutic 'brackets' are placed on the enterprise of interpretation, it is not possible to remove them in any way short of conversion. Third, although it is true that the reflective appropriation of mythic-symbolic religious meaning, truth, and worth as well as a kind of hermeneutic faith has become possible and necessary in a post-critical age, still the only adequate means of such appropriation can be carried out in terms of the self-appropriation of the knower as the first step to the reflective appropriation of language as discourse. This would require a critique of mistaken beliefs in terms of the self-correcting process of learning, as well as the recognition that authentic faith excludes all mistaken beliefs in principle if not in fact (Lonergan, 1958, pp. 174-175, 286-291).

Ricoeur argues that reflective thought must be informed by the meaning of religious symbolic myths if it is to arrive at real human self-understanding; in a word self-understanding demands faith. His motto: 'the symbol gives rise to thought,' means that it is necessary for thought to inhabit the fullness of language. Even though there is no philosophy without presuppositions, thought must have a point of departure in experience and language. In fact it is the experience of speaking and hearing which is the privileged starting point for an existential reflection that aims at self understanding. The first task of reflective thought is to remember from the midst of language with a view to a new beginning. 'The historical moment of the philosophy of symbols is that of forgetfulness and restoration. Forgetfulness of hierophanies, forgetfulness of the signs of the sacred, loss of man himself insofar as he belongs to the sacred.' Critical hermeneutics remains in line with critical thought but its critical function does not turn thought away from the appropriation of human and religious meaning, truth, and worth but rather makes it more authentic and

faithful. This in no way validates the Kantian critical enterprise, however, and in fact it reveals the basic inadequacy that Kant divides up the life in faith and the life in truth and fails to reconstitute the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith in reflection (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 353-357).

Ricoeur rightly argues that the dissolution of myth as an explanation in a literalist or reductionist philosophical hermeneutics is merely a moment in the restoration of myth as symbolic self-understanding. He recognizes that phenomenology is only the first step in the restoration and appropriation of religious mythic-symbolic meaning, truth, and worth, so that it is not possible to limit the philosophy of religion to a mere exploration of religious symbolic meaning. Religious meaning is existential and makes a claim to truth on the philosopher.

Although the phenomenologist may give the name of truth to the internal coherence, the systematicity, of the world of symbols, such truth is truth without belief, truth at a distance, reduced, from which one has expelled the question: Do / believe that? What do / make of these symbolic meanings, these hierophanies? That question cannot be raised as long as one remains at the level of comparativism, running from one symbol to another, without oneself being anywhere. That level can only be an intermediate stage, the stage of understanding in extension. panoramic understanding, curious but not concerned. It has been necessary to enter into a passionate, though critical, relation with the truth-value of each symbol (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 353-354).

Still Ricoeur does not realize that phenomenology does not only give a truth without belief, but it gives a truth without faith and commitment. In effect, it attempts to avoid the issue of truth altogether. For there is no truth of the self without faith, and there is no belief without faith. The epoche of phenomenology must give way to a more adequate transcendental method as horizon analysis; the bracketing of naive belief must give way to a thematization of conversion as intellectual, moral, religious, and Christian if Ricoeur is to resolve this issue successfully. Ricoeur is not completely oblivious to this requirement for he says, '... a philosophy instructed by symbols has for its task a qualitative transformation of reflexive consciousness.' (Ricoeur, 1967, p. 356). This qualitative transformation can occur only if the one who reflects undergoes a conversion (Lonergan, 1974, pp. 65-68).

Religious man does not believe in symbols, but through symbols in God. The Christian believes in a Transcendent Self-Transcending God. For him religious symbolic language reveals a divine-human dialogue of love in action. Thus he thinks not only with symbols as a starting point the way Ricoeur argues, but he thinks and lives in and through them. A fundamental hermeneutic ontology shows that it is not myth as such which must be eliminated from thought but the misinterpretation of myth as a literal meaning or a pseudo-rational account. When myth is purified of the naive realism of common sense and the idealism and conceptualism of a misguided reflection, what remains is story on the symbolic and existential level, and critical history on the conceptual level of theory. The proper task of a foundational hermeneutics starting from symbols and myths is the elaboration of existential notions or the structures of human existence in terms of conversion and self-transcendence. To recognize the symbol as the primary function of language as discourse is for the subject to recognize the self as in being rather than vice versa. For the existential, reflective self to find himself in being is to find himself in the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith. When this happens, all bets are off. Ricoeur's wager of believing in order to understand is misguided, for the real alternative is not some understanding or more understanding, but rather authentic self-understanding or no self-understanding in the ultimate sense. Although reflection cannot lead from knowledge to belief without a break, still the break that occurs is not away from knowledge but away from inauthentic knowing which would exclude conversion (Lonergan, 1972, pp. 265, 292).

Ricoeur's Pascalian wager to risk his belief in the Adamic myth, betting that the other myths will reveal their symbolic power, is no more than an admission that the hermeneutic circle is a kind of trap. Once again it follows from his Kantian presuppositions. It is clear that such a wager is not true faith. According to him the philosopher can 'verify' the Adamic myth to some extent by showing its reflective capacity to reveal the true meaning of the human situation. He says he chooses the Adamic myth from a philosophical perspective because it is in fact the only myth that can integrate and re-affirm the truth of all the other myths. He claims the Adamic myth is the 'most reflective and subjective' of the myths so that the

problem of interpretation from within the Adamic myth is the problem of 're-integrating the objective elements of truth from the other myths.' He says he will use the other myths 'dialectically to limit the intrinsic "idealism" of the Adamic myth.' Again we can discern the Kantian schematism projected onto the problem of the relation between the four mythic types: the first three myths (Cosmic-Theogonic, Exilic, and Tragic) are characterized as perceiving evil as somehow 'out there objectively.' while the Adamic myth becomes the symbolic-conceptual framework which by itself would be mere idealism, but in conjunction with the 'perceptions' of the other myths yields a Kantian 'objectivity'. According to Ricoeur this 'priority of evil' is an 'objectivity' (read nominalist pre judgment) which is not directly absorbed by the Adamic myth. In effect the 'idealism' of the Adamic myth must be 'corrected' by Ricoeur's Kantian epistemology.

In Ricoeur's Kantian appropriation of the Adamic myth the 'objectivity' of the other myths is incorporated by reversing the primary intention of the myth's assessment of human responsibility for evil: though man is responsible for a freely posited act, still evil itself is caused by a disoriented or bad will. Ricoeur thinks this 'reversal' makes evil primarily an event in history, so that once it enters the world all men are affected by its historic 'objectivity'. This 'reversal' is not part of the Adamic myth but Ricoeur's Kantian reconstruction of the meaning of the myth.

Although it is true to say that the Adamic myth attributes responsibility for evil acts to man, it is not true that the myth claims that evil acts have a 'cause'. Moreover the question of responsibility can not be pushed out of the way by the supposed positivity of evil for it returns with the question of the first free act: Can any free act be completely self induced? Human freedom can seduce itself up to a point; a 'bound freedom' can be self imposed captivity. However human freedom is always a motivated freedom; so the question remains, where does the motivation for evil come from? The only answer faithful to the recognition of the goodness of being is that evil comes from a finite good, but not insofar as a thing is good but insofar as it is merely finite. The Adamic myth shows how a good universe can be the 'underside of evil.' For the universe is good as coming from the creative act of a Good God and insofar as it is oriented to the Divine Good, but if that orientation is broken or disoriented by man, in other words, if man makes a finite good a motive for turning away from God, he introduces a disorientation in himself as well as in the community of being. Ricoeur's Kantian interpretation of the Adamic myth distorts its intention and its existential insight into human responsibility and freedom.

### **5. The Adamic Myth as the Central Myth of Evil**

In spite of his Kantian presuppositions Ricoeur gives a sensitive and insightful re-reading of the Adamic myth as the central myth of evil which can re-integrate the symbolic meanings of the other three myths. He claims the Adamic myth is iconoclastic in relation to the theogonic myth of chaos; the Adamic myth demythologizes the myth of chaos by conceiving Yahweh in personalist terms. It elevates Yahweh to an infinite Power but eliminates all implications of violence from Divine activity, because Yahweh's power is rooted in His wisdom and goodness; He exercises His power through His creative word. In the Adamic myth the world is finite but good, and man is oriented and destined for the Good who is God Himself. Though biblical man is not a servant of the gods, he is a vassal of Yahweh, and as such he is free and the master of the earth over which Yahweh has granted him responsible dominion. One intention of the myth is to remove evil from the notion of being and place it in an historic eruption of disoriented human freedom. For the myth evil is rooted in human subjectivity and as such it escapes all metaphysical categories. In Ricoeur's interpretation the myth's identification of evil does not escape every ontology, for an ontology that includes metaphysics but goes beyond it in an historic act of human freedom could not be conceived in purely objectivist terms as thing-like. Ricoeur does not address himself to the question whether such a religious ontology is required by the Adamic myth. Ricoeur simply says that the myth cannot completely 'subjectivize' the reality of evil. He traces the irreducible 'objectivity' of evil witnessed to by the theogonic myth as darkness and disorder to the Adamic symbol of the serpent as its vestige. Although the chthonic animal has been made finite, it has not lost its symbolic power to reveal the external seduction of evil. Still the serpent symbol remains subordinate to the primarily ethical intention of the Adamic myth. The serpent is an interesting ancient ambiguous symbol of healing and poisoning which corresponds to the double nature of created things as symbols of the divine as well as seductions from it. Unfortunately, Ricoeur is

wedded to the notion that the serpent somehow represents the 'externality,' 'positivity,' or 'objectivity' of evil as somehow 'already there' before the will of man initiates it (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 310-311).

For Ricoeur the tragic myth is closest to the Adamic because it is to some extent a 'reflective' myth. It falls on the necessity side of the necessity-freedom dialectic, while the Adamic myth falls on the freedom side. Like the theogonic, the tragic myth reveals a non-willed dimension of evil acts. In the tragic myth the irreducibility of the evil act is the 'fatedness' of the free act once it has been posited. In contrast, the Adamic myth is basically anti-tragic because it affirms both the responsibility and guilt of the man on the one hand, and the innocence and holiness of God on the other. Ricoeur interprets the serpent's temptation as the incorporation of this 'positive' element emphasized by the tragic myth. In the Adamic myth temptation reveals the limits of the finite. In the temptation the serpent calls into doubt the basic orientation of man to God. In the myth the finite is originally oriented to a Transcendent, Infinite God. In the temptation the serpent viciously interprets the limits of the finite as an arbitrary interdiction, thus confusing finitude with radical alienation from God. Again the temptation shows the seductivity of the finite, the basic ambiguity of creatureliness, and the inevitable alternative to a right orientation to God: man can either recognize God through his creatures or allow himself to be seduced away from Him by them. The recognition of the seductivity of the finite preserves the ethical vision of the Adamic myth from a moralizing devaluation of its religious meaning. Though man is responsible for evil acts by his free choice, human responsibility does not imply that man chooses every aspect and consequence of his acts; there remain unchosen aspects to every human action. If his human freedom is finite and motivated, man is not responsible solely to himself. As such man is capable of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Hence the 'spectacle' of man's tragic act leads to the hope of his salvation, but now through a Divine and not merely a human tragic compassion. As soon as Adam sins, he is given the promise of Divine Redemption. A Divine Compassion comes to man's rescue. The Hebrew prophets develop this theme of Divine Compassion and the New Testament writers symbolize Jesus Himself as the real suffering servant of Yahweh. The passion of Christ will become the ultimate revelation of the Divine Compassion. Just as the tragic fate is the reverse side of human freedom, so the suffering of Christ as the New Adam is the reversal of the evil act of the First Adam. So the Adamic myth can re-interpret the tragic myth and retain its basic elements in a new configuration. Finally, the Adamic myth creates the new religious symbol of the suffering servant of Yahweh by transforming the insights of the tragic myth (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 310-325).

Ricoeur notes that the myth of the exiled soul presents an important problem of interpretation for the Adamic myth. For the myth of the exiled soul is the only one that divides man up metaphysically into two irreconcilable realities: soul and body. It is the only mythic anthropology that is metaphysically dualistic. It deals with the externality of evil seduction by assimilating it to the body which becomes the symbol of evil seduction: the body symbolizes everything that happens to me without my doing it. The body becomes the symbol of the involuntary as the focus of the resistance which the passions create impeding the free exercise of my will. In the Adamic myth the serpent symbolizes the seductivity of the non-human world, while in the myth of the exiled soul the body symbolizes the seductivity of the human world, for the body is somehow part of man himself even though an involuntary part. The myth of the exiled soul presents man as a mixture of passions or desires. The body serves as an internal symbol of the external and as the positivity of evil seduction. Ricoeur gives a brilliant and complex account of how the Hebraic sin-symbolism developed in the direction of the symbol of guilt by the progressive internalization of sin as a conscious deviation. This development came to fulfillment in the prophetic tradition which led to the latter assimilation of the Greek body-symbolism used to express the dimension of inner seduction. The theme of the exiled soul was woven together with the Hebraic theme of the exiled man. The exiled man can be traced beginning with the exile of Adam and Eve from paradise, through the Exodus and Captivity themes of later biblical thought straight down to the flesh-spirit symbolism of the Pauline theology of law and grace. The movement shows how the Adamic myth of the exiled man was with great complexity grafted onto the philosophic myth of the exiled soul (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 330-346).

Ricoeur concludes that the Adamic myth can act as the symbolic interpretant of the other three myths of evil while promoting their symbolic meanings without distorting their intentions (Ricoeur, 1967, pp. 306-346).

By wagering a 'reflective' belief in the Adamic myth, Ricoeur thinks he has shown how the philosopher of religion can interpret all the religious myths of evil. Yet for him the 'belief' in the Adamic myth remains reflective or methodological rather than religious. He makes no further claim for his appropriation of the Adamic myth than its interpretive illumination of the world of myth. To the more radical question: Why choose the Adamic myth over the other myths? he can answer only that we must interpret the myths in a nonreductive, symbolic manner. He takes refuge in the notion that philosophy cannot demonstrate the truth of any religious myth. He assumes that belief must always be naive and as such is no longer possible in our 'post-critical age.' The only kind of belief which would escape naivete would be the pretense of belief created by his Kantian assumptions and his Husserlian epoche. Both naive belief and Ricoeur's methodological belief remain a belief without faith or conversion and as such remain an inauthentic possibility.

Moreover Ricoeur is open to the objection that he has arbitrarily, and in a purely historically conditioned manner, chosen one of the religious myths, the Adamic, as primary, when he could have chosen any or all of the other myths serially and still be able to preserve the symbolic meaning of the myths and enter into the hermeneutic circle of the religious world of myth. His answer to this persistent question is historical and cultural rather than philosophical or religious. He claims that since we live in a Western, Christian tradition, the only authentic historical option is the Adamic myth. This amounts to a radical cultural relativism and as such could never be a satisfactory answer for a philosophy committed to the truth of human existence in the world. Nor can he argue that the alternative is to show a Hegelian type necessity for a philosophic choice of the Adamic myth, for the real option is not simply between an arbitrary, historical contingency and a rationalist non-historical necessity, but between both as inadequate and the more adequate notion of a conditioned necessity grounded in the reflective grasp of a virtually unconditioned that allows a critically reasonable judgment of historical fact. We shall return to this option shortly (Piscitelli, 1977, pp. 159-217).

There are further questions that go to the heart of Ricoeur's methodological inadequacies. For example, what about the mythic paradigms or types that are not included in the cycle of the myths of evil as recounted by Ricoeur? Are these four mythic types exhaustive of the symbolic possibilities? Have some mythic types been overlooked? If his list is de facto historically complete, can new possibilities emerge in history? How will new mythic-symbolic types be related to the Adamic myth? Ricoeur has not seriously raised any of these questions, nor to our knowledge does he have a convincing answer to any of them. Yet they are crucial to his whole enterprise of a philosophical appropriation of the symbolic world of religious myth. If his method fails here, it fails precisely on the level of a philosophical hermeneutics.

If Ricoeur is going to resolve these difficulties, he will have to shed his Kantian methodological assumptions. What is needed is a transcendental method equivalent to a transcendental hermeneutics grounded in a critical cognitional theory verified in the actual performance of the subject as knower. If he is to retain his vision of a fundamental, religious, hermeneutic ontology, what is needed is a movement that sublates transcendental method in an ontology of the existential and historical subject as knower, speaker-hearer, and lover-actor grounded in the religious dimension of the human desire to know, to say, and to be in the Infinite. Only then could he preserve the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith or the symbol and the concept (Piscitelli, 1977, 920-997).

Ricoeur has been going on the assumption that there is a correlation between method and language as discourse. Specifically he has been trying to revise a Kantian epistemology and a Husserlian phenomenology in order to recover religious mythic-symbolic meaning on the reflective level of critical understanding. He hoped to do this without distorting the symbolic intention of religious discourse. As we have seen, he was not successful because it is impossible to revise or adopt a method that is not verifiable in the actual performance of the subject as knower. An adequate critical, transcendental method could give Ricoeur what he needs. Such, we believe, can be found in the work of Bernard Lonergan. An adequate, critical, transcendental method would reveal that there is an isomorphism between the structure of human consciousness and the typology of the myths of evil. Moreover when the human subject is understood in terms of self transcendence and human authenticity in terms of the conversions (intellectual, moral, religious, Christian), then the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith or the symbol and the concept

will be preserved and the intention of religious mythic-symbolic discourse can be taken up into reflection without distortion of its meaning and truth. It remains for us to show how in fact this can be done in such a way as to preserve Ricoeur's religious vision and meet the difficulties of his faulty method (Piscitelli, 1977, 920-997).

The religious myths are historical in the sense that they are the actual expressions of religious discourse in historical communities of faith. Religious language as a language of faith is an attempt to express the presence of Divine Transcendence in human experience. In a complementary manner on the reflective hermeneutic level religious mythic-symbolic language constitutes the horizon of self transcendence explicitly achieved by the religious community living in the presence of Divine Transcendence. The language of myth is the first expression in language of the meaning, truth, and worth of the human subject before God. Myth, then, is the language of the horizon of the experience of human subjectivity. As such it is the first language of the existential, historical subject. Its objectivity will depend upon an authentically self transcending subjectivity at whatever stage of its development. It will have nothing to do with the nominalist pre judgment that reality is somehow 'already out there or in here' (Lonergan, 1958, pp. 412-415, 424-425, 499-500, 505).

**6. The Isomorphism between the Four Myths and the Experience of Transcendence**

The four mythic types identified by Ricoeur are the mythic explorations of the horizon of human experience in the presence of Divine Transcendence. There is an isomorphism between the four mythic types and the hermeneutic and transcendental notion of human consciousness as self-transcending. The myth of the chaos or the theogonic myth corresponds to a symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing that presence. The myth of the exiled soul corresponds to a symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing understanding in the light of that presence. The tragic myth corresponds to the symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing reflection and judgment in the light of that presence. Finally the Adamic myth corresponds to the symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing deliberation and decision in the light of that presence. Thus we have the following isomorphism between consciousness as the subject's experience of Transcendence and religious mythic-symbolic language as the expression of the subject's experience of Transcendence:

<b>Consciousness:the Subject's Experience of Transcendence</b>	<b>Four Mythic-Symbolic Explorations of the Presence of Transcendence</b>
1. Experience of the Subject as Experiencing	1. Myth of the Chaos or Theogonic Myth
2. Experience of the Subject as Understanding	2. The Myth of the Exile
3. Experience of the Subject as Reflection-Judgment	3. Tragic Myth
4. Experience of the Subject as Deliberation-Decision	4. Adamic Myth

This isomorphism shows one level of the complementarity between transcendental method and language as mythic-symbolic discourse. On the methodic side of the hermeneutic circle, conversion is the appropriation of authentic human subjectivity. On the hermeneutic side, faithful speech which listens is constitutive of authentic human subjectivity. At the same time that the myths are symbolic explorations of

the presence of Transcendence to the subject as experiencing experience, understanding, reflection judgment, and deliberating decision, Transcendence is making itself present in and through religious mythic-symbolic discourse. No one mythic-symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence can express all the levels of consciousness as self transcending. This is the reason for the fourfold plurality of mythic types (Lonergan, 1974, pp. 69-86).

Since the linguistic horizon of myth is the undifferentiated expression of the experience of the subject as subject, it follows that the four myths will appear irreducible one to another within the field of mythic discourse. Since myth is not the full linguistic exploration of all the horizons of language any more than the experience of the subject's experience is the full development of consciousness, it follows that the other horizons of language will be able to take up the meaning, truth, and value of the myths in the horizons of symbolic word, conceptual theoretical word, and spiritual word. Moreover the other horizons of language will be able to preserve, promote, and develop those meanings, truths, and values in a more differentiated and integrated way. Just as myth calls for symbolic interpretation, so symbolic meanings call for theoretical explanations and all three call for authentic human living. In fact, the linguistic horizons of myth, symbol, word, and spirit constitute the same exigencies for self transcendence as are appropriated by the subject in conversion.

Let us then see how the isomorphism between the myths and the structure of consciousness uncovered by transcendental method illuminates the meaning and interrelatedness of these symbolic explorations of the presence of Transcendence. This new reading of the myths of evil will allow us to resolve the serious difficulties encountered in Ricoeur's work because it will be free of his Kantian framework.

## **7. A New Reading of the Myths**

### **7.1 The Myth of Chaos**

The myth of the chaos or the cosmogonic myth is a symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing Transcendence. In the myth Transcendence is experienced and expressed as what brings order out of the chaos of human experience itself. Thus the Divine Transcendent Principle is related to a cosmic chaos as understanding is related to chaotic human experience. From the horizon of the subject's experience of experience the Divine Principle's Power to order appears as a conflict with disorder or a violence directed against the given. This is an inevitability given the viewpoint of immediacy from which the myth articulates itself. For from the perspective of immediacy consciousness and its world appear as a stream whose currents seem random. Aristotle seems to have been hinting at the same kind of experience in the Posterior Analytics when he likened the discovery of a law in experience to an army in flight in which now one soldier then another takes a stand until finally the opposing army (chaotic experience) is routed (the emergence of the universal). Aristotle's analogy for the discovery of the universal in induction uses the same notion of conflict as the myth of the chaos. The myth of the chaos or the theogonic myth is the most primitive experience of Transcendence expressed in the language of myth. To live in the myth of the chaos is to experience Transcendence as the principle, ground, and origin of all intelligible order. It is to experience human experience itself as ordered rather than chaotic. It is to answer the question: Why is there order rather than chaos? by affirming a Divine Transcendent Principle of cosmic order. The myth of the chaos is a basic and inescapable myth insofar as human experience always first has the character of immediacy. Finally the myth of the chaos is an essential feature of all human experience, because it reveals both the physical universe and the inner life of man as eternal sources of wonder and awe for those men who become conscious of the grandeur of the former and the depth of the latter.

### **7.2 The Myth of the Exiled Soul**

The myth of the exiled soul is the symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing understanding as Transcendence. The dualism of soul and body characteristic of the myth of the exiled soul is a result of the emphatic and dramatic difference between the world of immediacy and the worlds mediated by meaning and understanding. Just as the idea or the concept, once it is reflectively achieved in the world of theory, appears to have a radically different nature from that of sense perception, so the soul appears to have a radically different nature and

origin than the body. The soul will be conceived in terms of its ability to grasp the universal or the idea while the body will be conceived in terms of its grasp of the particular or the immediately given thing. Thus the myth of the exiled soul says in mythic-symbolic form what the philosopher discovers reflectively when he is able to differentiate the horizon of immediate experience from the horizon of understanding and the world mediated by meaning. Once this differentiation is made, it is not possible to reduce understanding to immediate experience, or the world mediated by meaning to the world of immediacy. The myth of the exiled soul is a religious expression of the experience of understanding and meaning as the gift of Transcendence. After Socrates identifies the questioning mind as the source of understanding, Plato will develop his theory of the *eidos* to account for the difference between the perceptible and the intelligible with the corresponding differentiation of human desires. It is not surprising that Plato will take up the myth of the exiled soul reflectively, since on the mythic level it has an affinity to the symbolic and conceptual development emerging in Greek philosophy at the time.

The myth, then, is an expression of the experience of Transcendence in terms of human understanding and its expression in symbols or reflective concepts. For the soul is experienced as being in exile to the extent that man experiences the difference between his inner life of understanding and his outer life of perception as a 'fall into the body.' In the myth Transcendence is experienced not only as the source of order as in the theogonic myth but also as the *intelligent* ground of meaning, truth, and worth. The human subject experiences himself as having a kinship with the Divine insofar as the self is identified with the soul as the inner divine principle of human life. This identification is not experienced as an immediate state of being but rather as a process of inner becoming. Hence the process of self identification is understood to be a purgation of the bodily or material elements from the true self as well as a purgation of all carnal desires which impede the soul's return to its Divine home. The myth of the exiled soul is an ascetic myth, and as such it can be easily assimilated to the disciplinary values of human education. In the reflective, Platonic form of the myth one function of education is to purge all desires except the desire to know the forms and the desire for ultimate union with the highest form of the Good. When the myth of the exiled soul is fused with the Platonic theory of knowledge and virtue, then the themes of memory and forgetfulness come to play a central role in the symbolic transformation of authentic human being in the world. In this way the myth of the exiled soul is the symbolic exploration of the experience of understanding and its symbolic or reflective conceptual expression as the gift of Transcendence. The Divine Being is affirmed as the intelligent ground of meaning, truth, and value. For this reason it has a tendency towards gnosticism since it is preoccupied with the desire to know and its fulfillment as the necessary condition for human salvation and liberation.

### 7.3 The Tragic Myth

The tragic myth is the symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing reflection and judgment as Transcendence. The central themes of man's fate in relation to nature and his destiny in relation to his fellow men reveal the experience of reflectiveness in the tragic myth. The tragic myth explores the meaning, truth, and worth of man's life and his ultimate death. It is human life and death which motivates the reflectiveness of the myth. In this existential form the question for reflection is unavoidable: Is it true that as a man I am born to suffer and die? The existential, mythically expressed, horizon of reflection and judgment reveals simultaneously the limits of man as knower, speaker, and actor and a Transcendent Unconditioned as the ultimate ground of these human limitations. Thus the tragic myth discloses the man is neither merely another natural being nor simply an exalted Divine Being. The myth affirms the 'in-between' nature of man, the *metaxy*. The myth explores human alienation in terms of the tension between the banalization of man in his identification with the merely natural and the exaltation of man in his identification with the Divine. However the myth is especially concerned with man's false exaltation and for this reason the theme of hubris plays such an important role in the tragic myth.

The central issue for the tragic myth is the experience of Transcendence as the experience of the Unconditioned. The revelation of the Unconditioned of the mythic existential level of human experience parallels the discovery of the Unconditioned in methodic reflection. Thus the birth of tragedy precedes and prepares the birth of Socratic-Platonic philosophy. For with the tragic myth there emerges into experiential

reflective consciousness the question of the ultimate meaning, truth, and worth of human life in relation to the apparent necessities of nature, on the one hand, and human freedom and its desire for a salvific and liberating Unconditioned Transcendence on the other. However, there is a fundamental ambiguity in the tragic myth for it tends to project the unconditioned of nature into the sphere of the Divine. The gods remain subject to the fates: even though the gods escape the fate of man, namely death, they cannot liberate him from his fate or his destiny; they merely participate in the drama. For the tragic myth, nature remains the ultimate Unconditioned of human experience. In other words, the tragic myth cannot differentiate the horizon of reflection and judgment from the horizon of deliberation and decision. In this sense it is a pre-ethical myth. The myth cannot untangle the issues of responsibility, guilt, freedom, and truth, for a man is both fated and destined to do what he does as well as being guilty and responsible. As long as the myth must retain the reflective horizon as primary to its understanding of man, the only meaning of human freedom can be a consent to necessity.

The tragic myth shares one trait with the myths of the chaos and the exiled soul: the co-eternal existence of nature and the Divine. It differs from them in its ability to distinguish human nature from the merely natural and the Divine. In the tragic myth the actions of the gods and men remain limited by the unconditioned of nature. Although the tragic myth is closest to the Adamic myth because the horizon of reflection and judgment is closest to the horizon of deliberation and decision, still in the myth human action is under the control of necessity. Thus the myth cannot distinguish the relatively unconditioned which nature is from the absolutely Unconditioned which God is. In other words it does not symbolize the Divine as an Infinitely Creative Act because it does not symbolize human action as creative. Only the Adamic myth will be able to distinguish nature as relatively unconditioned and God as the Absolutely Unconditioned, because it will symbolize man as an existential and creatively active subject whose creativity depends upon an Infinite Divine Creativity.

Finally, tragic man is saved and liberated from his fate and destiny only by identifying with human fate and destiny. Human suffering remains doomed unto death. If it is a purgation or an education, it remains the education and purgation of man the spectator of man. The tragic myth cannot conceive of suffering as divine in any way within its own limited horizon. Again it will be the Adamic myth which will be able to conceive of a Transcendent, Infinitely Compassionate God Who will be able to take even human suffering into Himself and create the new possibility of a new man. For the God of the Adamic myth is a God of Infinite Love.

#### **7.4 The Adamic Myth**

The Adamic myth is the symbolic exploration of the presence of Transcendence in the horizon of the experience of the subject as experiencing reflective deliberation and decision. The Adamic myth is the only myth that symbolizes the experience of the existential subject as existential. It is the only myth that symbolizes the human self in terms of real self transcendence, for in the myth human decision and action are actually constitutive of the human good. The Adamic myth symbolically articulates the meaning, truth, and worth of Transcendence in terms of real moral agency. It is the only myth that is adequate to the historic experience of the existential subject as a responsible and free moral agent. It is the only myth that is able to articulate a fully consistent ethical vision of the world.

The superiority of the Adamic myth lies in the fact that it is the only myth which can reveal the full transcendence capabilities of the human spirit. Its central notion of human evil is sin as a free and willful turning away from a gracious God who has given man the gift of existence itself. Its vision of God as an infinitely creative love is unique to the world of myth. It is the only myth that symbolizes God as a Transcendent and Self Transcending Subject and man as the image of God. In the myth the realms of nature and man are clearly differentiated and both are defined as creature in relation to the Creative Act of a Transcendent God. God is understood as an absolutely Self Transcending Freedom, and man experiences his freedom as a direct gift from God. In the Adamic myth men are free because God is Free and not vice versa. Just as God's Freedom is disclosed in His Creative Love for man, so evil or sin is characterized as man's refusal to respond to that Creative Love which is the ultimate ground of human authenticity. In the myth the facticity of nature and man is made meaningful, true, and good in the light of an Infinite Creative

Love. Finally the Divine Power is clearly distinguished from any kind of violence because it is identified with a Transcendent, Creative Wisdom and Love.

Once the relatively unconditioned of nature is distinguished from the absolutely Unconditioned of Divine Creativity, then moral evil can no longer be confused with the conditions of nature or human fallibility. For this reason no metaphysics can adequately express the notion of moral evil or sin. For every metaphysics is a conceptual expression of objective structural elements which must prescind from the historic-event character of human acts. The immediate result of every morally evil act is the destruction of the authentic human self. Since the Adamic myth lives in the horizon of the existential subject, and since it is the symbolic exploration of the historic meaningfulness, truth, and worth of human existence in the presence of Transcendence in the world, it must include in its story those symbolic elements of the other myths which disclose the truth of human existence as the experience of the presence of Transcendence. In this sense the Adamic myth can and does incorporate the 'objective' elements of the other myths in a way that Ricoeur's Kantian reading cannot. The ultimate philosophical reason that the Adamic myth can include the horizons of the other myths is that it has symbolically expressed the horizon of the existential subject and the existential subject includes but sublates the empirical subject (myth of the chaos), the intelligent subject (myth of the exiled soul), and the rational and reasonable subject (tragic myth).

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Now that we have shown why the Adamic myth can interpret the other myths and not vice versa, we can understand how a reflectively hermeneutic philosophy of religion can take an intelligent and reasonable stand within the Adamic myth, for it is only in so doing that reflection can preserve and promote the full symbolic intention of religious discourse. In the world of religious myth the Adamic myth alone reveals Divine Transcendence as a transcendence of the world and as an intimate presence in the world, and especially in the human heart. In the philosophical reflection on religious myths the Adamic myth alone is adequate to the experience of human self-transcendence in all its dimensions, as well as to the intention of the Presence of Transcendence itself. In the world of religious commitment, in the fully constituted world of human being, speaking-hearing, loving and acting, for the human spirit who speaks, acts, and lives within the horizon of the presence of Transcendence, the Adamic myth alone discloses the full intentionality of human knowing, speaking-hearing, and loving-acting which is historically in search of the Word of God addressed to man, made known to him, and dwelling lovingly with him.

There is then a historically conditioned necessity for a reflectively hermeneutic philosophy of religion to affirm the philosophic and historic truth of the Adamic myth. For if a transcendental hermeneutics shows the human subject to be itself authentically in self-transcendence, and if the Adamic myth alone reveals this truth symbolically in a way in which the other myths cannot, then philosophy can affirm the historically conditioned truth of the Adamic myth. Still the philosophic affirmation of the truth of the Adamic myth will remain a grasp of a virtually unconditioned, and not a Hegelian grasp of trans-historic necessity or absolute truth. For the Adamic myth remains for philosophy an historic emergence in human religious discourse. Thus philosophic reflection can verify the truth of the myth in relation to the actual structure of human consciousness (method), as well as in relation to the actual intention of religious, symbolic discourse (transcendental hermeneutics). The philosophical verification of the truth of the Adamic myth is similar to and parallel with the verification of the structure of human consciousness in its performance of experiencing, questioning, understanding, conceiving or symbolizing, reflecting, judging, deliberating, and deciding. Finally the philosophic and hermeneutic truth of the Adamic myth is not to be confused with its religious truth. For the religious truth of the Adamic myth is the full meaning, truth, and worth of human existence in the presence of Transcendence in the world; it is the truth that is lived in the loving dialogue of God with man and man with God; it is the full participation of man with the creative life and activity of God in the worlds of nature and man. Thus intellectual or philosophical conversion (the philosophical affirmation of the truth of the myth) is not to be equated with religious or Christian conversion (the creative love of God working in the hearts of men in history). The differentiation of philosophical and religious conversion in no way denies that philosophical reflection is oriented to religious and Christian conversion by the historic intention of human subjectivity revealed in religious discourse. In fact it shows how that orientation is possible, historical, and actual (Lonergan 1958, pp. 271-318; 1972, pp. 235-266).

From our position of a fundamental, hermeneutic ontology of the human subject grounded in the actual performance of the self as knower, hearer-speaker, and lover-actor, an ontology of the subject as self-transcending, we can answer the unresolved, persistent questions that arose in our consideration of Ricoeur's reflective interpretation of the religious symbols and myths of evil. For the theory of the four mythic types can be shown to be grounded in the transcendental structure of human consciousness and human language as discourse intending Transcendence, and through intellectual, moral, and religious conversion attaining an authentic human life in its Presence. With this verification of the truth of these four mythic types it becomes clear in what sense they are paradigmatic of a symbolically expressed religious meaning, truth, and value. The four mythic types are transcendentially as well as hermeneutically and religiously relevant to an interpretation of human existence in the world. Although new myths or stories can and will emerge in human history, still the four mythic types will remain exhaustive of the transcendental possibilities of human consciousness and the structure of language as discourse. All new types of myth will be combinations or variations on the four mythic types. For every myth or story is the symbolic exploration of the horizon of human experience in language, and as such it will fall into the horizons of experience, understanding, reflection and judgment, or deliberation and decision. Nor is this a 'transcendental deduction' but rather a method that is grounded in the actual performance of the subject as subject and dialectically correlated with the actual emergence of human discourse in man's history. Finally, the Adamic type myth will remain the most adequate to human experience as existential insofar as the experience of the subject as subject is recognized as authentic as self-transcending.

Like Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology our transcendental hermeneutics can re-enact the meanings of the myths of evil on the level of reflective interpretation without reducing the symbolic meaning of the myths to a literal, allegorical, or gnostic interpretation. However, unlike Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology our transcendental hermeneutics is grounded in the actual performance of the human subject as knower, hearer-speaker, and lover-actor without recourse to the schizoid notion of a Kantian limit-concept with its resulting split subject, split intentions, split references and split worlds. Like Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology our transcendental hermeneutics can preserve the differentiation of the religious symbol and the reflective, theoretical concept. However, unlike Ricoeur's position our fundamental ontology of the subject can appropriate that differentiation in terms of the actual performance of the subject as knower (concept) and hearer-speaker (symbol) and thus promote religious mythic-symbolic meaning, truth, and worth to the reflective level of existential commitment (faith-conversion) without implying the construction of a fictional human world (Ricoeur's Kantian notion of 'fictive re-description of the real') (Ricoeur, 1975, pp. 122-145).

Finally, a note on Ricoeur's return to Kant through Hegel is in order. We can say that what Hegel intuitively grasped, inadequately tried to express, and was unable to ground in the performance of the existential subject, was the transcendental relevance of the religious experience of Western man. For the four Western religious mythic types are reiterated in reflective conceptual form in a historically conscious philosophy of the human spirit. Indeed we can affirm in a more comprehensive way what Ricoeur, following Hegel, claims when he says the historic evolution of the religious symbol is the history of human subjectivity in the discourse of the spirit. For an understanding of human subjectivity as self-transcending illuminates the symbolic intention and meaning of all religious mythic discourse. Since Ricoeur's Kantian-Husserlian method cannot illuminate the transcendental relevance of religious myth, his interpretation of those myths remains a hermeneutics in search of an adequate transcendental method.

Although our position has been thoroughly critical of Paul Ricoeur's work, it would not have been possible to work our own dialectical transposition of his brilliant study of religious myths and symbols without his contribution. Just as we learn from Bernard Lonergan the central importance of the act of understanding for a foundational, methodic inquiry, so also we learn from Paul Ricoeur the central importance of the symbolic act for a foundational, hermeneutic inquiry. We have remained faithful to Ricoeur's religious vision of the meaning, truth, and worth of human existence in the presence of God in the world by showing how his commitment to the principle of the hermeneutic circle of understanding and faith or the symbol and the concept can be mediated and appropriated by a fundamental, religious, hermeneutic ontology grounded in the actual performance of the subject as subject in knowing, hearing-

speaking, and loving-acting. Our dialectical transposition of Ricoeur's work remains committed to his own central insight that 'the symbol gives rise to thought' (Ricoeur, 1967, p. 348).

#### REFERENCES

- Lonergan, B. - 1958. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. New York: Longmans.
- 1967. *Collection*. New York: Herder.
  - 1972. *Method in Theology*. New York: Herder.
  - 1973. *Philosophy of God and Theology*. London: Darton, Longman, & Todd.
  - 1974. *Second Collection*. New York: Seabury.
- Piscitelli, E. 1977. *Language and Method in The Philosophy of Religion*. Ann Arbor: University Microfilms. (Dissertation #77-26,395).
- Reagan, C. 1979. *Studies in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur*. Athens: Ohio University Press. Ricoeur, P. 1965. *Fallible Man*. Chicago: Henry Regnery.
- 1966. *Freedom and Nature*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
  - 1967. *The Symbolism of Evil*. New York: Harper & Row.
  - 1970. *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
  - 1974. *The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
  - 1975. *Semeia*: Volume 4. 'Biblical Hermeneutics.' pp. 29-145.
  - 1976. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press.
  - 1977. *The Rule of Metaphor*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.