Rethinking Religious Experience

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Religious Experience: Mediated Experience

One of the crucial questions St. Augustine asks himself in his *Confessions* is: "What then do I love, when I love my God?"[ii] We begin the present reflection with this question: What kind of experience do we have when we experience God? Much like St. Augustine's Confessions, C.S. Lewis's book *Surprised by Joy* deals with the topic of the author's conversion. After he had been sceptical about Catholicism, Lewis ultimately converted to it. In the autobiographical report, the central theme of his conversion is the discovery that the joy, which was the thread of his life, refers first to 'something' and ultimately to 'Somebody'. It is remarkable that this joy lacks a reason or an object in contrast to other forms of joy. The 'something' of his joy is not assignable. The lacking of a clear and defined object as the source of this joy is another parallel between St. Augustine and C.S. Lewis. In his search for God, St. Augustine confronts the whole of creation with his question "and what is this?" and each time he receives the answer "I am not He".[iii] Similarly C.S. Lewis experiences that every moment of joy in his life seems to say to him: "It is not I. I am only a reminder. Look ! Look ! What do I remind you of?"[iv] The real source of their joy is not assignable, tangible or comprehensible.

The experiences described above correspond well with Heidegger's critique on onto-theology. Heidegger gives us his interpretation of the development of metaphysics in philosophy in *Identity and Difference*.[v] The history of metaphysics turns into an onto-theology in which God is

understood as the keystone of the philosophical vault. Even though God is understood as the highest being, God is reduced to a being or a function in the philosophical system. According to Heidegger that is the way in which God enters the philosophical discourse. He criticises this conception of God because the truly "divine god" cannot be objectified or reduced to a being, not even to the highest being, nor Being.[vi]

When we consider the consequences of Heidegger's critique on metaphysics, we can conclude that a religious experience, according to his critique, is not the experience of a being. The idea that the word 'being' is not appropriate to name God, inspired J.-L. Marion to write *God Without Being*, in which he demonstrates that God cannot be identified with Being.[vii] It is not our purpose to replicate his path of thinking: others have done and are still doing this sufficiently. The idea we wish to develop is that the experience of God as a 'non-being' and at the same time as *not Being* is not the experience of an immediacy. St. Augustine and Lewis express the idea that nothing can be identified with God, and that God only refers to what is not graspable in immediacy. For St. Augustine the summit of religious experience is the encounter with God: the gaze of the mind (*acies mentis*).[viii] Initially, Augustine thought that humans could acquire this experience during their lives. The soul would be able to ascend to God (*acies mentis*) and experience God in an unveiled manner. Afterwards, Augustine altered his view, holding that it was only possible to attain the unmediated experience in the next life. Consequently, all experience of God can be considered as mediated and indirect.

This idea strengthens our resistance against the notion of the immediate experience of God. We share this resistance with the French philosopher Paul Ricœur, who avoids the use of the word 'experience' because of the immediacy that it implies and the importance of language and the symbolic order that is ignored.[ix] Ricœur is deeply convinced of the impossibility of a direct access to God, to the world and to ourselves. Symbols, signs, texts and stories always mediate such access. Throughout his career, Ricœur favoured the idea of mediation by language and scripture.[x] His thinking stands at the threshold of post-modernity and of our reflection today. Crucial is the linguistic turn, the insight that an

experience of significance is mediated by language. Ricœur's thinking allows us to rethink the idea of religious experience.

The Linguistic Turn and the Endless Detour

Since Aristotle humankind has been defined as *zoon logon echon*, which rendered in Latin, is *animal rationale*, already a particular interpretation of the *zoon logon echon*. For centuries the '*logos*' was understood as rationality in the strict sense. In the 20th century, a renewed interest in the impact of language on world and thinking was called the linguistic turn. This broadened the concept of *logos*. It made us conscious that language is more than a simple instrument that is used to express our thoughts, to articulate our feelings and to describe our world. Language was no longer considered a neutral mirror and an unaffecting medium but a reality that not only expresses but also pictures and shapes our world.[xi] Language became an essential characteristic of our being-in-the-world. Just as King Midas saw his wish fulfilled that all things he touched turned to gold, we see that we have no other entry to the meaning of reality and the world than by means of language.

The implication for the identity of human beings is that they not only experience birth by a woman but also the birth of language. According to the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, physical birth needs to be repeated by the birth of language. There is a second separation from the mother by means of language. In a similar way the philosopher Charles Taylor speaks of the "twice-born".[xii] Religious people are born a second time when they enter the symbolic system of a religion. Phenomenologically speaking, the baptism or the initiation ritual is the moment one enters the symbolical order of faith. Human beings have to break with a first immediacy to have access to our being-in-the-world, because being (*Sein, zijn*) is always related to sense (*Sinn, zin*). Although we can distinguish the aspect of language and the prelinguistic dimension in reality, it is not possible to separate them, as we can only refer to the prelinguistic by means of language. What are the consequences for religious experience, considering that there is a prelinguistic ground whose meaning we only have access to by means of language?

A first and important implication is the ambiguity and equivocity of the prelinguistic reality and, consequently, also of our pre-linguistic experiences which are polyinterpretable. In Ricœur's early thinking, the significance of the ineffable experience is unveiled by the symbol that is an instrument to interpret it. As a limit-concept the symbol has roots in the prelinguistic reality, as it is a part of the symbolical order. Thinking of the symbol, Ricœur tries to provide evidence for the fact that we, the world, and also our experience of God are not immediately transparent. We are compelled to make a detour by interpreting signs, stories, symbols, etc. to get access to the world, God and ourselves. In a later phase, he elaborates the mediation of our experience between language, metaphors, narratives, etc. Finally, one of Ricœur's conclusions to his investigation states: "Time becomes human time to the extent that it is organised like a narrative."[xiii] Thus, time has to be articulated to become human. Moreover, Ricœur adds that experience is only itself when it is articulated.[xiv] Similarly, the time of our life becomes human, our experiences become religious when they are articulated or expressed in a way religious categories, concepts and language are applied to them.

A second conclusion, closely related to the first, is that we have to abandon the concept of an immediate and instantly evident religious experience. Although it may give the impression that our religious experiences are characterised by immediacy, the reflection upon it shows the inverse. We discover an interplay of different aspects in the religious experience and we can distinguish several moments in it. On the basis of Ricœur's concept of mimesis, we distinguish three moments in religious experience.[xv]

The Triple mimesis: Prefiguration, Configuration and Refiguration
Ricœur calls the first moment of mimesis the prefiguration. When we have experiences, they occur in an already prefigured world, in which certain forms of life, practices, customs, etc. are the case. The world we live in is already going on. Consequently, when we become engaged in the world, a particular being-in-the-world is already there. This pre-comprehension of reality is the horizon in which established experience is present. Before our

experience leaves traces in this world, we get to know the traces of the experience of others before us; and before we speak, something is already said.

A second moment of mimesis is the configuration. Here, a reformulation of the being-in-the-world takes place.[xvi] Our attempt to express our own being-in-the-world breaks into the already existing pre-comprehension. To understand the process of configuration we need to refer to the concept of the living metaphor.[xvii] Since the experience is not accessible immediately, the living metaphor fits most closely to the living experience. Using the metaphor, we are able to refer to what is not accessible in an immediate way, because the metaphorical reference is based on resemblance. This resemblance is expressed by a literal 'is not as' and a figurative 'is as.' In this way, the living metaphor expresses the living experience. The fact that the experience 'as such' is not accessible, brings us back to language as a compelled detour. Although the sense of 'detour' leads us to think of it as a temporary event, the inverse is the case. As language is not an accidental aspect of human life, the detour appears to be a continuous event in human experience.

Language disposes of a disclosing power that becomes evident in the revealing and transforming capacity of the metaphor. According to Ricœur this capacity is based on the 'seeing as'. This 'seeing as' is not an exception to the usual way we conceive reality, as the metaphorical characterises language as such. Consequently, all our seeing is to a certain extent 'seeing as'. In the configuration, we attain a new 'seeing as', which organises our life and shapes it into a particular setting. The organising activity gives a 'plot' to our life. As in the theatre, the plot organises the play and the progress, which implies a beginning, a middle and an end. This configuration also structures our lives by giving it perspective and orientation. In this way, the configuration of our experience brings it to a unity, which means that it receives contours and becomes 'closed', so we can speak of designation.

For the sake of convenience, we can call the result of configuration 'text'. This text is not limited to descriptions of reality alone, but includes different kinds of formulations of our being-in-the-world. The text expresses the plot (*mise-en-intrigue*) of our understanding of time. This

renewed understanding of being appears in different sorts of 'texts'. Strictly speaking, we should not restrict 'texts' too literally. Ricœur, for his part, only analyses literary products – but in the same way art could also be construed as an expression of the formulation of an understanding of time and being.

A third moment of mimesis (refiguration) is the configuration that leads to a renewed being-in-the-world and that, on its turn, becomes a pre-comprehension of reality. This refiguration is the logical downstream of the revisited vision on our being-in-the-world as a result of the reformulation of our experiences and the renewed setting of our life. This third mimesis is situated in the intersection of the world of the text and the receiver.[xviii] The refigured view results in a changed behaviour and a different way of acting. It can be considered as the completion of the configuration that shapes reality because the vision that is formulated in the 'text' of the configuration will now be translated into action. These changes become visible in decisions, stipulations, organisations, rules, etc. Consequently, our acting will transform the world in view of configuration. Finally, it is praxis that gives rise to a new being-in-the-world and becomes once again a pre-comprehension of the world.

The Post-Modern Masters of Suspicion

In a post-modern setting, the refiguration becomes recontextualised. It is in itself an illustration of recontextualisation through which established experience is refigured, because it appears in a new context. The horizon in which the event of mimesis takes place is different compared to the previous ones. As the context changes (decontextualisation) the refiguration appears in a context (recontextualisation) that is characterised by criticism and the consciousness of finiteness.[xix] In order to sketch the particularity of our post-modern or late-modern condition, we will refer to the thinking of Derrida, Lyotard and Rorty. We consider these three philosophers to be the masters of suspicion of post-modernity, analogous to the masters of suspicion for Ricœur: Freud, Nietzsche and Marx. All three post-modern philosophers confirm in their own way the consciousness of finiteness.

With his deconstruction, Derrida discloses an exteriority that can never be adequately named or defined, although he uses the name '*différance*'

for it. This alterity embodies the figure of speech of a radical transcendence that remains 'outside' language. Consequently, every narrative, every form of thinking is confronted with boundaries and 'something' that remains 'outside'. Even the indication of the 'outside' language is already a recuperation and a contamination of this exteriority. The affirmation of this radical exteriority characterises deconstruction by a radical pluralism. This '*différance*' resists any attempt to reduction or recuperation. Every form of thinking is confronted with an element that cannot be lumped on one and the same denominator. Concerning the status of rationality, this implies that it always remains an open thinking or an open system in the sense that Gödel formulated his thesis, namely, there is at least one proposition that is formally undecidable from within a system.[xx] Thus, the arms of our thinking are too limited to enclose reality and to fully grasp it intellectually.

Another master of suspicion is J.-F. Lyotard. The main idea of Lyotard's thinking confronts us in another way with human finiteness. He draws attention to the fact *that* humans have to answer, but it is not prescribed how we have to respond. Thus, there is a *that* and it is not clear *what* it is. Lyotard pays particular attention to the particularity of the human discourses. In *The Different* it is illustrated how people can understand each other and come to an agreement when they use the same language game.[xxi] As long as people share the same discourse, it is possible to come to an understanding or an agreement. As soon as people find themselves in different discourses their language games do not correspond any more. When there are no already established relations between discourses, we have to shape them and apply our own creativity to come to an agreement. Lyotard's thinking makes us conscious of the inevitable gaps in reality, because discourses do not fit seamlessly into each other. The attempt to relate the different discourses into a perfect harmonisation is doomed to fail. Consequently, humanity sees itself forced to live with fragments of discourses and the lack of a harmonising total perspective.

We consider the American philosopher and pragmatist Richard Rorty to be the third master of suspicion because of his attempt to fully consider the implications of the 'contingency of language'.[xxii] There are different vocabularies we live in and use. At the basis of our being-in-the-

world lies a particular 'final vocabulary': "the words we use to tell, sometimes prospectively and sometimes retrospectively, the story of our lives".[xxiii] This set of words is called 'final' because it consists of the vocabulary we use to justify our actions, choices, beliefs, etc. Rorty adds three characteristics of this final vocabulary. Firstly, there is a continuing doubt about this final vocabulary. It emerges from the comparison with other vocabularies. Secondly, one's own vocabulary can never resolve these doubts and uncertainty. Finally, the use of a final vocabulary does not give the certainty that one is closer to reality than other vocabularies. For Rorty, the criterion to opt for one vocabulary over another is the decrease of cruelty that it might produce. All in all, Rorty is of the opinion that it is impossible to obtain an encompassing vocabulary that reconciles the particular and private vocabularies with an integral vocabulary.[xxiv] In his way Rorty illustrates with his concept of 'final vocabulary' the post-modern condition that discourses are limited and that with those words we go as far as we can with language.

Each of the masters of post-modern suspicion stresses in his way the impossibility for a discourse to be comprehensive and grounding. Derrida points to the radical exteriority that only can be named by metaphors. It shows how every discourse and philosophy has its own margin. A similar idea is present in the thinking of Lyotard who demonstrated the arbitrariness of the discourse due to the lack of foundation. Rorty, influenced by his continental colleague Derrida, comes to the conclusion that the lack of foundation gives rise to a poetical reshaping of our world. With language we give meaning to the world and organise it according our viewpoints. Thus, language can no longer be considered a reliable mirror for reality, because it plays an active role in framing our vision and our experience of the world. And as language is always a particular one, what is disclosed in language is also accessed from a specific point of view.

The French philosopher Ricœur can help to inspire to deal with these post-modern criticisms. Ricœur is inspired by the masters of suspicion to a restorative hermeneutics that is able to reveal anew the meaning of faith. Because of the criticisms of the philosophers faith lost its

first naiveté, an uncritical dealing with faith. Ricœur's conclusion was that the restoration of faith is only possible when a critical distance is integrated in the act of believing. Only by taking up the tension between a religious involvement and the critical distance can the meaningfulness of faith be preserved. Just as Ricœur integrated the critical distance represented by the masters of suspicion, we have to incorporate the critical consciousness of the post-modern philosophers. A first important lesson they allow is the particularity of each discourse. The reasons rationality has at its disposal are good, but always too few to be comprehensive. Consequently, any discourse can never be grounded in a firm way. A second important element they teach us is the constructing and interpretative character of language. Language is no longer the neutral mirror for reality. The stubborn 'that' of reality is always given in the 'what' of an interpretation of this 'that'. The world is not the empty box in which we put our meanings and interpretations. There is significance in reality that cannot be reduced to language, but is not always very clear.[xv] Reality is whispering, but we need to listen with our knowledge and competence for what it is signifying. The metaphor of the exteriority, which Derrida brings to our attention, makes us conscious that reality for us is like a jigsaw puzzle which lacks a piece. This missing is the impossibility to recuperate or to reduce the otherness of the exteriority that destabilizes each discourse. Consequently, every discourse is related to a margin. The margin refers to the particularity of a discourse and its perspectivistic character in reality. Thinking, speaking, etc. are practised from different perspectives and imply a plurality of possible viewpoints. This is related to the lesson, that the post-modern masters of suspicion teach us, namely, that our linguistic approach is shaping reality and that, to a certain extent, reality is interpretation and construction. The importance for religious experience is that this unconcealing of reality goes together with concealing. Likewise, language helps unveiling, and we should be aware that it is always coupled with veiling.

The critical distance of these post-modern thinkers helps us to keep open our minds and prevent that we generalize our religious experience to *the* religious experience. At the same time it prevents a particular discourse from becominhg closed and encompassing. The

critical consciousness is an important corrective element for experience. A simple experience of nature cannot e.g. uncritically be identified with creation, taking into consideration that in nature there is metaphysical violence. Uncritical identification of both would bring us back to the theodicy question: if, as Christian faith proclaims, God is good, omnipotent and omniscient, how then can bad things happen? This demonstrates that our religious experience is no longer possible in an uncritical way when we wish to discover the meaning that is enclosed in it.

Religious Experience: "A Waltz in Three Times"[xxvi]

Let us now reconsider the religious experience as we described it above as the telling of the story of our life with the help of a religious vocabulary. Thus, our experience becomes language. This implies that there is no religious experience without interpretation or without language. In a post-modern or late-modern context, the mediated experience is confronted with a critical consciousness that questions the first naiveté, which we can consider a literal understanding of the applied religious language. This language is present in the form of life of religion and helps us to express and interpret our experiences. In the post-modern setting of our society, religion is no longer the encompassing perspective that encloses all domains of life, not even concerning the meaning of life. The pluralistic context and different points of view confront believers on the one hand with the particularity of their viewpoint and their commitment in the experience, and on the other hand with a viewpoint from outside, which is not reducible. They find themselves in a tension to respond to a critical perspective from outside that questions their own experience. As a result this confrontation prohibits the first naiveté – the uncritical view from within. The loss of this first naiveté forces the believer to look for a meaning that reaches further than a literal understanding. This results in a metaphorical or symbolical perspective, in which the religious understanding cannot be a literal affirmation of the significance of our words and sentences. Well-considered, this is the logical consequence of the awareness that every religious experience is the experience of God's transcendence that escapes all definition or intellectual grasping.

It is this transcendence, which compels us to an interpreting detour, by which our experience becomes mediated. Consequently, we need another conceptuality that allows us to think critically about religious experience in a post-modern setting. Ricœur can lend us a helping hand in this matter. In the dialectic of expressing our experience, something not only happens to our experience that becomes interpreted, but also to the prefiguration that provides in the signifiers, the symbols and the language to formulate our experience. This prefiguration or pre-comprehension of reality is the horizon in which established experience is present. Before our experience leaves traces in this world, we meet the traces of the experience of others before us; and before we speak, there is already something spoken. The overlapping of our unexpressed experience and the prefiguration leads to a new formulation: the configuration. The plurivocity of the ineffable experience 'as such' is taken away with the formulation. Although the formulation gains clarity, it signifies at the same time a kind of loss in immediacy. On the other hand, experience that is on the way of expression compels people to search for new formulations, expressions, etc. in language, instead of the established concepts and language that characterise the prefiguration. Put simply, the experience gives new light and significance to the religious language.

Because the prefiguration is a linguistic, meaningful and coherent whole of references, it functions as a text. Therefore, according to Ricœur, the configuration is a being-before-the-text, in which the formulation is the result of the meeting of text and receiver. In a Christian religious setting, this being-before-the-text is the more significant because Christianity is reckoned to be one of the three 'religions of the book'. Here the 'text' should not be limited to the Scriptures; it can also refer to the Christian tradition. The prefiguration encounters the experience and leads to a renewed formulation in the event of the configuration. Here, a 'referent of the text' emerges. The referent is not an objective or autonomous item present in the text. This 'referent-of-the-text' is neither the content of the text, nor the world of the receiver, but a new possible-being-in-the-world, that emerges out of the encounter. In a Christian setting this is the encounter of the text and the receiver, which leads to a

world-of-the-text. This proposal of a possible being-in-the-world functions as a limit or an ideal on the horizon of the lived being-in-the-world, and is as such transcendent to the actual being-in-the-world. On its turn, the possible being-in-the-world is structured around the transcendence of God that escapes every definition. In order to be a mediation of God, each symbol, sign, narrative should refer intrinsically to the transcendent character of God. 'Referring' in this context means witnessing to God's ineffable transcendence. God, who holds together the heterogeneity of all Biblical texts, is not only the common reference; God is the direction in which the reference is made, but also what remains transcendent to all. The transcendence consists precisely in the not being present in immediacy. It should not amaze us that Ricœur defines the comprehending of the word God as the grasping and the following of the direction to which the word God points and is revealed in the encounter of text and reader as described earlier.[xxvii] Consequently, the experience of God is the experience of meaning that gives direction and opens a perspective in our lives. The religious experience as detour finds its equivalent here in the reference to God's transcendence that, on its turn, is mediated by a possible being-in-the-world, which is organised around God as signifier. However, the Signifier God is only present by a paradoxical elusiveness. God's transcendence can only be indicated by a mediation of signifiers which refer to the Signifier that lacks in its immediacy. It is in the coherence of the being-in-the-world in which experience, signifiers, etc. refer to the Signifier, that we experience God's presence.

My conclusion is that experience of God as experience of God's presence is only possible in a paradoxical manner. Am I then allowed to name the detour of the interpretation of human experiences 'religious experience'? Indeed, I think it is, because the experience of God is the experience of transcendence in a Christian religious setting. This implies that the experience of God's nearness is at the same time also the experience of Gods elusiveness, transcendence… Such an experience is not possible as a momentaneous instance, but should be understood as an event. This brings me back to the etymological meaning of experience.

Religious 'Ex-perience': Towards an Etymological Originality of Experience
In psychoanalysis, it is common to think of a trauma as an event with at
least two distinguished moments. Freud, and with him many others,
distinguishes a first moment of shock as something strange and
inconceivable that troubles the subject. In a second moment signification
attaches itself retroactively to the shock of the first moment and
traumatises the subject.[xxviii] Consequently, the trauma is an event
extended in time and is constituted of two moments, which are
superimposed.

According to Ricœur, the experience is the time of our life that is
organised like a narrative. The parallel between the trauma and religious
experience is that the 'ontological material' of our experiences is time. As
we described above, the religious experience is the event of a mimesis in
which a prefiguration makes it possible that there is meaningful experience.
The particularity of our own experience breaks the prefiguration into a
new configuration. The downstream of it leads to a new contextualised
Christian being-in-the-world. Religious experience understood in this way,
is the 'passing through', (*Er-Fahren, er-varen, ex-perior, ex-perience*), or the
work of organising our experience like a story, together with the
interpretation and the confrontation of the narrative perspective from
within with a critical perspective from outside. A first implication of the
post-modern context for religious experience is precisely the confrontation
with the diversity of discourses. This confrontation is a questioning of one's
own perspective. The irreducibility of this plurality in discourses causes not
only the loss of a first naiveté, but impedes the possibility of a second
naiveté as a definitely reached or acquired position. Religious experience is,
consequently, also the experience of being-in-search-of-God. A second
implication concerning the understanding of religious experience as the
experience that is organised after the manner of a faithful narrative is that
the initiative to determine the definite plot does not belong to us. As long
as history is going on, the narrative of faith remains an 'open story'.[xxix]
This being-in-search-of-God and the 'passing through' the interpretation
that organises our time like a narrative returns to experience its
etymological significance of going through a process.

Notes

[i] Christophe Brabant is a junior research fellow in the Research Group 'Theology in a Postmodern Context', working on the project 'Theology of Religious Experience', sponsored by the Fund for Scientific Research – Flanders (FWO).

[ii] Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 7, 2; see also: X, 6, 8.

[iii] Augustine, *Confessions*, X, VI, 9.

[iv] Cf. C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, Fount paperbacks, 1990, p. 176.

[v] M. Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz*, Pfullingen: Neske, 1957; English translation: M. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, transl. and with an introd. by Joan Stambaugh, New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1974.

[vi] M. Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, p. 72.

[vii] Cf. J.-L. Marion, *Dieu sans l'être*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1991.

[viii] F. Van Fleteren, *Acies Mentis*, in A. D. Fitzgerald (ed.), *Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia*, Gran Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, p. 5-6.

[ix] Here Ricœur is in agreement with Levinas: "The relation with infinity cannot, to be sure, be stated in terms of experience". E. Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1979, p. 25; see also K. Hart: "The Experience of God", in *The Religious*, ed. J. D. Caputo, (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002) 164-165.

[x] "J'ai beaucoup résisté au mot « expérience » dans mon trajet, par méfiance à l'égard de l'immédiateté, de l'effusion, de l'intuitionnisme; j'ai toujours favorisé au contraire la médiation langagière et scripturaire..." P. Ricœur, *Critique et conviction: Entretien avec François Azouvi et Marc de Launay*, Paris: Hachette Litératures, 2001, p. 211; English translation: P. Ricœur, *Critique and Conviction: Conversations with Francois Azouvi and Marc de Launay*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p. 138.

xi For the impact of language on the decrease of the idea of the mind as a mirror of nature, see R. Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980.

xii C. Taylor, *The Varieties of Religion Today: William James Revisited*, Harvard University Press, 2002.

xiii "... le temps devient temps humain dans la mesure où il est articulé de manière narrative..." Ricœur, *Temps et récit. Tome 1*, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1983, p. 17; Ricœur, *Time and Narrative. Vol. 1* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984, p. 3.

xiv "L'expérience peut être dite, elle demande à être dite. La porter au langage, ce n'est pas la changer en autre chose, mais, en l'articulant et en la développant, la faire devenir elle-même." P. Ricœur, Phénoménologie et herméneutique, in P. Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique II*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1986, p. 56; English translation: *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics*, II, London: The Athlone Press, 1991, p. 40-41.

xv P. Ricœur, *Temps et récit. Tome 1*, p. 85-129: P. Ricœur, *Time and Narrative. Vol. 1*, p. 52 ff.

xvi Cf. Ricœur, *Temps et récit. Tome 1*, 101-109.

xvii P. Ricœur, *La métaphore vive*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1975 ; English translation: P. Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, transl. by Robert Czerny e.a., London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986.

xviii Cf. Ricœur, *Temps et récit*, 1: 109-129.

xix Cf. P. Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action. Essais d'herméneutique II*, Editions du Seuil, Paris, 1986, p. 111; English translation: P. Ricœur, *From Text to Action. Essays in Hermeneutics II*, London: The Athlone Press, 1991.

xx Cf. K. Hart, *The Trespass of the Sign. Deconstruction, Theology and*

Philosophy, New York, Fordham University Press, 2000, p. 155.

xxi J.-F. Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Minneapolis: Minnesota, 1988.

xxii R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. xvi.

xxiii R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 73.

xxiv R. Rorty, *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, p. 92-93.

xxv Cf. R. Visker, *Truth and Singularity: Taking Foucault into Phenomenology* (Phaenomenologica, 155), Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999, p. 17.

xxvi « *une valse à trois temps* » After the refrain of the song of Jacques Brel: *Une valse à mille temps*.

xxvii "Comprendre le mot « Dieu », c'est suivre la flèche de sens de ce mot." P. Ricœur, *Du texte à l'action*, p. 129.

xxviii See R. Bernet, *The Traumatized Subject*, in *Research in Phenomenology*, Vol. XXX, 2000, 160-179, esp. pp. 162-163.

xxix L. Boeve, *Interrupting Tradition. An Essay on Christian Faith in a Postmodern Context* (Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs, 30), Leuven/Dudley, MA: Peeters Press, 2003.

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