PAUL RICOEUR AND THE METHODOLOGY OF THE THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION: THE HERMENEUTICS OF J. SEVERINO CROATTO, JUAN LUIS SEGUNDO AND CLODOVIS BOFF

Marcella Althaus-Reid

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD
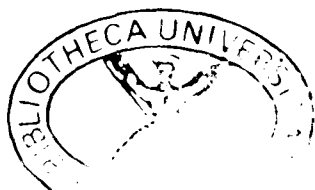## at the
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to a better understanding of the theology of liberation, through the study of the influence of the hermeneutical circle of Paul Ricoeur on its methodology.
Ricoeur is an interdisciplinary philosopher whose reflections are the product of a Transcendental Phenomenology in dialogue with Human Sciences and studies in the interpretation of symbols. Chapter one is an introduction to Ricoeur's interpretation theory and his hermeneutical circle. Chapter two deals with the specific elements of Ricoeur's Biblical Hermeneutic, the dynamic of symbols and the theory of myths. In the second part of chapter two we compare these elements with Rudolph Bultmann's demythologising project, and describe Ricoeur's most important contributions to Biblical interpretation.

Chapter three studies the development of Ricoeur's Biblical hermeneutic in the work of three influential hermeneuticians from Latin America:
J. Severino Croatto from Argentina, Juan Luis Segundo from Uruguay, and Clodovis Boff from Brazil. Each of these has based his interpretation theory on Ricoeur's work. We search for the basic tensions and conflicts in each of these three theologians, such as that between tradition and re-creation of meaning in the Scriptures, and their ways to resolve them in a new interpretative synthesis.

Finally, in chapter four we present our conclusions and reflections.
1) Ricoeur's contribution to liberation theology in three main areas: the search for the Latin American identity, the actual praxis of liberation and the development of a concept of positive utopia.
2) The influence of Ricoeur in the work of Croatto, Segundo and Boff.
3) The original contribution of liberation theology to Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle.
This contribution comes from the hermeneutical function of the Basic Ecclesial Communities which complete Ricoeur's own project of a philosophy of action.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

(a)   I certify that Marcella Althaus-Reid has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended), and is qualified to submit this thesis in application for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Rev. Steven G. Mackie

(b)   I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance 350 (General No. 12) on October 1989 and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under Resolution of the University Court, 1967, No. 1 (as amended) on October 1989.

The following thesis is based on the results of research carried out by myself, is my own composition, and has not previously been presented for a higher degree.   The research was carried out in the University of St. Andrews under the supervision of the Rev. Steven G. Mackie.

Marcella Althaus-Reid

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CHAPTER ONE

THE HERMENEUTICAL CIRCLE

"Ts'ui Pên said once: I withdraw myself to write a book. And another time:
I withdraw myself to build a labyrinth."
Jorge Luis Borges. (1)

"The universe of semiosis, that is, the universe of human culture, must be
conceived as a labyrinth of the third type: a) It is structured according
to a network of interpretants; b) It is virtually infinite..."
Umberto Eco. (2)

Part 1.

1. Of Labyrinths and Circles: The Geometry of Interpretation.

No other allegory could have been more appropriate to start this chapter
than the labyrinthine one. Its describes with creative accuracy the task
and challenges of the interpretation of literary texts, through the images
of complexity and options which it brings to our minds. In this sense, a

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(1) J. L. Borges, Ficciones, p. 110.

(2) U. Eco, Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language, p. 83.

labyrinth is a "living metaphor", a well-spring of imagination and intuition, as Ricoeur himself defines this kind of powerful representation. The task of interpretation seems to have a preference for geometric images. Labyrinths coexist with the "semiotic squares" of Structuralism, spirals of interpretation, critical circles, and the "hermeneutical arc" of the hermeneutics of Paul Ricoeur. With them, the theory of interpretation moves in terms of space and time, in a synchronic and in a diachronic axis.

The metaphor of labyrinthine models, as used by Eco in the quotation, reminds us of the fact that parallel to a change in the design conception, hermeneutical theories also changed. For instance, in garden designs, the plain labyrinth was replaced at the end of the Renaissance by the "Maze", a new model which offered more alternative paths, and more choices of options. More than a coincidence, it was the geometric representation of the eruption of a different model of knowledge, and a more subjective approach to authority, especially with reference to the role model of powerful institutions such as the Christian Church.

The Hermeneutical Circle shares with the maze a common origin, because it was conceived as a structure of interpretation by humanists of the Renaissance. At the beginning, it had been thought to form part of a "Relational Theory of Interpretation", a theory concerned with meaning as the result of a process of community participation through the process of writing, and the work of literary commentaries. It relates thought and language, and tries to reply to the problem of how an individual can share his/her own perspective of the world with others. The Relational theory has many features in common with a later development, Phenomenological

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Hermeneutics, which is represented by the work of thinkers such as Martin Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Hans-Georg Gadamer, the "Constance School" with proponents such as Wolfang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss (both ex-disciples of Gadamer) and Ricoeur. The basic idea of both theories, and the one which is of particular interest for our work, is the emphasis on the collective role of interpretation, both in relation to the writer (the community as author) and the reader (the interpretation as a result of a collective shared process).

1.1 Precursors of the Hermeneutical Circle.

At the beginning of the XVI Century, Juan Luis Vives, a Rennaisance thinker, conceived the idea of an "interpretative community" of scholars, whose task as literary critics, was to be developed in the light of the temporality of truth, according to what was conceived as the fallen nature of man, incapacitated to obtain more than a glimpse of knowledge at a time. Vives was a perceptualist; he considered that it is only through our senses that knowledge could be obtained.

Vives' ideas were further developed in the XVII Century by Gianbatista Vico, an Italian philosopher and author of a treatise about civilisation's evolutionary cycles called <u>New Science</u>. In this book, Vico organised his "Judgement of Argumentation" around Vives' theory of critical commentary, in the following way: perceiving that there is a relationship between the nature of communication and human language, he concluded that men had created reality, according to the "shape of their own mind", but as a result of this process, what they created had re-created them. Such is the

historical thesis of <u>New Science</u>, supported by the use of myths, poetic language and linguistics. Vives and Vico have in common a core idea of an hermeneutical circle, the concept of the interpretation of the parts by the whole; the "totality" is represented in Vives by the thought of the community as interpreter, and in Vico as the structure of the mind which makes sense of perceptions.

At the end of the XVIII Century, Wilhelm Von Humbolt continued and surpassed Vico's ideas, establishing for the first time the role of the historian as interpreter. Humbolt, a German philologist and educator, defined the historian as the one who needs to produce "a vision" (or idea of the historical period), before being able to understand any isolated episode. Here we are confronted with the idea that Friedrich Schleiermacher developed in his work <u>Compendium of 1819</u>, in an early definition of the task of the hermeneutical circle:

> "Complete knowledge always involves an apparent circle, that each part can be understood only out of the whole to which it belongs, and vice versa." (3)

The image of a circle of interpretation, as a metaphor, has other suggestive connotations, especially in relationship with the phenomenological hermeneutics developed by Ricoeur. For instance, it speaks about a non hierarchical but mutually dependent system (relational), where every element is supposed to be in a dialectical relationship. In such a circle, to advance means sometimes to go back, either to the interpretative

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(3) Quoted by J. Bleicher in <u>Contemporary Hermeneutics</u>, p. 1.

community in the past, or to a previous methodological moment of the process, to produce a necessary qualitative leap in understanding.

1.2 Hermeneutics: in search of a definition.

Hermeneutics can be defined as "The theory or philosophy of the interpretation of meaning" (4). This definition is in accordance with Ricoeur, in the sense that a "written text" is not specified as the only meaningful human expression of our concern: a novel, a sculpture, a film, an archeological site, could all be considered a text. But although in the past the texts in which the effort of interpretation lies were exclusively written discourse, this idea of other artifacts as conveyors of meaning is indeed very old. So old that its origins are related to the etymology of the word "hermeneutic" itself. Ricoeur, in his article Existence and Hermeneutics (5), analyses the etymology of the term and finds three different meanings of the word as given by the Greeks. Such definitions are: hermeneutics as a technique. as an intrinsic element of language and as interpretation.

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(4) F. Schleiermacher, "General Hermeneutics", in M.-Vollner (ed.), The Hermeneutics Reader, p. 84.

(5) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 4 ff.

1.2.1 Hermeneutics as a technique

Hermeneutics is a word in the grammatical root of which we find a reference to the Greek god Hermes who, as messenger of the divine pantheon, carried the task of delivering the words and secret intentions (codes) of the deities to the common mortals. Apart from carrying a message that needed to be deciphered, Hermes himself, by the mere fact of his presence, was a sort of "significative text": To see him was the equivalent to know that "someone wanted to say something about something to someone" (a definition of Hermeneutics used by Ricoeur). In this sense, Hermes was himself a living text. But to decipher the messages, which were veiled from human beings' understanding, it was necessary to develop a technique.

This is the reason why the word "hermeneutic" in Greek, is always an adjective of the substantive "technique": The <u>techne hermeneutiké,</u> or interpretative art which was carried through the texts of the pythonesses and other diviners.

In those cases, although they were not written texts, they functioned as such, because any dialogue between the enquirer and the diviners was excluded. They were closed texts, metaphors with obscure references. But in other cases, the messages were delivered by dances, movements, colours, forms and gestures.

One century after Christ, the Roman historian Tacitus made this remark about divinatory methods concerning the behaviour of horses:

"They (the diviners) themselves are only the servants; the horses are

the confidants of the gods."(6)

Nowadays, this phrase would take us into Ricoeur's discussion of meaning, sign and reference, as we will see in the second part of this chapter concerning the hermeneutical circle.

Although far from the development of a theory which see texts in human actions (7), a definition of hermeneutics as exceeding the limits of the written discourse and the difficulties of dividing between medium and message were already acknowledged. A very important point for the further ontological aspects developed in XX Century hermeneutics.

1.2.2 Hermeneutics as an intrinsic element of language.

Aristotle, in his book Perí Hermeneias which belongs to his work called Organon, uses the term hermeneia as interpretation, and as such its Opus has been translated into Latin: De Interpretatione. Ricoeur finds that in Aristotle's criticism theory, a significative change has been produced. Hermeneia with Aristotle is more than a simple technique used to decipher messages from mysterious beings; it is the fundamental power of language, manifested as conveyor and interpreter of reality.

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(6) Tacitus, On Britain and Germany, p. 109.

(7) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 40.

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Hermeneutics becomes then an intrinsic element of language, in relation to the context of the discourse, and more specifically, to the context of the sentence of the discourse. Hermeneutics, according to Aristotle, is related to the mediator role of language.(8)

1.2.3 Hermeneutics as interpretation.

The concept of interpretation, as expressed by the words Auslegung or Deutung in the German language, is a synthesis of the two concepts of Hermeneutics already described: a technique and an element of language. This concept has been developed through many centuries, from the work of the School of Alexandria to the hermeneutics of the Protestant Reformers, and in the contributions made by Philosophy, Philology and Jurisprudence. (9) This hermeneutical synthesis was produced, basically, during the Enlightenment Movement of the Eighteenth Century, when the general philosophical principles were found to be valid for every field of knowledge where interpretation was necessary.

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(8) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Démythologisation et Herméneutique, pp. 4 ff.

(9) Cf. K. M.-Vollner (ed.), op. cit., Introduction.

1.3 General Hermeneutics. Some key aspects of its development.

1.3.1 From the Apologetics to the Ars Critica.

Alexandria of Egypt was a philosophical centre for Greek, Jewish and Christian thought. It was in this city that the Scriptures (both Old and New Testaments) were read in the same style as Homer's work or Egyptian myths, e.g. as texts which were concealing hidden, allegorical meanings, only accesible to the initiated. Gnosticism and speculative syncretisms flourished, and the Apologists, who were the first Christian theologians in a sense, started to develop their doctrine on the Logos. (10)

Amongst the many thinkers of that time, Origen of Alexandria can be considered the first biblical hermeneutician of the third century. His hermeneutical style is demonstrated in some of the works still available to us, such as De Principis and the Hexapla. Origen believed in the literal inspiration of the Scriptures, and worked to restore the original sense of the texts by a system of multiple, comparative translations. Such is the work of the Hexapla, where six to nine parallel columns show to the reader the Hebrew text, its Greek transliteration, and the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint and the translation of Theodotus. At the same time, Origen wanted the Scriptures to be interpreted spiritually, and following Clement of Alexandria, he considered the doctrine of the three

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(10) Cf. J. L. González, A History of Christian Thought, Vol. I: From the Beginnings to the Council of Calcedon.

Biblical senses, as valid criteria for interpretation. Those criteria were the literal, moral and intellectual senses of allegorical interpretation, organised not in a hierarchical but "circular", relational fashion. Origen also established the necessity of setting certain parameters of interpretation, eg. the restoration of the original sense of the text, the historical references, and then the use of allegories or a typological study, although in other cases a literal interpretation was acceptable.

Interpretation as such, was part of the theological studies that Origen taught in Caesarea, Palestine, and it continued to keep the same status during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. An important change, related in a sense to the hermeneutical circle of liberation theology in many ways, was produced during the times of the Reformation. It consisted in a new element of interpretation, called "The Principle of Perspicuity" (11), which established the sufficiency of the text, in contrast with the Roman Catholic principle of the role of Church tradition. Other changes were,

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(11) The Principle of Perspicuity (Perspicuitas), refers to the self-sufficiency of the Scriptures (Sola Scriptura) based in the belief in the internal coherence of the biblical text. The continuity of the Scriptures and the principle of internal coherence of the text replaced the two main hermeneutical principles of the Roman Catholic Church: the Church's authority and tradition. For this and other general references concerning the hermeneutical development, Cf. K. M.-Vollner (ed.), op. cit., pp. 2 ff.

for instance, the introduction of grammar in the interpretive process, by
Martin Luther, and the development of the theories of inner coherence and
historical continuity of the Bible, still basics of any protestant
hermeneutics.

In 1567, an important magnum opus, a compendium of Biblical Hermeneutics
from Origenes to the present days was written. Its author was Flavius
Illyricus and his book was called Clavis Scriptura Sacrae ("Key to the
Sacred Scriptures"). In this book, Illyricus developed the thesis that
faulty interpretations of the Scriptures were due mainly to a lack of
linguistic knowledge. In this sense, the work of Illyricus is a precursor
of modern Biblical Hermeneutics.

The Renaissance, in general, was a creative period where new perspectives
flourished, some of them due to the popularity that Roman ideas achieved.
Interpretation become an ars critica, associated with Philology, and
Jurisprudence. The necessity of interpretation of the Roman Law, produced
in Italy during the XII Century a serious work in the Justinian Code, in an
attempt to rediscover the original meaning of the law.

In the XVIII Century this philological aspect was stressed more, and
hermeneutics became, perhaps for the first time, a science, establishing
categories and distinctions concerning legal exegesis, and classifying it
into various corrective, extensive, restrictive and declarative aspects.
An example of this approach can be found in Johannes Von Felde's Treatise
on the Science of Interpretation (1689), where hermeneutical principles

were declared to be valid for the interpretation of both literary and legal texts.

1.3.2 The influence of the Enlightenment Movement

It is during the Enlightenment Movement, with its emphasis in the systematization of human knowledge, and its search for the basic principles which were thought to underlie everything, that hermeneutics started to be related with Philosophy. The Enlightenment philosophers returned to Aristotle and the <u>Peri Hermeneia</u>, and hermeneutics was related to the field of Logic. Perhaps the most important thing is that now hermeneutics became a general science, based on the general principles needed for the benefit of every particular science. Christian Wolf and Johann Martin Chladenius are two hermeneuticians who deserve to be mentioned in this brief account, because their contributions have been highly relevant for subsequent developments. Wolf, in works published in 1713, divided the texts between "dogmatics" and "historics", the first being considered according to the quality of their arguments, and the second to the "completeness" of the account. By "completeness" Wolf meant the veracity and sincerity of the author, since history in itself is remote from us. Sincerity of the author was considered in relationship with the literary genre selected for the account. The text was judged by its intention, although not by the psychological intention of the author, as Schleiermacher did later on. Wolf did not consider the meaning of the text in itself, but developed a normative hermeneutics which related the correct use of grammatical structures with the right sense conveyed by the reading.

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Chladenius, who wrote a systematic exposition on hermeneutics, gave an

important contribution with his notion of the point of view of the author

(Sehe-Punkt) in the consideration of historical accounts.

In his book Introduction to the Correct Interpretation of Reasonable

Discourses and Books (1742), Chladenius, taking ideas from Leibnitz' Optics

and Monadology, established that different historical accounts might be due

to different perspectives from different authors, although the event is the

same. His position does not advocate a relativist dimension, as will happen

later in a hermeneutics of suspicion,(12) but calls for the role of the

reader in the clarification of obscure words and phrases.

Chladenius defined hermeneutics in the following way:

"Hermeneutics is (the provision of) certain concepts which the

reader lacks. This can be the matter of few words or an extended

speech containing many sentences"(13).

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(12) For an early definition on the hermeneutics of suspicion, cf. P.

Ricoeur, "Interpretation as Exercise of Suspicion", in Freud and

Philosophy, p. 32. Also cf. this chapter, "The Hermeneutical Circle of Paul

Ricoeur", 1.6.

(13) Cf. K. M.-Vollner (ed.), op. cit., p. 54.

1.4 Philosophical Hermeneutics

1.4.1 Hermeneutical Theory: Friedrich Schleiermacher.

"The rules of the art of interpretation must be developed from a positive

formula, and that is: The historical and divinatory, objective and

subjective reconstruction of a given statement."

F. Schleiermacher (14)

The introduction of Philology in the exegetical process divided for the

first time Christian Dogma and understanding of the Scriptures. The

Enlightenment put the Bible in the same status of any book for the purposes

of understanding, since "sense" and "truth" become two different issues.

Kant, through the development of a Theory of Knowledge, also saw a division

between understanding (Verstehen) and explanation (Erklären): it was not

anymore the hidden meanings of a text which were sought after but the

conditions of knowledge considered necessary to unveil, for the purposes of

the achievement of a correct interpretation. This Kantian Rationalism,

which developed the condition of knowledge in relation with the physical

sciences, was opposed by Romanticism, more preoccupied with the condition

of knowledge of the spirit and the individual genius.

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(14) F. Schleiermacher, "General Hermeneutics", Introduction. Part I: III,

3, in K. M.-Vollner (ed.), op. cit.

Schleiermacher (1768-1834), considered by many as the father of the modern hermeneutical theory, tried to reconcile the two aspects, the spirit of criticism of Kant and the spirit of creativity of Romanticism, Philology and Exegesis. The task of hermeneutics was then to understand the texts through the search for the intuition of the author, and by the study of the language as its expression. This was to be achieved by a divinatory process of guessing, and a methodology which included both grammatical and philological analysis. In the divinatory method, the goal of the interpreter was to understand the text as the original author did , reconstructing his intention; in the second aspect, the comparative method, the author was classified in various types of genres. In this way it was possible to bridge the cultural distance produced since the texts were written (and already recognised by the historical sciences) and to regain the immediacy of understanding.

Schleiermacher envisaged Hermeneutics as the product of the dual relationship between Thought and its linguistic expression, and he claimed that, in fact, the "two tasks are completely equal" (15). His genius consisted in the fact of being the first to recognise the necessity of the development of a theory of understanding, with the combining elements of reflection and intuition.

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(15) F. Schleiermacher, op. cit. Introduction, IX, 18.

After Schleiermacher, Hermeneutics is no longer confined to textual

exegesis alone, and universal rules needed to be found in order to relate

texts with the human creative processes which originated them.

Ricoeur admires Schleiermacher's departure from the physical sciences'

understanding of the human mind, which set the precedent for a modern

theory of interpretation, with its concern for understanding in relation to

textual interpretation. His criticisms are related to what Ricoeur sees as

the subjective, accent of Schleiermacher's thought, which is part of the

psychological emphasis of Romanticism.

1.4.2. Subjective hermeneutics and Christian interpretation

The problem with both Schleiermacher and Dilthey is that they have

identified "interpretation with the category of understanding" (16), and

by 'understanding' they consider the recognition of the mind of the author,

and his/her original intention and purpose in relation with the original

readers of the text (addressees). Ricoeur finds that this subjective

conception has had a deep influence in Christian hermeneutics, and their

search for the "original event" as normative for our interpretation of

faith. Ricoeur's criticisms are based on the lack of "dialogue" of such

interpretations, which could lead to a partialisation ("onesideness") of

interpretation. The key, in our author's conception, is to understand the

double dialectics of event and meaning and sense and reference;

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(16) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 22.

the intention of the author does not need to be excluded, but the discourse is a written inscription, and its possibilities "are those of the text" (17). To conclude, Ricoeur says that in relation to Schleiermacher, what is needed is a redefinition of the hermeneutical task.

1.4.3 William Dilthey

"Life consists of parts, of lived experiences which are inwardly related to each other."
W. Dilthey (18).

Dilthey had a stronger influence on Ricoeur than Schleiermacher. To understand Dilthey means to acknowledge first of all, the fact that his work was developed between the rise and death of ideas belonging to two different centuries. At the end of the XIX Century, Philology, which had been so important for Schleiermacher, gave way to the study of History. Dilthey then started to consider human beings as historical beings, and his main questions were related to the possibilty of understanding amongst them. Following Hegel's ideas, Dilthey understood History as the manifestation of the cyclic movement of the World's Spirit, represented more as the lives of individuals rather than the "Objective Mind" of Hegel. Hermeneutics then becomes the science of re-creation of human lives in

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(17) Ibid., p. 23.

(18) W. Dilthey, Draft for a Critique of Historical Reason in M.-Vollner (ed.), op. cit., p. 151.

History, which meaning can only grasped through the fixation produced by writing. Dilthey admired Schleiermacher and in 1871 he wrote Life of Schleiermacher, although he never finished it. He sees Psychology as the science which would open the the psychic elements fixed in the text. However he tried to develop a less mechanistic psychological approach, replacing it by a descriptive and analytical model concerned with the structure of mental activities. Influenced by Husserl's Logical Investigations, Dilthey perceived the psychic as intentional. From there he assumes that it is only through the intention that the expressed meaning can be grasped.

Dilthey uses Philology in his attempt to give hermeneutics a character of objectivity, which the Positivism of his time demanded. Philology becomes identified with understanding, but contrary to Schleiermacher "Understanding" (Verstehen) is more than a linguistic phenomenon, but a methodological concept originated in the process or category of life itself (Lebenskategorie). One important contribution of Dilthey to a Theory of Hermeneutics is related to the circularity of interpretation: to understand a text, it is required for us to know the whole meaning of the text, and vice versa, one cannot grasp the general meaning without knowing first its parts.

According to Dilthey, the task of Hermeneutics must be concerned with what he calls an "Expression of Life" (Lebensäusserung). This Expression is found behind History, and behind the coherence of a text itself, and in the last analysis constitutes our object of interpretation. Subsequently Dilthey envisaged all expressions as "texts" but Ricoeur criticises this

approach because in his opinion, the object of Hermeneutics is the meaning of the text, and not the life of the person behind the written discourse. For Ricoeur, the search for meaning in the author's genius constitutes a "psychological aporia".

At the end of his career, Dilthey changed positions from historicism to logic, under the influence of Husserl and Frege; Ricoeur sees in this an important aspect, derived in general from the anti-historicist position, in relation to his concept of appropriation and its goal of actualisation of meaning. This meaning, according to Ricoeur, will not be related to the author's mind or his/her historical circumstances, but to "the power of disclosing a world that constitutes the reference of the text" (19), another perspective or way of looking at reality.

1.4.4 Ontology and Understanding.

Schleiermacher and Dilthey tried to understand the text through the intention of the author and the grammatical intention at the same time. Both of them specified, with different emphases, the use of Psychology.

With Heidegger, Hermeneutics moves from this psychological preoccupation to the ontological concern of the relation of human beings in the world. As Ricoeur followed Heidegger in many aspects of his thought, it is necessary to give an introduction to this Ontological Hermeneutics, where the work of

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(19) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 92.

interpretation is not separable from the interpreted being (20).

1.4.5   Martin Heidegger and the Emergence of the Word.

In his essay Heidegger and the Question of the Subject (21), Ricoeur
considers the development of Heidegger's Hermeneutics in relation to three
main points: The "Contestation of the cogito, the question of the self, and
the emergence of the "word". The first point, is related to the apodictic
proposal of Descartes Cogito ergo sum; this judgement has not been
challenged by modern philosophies (although reinterpreted sometimes), and
as a consequence of that an ontological omission has happened. Ricoeur
considers the determination of the cogito by the sum (I am), because he
sees that the sum conditions the cogito. In this point, Ricoeur quotes
Heidegger: "what (Descartes) left undetermined when he began in this
'radical' way [with cogito ergo sum] was the kind of Being which belongs to
the res cogitans, or -more precisely- the meaning of the Being of the sum"
(22). The meaning of being is Heidegger's main question, which is
understood as Being-in-the-world; the main task of his hermeneutical
proposal is then, to understand this Being. In Being and Time, Heidegger
uses a phenomenological hermeneutics, which means that he leaves the "thing
itself" to be manifested as it is, and in this case, allowing the Dasein
(Being there, existence) to reveal itself as transcendence.

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(20) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 23.

(21) Ibid., p. 223.

(22) Ibid., p. 227.

Ricoeur points out that the question of the meaning of being for Heidegger, displaced the position of the ego in his philosophy. The structure of trascendence consisting of comprehension (_Verstehen_) and logos (_Rede_), is the component by which _Dasein_ articulates such comprehension through language. _Dasein_ and language (as _parole_/word) are together as the core of a philosophy of language, as the problems of _Dasein_ are originated in language, and related to the problems of _langue_ (speech) and _parole_.

Heidegger takes the human into language and develops an hermeneutics of the "I am", because language is an element which constitutes the world. The word "names" (and denominates, adds Ricoeur) and expresses the _Noein_ (Thought/Discerment), and the _Denken_ (Thought). Ricoeur comments that this function of denomination "designates the place and role of man in language, and a finite, speaking existent is born" (23).

1.4.6   Understanding as "a mode of being."

Heidegger considers the two aspects of the word: "to preserve" and "to maintain"; "preserving" conceals, and is the origin of man's domination over Being through reason. But there is also an "emergence of the word", which can be compared with the emergence of the "There"..."as the one who enquires into Being" (24). Language aprehends _Dasein_, and humans use and are used by it.

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(23) P. Ricoeur, _op. cit._ p. 233.

(24) _Ibid_. p. 234.

"In <u>Urdichtung</u>, primordial poetizing, the poet testifies to a kind of language in which the over-powering of Being founds the power of man and his language." (25)

In the first part of his work <u>Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences</u>, entitled <u>Studies in the History of Hermeneutics</u>, Ricoeur, who has considered the development of Hermeneutics as a transitional movement from the epistemology of Dilthey to the ontology of Heidegger, considers the importance of understanding as "a mode of being". However, he points out what he thinks is the failure of Heidegger (and later on of his student Gadamer): the lack of response to the epistemological questions, manifested as the problems of interpretation in relation to historical knowledge, such as those coming from the exegetical field. This lack of interest in the developing of a method creates a sort of subjectivism, which Ricoeur considers negative for an interpretation theory.

What Ricoeur takes from Heidegger is the ontological interest, the "reading" of experience through philosophy of language, but he keeps the method of analysis of Husserl, to approach the phenomena through the discourse. To conclude this brief analysis, we must say that the fundamental difference between Heidegger and Ricoeur in relation to an ontological/phenomenological hermeneutics is that Heidegger takes "the short way", while Ricoeur takes "the long way", through the study of modern linguistics and semiotics. He aims to explore the self, which is shaped by its shaping of the world, by acts of decision, action, and consent. Apart

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(25) <u>Ibid</u>. p. 234.

from Linguistics, Ricoeur uses History of Religion, Psychoanalisis and Anthropology.

It is indeed a long route, and quoting Jean Nabert, a French philosopher to whom he dedicated his book The Symbolism of Evil, he says that "Reflection... can be and must be an hermeneutics." (26) And Ricoeur adds that "the entire sensible world and all beings with which we have dealings sometimes appear to us as a text to be deciphered." (27).

1.5   Phenomenological Hermeneutics

1.5.1   Phenomenological Principles.

Edmund Husserl wrote in the first of the series of lectures delivered by him in Göttingen, at the beginning of the century, the following definition of Phenomenology:

> "(Phenomenology) denotes a science, a system of scientific
> disciplines. But it also and above all denotes a method and an
> attitude of mind, the specifically philosophical method." (28)

As a method, phenomenology has a descriptive characteristic. It means that

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(26) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 222.

(27) J. Nabert, "The Inner Experience of Freedom", p. 77, quoted by P. Ricoeur in The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 222.

(28) J. Ferrater Mora, Diccionario de Filosofía, tomo I, p. 883.

the emphasis is upon the "appearences", "the things as they show themselves" or phenomena. These phenomena are considered according to the intentionality of our consciousness, since as Husserl establishes, consciousness is always consciousness of something. The phenomenological method questions the "meaning" of the phenomena through the receptivity of data or "intuitions" as Husserl calls them; every intuition is concerned with a specific intention, although they are not always referred to an experience, as in the case of the "empty intentions".

Ricoeur, in his work The Conflict of Interpretations, finds the following thesis from Husserl as a key for understanding his ideas. First of all, the process of phenomenological description needs to be studied in the category of "Meaning". Second, the subject is the one which conveys meaning, and third, the process is carried through the act of "phenomenological reduction". Ricoeur thinks that these three theses are inseparable.

By "phenomenological reduction" we refer to the first moments of the Husserlian method, when the subject needs to be free of beliefs and pre-understandings or theories in order to deepen his/her immediate perceptions (29). This happens in the so called "purgative stage", where all data must be reduced to sense data; this is the stage of preparation for intuitions. Husserl considers this first reduction as "transcendental". The second one is the "eidetic reduction" (or "eidetic variation"), when the movement is

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(29) For the different stages of the phenomenological reduction cf. S. Sajama and M. Kampinen, A Historical Introduction to Phenomenology,

from the particular essences already found, to the universals. Husserl called such movement <u>Wesenschau</u> or eidetic intuition, and as such it is considered part of the phenomenology of General Essences.

1.5.2   French Phenomenology

The phenomenological method of Husserl received in France the influence of existential philosophy. Marcel, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are the thinkers who combined this methodology with existential themes such as anxiety and nothingness; Existentialism also brought an attitude of suspicion about the human being's possibilities of knowledge. Ricoeur mentions the deep influence of the French translations of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Jaspers, and what he calls "the masters of suspicion": Marx, Nietzche and Freud. He finds the encounter of both philosophies very productive, and as a result, the Husserlian phenomenology gained through the incorporation of the tragic element of existence, while the Hegelians obtained a "sense of the negative", necessary to highlight aspects of human existence.

Ricoeur has described the changes which Phenomenology suffered through its history (30). Husserl started with a phenomenology of meaning in his

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chapter I. Also R. Detweiler, <u>Story, Sign and Self</u>, chapters I-II.

(30) For this point cf. M. Natanson "Introduction" in <u>Essays in Phenomenology</u>.

<u>Logical Investigations</u>, moved toward a more transcendental position and ended in a "Genetical Phenomenology". Merleau-Ponty followed Husserl in the perceptualist emphasis of this last period, considering that perceptions guide us to the meaning of things and to the meaning of the subject which interprets; he considers an aspect of language which Husserl discussed in his first and fourth <u>Logical Investigations</u> (meaning and expression and the role of the grammar). From here, Ricoeur elaborates in the dialogical fashion, characteristic of his thought, the two trends of phenomenology in which he has interest: The existential line from Merleau-Ponty and the hermeneutical one from Heidegger.

1.5.3 Experience and Language. The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty.

Merleau-Ponty follows Husserl in the path of perceptualism, agreeing with the intentionality of consciousness and with the definition of consciousness as perception. His phenomenology is existential, and he replaces the distance between subject and world of Husserl for the concept of the presence of being in the world (<u>être-au-monde</u>). The theme of the body and incarnation (<u>corps prope/corps vécu</u>) is another key element to underline for a phenomenology which attempts to understand human behaviour through the world of perceptual life (<u>Lebenswelt</u>). His aim was to arrive at a pre-theoretical world. Merleau-Ponty developed a theory of perception and a theory of expression; he starts from the notion of an expressive world, where language is born from the silence of the perceptuality. But although Merleau-Ponty gives language a central place, Ricoeur criticises him in the formulation of his theory. Specifically, Ricoeur claims that Merleau-Ponty has excluded "any connection with modern linguistics, and the semiological

disciplines which have been established on a linguistic model."(31)

Merleau-Ponty opposes dialectically two concepts of language: 1) Language as _fait acompli_, something residual from the past, and 2) Language as the subjective dimension of the speaker. He also advances towards an ontological development when he refuses to "bracket out" (the use of the _Epoché_) the problem of Being, that Husserl "suspended" in his phenomenology. Ricoeur continues his proposal but through what he calls "the long way", by means of a careful consideration of semiology and linguistics.

Merleau-Ponty represents an existential phenomenology of speech, and Ricoeur contrasts it with the hermeneutical phenomenology of language of Heidegger.

1.5.4   The Phenomenology of Heidegger

Heidegger once wrote: "Language is the house of Being" (32). And his thought is a path (_wege_) which guides us to it. Merleau-Ponty described the natural world, populated by silent phenomena and gestures assimilated into words. from the experience of perception, he comes to expression, and from there to meaning. Heidegger, on the other hand, considers the world as

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(31) Cf. Don Ihde, _Hermeneutic Phenomenology_, p. 170.

(32) Cf. M. Heidegger, _Introducción a la Metafísica_, pp. 20 ff.

a cultural product, inhabited by subjects who create and are created by language (a similar statemement to that already mentioned by Vico, in the XVII Century). The main point of departure from Husserl is in the fact that for Heidegger the phenomenon is the being, and being is revealed only through what man says. In his studies about the German poet of the XVIII Century, Friedrich Hölderlin, Heidegger quotes the following words from one of his poetic works: "We are an undeciphered sign..."(33). Ricoeur, who has considered Heidegger's hermeneutics in his work The Conflict of Interpretations, notices here that being and meaning ("signification") are the two key aspects of his thought. The ego, so important in Husserl's last work, where perception was limited by the "I", as the only source of knowledge, has been now displaced. Dasein and language (as parole) are in a dialectical perspective: Dasein is in the core of a philosophy of language, and as such is equivalent to the Lebenswelt, the "life-world" of Husserl.

About the Dasein, Ricoeur says: "Authentic Dasein is born from the response to Being and, in responding, preserves the strength of Being by the strength of the word" (34). One of the main contributions of Heidegger to a phenomenological hermeneutics is related to his concept of Dasein which advances beyond the impasse of subject-object inherited by phenomenology. The Cogito as "absolute subject" disappears, and from now on its authenticity remains in "the gift of the poetic life". Ricoeur takes from

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(33) H. Heidegger, "Was Heisst Denken?", in Vorträge und Aufsätze, Teil II, p. 11.

(34) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 234.

both Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger that their different options, ("experience and language", "immediacy and history") are related to different linguistic aspects, but that they are also complementary, and we need a phenomenology of speech and a phenomenology of language if we want to understand the human discourse as an unity. This is the difference between "the short way" -as in Heidegger- and "the long way" of Ricoeur, to the meaning of being via linguistics.

Part 2.

1.6 The Hermeneutical Circle of Paul Ricoeur.

"My purpose here is to explore the paths opened to contemporary philosophy by what could be called the graft of the hermeneutic problem onto the phenomenological method".

P. Ricoeur (35).

1.6.1 General Characteristics.

The characteristics of a Phenomenological Hermeneutics, developed after the works of Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur, can be organised according to questions concerning the text, its nature and status, the relationship between writer and reader, and the main purpose of the literary work. The following definitions will give us a clear, although very brief summary of

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(35) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 3.

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the main characteristics of Phenomenological Hermeneutics (36):

a) A literary text is a written discourse with an unity. Although the product of a writer, the text becomes "itself" only through the work of actualisation by the reader, in a process called "immersion". But the text is also immersed in its own historic reality. At the end, the identity of the text is shaped according to its relation with the interests of the reader. The experience of the reader is as important here, as was the "mind" of the author for Schleiermacher. Ricoeur considers that language is rooted in human action, and a text finally remits us to praxis.

b) The model of communication is built upon a parallel pattern of writer/text and reader/text. The author/text belongs to the historical event of the creation of the text. The model is not a dialectical one, because there are no common experiences between reader and writer; phenomenological hermeneutics searches for the state of consciousness, the type of Dasein that the text has.

c) The re-reading is an event which replaces the event of the author. Ricoeur elaborated the idea of Aneignung (appropriation) as the moment of re-creation of the text by the reader. This appropriation is mediated by the formal structure in which the text has been objectivised; Ricoeur, in his "long way" (detour), has taken the road of semiology and modern

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(36) Cf. M. J. Valdés, Phenomenological Hermeneutics and the Study of Literature, pp. 60 ff.

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linguistics (the linguistics elaborated after Saussure) in order to elaborate a phenomenology without the short comings of Merleau-Ponty. The literary text is used by the reader to re-shape reality, not as an individual, but from a community since the text comes from one and the reader belongs to another. Appropriation of the text is related to the challenge of the text towards a concrete praxis of redescription of the world.

d) The tension between the planning of a textual explanation and an understanding, as a provisory hermeneutical conclusion, is resolved dialecticaly, based on the following principles:

1) The acceptance of the role of presuppositions in order to acquire knowledge.

2) The rejection of an absolutist, idealist conclusion.

3) The intentional nature of the structure of the text, determined by the historical context of the author.

From these general aspects concerning phenomenological hermeneutics, we are now able to say that the formal structure of the text, its history, the experience of the reader and his own reflection in the moment of appropriation are key aspects concerning the meaning of a text. These elements, organised in a relationship of mutual dependency and interaction, constitute the four basic moments of the hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur.

1.6.2 The Hermeneutical Circle. Its structure.

The close nature of the dialectic explanation and understanding, and appropriation and understanding, and the aspect of "circularity", which opposes the dialogical to the hierarchical, makes it difficult to explain the hermeneutical circle in a linear fashion. Following Ricoeur's schema in Interpretation Theory, and for the sake of clarity, I have organised here a methodical step by step description of moments, which in reality are not sharply divided as this presentation may suggest. These moments of interpretation, according to Ricoeur and the general principles of Phenomenological Hermeneutics already studied, are the following:

1) Guessing.

2) Explanation.

3) Understanding.

4) Appropriation.

This can also be seen in the following diagram:

Guessing

Formal dimension of the text

Dialectic: Text/meaning

(How does the text work?)

A new proposal of being-in-the-world; praxis

Appropriation

Text as "Self-knowledge"

Dialectic: Author's event/reader's event

(How have I read this text?)

Explanation

Text as History

Dialectic: Text/reference

(What does the text speak about?)

"Hermeneutical Arc"

Understanding

Text as experience

Dialectic: Text/reader
Text/author

(What does the text say to me?) (37)

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(37) Cf. M. J. Valdés, Phenomenological Hermeneutics and the Study of Literature p. 67.

1.6.3 Guessing

Schleiermacher, who is considered the precursor of Philosophical
Hermeneutics, gave a special place in his interpretation theory to what he
called the divinatory aspect of reading. This divinatory aspect was related
to the process of guessing the original intention, the mind of the author.
However, as we have already seen phenomenological hermeneutics has replaced
the "genius of the author" stressed by Romanticism, by the experience of
the reader, and the collective aspect of interpretation has taken the place
of the old individualistic approach. Guessing, for Ricoeur, is something
that happens in the semantical and not in the psychological field, which he
considers inaccesible to our experience.

According to Ricoeur guessing is related to the phenomenological principle
of the hermeneutical circle itself, the idea that the parts cannot be
understood without a previous insight of the whole, and vice versa (38).
The reader is confronted with, basically, two kind of texts, defined by
formal aspects of the discourse: a) descriptive texts, which only require a
knowledge of grammar for their interpretation, because in these texts there
is not an outside reference, and b) literary or poetic texts, which involve
a more complex process of understanding, due to their creative potentiality
of meanings. But to be able to make a distinction between these two
different kinds of texts, already involves a guessing, in the sense of a
"judgement" upon many works. This is the process Ricoeur calls the

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(38) For this point cf. P. Ricoeur <u>Interpretation Theory</u>, pp. 74 ff.

"individualization of the unique text", which involves a first act of
discernment about what sort of text it is that we are reading. This
includes aspects of understanding the construction of a text, as related to
its style (the key to finding the potential meanings of a text), class and
genre, and the particular types of codes, that give the reader the first
clues about the meaning of a discourse. Here, guessing involves the process
of seeing the text as an unity, as belonging to a certain literary genre,
but it also presupposes the task of looking at its parts or components;
Ricoeur establishes in this moment the questions related to the topics of
the text, and the structure of "hierarchy of topics". In the same way that
the study of the codes establishes the text in its individuality, the
hierarchy of topics focus on the text as a totality, as a whole.

Ricoeur compares the moment of guessing with the contemplation of an
object; it is possible for the reader in this particular moment, to see one
side of the text, but not the text in its complete constitution, from all
the available perspectives at the same time. It implies that there is
always an "onesideness (that) grounds the guess character of
interpretation" (39), an acceptance of a non idealist position, and a clear
option of significance. The originality of Ricoeur on this point, consists
in seeing the nature of our cultural engagement with the world since the
beginning of our task. This is an acknowledgement of our cultural roots,
our particular way of belonging to the world of human actions, and will be
the key element for the proposed re-elaboration of the world during the

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(39) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 78.

moment of appropriation. The circle of interpretation begins with the reader situated in a certain level of consciousness, and finishes with the the same reader, but after having passed through a qualitative leap of the level of being-in-the-world. But guessing, as a moment of interpretation, is not an individualistic act. In Phenomenological Hermeneutics, to start our process with the form of a text, means also to provide a space in common for a community of readers, the common base from where the critical analysis will begin. It means to begin with a project which belongs to a community, in what we would like to call a "Hermeneutics of Solidarity", amongst interpreters, authors and their worlds (40).

Guessing presupposes the attitude of the reader who is confronted with the text from a formal point of view. The dialectic that Ricoeur uses here is

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(40) For the collective aspect of interpretation, Cf. M. J. Valdés, op. cit., pp. 24, 65 ff. Valdés relates this aspect with the Relational Theory of Vico in the XVII Century, which tries to explain how it is possible to obtain a "shared meaning" from a reading done in different historical times. Although the readers as individuals change, there are common elements in the interpretative dynamic, such as the tradition of a community of interpretation, the participation in certain praxis of change, and the fact that every text is the product of a community. To re-read a text is to re-write it. Valdés sees these points in relationship with the moment of "guessing", but also with the whole dynamic of the hermeneutical circle.

the one of meaning/text. The basic question which appears is, "How does this text work, how is this text organised (the _Zusammenharg_, or inner organisation of a work) to produce a certain meaning?." The answer lies in a theory of the text which can provide us with access to a deep semantic level, and at the same time, with the objectivation of the text necessary to avoid a psychoanalytic hermeneutics. Ricoeur finds here that the structural conception of language from Ferdinand de Saussure (_Gestalinguistik_) and the narrative analysis from Algirdas Julien Greimas (Structural Semantic Analysis) gives him a scientific, rigorous method of study. In addition, Ricoeur considers the work of the Russian Formalist Vladimir Propp and other French Structuralists such as Roland Barthes, Claude Brémont and the Structural Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss.

1.6.3.1 Structural Analysis. Ferdinand de Saussure.

At the beginning of the century, Saussure produced a revolutionary approach to linguistics, based on a systemic conception of language. He did not began his studies from the point of view of the origin of language, but from the notion of system. Later on his followers changed the word "system" to "structure", and his analysis was called "structural" (41).
He considers language as a system independent of its task of communication, and makes a distinction between Language (_Langue_) and Utterance (_Parole_). Language is defined as "the body of conventions adopted by the society in

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(41) Cf. A. Alonso, "Prólogo a la Edición Española" in F. de Saussure, _Curso de Lingüística General_, pp. 7 ff.

order to allow communications amongst individuals" (42), while utterance

refers to the use of the codes. Ricoeur sees three important principles in

Structuralism (43):

1) The idea of language as an objective system, independent of the observer

subject.

2) The notions of the Diachronic and Synchronic levels of understanding

3) The work of the linguistic laws.

1) The language as a system of signs, is organised around lexical

oppositions. Saussure says "In Language, we only have oppositions" (44). A

sign is an arbitrary, unconnected combination of an acoustic image (called

"signifier") and a concept (or "signified"). Both signifier and signified

constitute a first, inner level of differentiation; a second

differentiation process happens at the same level as the lexeme (for

instance, the oppositions produced by phonemes, morphemes etc.). Sign and

sense are linked to each other since sense is the resultant of the relation

between signifier and signified.

2) The synchronic level is the one where we can see the simultaneous

elements of a system in a particular moment. Diachrony is interested in the

evolution in time of such elements. Structuralism privileges the Synchrony,

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(42) Saussure, op. cit., p. 103.

(43) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 80 ff. Also

Saussure, op. cit., pp. 46 ff.

(44) Saussure, op.cit., p. 139.

the present moment of the language, but Ricoeur considers that it is in the "diachronic residue" where we find the deep structure of a text. For Ricoeur, Synchrony is subordinated to diachrony, because it is necessary to respect the unity of significance, regulated by temporality. This means that the original event of the text needs to be taken into account in our analysis, and even be privileged over the system, or we would not be able to advance from a surface meaning. This primacy of Diachrony has profound consequences for Biblical Hermeneutics in the context of Liberation Theology.

3) The linguistic laws refer to an unconscious, pre-reflexive level of the spirit, where history is excluded. Ricoeur considers it a "Kantian Unconciousness", as opposed to a Freudian one. The difference is , basically, that Structuralism defines the unconscious level as a system of categories, as an organisation without a reference to a subject.

To conclude, we can say that the idea of language as an organism, composed of units related at different levels, the privileging of synchrony as opposed to the historical development of the structure, and the concept of language as a finite system of unities in permanent combination, are the key elements of Structuralism as conceived by Saussure.

1.6.3.2 Structural Semantic Analysis: Greimas.

After having considered the text as a whole, Ricoeur analyses the discourse from two aspects, the word (or _lexeme_, as Greimas and Pottier call it) and the structures behind the lexemes.

In the first case Ricoeur uses a semantic lexical analysis, e.g. he analyses the lexical units of the discourse, and finds their meaning.

In the second case, Ricoeur follows Greimas and his Structural Semantic Analysis, also called "Semic" or "Componential Analysis" (Componentielle). We will consider now the structural analysis, which seems particularly relevant for Ricoeur (45).

Greimas does not start his analysis from the perspective of lexemes, but that of sèmes (46). Sèmes (or semantemes) are the minimum units of significance, or structures of meaning organised in relations of conjunction and disjuction. By relation of conjuction, Greimas means that the semantemes are organised around a common aspect, e.g. genre; on the other hand, disjunction is the case of sèmes which do not have any aspect in common, but are binarily opposed to each other, e.g. black/white or male/female. (The structural analysis that privileges this aspect is called, precisely, "Binary Opposition Analysis".) The semantemes acquire their value in the diachronic level, by means of a chronological process, and obtain a modern significance in a new system, at the synchronic moment.

1.6.3.3 Levels of Signification.

Greimas divides the text into two levels of signification: a) The level of

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(45) Cf. G. Mounin, Clefs pour la Linguistique, pp. 140 ff.

(46) Cf. A.-J. Greimas, Semántica Estructural.

Manifestation and b) The level of Immanence. Ricoeur considers that this is a very important aspect of the componential analysis of Greimas, and as such deserves to be seen in detail (47). The level of manifestation is the one of the "surface" of the written discourse; it "manifests" something that is happening at a deeper level, showing us the organisation of the "actants" or characters of the story ("character" is here defined by function, as roles. By actant Greimas means abstract figurae, opposite values, objects or actors.) The lexemes belong to this level. But it is at the level of immanence where we find the fundamental oppositions in which the text rests. On this level Greimas considers the narrative (or syntactic) structure, concerned with the deeper organisation of the actants, and the discursive (or semantic) structure, where the fundamental oppositions of the story are located. Ricoeur finds that the most important level is the surface, the level of manifestation, because in it the semantemes -through relations of conjuction and disjuntion- produce the "meaningful effect" (effet de sens) of the text, depending on their context (which is called classeme by Greimas).

The action-sentences are decisive for the treatement of the plot, and homogeneous levels of signification can be distinguished in the narrative, by means of the isotopies of discourse (48). Ricoeur is interested in this

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(47) For the analysis of Ricoeur on Greimas' narrative semiotics, cf. P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, Vol. II, pp. 44 ff.

(48) The isotopies (there is a principal one and many secondaries in every text), are refered to by U. Eco as an "umbrella term for coherence" (Cf. U.

aspect, because it is related to the multiplicity of meaning and the study of symbolism. From the synchronic concept of polysemy, which he mentions as "the axis of semantics" (49), to the plurivocity of the text due to the role of context, Ricoeur finds that Greimas provides him with a scientific, stable structural model, and a dialectic of openness and closure of the text. Greimas, as a Structuralist, considers that there is no salvation outside the text (50). But for Ricoeur, the analysis of the discourse also requires the understanding of the problem of the reference of the text. As a hermeneutician, Ricoeur goes beyond the semantic field to find the historical context, which is related to the reference of the discourse, in order to interpret the text as a mediation between human beings and their world. This is precisely the point of the second moment of the hermeneutical circle, the dialectic of the historical context of the text and the reader.

Eco, <u>Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language</u>, p. 190). They guide the reader to identify the text through the phenomenon which Greimas calls the "plurilineal character of manifestation".

(49) Cf. P. Ricoeur, <u>The Conflict of Interpretations</u>, p. 71.

(50) Quoted by M.-C. Escalle in Equipo Cahiers Evangile (eds.), <u>Iniciación al Análisis Estructural</u>, p. 14.

1.7   Explanation.

If in his first approach to the text Ricoeur questioned the formal

dimensions of composition, and found that Structuralism and the Semiotic

Structural Analysis of Greimas provided him with a solid base, his pursuit

of the reference of the text moves our author into another dialectic. The

main question of this second hermeneutical moment is concerned with the

text as history, and the tension produced by the historicity both of the

text and the reader. Ricoeur, who has already asked "How does the text

work?", will now ask "What does the text say ?". But before considering his

answer to that question, we need to mention some aspects of the path from

guessing to explanation.

Ricoeur in his book Interpretation Theory, quotes E. D. Hirsch about the

need to validate our guessing:

> "The act of understanding is at first a genial (or a mistaken) guess,
>
> and there are no methods for making guesses, no rules for generating
>
> insights. The methodological activity of interpretation commences
>
> when we begin to test and criticize our guesses." (51).

In the moment of guessing, of "naïve understanding", the phenomenologist

hermeneutician uses the epoché, bracketing off or suspending of any

judgement upon the text. But because the discourse is the fixed expression

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(51) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 99 (2).

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of an event (and as such, opposite to language as a code or system), meaning becomes the paradox between what can be identified and what needs to be construed and therefore, guessing can only be validated by a dialectic between understanding (<u>Verständnis</u>) and explanation (<u>Erklärung</u>) (52). This is the field where the conflict of interpretations happen, and where Ricoeur argues for the need for arbitration. It is obvious then, that Ricoeur privileges the dialectic Explanation-Understanding, because in its relationship the reader is able to pass from a level of critical description of the text to another of interpretation.

Returning to our question, "What does the text say?" we find ourselves struggling in the tension created by the text and its references, which is closely related to the process of understanding. For Ricoeur, to understand a discourse, means to follow a movement produced from sense to reference, from what the text says to apprehend a sense which is beyond the intention of the author and the reader's situation. Ricoeur distinguishes between two kinds of references, the ostensive one, which refers to the author's or reader's situation (the <u>Umwelt</u>), and the non-ostensive one, which is the world opened to our eyes by the text, the revelation of new ways of being-in-the-world (<u>Welt</u>). From the intersection between the ostensive and non-ostensive references, produced by the tension confronting language and expression, the metaphor is born.

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(52) The dialectic Explanation-Interpretation constitutes what Ricoeur calls the *hermeneutical arc*. Both moments can be compared with "pillars" which support the "bridge" or "arch" of hermeneutics. Cf. P. Ricoeur, "What is a text?" in "From Text to Action", pp. 105 ff. For this point concerning

1.7.1 Theory of the reference

The balance which Ricoeur establishes between understanding and explanation, is the same when he considers the relation between the Naturwissenschaften and the Geistewissenschaften (Empirical and Human Sciences). It also implies that Ricoeur does not differentiate between different languages (scientific or common); on the contrary, Ricoeur has a wider, less parcelled concept of language than many of his predecesors.

To study the dialectic sense-reference, (understanding "sense" as the "what" of the text, and "reference" as the "about what") Ricoeur uses the distinction between language and discourse of Emile Benveniste (53). Saussure, as we have already seen, privileged the place of Langue, as a system the unit of which is the sign. But Benveniste finds that Parole also has a structure, and to express it he decides to use the term Discours (discourse). The unit of the discours is the sentence, and while in language we only find relations of difference, in the discourse we only distinguish references. The sign, as a form, is opposed to the synthetic value of the sentence; meaning is no longer the signified of a sign defined by opposition, but is related to the discourse through the

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the mediation of explanation and understanding in the process of text interpretation cf. K. Vanhoozer, "Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur", pp. 86-8.

(53) For the present point cf. P. Ricoeur, "New Developments in Phenomenology in France: The Phenomenology of Language", in Social

sentence. Ricoeur is interested in the development of these ideas, and for that purpose he considers the work of Gottlob Frege and Husserl.

Ricoeur follows Frege in the difference that the latter makes between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung). In The Conflict of Interpretations Ricoeur writes: "It is in the instance of discourse that language has a reference. To speak is to say something about something". Quoting Frege's article Über Sinn und Bedeutung, Ricoeur considers that the aim of language is constituted by "an ideal sense of meaning" and by "the aim of reference", but it is the reference which takes us from the ideal meaning to reality. Frege says that every proper name is related to a sense which it expresses, although there is not always a correspondence between them, since sometimes we can find sense without reference. However, Frege sees a movement (drang) from the ideal sense to the real reference, and this is what Ricoeur considers our "exigency for truth" (das Streben nach Wahrheit), which can be compared with Husserl's Bedeutung and Erfüllung (Reference and Fulfilment) of the Logical Investigations. According to Husserl, the relation between sense and reference is resolved through a fulfilment of the linguistic expressions, in an act which confers them sense. This is the act that goes from "the ideality of meaning to the reality of reference (or Erfüllung)"; Ricoeur finds here an ontological proposition, because Husserl speaks about the role of language in reference to a pre-experiential level (a Lebenswelt or Life-World), which is previous to any experience of the relation subject-object.

Research, 34, pp. 1-30. Also cf. P. Ricoeur, "The Question of the Subject", in The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 326-66.

1.7.2 Theory Of Descriptions

Ricoeur also mentions other philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, Ludwig Wittgenstein and P. J. Strawson, in relation to a referential theory. Russell, in his article On Denoting (54), considers the question of existence in his Theory of Descriptions. The point of his theory is to show how an imperfect use of language has produced erroneous philosophical thoughts, which do not perform what, in his understanding, is the aim of Philosophy; this aim is to inform about the structure of the world.

Russell makes a distinction between definite and non-definite descriptive propositions. In the first case, the descriptions do not have ambiguity, e.g. they start with the article "the"; in the second, they have indefinite pronouns and articles. The definite descriptions are, according to this theory, the ones which describe existence and nominate entities in a significative way. Russell's Ontology is concerned about the world's reality (sense-data) and the reality of other existences such as names, chimeras, etc. As a result of this theory, he establishes the dual character of the relation between "facts" (real descriptions) and "objects" (things).

Ricoeur finds that in Russell the facts belong to the objective world, and the distinction between facts and things (in the sphere of existence) is parallel to the distinction between sentences (in the sphere of language).

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(54) Cf. B. Russell, "On Denoting", in Logic and Knowledge: Essays 1901-1950, pp. 39-56

Ricoeur finds here a lack of distinction between reference and signification, and a failure to understand the difference between the aims of ordinary and scientific language, which are those of communication and argumentation. He quotes Strawson's response to Russell's article, On Denoting, saying that "Language has a reference only when it is used" (55).

Strawson considers that the sense of a sentence depends upon its context, and the reference has the power to make it false or true. Ricoeur says: "To refer is what the sentence does in a certain situation and according to certain use" (56). The act of refering is in itself, a "speech-event". Ricoeur also takes into account the ideas of Wittgenstein, whose ontology he considers of a "crystalline beauty" (57). Ricoeur considers that "to name", and "the word", are entities with an independent existence from the sentence. Proof of that, is the existence of dictionaries. But if the word

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(55) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 20.

(56) Ibid., p. 21.

(57) Wittgenstein, using Plato's mimesis, finds a coincidence of structures between discourse and reality, as a kind of mirror-relation where the structure of the discourse "reflects" the structure of reality; this is basically, a relationship concerning true propositions and facts. In his Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein finds that in language the important thing is not signification in itself, but rather the way we use terms, because it is not possible to understand the world outside the structure of language. Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Ontologie", in Encyclopaedia Universalis, XII, pp. 94-102.

has a meaning in itself, it is only a potential one, while the sentence carries out an actualised meaning of the word, thanks to the contextual frame provided by the sentence. This is what Ricoeur calls "the Semantic Capital" defined by the context.

Still, Ricoeur finds that the question "What does it means to refer to something,?" has not been resolved, and in order to do that he needs to study the structure of the discourse beyond names and descriptions. The theory of propositions of analytic philosophy, represented by Frege, Russell and Wittgenstein, is complemented by Ricoeur with the theory of the "Speech-Act" of J. L. Austin and J. Searle, and the "Theory of Intention" of P. Grice. These theories represent the fusion between pragmatism and semantics (58).

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(58) Ricoeur has considered the two functions upon which the the discourse is based. These functions are identification and predication.

Identification has the aim of identifying singularities, for instance, the subject of a proposition. The second function, predication, links the subject with universals or classes; in this sense, it fulfills the purposes of classification. It is very important to distinguish here between the two functions in order to understand that universals can only be revealed through the subject, and in the singularity of identification.

Identification is a logical and not a grammatical function, and as such it creates a problem which requires, apart from Linguistics, the work of the phenomenological reduction proposed by Husserl. What is identified exists

1.7.3 The Speech-Act Theory.

Austin divided language into two categories: the constative and the performative. Constative expressions are descriptions, affirmations, while performatives are "utterances which themselves describe the speech-act which they perform"(59). The difference between constative and performative sentences is parallel to the difference between to say and to do. The acts of discourse do things with words, and Austin divides them into three categories or levels: the locutionary, the illocutionary and the perlocutionary acts.

The Locutionary Act is the basic act of the discourse. It is equivalent to a sentence with signification. The Illocutionary Act, expresses an order, a wish, a promise, and the force of a proposition in general. The Perlocutionary Act, is what we produce with our speech, e.g. to convince or to threaten. Ricoeur says that this aspect is the least linguistic of the three mentioned.

(the "potential existents" of Strawson), but Ricoeur wants to discover now which is the "linguistic place" of the ontological question; he already suspects that it is not in the "name", but in the sentence, and to investigate this point further, he turns to the Speech-Act theory of Austin and Searle.

(59) G. Leech, <u>Semantics</u>, p. 323.

Ricoeur finds in Austin's Speech-Act Theory the following implications for his own analysis:

1) The illocutionary force is related to an ontological engagement. Both the constative and performative make things with words, and the conclusion is that the illocutionary force is present in the discourse as a whole. Austin finds that "our being human lies in doing things with words." (60)

2) There are two ontologies in the discourse: an ontology of facts and another of individuals or things. There are two theses then, a linguistic and an "extra-linguistic" one, which Ricoeur relates with the problem of sense and reference.

3) Ricoeur finds in Austin and Searle's theory, that there is a reality in the same act of discourse, and that language, more than a mediator between human beings and the world, is a way of being in itself.

Ricoeur considers that language is more than a mediator, it is an échangeur (shifter) "between two exigencies, an exigency of logicity which gives it a telos, and an exigency of foundation in the prepredicative which gives it an arché." (61) This "pre-predicative" stage is Husserl's concept of Lebenswelt, a level of experience previous to the relationship subject-

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(60) Cf. W. Cerf, "Critical Review of How to Do Things with Words", in K. T. Fann (ed.) Symposium on J. L. Austin, p. 372.

(61) M. J. Valdés, Phenomenological Hermeneutics, p. 55.

object, and close to the horizon of the world, or the operative life (62).

Merleau-Ponty, in his work The Visible and the Invisible, already foresaw language as an articulation of the Lebenswelt, as a pre-logical and pre-verbal stage. Only through a retrospective enquiry (Rückfrage), would we be able to understand this field of meaning previous to the subject of the Theory of Knowledge, and previous to the objectivity represented by the constitution of the mathematical nature since Galileo.

It is in this search for the kind of language which will help us to reveal the Lebenswelt, that Ricoeur goes to the study of the poetic text, finding as Heidegger did, that it is the only language with the power "to say" our being. It is in this context that Ricoeur dedicated himself to the investigation of the metaphor, "the poetic text in miniature", which will guide us to discover the richness and deepness hidden in the symbol.

1.7.4 The theory of the metaphor. The Living Metaphor.

Merleau-Ponty, in his study entitled Phénoménologie de la Perception, presents a linguistic position which can be considered an early challenge to Structuralism. Basically, Merleau-Ponty locates language in a central

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(62) In relation to Ricoeur's reflections on Merleau-Ponty, see for instance P. Ricoeur "Language (Philosophy)" in Encyclopaedia Universalis, pp. 771-78. Also cf. P. Ricoeur, Husserl, an analysis of His Phenomenology, pp. 209 ff.

position, and finds that the discourse is the place where the Lebenswelt, or the stage of the "pre-reflexive" is manifested in a "reflexive" moment. Although Merleau-Ponty died before developing a further criticism on Structuralism, which advocated the closure of the text to any pre-theoretical sphere, Ricoeur continues this challenge, through his Semantics of the Metaphor (63).

For Ricoeur the task then is to find the appropriate language, a language which can convey enough freedom in order to allow the expression of the Lebenswelt. This language, according to Heidegger, is poetry, the only one

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(63) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Rule of the Metaphor. Ricoeur starts considering the metaphor as part of the "Art of Rhetoric", and he discuss Aristotle's "Poetics", where the philosopher defines metaphors first of all in terms of transferences of meaning in words, and second, by the use of comparative images. Here the metaphor is the "trope" (from Latin tropus, or figurative use of a word and the Greek tropos/trepein, "style/to turn"). But Ricoeur finds that here the metaphor is located in the field of words, of "the connotative", which in his opinion does not give place to any semantic innovation and therefore, does not convey any new information concerning reality; this aspect of "innovation of meaning" is, precisely, what Ricoeur wants to explore, and for this purpose he considers the work of modern Semantics, starting with Richards, whom he considers a pioneer in the development of the modern theory of metaphor. See also S. Meitinger "Between plot and metaphor: Ricoeur's poetics applied on the specificity of the poem", in Philosophy and Social Criticism, 14:2, p. 161.

which can give us a glimpse of being. Ricoeur quotes Monroe Beardley's definition of metaphor as "A text in miniature", and dedicates himself to the study of the history of the theory of metaphor, considering the works of Beardley, Max Black, I. A. Richards, Colin Turbayne, Philip Wheelright and Nelson Goodman and others.

1.7.5 I. A. Richards' "Theory of the Discourse"

In his essay Creativity in language (64), Ricoeur writes that Richards has characterized the rhetoric metaphor theory as a "substitution theory". This theory consists in restoring to the reader a word already substituted by the author, and therefore the metaphor fulfills only a decorative role, because the information carried by the word used, and the word restored is the same. Metaphor is then a way to relate two ideas concerned with different objects, in a word or sentence; it is interesting to notice that such a relationship keeps the different ideas in a sort of dialectical tension, but preserving and respecting both of them. Richards considers that in a metaphor, there are two aspects present at the same time: the "tenor" (the underlying subject of the metaphorical word) and the "vehicle" (the metaphorical word itself). Ricoeur considers that the tension of the metaphor does not happen at the level of the terms of the utterance, but

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(64) P. Ricoeur, "Creativity in Language: Word, Polysemy, Metaphor"" in The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. An Anthology of His Work, pp. 120-33.

between the "opposed interpretation of the utterance". He puts the following examples of metaphors to analysis: "Blue Angelus" and "Mantle of Sorrows", and finds that in a literal interpretation, there is an element of absurdity present. Ricoeur says:

> "The angelus is not blue, if blue is a color; sorrow is not a mantle
>
> if the mantle is a garment made of cloth. Thus a metaphor does not
>
> exist in itself, but in and through an interpretation." (65)

In this interpretation, Ricoeur finds an extension of meaning which help us to understand what, if considered in a literal way, may be seen as absurd.

Ricoeur sees the metaphor in the semantics of the sentence and not in the word, as in the "substitution theory " which we have already considered. He finally finds in Black other useful perspectives about the tenor/vehicle concept from Richards (66).

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(65) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 50.

(66) Max Black Black's System of Implication considers the literal interpretation of the metaphor as a "contradiction". Black points out two aspects of the metaphorical sentence: the metaphorical word and its contrasting context. As an epistemologist and as a logician, Black works over the concept tenor/vehicle, which he replaces by the focus/frame relationship. According to this model, the metaphor is considered in the sentence; there is a specific word which makes a metaphorical statement, which "focalises", e.g. brings to the mind the meanings organised in "a system of associated commonplaces" (M. Black, Models and Metaphor, p. 42).

1.7.6 Monroe Beardsley: The role of Logical Absurdity.

Beardsley's literary criticism of the metaphor contains two basic points,
which Ricoeur considers important in order to resolve the problem of the
metaphorical process.
These points are the role of logical absurdity and the metaphorical twist.

1) The role of logical absurdity:
This is a basic, pivotal concept, and refers to the "clash between meanings
within the same context" (67). Black's model of tenor/vehicle is replaced

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The sentence, to which this metaphorical word -focus- belongs, is the
frame, the place for contrasts and filtering of some meanings at the
expense of others. It is important to recall that the focus also works as a
filter, organising and selecting our perception of the frame. Ricoeur, in
his essay Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics, finds that Black's
theory can reduce the metaphorical process to the "system of associated
commonplaces" and therefore, curtails the freedom and creativity which
Ricoeur is looking for. He then tries to explore what Black has called the
"specially constructed system of implications" (Cf. M. Black., op. cit.,
pp. 48 ff.), emphasising the "constructed aspect" of the model, since it
implies interaction, creation, and leads us to the novelty of meaning,
beyond the limitations of a system based on the psychological association
of commonplaces. Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problems of
Hermeneutics" in The Philosophy of P. Ricoeur, p. 134-48.
(67) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 140.

by the notion of modifier/subject. The primary meaning of the modifier, e.g. what is predicated of the subject, is in a contradictory tension -or "logical emptiness"- with the primary meaning of the subject. Beardsley, in his book <u>Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism</u> says that "in poetry the chief tactic for obtaining this result is that of logical absurdity" (68). The reader then needs to produce a new, secondary meaning in order to make meaningful the absurdity of the contradiction.

2) The "Metaphorical Twist":

The reader is then confronted by the event of a new meaning, which is independent of the intention of the author, but dependent of the interaction betweeen subject/modifier. Ricoeur finds that the "Metaphorical Twist" of Beardsley is related to the reader's construction of a novel meaning through the confrontation of two interpretations of the same statement. The hidden kinship of the word's connotations are established in a process of selection and discrimination.

1.7.7 "Image and Resemblance":

Ricoeur finds that Beardley's theory does not use any reference to the image function in the metaphorical process. In fact, he observes that the Anglo-Saxon interaction theory does not consider the place of an image or figure at all. Both image and resemblance have been associated with the

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(68) M. Beardley, <u>Aesthetics: Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism</u>, p. 138.

substitution theory already mentioned, but Ricoeur still considers that they are central elements of the metaphorical process, and that it is necessary to reconcile and to investigate their dialectical relationship. In The Rule of Metaphor, Ricoeur organises his thesis upon the work of resemblance in four main points, which we will briefly mention here:

1) Resemblance is a necessary notion for a tension theory, even more necessary than in a substitution theory. The concept of "logical contradiction" requires that what is distanced must be drawn near, showing a relation of kinship through the work of the predicate.

2) Although resemblance is shown through the work of the predicate, it also constitutes the predicate. Ricoeur uses here the work of Phillip Wheelwright (69), to show two elements which are part of a metaphor: Epiphora and Diaphora. The first, following Aristotle's idea, is related to an intuitive process in which alien ideas are assimilated and transferred; the second, is the constructive or discursive moment of the metaphor.

3) According to this, Ricoeur sees that the metaphor is a semantic fact, instead of a psychological one. The originality of Ricoeur's thought lies in the aspect that he sees the production of resemblance as coming from the core of every genre, in the origin of every semantic process. There is

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(69) Cf. P. Wheelwright, Metaphor and Reality.

something in the metaphorical process which produces changes, and this is also closely related with the way language in general works. In this sense he agrees with Gadamer, who sees the metaphor as the origin of logical thought. Thus Ricoeur says: "(the metaphor is) the genetic phenomenon par excellence in the realm of the instance of discourse." (70)

4) If the metaphor is the union of the epiphoric and the diaphoric, intuition and discourse, then it is also image and verb. Mentioning Paul Henle's "iconic theory" and Michel Le Guern's "associated image", Ricoeur considers the tension between a "bad psychology", and a semantic analysis. His dialectical approach once more produces a new synthesis, finding the role of a creative imagination in the process of the metaphor. In this way he incorporates the image into the semantic theory, because resemblance is in fact an image, "depicting abstract relationships." (71)

Ricoeur agrees with Beardsley saying that not only sentences, but the text itself has a sense and a reference, a connotation and a denotation which somehow are outside language. There are multiple meanings, and the metaphor is a text of an ambiguous discourse. This ambiguity of the text, is the equivalent to the plurivocity of the sentence and the polysemy of the word. The "cumulative" characteristic of the polysemy constitutes for Ricoeur an important aspect of the theory of the metaphor, in relation with the production of novel meanings.

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(70) P. Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor, p. 198.

(71) Ibid., pp. 198 ff.

Ricoeur considers what he calls "the case against reference" and finds the two basic positions in relation with sense and reference. First of all, there is a suspension of reference in relation to literature; for some people for instance, "poetry" is the "Counter-example of the referencial relationship of language" (72). Others see the suspension of the reference in all literary genres, and not only in poetry. Ricoeur considers the relation between sense/reference and sense/reality (or truth), and says that without a reference, poetry becomes subjective, a fact which he criticises as originating in Positivism. He needs then to find more about the referential role in the metaphor, and for that purpose he studies Goodman's theory.

1.7.8 Nelson Goodman: Reverse Reference.

Goodman, in his work Languages of Art, starts considering all verbal and non verbal-operations (pictures or statues, for example) from a referential perspective (73). Basically, he considers that a piece of music, a dance, or a written discourse, refer us to the organisation of the world, and that there is a re-creative aspect in such reference. Goodman establishes a relation between the symbolic operation of the metaphor- the re-creative aspect- and the symbolic operation of the denotation. "Denotation" is in this context a concept similar to "reference", or a "first label" as

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(72) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 221.

(73) For this point cf. P. Ricoeur "Metaphor and Reference" in The Rule of Metaphor, pp. 216 ff.

Goodman calls it. This labeling or denotation is produced through the transference of predicates or "properties", from one field to another. An example of this, can be found in relation with colours: if we say "blue", and we see "blue", we are passing from the symbol (the word) to the object (the colour). This is to label, or to denote something. Object are not the only ones capable of denotation but "events" are denoted too. The denotation of nature is related to the re-creation of reality.

When the predicate goes in an opposite direction from the example which we have seen, starting with the object, in this case the colour blue, and passing to the symbol (the word "blue"), we are presenting an example of a property that something or someone possesses. Goodman calls this process "sampling", and establishes that in this case, the predicate does not denote but exemplifies. What happens then with the reference in this process of exemplification? According to Goodman, reference and property coincide. A grey picture exemplifies, or possesses "greyness", but at the same time is denoted by the property of "greyness" to express sadness. Goodman calls this type of reference, a "reverse reference", and Ricoeur comments that the theory of the metaphor can be bound "solidly to the theory of reference, linked by transference of a relation..." (74). The transference is one of possession, which is exemplification. For Ricoeur then, a metaphor is a kind of exemplification, e.g. the sadness expressed by the painting is a metaphor.

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(74) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 234.

From his analysis on Goodman's theory, Ricoeur takes the following points:

a) Poetry has a referential function. Ricoeur says that "Metaphorical reference... consists in the effacement of descriptive reference." (75)

b) Sounds, images and feelings (called "sensa") are not descriptions but representations. They do not denote, but exemplify. In this sense, the poetic reference is as real as the reference of a scientific discourse.

c) The metaphoric language "make and remake" the world.

d) Poetic language is concerned with truth, and Ricoeur thinks that there is an "interweaving" action between historic and poetic references. This happens through the temporality of human actions.

In this second moment of the hermeneutical circle, we have seen how Ricoeur investigates a dialectic of meaning in the past and in the present, through the study of the problem of the reference of the text. But the historicity of the text is in a conflictive relation with the historicity of the reader. For this reason, Ricoeur wants to ask about the nature of the text as experienced, in a dialectic text/reader and text/author. The main question for the following moment of the hermeneutical circle will be "What is the text saying to me, in relation with the experience of the 'community' of readers?"

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(75) For this point cf. P. Ricoeur, op. cit, p. 238 ff. Also Time and Narrative, I, pp. 80-6.

1.8 Understanding.

The two main principles of a phenomenological hermeneutics are concerned with the meaning of the text and with a different model of textual communication. The first means that any question to the text must be, basically, a question about its meaning, taking into account the history, the formal aspects of the text, and the reader's own reflections (76). The second, changes the traditional model which relates writer, text and reader in the mentioned order, to a model of "parallel relations" between writer/text and text/reader. This is the model which Ricoeur uses to analyse the relation established between the reader, the text and the community of readers in "Narrated Time", the fourth part of the volume three of Time and Narrative.

1.8.1 The World of the Text and the World of the Reader.

In his work The Rule of Metaphor, Ricoeur studies Aristotle's definitions of the concepts of mimêsis and muthos, as presented in his Poetics. Aristotle defined mimêsis as "an imitation of human actions" and finds that poetry, especially in the superior form of tragedy, fulfils this role of imitation of human life. It is important to recall here that for Aristotle "imitation" is a concept of production, as for instance, in the work of "resemblance". But every tragedy, according to the Poetics, is

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(76) Cf. J. M. Valdés, Phenomenological Hermeneutics and the Study of Literature, p. 60.

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composed of six different parts which Ricoeur mentions as "...Fable or Plot
(muthos), Characters (êthê), Diction (lexis), Thought (dianoia), Spectacle
(opsis) and Melody (melopoia)". Of all these parts, muthos is the central
one; its functions are the organisation of the poem and the work of
coherence necessary for the arrangement of characters. Muthos (or myth) is
in a way, mimêsis, and it is also a poiêsis (a making), because of its
creative function. As mimêsis is a re-description of reality (77). Ricoeur
finds that in the relation muthos/mimêsis of the poiêsis, lies a tension
between imitation of reality and creativity or between heuristic fiction
and re-description of models. These concepts enrich Ricoeur's investigation
about metaphors; there is a parallelism between the "elevation of meaning"
in the myth, at the level of the poem, and the "elevation of meaning in the
metaphor at the level of the word [lexis]" (78).

In the first volume of Time and Narrative, Ricoeur returns to the concept
of mimesis, in an elaboration of what he calls "Mimesis $_3$". He tells us
that "Mimesis $_1$" is an elaboration made from a pre-figured structure of
human experience, and "Mimesis $_2$", is the creation of a text by an author.
"Mimesis $_3$" then, is the re-configuration of what the author has created in
the text (Mimesis $_2$).

Ricoeur now wants to study how the narrative configuration could be related
to the reconfiguration of temporal experience. Following our author's

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(77) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 35.

(78) Ibid., p. 41.

elaboration in Part IV of Time and Narrative (Vol. III), we find this definition of time: "(Historical Time) is a reinscription of lived time on cosmic time" (79); this means for Ricoeur that history constructs reconfigurations which "stand for" or "take the place of" the events of the past. Speaking about what he considers "the interweaving of history and fiction", Ricoeur proposes the overlapping of the "quasi-historical character of fiction" and the "quasi-fictive character of the historical past" (80), and shows how this work of re-configuration (Mimesis $_3$) is perceived through the interrelation between the world of the text and the world of the reader.

1.8.2 The "Reader-Response Theory."

Ricoeur looks now for a theory which emphasises the role of the reader, an "aesthetic theory" in contrast with a "rhetoric of persuasion" where the reader is a more passive element. The text affects the reader, and to analyse this process, Ricoeur investigates the Reader-Response Theory of the German Aesthetics of the University of Constance, represented mainly by the work of Wolfang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss.

Iser, in his book The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response,

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(79) P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, vol. III, p. 99.

(80) Ibid., p. 191.

establishes that every literary text represents a perspective of the world organised by its author; the text is a construction and not a copy (or imitation, in a Platonic sense) of the world, and it does not need to convey an original perspective from the author. Usually what the text carries is a recompilation of the perspective of the author's historical time. The role of the reader is one of participation in the production and understanding of a text because the written discourse has an element of indeterminacy, which forces the reader to communicate with it, and to complete the text. Such indeterminacy is the consequence of the text's lack of a concrete referent, and Iser compares the written discourse with an "iconic sign", which designates "the conditions of conception and perception", and facilitates the reader's construction of the text -and referents- in his/her own mind. It is because of such a lack of concrete referents, that Iser sees the work in the interrelation between the language of the text and the reader's consciousness. This consciousness actualises the potential of the linguistic signs. Iser says that a novel has the power to represent "thought systems" due to this characteristic of "suspended reference", which do not anull a mimetic function, e.g. a relation of resemblance, similarity and difference in the text.

Ricoeur considers that the most important concept of Iser is that of "wandering viewpoint". By wandering viewpoint, Iser means the changes of perspectives or broken "threads of the plots" (81), which are the new introductions offered by the narrative to the reader. According to Ricoeur,

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(81) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 112.

this concept "expresses the twofold fact that the whole of a text can never be perceived at once and that, placing ourselves in the literary text, we travel with it as our own reading progresses" (82). It means that the reading process involves a play between expectations, anticipations, and modification of memories, something that Ricoeur finds very similar to Husserl's description of the two main phenomena of Phenomenology of Time: the relation between "retention" (primary memory) and "protention" (expectation).

Iser has based his investigations on the work of Roman Ingarden, a Polish philosopher who studied with Husserl, and who tried to use the phenomenological method to overcome the distinctions between object and subject (e.g. the material and the mental world), through a careful examination of consciousness and the object of consciousness at the same time. Ingarden defines the text as "one object presented to consciousness". Ricoeur mentions Ingarden's understanding about the "incompleteness" of a literary text as follows (83):

1) The text is incomplete because it only offers schematic views that the reader must complete or "concretize". Ingarden uses the term "places of indeterminacy" which the reader must "fill out".

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(82) P. Ricoeur, _Time and Narrative_, vol. III, p. 168.

(83) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "A Phenomenology and a Aesthetic of Reading" in op. cit., pp. 166 ff.

2) The incompleteness of the text is also related to the "ordered sequence of sentences" (intentionale Satzkorrelate), which gives to the text "a quasi-temporal 'extension' from beginning to end". Ricoeur finds here another relationship between the concept of a "chain of sentences" and the Husserlian idea of protention/retention. Protention is the equivalent to quasi-temporal 'extension' from beginning to end". Ricoeur finds here another relationship between the concept of a "chain of sentences" and the Husserlian idea of protention/retention. Protention is the equivalent to the function of anticipation of the sentence, while the function of retention is fulfilled by the primary memory of the mentioned chain; in terms of reading, both terms refer to the process of modification of expectations and transformation of memories in the sentence.

1.8.2.1   The dialectics of the "vital experience."

Ricoeur considers three main dialectics which are the characteristics of a reader-response theory, and those responsible for a "vital experience" (expérience vive) on the reader's side. These dialectics are:

1) Dialectic of "Discordance-Concordance": Reading becomes a "drama of discordant concordance", because the places of indeterminacy are the result of a strategy of frustration of the text, meaning by that the reader's necessity to provide the configuration of the world, while the text "frustrates" his/her expectations of obtaining an immediate one.

2) Dialectic of "Determinacy-Indeterminacy": Apart from its indeterminacy, the text has an excess of meaning, which makes it inexhaustible from the

reader's point of view. There is a permanent tension in every text between a lack of determinacy and an excesive richness which is provided by the work of the reader.

3) Dialectic of "Familiarity-Discovering": The reader, in his/her search for the coherence of the text, could find him/herself becoming "familiar" with the work, or as Ricoeur says "on an equal footing with the work" ("believing" in it). This makes an illusion of the act of concretizing (Konkretisation - realisation), but on the other hand, if the reader cannot find coherence in the written discourse, s/he will never became familiar with the work. "The right reading" then, is according to Ricoeur "The one that admits a certain degree of illusion" but also accepts the excess of meaning (or polysemanticism) of the text (84), key for a creative interpretation.

1.8.3 Hans Robert Jauss: The Collective Horizon.

Iser has studied the relationship of the text with the individual reader, who is considerd by him as the co-creator of a text, because s/he needs to supply the implied -not written- meaning of the work. Jauss, in his work Toward an Aesthetic of Reception, organises his theory in a hermeneutic of a more collective horizon. Yet, Ricoeur does not find contradictions between them, but a complementary role of an individual/public approach to the process of reading. According to him, the individual reading manifests

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(84) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 169.

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the "structure of appeal" of the text, but the act of reading is always related to the historic expectations of past readers and their own reception of the text. Ricoeur finds here the necessity of establishing a phenomenology of reading, to enlighten certain aspects such as the relation between the "implied reader" (the reader role that the text in itself has established) and the "implied author" (the style of the work).

To explore this relation, Ricoeur takes us now into the consideration of Jauss' theory. Jauss has rejected the idea of the fixed meaning of the text, and he has searched for an explanation to the question of different readings in history. Basically, he relates such differences to two notions, the paradigm and the horizon of expectations. The "paradigm" refers to the fact that writers and readers belong to certain historical periods, in which certain assumptions about literature and literary conventions existed and were shared by the authors and the readers. These assumptions were also part of a context, where some expectations prevailed over others, although there are writers and readers who work outside such horizons. They are usually the ones who contribute to future expectations, although their ideas are not necessarily understood in their own historical time. Jauss explains the changes in literary history through the concepts of a "shared set of assumptions" and by the rejection of an horizonal framework.

1.8.3.1 Basic thesis of the Response Theory.

Ricoeur mentions what he considers the basic thesis of the response theory in Jauss' Aesthetics, in the following way:

1) Basically, the production of meaning in a text rests upon the dialogical (dialogisch) relation created by the public who read the text in their own different historical moments.

2) There is a "trans-subjective horizon of comprehension" (85), which acts by conditioning the "effect" produced by the text (Wirkung). To put it in other words, all the references of a text, as they were thought by the public in the past, need to be recognised in order to be able to understand the sense of the work. To take such references into account is what Jauss calls the restoring of the horizon of expectations. It is interesting to remember here that Husserl defined temporal experience by the word "horizon", and Jauss is using the aforementioned concept in the primary sense of "the experience of the first readers of a work". (86)

3) The concepts of "effects" of a text, and "history of effect" (Gadamer), together with the idea of "horizons of expectations", are complemented with a logic of question and answer, in which Jauss follows Gadamer and R. G. Collingwood, in his book The Idea of History. Jauss considers that every text replies to a question, and understanding depends on the way the answer is articulated by the reader. Ricoeur adds here that this response "mediated between the past and the present" (87), or in other words, that there is an historical mediation in the reception of a work.

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(85) Cf. H. R. Jauss, Pour une Estetique de la Réception, p. 14.

(86) (87) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 172.

4) Jauss opposes Gadamer's concept of Classicism in _Truth and Method_. This is related to the "consciousness of the perennial, of the inalienable sense, which is independent of all temporal circumstances." (88) According to Jauss, in the classical works there is only a "temporary" but not permanent hold up of the dialogical relation public/text. The contrary is, in his own words, "an abusive interpretation" (89; my translation) where the characteristics of openness of history are denied, in the same way that the creative aspects of the logic of questions and answers are suppressed (e.g. the answers of an early work should produce more questioning, and new responses too). Still, Ricoeur remarks that in Literary History we need to consider the classical works as "references", temporarily estabilised (on a diachronic level) but producing integration in the synchronic moment of reception.

Ricoeur finds in Jauss' thesis a certain creativity, which makes him criticise the structuralist position (the "narrow" text without reference) and the dogmatic Marxist position which moves everything into the social plane. The creative function of the text is done only on the public level, through the aesthetic distance existing between the horizon of expectations of literature and everyday life to which it is confronted. Ricoeur discovers here the "efficacy" of literature: to put the reader in a situation where s/he can find his/her own answers, to the questions opened by the text. A Literary Hermeneutics needs to work in the three stages of

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(88) H.-G. Gadamer, _Truth and Method_, p. 272.

(89) H. R. Jauss, _op. cit._, p. 105.

understanding, explanation and application; these aspects are related to each other and application cannot be privileged above the others, otherwise our approach becomes superficial. Finally, Ricoeur presents us with a synthesis of the process of reading and its reception, according to what we have already considered, in the form of a structure of inmediate understanding.

1.8.3.2 Structure of immediate understanding.

First Reading: The first reading is a naïve one (although Ricoeur doubts about its "innocence"); it is governed by the epochal tendencies of the text.

Second Reading: A distance with the text is established; the reader has new expectations, and the work of the logic Question/Answer begins. The reader needs to choose an interpretation, excluding others, and doing that s/he gives place to a "certain partiality" in the interpretation.

Elucidation.
The "certain partiality" produced requires a work of elucidation. This is done through a third re-reading.

Third Reading: This is a moment of verification. The limits and conditions derived from the historical horizon of the text need to be questioned. The difference of horizons is then clarified, and this process generates more questions and answers. This third reading is, accordingly, a "historical reading".

New Distanciation.

Although the expectations from the first and second readings still continue, the historical reading, which answers the question "What did the text say?", is now under the frame of a more hermeneutical question, "What does the text say to me and what do I say to the text?" (90). The following question is, according to Ricoeur, the one concerning the applicability of this schema, and this will lead us to the last part of the Hermeneutical Circle, the moment of Appropriation (_Aneignung_).

1.9   Appropriation.

1.9.1   Ricoeur's shift of emphasis in the Hermeneutical Circle.

The idea of the hermeneutical circle in Ricoeur comes from Heidegger's ideas, as expressed in Part II of _Being and Time_. Heidegger considers here the movement of an ontology of understanding, where we are able to perceive the being only in the moment of interpretation. There is a sense of circularity, concerning the understanding of the text and the understanding of oneself, and this is basically where the image "hermeneutical circle" comes from. There are common aspects in all the definitions of hermeneutical circles, from the ones conceived by the Romantics to Ricoeur, but there are differences too. For instance, when Schleiermacher uses the circle, he refers to the relation established between two subjectivities, the author and the reader; to understand the text is to understand the mind

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(90) P. Ricoeur, _op. cit._, p. 175.

of the author, the other, by means of the projection of the reader's subjectivity into the reading. But Ricoeur, although not ruling out the hermeneutical circle as such, reformulates its concept, in accordance with his own shift of emphasis in understanding.

Ricoeur does not consider the understanding of the other, but of the world. The circle then does not belong anymore to the psychological level of intersubjectivities, but to the semantical process of textual interpretation. The hermeneutical project of Ricoeur relates to two discourses: the discourse of the text and the discourse of interpretation, considering here the moment of appropriation, not as a projection of the reader but as a fusion of different horizons.

1.9.2   The Hermeneutical Arc.

Ricoeur, in his essay entitled What is a text?, says that the moment of appropriation should be "postponed until the end of the process" (91). Appropriation is then the "last pillar" of a process of interpretation, which Ricoeur calls "the hermeneutical arc" (arc hermeneutique); in this "arc" (or "arch"), explanation and understanding are two pillars, integrated in the reading of a text (92). This is part of the process of

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(91) The French word "arc" can be translated as arch or as arc. Cf. P. Ricoeur, "What is a Text?" in D. Rasmussen Mythic-symbolic Language and Philosophical Antrhopology, p. 150.

(92) The dialectic explanation-understanding of Ricoeur has a deep

"making one's own" the sense and meaning of the work. Both explanation and understanding are the pillars where the hermeneutical arc rests. Understanding is non-methodical, it is a "guessing" concerned with the semantics of the text, because through them the work becomes truly alive; explanation, on the other hand, involves a methodology, an analysis seeking to explain what is being understood, and to understand what is explained in a dialectical way. As Ricoeur himself says "...explanation (erklären) requires understanding (verstehen) and (...) understanding brings forth in a new way the inner dialectic, which constitutes interpretation as a whole." (93)

1.9.3 The Mechanism of Distanciation

We will consider now how Gadamer's thought has had an influence on Ricoeur, studying their coincidences and divergences in relationship with

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influence from Gadamer, although there are also many points of divergence between both thinkers. Gadamer developed a hermeneutics based in the dialectic of distance and participation. By "participation" Gadamer means an ontological participation (Zugehörigkeit), which implies the relation between things and their being (the object/subject relation of distance). He returns to the discussion of Dilthey about the status of Epistemology in Natural Science, and finds that scientific objectivity is based in a distanciation between Being and participation; in Gadamer the ontology of Heidegger and the epistemological quest of the Romantics seem to be combined.

(93) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 86.

appropriation of meaning in interpretation. Ricoeur divides the function of
distanciation in two parts, a cultural and a methodological one. The
cultural (or temporal) aspect of distanciation, is related to the fact that
the text has lost its immediate authority; all the work developed by
Ricoeur around the Judeo-Christian symbology and the function of the myth
in the Christian tradition comes from his confrontation with this problem.

The second aspect, method, has received the influence of Gadamer's thought
in Truth and Method. Basically, the thesis of Gadamer's masterpiece is that
methods destroy the reality of life; one should opt for one or the other,
method or truth, because understanding can never be reduced to a technique.
Methods, according to Gadamer, produce an alienating distance with the
text, objectifying it.
Ricoeur disagrees with Gadamer on this point, because he wants to rethink
the hermeneutical problem created by distanciation. Doing so, Ricoeur finds
that far from alienating, the aforementioned function performs a very
necessary aspect such as the preservation of the text. The mechanism of
distanciation then, according to Ricoeur, happens in the following way
(94):

First Distanciation:
The first distanciation is the one produced in the act of taking distance

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(94) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation" in From
Text to Action, p. 75 ff. Ricoeur wants to leave behind what he understand
is the Gadamerian antinomy between distanciation-belonging, which is also

from the event: it happens in the speech-act (event of the discourse) and it is manifested in the ambiguity of the text, which requires interpretation.

Second Distanciation:

The second moment of distanciation, is related to language; the text has been preserved by language, but at the same time it has become de-contextualised. Such de-contextualisation requires a hermeneutic process, in order to understand the work; at the same time, it performs the function of keeping the "openess" of the text. This "openess" is the key to new interpretations, and to the creative aspect of re-reading in general.

Third Distanciation:

Distanciation is, according to Ricoeur, the element which helps the text in its function of re-describing reality, the "world of the text" (remembering that "text" is an extended concept in Ricoeur). It is in this world of the text where a third distanciation movement appears: "a distanciation of the

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an antimony between truth and method. Gadamer thinks that we should opt for a method (thus losing ontological density in interpretation) or for truth (rennouncing to the claim of objectivity made by human sciences). Against this antinomy, Ricoeur considers that truth is no longer relate to the dicotomy 'object-subject', but can be found instead in the text and in the interpreter appropriation of its meaning. Cf. also P. Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, pp. 182 ff.

real from itself" (95). In this new distanciation Ricoeur sees the importance of fictional narrative, which supresses the familiar or "first reference", and gives place to a different sort of reference. The new reference is related to the resurgence of the Lebenswelt mentioned by Husserl or the "being-in-the-world", using Heidegger's terms.

1.9.4 Fusion of Horizons.

Gadamer sees human beings in their location in History. The historical consciousness is the "consciousness of the history of effects" (wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein) and this implies the awareness of knowing how our interpretations are conditioned by our historical setting. This historicity of interpretation means that no observation can be neutral, since it is closely related to a previous understanding on the side of the interpreter. According to Gadamer, we are never free of the past and although he does not consider the past as an object of observation, he sees how it affects us; the consequence of this argument is that historical existence has priority over reflection. Ricoeur disagrees with Gadamer in this aspect, becauses he sees Gadamer as following Dilthey in an opposition between explanation (related to the human sciences) and understanding (concerned with the physical sciences).

Gadamer uses the term "horizon" to describe the contextuality of

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(95) P. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of the Human Sciences", in From Text to Action", p. 86.

interpretation. The interpreter cannot be separated from his/her own horizon (von-sich-absehen), but the text itself has its own horizon too. In order to understand the past, the horizon of the present must include the one of the past: this is the "fusion of horizons" (Horizontwerschmeltzung, literally "a wiping away of horizons"), a broadening and focusing function which results in the creation of a new horizon, where "the world horizon of the reader is fused with the world horizon of the writer" (96).

The relation between the past and present horizons is in a dialectical tension, and it is the key for understanding our history and our present.

1.9.5 Appropriation and the fusion of horizons.

However, the fusion of horizons is not appropriation, neither is the concept of application (or Anwendung). Anwendung, according to Gadamer, is not the final aspect of interpretation (as in Ricoeur) but an implicit aspect of the whole hermeneutical process, related to "the conscious act" of the fusion produced when "the historical horizon is projected (and) simultaneously removed" (97).

Appropriation (Aneignung) as defined by Ricoeur, is the understanding of the distance which is mediated by the text, and not by the author, who is here considered as an "illusion". This concept of understanding obviously

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(96) P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 93.

(97) H.-G. Gadamer, Truth and Method, p. 273.

is opposed to the Cartesian apodigma _Cogito ergo sum_ and the idea of the subject as capable of knowing by intuition. To interpret is to appropriate the meaning of the horizon of the text, and the term has an individual and a collective connotation, difficult to understand in the English and French translation of the word. _Aneignung_, which in a literal translation means "making one's own" (98), also implies the idea of "to incorporate" the thought of a certain author. But although it appears to be an act of individualistic possession, it also implies the notion that the reader needs to be "open" to the text, emptying him/herself in order to be in contact with the world offered by the text. Ricoeur says that "...it implies a moment of dispossession of the egoistic and narcissistic ego" (99), and presupposes the contact between the individual and the community, expressed in the communitarian aspect of the _Welt_ (World of the text). This is the ontological aspect of the act of appropriation, the engagemenent of the interpreter in the re-description of the world, and his/her response to that. Ricoeur sees some misconception in the use of the idea of appropriation, basically in relation with the following aspects concerning the author, the addressee, and the actual reader.

1) Concerning the author: Appropriation is not incorporation of the intention of the author, neither of his/her historical circumstances,

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(98) P. Ricoeur, _op. cit._, p. 94.

(99) _Ibid._

expectations or understanding of the cultural/historical phenomena of the past. Appropriation is related instead, to the meaning of the text as "open", in a certain atemporality where the text reveals the world which constitutes its reference.

2) Concerning the addressee: The process of appropriation must not be regulated "by the understanding of the original addresee of the text" (100). The historicity of the text is in tension with the "omnitemporality of the meaning" which has left the original author, his/her circumstances and the original reader or addresee.

3) Concerning the actual reader: To regulate the moment of appropriation by the actual reader is also a mistake, since interpretation could become merely a projection of individual prejudices, pre-understandings etc. Ricoeur reminds us here that this is a criticism made to Existential Hermeneutics. Aneinung is appropriation of a certain project of the world, a "pro-position of a mode of being in the world that the text opens up in front of itself by means of its non-ostensive references" (101).

1.9.6 Conclusions.

To conclude, Ricoeur does not acknowledge Gadamer's separation between truth and method, and reaffirms instead the dialectic

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(100) Ibid., p. 93.

(101) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 97.

distance/participation which is related to explanation/understanding. The appropriation of meaning, as part of this dialectics, reveals to us a new interpretation of the text, and new ways of being in the world. This last moment of the hermeneutical circle presents to us the text as a medium for "self understanding", and through this to a new understanding of the world, manifested in the challenge to the moral, philosophical and aesthetical problems confronting our existence.

We started this long way of Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle of interpretation providing the space and common base for a community of readers, throughout the study of the formal aspects of a text. We continue asking questions about the text as history and as experience, and we finish acknowledging the interpreter's new "level of being", acquired in a process of self knowledge which is also a new knowledge of his/her world. It is in this moment called "Appropriation" by Ricoeur, where meaning is found in praxis, through a dialectic process which has challenged the interpreter, and produces in him/her a "challenging attitude" to his/her own world.

Through this long way which in Ricoeur implies a "return" (Kehre) of language, we perceive the interpreter's discovering of a more authentic being, closely related to a praxis of change of structures of power and dominion. It is in this context that Ricoeur sees the amplitude of the task of liberation, the key for our study of Theology of Liberation, in the following words:

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"The problem of liberation [is concerned with] the liberation of

exploitation of work but also of the word which is falsified by the

fact of being at the service of certain relations of power." (102)

The suspicion of interpretation as merely a projection of the individual's

pre-understandings, gives space to the ideological suspicion.

This words from Ricoeur introduce us now to the second part of our study,

where we will consider Ricoeur's analysis on the problems confronting

Biblical Hermeneutics, and his debate with Bultmann and the "New

Hermeneutics" on myth, symbol and exegesis.

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(102) Cf. B. Melano Couch, Hermenéutica Metódica, p. 262.

Summary

Part One.

Hermeneutics can be defined as "the theory or philosophy of interpretation of meaning." Ricoeur considers three main aspects of hermeneutics: as a technique, as an intrinsic element of language, and as interpretation. The first two aspects are subsumed under the third, as part of a hermeneutical synthesis developed through many centuries.

In the area of Philosophical Hermeneutics we have considered the work of Schleiermacher and Dilthey in the XIX Century. Schleiermacher tried to reconcile philosophy and exegesis, putting together Kantian criticism and Romantic creativity. He established a "Divinatory Method" to understand the text by the search for the mind of the author. Dilthey had a similar but less mechanicist psychological approach, developing a descriptive and analytical model concerned with the structure of mental activities. Ricoeur admires Schleiermacher's departure from the Physical Sciences, but criticises the subjectivity of his approach, which tends to produce a partial understanding, and the same criticism is applied to Dilthey. Ricoeur is concerned with the meaning of the text, and not with the life of its author.

Ricoeur studied the development of Heiddeger's hermeneutic in relation to three main points: a) the contestation of the cogito, b) the question of the self and c) the emergence of the word. He considers that Heidegger has displaced the position of the cogito in his philosophy, and he takes from him the reading of experience through a philosophy of language. However, Ricoeur keeps the analytical method from Husserl, approaching the phenomena by the discourse, in which he considers "the long way of hermeneutics": to being, through the understanding of signs.

Ricoeur uses a Phenomenological Hermeneutics based on the following key points from Husserl: The process of phenomenological description, as studied from the category of meaning; the subject as the conveyor of meaning, and the act of phenomenological reduction. From this last point we emphasised the role of the epoché, or suspension of immediate beliefs and understandings prior to the process.

Part two

The hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur takes four elements from
phenomenological hermeneutics: 1) a literary text as a written discourse
with an unity, 2) the model of communication built upon a parallel pattern
writer/text and reader/text, 3) the re-reading as an event which replaces
the event of the author, and 4) the dialectic explanation-understanding.

The main moments of the hermeneutical process are: Guessing, explanation,
understanding and appropriation of meaning. They are related to the
following aspects.
Guessing: How does the text work? Formal dimension of the text.
Explanation: What does the text speak about? Text as history.
Understanding: What does the text say to me? Text as experience.
Appropriation: How have I read this text? Text as self-knowledge.

Ricoeur considers the formal dimension of the text studying Saussurian
Structuralism. He sees here three important principles: The idea of
language as an objective system, the notions of diachronic and synchronic
levels of understanding, and the work of linguistic laws. Basically, what
Ricoeur rejects is the lack of reference in Structuralism, and the
exclusion of historical context.

The text as history is related to the theory of reference. Ricoeur
considers two types of references: The ostensive one (referred to the
author's situation), and the non-ostensive which is the world opened to our
eyes by the text. From the intersection of both references, the metaphor is
born. Ricoeur's theory of the metaphor is elaborated upon the work of many
thinkers such as Bearsdley, Black and Goodman amongst others. From Goodman,
he takes these important points: a) poetry has a referential function, b)
poetical references are real, and c) Metaphors qualities contribute to the
shaping of the world.

Explanation and understanding form the "hermeneutical arc", and both
elements are necessary for the process of interpretation. Ricoeur studies
the Reader Response Theory, where he finds the creative function of the
text, and the efficacy of literature: the reader can find his/her own

answers to the questions opened by the text; this confronts Ricoeur with the problem of distanciation, which can briefly be described as this: The first reading is a naïve one, and takes account of the epochal tendencies of the text, while in the second, a distance is established and the reader chooses an interpretation. A third reading requires a verification, from the historical context of the text, and after that, a new moment of distanciation moment arrives, with the actualisation of meaning. Distanciation is, according to Ricoeur, the element which helps the text in its function of re-describing reality, "the world of the text." In relationship with Gadamer, Ricoeur disagrees in what he considers an opposition between explanation and understanding, or truth and method. Ricoeur reintroduces a dialectic of distanciation and participatory belonging, in the text.

Finally, the hermeneutical circle reaches its end, in the moment of appropriation of a certain project of the world that the text opens up to the reader by means of its non-ostensive reference. This is, in a nutshell, the long way of interpretation proposed by Ricoeur: a return to language to discover a more authentic being, related to a praxis of change in the world. It is a hermeneutic of solidarity, since it values the community of interpreters and the practice of a new way of liberation from oppressive structures, but is basically a hermeneutic of hope and action.

BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS AND THE INTERPRETATION OF SYMBOLS

"At times, interpretation matters. On the whole, such times are times of
cultural crisis."

David Tracy. (103)

"Theology may be defined as a new act of interpretation of the Christ
Event."

Claude Geffré. (104)

Part One.

2.1 Christian Hermeneutics during critical times.

The first chapter of this thesis has introduced us to issues concerning
general hermeneutics and the development of the circle of interpretation of
Paul Ricoeur, which, as we have seen, is related to phenomenological
hermeneutics. In the present chapter, we will consider Ricoeur's theory of
interpretation in its specific relation to Biblical Hermeneutics, and his
formulations on symbols, myths, and on the problems which lie at the core
of Christian hermeneutics. The second part of the chapter will be dedicated
to studying Rudolph Bultmann's concepts of myth, symbol and exegesis. His

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(103) D. Tracy, Plurality and Ambiguity, p. 7

(104) C. Geffré, El Cristianismo ante el riesgo de Interpretación, p. 74.

hermeneutical circle of demythologizing will then be compared with Ricoeur's theory and at the end with one of Bultmann's students, Ernst Fuchs, a representative theologian of the "New Hermeneutics". Our purpose here will be to create a dialogue between Ricoeur, Bultmann and Fuchs, ending the chapter with a synthesis of Ricoeur's exegetical and hermeneutical proposal.

We started quoting Tracy on the role of interpretation during critical times. Such crises could be in the lives of individuals or nations; it could well be, as Tracy says, Luther challenged by the crisis of the German society of the XVI Century, or Schleiermacher confronted with the crisis of the process of interpretation in itself. In any case, the history of Christian theology is built upon the interpretation of dogmatic crisis, requiring the re-creation of a meaning which seems to become at times, either lost or inefficacious. This is the reason why Geffré considers that Christian Theology has always been a hermeneutical theology, in constant dialogue between tradition and history, and the horizon of the Revelation which lies in the past but also waits in the future.

Ricoeur has said that hermeneutics is the art of interpretation which always maintains a distance with the object of explanation. In the same way, theology had maintained a distance with the tradition of the event of Christ (as experienced by the apostles), and added new elements in its search for understanding the Christian message of the Scriptures. Such investigation has been enriched in our time by the experience of a more plural dialogue with culture and ideology, resulting in a contextual hermeneutical approach from the Third World.

As a result of this hermeneutical dialogue with culture, Christian theology

has found new challenges which have given origin to a new model of

interpretation, where many anthropological assumptions have been

questioned. Language has taken a decisive role in relation to these

questionings, and biblical hermeneutics has moved from a tradition of

translation to a more critical relationship between understanding and

explanation, the hermeneutical arc or "pillars" of the process of

interpretation.

One can ask, however, if the strong role of linguistics in biblical

hermeneutics is a modern product or if it is the natural consequence of a

process that has been carried throughout history, as part of the

hermeneutical theology mentioned by Geffré. Ricoeur, in his analysis of

the core of the hermeneutical problem in the history of Christianity,

considers the problem of interpretation and language as inherent to

biblical reading in history. He denies that the actual conflict of

Scriptural interpretation is original to modern times, and shows us instead

its development through history. We will proceed to consider Ricoeur's

outline of the dialectics of biblical hermeneutics, in relation with the

text, the Kerygma and the existential question of humanity.

2.1.2 A mirror of explanations: The text as interpretation of a text.

The fact that today we perceive biblical hermeneutics as so challenging,

especially in relation to previous methods of interpretation is, according

to Ricoeur, a paradox. Such a paradox is built upon the historical

development of a Christian hermeneutic, which has always been grounded in the interrelation of the Writings (<u>Scriptura</u>), the Word, the event, and its meaning (105). Ricoeur thinks that many aspects worth considering in this dialectic, have not been clearly perceived until recently.

The hermeneutical problem of Christianity is organised by Ricoeur in three main moments:

1) The moment of questioning the relationship between the Old and New Testament.

2) The moment of interpreting Christ's mystery in relation to human existence.

3) The moment of the questioning of the hermeneutical situation in itself, or the correlation Kerygma-Text. These moments are not arranged by Ricoeur in a chronological but in a systematic order.

2.1.2.1 First Moment: The questioning of the relationship between the Old and New Testament.

The hermeneutical problem was considered by the primitive Christian Community and later on by the Reformation. In recent times it has been the object of consideration of Liberation Theology and other contextual

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(105) P. Ricoeur, <u>The Conflict of Interpretations</u>. p. 382.

theologies. Ricoeur reminds us that the New Testament is already an interpretation of the only text the first Christians had, the Torah. This event of interpretation gives the Hebrew Scriptures the adjective of "old", although the new interpretation remains related to the interpreted text, the Torah. Ricoeur finds this relationship ambiguous, and established upon an inner mechanism of processing of meaning. Such is the mutation of meaning which lies at the core of the Scripture, from the Letter to the Hebrews to the whole spirit of the Gospel, the novelty of the "Good News."

This novelty of meaning has been expressed in the use of Christian allegories, which Ricoeur distinguishes carefully from the hermeneutical use of allegories by pagan sources. The basic difference between them lies in the fact that the Stoics, and Philo of Alexandria in particular, use allegory as a way of mythical appropriation of a philosophical discourse, while Saint Paul, based in the historical event of Christ, uses allegory to interpret the whole of the Scriptures. Ricoeur says that Jesus is the Logos of Scripture, and himself "Exegesis and Exegete" (106) of the biblical text, whose richness is increased by the tense relation of the Torah and the Gospel, since the categories of promise and fulfillment act as a bonding element between the texts; the ambiguity of the dialogue between Old and New Testament is then resolved creatively by the use of allegorical tools.

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(106) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 384.

2.1.2.2   Second Moment: Interpreting Christ's mystery in relation to human existence.

Ricoeur finds that the hermeneutical circle used by St. Paul, is based primarily upon the events of the Cross and Resurrection. The reader is then encouraged by St. Paul to appropriate these events in relation to his/her own existence; as such, the act of appropriation is explained in Paul's metaphor of becoming a new creature in Christ (107). The death and resurrection of Christ are hermeneutically related to the mystery of human existence, and to humanity's own experiences of dying and living again (eternal life).

This hermeneutical dialectic has been developed during the Scholastic interpretation of the Middle Ages, and by Rudolph Bultmann in our own century. The Scriptures are interpreted here in a cultural relation, with the aim of producing an understanding not only of the text, but of the whole world. Medieval hermeneuticians were concerned with reality, both from the human and divine perspective. The emphasis put on the moral meaning of the Scriptures made hermeneutics "The deciphering (of) our existence according to its comformity with Christ" (108); from that, Ricoeur finds that our own understanding of ourselves is mirrored in the written word. The moral meaning of the text depends on the allegorical

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(107) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., pp. 409-11.

(108) Ibid., p. 385.

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process, but at the root of it, we always find the relationship between word and reality, text and life, liber et speculum.

2.1.2.3 Third Moment: Kerygma and Text.

According to Ricoeur, The paradox of biblical interpretation is that the Kerygma is not a text, but a person (109). The announcement of Jesus Christ implies then that the Word of God is God himself, as in the mystery of incarnation, and not in the Scriptures as such. But to express this Kerygma the written word has been needed, and the communication took the form of the witnesses' stories of the Gospel; afterwards, it also became the community confession of faith.

The Kerygma became the text and rule (canon) of interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures, and this happened because the literal meaning prevailed over other meanings such as the moral, analogical and methodological (110). The point is that according to Ricoeur, this literal meaning also needs interpretation, although this is certainly a modern discovery, indebted to Philology and Historical Criticism. The desacralisation of the Scriptures which we have already studied in Chapter One, forces us to consider not

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(109) Ibid., p. 386.

(110) Cf. M. Lubac, Exégese Médiévale: Les Quatre sens de l'Ecriture. Also P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretation, p. 384.

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only the relation between Old and New Testament, or text and existence, but the discernment between Word of God and human word located at the core of the New Testament itself. The whole Scripture is mediated by a process of distanciation, from the first community of witnesses to ourselves. The task of modernity is, according to Ricoeur, to understand this distance of time, space and meaning; in this hermeneutical moment in which we are now.

Bultmann's genius was the re-discovering of a demythologization programme, which was later challenged and continued by the New Hermeneutic movement. Ricoeur has then contributed new insights from Phenomenology; and the dialogue, far from being finished, is still growing in the actual hermeneutics of Liberation Theology. This adds new questions concerning the degree of dependence/independence between both types of hermeneutics, and the specific problems of the biblical text, which we will proceed to consider in the light of the thought of Ricoeur.

2.2 The place of Biblical Interpretation.

"Biblical hermeneutics is at the same time a particular instance of the
sort of general hermeneutics described... and a unique affair."
Paul Ricoeur. (111)

In a short article entitled <u>Biblical Hermeneutics and Philosophical</u>
<u>Hermeneutics</u>, Ricoeur analyses the relation between these two
interpretative tasks, which he defines as being complex and inclusive. The
first, obvious question he confronts us with, concerns the degree of
dependency of biblical hermeneutics on a philosophical structure of
interpretation. The second question which is indirectly framed, is about
the integrity of a theological reflection which can be subordinated to a
philosophical hermeneutical process of understanding.

Ricoeur starts his argument considering philosophical hermeneutics in a
category of "general hermeneutics", from which biblical hermeneutics can be
seen as a derivation or "region". Faithful to his dialogical methodology
which we have already presented in chapter one, he proceeds to try to
reconcile and differentiate at the same time, the categories of general and
regional hermeneutics. Ricoeur considers the many different uses or
applications of philosophical categories of interpretation in biblical

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(111) P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics" in
<u>Exegesis</u>, p. 334.

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hermeneutics, but also stresses the unique characteristics of the theological discourse; for instance, the Word of God as privileged referent, and the uniqueness of its textual world.

To follow Ricoeur's analysis, and to understand his bird's eye view of the core of the problem of biblical hermeneutics throughout history, we will proceed first of all to present his idea of the uses of philosophical hermeneutics in a biblical one. There are four principal areas of application of general hermeneutics in theology which we are concerned with 1) the structural forms of discourse, 2) the oral and written word, 3) the problem of reference and 4) the category of comprehension.

2.2.1   The Use of Structural Categories.

Ricoeur defines the character of theology as "eccentric" (112). This concept refers to the fact that theological hermeneutics is not centered exclusively on the notion of the text. For instance, biblical hermeneutics uses elements outside the scriptural narrative, such as a confession of the Christian faith. In this case, the meaning derived from the reading of the Bible is produced in the closed relationship between the narrative structure and the confession of faith, which also has a particular structure or form of discourse. Ricoeur considers that the confession of faith is full of theological contrasts, which are a consequence of inner

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(112) P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics", in Exegesis, p. 322.

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tensions produced in this particular text by different forms of discourse. He uses the example of the necessity to distinguish between narration and prophecy as prior to any understanding of the Old Testament's message. But another dimension concerning the structure of the biblical text, according to Ricoeur, is the closure of the canon, which adds elements of signification to the narrative forms, by means of stressing and shaping them.

Analysing what he considers the problems of biblical discourse, Ricoeur uses methodological elements from the work of Gerhard Von Rad. In an article published in the book Exegésé et Herméneutique, Ricoeur makes an interesting re-reading of Von Rad's Old Testament Theology, using Roland Barthes structuralist levels, e.g. level of functions, of actions and actants and the narrative level (113). In the first level, he puts the confession of faith from Deuteronomy 26:5 ("My father was a wandering Aramaean ...") as the originator of a long sequence, whithin which many sub-units of the Hexateuch are organised. But there is a narrative "law of expansion", and many non-narrative elements are also incorporated in the stories; for instance equivalent elements, such as short stories made by short sequences, or long stories made by long sequences as in Exodus 14 (The departure from Egypt). Ricoeur also sees in Von Rad the element of extension due to recurrence, and he quotes again the Creed from Deuteronomy 26:5, which incorporates mythical accounts and epics.

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(113) Cf. R. Barthes; P. Ricoeur; A. Vergote et al., Exégése et Herméneutique, pp. 44-6.

Following then Von Rad's exegetical analysis in this way, Ricoeur derives the three basic problems of the biblical discourse. The first one is concerned with the relation between biblical narrative and confession of faith; the second considers the same point but with reference to the theological method, and the third looks at the relation between the whole of the corpus of the text and the changes produced in the interpretation of individual forms of discourse when they are a unit. Rhetoric and narrative are connected in a close relation of mutual dependence, and narrative and confession of faith make of Christian theology "A theology in the form of Heilsgeschichte." (114). In order to interpret the signification of the discourse, Ricoeur once again takes the long way of language, in the study of the structures of forms.

2.2.2 From the spoken word to the written text.

This is Ricoeur's second application of categories from philosophical hermeneutics to biblical interpretation. Here he is concerned with the process of distanciation, from the moment of oral utterance to the fixing of the word in the text (115).
The aspect to be stressed here is the relationship between the Word and the event. The word precedes the writing, and the Word goes before the

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(114) P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics" in Exegesis, p. 325.

(115) This point has been already studied in Chapter one. The process of distanciation is synthesised in Chapter one, 1.9.3.

Scriptures. The writing process, as we have seen before, is the first closure of signification, and the beginning of the process of distanciation which consists in distanciation from the author, from the situation of the discourse and from the original addressee. Ricoeur considers the importance of the study of such a moment of transition for a theology of the Word, where the origin, the object and the expression of Christian faith come together as the Event.

At this point Ricoeur presents us with his panorama of the core of the hermeneutical problem in Christian theology, which could be summed up as follows. Christianity works as an exegetical religion; the word as such has always been related to the event, to the writing, in a fashion that allows Ricoeur to consider whether "writing should precede the word" (116). The Event of Christ needs to be transmitted by the interpretation of the written word, but the preaching act in itself is a new writing; the process of distanciation is always present, giving origin to tradition, which works basically as a link between the word and the Scripture. The importance of the study of the function of distanciation for a theology of the Word lies in the fact that the Scripture becomes free of the "voice" of the writer, and its significance comes to us by the characteristics of the world (or "thing") of the text, which in itself constitutes the true object of the hermeneutical process.

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(116) _Ibid._, p. 327.

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2.2.3 The world of the text.

The world of the text is a basic category of the hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur, and as such it has been considered in relation to the problem of reference in chapter one. In the hermeneutical moment of "Explanation", our author considers two methodologies which could help us to answer the question of the reference of the text. The first is the Structuralist Method and the second is Historical Criticism. Ricoeur finds in both theories advantages and disadvantages from the point of view of the work on the world -or "thing"- of the text, and he ends proposing a convergence of methods (l'entrecoupemente des méthodes) to help with the problem (117).

Structuralism provides the hermeneutician with an objective method, which helps to avoid a psychological interpretation, or subjective insights into the world of the text. The characteristics of the work at the levels of surface and deep structure of understandimg, provide us with the organisation of the textual codes, which are the key to "open up" the specific insight of the text, or the "thing" we are searching for. On the other hand, Ricoeur is critical of the semiotic model in itself, since there is a lack of understanding of the concept of discourse and the role of the phrase in the process of interpretation. Unless we take into account what is beyond the structure of a text, we will not be able to reach the deeper meaning of the discourse, where the ultimate reference of the text

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(117) Cf. R. Barthes; P. Ricoeur; A. Vergote et al. Exégése et Herméneutique, p. 285.

can be found. It is in this sense that Ricoeur considers the Structural
method valid only as a first step, which would take us from a surface level
to a deeper analysis of the work.

Structuralism needs then to be complemented by Historical Criticism, which
according to Ricoeur, is a method requiring not so much replacement but
correction. The basic point here is that the text is a living testimony of
an event and a tradition, to which the readers also belong. Biblical
exegesis will always need to use historical criticism; the proposed
correction of the method is related to what Ricoeur calls the three
"illusions", regarding the source of the text, its author and its
addressee. Basically Ricoeur sees here the difficulties in an understanding
of the text, based only on its origins, the author(s) or the original -or
modern- meaning elaborated by the readers. The interpretation should always
be liberated from these flagrant psychological or ideological projections.

The convergence of those two methods brings us the real world of the
biblical text, the thing which gives the uniqueness of the scriptural
discourse, which is revelation. Ricoeur calls revelation "the mark of the
biblical world" (118), and he arrives at this conclusion after having used
structural analysis (which enables him to call YHWH "the great Actant of
action"), and his studies in the narrative forms. The following two

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(118) P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics",
in Exegesis, p. 331.

applications of general hermeneutics into biblical hermeneutics are also related with the world of the text.

2.2.4. The communitarian dimension of the text.

Ricoeur deduces the "cosmic dimensions" of the signification of the biblical text, from the reference to the world or wholeness of the Scripture. The world of the Bible comprises people in both a historical and cultural frame of reference. In the Scriptures, a person is considered in a broad dimension of existence, which is cosmological, personal, anthropological and ethical. It is in this point that we find that the communitarian aspects of what we have called a "hermeneutic of solidarity" are revealed as the base of Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle, and are also present in his reconciliatory dialogue between different methodologies.

2.2.5. The power of projection of the biblical text.

Ricoeur stresses the poetic dimension of the text. The literary aspect is important because the text is "poetically removed from daily reality", and in consequence, it opens a space of creativity at the moment of appropriation of the text. The inference he makes from here is of a degree of importance that cannot be overestimated. Ricoeur sees the opening of the text as a precursor to the opening of reality, the dimension of the hermeneutically "possible". The foundation for this concept comes from Heidegger's basic structure of finite transcendence, consisting in understanding as comprehension (<u>Verstehen</u>) and the mood or component through which the non-Being is disclosed (<u>Befindlichkeit</u>). <u>Verstehen</u> speaks

about how the <u>Dasein</u> is projected into the world, and is directed to the possibilities of the project of <u>Dasein</u>. Ricoeur finds the Christian statement "The Kingdom of God is here" has the theological appeal to the possibilities of Being, which do not come from ourselves. "The reality of the possible" is then the final conclusion that Ricoeur presents to us, as the principles of general hermeneutics are applied to biblical interpretation.

Ricoeur claims that far from submiting itself to a philosophical theory, biblical hermeneutics makes of philosophy its "organon"; this happens due to the specificity of the world of the Bible, and the uniqueness of its main referent, God. The word God is the centre around which all the biblical stories and the different forms of discourses are organised. Understanding the word God, we understand the meaning of the religious symbolism and at the same time we open the horizon of the text. The word Christ serves the same function but it adds a new dimension expressed in the symbol of the sacrificial love of Jesus who conquers death. Ricoeur finds that the preaching of the event of the cross and the resurrection gives "density" of meaning to the word God. God, and the event-meaning of Resurrection makes of the biblical discourse something unique due to the continuous reference to one Name, but this would obviously require from us some considerations concerning the role of faith in this process.

2.2.6 The hermeneutical constitution of faith.

Ricoeur considers that the concept of "new being" in the Scriptures should be found in the "thing" of the text itself. It is in this sense that faith is defined as related to this new being, to the world of the text and to a hermeneutical understanding. To claim that faith is an issue of interpretation as such, means also to underline its independence from a psychologically constructed faith, but Ricoeur also recognises that faith, as an act, goes beyond the linguistic dimension and cannot be reduced to that. Faith then, is defined as hermeneutical because it cannot be considered outside the interpretative process of the Word, which always refers us to language but remembering also the non-hermeneutical origin of interpretation; this is what Ricoeur calls "The feeling of the Absolute". Ricoeur is refering here to the feeling that comes to us, and becomes closely related to aspects of Christian hope. It could be described as a process of openess that goes beyond our experiences and, as Ricoeur says, sometimes even contradicts them.

But Christian hope needs to be re-read constantly in a renewed interpretation of the "sign-events" of liberation in the Scriptures, especially in the Old Testament Exodus and the New Testament story of Resurrection. In these stories, we are able to appropriate the possibility of personal deliverance, and our faith is constituted in close relation with the world of the text. Our understanding of ourselves is linked with our work in the hermeneutical circle, and it results in what Ricoeur calls "self-understanding before the text", where the illusions we brought into the process are confronted by a hermeneutics of suspicion.

This hermeneutics of suspicion has a creative, positive task, which goes beyond the destructive process of illusions. Ricoeur resorts here to the notion of "play" (jeu) in Gadamer's Truth and Method: play as the road to a metamorphosis, as the way to allow imagination to open the poetic dimension of the text (119). To the distance between the world of the text and reality, we should add the distance produced by the creative imagination. Ricoeur concludes his analysis by saying that our imagination is the first addressee of the text, because it is the one which carries the power to interpret "the symbolics of my liberation", which in turn will become the word of God (120). This point will take us into the second part of our study, which is concerned with the relationship between biblical interpretation and symbolism.

2.3 Biblical Interpretation and Phenomenological Analysis:

2.3.1 Interpretation and Symbol.

According to Ricoeur, a symbolic word has a power to reveal dimensions of human existence which cannot be reached by any other way, except through the deciphering of symbols and signs. The relation between symbols and hermeneutics is a closed one, and it is part of the task of understanding ourselves and the world in which we live (121).

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(119) P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical Hermeneutics and Biblical Hermeneutics", in Exegesis, p. 338.

(120) Ibid., p. 339.

(121) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Finitud y Culpabilidad, pp. 712 ff.

Ricoeur has defined interpretation as "the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning" (122). These "hidden meanings", which are the task of exegesis in general, and biblical exegesis in particular, are discovered through the power of expressions with "double meaning", eg. structures of signification which can tell us more about ourselves and about the world. Such structures are what Ricoeur calls "symbols", and they play a key role in his long route to discover the "I" of the Cogito, which is Ricoeur's ontological task. Interpretation and symbols are concepts closely related to each other in Ricoeur's thought, and are part of the challenge of a reflective approach to Hermeneutics, where the study of signs and symbols opens the way to a transcendental understanding of existence.

Ricoeur's phenomenological method, initiated in his unfinished project "The Philosophy of the Will", changes from the approach used in The Voluntary and the Involuntary to the hermeneutics of The Symbolism of Evil, Freud and Philosophy and The Conflict of Interpretations. In The Voluntary and the Involuntary, Ricoeur wanted to demonstrate the mistakes of the dualistic tradition after Descartes. The voluntary and the involuntary are shown as interrelated aspects, interdependent on each other, in the way that transcendence is related to finitude. In this analysis Ricoeur uses a heuristic device called "The diagnostic method" (Diagnostique), which

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(122) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 13.

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consists in the use of another objective point of view, exterior to the analysis carried out, whenever the phenomenological method reaches a limit. It is a correlative method with the task of helping to understand the nature of human beings; an example of this _Diagnostique_, is how Ricoeur has used disciplines such as Psychoanalysis or Sociology. Following elements from Marcel (especially the notion of "Mystery" which is close to the one of "limits") and Husserl, Ricoeur seems to work in search of a descriptive unity in his investigation.

In _The Symbolism of Evil_, Ricoeur's phenomenological approach gives rise to a hermeneutic of the symbols in religion, in relation to evil. His task is to understand experiences as interpreted in religious texts; he then develops a theory of the symbol. At the end of this investigation and owing to the irreducible character of the symbol, Ricoeur welcomes a more plural dialogue than the one established in _The Voluntary and the Involuntary_ or _Fallible Man_. In subsequent works on Freud and in _The Conflict of Interpretations_ Ricoeur's interpretation is directed towards texts, the oral ones from dreams and the religious discourse that precedes theology, where the latter may recover a more primitive dimension. Faith and hermeneutics, symbols and myths, are part of Ricoeur's dialogue with belief and suspicion. This is a dialogue which needs a reconciliatory hermeneutic.

2.3.1.1 The Privileging of the Symbol.

For Ricoeur a reflection on the symbolic is a starting point for a philosophy of Language. David Rasmussen (123) finds this as part of an anthropological Ricoeurian project, where hermeneutics plays a key role in the restoration of the human's being. The exegesis of the symbolism of evil, especially in the Judaeo-Christian traditions which have deeply influenced our western culture, is then the touchstone of the interpretation of texts (defined here as any cultural production) and life. Semiology, the analysis of the signs in a system, and Semantics, the science which reflects on the signs but in reference to the discourse and the sentence, are both part of the Philosophy of Language where event and structure are no longer differentiated.

For Ricoeur, a symbol is an indicator of reality, an instrument born from a confrontation with life, which points outward to another meaning. Western civilization seems to have lost its ability to relate to the symbol, and in this process it has lost the possibility of finding this "other meaning" of its existence. The lack of sensibility to the Scriptural Word is in reality a fear of confronting something different which could challenge our Cartesian (dualistic) construction of the world in which we live. Ricoeur affirms that this fear of the disclosing power of the symbolic -manifested through the re-discovery of biblical literalism, for instance- is a major

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(123) Cf. D. Rasmussen, Mythic-Symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology, p. 90.

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problem for the understanding of biblical texts; it is also part of a bigger and more complex situation, which creates an obstacle far superior to the cultural distance we have with an ancient text. It is in this sense that Ricoeur finds it necessary to use an Hermeneutics of Suspicion, because it has the power to take from the religious discourse that which has been kept apart from it, and which -in general- we do not want to confront. Ricoeur is talking here about the narcissistic interpretative elements which pervade our understanding of the Scriptures, helping us to avoid any challenge from our reality.

Ricoeur's analysis of the symbol is then complemented by a study on Structuralism, Psychoanalisis, and Structural Anthropology (Lévi-Strauss).

2.3.1.2 Defining the symbol.

How does Ricoeur define a symbol? In The Conflict of Interpretations we find the following concept:

> "I define symbol as any structure of signification in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates, in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary, and figurative and which can be apprehended only through the first." (124)

This definition is closely related by our author to his own concept of interpretation as "a deciphering". Ricoeur thinks that both symbol and interpretation are in fact correlative concepts, due basically to these key aspects of "hidden meaning" and "plurality of meaning" (double

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(124) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 12.

intentionality) which function as their hermeneutical loci.

The function of the literal meaning of the symbol, which consists in the showing of an extra secondary meaning, could be understood in the context of Ricoeur's discussion on the Cogito. We have already seen in chapter one the opposition of our author to the illusion of the Cartesian ego, which Ricoeur calls a "false consciousness". Now we will see another aspect of this discussion, eg. the consequences of Cartesian thought in relation to the symbol. Both in The Voluntary and the Involuntary and in The Symbolism of Evil, Ricoeur speaks about the Cogito Brisé (broken) or Blessé (hurt), which carries with it the suspicion of a false conciousness.

The narcissistic ego wants to control, to manipulate the world (which it considers to be of its authorship), and more than anything, to control language. The Cogito Blessé instead, has a kind of humbleness, which mobilises it in search of its own self-understanding (125). To achieve its task, the Cogito Blessé looks for clues to hidden meanings, such as the ones the signs, symbols and cultural institutions (eg. significative construction) can provide. From a phenomenological point of view, Ricoeur is working with the pre-objective world, the world of the pre-reflective, where the symbols belong before we organise them into logical categories. Ricoeur uses here the epoché, to bracket out the natural attitude of the philosopher and to allow him to find -through phenomenological reduction- the world before the control of the narcissistic ego. The problem of the

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(125) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Le Volontaire et l'Involontaire, pp. 17 ff.

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human will, the mystery of evil, the question of human freedom, lies in the interpretation of the symbols. Ricoeur's Hermeneutic of Suspicion is counter-balanced by an Hermeneutics of Hope and Faith, in his attempt to find the mystery of interpretation which is finally related to the mystery of being, and the being of the interpreter.

2.3.1.3 Symbols and Metaphors.

The symbolic production of meaning in Ricoeur, should be understood in relation to Ricoeur's theory of metaphor (126). The living metaphor has the power to disclose reality due to the process of "the metaphorical twist" where the reader is able to construct a "novel" meaning. According to Alan Olson, it is in the analysis of metaphor that Ricoeur enables us to understand the dymamic structure of the symbol, and its characteristic "non-linguistic roots of experience" (127). The metaphor is always situated at a more visible level than the symbolic universe, and it is in its image that the symbol becomes "a giver". Basically, it gives new meanings by a phenomenon of transgression of the limitations imposed by the false fixation of discourse; it gives the possibility of the possible through its exploratory function, and in the famous words of Ricoeur "The symbol gives rise to thought" or "Gives us something to think about" (Le symbole donne à penser).

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(126) For Ricoeur's theory of metaphor, cf. Chapter 1, 1.7.4.

(127) A. Olson, "Myth Structure and Metaphorical Truth", in A. M. Olson (ed.), Myth, Symbol and Reality, p. 108.

Ricoeur proceeds to analyse the symbol phenomenologically, and he starts by bracketing out everything except the symbol itself. He wants to understand the symbol by itself, working sometimes from the multiple meanings of the same symbol, or explaining a symbol by another one, in any of the manifestations of the sacred, such as myths and rites. Ricoeur then tries to rescue the symbolic system by becoming involved within it, in order to appropriate the deepness of its meaning. As part of his phenomenological procedure, the question of symbol and truth is suspended here and replaced by a dymamic implication with the symbol. However, it is at this moment that Ricoeur formulates the following hermeneutical circle: "You must understand in order to believe, but you must believe in order to understand." (128)

To interpret, the interpreter must already have a participation in the meaning which is hidden; and this is in a way, belief. Yet, without an hermeneutical understanding we remain in a first naïveté, in a pre-critical moment. The challenge here is to understand the symbol without resort to allegorical methods or gnostic interpretations which are a kind of dogmatic rationalisation.

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(128) P. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbols", in C. Reagan (ed.), Studies in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, p. 45.

2.3.1.4 The Dynamic of Symbols.

Ricoeur classifies symbols in two categories: Primary symbols and secondary symbolism (129). Primary symbols have the characteristic of showing their own structure; they build upon their literal meaning (first intentionality), a second meaning which discloses the participation of humanity in the sacred. Symbols can be also organised into technical and symbolic signs. The first are "transparent": they say what they mean through their signified; the second are "opaque", and they are richer than the first; their second meaning is not given, but is hidden. The secondary symbolism has the characteristic of being organised in a system, and articulated as we find them in myths.

2.3.1.4.0 Primary Symbols.

Ricoeur finds that the dynamic of symbols is related to three "symbolic constellations", which are stain, sin and guilt. Every symbol seems to destroy a previous one, and only the archaic symbols remain at the end of this process. The example our author puts here is the one of stain, and he follows its dynamics in the Old Testament in the following way:

a) Evil, considered as a thing, is symbolised by "stain".

b) Evil, leaving the category of thing, becames the opposite, a "nothing", expressed as a broken relationship with God and Humanity, absence of God,

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(129) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, pp. 17 ff.

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and emptiness.

c) Due to the historical circumstances of the captivities of Israel (first the Egyptian and second the Babylonian), stain returns to its "schema of exteriority" but at an ethical level. Later on, stain becomes related to the symbol of guilt. Ricoeur concludes that the persistence of stain, is a proof of its archaism.

This example belongs to the category of cosmic symbols, the ones where the sacred can be seen in the world. There are another two modalities of symbols, the oneiric or dream images and the poetic imagination. In The Symbolism of Evil, Ricoeur worked basically upon cosmic symbols while in Freud and Philosophy he studied the nature of oneiric ones. The poetical imagination is investigated in several works apart from those already mentioned, especially in The Conflict of Interpretations and The Rule of Metaphor. We will proceed now to describe briefly Ricoeur's understanding of each category of symbol, making it clear that these different levels of symbolism are very closely interrelated in the whole of Ricoeur's thought.

2.3.1.4.1 Cosmic Symbols.

As we have already seen, these symbols are related to humanity's tendency to see the cosmic as symbolic of the "sacred" (a term that comes from Rudolph Otto). Ricoeur follows here Mircea Eliade's phenomenological concept of myth: "... Myths describe the various and sometimes dramatic breakthroughs of the sacred (or the 'supernatural') into the World." (130)

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(130) Cf. M. Eliade, Myth and Reality, pp. 5-6.

The sun, the stars, elements such as fire or water, are things and signs of something else, something that cannot be reached unless we proceed to interpret the doubleness of their meaning. Ricoeur comments on the linguistic function of the symbolic process of imagination, since this second meaning cannot be reached unless we designate it with words. Quoting Psalm 19, Ricoeur stresses the fact that the heavens cannot "tell" about the glory of God, because they do not speak, but it is the prophet, the psalmist or the liturgy, the voice which makes the heavens speak to us about the glory of their creator. The hierophany needs the word to communicate its sacredness.

2.3.1.4.2 Oneiric Symbols.

Ricoeur works here in a dialogue with Psychoanalysis, re-reading the basic thoughts of Freud and Jung and adding to the cosmic function of the imagination the psychological one. The hermeneutical task of this moment is to recover the nexus between the symbolic of the subject's unconscious and the cultural symbols of humanity. The point is that the meaning of the symbols released by consciousness into dream images needs to be interpreted, and communicated with words, in the same way that the cosmic symbols require a linguistic dimension.

Ricoeur's works on Freud are related to two areas: the inquiry about the nature of the cogito, and the economy of desire. In the first area, he reviews the topography of psychoanalysis, organising consciousness into three areas: unconscious, preconscious and conscious. Consciousness then functions as a perceptive system, for a subject whose main characteristic

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is its own "dispersion". The phenomenological task of reduction to consciousness, is inverted in a process of reduction of consciousness. Reflecting on Freud in this way, Ricoeur comes to the conclusion that Psychoanalysis has the task of searching for the subject, the one who, obscured by the narcissistic (false) ego, is usually identified with consciousness.

The second aspect that Ricoeur develops is in relation to the inquiry of the subject in an "Economy of Desire." Desire is defined as archaic, preceding consciousness and timeless; although originated in the unconscious, desires can only be manifested in the pre-conscious and conscious levels. The point is that because the desire is anterior to the cogito, the latter is defined more by the "I am" rather than the "I think".

The analysis of the question of the cogito, gives Ricoeur another ontic dimension to his theory of symbols, because in order to apprehend the meaning of the immediate consciousness it is necessary to interpret a material that is not evident but rather hidden in dream images and fantasies. The arché, is then the object of a reflective philosophy, but it is necessary to counterbalance this search or archeology of the subject with a teleology of the "cultural aim" of the subject. The dialectical method that Ricoeur uses here relates a Freudian archaeology of desire with a teleology of the spirit by Hegel, where the initial instinct is kept in the progressive movement of the individual. Or to say it in other words, humanity's destiny is in dialogue with its history.

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When Ricoeur analyses Sophocles' Oedipus Rex (131), his work on the symbol
becomes clearer and is organised in what he calls "two types of
hermeneutics": The first type, considers the archaism of the symbols as
contained in the tragedy, such as vanity, power and truth; the second
hermeneutics find new symbols, such as the cultural world of works,
monuments and institutions, which still symbolise the same drama of power
and truth. This is what Ricoeur calls the "projective" power of symbols
into the past and future, but there is another aspect to consider, the
"formative" or educational side. The symbol becomes paidea, or Bildung, the
forming basic element of the building of culture.

2.3.1.4.3 Poetic Symbols.

Ricoeur uses the term "poetic imagination", making an important
distinction between imagination and image. The concept of image sometimes
used, as representation or "portrait" is rejected in favour of Gaston
Bachelard's definition: (The poetic image) "puts us at the origin of the
speaking being" (132). This happens because an image is basically close to
the emergence of language in itself. Here we are confronted by the symbolic
function of poetry in its nascent state, with the dynamism that cosmic and
oneiric symbols are deprived of, since they are free of the stability that
the history of religions, myths and rites provides for hierophanies and

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(131) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 115.

(132) P. Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 13.

dream images. In Ricoeur, poetic imagination is a key theme of his theory of metaphor, as has been seen in chapter one.

2.4 Secondary Symbolism: Myths.

We have already noticed how Ricoeur gives a first definition of myths as an organised system of primitive symbols. Apart from the structural aspect there are other basic differences between myths and symbols, as seen in the study of the narrative time of the myth, the narrative order in itself and the dialectic between myth and ritual.

2.4.1 The time of myth.

Ricoeur calls it the "fundamental time" (133). This is the kind of time referred to in stories of origins and endings (myths of creation, apocalypse) and which is recognisable because of the inclusion of formulas such as "In those times...", or "Once upon the time..." It is interesting to notice here that the first book of the Old Testament is called "In the beginning" (Sefer Maaseh Bereshith, "Book of the Beginning"). The Bible itself then, starts with an account of events in the fundamental time, and this adds a historical dimension to the narrative of myths, which primitive symbols do not have. Ricoeur's task here is to try to recover this fundamental time of existence through interpretation.

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(133) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 28.

2.4.1.1 The narrative order of myth.

The writing of myths implies a first distanciation, and as such the beginning of a process of rationalisation. Here we are confronted with a closure, manifested in the fixation of the symbolic discourse through the function of rhetorical rules and speculation. This is a necessity, because myths cannot be expressed without a narrative which also serves to expose the dynamic of myths: their "struggles" with each other, where only the strongest are able to survive, and their processes of deep inter-communication. The difficulties arise when the fundamental time of myth is "exhausted" due to the work of dogmatism of the great narratives (called by Ricoeur "mythologisation"). The development of traditions is close to mythologisation, as in the stories of fall and exile in the Bible, and both the Gnostic and anti-Gnostic elaborations. The only way to renew and recover the richness of the myth is to interpret them starting by the study of the primary symbols which are organised in them as an explanation already. To "demythologise" is important for Ricoeur, although it could produce the risk of a "de-symbologising" process too.

2.4.1.2 The dialectic between myth and ritual.

This is an elaboration that comes from phenomenological roots. Ricoeur is influenced here by Eliade, Marcel Mauss and the work of the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski who, through his functionalist theory, considered the wholeness of culture. An example of this is Malinowski's <u>Coral Gardens and their Magic</u>, where he proves that the Melanesian gardens as aesthetic value are intimately related to agricultural labour and magic amongst

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Trobianders. For Malinowski myth is "a hard-worked active force" (134) and a reality with social functions, such as the legitimisation of institutions (135). Myth is then manifested in a sociological sphere, but its richness is not exhausted neither in rites nor institutional life; it remains alive although obscured by temporality.

After having studied those characteristics, Ricoeur concludes that myths are no longer at the same level as symbols, but are rather subordinate to them. The richness of meaning of a primary symbol diminishes when it becomes a myth due to the closure produced by the main factors already mentioned. Ricoeur's insistence on the distortion produced in myths by rationalisation, indicates his ideas concerning the autonomy of myths. He has taken in this position, some elements from Ernst Cassirer's idea of the unity in myths (136), and Claude Lévi-Strauss' anthropological structuralism.

Cassirer's theory preserves the autonomy of the myth in a sense of unity or wholeness of the mythical thought. Myths have an internal and an emotional (not rational) coherence manifested individually but showing, through a common "tonality" an universality of mythical apriori (137). Myth cannot be reduced, but Cassirer considers a difference between the thought of the

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(134) B. Malinowsky, Magic Science and Religion, p. 101.

(135) Ibid., p. 106.

(136) Cf. E. Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms II, Mythical Thought.

(137) Ibid., p. 88.

primitive human and the scientific, modern view. The mythopoeic thought is
a form of thought in itself, autonomous, and not related with scientific
thought; it has it own rules and provides the foundations of the symbolic
religious base of our civilisation.

Lévi-Strauss does not differentiate between a primitive and a scientific
mind, because "between societies which are called 'complex' and those which
are wrongly termed 'primitive' or 'archaic', the distance is less great
than one might think" (138). The function of the myth is then to show us
the structure of the human mind. From Cassirer, Ricoeur takes the
differentiation between primitive and scientific thought, but he also finds
with him and with Lévi-Strauss that there is a point of reunion between
both kinds of thought, manifested in the symbolic language, which is a
basic point for Ricoeur's ontological quest, or long route.

2.4.1.3 The pursuit of the fundamental time: The Criticism to the
Structural Anthropological Model.

Reflecting about both the "time of tradition and interpretation" (139) in
myths, Ricoeur addresses two structuralist concepts, diachrony and
synchrony. As we have already seen in Chapter one, Structuralism favours
synchronicity (a moment of the language) over diachronicity (language in
relation to its history). In order to carry on this investigation, Ricoeur

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(138) Cf. C. L.-Strauss, "Conference paper", in Annales, Nov./Dec. 1983.

(139) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 29.

decides to study Lévi-Strauss' work, especially <u>The Savage Mind</u>, which in his opinion constitutes a systematisation of the structural system in an anthropological model.

Structural anthropology has been inspired by the work of Saussure, the Prague school of linguistics and the phonological method of Trubetzkoy and Jakobson. Phonology has looked into the unconscious structure of linguistic phenomena, as structuralism has reflected on the non-reflexive, ahistorical level of linguistic rules. In this system the general rules are deduced by a logical process inherent to the system, which is objectively independent of the subject.

Lévi-Strauss applies these concepts of language as a closed system or organism, where meaning is established in the interrelation of terms of opposition and correlation, at synchronic and diachronic levels, but in kinship relations. He finds that clan systems function in an analogous way to language: first, they work at an unconscious level; second, communication is produced by circulation of women amongst clans, in the same way as words are interchanged in language (140). The third level, shows that the kinship structure has a diachronic perspective, manifested through the connection of different generations in a family. The synchronic or historical dimension also seems present here, but Ricoeur found that it

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(140) Cf. C. Lévi-Strauss, <u>Structural Analysis in Linguistics and Anthropology</u>, p. 58.

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is subordinate to the diachronic level, since history is not regarded in the construction of kinship systems.

Structural anthropology analyses a society in a way similar to Saussure's analysis of a text. Lévi-Strauss opposes fathers to sons, husbands and wifes, as characters who can only be understood by their binary relations, in a very similar style to Vladimir Propp's work on Russian folktales. Propp established that in folk tales, there are characters who always perform the same "functions" or actions, which are the ones responsible for the coherence and stability of the tale. These functions are limited to 31, and always follow the same order; for instance, first the story presents its hero, who is in a situation of deficiency and needs to pass through different tests, in order to overcome his deficiency (eg., a task to do such as to rescue someone, or find an object, or marry a princess etc.). Propp also establishes a number of seven characters as the maximum for a folk tale (141).

Lévi-Strauss goes a step beyond Propp, concentrating less on the narrative level of myths but more on the deep level, eg. systems of relationships and their logical- symbolic meaning. A myth, as a kinship relation works for Lévi-Strauss in a similar way to Propp's analysis; the difference is that Lévi-Strauss advances over the initial situation of deficiency and finds

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(141) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, II, p. 33.

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that myths manifest something else, an excess of meaning which he explains in an algebraic formula. Mythical language is then a language in itself, which cannot be considered pre-logical nor primitive. Its function is different from scientific language, because it basically expresses the structure of unconscious mental processes, as they can be discerned by reflection on social institutions, rites or stories. The process of thought is the same in both the mythical and scientific model, but the object differs. Here we need to be aware that Lévi-Strauss is not using a Freudian theory of the unconscious, but rather a Kantian one: the unconscious is considered as structured in a categorical way, without the subject as thinker.

Ricoeur's criticism of the use of a linguistic model in structural anthropology, is concerned with the hermeneutical circle of interpretation, which can be divided in two levels: a) level of description and b) level of interpretation.

2.4.2 Level of description

This comprises the text as form, the literary theory and the dialectic text-reference. At this level the interpreter takes distance from the text, and objectivises it in order to explain it; this is a moment of critical description and analysis. Lévi-Strauss' analysis of the kinship system seems to work primarily at this level, de-codifying and describing the aforementioned by its structure. The structural law of myth is located at the level of its logical relationships, as organised in the text; here Lévi-Strauss can say with Greimas that "there is not salvation outside the

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text" and the mythemes or units which constitute the myth. Ricoeur recognises the value of structuralism at this level, but he asks if there are not other existential meanings to be found beyond this "surface analysis" of myths. The symbol does not exhaust its meaning in the myth, and Lévi-Strauss himself recognises it in the mediator function of the mythical thought between life and death. Then, the structural analysis needs to be complemented with a hermeneutical level, or moment of interpretation.

2.4.3 Level of Interpretation

Here we consider the reflective task of hermeneutics, the understanding of experience and the appropriation of the text as the interpreter's self-understanding. It is at this level that the fundamental time of myths as narrative can be rescued, through what Ricoeur calls a "semantic analysis" or study of the meaning of the sign. The description process carried out by Lévi-Strauss works basically at syntax, eg. the meaningful combination of words, which explains the myth but does not understand it. Lévi-Strauss has argued against Ricoeur on this point, saying that it is not a question to choose between syntax and semantics, because meaning is produced by the combination of elements which are significatives in themselves (142). This is a definition of meaning in Lévi-Strauss which comes from Phonology,

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(142) Cfr. P. Ricoeur, "Structure et Herméneutique" (partial text), in Sprit, 31, 1963, pp. 596-627.

while Ricoeur favours meaning in relation to the hidden time, or time of meaning, that structuralism cannot discover. Another criticism of Lévi-Strauss by Ricoeur is concerned with the lack of unity in mythical thought according to anthropological structuralism, and the difficulties involved in working with a highly heterogeneous geographical material, such as in the case of the non-european myths. Both in the Israelite and Mesopotamian mythologies, as in the Grecian stories, there seems to be an underlying unity expressed beyond the fragmentation of myths, which -according to Ricoeur- is the unity that our fragmented universe's perception is searching for. This is the reason why different myths repeat certain elements and yet they appear to be so diverse. The second point of criticism, is related to the characteristics of totemic thought itself.

This type of thought lends itself to the kind of analysis that Lévi-Strauss uses, for instance, in "The Savage Mind", but the Semitic, pre-Hellenic or Indo-European myths which do not belong to that cultural area cannot be organised so easily in the same structure. But the main doubt of Ricoeur is about the use of structuralism to understand cultural phenomena, because the principles of phonology are not broad enough to understand the work of the human spirit in historical events.

2.4.4. Kerygma and Totemism

Ricoeur takes us back into biblical interpretation, reflecting upon the difference between these two models of analysis, Kerygma and Totemism. Totemism is characterised by the privileging of order and structure, or synchrony over diachrony. As such, it seems to be the ideal field for the

structural method, but the Bible requires another type of analysis, such as the one provided by the kerygmatic model. Ricoeur follows here Von Rad's work in his book _Theology of the Historical Traditions of Israel_, where the author examines the Hexateuch in relation to its kerygma, eg. the signs of actions of YHWH as constituted by events. These events, presented as the crossing of the Red Sea, entering the Promised Land, the Davidic mission and the destruction of Israel are made part of Israel through its historical confession of faith. Every new generation reappropriates this confession, which then becomes a meaningful unit, and part of a tradition which is constantly being re-interpreted in a historical way. Here Ricoeur discovers the historicity of hermeneutics, which cannot be confined to a system: 1) there is the fundamental time of myths and sagas which is hidden, the time of the founding events; 2) the time of the interpretation made by the biblical writers and 3) the time of re-discovering and renewing of meaning by hermeneutics. The kerygmatic model is organised in a structure of word-event, a semantic model where diachronic time prevails over the synchronic dimension.

The following diagramm illustrates Ricoeur's position in relation to the interpretation of myths and his criticism of anthropological structuralism.

Ricoeur's Kerygmatic Model
Lévi-Strauss' Totemic Model

x Guessing

Kerygmatic model: work in solidarity
with previous community of interpretation
(diachronic level).

x Appropriation
x Appropriation
Totemic Model: Fragmented.

Kerygmatic model: Dialectic

Sign/Event; the hidden meaning

of myths.

x Explanation
x Explanation
The Totemic model works
at this moment
Kerygmatic model (diachronic level)
Semantic Analysis. The fundamental event. Fragmentations of myths.

fundamental event.

(unity of myths).

Levels of
Interpretation.
Levels of

Interpretation

Levels of Description.

Levels of Description

x Understanding

x Understanding Totemic Model: Myths are explained but not
understood. De-codification.

Kerygmatic model: The "time" of myths and the
"time" of the reader.

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The following diagramm illustrates Ricoeur's position in relation to the interpretation of myths and his criticism of anthropological structuralism.

Ricoeur's Kerygmatic Model

x <u>Guessing</u>

Kerygmatic model: work in solidarity
with previous community of interpretation
(diachronic level).

x <u>Appropriation</u>   x <u>Explanation</u>

Kerygmatic model: Dialectic   Kerygmatic model:
Sign/Event; the hidden meaning   Semantic Analysis. The
of myths.   fundamental event.
                                       (unity of myths).

Levels of
Interpretation   Levels of Description

x <u>Understanding</u>

Kerygmatic model: The "time" of myths and the
"time" of the reader.

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2.5   Ricoeur's analysis of Myths in the Old Testament

In "The Symbolism of Evil", Ricoeur considers the myths of Israel, Greece and Mesopotamia as the language which expresses the human experience of fault in relationship with God. He divides myths into four categories:

1) Myths of the drama of creation.

2) Myths of the fall of humans.

3) The myth of the tragic hero (in Greece).

4) The myth of the exiled soul.

To study a particular category of myth, Ricoeur starts his phenomenological analysis by working with primary symbols, as in the investigation of the trilogy stain-sin-guilt in the Old Testament context which we have already briefly addressed (143). His investigation will force him to try to understand symbols by symbols, and sometimes by myths or rituals, which Ricoeur considers -taking a term from Rudolph Otto- "manifestations of the Sacred" (144).

Ricoeur studies the myth of creation in relation to the origin of evil. He distinguishes myths where evil is created at the same time as the divinities are born (eg., the Enuma Elish), from others such as the myth of Enki and Ninhursag, where evil "falls" into the world. The story of the Flood in different myths also shows a disparity in the treatment of human

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(143) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, pp. 172-4.

(144) Cf. C. Reagan (ed.) The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, p. 45.

fault and God's reaction to it. In the myths of Atra-hasis and Gilgamesh, there is no offence done to God while in the Old Testament's Genesis, divine offence is provoked by human fault. One of the characteristics of the Old Testament myths that Ricoeur points out, is the transforming action of the irruption of history in Israel. It is manifested through the lack of theogony or theomachy in the account of creation, or stories about the birth and wars amongst Gods, and their irruption into the world. The theogony always has a clear intentionality, which is to make reality meaningful: this is the reason why their divinities come from the Apsu-Tiamat, the primordial Nun of the Egyptians, but never from "nothingness" (145). Instead of these mythological schemes, the Old Testament defines evil as a historical fact, where enemies are human protagonists of the struggle of the God of Israel and his people against pagan nations.

The type of myth required to express Israel's historical experience of evil is exemplified by Ricoeur in his analysis of the Adamic myth. This myth is classified as a creational myth, and "strictly anthropological" (146). Ricoeur interprets it around the work of the primary symbols of stain-sin-guilt, which are already present in the narrative. These symbols represent the experience of humanity, in the historical tension and dramatisation of the movement from innocence to fault. The myth works to resolve the threefolded dialectic of human sin, rooted first in a situation of

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(145) Cf. J. S. Croatto, El Hombre en el Mundo, I, p. 96.

(146) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, p. 240.

estrangement from God, and as a consequence of it, of estrangement from fellow human beings.

2.5.1 Stain, Sin and Guilt.

The situation is described by Ricoeur in the following terms: The sinner confesses its sin as a bad action but also as a product of the situation of estrangement; this estrangement is not entirely the fault of the sinner (eg. the human race), because it was in the world already and yet, it fell (by a human decision) into the world. The character of the serpent symbolises the evil which is outside Adam and at the same time is part of humanity (the "Adamah"), although it belongs to an unknown, "dark" aspect of human nature. The holiness of God condenms sin, which at this level of the narrative of the Old Testament presents a scheme of exteriority, almost equating evil with something material, although there is also an element of sin as internal reality. It is in this context that Eve becomes a deeply symbolic character of the triple alienation of humanity from humanity, from the visible Sacred represented by YHWH, and from the desacralised nature which is his creation.

Stain is the most external symbol of evil, and as such is manifested through cultic ceremonies of purification, or cleansing rituals; sin is the symbol that comes after stain, and carries the tension of both exterior and interior manifestations. Ricoeur looks at the meaning of the word sin, not with the intention of understanding the symbol by its etymological roots (which could close its ontological openness to meaning) but to see its work

In the context of Israel's Covenant with God (147). "Sin" appears here as the translation of hatta't, "to miss the mark", and 'āwon, "deviation". Another root, pāša', "rebellion" (in a political sense) shows the intention in itself to commit an evil action in a communitarian sense.

The drama of the fall reminds us of the paradox of human nature and its relationship with God; here Ricoeur quotes Kant, about the human destiny of doing good, and its inclination to do evil (148) This is also the historical experience of Israel with God, and as such grounded in Psalms and prophecies of the Old Testament. The third symbol of the trilogy, guilt, appears already in the Adamic myth as a further step of a process of internalisation started with stain; guilt does not supersede stain, but rather brings back all its archeological power. There is already a mechanism of inner demythologization set in the core of primary symbols, from the desacralization of stain, as a material thing which needs to be washed, to the guilt of the Adamic myth which can only be cleaned by a surrender of human hubris. The demythologization process, started in the desacralization of cosmos and nature in Genesis, explains why Ricoeur sees the myth as an explanation of a structure of primary symbols, intimately connected.

To continue then this line of thought, Ricoeur needs to go to a second step of explaining myths by myths. The tragedy of human hubris in the Adamic

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(147) Cf. P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 72.

(148) Ibid., p. 252.

myth, could be better explained by other myths of falling, as found in
Plato's _Phaedo_, in Plotinus and the Neo-Platonism, the Orphic Mysteries and
in the Gnostics. Studying them Ricoeur comes to the conclusion that the
symbol of the fall is not original of the Adamic myth; the originallity
lies, in any case, in the fact that Genesis is a unique attempt to separate
evil from good in its origins, and it tries to do that from a human
centered perspective. To interpret the Adamic Myth, Ricoeur is aware of the
dangers of gnostic (rational) interpretations, or apologetic attitudes
inspired by works such as St. Augustine's explanation of the nature of
evil. Both of them reduce and exhaust the living movement of meaning in the
symbol, and the _ana-travail_ or work of interrelations between human beings
and fundamental time, "re-united" by the action of primary symbolism (149).

2.5.2 Myths and Mystifications

We have seen how Ricoeur has investigated the nature of symbolism, myths,
and the characteristics of the biblical narrative in relation to western
thought. His interpretative tools have allowed us to gain a new insight
into the historical process of Christian hermeneutics, with its particular
inter-textual (Old/New testament) relationship. Through all this process,
Ricoeur has been establishing a fundamental difference between what we
could call myths and mystifications; to understand those terms will help us

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(149) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Langage Religieux" in "Actes de XIIe Congrès des
Sociétés de philosophie de langue française", _Le Langage. II. Langages_, pp.
130-1.

to study Ricoeur's position in relation to Bultmann's demythologising project, in the second part of the present chapter.

Ricoeur considers that myth is a language in itself, with its own inner dialectic compressing aspects of time and life, with its "symbolic alliances", facing death or a more or less uncompromissed survival. Ricoeur has shown us these dynamics in the Old Testament myths of creation, in the symbolism of fatherhood, or through the follow up of the trilogy stain-sin-guilt in the Bible. Myths are not associated with falsehood, but with the communication of inexpressible truths, concerning the relation between human existence and the Sacred. But when Ricoeur speaks about Mystifications, he implies something different. Mystifications are kinds of false constructions which do not participate of the dynamic structure of the symbolic-mythic language, and which do not require interpretation but a de-struction (de-construction) of literal meanings (150). Perhaps we could say that mystifications do not share with myths the centuries long communitarian process of their creation, and the enrichment and deep characteristic of a language which transcends human reality. In mystifications, language expresses the divine in human terms; in mythical language, the divine itself communicate its Truth through the imperfect human word. The difference can be summarised by saying that in myths "God created man and woman in His own image", but in mystification "Humanity

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(150) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Preface to Bultmann", in L. Mudge (ed.) Essays on Biblical Interpretation, p. 58.

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created the sacred in its own image". This could also be part of the Old Testament contrast between God and an idol.

To demythologise does not partake of this negative enterprise of destruction of literal meaning, (although in some sense it needs to be done too) but tries to reach a comprehension of the text. We must remember here that myths have a mystifying wrapping which has been produced by the cultural/conceptual distance we have with the text. Bultmann has demystified the New Testament taking apart what Ricoeur calls the "mythological wrappings" (151), and this has freed a primary meaning of the Gospel, through the separation of the Kerygma from elements of the original cultural/conceptual frame (Bultmann calls them "myths"). But in the process, Ricoeur adduces that Bultmann has de-symbolised the narrative, perverting the real meaning of myth and reducing it to a naïve surface level of understanding. We will proceed now to study how Bultmann understood the demythologising project, and how Ricoeur has challenged this position from a methodological perspective.

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(151) Cf. P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 59.

Part Two. The hermeneutical circle of Rudolph Bultmann.

2.6 Demythologization or demystification?

"...De-mythologizing is an hermeneutic method, that is, a method of
interpretation, of exegesis".
Rudolph Bultmann. (152)

"The first problem is demythologization; the second is what is called the
hermeneutical circle."
Paul Ricoeur. (153)

Bultmann wrote in an essay entitled <u>On the Problem of Demythologizing</u>
(154), that he had no wish to impose his concept of myth on any person, who
could find his own notion as questionable, and that more to the point the
concept of myth could not be important for the understanding of
demythologizing. In spite of that, we consider it relevant to start the
second part of this study with an investigation into Bultmann's own
conceptualization of myth. Myth is the basic presupposition, at the
"guessing stage", of both Ricoeur and Bultmann's hermeneutical circle, and
functions as the key concept upon which their processes of interpretation

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(152) J. Bultmann, <u>Jesus Christ and Mythology</u>, p. 45.

(153) P. Ricoeur, <u>The Conflict of Interpretations</u>, p. 388.

(154) S. Ogden (ed.), <u>New Testament, Mythology and other Basic Writings</u>, p.
95.

are built. For Bultmann, as we will see, demythologizing is a whole method of interpretation; for Ricoeur, it is only a part of the process.

Bultmann's understanding of myth has proved to be polemic, not only because of the criticisms his position has generated, but also due to disagreements amongst theologians concerned with the ambiguities of Bultmann's own concept of myth; this is related to the fact that Bultmann produced different definitions at different stages of his work. However, the truth seems to be related to Bultmann's lack of concern with a definition of something he did not question; he simply claimed to understand myth "in the sense in which it is customarily used in the science of history and religion" (155). For the present purposes of the study of Bultmann's hermeneutical circle we will consider now the background of the concept of myth in Bultmann, according to different parts of his work.

2.6.1 The sources of Bultmann's concept of myth.

Roger Johnson, in his study about the philosophy and historiography in Bultmann's theology, recognises three moments in the construction of the concept of myth, all of them relevant for our understanding of demythologisation (156).

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(155) S. Ogden (ed.), op. cit., p. 95.

(156) R. Johnson, The Origins of Demythologizing, pp. 30 ff.

These moments are:

1) The formulation of myth according to the _Religiongeschichte_.

2) The Enlightenment concept of myth.

3) The existentialist definition of myth

2.6.1.2 The _Religiongeschichtliche_ approach to myth

Bultmann received the influence of the School of Religion, mainly through the work of Richard Reitzenstein and Wilhelm Bousset; this happened especially during the early period of Bultmann's work, between the years 1933 and 1941. The _Religiongeschichtliche Schule_ uses a descriptive and phenomenological approach to the religion of Israel from the point of view of its historical development, although their definition of myth varies amongst diverse theologians, from Gunkel to Eissfeldt. Reitzenstein, in some of his works such as _Poimandres_ and _Die Hellenisten Mysterien-Religionen_, stressed the influence of the early mystery worships in the Old Testament, eg. the myths of Cybele and Attis in Phrygia, Serapis and Isis in Egypt and the Mithras worship in Persia. Bousset also considered Christianity as a part of a major historical phenomenon, but he gave considerable importance to the influence of the Old Testament and Jewish background, in Christian thought. From Reitzenstein's ideas, Bultmann elaborated a concept of myth, as a special kind of narrative concerned with the story of the "Primal Man", or "Heavenly Redeemer"; this motif was considered to have originated in Iranian religious beliefs. Zoroastrianism was based on dualistic principles of _Asha_ (Truth) and _Druj_ (Lie). This dualism was later incorporated in the Hellenistic narratives which

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influenced Christianity (157).

Reitzenstein considered the myth as a soteriological narrative, stressing the assimilation of the story of the Primal Man, from its Persian origins to the rich Mandean, Manichean and Gnostic traditions which had an impact on the primitive Christian community, and in St. Paul (158). Bultmann summarised these ideas from Reitzenstein (159), drawing the following outline on the myth of the "Heavenly Redeemer":

a) There is a dualistic principle in the world (Weltbild) manifested as Light/Darkness, Order/Disorder.

b) In the beginning, part of the Light fell into the darkness, due to a "cosmic conflict", giving origin to the "Primal Man".

c) The Primal Man was divided up into pieces, and as a consequence of that, some particles of light remained in the Darkness. These are the souls.

d) An ambassador from the Light, is then sent to the Darkness. He taught the souls about their origins, and showed them a way to return to their real "home", or place of procedence (Light). This way is related to the Christian use of Sacraments.

e) The ambassador dies, but his death prepares the way for the souls to return to their home of Light.

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(157) Cf. R. C. Zaehner (ed.), The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths, pp. 200 ff.

(158) Cf. R. Davidson, A. Leaney (eds.), Biblical Criticism, p. 288.

(159) Cf. R. Bultmann, "Urchristliche Religion", in Archiv für Religionswissenschaft, pp. 83-164.

The emphasis of the Hellenistic influences in the Christian mythology was stressed by Bousset in his book Kyrios-Christos, published in 1913. Bultmann took from Bousset the idea that the life of Jesus, and the passion narrative, are both informed by Hellenistic myths. During all this period of his work, Bultmann related myths to soteriological narratives, in close contact with the Hellenistic religions; he also kept a temporal-spacial definition of myth, within the boundaries of the Hellenistic world. Bultmann sees myths as heuristic devices, as a particular literary phenomenon which help us to understand the historical origins of the New Testament.

2.6.1.3 The Enlightenment conception of myth.

Bultmann worked with the Enlightenment definition of myth at the time he developed an existentialist understanding of the New Testament Mythology. From the Enlightenment Movement, he understood myths as false conceptions of the world, and a product of primitive men unable to rationalise or use logical thought as we do now. The scientific paradigm, with its understanding of reality as a mere product of causal laws, was linked in this way to the "primitive man mentality" theory. This gave way to a developmentalist conception of history, where myths occuppied the space of the childhood of humanity. Bultmann's books New Testament and Mythology (1941) and On the problem of Demythologizing (1961) reflect this moment of his thought, and his similarity to formulations from J. G. Eichorn and D. F. Strauss. These theologians were in agreement with the opposition

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between mythical and scientific thinking (160). But it is also true that the Enlightenment tradition also recognised the scientific intentionality of myths, (in the sense that their intentionality is informed by a desire to explain natural phenomena), as a "primitive sort of science" (161) or a "Mythical _Weltbild_". Demythologizing then, was Bultmann's programme, created to set free the Scriptures not only from this primitive _Weltbild_, but from a scientific paradigm too.

In this way, Bultmann seemed to have criticised the Enlightenment formulation of myth, and this in spite of his acknowlegement of a basic definition of myth, from a Neo-Kantian position (and its concept of reason). Bultmann, as a Neo-Kantian, worked from a dualistic core of "reason-individuality", but he never felt compelled to accept the ultimate truth of modern science; instead of that, he recognised the importance of Greek thought (as the origin of modern science), and the Scriptural view of reality which is related to it. The individual, in a historical process which manifests the unity of reason, needs to objectify the surrounding world. Such "objectivation" is science in itself, although it has a mythological nature.

2.6.1.4 Myth and Existentialism

Bultmann incorporated an existential hermeneutic of myth into his works

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(160) Cf. R. Bultmann, _Kerygma and Myth_, II, pp. 180 ff.

(161) Cf. R. Bultmann, _Jesus Christ and Mythology_, p. 15.

between the years 1925-1933. He developed his thought about myth and self-understanding under the influence of Heidegger's <u>Being and Time</u>, and the dialectical work of Hans Jonas on Heidegger and Hegel. Jonas studied Augustine and Gnosticism between the years 1930-1934, and later on formulated the concept of "objectifying", which Bultmann used after him. But the existential understanding of myth in Bultmann does not always coincide with Heiddeger's categories, as he has already departed from the Enlightenment concept of myth, to formulate his original proposition.

In general, myth is defined here in relation to the existential human quest for self-comprehension, but acknowledging the "Objectivation" of the understanding expressed in mythical terms. Jonas spoke of "Objectivation" (<u>Objektivation</u>, a reifying of <u>Dasein</u>), in relation to the movement of the Spirit (<u>Geist</u>) in history, showing how the Spirit changes form during the different levels of the dynamic of history. Reason becomes objectified as part of its own activity, and as a necessary condition of Existence; Objectivation is then an ontological concept referring to the actualisation of being. Hermeneutically speaking, Jonas found that this history of the <u>Geist</u>, provides us with a community of interpretation, with whom we are related through the text, and by our special position in the movement of the Spirit in history. Every objectivised self-understanding is then superseded by a new one, which enriches the first with available knowledge of the history of the Spirit, and thus gives to the new interpreter possibilities of understanding and self understanding denied to the

original addressees (162). In this way, the spiral of interpretation continues as the true hermeneutics of Being.

2.6.1.5 Concept of Objectification.

Bultmann's concept of objectification (Objektivierung), departs from Jonas position. Bultmann does not agree with Jonas in the structuring of knowledge formulation, and his idea of human beings as part of a continuum. Bultmann works with a dualistic understanding of world/existence, in a way which is more an existentiell rather than an existential analysis. The term "existential" refers to the activity of interpretation, but "existentiell" is used to describe the every day understanding of existence. Themes such as "anxiety" or "authentic being", are appertaining to the concrete reality of a personal existence, thus "existentiell". Bultmann sees a human being as a "potentiality to be", whose reality can only be expressed in his/her own acts (actualization of being). The being in the continuum with the world, as defined by Jonas, threatens the real being because its perpetuates insecurity and splits the real self.

Objectification is an existential stance characterised by inaction, insecurity and lack of decision. Bultmann sees two kinds of knowledge, an objectivised, "worldly" one, composed of general truths (descriptive propositions, imperatives) which are basically "counter-existential" and expressed in objectifying language referred to past events of history and nature, and secondly, an authentic knowledge. This authentic understanding

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(162) Cf. J. Jonas, Augustin und das Paulinishe Freiheitproblem, II, p. 13.

is expressed in an existential language which is concerned with freedom from worldly existence, and authenticity. Thus both the theological and kerygmatic languages are related with a dimension which goes beyond the descriptive levels of objectified truths.

Objectifying, mundane thought is connected with the idea of work, and from Bultmann's Lutheran perspective, with the doctrine of "Justification by Faith", opposed to a justification by human work (163). The historicity of Christ is opposed to a Kerygmatic Christ who is the real source of our salvation in terms of the restoration of our authentic being. Demythologizing is the method that Bultmann conceives to allow the Gospels to bestow our being by the free gift of the kerygma, which delivers us from the vicious circle of our false (mundane) self.

2.7 Demythologizing.

Demythologizing is the process of understanding which consists in the systematic elimination of the worldly, historical (objectified) identity of Jesus and his teaching, as given by the Gospel narrative. According to Bultmann the mythical language, which is scientific in intention and counter-transcendental by nature, needs to be dismantled to give way to authentic understanding. This objective is achieved by a hermeneutic of translation from a mythic mode of discourse (which has become meaningless to modern humanity), to an existential language with the power to disclose

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(163) Cf. R. Bultmann, Faith and Understanding, I.

the true meaning of the text. These two aspects related to an inauthentic

understanding of human existence, and at the same time to the bearer of

Dasein's self-understanding, make the complex structure of a myth.

2.7.1   The Hermeneutics of Demythologisation

In order to describe and understand Bultmann's project of demythologizing,

we will organise it in various moments of interpretation, according to the

hermeneutical scheme presented in chapter one. In each of these moments, we

would like to describe the movement of Bultmann's interpretative process,

and the differences between this theory and Ricoeur's own position.

Hopefully, as a result of this, we will achieve a clearer understanding of

Bultmann's and Ricoeur's methodology, concerning both biblical hermeneutics

and exegesis.

2.7.1.1   Moment of Guessing.

Presuppositions.

Bultmann's first approach to the text comes from his understanding of myth,

as a language with an existential intentionality, obscured by a pre-

scientific interpretation of the world. He receives the biblical text in

its second moment of distanciation (the first distanciation was produced

when it became the written word), adding to this process another distance,

the one produced by objectification. The structure of the text produces a

concealment of the transcendental elements of its discourse, and there is

an inadequacy of communication of meaning at formal levels. The "first

naïvete" or fascination with the text is, in Bultmann, a negative experience.

The first encounter between text and reader, apart from an acknowledgement of the objectivisation of textual meaning, also presupposes the presence of a community of readers and critics (which includes the new reader). Following Bultmann, this community has the characteristics of the same ambivalent elements featured in his formulation of myth. As a reader, he shares with the community the ontological quest for human destiny, and at the same time, the frustration produced by the concealment of the signification of existence, in the present discourse. But, how does Bultmann know that this community of Bible readers in the past, perceived an answer to existential questions hidden in mythological language? The answer lies in another of Bultmann presuppositions: the commonality of the Christian faith. Faith is a requisite to understand, and understanding is the requisite to believe without the need to make a "sacrificium intellectum". This is what Ricoeur has called "the hermeneutical circle of Bultmann", or "the primacy of the object of faith over faith." (164)

Bultmann places the meaning of the biblical text _in_ the text, and not in the intention of the authors; in this way he departs from Dilthey's psychological position, although Ricoeur finds that the circle of believing/understanding is a psychological formulation in itself. But the

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(164) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Preface to Bultmann", in L. Mudge (ed.), Essays on Biblical Interpretation, p. 58.

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point here is that the intention of the text requires a work of interpretation; in this, the interrelationship between demythologisation and hermeneutical circle becomes more evident. But the basic presupposition of Bultmann's hermeneutical process, is the expectancy of obtaining self-understanding, resulting in a particular self-transformation of the reader as interpreter of the biblical text. In this sense, we find in Bultmann an attitude of "openness" to the text, or desire of dialogue, but there is also a strong pre-determination of the interpretative process at the very start of his hermeneutical circle. Self-understanding works here both as pre-understanding and the ultimate objective of the interpreter.

2.7.1.2 Moment of Explanation.
The hermeneutical principle.

Bultmann's approach to the biblical text has the characteristics of scientific realism; the text is an object independent of the reader who perceives and interprets it. The movement of interpretation has only one accepted way, from the reader to the text and not vice-versa. With this investigative spirit, Bultmann fixed the task of interpretation: "Our task, therefore, is to discover the hermeneutical principle by which we can understand what is said in the Bible" (165). Part of this hermeneutical principle is the presupposition of faith, as we have seen already, or the belief that the word of the Scriptures is addressed personally to the believer-reader. But from a methodological point of view, the hermeneutical

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(165) R. Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, p. 54.

principle is a philosophical option, defined by Bultmann as his

existentialist position, whose object is to try to analyse and understand

human existence in relation to God (166). If in the New Testament such

existence has been intuited and expressed according to a pre-scientific,

mythical world view, the modern interpreter's task is the translation of

the central message of Christianity into scientific, logically minded

language. The method of interpretation becomes translation, the meaning is

pre-assumed to be existential, and the dialectic used is the dialectic of

the Kerygma (as proclamation; the central message of Christianity) and

history.

The project of demythologizing uses a translation method, whose roots are

to be found in the same Kerygma (or proclamation of the Christian church),

concerning the act of God in Jesus Christ for the salvation of humanity.

Bultmann proceeds to separate Kerygma and history through the questioning

of the mythical language of the New Testament, and the use of analogy.

Bultmann's interpretation of history is informed by Existentialism, and as

such is composed of two levels of interpretation called <u>Historie</u> and

<u>Geschichte</u>. Bultmann regards the first as science, a free and objective

account of facts of the past, and the second, as the subjective

interpretation of the meaning of such events. Demythologizing works at the

level of <u>Geschichte</u>, which is where the power of God calls us to live an

authentic existence, and where our faith is manifested as decision and

acceptance of the free gift of self-disclosure of God in our lives, or

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(166) Cf. R. Bultmann, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 58.

"revelation". <u>Historie</u> can be discarded because as a science, it will never be able to perceive the higher levels of historical interpretation, present in a Holy <u>Geschichte</u> or <u>Heilsgeschichte</u>. To highlight the historical aspects of the life of Jesus, from this point of view, is exegetically misleading because they are not historical but uncertain, mythical constructions which, according to Bultmann, cannot express the revelatory act of God in Christ.

The translation method uses an analogical style of work, juxtaposing mythical-symbolic expressions with an existentialist model of language. For instance, Bultmann sees the conception of God the Father, seated in Heaven with Jesus at his right hand, as a secondary term, adequate only for a mythological framework in need of making God observable, and located in time and space. But through an analogy, what can be rescued here, are the existential characteristics of the concept of divine fatherhood (167), as an experience of human finitude which needs to be submitted to the divine. This is as relevant today for the modern person, as it was in the past for the disciples. Here Bultmann received an influence from Martin Buber's "I-Thou" analysis, where visible features need to be considered only in a correlation with deeper, existential phenomena. God as a father is not a myth but a symbol, and through analogy we rescue a God who is the same for the modern person as He was in the times of Jesus, because the kerygma is the loci of a deeper meaning, only reflected partially in the symbols used. The literalism of the interpretation of New Testament myths is the

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(167) Cf. R. Bultmann, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 69.

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stone -or "skandalon"- which Bultmann wanted to remove, to allow a way to the confrontation with the "real scandal" of the cross of Jesus. Humanity needs to face the challenge presented by the Word of God, through the word of the Bible; mythical creeds and cosmological statements, openly false, should then be discarded.

2.7.1.3 Moments of Understanding and Appropriation.
Event and Meaning.

The first two moments of the hermeneutical circle, Guessing and Explanation, work at descriptive levels, although some methodological aspects are usually specified during the Explanation. Understanding is a non-methodological moment which, together with the appropriation of the text, works at more interpretative levels. The relation between Explanation and Understanding is similar to language (as system) and word (as event); Bultmann has considered the first, Langue, but neglected the second, Parole. He has interpreted the mythical language through a negative hermeneutic, based in analogical translation, but he did not work at a level of understanding. The appropriation of the textual meaning comes, somehow, by a shorter way than in Ricoeur's work.

Bultmann's concept of meaning is rooted in Husserl. The text acquires its meaning only through the personal appropriation made by the reader; this is what Bultmann calls the moment of "personal decision", when -through the acceptance of a gift from the Transcendental-, the being is bestowed to the reader by the Kerygma. The text acquires its meaning only when the reader is "changed" into a more authentic being by his/her act of interpretation.

It implies an act of self-renunciation, and an acceptance of a lack of authenticity, together with the impossibility to live out of transcendence, and by human resources (168). Through the use of analogies, Bultmann has identified these experiences with the New Testament calls to "humility", and "renunciation of the world", and St. Paul's arguments concerning living by Grace and living by Law.

Bultmann's hermeneutical circle starts and finishes with faith. Without faith, such a process of interpretation of the Bible could not happen, but the question is that the appropriation of the existential call, towards an authentic life, is also done by faith. Faith is defined here as an act, not a belief; it implies previous moments of decision or appropriation of the word (169). Faith is the human possibility to actualise the individual's true being, and thus transform him/herself; self-understanding is then, an understanding of a new self which is different from the one known before this existential encounter with God.

2.8   Ricoeur's criticism of Bultmann's circle of interpretation.

Ricoeur bases his analysis of the demythologizing method, on two of the main works of Bultmann, Theology of the New Testament and The Gospel of John: A Commentary. He focusses on several points of criticism, which can

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(168) Cf. R. Bultmann, Faith and Understanding.

(169) Cf. P. Ricoeur, in L. Mudge (ed.) Essays on Biblical Interpretation, p. 162.

be organised into the hermeneutical circle in the following way:

1) Moment of Guessing: A criticism of Bultmann's appropriation of Heidegger.

2) Moment of Explanation: A summary of points showing lack of reflection about language in the process of demythologizing.

3) Moments of Understanding/Appropriation: A criticism to Bultmann's formulation of the relation meaning-event.

2.8.1 Moment of Guessing. Dasein and Language.

Ricoeur accepts Bultmann's position of confronting the Scriptural Texts with presuppositions; in this case, Bultmann uses an appropriation of Heidegger's anthropology; a human being is an unique creature who attains his being through the possibilities of his existence. Ricoeur has worked in his interpretative circle with a principle of pre-understanding, which in any case, he tries to discover before the hermeneutical process starts. The difference with Bultmann is in relation to a Heideggerian methodology which Ricoeur considers incomplete, or a "short cut" (170).

According to Ricoeur, Bultmann concentrated his analysis on being, in Heidegger's existentials (care, being-in-the-world, fallenness, etc.) These are constitutives of Dasein's structure, since Heidegger claims that

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(170) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 399.

"Da-sein (to be there) is Mit-Sein (Being-with)" and also because there is

an openness to "life in community" in the Being (171). But Ricoeur

criticises Bultmann for stopping his analysis here, at this "surface

level", while in Heidegger the question of being is broader than that. To

take a "long way" (as opposed to a "short cut") in this ontological

project, could only mean then to question the being from the spaciality of

Dasein, the "there" of being-in-the-world. To question the "there" (the

concrete world) can only be done through language: Da-Sein and Sprache

determine each other in a dialectic of meaning. Ricoeur finds that Bultmann

has not questioned the being, and instead of following the long process

proposed by Heidegger, he has started interpretation in the middle of the

analytical road; Bultmann has not worked enough with those existentials he

took as presuppositions. As a result of that, Bultmann's concepts on human

beings and God do not come from a conceptual process, but are appropriated

by him at the start of his process of investigation.

The Bultmannian hermeneutical circle is then psychologically framed, with

the object of faith influencing faith, and an exegetical method behind the

reading of the text (172). God as a concept is not "discovered", but

presupposed, which in Ricoeur's opinion, invalidates the process. No doubt,

Bultmann's subject-object approach also has influence at this point.

However, we need to stress that Ricoeur does not consider the use of

Heidegger's philosophy as a necessity for interpretation, but rather as an

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(171) Cf. M. Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 156.

(172) Cf. P. Ricoeur in L. Mudge (ed.), op. cit., p. 58.

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option. The point which is the object of his criticism of Bultmann, is the misuse of Heidegger's conception.

2.8.2 Myth and Language

As we have seen in the first part of this chapter, Ricoeur's concept of mythical-symbolic language is opposed to Bultmann's. Ricoeur understands myth as the language which is capable of objectively representing the relation between human beings, and the limit and foundation of existence. Myth is neither opposed to science nor the product of primitive civilisations; it is a projection and reduction of something transcendental which humanity tries to grasp. In Bultmann, the movement is inverse, and implies a projection of human power into a ficticious universe, explaining the world in terms of a pre-scientific language. (173)

This understanding of myth in Bultmann, is linked by Ricoeur to a general lack of reflection about language. For instance, Bultmann never questioned the language of faith, in the use of expressions such as "act of God", "future of God" or "Word of God". These become non-mythological statements because Bultmann considers that the Transcendental is not mythological. Ricoeur explains this position in relation to the Kantian influences that he perceives in Bultmann. "Myth holds in the first thinker (Bultmann) the

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(173) These points have already been considered in point 2.5.2, under the title "Myths and Mystifications".

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same place that 'transcendental illusion' holds in the second (Kant)."
(174). The transcendental illusion is not the thought concerned with the
Absolute, but rather with the intention to explain the Absolute as a
phenomenon, or as an object of phenomenological knowledge. Bultmann has
criticised the New Testament myths, but has never questioned these non-
mythological elements, which are part of his theological presuppositions,
influenced by Luther's doctrine of justification by faith. Bultmann cannot
explain the act of God, he can only receive it by faith. Ricoeur finds here
a fideistic position, which produces a psychological exegesis, since the
act of God is explained only from a human, psychological experience,
instead of analysing the text from the word. The ontology of language is
then missed in Bultmann.

Without this type of reflection, Bultmann gives the language of faith
characteristics of personalism and analogy. Whenever Bultmann says that
God relates to us as a father, on a personal level, he is using analogies
of a language he no longer considers mythical but symbolic. The lack of
reflection at this level (on analogy and symbolism) produces, according to
Ricoeur, a <u>sacrificium intellectus</u> in the language of faith; the same kind
of sacrifice which Bultmann tried to avoid in his demythologising
programme. But according to Ricoeur, exegesis and demythologising become
unnecessary tools, when the language of faith apparently has no need of
being deciphered.

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(174) Cf. P. Ricoeur, <u>Essays on Biblical Interpretation</u>, p. 64.

2.8.3 Meaning and Event.

According to Ricoeur, the relation between "the word and the event and its meaning is the crux of the hermeneutical problem" (175). The historical interpretations of the Scriptures show the centrality of this problem in Christianity, as we have already seen at the beginning of this chapter, under the title "A mirror of explanations: The text as interpretation of the text". Bultmann's position concerning the process of objectivisation produced his lack of questioning about language: the mythological language, the language of faith and even the philosophical language. Ricoeur finds in Bultmann a psychological, Diltheyan approach to the text, where the act of understanding is an emotional empathy with the text. As a result of that, Bultmann explains a myth, but he does not understand it, because his de-mythologising project only succeds in pre-empting the meaning of the symbolic language

Ricoeur's own hermeneutical circle considers two important moments of interpretation: the explanation of the text -but not of the author- and the appropriation of meaning by the reader. The second depends on the first, which, as we have seen in chapter one, is a semantic moment presupposing the use of a theory of language. Textual criticism needs these two aspects, the objective and the existential, but Bultmann neglects the first; his hermeneutical circle is a "half circle", where understanding (Verstehen) is empathy with the author(s) of the text, instead of an appropriation of

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(175) Cf. P. Ricoeur, in L. Mudge (ed.), op. cit., p. 49.

meaning (Aneignung). The hermeneutical circle should always be methodological, rather than psychological. Ricoeur also finds a kind of anthropological reductionism, in some of Bultmann's formulations; one of them, "the act of God" becomes related to the existential relation between God and human beings, and to a preaching centered in the message of personal decision (or conversion). The historical dimension of the biblical text, which consists in the manifestation of the greatness of the creation, and of the People of God (Laos theou), is lost. The individualist approach to the text seems to forget the communitarian context of salvation; for instance, in the Old Testament, salvation is for the People of God, and in the New Testament the Holy Spirit is manifested in the community.

Another aspect that concerns Ricoeur, is that Bultmann centers his work in the "speaking" experience (event) rather than in the "language" side, or system (176). Exegesis requires the two moments of interpretation in order to understand both the system and the event; in this sense, Bultmann's work is opposed to Structuralism which stresses the language, as a system of signs. Ricoeur sees that this forgetfulness of language has produced in Bultmann a neglect of the non verbal language of faith, represented by the world of sacraments, rituals and meaningful gestures without which the preached word suffers a further reduction of its meaning.

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(176) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 398.

2.9 Post-Bultmannian hermeneutical criticism.

What does language do? It justifies being. How does it do this? ... It makes being into an event."

Ernst Fuchs. (177)

2.9.1 The New Hermeneutics.

Bultmann's interest in finding a way to convey the meaning of biblical language to modern readers, was continued by other existentialist theologians who were his disciples. The problem of language, to an extent unknown in Bultmann's programme of demythologising, became the core of the thinking of the movement called "New Hermeneutic". The main hermeneutician we are going to consider here was a student of Bultmann: Ernst Fuchs, who become Bultmann's successor in the University of Marburg in 1961. He is one of the principal exponents of the New Hermeneutics amongst continental scholars.

Fuchs shares with Bultmann the basic ground of a quest for the communication of the biblical message, through the distance of centuries; both of them agree that distanciation puts modern readers in a tradition of interpretation alien to themselves. Fuchs and Bultmann discard the use of

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(177) E. Fuchs, Studies of the Historical Jesus. p. 207.

literalism, because it could lead the interpreter to a mere repetition of traditions; this style neither honours the real meaning of the text, nor is able to communicate truth, in a modern, scientifically informed society (178). However, Fuchs departs from Bultmann's proposal in some aspects concerning language formulation, text definition, faith and history; from the interrelationship of these concepts, the New Hermeneutics developed a hermeneutical circle which seems to come closer to Ricoeur's interpretation theory, although there are still important differences for us to consider.

We will proceed to highlight the dialectical moments of the New Hermeneutic, following Fuchs theory in his work <u>Hermeneutik</u>, and <u>Studies on the Historical Jesus</u>. Our main interest here is to contrast Ricoeur, Bultmann and the New Hermeneutics, in order to arrive at a conclusion concerning what we can call Ricoeur's biblical interpretation proposition; such formulation will then take us into the next point of our investigation, which will be centered on the influence of Ricoeur's biblical interpretation on the hermeneutical circle in liberation theology.

2.9.2   The dialectic of the New Hermeneutic. Key concepts.

2.9.2.1   Language

Fuchs' : definition of language includes two basic aspects: a) the concept

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(178) Cf. A. Thiselton, "The New Hermeneutics" in D. McKim (ed.), <u>A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics</u>, p. 78.

of "letting", and b) the relation between language and event. The essence

of language is constituted by an act of "letting" or "showing", as if the

core of language could be described as a certain movement that directs us

into perception (179). This concept is related to Fuchs' linguisticality of

existence, where human beings only exist in language, and specifically in a

point located between the call (Anruf) and the answer (Zuruf) of language.

Toward this movement or "grant" of language, a being becomes an event,

because it lets being exist and to exist in certain time; the concrete

word, as a linguistic event (Sprachereignis) makes possible the existence

of being (180).

From this formulation we understand that, in Fuchs, language precedes the

spoken reality and the speaker him/herself. Language is not the second

moment of thought but the contrary is true; language, in this definition,

is the home of existence. It is important to recall that Fuchs makes a

distinction between "language" and "words", because he does not define

language from the conceptualised meaning of words; this transference from

content (concepts through words) to language, does not concern him. Fuchs'

main definition of language is related instead to existence, and to the

communication of the personal nature of existence.

Human beings inherit a language tradition which involves a self-

understanding of their being; communication amongst individuals relates

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(179) Cf. E. Fuchs, Hermeneutik, p. 141.

(180) Cf. E. Fuchs, Studies in the Historical Jesus, p. 79.

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then to a sort of "agreement" of common understanding (181). This self-understanding suffers crises concerning its adjustment to reality, which are generally minor shifts produced by the experience of life. But there is also what Fuchs calls "major crisis" (182), where the individual experiences a radical challenge to his/her own self-understanding of the world and of him/herself. This is the essence of Fuchs' concept of "speech-event", where the real content of our speech is the situation (event) of our being (183).

It is in these situations of major crisis where Fuchs likes to stress our dependency upon language and specifically, upon a new, authentic language which is the one conveyed by the Word of God. Since human beings exist between a call and an answer of language, the Word of God is what Fuchs considers the _Anruf_ of the linguisticality of existence (184).

The difference between Fuchs' position and Bultmann becomes clear in this last point. Although both theologians focus on language in relation to human existence, Fuchs goes beyond Bultmann in the prioritising of the language-event. The language of the biblical text comes first for Fuchs, while for Bultmann the priority belongs to the interpreter's own thoughts. At the same time the proclamation of the word, which in Bultmann was

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(181) Cf. R. Funk, Language, Hermeneutic and the Word of God, p. 51.

(182) Cf. E. Fuchs, Hermeneutik, p. 137.

(183) Ibid., p. 349.

(184) Ibid., p. 70.

associated only with speech, in Fuchs is related with the event of the presence of Christ, who calls us to an authentic existence and gives us the answer we require at the same time. This is the language of the parables of Jesus.

The new hermeneutic understanding of language takes distance from Bultmann but comes closer to Ricoeur, because it allows the text to "say" the being of the reader, and to challenge him/her beyond his/her own conceptions. Fuchs agrees with Bultmann in the necessity of a demythologising programme, although the subject of this process is not the text, but the interpreter. Here we are closer to the transcendence of the Cartesian subject-object approach, from which Bultmann takes a position as interpreter-subject, directed towards a text-object; this is the characteristic movement of scientific thought, opposed to Ricoeur's phenomenological position, where the text "questions" the reader. Instead of being a mere object of investigation, the text is here the "subject-matter" of hermeneutics.

2.9.2.2   Text.

The text as "subject-matter" transcends Bultmann's demythologising project, because the text not only works as an instrument of communication of the Kerygma, but as the "granter" which directs us into a new perception of our existence. Fuchs considers that the hermeneutical task is a continuation of a similar process already present in the text. The Gospels are a linguistic phenomenon, and the same could be said about the primitive Christian church, which existence was grounded in this "new" -authentic- language. As we have seen already, Bultmann shares Fuchs opinion about the continuation

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of the hermeneutical process; we can recall here how in Bultmann the
demythologisation process is evident in the New Testament, for instance in
St. Paul's letters. Ricoeur would also agree with this position, since he
has affirmed that the biblical text is interpretation of interpretations.
However, Fuchs stresses that the task of interpretation goes beyond the
text, because he is thinking in a hermeneutic of the present moment (185).
It is in this present moment where our human existence is confronted with
the Word of God, and this is the reason why, in Fuchs opinion, the
hermeneutical task is a continuing process.

Fuchs uses a method of self-understanding in his exegesis of the parables
of Jesus which represent for him the most genuine instances of authentic
language. Three basic aspects of Fuchs' understanding of the parables need
to be mentioned here: (186)

1) Jesus does not use the circumstances of the normal, everyday life of
Palestine in the first Century CE, as a device for picturesqueness. He uses
them as a contact point with the world of the reader. The commonality
between the world of Jesus' parables and his hearers own circumstances,
allows a greater existential understanding in the parables, than in another
form of discourse.

2) Through the use of a conventional, common, daily language, Jesus
challenges his audience with the unexpected reactions of the characters
from the parables. This is a creative language event, where through the

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(185) Cf. E. Fuchs, Studies in the Historical Jesus, p. 211.

(186) Ibid., pp. 97 ff.

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commonality with the world of the text, we find ourselves challenged to take a decision, as a result of a new observation. Here we need to consider for instance, the "upside down" elements of the parables, which contradict what Paulo Freire calls "Naïve Consciousness", and produces a new awareness in the reader. Perhaps liberation theology could say that Jesus' parables are, somehow, mini-models of conscientization programmes, since they share the life of the listeners (students/base communities members), allowing them to face a challenge, and to make a decision which would involve a transformation at both personal and community levels.

3) Fuchs' Christology stresses the unity between Jesus and his word. To hear Jesus then, is to participate with Him, to share his world and to respond to God's challenge together with the Son of God. This is the "Jesus as a model for faith" that is found not in history, but in the language-event. This aspect of the participation of the community with Jesus, has an interesting parallel in the characteristics of a Freirean teacher as a concientizador popular, or the leader of Base Christian Communities in liberation theology. In both cases the subject-object approach of Scientificism has been superseded by a non-banking understanding of the dialectic of community transformation (187).

Fuchs works exegetically with the Pauline Gospel and what Jesus said; he contrasts and confirms both messages as the same, especially in that which is concerned with Jesus (and our own) relation with God. Fuchs believes he

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(187) Cf. P. Freire, Pedagogía del Oprimido, pp. 71 ff.

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can know the mind of Jesus, and the real meaning of his sayings, which takes us back to the psychological approach criticised by Ricoeur. However, this seems to be characteristic of an old liberal, individualistic approach to the interpretation of the Scriptures. An example of Fuchs approach to the New Testament can be found in his exegesis of 1 Corinthians 9:1 and the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).

In this example Fuchs comments on St. Paul's vision of the risen Christ, and his acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus. St. Paul shows here a joy of communion with Jesus, which takes away the existential anxiety of humanity separated from God. The fear of divine judgement has been replaced with the acknowlegement of God's graciousness, affirmed through the vision of Jesus sitting at the right side of God the Father. This theme is repeated in the parable of the Prodigal Son: the father (who represents Jesus himself) does not reject the sinner, acting in accordance with the will of God. The story implies then that God (represented by Jesus/the earthly father) is gracious and merciful, and this is the same message we receive from St. Paul. According to Fuchs, this is the reason why the enemies of Jesus (represented in the story perhaps by the "self-righteous" brother), condemned him to die. They "could not tolerate (Jesus) claim to assert that God's will was a gracious will." (188)

In another exegesis, Fuchs works with a similar method (189). For instance,

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(188) E. Fuchs, Studies in the Historical Jesus, p. 20.

(189) Ibid., pp. 23, 94, 122-3.

In the Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44-46). Fuchs starts with a grammatical question, concerning the phrase "ομοία εστίν η βασιλεία των ουρανων". The use here of a dative case creates, in his opinion, a confusion about the real purpose of the parable, and the meaning of βασιλεια. Fuchs considers that the Kingdom is "the miracle of faith". The βασιλεια is not the treasure, but the abundant result of a very little amount of faith, which could only come through the preaching of Jesus Christ. Fuchs confirms this exegesis comparing other texts of the Gospel.

The results of these exegeses highlight Fuchs' psychological approach to the text. In all the cases, the method of self-understanding seems to be related with an attempt to know "the mind of Jesus", and the security of reconstructing the real meaning of his teaching, in an individualistic style. Fuchs interest in History is related to this search for the reconstruction of the authentic voice of Jesus.

2.9.2.2.1 Trans-lation Method.

In some ways Fuchs still uses a similar translation method to Bultmann; he calls it "trans-lation" (über-setzen) of the language of the text, to the modern language (190). He has a frame of questions, an existentialist pre-understanding, and his interpretation replies to it. There are other criteria which Fuchs does not take into account, as for instance, the interpretation that the New Testament makes of the Old Testament teachings.

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(190) Cf. E. Fuchs, Hermeneutik, p. 109.

This is particulary evident in the narrative of the passion and resurrection. Fuchs limits himself to linking the confession of Jesus' resurrection to our experience of a faith which experiences final victory in the Lord's Word (191). No matter how much Fuchs struggles to render free the truth of the text, he pre-empts the results; perhaps Ricoeur would see in Fuchs the same hermeneutical "short cut" which Bultmann has taken.

The New Hermeneutic wants to move from the every day, objective language, to the language of being, but still lacks a reflection translated to the deeper level of a semantic analysis. It seems that Fuchs relies on the translation of the text through the concept of empathy (Einverständnis), which happens in the interpreter at a pre-conscious level, by an imaginative re-creation of the world of the text. Ricoeur would disagree with both the psychological approach and the lack of reflection which we have located at the moment of explanation of the hermeneutical circle.

2.9.2.3 Language and History.

The New Hermeneutics does not relate its reflection to an historical event. Historical events do not exist as such, but only through the reflection of the prophets concerned with certain events. The words of the prophets are not to be taken literally, as faithful records of God's revelation; rather these words are historical events in themselves. Historical Criticism is used as a tool to liberate the hermeneutical function of the text (192)

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(191) Cf. E. Fuchs, op. cit., p. 229.

(192) Cf. J. M. Robinson, The New Hermeneutic, p. 66.

from the distortion produced by mechanical causes, inappropriate
interpretations, ideological prejudices or the confusion produced by the
linguistic medium of the Scriptures. In this way Fuchs avoids perhaps the a
historical existentialist interpretation of Bultmann, which seems to lose
contact with the world. However the New Hermeneutics does not consider the
objectivity of the external world, and emphasises the subjective individual
experience in the present. The reconstruction of an historical past is
outside the limits of this position, but the same can be said of Bultmann.
Ricoeur spoke about "the world of the text", eg. the meaning of historical
events as left in the work of documents and signs. Thus Ricoeur defined
history as "a quasi-'thing' on which human action leaves its mark." (193).
This historicity of the text produces a tension in its relationship with
the reader's own historicity. There is a dialectic of meaning between the
past and the present through the text, which allows us to explain what the
text is saying to us, and avoid the perils of a too subjective
interpretation as in Fuchs' case. Concerning the validity of the historical
criticism, Ricoeur makes clear the importance of this method, especially to
counter act the Hegelian totalization of History in the Absolute Spirit
(194).

2.9.2.4 Language and Faith

The reflection on faith in the new hermeneutics is closely related to the

(193) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, p. 208.

(194) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 109-12.

dialectical relation "language-event" and Christology. Fuchs, like Bultmann, considers that the proclamation of the Kerygma radicalises human existence, demanding us to take a responsible decision concerning our present. This decision relieves us from the burden of the past, and puts us in the "future of God" (195). Faith therefore is the act of acceptance of our present as a gift of God, and a giving up of the past for this future. This is the "end of history, which is not as the end of man...(but) identical with the 'beginning' of (new) life." (196). But faith then needs to remain in a "present continuous", renewing itself, and this can only be done by the power of the preached word. Fuchs says that, "The preaching of the faith is the preaching of the Gospels" (197), which in St Paul is the proclamation of the message of grace, as we have seen in Fuchs' exegesis of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Jesus brought God into language, through the language-event (or "concept of the situation") of his proclamation (198).

2.9.2.4.1 Word and Faith.

Word and faith are correlate terms in Fuchs' Christology; they are witnesses of the incarnation of Christ. Thus Fuchs says:

"The relation between faith and word in the process of understanding

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(195) Cf. E. Fuchs, <u>Studies on the Historical Jesus</u>, p. 218.

(196) <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 40.

(197) <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 219.

(198) <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 221.

and interpretation is not a relation that moves from the subject to the word, but rather from the word to the understanding subject." (199)

From this text we infer that the word of God creates faith, although it does not take it for granted; it is not necessary to presuppose faith in the addressee. The difference with Bultmann is then that the criteria of understanding of the Kerygma in the proclamation, is the non-believer instead of the believer (200). Nevertheless, Ricoeur finds that the lack of reflection on the language of faith, is still "at the center of post-Bultmannian hermeneutics."(201). In the new hermeneutics, the understanding of the biblical text (Verstehen) suffers a reduction of meaning, due to an excessive stress on the existential decision of the addressee. "The moment of exegesis" -according to Ricoeur- "is not that of existential moment but that of meaning..." (202).

Ricoeur agrees with Bultmann and the new hermeneutics, on the place of the subject in the proposed philosophical discourse. He can accept that meaning

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(199) Quoted by J. M. Robinson, The New Hermeneutics, p. 64. Also cf. Evangelishe Evangelienauslegung, 1st ed., pp. 382 ff.

(200) Cf. A. Thiselton, "The New Hermeneutics" in D. McKim (ed.) A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics, p. 101.

(201) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 396.

(202) Ibid., p. 397.

comes from a personal appropriation of the text, but providing that this Aneignung comes only as the last stage of the moment of interpretation. "Meaning" is in Ricoeur an objective or "ideal moment." (203). However, "Signification" is the moment of meaning actualised in existence; Ricoeur criticises that the pre-supposition of "the moment of decision"shortens the circle of interpretation, leaping over the moment of meaning, and making the task of interpretation very difficult. The main problem could be what Ricoeur calls "an objectivation" of faith, or a mystification of the transcendental. Only through keeping the horizon of the Christian eschatology (ie. the transcendental or "beyond" history irrupting in our history), can religion escape the risk of the totalization of the "Whole Other" (204). The real danger then, is to make an "idol" or "relic" of the Christian religion, by a lack of relevant criticism in the biblical interpretation process (205).

2.10   Ricoeur's Biblical Hermeneutic

2.10.1   The Ricoeurian "Quadrilateral Model"

Our investigation of Ricoeur's phenomenological hermeneutics, with its

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(203) Ricoeur uses the concept of meaning in the sense of Husserl and Frege. Cf. I. Miller, Husserl, Perception and Temporal Awareness, p. 17.

(204) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freud and Psychology, pp. 250 ff.

(205) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Task of the Ecclesial Community in the Modern World", in L. K. Shook (ed.) Theology of Renewal, II.

particular application in the field of biblical hermeneutics, has brought

to the surface many characteristics of Ricoeur's project of interpretation.

These elements can be organised into what Beatriz Melano Couch has called

the "Ricoeurian Quadrilateral Model" (Cuadrilátero Ricoeuriano), which

scheme we are going to follow in this last part of our present chapter

(206). This Cuadrilátero is composed of the four basic dimensions of

Ricoeur works: 1) The linguistic, 2) the philosophical, 3) the ontological

and 4) the sacramental dimension. All these aspects, which are present in

Ricoeur's hermeneutics, seem to be absent or incomplete in Bultmann's

demythologising programme, and in the new hermeneutic school. As a resumé

of our previous investigation on Ricoeur, we will mention briefly the

following aspects of the Quadrilateral Model:

2.10.1.1 The Linguistic Dimension

Ricoeur has taken the long way of the interpretative process, through the

investigation of mythical-symbolic language. For that purpose, he uses the

Linguistic Sciences and the study of Semiology; his task is the deciphering

of the text, which is characterised by the multiplicity of meaning. But

this textual plurivocity can only be approached by an inter-disciplinary

model, e.g. through the psychoanalytic interpretation of dreams, study of

myths, historical understanding, exegesis etc.

Ricoeur works in a dialogical fashion, relating the philosophy of language

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(206) Cf. B. Melano Couch, Hermenéutica Metódica, pp. 231 ff.

(the Speech-act of Austin and Searle, Black's theory of metaphor etc.) with Husserl's phenomenology, Heidegger's ontology and the semantic analysis used by exegetes. This is the Ricoeurian project in a nutshell, the organisation of a general hermeneutic which could include a reflection on anthropology, psychoanalysis, symbolic logic and exegetical science (207). Ricoeur considers here three tasks to be taken into account for this project: the catalogue of symbolic expressions (cosmic symbols, oneiric expressions, etc), the elaboration of a "criteriology", fixing the criteria of the structures of related forms, such as metaphors, allegory and simile (208), and consequently, a promotion of an inter-disciplinary dialogue. In this way, the multivocity of the symbols would not be reduced by one interpretation from metapsychology or phenomeneology of religion, but it would be enriched by a diversity of hermeneutical methods. A criteriology will provide the base for such a fruitful dialogue, arbitrating between dream mechanisms and rhetorical forms, for instance. Ricoeur's task is to liberate human discourse, from the absolutist claims of different methods of interpretation. (209)

2.10.1.2 The Philosophical Dimension

Ricoeur criticises Bultmann for his lack of reflection at this level. Bultmann's search for the meaning of the text does not provide us with a

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(207) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Démythologisation et Herménéutique, p. 36.

(208) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 14 ff.

(209) Ibid., p. 15.

careful analysis of the different moments of the production of meaning/signification. The two main points Ricoeur considers here are a) the problem of existential understanding, and b) the question of the Cogito. In the first case, we cannot appropriate the meaning of the text, in an existential way, if we do not take into account literary criticism.

The interpretation of the text, at semantic levels, is closely related to the self-understanding of the reader. In the second point, Ricoeur works with a philosophy of the subject, in order to ask who is the "I" who appropriates the text.

Bultmann has considered that the big obstacle for the moment of the appropriation of the text, is the cultural distance between the primitive addressee and the modern reader. He has tried to overcome this problem through his demythologisation method. But Ricoeur argues here that Bultmann does not ask who is the reader who appropriates the meaning of the text, without thinking that it could well be a "narcissistic ego" or a "false consciousness" characterised -according to Heidegger- by inauthenticity. Although Bultmann spoke of the need for a special attitude towards the text, or a kind of "disposition" on the part of the reader, he never asked about the nature of the "I" who needs to be "disposed" in front of the text.

An important point to remember here is that for Ricoeur, the distanciation of the text is a positive aspect which contributes to the interpretation process. The distanciation, as a hermeneutical function, produces three disappearances: that of the original writer, that of the original addressee

and that of the original horizon of the discourse (cultural and historical context). All these factors contribute, in Ricoeur's opinion, to an enrichment of the meaningful possibilities of the text. This happens because, although we do not have the "author", we have instead an autonomous text, with a new reader (addressee) and an "infinite" textual horizon, which replaces the original, limited horizon of the written discourse.

Finally, what differentiates Ricoeur from Bultmann, is his interest in developing a philosophy of the subject, with help from other sciences such as psychoanalysis and structuralism. Using both approaches, Ricoeur aims to produce an unmasking of the false Cogito. In Ricoeur's own words, "The self (le moi) must be lost in order to find the 'I' (le je)" (210). But this project can only be developed through the exegesis of the texts of human culture. (211)

2.10.1.3   The Ontological Dimension

Ricoeur says that "Ontology is the promised land for a philosophy that begins with language and with reflection" (212). The ontology that Ricoeur proposes is intimately linked with interpretation, and following Heidegger, he starts with being, instead of knowledge. For Ricoeur, "understanding is

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(210) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 20.

(211) P. Ricoeur, Demythologisation et Hérmeneutique, p. 30.

(212) P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 24.

thus no longer a mode of knowledge but a mode of being." (213). This is part of his major project of leaving aside the circle of the object-subject problem, in order to question the being, and that being which is "there" (Dasein), in the understanding mode; this can only be achieved by the hermeneutical process. (214)

Ricoeur recognises the value of different hermeneutics; this is also part of his "Criteriology". Every hermeneutic discovers something about the being who interprets. For instance, psychoanalysis has show the relation between language and human desire, and phenomenology works at descriptive levels related to language and the sacred. All these approaches are useful to unmask the narcissistic Ego, which considers itself the origin and fundament of every meaning; at the same time, these methods constitute the ontological implications of an interpretative process. This process is composed of different "ontological roots of comprehension" (215), which Ricoeur organises as psychoanalysis (with its archeology of the subject), phenomenology of the spirit (with its teleology of figures), and phenomenology of religion (the signs and the sacred).

The task proposed by Ricoeur is of a fundamental ontology. Language needs to be considered not as an object, neither as a mediator between meanings, but as a way to "name the Being." Bultmann also tried to find the being

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(213) Ibid., p. 7.

(214) Ibid., pp. 7 ff.

(215) Ibid. p. 22.

through an existential encounter with the kerygma, as the proclaimed word,
but in Ricoeur's opinion, the problem is that Bultmann's ontological
project does not use the interdisciplinary approach; and this is necessary
to rescue the many dimensions of the _Dasein_ who interprets.

2.10.1.4 The Sacramental Dimension

Ricoeur has criticised Bultmann for his excessive concentration on the
spoken language, forgetting the important dimension of the non-verbal
language; symbols, action, rituals and gestures are a rich language to be
considered. Ricoeur studies different discursive models such as the
religious, the discourses of Jesus, the poetic, the iconoclastic and a type
of discourse he calls "of a second hearing" (_de la seconde écoute_). (216)
His conclusions are the following:

  a) There is a dialectic of proclamation and manifestation expressed
  through the interrelation of hermeneutics and a phenomenology of the
  sacred.

  b) It is not possible to conceive a faith without symbols; the symbols
  allow us to continue the process of interpretation.

  c) The kerygmatic discourse is communicated through symbols.

Ricoeur sees a subtle equilibrium between proclamation and sacraments
(manifestations of the sacred) during all the history of the Christian
Church. This dialectic is manifested by the fact that in the preaching of

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(216) Cf. B. Melano Couch, _Hermenéutica Metódica_, p. 238. Also cf. P.
Ricoeur, "Manifestation et Proclamation" in _L'Herméneutique du Sacré_.

the kerygma, the Church wants to actualise the symbol (this is a praxis), but in the sacramental acts, the praxis becomes symbol again. Ricoeur stresses this mutual interdependence, saying that the sacrament allows the word to become concrete, and vice versa, the proclamation returns the charismatic dimension to the sacrament.

Melano Couch adds to this analysis that something similar happens in relation to other symbols of the Christian Church. For instance the Koinonía (communion of the Church), as a sign of the power of the word, "speaks" to us about the action of the Holy Spirit; the kiss in the "sharing of peace" of our congregations, and even the silence kept in the presence of God, are full of meaning. "The symbols give flesh (encarna) to the word; they speak, and sometimes they do it louder and more powerfully than the words which are said and heard." (217)

The Cuadrilátero Ricoeuriano of Melano Couch's model organises the four dimensions of the Long Way of Ricoeur, which provide us with an exegetical methodology, a fundament to understand history, and a mediator amongst contradictory interpretations. The sacramental dimension is of particular relevance for the hermeneutic of religious language, from the perspective of a non-verbal language. Ricoeur has criticised Bultmann for having emphasised the preached word, without paying attention to the language of gestures, actions, and any form of human communication without words. It is

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(217) Cf. B. Melano Couch, op. cit., p. 238.

in this perspective that Ricoeur asks:

"Does an hermeneutic of Proclamation detach itself of a phenomenology

of the Sacred? Does the Kerygma annihilate the Sacred?" (218).

This point seems to be of particular relevance for the Latin American

liberation theology, since our challenge is to reflect theologically

with people who belong to traditional non-Hispanic speaking, agraphic

cultures. We need to be able to incorporate to our theology, elements such

as dances and community celebrations, which have the role of communicating

the religious experience of our people. In this sense we can say that the

Long Way of Ricoeur cannot be completed in Latin America, until the

sacramental non-verbal language of the poor can be rediscovered, and

incorporated to the linguistic, ontological and reflexive dimensions.

2.10.2 Exegetical Rules for Biblical Interpretation

We have studied Ricoeur's hermeneutical theory, and we will conclude now

reviewing his work concerning exegetical rules (219). There are three main

rules he mentions as important for the biblical exegete. The first is

concerned with the non-neutrality of the text, the second with the

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(218) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Manifestation et Proclamation" in L'Herméneutique du

Sacré.

(219) Cf. R. Barthes; P. Ricoeur; A. Vergote and others, Exégése et

Herméneutique, pp. 13 ff.

postponement of a final interpretation, and the third, with the work of a criteriology (220).

The first rule of exegesis is to be aware of the non-neutrality of the methods of interpretation. Behind any chosen method there is always a theory of the production of meaning; to know the method we have selected helps us to realise the intermediaries between the text and ourselves. For instance, questions concerning the nature of language, or the text, function as a-prioristic determinants for our understanding of the discourse. Every method carries with it its own limitations, which should be known by the exegete before hand.

The second rule is related to the first, in the following sense: the exegete, being aware of the limitations of his/her chosen methodology, should not precipitate the final moment of interpretation. The paradox with which Ricoeur confront us here, is that we need to choose a method (thus limiting our possibilities), but at the same time be aware of the risk of an ecclectic combination of different theories. As a result of that, the final interpretation should be postponed, in the sense that it would need to always be open to new possibilities of interpretation, of further enrichment of previous exegesis. In this way, the task of the exegete is

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(220) By "criteriology" Ricoeur understands the combined work of different models of transference of meaning, as key to the development of the interpretative task. He considers that due to the Platonic influence, we tend to use mostly an analogical model, while failing to incorporate the

never finished, because it is the task of the search for the being who interprets. In Ricoeur's own words, the interpreter "like Moses...can only glimpse this (promised) land (of ontology) before dying." (221).

The third rule combines the first two. Recognising the limitations of our chosen method, and being aware of the risks both of ecclecticism and of fanaticism, it is required to develop a way of working with different methods. This should be done in order to keep enriching our interpretation. Ricoeur uses here a criteriology, a recognition of the "borders" or limits of different methods, and the points where they can connect with each other. Acquiring awareness about the finitude of the theoretical models, the exegete would be able to empathise with other epistemological proposals, knowing when and how to introduce a different method of analysis. Ricoeur wants to produce a convergence of methods (l'entrecoupemente des méthodes), as the only solution to the existing conflict of interpretations.

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analysis of dreams from Freud, or the critique of illusion from Nietzsche. A criteriology then, fulfils the role of incorporating different and even contradictory models of transference of meaning into the interpretation theory. Ricoeur points out that every interpretation is partial, and to avoid narrowness and fanaticism is necessary to rediscover the richness of different hermeneutics. In this way, the conflict of interpretation will give way to a deeper, richer hermeneutical circle. Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 26 ff.

(221) Cf. P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 24.

Melano Couch adds two extra rules which she infers from Ricoeur's work: The relation between written and spoken word, and the place of the exegete in the biblical tradition. Ricoeur has clearly established his belief in the dialectic of the written/oral discourse. In the written word, the unity is the phrase, and in the oral discourse, the sign. The exegete needs to pay attention to both dimensions, through the use of an adequate knowledge of the theory of discourse. Ricoeur has covered these exegetical dimensions with his studies on structuralism (concerned with the written text), and his research on Wittgenstein, Benveniste, Austin, Strawson and Searle (the spoken word).

But the exegete should also remember that his/her interpretation is situated in a chain of biblical interpretation; this means that the exegete belongs to the same tradition as the biblical text. Ricoeur has said that there is a chain of tradition-text-interpretation, which can be read in a different order. For instance, text-interpretation-tradition or interpretation (of an event)-text-tradition. In order to keep the integrity of the text, the exegete must acknowledge the fact that s/he is part of this community of interpreters who preceded him/her. This, as we have seen in chapter one, is one of the presuppositions from the moment of guessing in the hermeneutical circle, and a key aspect of what we have called "an hermeneutics of solidarity". It is this communitarian, mutually binding aspect of Ricoeur's proposal, which has proved to be an important influence on the Latin American theology of liberation. This and other relevant points from the hermeneutical circle developed by J. Severino Croatto, Juan Luis Segundo and Clodovis Boff, will be the object of the study of our next chapter.

Summary

The Conflict of Interpretation of the Scriptures.

Ricoeur, in his analysis of the core of the problem of interpretation in the history of Christianity, sees the conflict of interpretation of Scriptures as something inherent to biblical interpretation itself. He considers three main moments of its development:

 a) The moment of questioning the relationship between the Old and New Testament.

 b) The moment of interpreting Christ's mystery in relation to human existence.

 c) The moment of questioning of the hermeneutical situation in itself.

Biblical hermeneutics.

Biblical hermeneutics is, according to Ricoeur, a paradox. It is part of a chapter of a General Hermeneutics, but at the same time it has unique characteristics. One of these, is the "eccentric" character of biblical interpretation, that is, the use of elements outside the text as essential to interpretation, such as the use of the confession of faith, and the closure of the narrativity produced by the canon. Ricoeur uses Von Rad's analysis and takes from it the three basic problems of the biblical discourse: the relation between biblical narrative and the confession of faith; the relation between these two elements and the theological method, and the relation between the whole of the corpus of the text, and the changes produced in the interpretation of individual forms of discourse when they are a unit.

Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theological Hermeneutics.

Ricoeur works with philosophical hermeneutics to study the relation between Word-event (from the spoken Word of God to the text), and to analyse the world of the text (which has a referential function). He understands the world of the text by the convergence of two methods: Structuralism and Historical Criticism. Ricoeur wants to rescue the poetic dimension of the biblical text, and to give value to the interpreter's creativity. To understand the word of God is to understand its symbolism.

Phenomenological Hermeneutic and Theology.

Ricoeur has defined interpretation as "the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning." Through the study of the symbolism of the Bible, Ricoeur privileges the humbleness of the _Cogito Blessé_ (which looks for hidden meanings), against the manipulation of the word by the narcissistic Ego. In the study of the dynamic of symbols, Ricoeur considers three symbolic constellations found in the Bible: stain, sin and guilt.

Myths.

The analysis of myths is considered by Ricoeur in _The Symbolism of Evil_. He organises them into four categories: 1) Myths of the drama of creation; 2) Myths of the fall of humanity; 3) The myth of the tragic hero (in Greece), and the myth of the exiled soul. But the important thing to remark is Ricoeur's own conception of myth as a language in itself, with its own inner dialectic compressing aspects of time and life.

The hermeneutical circle of Bultmann and the New Hermeneutics.

At the base of Ricoeur's criticism of Bultmann lies a different conception of myth. Bultmann has been influenced by the Enlightenment conception of myth, and works from the idea of myth as falsehood, and as a product of primitive minds. Ricoeur opposes these concepts, but also criticises the lack of a theory of language and the centering of the Bultmannian exegeses in the "speaking" experience. He sees that this forgetfullness of language has produced in Bultmann a neglect of the non-verbal language of faith, such as the world of sacraments and rituals, without which the preached word suffers from a reduction of meaning.

Ricoeur agrees with Bultmann and the New Hermeneutics, in the place of the subject in the philosophical discourse. He can accept that meaning comes from the appropriation of the text, but providing that this _Aneignung_ comes only as the last stage of the moment of interpretation. However, the Bultmannian pre-supposition of the "moment of decision" shortens the circle of interpretation, leaping over the moment of meaning, and making the task of interpretation very difficult.

Ricoeur's biblical hermeneutics.

Ricoeur has recovered the four main dimensions of biblical hermeneutics: the linguistic, the philosophical, the ontological and the sacramental. As a result of the work of the Argentinian theologian Melano Couch, this is known in Latin America as the Ricoeurian "Quadrilateral Model". The exegetical rules that are related to this are the following:

1) The exegete must be aware of the non-neutrality of the methods of interpretation.

2) The exegete must also be aware of the limitations of his/her chosen methodology.

3) Recognising the limitations of our chosen method, and being aware of the risks of both eclecticism and fanaticism, it is required to develop a way of working with different methods.

Two extra rules that can be added are concerned with the relation between written/spoken word, and the place of the exegete in biblical tradition. This last point seems to be particularly relevant for liberation theology in Latin America, since the exegete must acknowledge the fact that s/he is part of this community of interpreters who preceded him/her. Is this communitarian and mutually binding aspect of Ricoeur's proposal, which has proved to be an important influence in the Latin American hermeneutical circle.

CHAPTER THREE

HERMENEUTICS OF LIBERATION

"We must realize that there are different philosophical categories that the Latin Americans are working with, such as the question of phenomenology and the category of mystery that is very present in many of the Catholic (theologians)."

Orlando Costas (222).

"The hermeneutical studies and the philosophy of language of Paul Ricoeur (from his philosophical interpretation on Freud to The Conflict of Interpretations and other more recent essays) have given us very useful tools for reflection. These ideas, together with the illuminating work of Paulo Freire ... have been and still are a source of inspiration."

J. Severino Croatto (223).

Introduction

3.0.1   "The Question of Phenomenology"

The quotation from Croatto, one of the earliest and most influential Latin American biblical hermeneuticians, confirms the words of Costas. The Theology of Liberation has been deeply influenced by phenomenology, specifically through the works of Ricoeur and Freire, whose Pedagogy

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(222) Cf. M. Branson; C. R. Padilla (eds.), Conflict and Context, p. 109.

(223) J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 10.

of the Oppressed has roots in the work of Husserl and other existentialist phenomenologists. There is a curious coincidence too, in the fact that Latin American theology is usually described in similar terms to phenomenology, at least in the first attempts towards a definition: It is a methodology, a way of walking through certain path of knowledge, a Metá-ódos. This methodology can be traced from the early documents where the theological thought of Latin Americans started to be organised, although sometimes it may look incomplete, contradictory or even dispersed. Nearly twenty years after the first works of liberation theology became known, there is still a need to organise the early influences and further elaboration of Latin American hermeneutics.

In the second chapter of the present research we have seen Ricoeur's biblical hermeneutical proposal in detail, and considered his work in relationship to Bultmann's hermeneutical circle and the "New Hermeneutic" represented by Fuchs. We have considered especially Ricoeur's symbolic theory, the dynamics of myths and the Ricoeurian model for biblical interpretation and exegesis (the "Quadrilateral Model").

In the present chapter we will continue our investigation related into Ricoeur's hermeneutical proposals, specifically in relation to their influence in key aspects of the methodology of liberation theology from Latin America. We will continue analysing the four moments of the hermeneutical circle and evaluating the use made of Ricoeurian theory by the theology of liberation, not only in the aspects where both interpretative methodologies are similar, but also in the ones where they are different.

The Latin American theologians who have been selected for this chapter are, from many points of view (including the chronological one) the most relevant in the hermeneutic debate of the continent. They belong to different geographical areas of Latin America, and although they represent the same church (Roman Catholic), we need to acknowledge here that the differences of work and style of the church from one country to another are very noticeable. These diversities have enriched the methodology of liberation; different patterns of interpretation are mainly due to the fact that Latin America is a vast continent, where cultures and languages are bound together as in a tapestry of different textures and colours, although in a similar design of poverty and violence.

The hermeneuticians whose theory we will study are José Severino Croatto, Juan Luis Segundo and Clodovis Boff. Segundo and Croatto belong to the River Plate area of South America, which was very much influenced by the European immigration movement of the beginning of the century. Uruguay and Argentina are considered the "white countries" of Latin America, with little identification with the rest of the continent where the native population is more numerous. The Roman Catholic churches in the River Plate tend to be very conservative, with a history of long alliances with the state.

Segundo is a Jesuit priest in Montevideo, and Croatto, having been excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church, works actively amongst both Protestants and Catholics in Argentina. He occupies the Chair of Professor of Old Testament in I.S.E.D.E.T., which is the Union Theological Seminary of Buenos Aires, having worked during many years as a member of S.A.P.S.E.

(Argentinian Society of Sacred Scripture Professors), which is well known

for its extensive contribution to the research of hermeneutics in Latin

America. Clodovis Boff is a Servite priest from Brazil, which is the

biggest country in South America, and a place where Christianity mixes with

the spirituality of the old African religions brought to the continent by

the people submitted to slavery by the Portuguese Empire in the XV Century.

He usually divides his time between working in Basic Ecclesial Communities

and teaching in the Catholic University of São Paulo, Brazil.

3.0.2 Liberation Theology as a Methodology.

In 1968, the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM) gathered in

Medellín, Colombia, and produced a very important document for the Catholic

Church, which deeply influenced the thought and work of the mainstream

protestant churches. In this document, with its studies of the "structures

of sin" in Latin America, and words of encouragement for the promotion of

Comunidades Eclesiales de Base (CEBs: basic ecclesial communities), it is

interesting to notice the methodological background provided by Paulo

Freire. This is especially so in the section about "Liberating Education",

but also in the discussion concerning church and Latin American realidad

(reality; In Spanish it is a term that includes a concept of history and

contextuality). Many hermeneutical keys derive from Medellín, such as the

option for the poor as a presupposition for interpretation, and a

demythologizing process in relation to socio-ecclesiastical symbols leading

to what Freire calls an integral transformation of the Latin American

realidad.

Nearly ten years later, CELAM gathered again in Puebla de los Angeles,

México, producing a second document, this time concentrating on issues of culture. The hermeneutical clues from the Puebla document were also present, and to the idea of the "educational community", as a tool for transformation, other elements were added such as the role of ideology in evangelisation, and the clarification of the pastoral task in the socio-economic context. The preferential option for the poor of the continent was stressed again. The Puebla gathering was informed by a substantial preparation document, analysing the conditions of extreme poverty and violence in which the people were living. The best known Latin American theologians, such as Segundo, Gutiérrez, Dussel, Sobrino, Comblin, Boff, Galilea and Assman amongst others were, curiously, not invited to Puebla, but working from a parallel meeting, they contributed to the Conference discussing the papers produced by CELAM, and circulating their commentaries through the Conference.

These two Conferences synthesised a current discussion about the mission of the church in Latin America, and provided, as Gutiérrez has written, a challenge in relation to the suffering believers of a deeply Christian Continent. They also opened the way for the organization of the CEBs (224). What Medellín and Puebla did, was to bring to the surface a much needed dialogue which had always been there, since the times when Las Casas and Montesinos spoke from their pulpits to the Church to ask:

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(224) Cf. G. Gutiérrez, "Entre las Calandrias", Páginas, 100, pp. 112 ff. The CEBs are small Christian communities, constituted by poor people who live together with a minimun of co-ordination from their local diocesis. They are mainly Catholics, but Protestant and ecumenical communities can

"By what right do you keep these Indians (sic) in such cruel
servitude?... Are these not men?... Are you not bound to love them as
you love yourselves?." (225).

The "Right Questioning" that Segundo advocates as a hermeneutical key in
his circle of interpretation, has been practiced since the arrival of
Christianity to the continent.

We have said that liberation theology refers to a methodology, a way to
interpret the Latin American reality which is a Christian reality. The
first questioning, the product of an on going dialogue between theologians
from different countries, came to the surface in the years 1964-1975; the
key works of liberation theology were published almost simultaneously, all
of them being the product of parish courses, workshops or conferences. A
Conference given by Ivan Illich in 1964, inspired Gustavo Gutiérrez to work
on a series of papers that were roughly gathered as A Theology of
Liberation in 1968, and finally published in 1971. In 1976 Clodovis Boff
finished his doctoral thesis on theology and praxis for the University of
Louvain, Belgium, which was partially published in the same year by the
Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira. Meanwhile Segundo, who has been publishing
works in existentialism and philosophy since 1948, and a doctoral thesis on
Christianity as Utopia in 1964, produced between 1968 and 1972 two volumes
of Open Theology for the Adult Lay Person, From Society to Theology and in
1975, a proposal regarding a hermeneutical circle in his famous book The
Liberation of Theology.

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also be found. Cf. J. Marins et al., The Church from the Roots.

(225) Cf. H. Herring, A History of Latin America, p. 174.

All the works produced by Latin American theologians have a methodological interest and contain a search for a new hermeneutical path but the three theologians we have selected for our study are the ones who produced specific research in the field of theories of interpretation. Segundo has worked on <u>The Liberation of Theology</u> organising many methodological elements into an hermeneutical circle, which bears the influence both of Ricoeur and Freire. In previous works, especially in the first volumes of his <u>Open Theology</u>..., Segundo also used a phenomenological methodology and produced some structuralist analysis on dogmatic issues and Scriptures. Boff's research on <u>Theology and Praxis</u> had been informed by the hermeneutical theory of Ricoeur, together with Gadamer and Dilthey.

Finally, Croatto was a pioneer in relation to the development of a biblical hermeneutics in Latin America, having published his first book on the subject in 1973. This book called <u>Freedom and Liberation: Hermeneutical Clues</u>, set a pattern in the interpretation circle in Latin America, because it was the first work on interpretation to be organised around a Ricoeurian background, where the creativity of the French philosopher's theory is tested in relation to important issues of liberation theology. It became a very influential text, and will be discussed in the first part of our study.

3.0.3   The Phenomenological Hermeneutical Circle in Latin America.

In chapter one, under the title "The Hermeneutical Circle of Paul Ricoeur" we studied four characteristics of the phenomenological approach to

literary interpretation. We will summarise them briefly to remind us of their characteristics, as follows:

1) The text becomes "alive", or "itself", only in relation with the interest of the reader. The historical experience of the reader shapes the text, which remits the reader to action.

2) Phenomenological hermeneutics is not interested in the possibilities of any shared experiences between the writer and his/her reader, but the type of being-in-the-world that is unfolded in the text. The term "author" is reserved for use only as a value-concept, in relation to the historical process of composition of the text.

3) The experience called "re-reading" replaces the author's intention, as in Schleiermacher's hermeneutics. Re-reading produces a re-creation of the text, in the moment of Appropriation. This moment is related to a specific praxis.

4) The role of presuppositions is accepted, and the "final hermeneutical conclusion" is postponed, because the text is inexhaustible. Although the "mind of the writer" is rejected, the text needs to be organised for its study by its form, and historical origins, but remembering that the reader is the only agent of meaningfulness.

The first point has been developed in liberation theology in relation to the interests of Latin American people; their concrete experience of poverty, destitution, illiteracy etc. has been used to shape the reading of

the Bible. The second point has been practised in an ambiguous way; in some hermeneutical works there is a clear correlation model used, and therefore the historical experiences reader-writer/text are stressed. In other recent approaches, there is a tendency to emphasize the type of being-in-the-world that is unfolded through the text. This point is then related to a more critical reading of the biblical text, as we will see later. The other elements concerning the "re-reading" of the text and "re-creation" of meaning have been extensively developed, in the style of work presented in Cardenal's The Gospel in Solentiname, for instance. (226a)

Finally, the stress on the "openness" of the text, has created the Latin American hermeneutical premise of "allowing the reader to say his/her own word" (que cada uno diga su palabra), which reminds us of the Ricoeurian task of allowing language "to name the being". Obviously, this point has ontological implications which we will study especially in relation to the moment of appropriation of the text by the reader.

All these principles, including the particular words used, such as "re-reading", have been present since the very beginning of the "popular Biblical studies" in the CEBs (Basic Ecclesial Communities), although some of them were fully developed only in more recent times. An early document such as Pope John Paul II's opening address at the Puebla Conference, makes the following comment:

"Now today we find in many places a phenomenon that is not new. We find 're-readings' of the Gospel that are products of theoretical speculations rather than of authentic meditation on the word of God

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(226a) Cf. Ernesto Cardenal, The Gospel of Solentiname.

and a genuine evangelical commitment. They cause confusion insofar as they depart from the central criteria of the Church's faith, and people have the temerity to pass them on as catechisms to Christian communities... They (the Bible study leaders) indulge in types of interpretation that are at variance with the Church's faith." (226b)

The "theoretical speculations" are related to the four basic statements already described, concerned respectively with the text, the author, the reader and the meaning of the text. We will proceed now to find some of the answers to these questions, researching Croatto's early hermeneutical circle as presented in Exodus, a Hermeneutic of Freedom, and its complementary text Biblical Hermeneutics.

Part I

3.1 J. Severino Croatto. Freedom and Liberation.
       Hermeneutical Clues.

Croatto published this book in 1973, as the result of a course given by him on "Bible and Liberation" in the early seventies, in the "Casa Nazareth", better known later as "The Institute for Justice and Peace" in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The English edition was published rather late (in 1983), under the title Exodus. A Hermeneutic of Freedom. This English title is perhaps misleading, since Croatto dedicated only one chapter to the

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(226b) Cf. John Paul II, "Discurso Inaugural" I, 4, in Documento de Puebla, p. 559. Also in Enrique Laje, "El Ateísmo Larvado en Cierta Teología de la

study of Exodus, from the six which form the book. The original subtitle gives us instead a more faithful idea of its contents: "Hermeneutical Clues", elements for the construction of a hermeneutical circle presented through concrete examples. It is true that the event of Exodus is presented in this particular work as an interpretative key, together with words such as "Freedom" and "Liberation", but the presentation of a hermeneutical circle seems to have been the real object of the book. It is interesting to notice that in the English edition of this book, Croatto has written a comment concerned with the misunderstanding of his work as an exegesis on the Exodus, instead of a presentation of a method of interpretation. Thus he says that Segundo, in a brief comment about Exodus written in The Liberation of Theology, has missed the point of the hermeneutical circle proposal and stressed the exegetical aspects of the book.

Ten years after Exodus, Croatto published a second volume, called Biblical Hermeneutics, which is the theoretical complement of the first. Both books should be read together, as an unity; the practical examples of Exodus..., used as hermeneutical clues, are the product of a series of workshops for lay people, and for that reason the theoretical elements are not stressed. Biblical Hermeneutics provides the reader with the appropriate philosophical background which the first book lacks, being the compilation of many years work of hermeneutical courses given by Croatto at I.S.E.D.E.T., Buenos Aires.

Liberación" in Tierra Nueva, 71, 1989, p. 35.

(227) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Exodus. A Hermeneutic of Freedom, p. 83. Also J. L. Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, p. 112.

Other books written by Croatto on hermeneutics, which we are going to consider are <u>Mito y Hermenéutica</u>, ("Myth and Hermeneutics", published in 1974; no English translation), the two volumes of <u>El Hombre en el Mundo</u> ("Man in the World"; vol. I "Creation and Design" (1973); vol II "To Create and Love in Freedom", (1986); no English translations); <u>Los Pobres</u> ("The Poor" (1978), no English translation); some of his many articles published in different journals, together with notes taken during his classes at I.S.E.D.E.T., and his latest book, "<u>Isaías 1-39</u>", from the series of "Latin American Ecumenical Biblical Commentaries" (1990; no English translation).

3.1.1 The Hermeneutical Vocation of the Latin American People

"Lord, take away from me this chalice."
(from a popular Brazilian song).

The genesis of the elaboration of the circle of interpretation in Croatto provides us with many interesting clues. First of all, he starts searching for a "Generative Word", following Paulo Freire's methodology. The words that he finds (Freedom, Liberation) presuppose a previous investigation process at "grassroots" levels (<u>a nivel de base</u>). This work has been done personally by Croatto in his involvement with CEBs, through his teaching, and also through the reading of other works on Latin America and theology, such as the writings of Gutiérrez, Assman, and Dussel amongst others. The words Freedom and Liberation are generative, because they "generate" the dialogue and discussion amongst Latin American people at an every day level, showing that somehow they were related to some key aspect of their reality.

The words Freedom and Liberation were also closely associated with language and interpretation. Confronted with censorship, including the banning of certain words for public use and a persistent lack of information, Latin America became a continent of incipient hermeneuticians; one of the most popular every day phrases of the seventies was: "Do you know what is happening?", as people made their effort to understand their reality which was becoming silenced and meaningless (228). Freire recalled how a popular song in Brasil, the chorus of which goes: "Lord, take away from me this chalice", become a symbol of freedom, because in Portuguese the word "chalice" (calice) sounds very similar to the imperative mode of the verb "to shut up" (calar-se). What people were actually singing in the streets was "Lord, take away from me this [order to] shut up." (229). This is a perfect example of what Ricoeur considers the positive role of double meaning. In Ricoeur's own words:

"There is something to unfold, to dis-implicate in symbols [chalice became here a theological symbol of the identification between the suffering of people and Jesus's crucifixion]... That which arouses understanding is precisely the double-meaning, the intending of the second meaning through the first." (230)

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(228) For this point, cf. D. Balderston, Narrativa Argentina durante el Proceso Militar.

(229) From a private conversation with Freire, 1989

(230) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 18.

However, the censors did not discover the "double meaning" of the song, probably due to the fact that authoritarian language only works with non-equivocal utterances (231). In certain countries common names and verbal expression have been banned, under the suspicion of having undesirable-connotations ; for instance, political opposition prisoners were referred to by certain government media as "parcels" (paquetes), in order to dehumanise them, and relativise their persecution. Even the teaching of the language of binary mathematics was forbidden, because like Marxism, it is built upon relations of opposition (the same can be said about Saussurean Structuralism).

The poor people in Latin America have a traditional orally oriented culture, which means that if their freedom of speech is curtailed, a very serious damage is produced in people's life, especially since illiteracy and poverty does not allow another sort of "dialogue" with texts, for instance, or with images such as cinema or television. Croatto then rescued through the use of a Freirean conscientisation process, two words that conveyed the Latin America reality at that time: Liberation and freedom. This is, hermeneutically speaking, his starting point, and there are two key elements in it which will introduce us to the first step of the hermeneutical circle of liberation theology: the starting point of the questions and of the questioner.

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(231) For a commentary about "double-meaning" in Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle, cf. Chapter two, 2.1.

3.1.2 The Hermeneutical Circle of Liberation Theology.

"We are not going to devise anything new. Biblical hermeneutic is simply a
method to read the Bible which needs to be clarified and organised."
J. S. Croatto (232)

Croatto defines the theology of liberation in terms of hermeneutics. In his
introductory words to "Exodus", he writes: "We prefer to speak of
hermeneutics of liberation rather than liberation theology." (233). The
reasons for this are related to the theology of liberation's need to remain
a "theology of the possible", in the same way that Ricoeur's hermeneutics
has been characterised by a "passion for the possible." (234). Ricoeur has
tried to preserve the opening of his Poetics, in order to keep in the
process the category of hope. In the same way, Croatto defines theology of
liberation as an unfinished (inacabado) project, open to the plurivocity of
the text of the Scriptures and the Latin America situation. The experience
of re-reading the Bible keeps the dynamic opening of the text, and the
Kerygma of "man's (sic) vocation for freedom" (235). Croatto considers that
every reading is a hermeneutical reading in itself, and as such the

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(232) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 8.

(233) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, Introduction; my own
translation.

(234) Cf. Don Ihde, The Conflict of Interpretations, xxiv.

(235) J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 144.

hermeneutical circle has presuppositions but no neutral positions. The task
of interpretation then requires the organisation of methodological elements
which are necessary to renew theology itself (236).

There is another purpose in Croatto's task of organising a methodology of
liberation, related to the category of suspicion, which has been taken from
Ricoeur's interpretation theory. Hermeneutical suspicion is an important
factor in biblical re-readings; it shows that according to contextual
interests, theological readings emphasise one element to the detriment of
another, advocating a model of being Christian which could be at odds with
movements of liberation. The "hermeneutics of Apartheid", which read God
and God's children in terms of a dialectic "black servants and white
masters" is a clear example of that (237). In Latin America, José Míguez
Bonino's studies on images of Christ since the Spanish Conquista (as a
child, as a king and as a crucified dying man) are another example of how a
specific Christology can result in the submissive apathy of a continent
(238). The methodology of liberation which Croatto wants to organise has an
awareness of undesirable ideological biases (anthropological, political,
cultural, religious etc.), critically accepting its own options at the same
time. Exegesis depends on hermeneutics, and hermeneutics needs to be

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(236) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 8.

(237) Cf. G. S. Wilmore and J. Cone (eds.), Black Theology, p. 277.

(238) Cf. J. Míguez Bonino, Jesús: Ni Vencido ni Monarca Celestial.

aware of its presuppositions. In this relationship between methodology and particulars of interpretation lies the intimate connection between hermeneutics and the renewal of the Latin American churches.

3.1.3 Biblical Hermeneutics and Philosophy.

Croatto follows Ricoeur's position in relation to the place of biblical hermeneutics in the context of a "general hermeneutics" (239), considering the "regional" place - and at the same time the uniqueness- of biblical hermeneutics in the philosophical field. The methodology and the phenomenon of its study (the textual event) is basically the same, no matter if there is a sociological, literary or philosophical hermeneutic. More to the point, Croatto considers that the indifference shown by biblical hermeneutics towards a theory of interpretation of signs is a scandalous situation. He claims that "in no other literary work has anybody committed such elementary mistakes", as for instance, the interpretation of texts using only a historical perspective. Yet, it has happened with the Bible (240).

Croatto considers briefly the history of hermeneutics in three moments of its development, from 20th Century theories to Rabbinic interpretation during inter-testamental times. Coherent with his hermeneutical circle which starts in the present, Croatto starts analysing Heidegger's ontology,

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(239) Cf. Chapter two, 2.2.

(240) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 21.

and ends with the work of the Targum (241).

Firstly, Croatto mentions the philosophical hermeneutics of Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, Gadamer and Ricoeur, and its relation with the theological work of Bultmann, Fuchs and Ebeling. One important aspect to be considered in this moment is, according to Croatto, the Heideggerian return to the foundation of hermeneutics (Kehre), which is the Dasein acting as a pre-comprehension for the interpretation. It is interesting to notice that Croatto translates Dasein in Spanish as Estar, making very accessible the concept of Dasein to his readers, especially in CEBs. The Dasein interrogates the Cartesian Ego, because the essence of being is put in relation to the world. From Gadamer, Croatto considers the position of human beings as inserted in a historical tradition, and two hermeneutical elements: the function of distanciation and the fusion of horizons (242). Finally, he considers the proposal of the "long way" (detour) from Ricoeur, and his return to a linguistic theory.

Secondly, Croatto considers the medieval hermeneutic, and mentions the controversy upon the four Scriptural senses: Literal, allegorical, moral (or tropological) and scatological. He does not analyse them, but remarks that this variety of models of interpretation shows the fact that hermeneutics is a never finished process, and the Scriptures always have "something else" to say. Curiously, Croatto does not mention the Lutheran

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(241) Ibid., pp. 10 ff.

(242) For this point, cf. Chapter one, 1.9.3.

"Perspicuity principle" (243), which has influenced all biblical

hermeneutics in general and Latin American interpretation in particular.

C. René Padilla, the Argentinian Baptist theologian, during the "Context

and Hermeneutics in the Americas Conference", (Mexico, 1983), argued

passionately with an hermeneutician from the U.S.A. about the role of the

Lutheran influence in Latin America. Padilla has replied to the charge that

no theology can work outside the Church's traditions with the following

statement:

> "In Latin America we have a struggle with the church that says
>
> 'Scripture and tradition', and we have always said: No, Scripture,
>
> Scripture, Scripture and Scripture." (244).

Croatto represents the "Church and tradition" position; we will consider if

such a position can be maintained or not in the context of the

"hermeneutics of possibility" he advocates, in the final discussion of

chapter 4.

The last moment of Croatto's consideration, is the hermeneutics of the

First Century, especially the work of Philo of Alexandria which is related

to a concern with language. Finally, he mentions the biblical reading made

by the Rabbinic Tradition of the inter-testamental times. Croatto sees in

them an attempt to find a second meaning, or "deep sense" of the Scripture,

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(243) Cf. Chapter one, 1.3.1

(244) C. R. Padilla, in C. Padilla; M. Branson (eds.) Conflict and Context,

p. 106.

in the _derās_ and _pesāt_ (surface and deep level) of the biblical words.

3.1.4 Privileged elements of interpretation.

These three main moments of hermeneutics, are related to specific methodological approaches, which Croatto organises according to the element which occupies the privileged place of interpretation. We will mention them briefly, studying Croatto's comments on these points later on in this chapter. These privileged elements of interpretation are:

1) _The reality:_ The hermeneutical circle works only with the text of the present situation; the Bible is rejected. The main problem with this position is that it denies the possibility of other readings of the Scripture and seems to accept the closure of the text; but the question is that if hermeneutics cannot recreate meaning in texts, how can it be done in the "text" of societies which have not introduced elements of change during centuries? This position, in Croatto's opinion, is in contradiction with the theology of liberation's own objective of liberating the text. The theological reflection should have priority over a social-historical praxis.

2) _The literal sense_ of the text: There are two aspects to consider here, the literal reading as such or "fundamentalism" (where the original addressee coincides with the modern reader), and the reading which does not discriminate between the event and its meaning. Croatto calls both these positions a _Concordismo_ (a concordance-style of interpretation), because it tends to reduce the biblical message to an equivalent situation between

Israel in biblical times, and other cultures in other times, such as the African, Asian or Latin American; obviously, there are not always coincidences amongst them. The criticism presented to this position lies in the fact that every fundamentalist reading confuses the Kerygma with certain cultural contextualisation in which it is expressed.

3) *The "pre-text"* (history of the construction of the text): Croatto condemns here the exclusive use of historical criticism or history of redaction, without adding other elements of interpretation in the hermeneutical circle. The risk is to produce a reductionism of the text. Croatto quotes Ricoeur's analysis of the emphasis on the "historical sense" of the texts, characteristic of western culture, without acknowledging what the text has to say by itself (245). But Croatto also considers that literary criticism needs to include other perspectives of interpretation to avoid the risk of a superficial reading.

4) *The "surface structure" of the text*: The reference here is to the use of structuralist approaches. Croatto, following Ricoeur, considers the benefits brought by this type of analysis, mainly the independence of the textual meaning from the author's original intention. His criticism of this method is, again, the possibility of falling into a reductionist position, due to the denial of structuralism of external (historical) references, which constitute the "life" of the text (246).

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(245) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 15. Also P. Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics", in Exegesis, pp. 265 ff.

(246) Cf. Chapter one, 1.6.3.1/2.

5) *The New Hermeneutics*: Croatto criticises the Bultmannian and post-Bultmannian hermeneutics, from the same perspective as Ricoeur. As we have seen in chapter two, the ontological appropriations in these hermeneutical circles, are done via the "short way", ignoring the "long way" of the use of the linguistic science. Croatto considers that the hermeneutical task of interpretation must always have its foundation in the science of signs (Semiotics).

As we can see, according to Croatto, each one of these approaches seems to be lacking some elements present in the others; the risk is to produce a narrow-minded, or reductionist approach to the Scripture. Croatto finds the solution to this problem in Ricoeur's convergence of methods (l'entrecoupemente des méthodes). "The conflict of interpretations", says Croatto, is related to the fact that "each one (of the interpretations) claims to be the 'real' interpretation, (and) does not accept a different one." (247). Croatto's hermeneutical circle tries to reconcile diverse methods of interpretation, as the only possibility to interpret the text from different angles and perspectives, producing a more integral process of interpretation. (248)

To summarise, the basic elements of the hermeneutical circle of Croatto show a marked influence from Ricoeur in the following points: a) the place of biblical hermeneutics in the context of philosophical hermeneutics,

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(247) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 37.

(248) Ibid., p. 18.

b) the acceptance of the Ricoeurian "long way" of interpretation (via Linguistics) c) the category of suspicion, d) the understanding of the plurivocity of the text and e) the proposal of a convergence of methodologies as the only possibility to produce a more integral interpretation. These are the basic points from which other elements, related to these first ones, will appear as related to our present study.

3.2 First Moment of the Hermeneutical Circle:
Guessing "in community."

Croatto makes clear that his chosen hermeneutical categories come from the common people's life, from a community. The generative power of "freedom " and "liberation" is immense because they transcend natural ethnic frontiers in Latin American, and appeal both to the peasant and to the urban population. The hermeneutician who belongs to the poor community, such as Croatto, tries to give voice to the voiceless. This means that the hermeneutician starts with his/her own reality, the social context that gives a word like "liberation" such high value and with the questioning of himself/herself, where the first elements of "suspicion" fell. When the hermeneutician asks about his/her own standing in relation to such a social context, s/he is questioning the "I" of the Cartesian cogito too. His/her existence becomes part of the community to which s/he belongs. As Ricoeur has said: "My birth ...speaks to me in another way of my existence as received: not only found *here* but given through *others*..." (249).

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(249) P. Ricoeur, <u>Fallible Man</u>, p. 97.

3.2.1 The text.

The phenomenological circle of interpretation starts with the text as the reunion of the interpretative community, in what we have called a "hermeneutics of solidarity", but Croatto adds to this the dimension of the Christian Latin American community, which happens to be constituted by the poor, the native people and the marginalised. In this way, they are included in the starting point of the interpretation process. Working with the categories of freedom and liberation (which implies the opposites of bondage/oppression), Croatto declares his presupposition: "First of all, we must discover the presence of God in the historical event (acontecimiento)" (250).

Events are also texts which require interpretation, and at this point Croatto expresses what he considers a different position from Ricoeur who, in his opinion, only understands hermeneutics in relation to written texts. "Text and event (or praxis) are mutually conditioned..." And he adds that although written texts require another type of interpretation, he will not "make such a distinction between both terms (written text and event) in the present work." (251).

However, this does not seems to be Ricoeur's position, since the French philosopher in his discussion on the dynamic of symbols makes clear what he

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(250) J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 19.

(251) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 9.

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calls the "two types of hermeneutics." (252). This second type of

hermeneutics is the one which, according to Ricoeur, works with the symbols

which became buildings, monuments and institutions, interpreting them as

"written texts". (253)

Another important point to consider is that Ricoeur has always considered

language as rooted in human experience, and the function of the text

related then to a praxis (254). Ricoeur's insistence on the grounding of

the text in social action is a quite distinctive element in his analysis,

and one of the reasons for his opposition to Structuralism, which

obliterates the reference of the text. It seems that Croatto has been

misguided by a definition of hermeneutics made by Ricoeur in Exegesis,

where he says "(hermeneutics) is the theory concerned with transactions of

comprehension, in relation to the understanding of texts." (255). However,

in other texts Ricoeur has worked extensively on the question of the text

and the text-event, and his position on this is clear. (256)

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(252) Cf. Chapter two, 2.1.3.2

(253) For a more detailed discussion on this point, cf. P. Ricoeur The

Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 121 ff. Also P. Ricoeur, Interpretation

Theory, p. 40.

(254) Cf. Chapter one, 1.7.

(255) P. Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics", in F. Bovon, G. Roullier

(eds.) Exegesis, p. 265.

(256) Perhaps one of the most relevant texts on this issue is Ricoeur's

"The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text", published

We will proceed now to study briefly the main hermeneutical elements of this moment of "guessing", concerned with text and truth, the category of suspicion and the problem of distanciation.

3.2.2 Text and Truth.

The relation between text and truth is concerned with determining a criteria of veracity for the written discourse. Croatto addresses this problem through the study of an important presupposition of his hermeneutical circle: Hacer-para-hablar (action as a foundation of speech). (257). He goes beyond the concept of honesty or authenticity (autenticidad), which is considered an important value in Latin America, and one of the words most frequently used in theological circles. To remain in a criterion of authenticity, for instance, "acting as we preach", does not imply that our action is correct, since it could be invalidated by a false argument. The point is that, for Croatto, action as a foundation of speech opens the discussion on the veracity of the text, because it makes us consider "right actions" as the ultimate criteria for truth. The written discourse (and the Biblical text) then, is seen as part of a process which started in a particular action or experience, and the veracity of the text refers us to certain right actions of God (which in Croatto are always actions of liberation) and wrong action from idols and people (understood in this context as oppression).

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in 1971; cf. From Text to Action. Essays on Hermeneutics II, p. 149.

(257) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, Introduction.

It is the "veracity" of the text in terms of its basis in action which seems to be the criterion of authority of the text for Croatto; the modern Latin American reader confronts him/herself with the Bible in terms of action, which starts and ends the hermeneutical circle, as we will see later on in our study of the moment of appropriation of the text). In this discussion Croatto uses Ricoeur's idea (already in Heidegger), that what we understand from a discourse is a project, or a model of being-in-the-world. "Human action", says Ricoeur "is opened to anybody who can read." (258).

But Ricoeur has also made clear that the text is free from the ostensive type of reference present in the oral discourse, that is the situation of the people who lived in a certain time and culture (the Umwelt). Ricoeur does not split the text from its referent, but he considers that the world of the text (Welt) is related to possible modes of being; this is the element which liberates the text from the limitations of certain past situations. Croatto instead seems to be reverting to a position nearer to Schleiermacher than to Ricoeur in this point, substituting for the "mind of the author" (as a reference), "the situation (or actions) of the author." We will consider the discussion about the veracity of action as hermeneutical presupposition in Croatto, in relation to Ricoeur, in chapter four.

The other aspect to consider here is the hermeneutical dimension of the text-event, which works as an important interpretative key in liberation theology. In an article entitled "Dios en el Acontecimiento" ("God in the

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(258) P. Ricoeur, "The Model of the Text", in From Text to Action, p. 15.

Event"), Croatto considers the importance of the event of salvation as a hermeneutical clue for Christian theology (259). The discussion is now on theology "as a text", which Croatto considers has been closed (or "fixed") in a rationalist system, and the challenge, according to our author, is to open it towards a new meaning. Croatto sees theology as a _logos_, a Greek word which means "word" but in the dynamic relation implied in a speech act (260). This _logos_, in Croatto's opinion, is related to a specific historical event in which God has been manifested.

Now a new problem seems to arise, related to the function of distanciation of the text. The question is, which events need to be considered in our reading? The events of the _Umwelt_ of the text, or the modern events of the life of Latin American people? Croatto wants to start grounding his hermeneutical process in the events of Latin American history. He says: "There is no other primary source (for the work of liberation theology) than the events-of-liberation of Latin America." (261). These events of liberation "dis-cover" (_des-ocultan_) the meaning of the text of reality, but they should be taken into a dialogue with the actions of liberation which Croatto considers the basis of the biblical discourse. Croatto uses

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(259) Cf. J. S. Croatto, "Dios en el Acontecimiento", in _Revista Bíblica_, 147, pp. 56 ff.

(260) The word _logos_ has been translated in the Spanish version of the Bible as "verb"; cf. Reina-Valera (trad.), _La Santa Biblia_, revisión 1960.

(261) Cf. J. S. Croatto, _Liberación y Libertad_, Introduction.

here an expression taken from radio communication: to tune in
(sintonizar). The present events need to be put in tune with the biblical
ones.

It seems here that Croatto is advocating the use of a "concordance of
actions" between Latin America and the Bible, but, on the contrary, he
reiterates his position against concordismos. He explains that his style of
"tuning" is related to re-discovering of meaning and highlighting of events
of liberation. The distinction between a concordismo and a sintonía seems
at this moment to be far from clear, in terms of the actual procedure in
the establishing of a dialogue text-Latin American history. We will
clarify this concept further later on, when we study Croatto's use of
history in interpretation.

3.2.3   The problem of Distanciation.

In his work in "Biblical Hermeneutics", Croatto considers the problem
created by a biblical text which has a large cultural and linguistic
distance from the modern reader. The problem, which has been a matter of
interest to Bultmann amongst other existentialist theologians, is resolved
by Croatto in a different way from the New Hermeneutics, following
Ricoeur's symbolic theory, as we will see in the subsequent point on
"Explanation" (3.4).

Croatto considers here Ricoeur's works: Evénément et Sens and "The
Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation." He starts pointing out the

dynamics of distanciation (262) in relation to the Bible. He considers the oral texts which precede the biblical ones, and the phenomena of closure in the writing and editing of each text. But the paradox is that every "closure" produced by distanciation, also opens up new meanings which are now presented to us as codifications of a message (263). Croatto considers the following three characteristics produced in the text by the function of distanciation:

a) *The original author disappears*: It is interesting to note here that Croatto uses the word "transmitter" (emisor; again terminology from radio) as equivalent to "original author". Perhaps it is a clue for us to understand Croatto's preoccupation with the oral discourse rather than with the written text. Croatto uses here a principle from Structuralist analysis: "the author is dead". The author "dies" in the codification of his/her message; Croatto rejects the psychoanalytic approach from Schleiermacher and the procedures of historical criticism. We will come back to these points in the next chapter.

b) *The original interlocutor also disappears*: Croatto finds that this continuous change of addressees seems to be less evident in the religious texts because they tend to keep their meaning through many generations of addressees.

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(262) Cf. J. S. Croatto, <u>Hermenéutica Bíblica</u>, p. 22.

(263) Cf. Chapter one, 1.8.4.4.

c) *The original horizon of the text is no longer present*: The cultural, social, political and religious original context of the text has changed, and the modern addressees have a different world in which they live.

As a result of these three moments, produced by distanciation, Croatto considers the autonomy of the text: the narrator is a linguistic supposition, the author does not live outside the text and the addressee relates him/herself with the written discourse, independently of the original reader. The finite horizon of the text is supplanted by the "textual infinite" (264). Far from closing the meaning of the text, these elements open the text to a new polysemy.

3.2.4 Distance and accumulation of meaning.

Croatto considers two distanciations produced by 1) the distance from langue to parole (language and speech), that is, the usage of language as a system and the individual speech act, which implies a choice; and 2) the distance from a text (words, phrases, literary units etc.) to "scripture" (writing), where the text is fixed. These elements come from Saussurean Structuralism, but now Croatto adds a third moment of distanciation: the one which is produced by the re-reading of the text. At this point we need to come back to Ricoeur, since this new dimension mentioned by Croatto is studied in Ricoeur's "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation". Ricoeur considers that the counterpart of the appropriation of the text by the

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(264) Cf. J. S. Croatto, op. cit., p. 24.

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reader is the distance from the original author produced by writing. Appropriation is then not linked to the primitive intention of the writer, but with the re-reading of the modern reader. "Appropriation ... is understanding at and through distance." (265). We will come back to this point later on in this present chapter.

Croatto finds that there is a relationship of elements here, which can be expressed in the formula: the greater the distance in the text, the greater the accumulation of meaning or reserva-de-sentido (reservoir-of-meaning) we find in the text. He also recognises that such creative re-reading can be accused of a lack of accuracy, for instance by Historical Criticism. However, as Croatto advocates a sort of Ricoeurian "diagnosis", that is, the use of different sciences which can help to understand the phenomenon of study, he will introduce elements of historical accuracy in the re-reading. We will see more about this point further on, in the moment of Explanation.

The following resumé synthesises Croatto's position in relation to distanciation, which has strong influences of Ricoeur:

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(265) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation", in From Text to Action. pp. 87 ff.

First Distanciation: From Language (characterised by polysemy)

                      To   Speech (which closes the polysemy, e.g. it

                                   chooses an usage of language)

                     (From possible meaning

                     to a "fixed" meaning)

Second Distanciation: From Speech (plurivocity)

                     To   Text/Writing (a new closure of multiple meanings)

                     (From the first "fixed meaning" of the speech act

                     to a "reservoir-of-meaning" of the writing)

Third Distanciation: From Text/Writing (a new polysemy)

                     To   Re-reading (a new closure of meaning)

                     (From the "reservoir-of-meaning"

                     to an "exploration-of-meaning")

3.3 Hermeneutics and Suspicion

The element of suspicion is introduced by Croatto in relation to the function of distanciation. Ricoeur has also considered that his own work in a hermeneutics of suspicion belongs "in its own right to the work of distanciation that all self understanding in the light of the text requires." (266). The function of distanciation in the text, and the

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(266) P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical and Biblical Hermeneutics", in From Text to Action, p. 100.

moment of praxis (appropriation) are intimately linked with a hermeneutic of disbelief.

As we have seen in the previous diagram, distanciation always implies choice and closure or fixation of the discourse. Although this does not reduce the meaning, (far from that, it seems to increase its creative property), the question now is: who makes the choices? The suspicion is related to two elements: to the text (as a construct) and to the reader who re-constructs the text. Croatto discusses both aspects.

3.3.1 The suspicion of the text

As we have seen before, Croatto establishes the close relation action-text; every text starts with a praxis or an event (any human action). The biblical text then, is an interpretation of events, and not an "objective" account; Croatto explains this point by saying that although the text has certain objectivity (the historicity of the event that it interprets), the writing has produced a new text, or new interpretation. "Objectivity" here should not be used in opposition to "subjectivity", but both concepts need to be seen in relation to the process of construction of the text (267). The question to ask at this moment is: who made the re-reading, and what were their interests at the time? For instance, according to Croatto, the exodus has been the interpretative clue for successive re-reading of

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(267) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 47.

the Bible *in* the same Bible; here we have an example of "non-neutrality" in the traditional re-reading made by Israel.

3.3.2 The suspicion about the addressee

This point is linked with the first, in the sense that the modern reader re-interprets the text; but since the Bible has not been read by people in Latin America, until relatively recently (with the coming of Protestantism in the XIX Century), and it has always submitted to a heavy pre-interpretation by the Church, the "modern reader" has not had the opportunity to make the text "his/her own." Croatto speaks of the suspicion about who is the real addressee of the Bible, as if there is a relation between the "liberation" clue that he finds in the text, almost as a key of its construction and a special sort of addressee: the people who can be "in tune" with liberation (the poor, the humildes -humble ones). Croatto suspects that the Church in Latin America has changed this addressee for another one, who represent the established, generally non-native affluent class.

These two suspicions make us reflect on the fact that the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America is the Church which came with the Conquistadores, and therefore the real suspicion is to be set upon a foreign faith which was cruelly imposed to a whole continent. This implies the need for a serious reflection about the re-reading of the text by the church itself, in order to be coherent with the liberationist circle of interpretation and its premise of veracity set in a pre-action. "A text comes from another

text" says Croatto (268), and the history of the church in Latin America can enrich or impoverish the hermeneutical circle of liberation theology. The pre-comprehension of the interpreter, and his/her context, needs to be broadened to include more elements of discussion. We will see later how Croatto attempts to resolve this adding a cultural dialogue to his hermeneutical proposal.

3.3.3 The Poor as the Da of Dasein

Ricoeur, in his book on Freud and later in The Conflict of Interpretations, has organised the Hermeneutics of Suspicion using a process of doubt, as a way to find new, alternative styles of thought, but also to transform the process of interpretation in itself. Ricoeur has worked in a hermeneutics of disbelief, inspired by the "masters of suspicion" (269), Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. Ricoeur uses Freud and lately he has been working more with Marx in relation to ideological suspicion. The important aspect to highlight now, is the object of Ricoeur's suspicion: the discourse in itself (the text) and the "idols" of the non-equivocal interpretation. Behind this project of demystification, lies Ricoeur's intention to unmask the narcissistic ego, and to question the "I" who asks the questions and interprets.

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(268) J. S. Croatto, op. cit., p. 35.

(269) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 32. We will study this point in more detail in our discussion about Segundo in Part II.

We have already said that the process of distanciation implies choices; through those choices the reader/interpreter closes the text and fixes a certain meaning. The hermeneutics of suspicion of Ricoeur, linked with his ontological project, introduces a doubt about the "I" who participates in the construction of the text. However, suspicion is an element that, according to Ricoeur, cannot be found outside the text, as an "outside adversary" of the discourse (270). On the contrary, "suspicion" is an instrument of interpretation which can be found inside the text; every new moment of distanciation from a previous text, shows its presence.

Croatto also works with an ontological project related to his use of the element of suspicion; the unmasking of the narcissistic ego of the theologically assumed "Latin American man and woman". His hermeneutical circle tries to discover who is the Latin American person, the addressee of the Biblical text and Christian believer; when Croatto takes an "option for the poor", he is making ontological definitions concerned with the "Da of Dasein", the being-there of the Latin Americans. However, he does not take the short route of Bultmann, but the long way of Ricoeur, via Linguistics. We will see more about Croatto's ontological project in our discussion about the hermeneutical moment of praxis.

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(270) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical and Biblical Hermeneutics", in From Text to Action, p. 100

3.4 Explanation

"Understanding calls for an explanation when the dialogical situation ceases to exist, when the questions and answers no longer permit us to verify our interpretations as the dialogue unfolds."
P. Ricoeur (271)

"Texts and human events are signs and they appeal to interpretation."
J. S. Croatto (272)

3.4.1 The Two Texts.

Croatto has taken the long way proposed by Ricoeur, as the methodological detour for a hermeneutic of liberation in Latin America. As we have already seen, the key element of Croatto's biblical interpretation theory is Sintonía, or the process by which he attempts to "be in tune" with the events of the text and the Latin American reality. This project requires then the interpretation of two texts: the text of society and the Bible.

Reality as a text is the starting point (el antes) of Croatto's hermeneutical process, which receives the name of "eisegetical", that is,

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(271) P. Ricoeur, "Explanation and Understanding", in From Text to Action, p. 129.

(272) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p 19.

the movement of interpretation goes from the "outside" (society) to the "inside" (Bible). These two elements are in fact in a dialectical relation, which makes it very difficult to tell which is first (273). However, Croatto does not use sociological methods of interpretation in his hermeneutical circle, and he seldom mentions concrete details of socio-historical relevance in relation to Latin America. It seems that Croatto has taken from Ricoeur the concept of "diagnosis", which refers to the use of auxiliary sciences in order to understand a phenomenon. This concept is very similar to the use of "mediation sciences" in liberation theology. This diagnosis is evident in Croatto's work, because his exegetical exercises or biblical commentaries always produce an empathy with the Latin American reader; the text of reality is pre-supposed in his work, but not explicitly.

There are two reasons for the use of a diagnosis, and a refusal to engage himself in a sociological reading of the Bible. First of all, he criticises the use of a sociological praxis as a hermeneutical parameter, since it tends to neglect the work on biblical interpretation (274). The process of interpretation of the Bible has been denied by sociological approaches which do not need any other text than reality. Croatto criticises this position in certain liberation theologians, who cannot resolve methodologically the problems created by traditional interpretation. In Croatto's opinion, it is the hermeneutics and not the Bible which needs to

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(273) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 25.

(274) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 13.

be replaced.

The second point, is in itself an hermeneutical concern. Croatto has stated in different books that his interpretation method attempts "to open the text" and allow the people to make their re-reading from their different Latin American contexts (275). The use of historical criticism together with linguistic tools, makes the Bible "sensitive" to the reading from Latin America, but it is the role of the reader to "be in tune with reality" or to start his/her own hermeneutical circle (276). Croatto does not want to "close" the reading of the Bible, but to invite the reader to say his/her own word from his/her particular reading of reality, avoiding at the same time what he has defined as concordismo (concordance) between the historical circumstances of the text and modern society (277). Sometimes Croatto uses examples from the Latin American reality, which pervades his whole work; but he does not use a sociological reading of reality. His path, is the return to the hermeneutics of Ricoeur, to the project of being through language. Croatto works as a semiotician, not as a sociologist. However, in his book El Hombre en el Mundo vol. II, Croatto makes a brief analysis of the social conditions of production in Genesis 2-3, but stressing that his reading is more a discernment, in relation to

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(275) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, Hermenéutica Bíblica and Isaías 1-39, amongst other relevant texts from this author.

(276) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Isaías 1:39, p. 30.

(277) Ibid., p. 31.

the text, and a complement to the work of historical criticism rather than a sociological analysis. (278)

3.4.1.2 The sign appeals to interpretation.

Croatto uses a verb from the judicial vocabulary: to appeal (apelar). With just one verb he conveys the image of the accused appealing for justice, a very appropriate metaphor for the often "silenced" signs of texts and events. The route is then from semiotics to hermeneutics, and the work is to be done through a convergence of different methods. We will proceed to study three main elements of Croatto's moment of explanation: a) his semiotic analysis of texts, b) the use of historical criticism and c) the use of Ricoeur's symbolic theory in relation to myth in the Bible.

3.4.2 The use of semiotic analysis.

Croatto's starting point is the reading process as a production of meaning (279). He finds that the text, and not the meaning, is the first element to consider, since the fixation of meaning by successive re-readings are of a relatively transitory nature, while the text remains. Croatto criticises the Romantic hermeneuticians such as Schleiermacher who considered that text and meaning are coincidental, in an objective way; for instance, the meaning of the text is the intention of the author. To find the original

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(278) J. S. Croatto, El Hombre en el Mundo, II, p. 205.

(279) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 26.

author's intentionality (or "mind") will give the meaning of the text, which is supposed to be unique and immutable. Croatto rejects what he calls the "extra-textual authority" of this hermeneutical model, and introduces us to a discussion on text and meaning which follows the Structuralist model. (280).

Croatto seems to favour the use of the structural method for textual analysis, at its two levels: the narrative or "surface analysis" and the discursive or "deep level". The structural analysis he uses comes from the Semiotic School of Paris (especially Greimas), and can be briefly described as follows: (281)

3.4.2.1 The narrative level

This considers the story as a sequence of narrative states (états) and transformations. The semiotic characters (objects, human beings, feelings etc.) are called actants, and they describe their identities through functional differences. Briefly, this type of literary analysis has four stages:

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(280) Cf. Chapter one, 1.8.1.1.

(281) For this point, cf. A.-Greimas, Maupassant. La sémiotique du texte: exercices pratiques. Greimas explains his method through the analysis of a text from Maupassant. Also cf. G. Prince, "Actantial Model", in Dictionary of Narratology.

a) Initial situation: We start with a "Process Statement", where the analysis consists in finding relations of conjuction and disjunction between a subject and an object (<u>Destinateur/Destinataire</u>). The subject is sometimes called "hero" (in Propp) or "protagonist."

b) Competence: The subject-hero goes through a process of transformation. "Competence" is, precisely, the necessary conditions for such transformations or operations to occur, which can be defined in relation to three verbal elements: /to want/, /to have power to do/ and /to know how to do/ (<u>le vouloir, le pouvoir and le savoir-faire</u>). Every change produced in a narrative state is called a "performance." Performances are indicated through verbs of action (to do).

c) Principal performance: There are different kinds of performances; the principal one is indicated by the passage of the subject-hero from a situation of disjunction with the object, to a conjunction with it (to finally obtain something, or to complete a task, etc.)

d) Final state: is the resolution of the story; in it, the subject-hero fulfils a situation of deficiency, and achieves the objective of the story.

3.4.2.2 The discursive level

Instead of working through transformations and <u>enchaînements</u> (linking) of functions, this analysis considers the logical articulations of themes, which are prior to the the narrative level of manifestation. The analysis here uses logical models such as the search for the semantic axis of the

discourse, and tools such as semiotic and verisimilitude squares (logical structures organised through visual representation). The characters are not defined by their actancial role, as in the narrative analysis, but by thematic role; this means that instead of considering what they do, the discursive analysis tries to find the meaning of their actions.

3.4.2.3 Croatto's Narrative and Discursive Analysis.

In his analysis in <u>Biblical Hermeneutics</u>, Croatto agrees with this structural model, and finds the meaning of the text in the level of competence. He gives two examples of biblical analysis, upon two different texts, giving some brief indications about a possible narrative and discursive analysis. In the text of John 1: 35-51, Croatto points out how an analysis of different codes tends to mark different themes of the story (282). At a narrative level, codes are considered important in terms of the referents of the story; for instance, they refer to cultural objects or bodies of knowledge (historical, literary, artistic etc.) The codes govern the production and reception of the message. Croatto finds four main codes in the text of John: chronological, visual, onomastic and a code of movement.

The chronological code is characterised by phrases such as "the day after" or verbs such as "to find". From them, the structure of the story organises

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(282) Cf. J. S. Croatto, <u>Hermenéutica Bíblica</u>, pp. 28 ff.

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a theology of the creation, which refers us to the first week of the story of the book of Genesis in relation to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. The chronological codes stress the human dimension of the encounter between the disciples and their Master. The visual codes are marked by the verb "to see"; the code of "finding" Jesus, is linked, according to Croatto with the visual one of "recognising" him. The onomastic codes (the use of proper names), are linked with identificatory codes (titles); for instance, in the formula "Jesus, son of Joseph." The last code mentioned by Croatto is that of movement, made evident by the use of verbs as "to go", "to come" and "to follow".

Croatto thinks that from a study of these codes, a reader can find a deeper, more subtle meaning of the narrative, because codes are one of the more important constituents of any act of communication; the message of the text, "signifies" (eg. gives meaning) through the system of codes of a discourse. Here Croatto uses Greimas' analysis on narrative organisation: "codes" are the "nucleic figures" (figures nucléaires) of our cultural universe. These codes work at different levels of the story; Croatto puts the example of the visual codes of John 1:35-51, which are expressed both at a body level ("Jesus saw Nathanael") and also at a theophanic one : "You will see heaven laid open...".

The combination of the different codes of the passage, are stressed as the key for the production of meaning, through the constant "opening and closing" dialectic of the text. The discourse produces its meaning by the work of the superficial codes (such as symbols, literary genres, etc.) and deeper ones (actants, actors and functions). It is important to mention

here that Croatto has never used the structural method as such in his
exegetical work except for the few elements as the ones shown in this
example of the use of codes in John. His opinion of structural analysis is
similar to Ricoeur, in the sense that he does not consider such a method as
"interpretation, but as a preparation (for the interpretative act)." (283).
Ricoeur considers Structuralism as a necessary step from a surface semantic
(for instance, the story of the myth) towards a deep semantic (the myth's
referents). (284). Structuralism, according to Croatto then, is a valuable
tool which needs to be complemented with other methodologies.

3.4.2.4 Other methods.

Other methods considered by Croatto are the pešer and the midrás. Both
styles of biblical commentary, although coming from rabbinic circles, seem
to be more open to new readings than other styles of interpretation. The
Midrašim for instance, are a type of interpretation which admits a deeper
Scriptural level (derás) of meaning, and which has many elements from a
communitarian or "popular" (less erudite) hermeneutical circle. The use of
Historical Criticism, and especially the investigation of the etymology of
words and grammatical constructions (both in semitic and greek languages)
are very marked in the work of Croatto, who is a specialist in oriental
languages. From his use of the historical referent of the text we can infer

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(283) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 28.

(284) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 17.

that his hermeneutical proposal disagrees with Structuralism, which, as we have already seen, denies the external referent of the discourse in its analysis.

However, Croatto does not discuss the place of the referent in Structuralism as Ricoeur has done before, and more than that, he says that the external referent does not give us the meaning of the text. As we have seen in chapter one, Structuralism only works with the production of meaning of elements present in the text, mainly by their relations of opposition; the author "is dead", and there is no historical referent to condition the new interpretation. Ricoeur rejects this position following Frege in his analysis of the relations between sense (Sinn) and reference (Bedeutung). It is precisely the role of the reference to ground an ideal meaning in reality, since "to speak is to say something about something." (285).

Croatto does not share Ricoeur's concepts on the role of the referent, and considers the structuralist denial of history as a positive element in the re-reading of the Scriptures. He expresses it very clearly, saying that the historical referent is "a useless load (lastre) that needs to be thrown away." (286). It is difficult to see how a positive view of the non-referential perspective of structural analysis can then be in agreement with the extensive use of historical criticism which is found in all the

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(285) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 87.

(286) J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 33.

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work done by Croatto. At first sight, it looks like a contradiction. This is the theme that we will consider now: how this difficult dialectic referent/non-referent is organised by Croatto in his proposed hermeneutics of liberation.

3.5. The use of Historical Criticism.
3.5.1 History and Event.

Croatto defines the text as a product of a process of interpretation (287). The numerous diagrams of this book, the exegetical commentaries of Exodus, and the two volumes of El Hombre en el Mundo refer continuously to the processes of closure and opening of meaning during the history of redaction of the text. In other words, Croatto stresses that the re-reading of the Bible is, somehow, part of the process of construction of the text, which is related to the dialectic word-event. "Every word becomes an event, or appeals to it" says Croatto, quoting Ricoeur, "because every word is a creative word." (288) We will now analyse if history has a role to play in such construction, and particularly, in the Biblical texts.

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(287) Cf. J. S. Croatto, op. cit., p. 56.

(288) Cf. J. S. Croatto, El Hombre en el Mundo, II, p. 120. Also P. Ricoeur, Evénément et Sens pp. 15 ff.

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3.5.2 History as "The time when we were not yet born."

Roland Barthes, in his book La Chambre Claire, asks the following question: "Isn't History simply that time when we weren't yet born?" (289). These words introduce us into the structuralist dialectic of history-texts. Structuralist analysis does not deny the historical event but stresses the fact that the only thing which we have from such an event is an interpretation, or a discourse. Any text is the product of a certain culture; the Bible in itself refers us to a particular cultural context every time we read it. The key to understanding what Structuralism says about history, is to consider that the culture which gave origin to the text is dead, while the text is alive. The "culture" or "historical context" fulfils the same role as the author of the text: the author -or culture- is dead. Serge Doubrovsky has expressed this with the following words: "The author is dead in the instant when his/her creation 'closes up' on itself; s/he has left." (290). Only the text has survived in a new culture, which is the reader's own historical context. The text only "dies" when it is not read.

The value of the text in this position is related to the reader's own culture. The historical facts are only a matter of interest when they

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(289) R. Barthes, Le Chambre Claire. Notes sur la Photographie, p. 100.

(290) "L'auteur 'meurt' dès l'instant que sa création se referme sur elle-même et le quitte." Cf. S. Doubrovsky, Les Chemins Actuels de la Critique, p. 147.

become appropriated by the reader, as a matter of interpretation. Ricoeur's position differs from this because the extra linguistic referent (history, context) is still kept. Ricoeur calls the application of structuralist techniques a "dechronologizing" of the narrative, which is reduced to a combination of a few "dramatic units" (actions such as "promising", "helping" etc.) which are then taken as paradigms (291). The narrator is in the text (designated by signs of narrativity) and nothing outside the text is considered, because the only model used is the semiological one. Ricoeur sees here a risk of reductionism of the text, in a very similar way to Croatto's criticisms, as we have already seen in 3.1.5. Ricoeur's main criticism of Structuralism is in relation to the absolutisation of a semiological model, where even society belongs to this order. He says "It is an apology for a system without a subject" (292). Language, deprived of a historical understanding, becomes an anonymous code, and humanity a product of language; for Ricoeur, "humanity is language", but not a mere product: humanity also has a creative role. Another point is that the semiological structures alone cannot totally explain a religious, political, social or cultural reality.

At the same time, Ricoeur does not reduce the text to an archaeological meaning, related to an absolutisation of a historical perspective, but on the contrary, he stresses that the referential function of the text is

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(291) Cf. P. Ricoeur, From Text to Action, p. 117.

(292) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Langage (Philosophie)", in Encyclopaedia Universalis, vol. IX, p. 778.

"beyond" it, in a dimension of the possibility of the discourse, or its re-creation. This is what Ricoeur calls "the world of the text", defined as "the kind of world the work unfolds, as it were, before the text." (293). This is an element Ricoeur has taken from Structuralism, due to the death of the material conditions of the text (author and historical production of meaning). Croatto takes from Ricoeur's theory the "beyond" (adelante) of the text, and Ricoeur's criticism of the emphasis on the original situation of the discourse, as if the original event can be repeated (294). Another Ricoeurian concept which plays a key role in Croatto's thought on history and text, is the relation between tradition and innovation, especially as developed in Ricoeur's Time and Narrative, vol. I.

3.5.3 The History of Effects in narrative.

Croatto accepts the epistemology of Structuralism: the production of meaning from the text, through the process of interpretation which is essentially creative; the future of the text, comes from the polysemic nature of the discourse. He rejects "historicism", because it implies the closure of the meaning in the original event. However, there is a historical element which liberates the text from historicism but nurtures the reader's understanding of the text: the "history of effects" (Wirkungsgeshichte), which is an original concept from Gadamer, used by

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(293) P. Ricoeur, "Explanation and Understanding" in From Text To Action, p. 131.

(294) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Evénément et Sens, p. 23.

Croatto (295). Gadamer refers to the fact that the effect (Wirkung) of a text is a very important part of its meaning; this effect has a history and a tradition, and the interpreter's understanding is conditioned by it. This reflection on the effects (or conditioning) of history calls for a self-reflection on the part of the historian or interpreter, concerning the influence of traditions in present thinking.

Ricoeur has said that reflection on the consciousness of the history of effects (Wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein) is a category no longer pertaining to historical methodology but to the reflective consciousness of it. This is the consciousness of being "exposed to history and to its action" says Ricoeur, "in such a way that this action upon us cannot be objectified because it is part of the historical phenomena itself." (296). This is a form of hermeneutics which does not treat the past as an object of classification, but allows the tradition to say something relevant to the present moment.

Croatto elaborates this concept in the following way: There are two worlds related to the act of interpretation, the world of the text (as described by Ricoeur), and our present world. The first world belongs to the

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(295) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 44. Also cf. H.-G. Gadamer, Verdad y Método, pp. 370 ff.

(296) P. Ricoeur, "The Task of Hermeneutics" in From Text to Action, p. 72.

linguistic level, but the second is related to history or "a level of praxis" (nivel práxico) (297). This level of praxis is constituted by the event which has become "word" in a text; the point is that the event then has the capacity to generate other historical events, through an act of "giving meaning" to other critical moments. This is not done through a relation of causality, but rather of meaning. As an example of this, Croatto points out that the crossing of the River Jordan (Joshua 1:5) is related meaningfully with another event such as the crossing of the Red Sea. The element that relates one event to another, is the "effect of history" produced by each text. The production of historical events, linked by their own effect of history, became part of the historical situation of the reader, and the interpreter relates to the text in the same way s/he does with his/her own situation.

Croatto sees in this relation the resultant of the function of distanciation, which goes beyond the dynamics of the text, and reaches the comprehension of historical events (298). At this moment, Croatto is trying to distinguish two different moments in the interpretative process: The epistemological moment and the moment of textual meaning. In the first, the interpreter, can work with structuralist models; the advantages are (as Ricoeur has pointed out) the possibilities to work free from subjectivism, and from the archeological preoccupation with the author's intention or the

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(297) Cf. J. S. Croatto "Liberar a los pobres: Aproximación Hermenéutica", in Los Pobres, p. 20.

(298) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 45.

first production of meaning. But the second moment is different from the first, because it works at the level of meaning (or the message of the text), which is a kerygmatic moment. It is at this point that the interpreter requires a convergence of different criticisms, including historical criticism.

The use of historical criticism in Croatto is then related to the work of the effect of history (the meaning of the significative events) and a dialectic tradition-innovation, which we find in Ricoeur's works History and Truth and Time and Narrative. We can synthesise this dialectic in Ricoeur's own words:

> "The labor of (hermeneutic) imagination is not born from nothing. It is
> bound in one way or another to the tradition's paradigms. But the
> range of solutions is vast." (299).

The "vast range of solutions" that Ricoeur suggests, are characterised by a polarisation of options, which Ricoeur calls "servile applications" (non-critical) and "calculated deviations" (total suspension of tradition and history in the hermeneutical circle). According to Ricoeur, both extremes are detrimental to the real task of interpretation, because one depends on the other. Only when the hermeneutical imagination is able to create poetically from an existent reference (of history, or previous interpretative traditions) can the text project new horizons of

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(299) P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, I, p. 69.

possibilities. This Ricoeurian dialectic tradition-innovation is affirmed by Croatto with the following words:

"The real hermeneutic assumes tradition, in the same way that tradition carries out meaning (portadora-de-sentido) because it is open to the interpretation which extends its existence." (300)

Croatto has found in Ricoeur's theory two key hermeneutical elements: a positive use of history and tradition, and a convergence of new methods of textual criticism. As we will see in chapter four, both aspects are very relevant in relation to the role of utopia as the "eschatological horizon" of the theology of liberation.

3.6   Myth and Symbol in the Hermeneutic Circle of Liberation Theology.

The "servile applications" or "inert transmission of some already dead deposit of material" are Ricoeur's description of the role that myths and folktales have played in traditional interpretation (301). As we have already seen in chapter 2, Bultmann approached myth as a language with existential intentionality, but obscured by pre-scientific interpretations of the world. Myth was opposed to history, and to truth, because it was thought to belong to an aethas mythica, superseded by the advancement of science. Croatto starts his reflection on myth from the perspective of

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(300) J. S. Croatto, El Hombre en el Mundo, I, p. 36; also cf. P. Ricoeur, "Symbolique et Temporalité", in Archivio di Filosofia, (1963) pp. 5-41.

(301) P. Ricoeur, Time and Narrative, I, pp. 81-2.

language, questioning the understanding of myths and their existential interpretation; to understand the nature of myth, says Croatto, is "an hermeneutical problem." (302). Croatto's research on myth and symbolism has been deeply influenced by the extensive work by Ricoeur on this subject, which we have briefly reviewed in chapter two. It is important to notice that this is a re-definition of myth which comes from Phenomenology of Religion; as such, it has been very innovative in Latin American theology and has produced interesting research in relation to the dialogue between Christianity and the major Latin American religions, such as the Náhuatl religion. It is not a coincidence that the original design of the front cover of the first edition of Croatto's Liberación y Libertad, reproduces the figure of the Náhuatl god Xolotl, who traditionally represents the triumph of dawn, carrying the symbols of victory (liberation) over the darkness of night. Our study will concentrate on three main aspects of the work on myth by Croatto: myth, sign and symbol, myth and event and myth and ideology. Finally, we will briefly consider what Croatto calls the "decosmicization" process of the Bible, in relation with demythologization.

3.6.1 Myth, Sign and Symbol.

Croatto defines the relation between myth and symbol, following Ricoeur's The Symbolism of Evil. He starts by considering how the symbol differs from the sign, in three aspects:

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(302) J. S. Croatto, Mito y Hermenéutica, p. 8.

a) The sign is semiotic, that is, it "indicates" something and supposes a relation of causality. The symbol is semantic, because it "orientates" towards something, and points out a reality not totally known but recognised by the symbol.

b) The symbol is "obscure" by nature; when it loses this mystery, it becomes a sign.

c) The symbol is polysemic by nature; it has a plurivalence of meaning. The sign refers to only one meaning.

The main characteristic of the symbol is then its revelatory function, showing to the reader certain levels of reality which are not immediately accessible to him/her. Croatto also mentions Eliade's concept about the "polarity of the symbol" (303), which refers to the fact that reality is presented in a symbol in a contradictory way (coincidentia oppositorum). Only the plurivocity of the symbol is able to express these contradictions, the products of a richness of meaning, which makes of the symbol an essential component of religious language.

Myth is not a synonym of symbol, but a myth is always symbolic. The contrary is not necessarily true; Croatto says, for example, that water is a symbolic object but it is not a myth (although it can be part of a

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(303) Cf. M. Eliade "Spirit, Light and Seed", in History of the Religions. 11: 1, 1971, pp. 1-30.

mythical story). The function of the myth is the integration of symbols, which also suffer modifications in the mythical structure; it can be said that myth re-creates symbols, though the work of a religious community. Croatto says "(myths) are the inheritance of a community and they are born and are developed in the middle of the community experience of the sacred." (304). Myths work as an unification factor for the community's participation in the universe of the sacred; they give a common language to people's experiences, and this is why they are anonymous, without an individual author. The symbol works by "suggestion", but the myth is more explicit; it says something of a transcendental nature, of the symbolic universe, in relation to a hierophany. These concepts are organised from Ricoeur's work on symbolic theory and myth, as we have seen in chapter two.

3.6.2 Myth and event.

The relation between myth and event, and myth and ideology, is perhaps the most original elaboration of Croatto on this theme. Croatto has defined myth as "an account of an act or event of the gods at the beginning of the physical world, or of history, which reveals the meaning of a present reality, institution or customs." (305). This definition has two main elements that we would like to explore: the role of the event, in the formation of myths, and the "effect of history" in its production.

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(305) Cf. J. S. Croatto El Hombre en el Mundo, II, p. 24; also cf. J. S. Croatto "The Gods of Oppression", in P. Richards (ed.) The Idols of Death and the God of Life, p. 28.

Croatto refers to an "event", which does not relate to history or to a scientific geography. The mythical event is explained here in the context of the deep experiences of humanity, and as having an ontological nature (an intuition of a being-in-the-world). Myth is a "paradigmatic event", with a profound "reservoir of meaning", which is somehow captured and condensed in the structure of its language (306). From this perpective, the biblical myth of creation, is according to Croatto, the "coincidence" of the encounter between a real event and another of divine origin. As we have seen already, Croatto will not turn to history for a verification of the reality of a past event, because he works from the text, and its own production of meaning. God becomes the actant (or actor) of history: the events of the garden of Eden are real in the text, and in the memory of a community which re-creates them.

With the word "account" of the definition, Croatto stresses the linguistic structure of the myth's narrative, which involves the characters of gods, and has "historic" elements. The history of the myth is not present in the narrative, but in the interpretation of the narrative. Although myths have suffered from an association with history, and Croatto following Ricoeur disagrees with such a relation, the second part of Croatto's definition seems to refer to the effect of history on myths. As we have seen this effect is produced by a text, and works linking different historical events, in such a way that the interpreter relates to the historical situation of the text in a similar way that s/he does with his/her present

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(306) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Mito y Hermenéutica, p. 93.

situation or context. When Croatto claims that a mythical narrative reveals to its reader an aspect of the reader's own reality, he is using the same concept. The mythical event is connected through this effect of the conditioning of history in the text, with another modern mythical event of present times. As Ricoeur might say, it is the reflective consciousness which is present in the narrative, the one that makes the connection between the past and the present mythical event.

3.6.3   Myth and Ideology

Croatto analyses this aspect in some detail in his article __The Gods of Oppression__. He starts by organising the elements which make myth an archetypal thought:

1. The gods who create are ontologically "perfect and insuperable"
2. The traditions concerning the origins cannot suffer innovations.
3. The reality which is shaped according to these traditions, cannot be re-structured.
4. The traditions are related to the deeds of the gods, their inventions, and their exemplary actions.

From that, Croatto establishes a link between social changes and a mythical world view, according to the dynamic of changes. For instance, in a society built on an archetypal model as the one previously described, the changes produced are related to "a return to the true sources" but not to innovations in the pattern. Another element that Croatto finds relevant in

this dialectic myth-human praxis, is Destiny, in relationship to the construction of social status (for instance, divinity and royalty.)

Croatto analyses these elements in the Old Testament (Book of Kings, Song of Songs and some major prophets), by contrasting them with Babylonian myths such as the myth of Atrahasis, the Enuma Elish and even the Bhagavad-Gita. His tacit presupposition is that the oppressive ideological elements of myths which support social structures of injustice belong to non-Christian traditions. These are the examples of the "gods of oppression" against the Biblical God YHWH who is a God of liberation, supported by a different archetypal thought. The main areas where the implications of mythical thought appear are, in Croatto's opinion, in the epiphanization of culture, (eg. culture as a divine product where people do not intervene); social status (mythical justification of marginalisation of groups according to race, gender, etc.) and celebrations (the cyclic holidays reveal a cosmic order, but can be regressive instead of progressive).

3.6.4 Demythologisation and "Decosmicization."

Croatto ends his analysis by observing that the Bible has its own demythologisation programme, which he calls "Decosmicization". From a hermeneutical point of view, it means that the Scriptures have "marginalised" the divine (as the archetypal actions previously described), in favour of humanity's working creativity. It does not mean that the process "de-symbolises", or ceases to acknowledge the nature of mythical language, as Bultmann has done, but, according to Croatto, the

decosmicization project puts people's destiny in their own hands, because it presupposes an awareness of a historical event of liberation.

Is this decosmicization related to Ricoeur's de-mystification process? (307). It looks as if it is implied in the dialectic gods of oppression/God of liberation, but there is a lack of reflection in Croatto concerning the mythical language of the Bible at this point. He has not studied the dynamic structure which allows us to differentiate myths from mystifications in the Old Testament.

There is also a lack of reflection on Croatto's own presuppositions in general, especially about the mythical archetype of liberation in the Bible, which calls our attention. The confrontation between Baal and YHWH at the event of Exodus is not clearly related either to this "decosmicization" process or to the Latin American situation. How can we relate the claim that the Bible put human destiny in humanity's own hands, with the struggles between "oppresive gods vs. liberative God?". Another question which is not answered by Croatto is: Who are the gods of oppression in Latin America? In some ways he seems to consider that they are part of the Synchretistic-Catholicism of the continent (308); in others he seems to consider that the traditional gods of the great Latin American religions were oppresive. In any case, he ends suggesting that the

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(307) Cf. Chapter two, 2.5.2

(308) Cf. J. S. Croatto, "The Gods of Oppression" in P. Richards (ed.) The Idols of Death and the God of Life. p. 43.

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continent needs to meet the true God of the liberation manifested in Exodus.

The problem which we find now is how to relate this statement with the drawing of the god Xolotl on the front cover of Liberación y Libertad. This is one of the questions that many third world hermeneuticians are confronted with, in relation to the traditional cultures of the continent. Apparently, these are hermeneutical contradictions, which imply a lack of questioning of presuppositions, and a difficult dialogue between the language of faith and the role of the people in the determination of their beliefs. A main issue to analyse here is who names (or defines) God in Latin American theology? We will reflect upon this point as part of the general conclusions of the next chapter.

3.7 Understanding and Appropriation of the text.

Croatto arrives at the moment of understanding of the text as the second pillar of the hermeneutical arch of explanation and understanding proposed by Ricoeur. Understanding is mediated by a work of explanation of the text at the linguistic level of the biblical narrative, through which the reader arrives at the experience of the "fusion of horizons." As we have seen in chapter one, this is a concept from Gadamer which Ricoeur adopted and Croatto also considers in his hermeneutical circle. The fusion of horizons alludes to the fact that the situation (or "horizon") of the interpreter, which is inseparable from the individual, has a certain flexibility to include the horizon of the past. According to Croatto, this is a reconciliatory process which includes the phenomenon of the broadening of

our horizon, through a focussing and understanding of the past in relation to our context (309). The two elements of this fusion of horizons are the fundamental or significative events of the text, and our own "significative context" (or meaningful events of our present). The hermeneutical circle in this way maintains a permanent tension of interpretation, between the consciousness of the past events and the present horizon of the reader.

3.7.1 Fusion of Horizons

Croatto considers that the fusion of horizons between the Latin American reader of the Bible, and the historical consciousness of the text, is produced by the expansion of the understanding of events of liberation. His main thesis is that the Pentateuch, for instance, has been "closed" as a text, from the perspective of the oppressed (310). Any re-reading of the Torah needs to take into account that the story of Israel is left unconcluded, and in Croatto's words as "a diminished nation (pueblo disminuído), with its lands still occupied, and without self goverment." (311). The literary structure of the Pentateuch is focussed on the "not yet" (todavía no) of freedom and independence.

The Latin American reader is also familiar with events of liberation, which are re-told every year in the rituals Fiestas Patrias (national

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(309) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 24-5.

(310) Ibid., p. 68.

(311) Ibid., p. 69.

celebrations) of the continent. Croatto cites an example from Argentina,
such as the celebration of the events of the 25th of May of 1810 as "Día de
la Patria" (Day of the Nation); although the historical event did not bring
any real independence from the Spanish Crown, people have always "read" the
event from "the perspective of the oppressed", with the hope of future
independence. It is interesting to notice that the "Independence Day",
which happened six years later, does not arouse the same feeling from the
people. In Croatto's words, the first event is open for a reading of
freedom, but the second is closed. (312)

Both horizons relate to events of liberation (Exodus in the Bible, and the
specific circumstances of oppression of any Latin American nation) and
produce a single Horizontverschmelzung (fusion of horizons) of
understanding in the reader, although a tension between past and present
always tends to remain. Croatto stresses that the process of textual
closure is in reality, double, that means it is produced both in the
selection of the fundamental event rescued by the text, and in the event of
interpretation which takes the form of a text. Every text, according to
Croatto, has its start in an experience, in an event, which could be a
natural phenomenon, a world view, or a context of oppresion (313). Not all
events have the same "meaning"; only the significative ones become texts.

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(312) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 16.

(313) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 43.

3.7.2 The conflict of interpretations and the conflict of praxis.

Quoting Ricoeur, Croatto points out the fact that the conflict of different interpretative methods (which intervene in these processes of closure of texts), results in a conflict of the appropriation of the text by the readers. Croatto speaks about appropriation in two senses: the appropriation of the biblical texts made by theology in general and theology of liberation in particular, and the appropriative moment made by the individual reader. According to the presupposition of this hermeneutical circle, they should not be in conflict, but in a dynamic relation.

Croatto, following Ricoeur, says that the act of reading as a production of meaning implies an appropriation of the textual meaning. The reader seems to have a relation of dependency upon the text which s/he interprets (314), and appropriation becomes a "violent" phenomena where the interpreter takes the textual meaning as self-understanding. Somehow, the appropriation of the text is also a closure of meaning, and this is particularly manifested through different (sometimes opposite) practices, which arise from the reading of the same (political or religious) text. It is important to remember at this point, that in Ricoeur's opinion, the reader always produces a change in his/her own world, as a result of interpretation, basically at the level of a change of attitude of the reader. Croatto works on two aspects of praxis as a result -and ultimate goal- of interpretation:

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(314) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 37.

the unmasking of the subject, and the existential or "new world" proposition.

3.7.3 The unmasking of the narcissistic "I" as a "We".

Croatto seems to be working here with Ricoeur's understanding of the decolonization process (315). Ricoeur relates colonization to "a removal of personality" and decolonization as the project which wants to recover people's own identity. Some Latin American theologians would consider that the locus of the crisis of the Cartesian Cogito is the shift that needs to be made between the old "I" as subject, and the "We" as the new starting point (316). In this case, the unmasking of the ego is related by the suspicion upon a "false social consciousness": the process of understanding Ricoeur's "illusions of the subject", is done by diagnostic work (diagnostique) using social sciences. The de-ideologization of the Latin American communitarian "We", in opposition to an individualistic "I", seems then to be Croatto's task of interpretation, and like Ricoeur, he sees appropriation as the consequence of the explanation of the text (317). But he also takes the position of Gadamer, in the sense that this final moment

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(315) Cf. P. Ricoeur, 'From Nation to Humanity: Task of the Christians', in Political and Social Essays by P. Ricoeur, p. 141.

(316) Cf. P. Andiñach, Amós: Memoria y Profecía, M. Phil. thesis done under the supervision of Prof. Croatto, p. 272.

(317) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 37.

of interpretation is done and produced throughout the whole process of the hermeneutical circle.

Croatto tries to elaborate an "ontology of being more" versus an "ontology of having more" (318). He has elaborated an understanding of the existential dilemma of Genesis, in terms of a primordial vocation for freedom in humanity, denied by the manifested negation of the "other", made by the oppressor. At this point Croatto uses Freire's own ontology, concerned with the call "to be more" (human) which the dehumanization processes of injustice have impeded, thus alienating humanity from God's designs. The praxis of liberation needs to start with a conscientization process, which is in intimate relation with solidarity, as the social responsibility of the "We" who interprets the text. Croatto's methodological guidelines, organised through the paradigmatic event of Exodus, have many similar characteristics to a Freirean conscientization process: the "internalization" of the oppressor (the memory of good food in Egypt), and the exodus as a long and difficult "awareness raising" programme.

3.7.4   The proposition of a "New World"

This "New World" is, according to Croatto, the result of the fusion of horizons of freedom and liberation. Freedom is the ontological vocation of humanity, and liberation is the process to achieve it. It seems that at

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(318) Cf. J. S. Croatto, op. cit., pp. 14-5; 18.

this point Croatto considers the utopia of liberation theology (freedom;
the ontological proposal of "being more human"), as part of the prophetic
role of Christianity in the continent. The Christians' responsibility is
then to announce the new Kingdom of God, which is the biblical proposition
he has taken in his biblical re-reading. Again, Croatto uses the dialectic
"God/Idols" which comes from his studies in myths, and organises the praxis
in these two areas: the ones in favour of the application of concrete
practices of liberation are the followers of God, and the opponents or
"passive" readers are worshipping idols. This dialectic is later used by
Croatto in relation to the Pauline interpretation of the events of the
death-resurrection of Christ. The "New Creation" is opposed here to the
"Old Person": "God" is related with community and solidarity, and what
Croatto calls "the baptism-vocation" of Christians to realize the praxis of
Latin American liberation (319); here he speaks of the commitment to the
paschal events. "Idols" is the category of individualism, lack of awareness
and indifference toward the biblical programmes of liberation.

The question to ask now is if Croatto has pre-empted the application of the
text, or if the "We" who interprets is more than a group of church
hermeneuticians. It is natural to have a tension of projects coming from
different re-readings of the text, and even disagreements around the "final
interpretation", and in this point Croatto also agrees with Ricoeur to
postpone the final moment of interpretation (leaving it "open" to new
interpretations). However, the event of Exodus is a strong closure of the

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(319) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 78.

Bible in Croatto's hermeneutical circle, and we must ask if it is

legitimate to do so. There seems to be a Latin American consensus

surrounding the re-reading of events of liberation, not only in the Bible.

These events, expressed in popular theatre as the traditional Latin

American natives' dramas of Conquista, always present the opposition

"liberation/ oppression" (not "freedom", as such, but the project to

achieve it). For instance, in these popular dramatizations, the

conquistadores and the priests "speak" moving their lips, but not producing

any sounds. People surrounding the actors in the streets, have

traditionally put words, implying hidden motives of their situation, and

positioning themselves as the "oppressed" who interpret their silenced

universe of injustice (320).

3.7.5 A "consciousness-of-freedom" process.

Croatto has not closed the re-reading of the Bible, but many centuries

before liberation theology, the people had also kept the text of their

oppression open in myths and art. The process for developing a

"consciousness-of-freedom" which Croatto finds in the biblical events of

liberation, is the main application of the appropriation of the circle of

interpretation. As a hermeneutician he has repeatly refused to advise his

readers about any specific application of a praxis for liberation, because

it would be contradictory with his eisegetical proposals (321). Eisegesis

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(320) Cf. E. Galeano, <u>Nosotros decimos NO. Crónicas</u>, p. 364.

(321) Cf. J. S. Croatto, <u>Liberación y Libertad</u>, p. 11.

works from facts prior to interpretations, which in every Latin American
reader can be different. Apart from that, the surplus of meaning of human
praxis, as shown in the text, ensures that every interpreter can relate to
an archetypical event such as Exodus, with a richness of meaning applicable
to the reader's situation in a dynamic way.

Croatto then completes his hermeneutical circle by "looking at the promised
land of freedom", as Ricoeur looks for the "promised land of ontology".
Both things relate to each other; freedom from structures of injustice is
closely linked to the liberation of the "non-person" (hombre-cactus) of
Gutiérrez. Somehow, Croatto starts and ends his hermeneutical process
privileging the element of "suspicion": the suspicion of the interpreter
taking control over the whole complex task of liberation. Even at that
point, Croatto insists that the text of action, must always remain "open."

Part II

3.8 Juan Luis Segundo.

Liberating the Hermeneutical Circle.

"We cannot bear any longer the burden of a philosophy which leaves us alone at eating time, or at prayer."

J. L. Segundo. (322)

"You see, my dear fellow, if you are a phenomenologist, you can talk about this cocktail and make philosophy out of it!"

Raymond Aron to Jean Paul Sartre. (323)

Segundo published his book Existencialismo, Filosofía y Poesía ("Existentialism, Philosophy and Poetry") in 1948. It was philosophy or theology from every day life that from the beginning made him consider first, the relation between poetry and truth, and second, the relation between exegesis and truth. Yet, in those early days of his thought, Segundo was questioning a truth which is not verified by praxis, and a

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(322) Cf. J. L. Segundo, Existencialismo, Filosofía y Poesía: Ensayo de Síntesis, Introduction.

(323) Quoted in M. Hammond, J. Howard and R. Keat, Understanding Phenomenology, p. 1.

knowledge which is not nurtured by the experience of reality (324). The influence of a phenomenological analysis on Segundo starts with his questions about the meaning of lo cotidiano (the everyday life) in the light of the Christian faith in Latin America, through a process of bracketing off models of understanding of which he is ideologically suspicious. This includes certain theological structures, explanatory theories of the underdevelopment of the continent, and the traditional Latin American understanding of history.

Segundo wants to understand all the texts of Latin American's reality, from poverty to the Bible, through the use of the epoché and hermeneutical suspicion, not only in the products of interpretation (exegesis) but in the circle of interpretation itself.

In this second part of the present chapter, we will study the influence of phenomenology on Segundo via Ricoeur, in relation to the hermeneutics of suspicion and in various elements of analysis that the Uruguayan theologian uses, which have been of enormous influence for liberation theology. The material we will use for this research includes early works of Segundo (such as his doctoral thesis for the University of Paris, Is Christendom an Utopia?, under Ricoeur's supervision, in 1964), a classic book such as The Liberation of Theology, the five volumes of Teología Abierta para el Laico Adulto (translated as "Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity", but which literally should be "Open Theology for the Lay Adult"), Hidden

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(324) Cf. J. L. Segundo, Existencialismo, Filosofía y Poesía, pp. 49, 63.

<u>Motives of Pastoral Action</u>, <u>Jesus of Nazareth</u>, and many articles which can help us to understand and organise the extensive work of Segundo related to the hermeneutics of liberation theology.

3.8.0   The Circle of Suspicion.

The hermeneutical circle of Segundo has many elements in common with the hermeneutical proposal of Croatto, and yet, as we are going to see, it is radically different. We believe that an over simplification of the hermeneutics of liberation, with an excessive importance attached to the category of exodus (without even acknowledging the differences in the treatment of exodus amongst Latin American theologians) has overlooked the fact that Segundo has worked very little on the hermeneutical circle as such. His work instead, is more related to the study of suspicion as a methodology, in what we can call "the circle of suspicion" of liberation theology. However, his interpretative process and the uses of Ricoeurian elements of hermeneutics, are different, if not opposite to Croatto.

The objective of their research in the first instance is basically the same for Croatto and Segundo: an utopia of liberation which uses a strong mythical-symbolic key to understanding, (as self-understanding) and praxis. However, if the methods of interpretation are different, dissimilar presuppositions are also implied, which produce different final models of action. Our present objective now is to study the Ricoeurian influences in Segundo, and how he has elaborated a hermeneutical perspective different from that already seen in Croatto; a further reflection concerned with praxis will be developed in the last chapter.

3.8.0.1 The construction of a paradigmatic suspicion.

The current description of the hermeneutical circle proposed by Segundo is usually taken from <u>The Liberation of Theology</u>, in its four methodological steps (325):

1) We need to consider "our manner of experiencing reality, which leads to ideological suspicion."

2) We apply the ideological suspicion, obtained in the first step, "to the whole ideological superstructure in general and to theology in particular."

3) The new way of experiencing reality, and theological reality, leads us "to exegetical suspicion ... and to the suspicion that current biblical interpretation does not take into account important data."

4) the last step is then related to "our new hermeneutics, that is, the new way of interpreting the source of our faith, which is Scripture, with the new elements at our disposal."

As we can see from these four moments, the key issue is suspicion; the circle starts with suspicion as a pre-supposition and ends with it as an understanding. The "How have I read?" of Ricoeur's circle of interpretation becomes, in Segundo's methodology , "How did I doubt about (reality, the exegesis, the hermeneutics in general)?" (326). The first question for us to ask now is how a Latin American person can perceive his/her reality in a

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(325) Cf. J. L. Segundo, <u>The Liberation of Theology</u>, p. 13.

(326) Cf. Chapter one, 1.6.2.

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different way, and what does he mean by "different" here. At this point, apart from Ricoeur, we need to consider the influence of Freire in Segundo's work.

Segundo's "different manner of experiencing reality" seems to refer to Freire's study on the mediation role of "prescription" (prescripción) which is a basic element in the oppressor-oppressed dialectic of education for liberation. Freire says that "every 'prescription' is the imposition of the option made by one conscience upon another." (327). This imposition of options by one group on another, implies certain conformity and lack of critical questioning on the side of the oppressed, which the Freirean process of conscientization tries to challenge. In this point Freire is using Husserl's concept of "fundamental intuitions", or perceptions that were not recognised by the subject, and once acknowledged, become objects of reflection (ad-miración), from more than one perspective (Abschauttungen) (328).

The "problem posing" methodology of Freire, is then indebted to phenomenology, in the sense that the student re-discovers a reality that s/he already knew, through a process of questioning which challenged the "prescribed" view about his/her life and circumstances. This is the core of the pedagogy of the oppressed, which can be synthesised in Freire's own words:

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(327) P. Freire, Pedagogía del Oprimido. p. 37.

(328) Cf. E. Husserl, Ideas, section 24, p. 92.

"Nobody educates anybody, and nobody educates him/herself; people educate themselves in communion [community], and the world [reality] is the only mediator (in the educational process)". (329)

The first point of the "Circle of Suspicion" suggests the use of a conscientization project, which must question the imposition of options in Latin America made by the two most powerful institutions: church and state. But the concientization process, also requires a critical model, and at this point Segundo mentions the work of the "three masters of suspicion", Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, refering to Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion as developed in his book Freud and Philosophy. We will consider now at what points Segundo has followed Ricoeur's theory, and where he has departed from it.

In Ricoeur's analysis, suspicion is a hermeneutical category closely related to the unmasking of false consciousness, or demystification (330). Suspicion is here part of a "purification process" of hermeneutics, and Ricoeur speaks in religious terms about it, as if the interpreter was a sort of monk who needed to fulfil four vows: "willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigour, vow of obedience." It is interesting to note that Ricoeur speaks here of an iconoclastic attitude, which would "liquidate the idols", restoring -listening to- the symbolic true meaning

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(329) P. Freire, Pedagogía del Oprimido, p. 86.

(330) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 26-35.

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of what is said. The dialectic God-Idols, which Croatto and Segundo use extensively, starts at the moment of suspicion.

Ricoeur builds his interpretative theory on the "school of suspicion", on the work of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud; the doubt about things, gives place also to the doubt about the subject, about consciousness. The three of them have a convergence of destructive interpretations of reality: Nietzsche, in relation to humanity's power, the restoration of will and man's force; Freud, in the elaboration of "the economy of instincts", via dreams which needs to be deciphered, and Marx, who uses a criticism based on economic alienation. The dialectic "hidden-shown" or "patent-latent" is characteristic of their hermeneutics of suspicion. However, it is necessary to say that Ricoeur's "doubting" element does not mean skepticism, but restoration of a more authentic reality.

Segundo arrives at the Ricoeurian concept of a hermeneutics of suspicion, through the study of various points, from a criticism on "Naïve Realism" to Marx's historical materialism, with a careful consideration of Freud and Nietszche. The first element to take into account, is Segundo's criticism of the scientific approach to understanding, which follows Ricoeur's questioning of a position of "Naïve Realism". From that, we will be able to understand better Segundo's work on the "Masters of Suspicion", and the final analysis of the role of Historical Materialism in what we have called "Segundo's circle of suspicion."

3.8.0.2 The criticism of Naïve Realism.

We refer here to Segundo's Existencialismo, Filosofía y Poesía. The main thesis of this book is the need for a philosophical synthesis, which could give us an existential answer to the question of humanity. Segundo claims that such a synthesis will be a return to common sense, and will integrate the dimension of the experience of the sacred in people's everyday life. The first argument of Segundo is concerned with the false opposition between poetry and truth (philosophy). The second, is the relation of knowledge and existence, and Segundo dedicates a whole chapter to Existentialism, from a methodological point of view. Two points need to be highlighted in this early analysis published in 1949: a) Segundo's definition of methodology, as "Not so much a logical technique, but a way to conceive and confront the fundamental philosophical question" and b) in relation to the questioning, Segundo claims that "Questions are more important than answers." (331). These two elements are present in the definition of Segundo's hermeneutical circle, previously described, and denote Segundo's preoccupation with methodological suspicion; the methods, and the right questions, define a philosophical (or theological) process of understanding.

Segundo objects to a Naïve Realist argument, which claims that subject and object can be split, following a scientific paradigm. Instead of that, Segundo, like Ricoeur in his criticism of the "natural attitude", is

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(331) J. L. Segundo, op. cit., p. 63.

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interested in a phenomenological argument, which is more integral and considers that objectivity does not exclude knowledge gained by experience (vivencia), but rather obtains a new depth with it. (332). The relation between human knowledge and existence, in Segundo comes through an early and tentative analysis of existentialist methodology, and the suspicion about questioning. From here, the road towards a new methodology requires the study of the "three great destroyers", as Ricoeur has called Marx, Nietzsche and Freud.

3.8.1 Hermeneutical dis-alienation.
From liberty to Freud.

The discussion of Freud in Segundo comes as part of the dialectic of "liberty and nature", and follows Ricoeur's analysis in his unfinished project of a Philosophy of Will. In the first volume of Ricoeur's research called The Voluntary and the Involuntary, the French philosopher has tried to demonstrate the interdependence between the two terms, that is, between the free decision and the experienced necessity. Human transcendence requires the attraction that the involuntary (an element of human finitude) provides; there is a risk in exalting transcendence at the expense of human finitude, which is the displacement of the concrete, or human existence. Ricoeur reflects on these points from the perspective of Marcel and Husserl. Marcel provides him with the analysis of the involuntary,

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(332) J. L. Segundo, op. cit., p. 63.

basically through the study of the objective and the affective elements, and Husserl with a phenomenology which pursues a unity amongst different points of view.

In the second volume of Ricoeur's project, <u>Finitude et Culpabilité</u>, especially in part one (<u>L'homme faillible</u>), the "<u>et</u>" of the title implies the contrast between the two terms. The main thesis of the book, which continues the first volume, is that finitude should not be confused with guilt; finitude is related instead with human fragility, which works as a pre-condition for situations of moral evil. This theme is then developed by Ricoeur in the second part of the volume II, <u>The Symbolism of Evil</u>, and later in his <u>Freud and Philosophy</u>. For methodological reasons, we will concentrate first on Segundo's treatment of the <u>Philosophy of the Will</u>, and then on the essays on Freud.

3.8.1.1 Suspicious liberty. Determinisms and possibilities.

"The struggle for truth -and liberty- is a struggle to *Interpret...*"
J. L. Segundo (333).

The material we are going to use here comes from Segundo's thesis, <u>El Cristianismo, una Utopía?</u>, vol. I., and vol. II of the series <u>A Theology for Artisans ...</u>, <u>Grace and the Human Condition</u>. In order to understand human existence, Segundo considers the division of a human being into what

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(333) J. L. Segundo, <u>Grace and the Human Condition</u>, p. 33.

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St. Paul calls "the inmost self" and "the law of our bodily members", and

Sartre calls "existence and essence". Following Ricoeur's analysis of the

"non-coincidence of man with himself" (334), Segundo agrees that these two

concepts are not opposite but complementary, and that free will and

determinisms coexist, in contrast with other positions which see liberty as

illusory. These "determinisms" (in plural), that he speaks about, are "pre-

conditions" of our being, but not limitations to our free will or liberty

(335).

Segundo considers that since our acts of free will need to struggle against

these "natural dynamisms", both inside and outside human beings, it implies

that liberty operates in a realm of truth, in a search for discernment

against the opposition of determinisms. Then as a consequence of that, our

free will needs to interpret its decisions, and the result of its acts, in

our own cultural context, because human liberty, according to Segundo,

implies the conscious realization of unconscious determinisms (or

"involuntary factors"), as for instance, structures of ideological

alienation (336).

To dis-alienate humanity in its search for liberty and truth, the process

of interpretation needs to be challenged; in order to achieve a creative

freedom, liberty must be "suspicious" of structures of alienation. Segundo

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(334) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Finitude et Culpabilité, I, L'Homme Faillible, p. 13.

(335) Cf. J. L. Segundo, Grace and the Human Condition, p. 33.

(336) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 277.

quotes Ricoeur's vision of the hermeneutical task, as follows:

"A desire to cast suspicion on things, and a desire to listen ... Today
our situation as human beings is such that we have not finished yet
with our *idols* and have just begun to listen to *symbols*." (337).

This is then related with an alienation-free will dialectic, where the only
way for the Christian is to live in a process of interpretation of his/her
reality, in church and in society (338). Ricoeur also speaks about the need
for an "iconoclastic procedure", in our discourse of interpretation, which
somehow, has been adopted by Croatto in his "idols-God" frame of
interpretation (339). The question to ask here is if this procedure of
"eliminating idols" has been carried out by Segundo, in the methodological
process of liberation theology in itself; at this point it seems that
Segundo, like Croatto, is confronted with the same dilemma, although the
resolution is different.

We will proceed now to investigate Segundo's hermeneutical path, where we
will be able to find some answers to this question, although more detailed
conclusions will be drawn in the final chapter. The "suspicious liberty" of
Segundo starts from an analysis of Freud, which has been particularly
influenced by Ricoeur's book, Freud and Philosophy.

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(337) P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 27.

(338) Cf. J. L. Segundo, Grace and the Human Condition, p. 35.

(339) Other Latin American theologians have adopted the same procedure; cf.
P. Richards (ed.), The Idols of Death and the God of Life.

3.8.1.2 The semantics of desire and the "Master-Slave" dialectic.

Ricoeur's thesis is that psychoanalysis is an interpretative science, with as its field of work a semantics of desire (340). Segundo finds that Ricoeur's analysis provides him with richer and broader tools of interpretation, always from the point of view of the "liberty-determinisms" dialectic, and especially because Ricoeur writes as a Christian philosopher (341). Following Freud's famous first topography, composed of "unconscious", "subconscious" and the "conscious", Segundo, who has already identified the unconscious with the determinisms which operate against human liberty, goes beyond that, saying that "everything unconscious in se and of its very nature must be set up in opposition to man's liberty" (342). Ricoeur has reflected on this theme, from the perspective of the "ego", which is one of the three roles of the subject, together with the "id" and "superego", although they do not coincide with Freud's topography.

The ego, according to Ricoeur's re-reading of Freud, is permanently threatened by external dangers, but basically by dangers "from within", which are more difficult to combat (343). Freud spoke of the ego as a "poor creature", menaced by three masters: reality, the libido and conscience

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(340) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 375.

(341) Cf. J. L. Segundo, Grace and the Human Condition, p. 36.

(342) Ibid., p. 35.

(343) Cf. P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 182.

(344). The situation of the ego is then related to what Ricoeur calls the "phenomena of unmastery", where the alternative of the ego is to dominate or to be dominated. At this point Ricoeur, as Segundo says, goes beyond the dialectic "to be loved-to be hated", to start to speak about the "master-slave" relationship.

This is the starting point for a hermeneutics of suspicion, with a doubt about things, but also about consciousness, that now needs to be deciphered, or interpreted in a new exegesis of meaning. According to Ricoeur, we are now in the presence of a _Cogito blessé_ (wounded), which can only understand its primordial truth, through the "avowal of the illusion, the fakery of immediate consciousness." (345). Segundo follows this argument, which he tries to relate to St. Paul's "law of bodily members" and "the inner man" dialectic, to conclude that the social structures that perpetuate humanity's alienation are meant to play an important role in the reappropriation of the real subject, once the narcissistic ego has been unmasked. The suspicion of the subject incorporates the function of symbolism, through the interpretation of signs belonging to the public or private spheres, or from the psychic or cultural realm; in them the "desire to be, and the effort to be which constitutes us, are expressed and made explicit." (346)

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(344) Cf. P. Ricoeur, _op. cit._; also S. Freud, _The Ego and the Id_, chapter 5.

(345) P. Ricoeur, _The Conflict of Interpretations_, p. 243.

(346) _Ibid._, p. 266.

Segundo finds that what he has called "determinisms", which confront the human vocation of liberty, are embodied in institutions, and in a social system which perpetuates them (347). The master-slave dialectic, is translated in terms of economic transactions, and relationships amongst social classes, which generate the appropriate supportive ideology. They justify the relationship of domination, which needs to be transformed in order to liberate humanity.

3. 8.1.3 Superstructures and ideologies

In his book The Liberation of Theology, Segundo takes these reflections, and connects the role of ideologies with theology and pastoral practice. The deciphering of signs is translated into the task of interpretation of exegesis, where the cogito needs to be unmasked, through a hermeneutic suspicious of the "I" who interprets. In order to do that, Segundo studies the work of four writers, Harvey Cox, Marx, Max Weber and James Cone, and finds that only the last of those thinkers can carry the element of suspicion to its ultimate conclusion. Cone is the only one who is able to doubt the ideological constructions of superstructures (interpretation methods), especially in relation to theology.

Segundo's analysis of Cox, presents some similarity with Ricoeur's early article Urbanization and Secularization (348). Ricoeur reads The Secular

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(347) Cf. J. L. Segundo, Grace and the Human Condition, pp. 38-9.

(348) P. Ricoeur, Political and Social Essays, pp. 176 ff.

City reflecting on the tasks of theology of culture, and finds that the most important work to be done, is the construction of a new ecclesiology. The church is to be defined in relation to God's people, and the task of theology, according to the French philosopher, is bound to their project of liberation. Ricoeur's criticism of Cox's analysis is similar to Segundo's on Cox's failure to identify the many problems of urban populations. Ricoeur calls this attitude a "naïve enthusiasm concerning our modernity", which is basically, uncritical of technology. (349).

As we have said before, Segundo's work is not related to interpretation in itself, but to one element (ideological suspicion). However, in other works, Segundo presents an incipient study of interpretation, including some comment on Bultmann's demythologising project, with whom he has many more things in common than with Croatto. Before analysing these elements, we will study the most important element in Segundo's circle of suspicion, which is his concept of ideology.

3.8.2   Segundo's anthropological thesis:
The emancipatory consciousness theory and the role of historical materialism.

Ricoeur has considered the relation between the "master-slave" dialectic of the Freudian ego, together with Marx's concept of alienation; he has also

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(349) P. Ricoeur, op. cit., p. 190.

taken various elements from Nieztche's main notion of the weakness of man

Segundo has taken into account the works of Freud and, although briefly, some ideas from Nietzsche, in the first volume of El Cristianismo, Una Utopía?. Basically, Segundo stresses the Nietzschean idea of the strengh needed to oppose the status quo, and to challenge "a false morality" which is based in a lack of ideological suspicion (350). In his thesis, written under the supervision of Ricoeur, Segundo quotes the following words from Nietzsche: "You will be called destroyers of morality, but you will be finding yourselves" (351). The fear that threatened the ego in Freud, according to Ricoeur, is challenged by Nietzsche's anti-narcissistic project; Segundo relates these elements in his dialectic liberty-determinisms, affirming that suspicion is the absolute pre-condition for (self) understanding of human existence.

Ricoeur has seen Marx as the third element of the trilogy of masters of suspicion, and the theory of ideologies as an important part of the demystification process (352). Ricoeur's analysis has used the early work of Marx, concerned with the relation of labour and alienation, showing that the liberation of praxis, done by the understanding of necessity, also implies an attack on the "mystification of false consciousness" (353).

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(350) Cf. J. L. Segundo, El Cristianismo, Una Utopía?, pp. 78-9.

(351) J. L. Segundo, ibid.; also Karl Jaspers, Nietzsche. Introduction à sa Philosophie, p. 160.

(352) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 35.

(353) Ibid.

It seems that the young Marx elaborated a theory of emancipatory consciousness, from a dialectic perspective (354). Marx studied the mystified consciousness from the point of view of the elements which perpetuate the "continuum of domination" (i.e. religious beliefs, values, attitudes etc.) According to his theory, the mystified consciousness includes a "practice of subjectivity" (355), which Freire described in his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, as a process of internalisation of the oppressor (356). This last element has been deeply influential in the whole development of liberation theology in Latin America, and its hermeneutical movement. An example of that, is Croatto's analysis of the "murmuring of the Hebrews" against Moses, who is their liberator, due to the internalisation of the Egyptian oppressors in their behaviour. The role of a conscientization process is related to liberation from the inner oppression (357).

Segundo has taken from Marx the notion of the development of emancipatory consciousness, from the context of historical materialism. According to this theory, the social structures are considered to be the result of an economic system; the final moment of social transformation would then come through class struggle, in a historical process which would culminate in a communist utopia. The anthropological thesis of Segundo has taken into

(354) Cf. E. Sherover-Marcuse, Emancipation and Consciousness, pp. 3-7.

(355) Ibid., p. 5.

(356) Cf. P. Freire, Pedagogía del Oprimido, chapter 1.

(357) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Liberación y Libertad, p. 24.

account this sense of progression, in relation to the liberation of the oppressed consciousness. The "continuum of domination" is perpetuated by traditional education and Christian theology; the hermeneutics of suspicion's role is, amongst other things, an anthropological model constructed upon the base of a consciousness produced by a determined economic system, which needs to be liberated through a dialogue between faith and ideology.

3.8.2.1 Faith and Ideology.

The anthropological thesis of Segundo is described in detail in his book Jesus of Nazareth. This project has the characteristic of being the first serious attempt in liberation theology to introduce anthropology as a theological locus. Segundo takes the risk of leaving aside the individual, the real object of Latin American theology, and introduces us to what he calls "a phenomenological analysis of man, in order to describe the universal characteristics of his anthropological dimensions" (358). His method is therefore, descriptive, and preceded by a "bracketing off" (an epoché) of Christian elements which could interfere with his intention of producing a phenomenological analysis.

Segundo starts his study questioning the relation between faith and ideology, which he finds constitutive of two basic human dimensions: the dimension of the "Values" or "Ends" (valor or fin), and the dimension of

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(358) J. L. Segundo, Hombre de Hoy ante Jesus de Nazareth. I, p. 19.

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"Efficacy" or "Means" (<u>eficacia</u> or <u>medios</u>). These aspects have different characteristics, but are complementary. Segundo's argument seems to be centred in these two dimensions which he sees present in human existence; the human being moves continuously between faith (value) and ideology (the "means" to obtain satisfaction). Through an analysis of Camus' <u>Caligula</u>, Segundo has decided that the search for happiness (or "satisfaction") is the human being's last existential goal; at this point, he differentiates his thought from the main theologians of liberation who have found another final goal or objective for human existence. For instance, Gutiérrez considers that the Christian responsibility towards the "non-person" is the ultimate objective of human existence, and Freire relates this goal to the context of humanity's vocation of "being more (human)", or <u>ser más</u>.

The model of ideology as a means to obtain happiness, comes from Marx's concept expressed in <u>The German Ideology</u>, that is the relation between class interest and its expression in an ideal form (ideology) for purposes of validation and universality (359). Here we find a process of legitimation or justification, that Ricoeur incorporates in his idea of ideology as a constitutive part of the hermeneutics of suspicion. According to Ricoeur, ideology has a "generative character" (360), a dynamism that is manifested through justification of a project, but that also acts as a mediator between founding thoughts and their social application. From this perspective, that Ricoeur has elaborated from Jacques Ellul's <u>Le rôle</u>

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(359) Cf. K. Marx, <u>The German Ideology</u>, p. 68.

(360) Cf. P. Ricoeur, <u>From Text to Action</u>, p. 250.

médiateur de l'idéologie, anything can be considered ideological: religion, ethics etc. (361). The interesting thing is that Ricoeur considers that one of the main characteristics of ideology is a "non-reflective" (or non-transparent) status, which seems to work as a condition "for the production of social messages" (362). According to Ricoeur, this is the reason why ideology is, by its own nature, uncritical, and carries with it a certain inertia which is transmitted to the process.

3.8.2.2 Positive and negative aspects of ideology

There is a function of closure in ideology, due to its non-critical nature, but it also has the positive effect of being itself a representation of a founding event, as for instance, a memory of an act of liberation. In this distinction from Ricoeur, we find the basis of the movement of emancipation of consciousness, or as Freire says, from "intransitive consciousness" to "transitive consciousness"(363). Liberation theology has incorporated these elements in its analysis of popular religiosity. The people's religiosity is sometimes oppressive, but can also be liberative; Christianity can be oppressive when it is treated as a "closed" paradigm, which cannot be confronted with new challenges. However, a Christianity opened to receive criticism, becomes creative, and thus able to be a liberative force. An example of this is Enrique Dussel's thesis on modes of production and

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(361) Cf. J. Ellul, Démythisation et Idéologie, pp. 335-54.

(362) P. Ricoeur, From Text to Action, p. 251.

(363) Cf. P. Freire, Pedagogía del Oprimido, chapter 1.

consciousness (364).

The relationship between ideology and liberation in Ricoeur, is connected to the hermeneutical function of distanciation, as "a consciousness exposed to the efficacy of history" (365). The confrontation of the memory of a founding act (as in Exodus) is then contrasted with the history of the effects transmitted through people's experiences, in a critical way.

These concepts related to the nature of ideology (as basically "uncritical" and authoritarian) and the positive aspects of criticism which need to be introduced in the foundational acts of a nation, are continuously present in liberation theology, from its hermeneutical proposal to its re-writing of Latin American history. It is due to the presence of the element of ideological suspicion in these analyses, that it has been assumed to be part of the "hermeneutical circle" of Segundo. However, a careful study of Segundo's concepts of faith and ideology seems to distance his thought from the current understanding of liberation theology on these issues.

3.8.2.3 Ideology and neutrality of means.

As we have seen, Segundo has an anthropological thesis which considers the role of interpretation in the process of concientización, which is based on the master-slave, or the oppressor-oppressed dialectic. The difficulties

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(364) Cf. E. Dussel, Filosofía de la Liberación, chapter 1.

(365) Cf. P. Ricoeur, From Text To Action, p. 269.

arise when we try to specify further his concept of ideology, which seems to contradict some of his previous statements. We will summarise the somewhat arid arguments of <u>Jesus of Nazareth</u>, into points of discussion in order to clarify the real meaning of the phrase "ideological suspicion" from Segundo.

1. Faith and ideology are anthropological categories: Segundo claims that faith does not imply "religion", neither does "ideology" necessarily mean "politics". These are broad categories related to the objective of human existence, which he calls "happiness" and the means to achieve it. Faith has the category of "goal of humanity" and ideology implies any means used to achieve it. Segundo claims that, from this point of view, everybody has faith, but people disagree with the ideologies used for the purpose. Both elements are complementary.

2. Faith and Ideology as universal categories: Every human phenomenon then, can be classified either as faith or as ideology. Ideology is then defined as "all the means, natural or artificial, used with the purpose of obtaining a certain goal" (366). Segundo does not explain how a natural phenomenon such as the digestion process (his own example) can be classified as a faith.

3. Ideology as a neutral concept: Segundo considers that the common use of language gives a meaning of neutrality to the term "Ideology". He does not

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(366) J. L. Segundo, <u>El Hombre de hoy ante Jesus de Nazareth</u>, p. 30.

see a value judgement in the use of this word. The point is that the use of the terms ideology/ideologist and ideological, have always had an ambivalence of meaning. Engels has considered ideology as an illusion, and as such related to false consciousness, while Marx seems to use the term in a more neutral way, notably in his Contribution to the Critique of Political Philosophy (1859). Here Marx stresses the fact that ideological forms are expressions of the economic context (367). Both conceptions of the term ideology, as an illusion and as a set of ideas related to certain economic conditions, have been extensively used in history.

However, the common understanding of "ideology", is related to Napoleon's derisory, and judgemental use of the term. This is particularly true in Latin America during times of dictatorial regimes, which associated "ideology" with unlawful political activity (368). In any way, Segundo is wrong to advocate the popular neutral meaning of ideology in Latin America, to the point that it would be very difficult for people to relate to any discourse of "faith and *ideology*". Fear of political persecution could have been a deterrent.

Segundo, having implied in his arguments that ideology guides action, needs then to acknowledge the objective elements which constitute an ideology. The fact that Segundo attempts to exclude ideology from the realm of values, adds confusion to his analysis. The exclusion of values from ideology also creates the situation where liberation theology cannot

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(367) Cf. "Ideology", in R. Williams, Keywords, pp. 126-30.

(368) During military dicatorships in the Rio de la Plata, the use of the

make ethical decisions upon the means and ends of processes. Apart from that, Segundo has made clear that the hermeneutics of liberation theology needs to be biased in favour of the poor (or to be "non-neutral") (369). The principle of "non neutrality" has been carried on extensively in Latin American theology and philosophy, especially by Freire. However, Segundo's concept of the neutrality of ideology seems to be the opposite of a "bias towards the poor" principle.

In The Liberation of Theology, Segundo has said that ideology is "the system of means and ends" (370). But in El Hombre de Hoy ante Jesus de Nazareth, he only considers the "systems of means" in his definition. Therefore, it seems that Segundo has two definitions of ideology: one, includes the concept of "ultimate" goals, and the other, only the way or the means to achieve such goals. At this moment, in order to clarify these two definitions, we will need to consider the differences established by Segundo between a "faith" and an "ideology".

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term "foreign ideologies" was commonly associated with diverse issues, from communism and human rights to Freirean literacy campaigns. Concerning the use of the term ideology in the Roman Catholic Church, the Document of Puebla says the following: "The temptation of certain groups ... is to identify the Christian message with an *ideology*." Cf. Juan Pablo II, Inaugural Discourse I, in Documento de Puebla, p. 559.

(369) Cf. J. L. Segundo, "Capitalism Versus Socialism. Crux Theologica", in R. Gibellini (ed.) Frontiers of Theology in Latin America, pp. 240-60.

(370) J. L. Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, p. 116.

3.8.2.4 The nature of the act of faith and ideology.

Segundo wrote about ideology as a "means" to obtain happiness, in a rather technical and limited way. He established that at the root of any human act, there is something that he calls "a radical difference", which he illustrates in the example of the act of nailing down (371). The nature of the objective of the carpenter, lies in what Segundo calls "an absolute freedom", where the "value" of the act depends entirely on the person who decides to hit the nail. But the means, or the methods s/he uses to do that, does not depend on the carpenter in him/herself, but in the availability of certain tools. Here, according to Segundo, freedom is conditioned by circumstances.

Using Segundo's terminology we can infer then that an ideology implies a "conditioned freedom", while faith is related to an act of "absolute freedom". The point is that the theology of liberation has worked upon the basis of the lack of freedom that people have in choosing their objective in life, owing to many conditions arising from their socio-economic circumstances. The differences that Segundo tries to establish between faith and ideology seem very relative, and entirely dependent on the point of view of the person who decides if nailing is an end in itself or a way to build a piece of furniture.

Another difficulty we find, is related to Segundo's use of the word

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(371) J. L. Segundo, El Hombre de Hoy ante Jesus de Nazareth, p. 6.

"efficacy" as a synonym of ideology; it tends to imply that the more efficacious the means used, the better is the ideology. It does not always seem to be the case, and Latin American theology's criticism of developmentalism and the use of technology has put an argument against the lack of reflection on the methods used to help poor countries, which although they can achieve their goal (for instance, to provide water to a village), do not consider the cultural implication of their actions. In our own example, the village can be provided with water but at the cost of changing basic cultural patterns, depending on the technology used, and damaging future possibilities of people's involvement in the resolution of their own problems. Apart from that, there is the fact that the term "efficacious" somehow implies a value, and Segundo has already said that ideology does not have values. This is another example which shows that the division between ideology and faith, as explained by Segundo, is very relative.

3.8.2.5 Ideological suspicion.

Our next step is to consider what Segundo really means by "ideological suspicion". According to his analysis in Jesus of Nazareth, everybody has "failed" ideologically speaking, including Jesus himself, in their own actions. The concept of failure used here is related to the fact that nobody has ben able to fulfil the criteria of the two dimensions of faith (goal/value) and ideology (means/methodology to reach the goal).

Segundo's main object of suspicion is the Roman Catholic social doctrine;

he considers it as "inefficacious" (372). The accusation lies in what the Uruguayan theologian calls the desire to "create a model of what ought to be", without making an adequate proposal concerning the methodology to use for that purpose. In this case, the Roman Catholic Church is encouraging a faith (as an "end") which cannot be achieved, due to the presence of an obsolete methodology; Segundo does not hesitate to call such a faith "a dead faith", since it is a model of "a faith without ideology", or means to realise it (373).

Segundo's preoccupation with the right methodology (as "ideology") is the core of his hermeneutical circle. As we can see now, it is related to a specific criticism of the social doctrine of the Catholic Church in Latin America, which is inefficacious, and requires the use of Marxian analysis. Historical Materialism is the right ideology, according to Segundo, upon which the circle of suspicion can be built. For this purpose, he quotes Marx from the Communist Manifesto, saying that "The dominating ideas of any period of history, have always been the ideas of the ruling class" (374). Thus the hermeneutical category of ideological suspicion in Segundo, although elaborated from Ricoeur's theory, does not follow the broad spectrum of questioning that we find in the French philosopher. Mainly it lacks the analysis of the non-critical nature of ideology, and its generative character in the field of actions.

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(372) Cf. J. L. Segundo, op. cit.. p. 158.

(373) Ibid., pp. 156-8.

(374) J. L. Segundo, The Liberation of Theology, pp. 20-1.

The elaboration upon Ricoeurian thought is then partial and even contradictory; however, the category of ideological suspicion has proved to be a rich component in the dynamic of hermeneutics of liberation in other authors, who claim to have taken this element from Segundo. The only explanation for this, is perhaps related to the fact that Segundo's readers have been developing the hermeneutics of suspicion from Ricoeur (or informed by him), and thus superseding the Uruguayan theologian's definition. However, in another part of his work, Segundo produces a more creative way of using ideological suspicion than in the specific discussions on faith and ideology in Jesus of Nazareth; an example of this can be seen in his Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity, as we will demonstrate in our outline of Segundo's methodological proposal.

The real value of Segundo's hermeneutics of suspicion in any case, is that it was the first introduction of the Ricoeurian concept of suspicion in the methodology of liberation theology per se, which led to a rich variety of thought concerning dominating ideas in class divisions, culture, and the role of the church and the primitive religions of the Amerindians by other theologians. The difficulties arise when we try to understand the frame of conceptions of Segundo, which are complex, diverse and even contradictory.

3.8.3. An outline of the methodological proposal of Segundo.

Apart from the circle of suspicion, Segundo presents us with an outline of a circle of interpretation, which includes a demythologization process. We will base the present analysis on the five volumes of his Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity, in order to consider elements such as Segundo's

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use of history, the locus of interpretation, his concept of myth and language, and finally his points in common with Bultmannian hermeneutics.

3.8.3.1 The inner suspicion in the methodological circle.

Two elements call our attention in Segundo's suspicion about the traditional circle of theological interpretation. Both elements seem closely associated with the discussion of the narcissistic ego by Ricoeur, from an individualistic and social perspective. The idea of being suspicious of our Cartesian cogito, comes to Segundo in relation to our concept of God.

The falsification (or "idolization") of the concept of God in our western society is, according to Segundo, an existential act of protection of our egotism. Our concept of God is intimately related to our existential experience in such a way, that what we can call the intransitive consciousness of the oppressed results in a perverted idea of God. From another perspective, both the falsifications of God and society's definitions, are the product of the illusion of the western narcissistic ego, which has determined a certain socio-economic order. In this way, Segundo relates the criticism of the cogito with social action, in the theological framework of the concept of God. (375)

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(375) Cf. J. L. Segundo, Our Idea of God, pp. 6 ff.

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As a consequence of this the traditional theological locus is also challenged. Segundo sees the western milieu of Christianity as the origin of a type of historical consciousness which identifies certain historical acts with a determinate meaning. The self-criticism of the western ego should be the process of separating both elements, and recognising what Segundo calls "the subtle and inhumane" character of the structures of domination which has permeated the constructed meaning of history (376).

The suspicion regarding the theological locus of our discourse, highlights the periphery of Latin America as an exploited continent, or space of "otherness", as Dussel refers to it (377). A theological method from this periphery of the traditionally recognised western centre of established knowledge, is the challenge of Segundo's suspicion on the Cartesian cogito.

3.8.3.2 History and interpretation.

Segundo envisages history as a process which begins with God's creation, and is prolonged by humanity's own acts. The main constitutive element of history is the continuity of "God-in-us" (378). The relation of collaboration between God and the human community is so close, that Segundo

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(376) Cf. J. L. Segundo, op. cit., pp. 35 ff.

(377) Cf. E. Dussel, Filosofía de Liberación, chapter 1.

(378) Cf. J. L. Segundo, op. cit., p. 39.

speaks in terms of "God who is a society" (379). This category seems to be crucial for the development of a hermeneutics of solidarity, as we will see with further detail in the next chapter.

Traditionally, the history of salvation has been reduced to a "privatisation" or an individualistic understanding, in the same way that history in general, and particularly in Latin America, has become a mere list of events disconnected from the reality of the oppressed nations. Segundo proposes here to reappropriate the act of interpretation of historical events, as the first political act of liberation; the traditional events of Latin America's "Fathers of the Nation", also need to be re-interpreted, for instance, in terms of the idolisation of military cultures.

Segundo claims that God convokes his people to a process of on going interpretation, as part of a project of "divine education" (380). This is a concept that has recently been elaborated in liberation theology as constitutive of a Biblical pedagogy of the oppressed (381). According to this Freirean perspective, God wants his people to be active subjects of their own history, in their role as creators and not slaves of history

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(379) Cf. J. L. Segundo, op. cit., p. 39

(380) Ibid., pp. 40-1.

(381) Cf. L. E. Wanderley, "Comunidades eclesiais de base e educaçao popular", in Rev. Ecles. Bras. (Dec. 1981), 41, pp. 686-707. Also cf. L. A. Gómez de Souza, Classes populares e Igreja nos caminos da história, Part 3.

(once again, we have here the two confronting dialectics of consciousness, the naïve or intransitive vs. the transitive or critical). Segundo considers that a certain insecurity, or crisis of interpretation is unavoidable here, due to the nature of a collective creative process of interpretation as such, but the presence of Christ in his church should act as a guarantee against an unfruitful relativism.

Instead of relativism, Segundo sees what he calls a "coefficient of relativity", which he associates with Christian maturity. However, he does not develop this concept enough for us to understand its meaning. He seems to be alluding to the liturgical role of the "signs" of salvation in the mass (382). He even suggests we should not question the validity of the rite, but reinterpret it. The point is that inasmuch as the rite of the mass is an interpretation of history, it should have the same "textual" category as the Bible, a social doctrine of the church or the ritual of celebration of the "Fathers of the Nation" in Latin America. It seems that Segundo's suspicion about history has its limitations, which contradict the work of a "divine pedagogy of the oppressed", as he tries to keep a balance between the church's authority and people's questioning of the structures of power.

3.8.3.3 Demythologisation.

Segundo defines this term in relation to the "coefficient of relativity" in

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(382) Cf. J. L. Segundo, op. cit., p. 55.

interpretation. He agrees with Bultmann on the point concerning the existential meaning of the message of Christ, and the necessity for an interpretation beyond the limits of biblical literalism. Demythologising is, according to Segundo, an attempt to avoid a fixed, closed interpretation of the Scriptures, but not a denial of the history of biblical narrative in itself.

It is important to notice here that Segundo uses the term "myth" as Bultmann does (as a pre-scientific understanding of the world), and not as Ricoeur (myth as a language in itself). To demythologize is for Segundo, the search for what is left in the Bible related to God's revelation beyond its popular legends and sagas. Interpretation needs to rule the narrative, because God's revelation is made of historical acts that we interpret. In this point, Segundo agrees with Bultmann's criticism of literalist interpretation, and also, with the German theologian, he believes that demythologising will lead us to a new self-understanding of human existence.

However, Segundo criticises Bultmann on various points, basically in his concept of "modern man" and in the language of transcendence. The criticism of the "modern man" paradigm, is based on the discussion about the ego who interprets, and he refers us again to the Ricoeurian doubting of the Cartesian cogito. The suspicion about the category of "modern man", seems at odds with Segundo's traditional conception of myth, underlined by an anthropological universe divided in primitive-scientific humanity.

The point is that when Segundo criticises the concept of "modern man" in Bultmann, he refers to the "western milieu" which has produced it, without considering, as Ricoeur does, that the basic dialectics of "modernity versus primitivism" also need some revision (383).

The second aspect, concerned with the representation of the transcendental, seems to put Segundo in the preamble of a discussion on the concepts of myth as language, but the Uruguayan turns his argument around the theme of "attitudes", instead of language. Segundo critices Bultmann for not providing an alternative model to represent the transcendental language of the Bible; he then becomes suspicious, as we have seen, of this attitude which seems related to the concept of "modern man." Segundo accuses the paradigm of modernism of depriving revelation of its meaning, and replacing the traditional language of transcendence with elements of the industrialized, capitalist world (384). This produces an enormous contrast with Latin America, which is trying to rediscover the "God who is a society" from the periphery of an oppressed continent.

Following this argument, Segundo says that when Bultmann uses the term "God", in reality he is refering to what he "desires his existence to be" (385). In consequence, "God" is the "idol" of the modern person, generated

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(383) For details on this discussion, cf. Chapter two, 2.8.2.

(384) Cf. J. L. Segundo, <u>Our Idea of God</u>, p. 49.

(385) <u>Ibid</u>. Also cf. P. Van Buren, <u>The Secular Meaning of the Gospel</u>, from which Segundo takes the original idea.

by a particular life-style which has created structures of oppression. It is this context that Segundo claims that Latin America is concerned with the death of idols, but not of God.

3.8.3.4 Language and Interpretation.

Apart from the comments he makes on Bultmann, Segundo mentions Bishop Robinson's book Honest to God, from the perspective of the use of language. The following elements will give us a clear idea of Segundo's position of the use of biblical language about God.

a) The facts of the Bible are not important in themselves, but the interpretation of the events represented in it is crucial. Quoting John Macquarrie, Segundo finds that Bishop Robinson committed the mistake of not understanding the symbolic language of the New Testament, which seems to be full of analogies.

b) As a consequence of that, the risk is to produce a reductionist model of biblical language, where the Christian message will suffer from a narrow approach to interpretation. Somehow, this model of interpretation seems to be connected with fundamentalism, which at first glance seems its opposite, because both styles deny the role of interpretation; in one case, by a literalist approach and in the other, by a positivist attitude.

c) Human communication requires that historical events need to be fashioned in a symbolic language. The language of faith needs the "I-Thou" relation

experienced in human communication, or it becomes impersonal and loses meaning.

In synthesis, Segundo opposes the paradigm of modern man in hermeneutics, as a product of an Anglo-saxon culture (386). This is his main criticism concerning Bultmann's project of demythologising, and from that he objects to the negative attitude of modern man towards the language of transcendence. We do not find in his work a reflection upon language as for instance in Croatto, and it seems that, although he has used some forms of literary criticism, Segundo follows what we have called the "half circle" of interpretation of Bultmann (387). Once again, as Ricoeur could say, the hermeneutical circle has come to the final moment of praxis and appropriation, without a proper explanation of the text from the linguistic point of view.

However, there are some elements of structural analysis in Segundo's approach to the New Testament, which we would like to comment on. For instance, the use of a visual code -the verb 'to see'- in the gospel of John (388), and the study of Jesus in relation to God the Father, also in the gospel of John (389). In this example, Segundo organises the story of the New Testament in terms of "functions", such as creation, election,

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(386) Cf. J. L. Segundo, <u>Our Idea of God</u>, p. 124.

(387) Cf. Chapter two, 2.8.3.

(338) Cf. J. L. Segundo, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 109.

(389) <u>Ibid.</u>, p. 60.

protective guardianship and love, and "operations" (between subject and object; in this case, represented by the Son and the Father). These operations are manifested through relations of conjunction (between Father-Son) and disjunction (between Son-Holy Spirit). Segundo also considers the onomastic codes of the story from John, such as the titles of Father, Son and Spirit, but concludes that the identity of the story's characters relates to their transformation of what we will call the narrative programme, and not to the apparent differentiation of names (for instance, the Father and Son are one, but the Son is different from the Spirit).

Apart from this and other examples of a sporadic use of structuralist elements of analysis, Segundo has not developed a reflection upon linguistic criticism in relation to the hermeneutical circle he wanted to build. His main concern is the use of ideological suspicion, and specifically from the base of historical materialism. This is the reason why we find Segundo's hermeneutics closer to Bultmann than to Croatto, from the point of view of the construction of the circle of interpretation in itself, although obviously, from the perspective of his pre-understanding of the text and reality, he seems part of the Latin American movement and not of the Bultmannian demythologisation process. Therefore, the work of Segundo should be called "the circle of suspicion" since he tries to apply his ideological suspicion to reality, to textual interpretation and to a certain extent, to the interpreter him/herself. However, as we will see in the next chapter, his ontological proposal suffers owing to what Ricoeur calls the short way of his hermeneutical circle, which has not taken into full account the extension of the suspicion procedures into the broad realm of the language of church and society itself.

Part III

Clodovis Boff.

3.9 The Dialectics of Interpretation: Anarchic Reading and the Authority of Traditions.

"What does it means to take up pen and paper in the midst of persons who can't write?"

C. Boff (390)

3.9.0 Interpretation and illiteracy: The challenges.

The question that Boff asks himself in his <u>Brazilian Journey</u>, is perhaps the most important question that biblical interpretation can ask today in Latin America. The challenge of a Christian continent, composed of a significant number of people who are illiterate in the broadest sense of the word, by their inability to read and write, and by their lack of understanding of their particular circumstances, gives another meaning to the hermeneutical circle. To interpret seems, somehow, more vital and related to the existence of the Latin American people than anything else.

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(390) C. Boff, <u>Feet-On-The-Ground-Theology, A Brazilian Journey</u>, p. 63.

Freire spoke about illiteracy in terms of dependence; this dependence upon the ones who read and therefore "interpret", has always been present in the life of the church in Latin America; in this process, people have tended to be passive recipients of meanings elaborated by others, but not participants. The Basic Ecclesial Communities (CEBs) have challenged this relation, trying to enable people to read for themselves "the signs of the times", but they have also created a tension in the balance of power between theologians and the laity. The elements of solidarity amongst the interpreters of the text, as stressed by the hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur, Croatto and Segundo, can only be practiced through a process of empowerment, in the difficult dialogue between "new readings" of the Bible, and the authority of church traditions.

Croatto has answered this problematic from the point of view of the meaningful event, and the "history of the effects"; the people who cannot write a text, nevertheless write the "historical text" of an organised community. People relate to meaningful acts rescued by the Scriptures, and repeated by liturgies and dramatic re-creations; the hermeneutical clue of the sintonía ("tuning in" of the Scriptures with their reality), has put together a hermeneutic circle of suspicion and hope, and a practice of social commitment.

Segundo has elaborated a circle of suspicion, which suggests a conscientization process amongst the poor, including adult education work. His proposal reminds us of a "YHWH, Pedagogue of the Oppressed" model of interpretation. Both in Croatto and in Segundo the community participates in the hermeneutical process with the guidance of an "animator" or leader

who gives them a "clue of interpretation": the event of liberation, or the art of suspicion.

The question that we are going to ask in this last part of the present chapter is how does Boff reply, hermeneutically speaking, to this concern about a circle of interpretation amongst the illiterate. For this purpose, we will work with two of his books, Theology and Praxis, which is deeply engaged in a dialogue about empowerment of the community and its limits, and Feet-On-The-Ground-Theology, where examples from his work with CEBs can enlighten some points of his hermeneutical circle.

Theology and Praxis is a doctoral thesis presented by Boff at the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, in 1976. In this book he elaborates a hermeneutical model that he calls the "Correspondence of Relationships", which is presented as a healthy alternative to the other models used in Latin America, where simplistic comparisons of the Gospel and modern politics are reproduced without further analysis.

Boff has been informed by Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle, from which his own model seems to come. But Boff's hermeneutics, although inspired by Ricoeur's theory, departs from it to the point of becoming contradictory at some moments of the interpretation. The tension between a creative community reading and the authority of the church to determine the meaning of such a reading, forces Boff to take some options outside the phenomenological circle of interpretation. We will analyse Boff's general ideas about the task of interpretation, and the work of his hermeneutical

circle, both in the moments of coincidence with Ricoeur, and also in its opposition to the French philosopher's theory.

3.9.0.1 The Via longa (long way) of theology.

Boff starts his analysis by considering the necessity of taking the long way suggested by Ricoeur, for a better understanding of the theological discourse. He distinguishes between two different kinds of language: the religious and the theological. According to Boff, the differences between these can be established by the degree of scientific methodology that each of them requires. For instance, the religious discourse works with what Boff calls "raw material", or supernatural factors, to which all kind of approaches are legitimate; but theology instead, needs to use more scientific categories, in order to describe properly the object of its discourse (391).

The conflict between theological and religious discourse lies then in the use of either a scientific or a "mythical" paradigm. To produce a scientific theological understanding, Boff advises the use of the via longa of interpretation, which includes the linguistic science proposed by Ricoeur in The Conflict of Interpretations. This approach contrasts with the short way of interpretation, which happens when semantics are ignored; there is a lack of self-reflection in this short way, and it also produces

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(391) Cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 52.

epistemological limitations (392).

Boff remarks on the necessity of the long way in theology for two reasons: first of all, to avoid this lack of reflection and self-criticism typical of what he calls "theologisms", and second, to incorporate the valuable elements coming from the criticism of religion made by the "Three masters of suspicion" proposed by Ricoeur: Marx, Freud and Nietzsche.

The hermeneutical work of the long way of interpretation, consists in a new re-reading of the text, which rejects a scientific positivism. According to Boff, this is the first step to locating the theological discourse at a different level of being, which could result in new possibilities of praxis of liberation. Although Boff affirms the necessity of a scientific frame of work, he is at the same time suspicious of the lack of questioning of the paradigm. The object of the long way of hermeneutics then, needs to incorporate a dialogue between faith and ideology, and in this sense Boff quotes Peter Berger's work The Sacred Canopy. In this book, Berger analyses sociologically the role of religion as "a human product", with a certain social purpose. The hermeneutics of suspicion of Boff seems to accept this fact, in order to produce a more "pertinent" theological discourse (393).

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(392) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 10-1.

(393) Cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 133.

3.9.0.2 Theological pertinency

Boff's concept of pertinency is related to hermeneutics, in the sense that it is only by a study of interpretation theory related to the political, that his theological project can then be defined. The "pertinent" seems to be the "adequate" or the particular element of a discourse located in a specific context; for instance, the "lived experience" (vécu) is a pertinent element for a theology of the political which wants to include this critical dimension in the facts provided by a scientific analysis.

This is also the phenomenological task that Ricoeur has set himself, as part of his project of reconciling a reflective philosophy with an ontology based on human experience (394). The reunion of the two analyses, the phenomenological and the hermeneutical is the core of Ricoeur's "diagnosis" of experience, which Boff has interest in developing in his own interdisciplinary approach for a project of a theology of the political. This sharing of resources and orientations from the different social sciences, is articulated with theology for a better understanding of its context, in what Boff calls "a criteriology." (395)

Ricoeur has defined the pertinency of a discipline in relation to its

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(394) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., pp. 68 ff.

(395) Cf. Don Ihde, Hermeneutic Phenomenology, Preface, p. XV.

formal object, as a "language project" which is characteristic of the kind of material we want to describe. Ricoeur has based his main reflections upon "the documents of life" and has used corrective criticism (or the hermeneutics of suspicion) in order to unveil the misunderstandings produced by a false consciousness (396). Drawing from these concepts, Boff considers that if the material object of the study of a theology of the political is "the political in itself", a mediation of social sciences is required to produce a necessary criticism. However, the theological pertinency of such studies will come, according to Boff, only by not turning the theological discourse into a mere socio-economic study. From this perspective, Boff criticises the hermeneutics of Belo and Clevenot, whose analyses of the modes of production in the Bible have excluded theological categories, such as faith, grace, etc. (397).

This theological pertinency is dialectically related to the reference of the discourse, and Boff considers here the practice of an epoché or bracketing off, in order to be able to study the object undistracted from elements that are not relevant to the task of a theology of the political. This suspension of non-pertinent aspects of argumentation, is done using a critique of religion, such as the one presented by the already mentioned "three masters". As a result of this process, Boff hopes to open up the phenomena of "methodological closure" produced through history. This

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(396) Cf. P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations. p. 18.

(397) Cf. M. Clévenot, Materialist approaches to the Bible. Also F. Belo, A Materialist reading of the Gospel of Mark.

closure has happened because "non-pertinent", or improper elements of the religious discourse had been incorporated into the theological sphere which is, according to Boff, more systematic and critical by nature (398).

Boff's analysis is intended to put the lived experience (_vécu_) onto the same level as scientific discourse. For that purpose, he follows Ricoeur's dialogue between phenomenology and scientific knowledge, emphasising the fact that the theological discourse is not superior to the religious one (as _vécu_), and more to the point, the experience of the religious phenomena is necessary to do an "epistemological recasting" of the theological practices. Theology and praxis will be the starting point of a new methodology, where the element of suspicion will be mediated through distanciation.

The method that theology uses works by helping the theory to take distance from the object of its study, and by practicing what Boff calls "theological vigilance", or self-awareness of the specific project of theology. As we have already said, this element constitutes the pertinency of the hermeneutical discourse; here suspicion is a mediating category to use against the absolutism of scientific positivism. Boff's project is to find a hermeneutic adequate to a theology of the political, which could include the categories of Otherness and Mystery, so often excluded by "epistemological totalitarianism."(399). We will consider now how Boff

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(398) Cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 69.

(399) Ibid., p. 54.

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develops this project.

3.9.0.3 Biblical Hermeneutics.

Boff defines hermeneutics according to Ricoeur's distinctions about the
term, as a technique (techne hermeneutiké), as a mediation of language
(hermeneia) and as interpretation (auslegung) (400). From the definition of
hermeneutics as auslegung, Boff considers hermeneutics as synonymous with
theology, or that theology is a hermeneutical science in itself. This
science of interpretation is to be considered with reference to two main
contexts, Christian positivity and the Scriptures (401).

Christian positivity is what Boff calls "the objective aspect of faith",
for instance dogmatics and history, which work as pre-understanding for
theological development (or "the given" to analysis). This positivity,
according to Boff, is based on the Scriptures, which are the foundation of
the Christian faith, and have a privileged position in relation to other
canonic texts. Although Boff refers to the Scriptures as an "articulated
whole", he establishes a hierarchy of texts, starting with the New
Testament's preferential function over the Old, and the authority of the
Gospels over the other New Testament writings. Here we find two interesting
elements which we will analyse in more detail later: first, the tension

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(400) Cf. Chapter one, 1.2.1.

(401) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., pp. 132-3.

in Boff between a desire for epistemological "openess", and a recurrent reference to *hierarchies* (402). Second, the so called primacy of the New Testament over the Old, when liberation theology has done, precisely, the opposite. We will return to these points in our next chapter's final discussion.

Boff speaks about the role of distanciation in hermeneutics, and the necessity to "decode" the present text, in order to "re-appropriate the original sense of the written message" (403). This puts Boff in a Diltheyian position, which has been criticised by Ricoeur as "romantic psychologism" (404), and gives us another clue to what we will call "the axis of closure/openess" of Boff's hermeneutical proposal. In another part of his discussion, Boff considers Dilthey's position in relation to Ricoeur's hermeneutical arc: explanation and understanding, or comprehension and explication. Dilthey had split them into different provinces, one belonging to "sciences of the human being", and the other to "sciences of nature". Ricoeur has made clear that both moments are related to each other: understanding is a non-methodological moment which in hermeneutics is combined with the methodological moment of explanation (405). Understanding precedes explanation, and explanation develops the

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(402) "Hierarchy" is Boff own's term; very suggestive from a perspective of interpretation; cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 132.

(403) Ibid., p. 133.

(404) Cf. Chapter one, 1.4.1.

(405) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Explanation and Understanding", in From Text to

understanding; any dichotomisation here is considered dangerous. Boff agrees with Ricoeur on this position, and calls Dilthey's epistemology obsolete or passé (406).

3.9.1 Distanciation

Close to the hermeneutical arch of Ricoeur, lies the concept of distanciation in its relation to praxis. It seems that at the core of the process of self-understanding, through appropriation and a critique of the illusions of the subject, there is a dialectic of explanation and understanding, which implies distance. Appropriation, says Ricoeur is contemporaneous, but involves a process of distanciation from the text as writing, from the author, and from the oral discourse. This whole process of distanciation also implies that the "original project" of the author is no longer accessible to us. Thus Boff has taken into consideration the hermeneutical arc from Ricoeur's theory, but not its consequences, since he claims that the hermeneutical task is related to the original intention of the author.

Boff also criticises Gadamer, adducing that there is a sort of anarchy (or permission for different readings in a text) in his interpretation theory, and a position of "universality" in his conception. However, there is also a claim of universality in the Romantic task of hermeneutics, which, no

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Action, p. 142.

(406) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., p. 134.

doubt, avoids any plural reading of a text. Boff has taken the first element, and it seems that the second, related to the closure of the text or its opposite "anarchic reading" is at the moment an unresolved or unacknowledged question.

3.9.1.1 Hermeneutic mediation.

There are two concepts here that we would like to highlight: 1) the function of distanciation as a mediation and 2) mediation as diagnosis.

1) Distanciation as mediation.

Hermeneutics as a _techné_ is a mediation in itself, which is produced between the text and the reader. It also implies the distance between them from the point of view of the closure of meaning in time, and the changes from the oral discourse to the written text. Boff sees this dialectic in terms of the relationship between the theology of the political and the Scriptures as a privileged text of interpretation. The hermeneutical mediation, in the light of Christianity, is defined by Boff here in its relation with the Bible. Mediation implies distanciation as a challenge for understanding, and also as a methodology of interpretation.

2) Mediation as Diagnosis.

Boff considers other kinds of "mediations", apart from the hermeneutical one, which are necessary for his theological proposition, such as the socio-analytic mediation. Basically he argues for an interdisciplinary

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approach (criteriology), in a convergence of philosophy, ethics, history, sociology and linguistics, with which theology can share a common task. Thus Boff says that "theology is a regional discourse", and needs the theoretical elaborations from other sciences in its discourse (407). Ricoeur's concept of diagnosis is also a project of methodological convergence; to understand implies to recognise the category of mystery, or limits in our methodological approach, and in order to overcome this, Ricoeur proposes the notion of diagnostic or diagnosed reality.

This diagnostic consists in supplementing phenomenology with other exterior testimonies such as psychoanalysis, which can help us to understand a phenomenon, whenever the former is not able to fulfil its task due to the limitation of its methodological nature (408). Boff also sees a logic of mediations: the socio-analytic testimony, which works with the political, and the hermeneutical one, which is theological. Both are articulated in his "theology of the political."

3.9.2   The hermeneutical task

3.9.2.1   The text.

Boff defines the task of interpretation according to Ricoeur, as a deciphering or "dis-implication" of the symbolic structure of meaning.

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(407) Cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 61.

(408) Cf. P. Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the

This concept is important from a theological perspective, since words declare the language of the sacred through the double meaning of symbols (409). Ricoeur, as we have already seen, defines "text" in a wider sense; texts are written discourses but also dreams, architechtural designs, cultures etc. Boff instead has opted for a definition of the text as the written text only, and he says that this is his position in the "ongoing war of hermeneutics", as described by Ricoeur (410).

Boff's position can be synthesised in Ricoeur's own words: "Interpretation understood as restoration of meaning." (411). The other positions mentioned by Ricoeur in his analysis of the conflict of interpretation are reflection (as a challenge to the Cartesian Ego) and interpretation understood as a reduction of illusion. Boff has clearly taken a romantic position with regard to the restoration of Scriptural meaning, as the task and object of a theological hermeneutic.

3.9.2.2 The hermeneutical circle

Boff attributes the description of his hermeneutic circle of interpretation to Ricoeur, as the French philosopher elaborated his theory from Heidegger.

Involuntary, pp. 373-409.

(409) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., p. 134; also cf. P. Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, chapter 1.

(410) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., p. 133.

(411) Cf. P. Ricoeur, op. cit., chapter 2.

Boff claims that the hermeneutic circle is constituted by dialectic relationships, governed by particular rules of production of meaning. This description refers to the practice of hermeneutics described by Schleiermacher as a "part-whole-part movement", or a constant process of back and forth dialectics, where the beginning of the circle is related to its end (412). As Ricoeur has said, this circularity in the Romanticist thinkers happened in relation to the understanding of the text and the understanding of themselves as interpreters, according to their pre-comprehension of the world (413).

Ricoeur has reformulated the hermeneutic circle eliminating two elements of the Romanticist hermeneutics which are the subjective relation between the intersubjectivity of the author and that of the reader, and the projection of the subjectivity of the interpreter into the reading of the text (414). The hermeneutic circle of Ricoeur is, as we have already seen in chapter 1, a programme of interpretation that connects two discourses, the discourse of the text and that of interpretation with the moment of appropriation which, contrary to a projection of a personal subjectivity, is instead the fusion of the horizons of reader and author. In this way Ricoeur has replied to an epistemological shift produced since Romanticism with a reconceptualisation of the hermeneutic circle.

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(412) Cf. D. Hoy Couzens, The Critical Circle, pp. 2 ff.

(413) Cf. C. Reagan (ed.) The Philosophy of P. Ricoeur, p. 144.

(414) Cf. M. Valdés, Shadows in the Cave, p. 133.

Having established the notion of the hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur as a guide for his analysis, Boff presents a series of paired terms, such as "Word of God-Scripture", and "Present-Past", which dialectical relation he defines as "hermeneutical circles". We will examine this model in detail.

3.9.2.3 "The hermeneutic circles".

Boff's definition of terms in dialectical opposition as hermeneutical circles seems to be organised around certain characteristics of the relation between two concepts, and not what Ricoeur understands by a circle of interpretation. Boff presents five "hermeneutical circles" for consideration, when in reality he is working out some pre-supposition for the circle of interpretation he proposes. To call them "hermeneutic circles" is confusing, because we then tend to identify, at some level, the pair of terms presented (e.g. "present and past") as a text to be interpreted. Obviously, this is not the case. Bearing this in mind, we will proceed to organise Boff's contribution to a theology of the political, from the point of view of authority of the text, semantics, history and narrative.

3.9.3 "Hermeneutic circles" (hermeneutic pre-suppositions)

3.9.3.1 Scripture-Word of God

The two elements which call our attention here are text and authority. As we have said before, Boff is concerned with the axis openness/closure of the text, or freedom of reading/authority of traditions. This tension is

manifested through all Boff's works, and especially in the present one, when he claims that Scripture, the "obligatory and constitutive theoretical resource of any theological process" is to be submitted to the theoretical resources of the church (415). The authority of the Bible is to be taken into account only as read in the church's tradition. It is not clear how Boff later translates the phrase "the church's tradition" into "the living spirit of a living community". In any case, he does not have the spontaneous readings of the CEBs in mind, but the canon of dogmas and tradition of interpretation of the Roman Catholic Church (416).

The word of God, according to Boff, is not to be found in the Scripture nor in the community, but in the dialogue between them; word of God is here a term equivalent to "the teaching of the Apostles" (417). This can be understood as a dialogue between Scripture (mediated by tradition) and the people who read the text. The hermeneutical circle starts then with the mediation of traditions for reading, which seems to have taken the place of the "mind of the author" in Schleiermacher, since it is the traditions which are the referents of interpretation.

3.9.3.2.   Creation and Perception of Meaning

We are still in the axis of freedom of reading/authority of traditions, and

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(415) C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 133.

(416) Cf. C. Boff, Feet-On-The-Ground Theology, p. 51.

(417) Ibid., p. 85.

this time it is manifested through Boff's discussion of creation -as "hermeneutical improvisation"- and perception of meaning -as closure of a text or "semantic positivism"-, both being original concepts from Lévi-Strauss and Ricoeur.

Hermeneutical improvisation is described in terms of a "bricolage." (418). Lévi-Strauss has used the term bricolage in relation to mythical thought, to distinguish it from scientific thought. According to Lévi-Strauss, the mythical discourse is a bricolage because it is basically built up with a "collection of oddments" from anterior social discourses (419), meaning by this the heterogenous meanings and remains of past events. Scientific thought instead works more in the style of engineers than of bricoleurs, that is, using structures and hypotheses and building from them its meaning and results.

As Ricoeur has noted already, Lévi-Strauss does not oppose myth to science because although bricolage brings the fragility of the contingent, it also works as a liberator, in its effort to re-order meaningful events without the restrictions of scientific structures. Linguistically speaking, bricolage represents the diachronic dimension of the text, while science

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(418) "Bricolage" comes from the French bricoleur, a shuffler, "someone who works with his hands and uses dubious means compared to those of a craftsman"; this term comes from C. Lévi-Strauss, The Savage Mind, p. 19. Cf. also P. Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 40 ff.
(419) Cf. C. Lévi-Strauss, op. cit., p. 19.

stands for its synchronicity. These two dimensions are harmonically related in Ricoeur's thought.

Boff uses the term bricolage as distinctively negative, presenting it as a symbol for disorder and utilitarianism, which he defines as the privileging of useful meanings, at the expense of other less relevant but still important meanings. Boff claims that the consequence of a hermeneutical bricolage is plurality or a "riotous carnival of meaning" (420). However, bricolage and improvisation do not seem to be synonomous terms; the bricoleur has a purpose, and can hardly be called an improvisateur. The Babylonian myths of origins that have been used to build Genesis 1, could have been "a collection of oddments" and distorted recollections of past events, but the author of the new myth of origins had a clear purpose of explaining the beginnings of the universe, and conveying a distinctive theological reflection upon the creation of humankind.

The mythical mind works with limited material, and elements that have not been produced, but that are available in the contingent state of a certain historical moment. In any case, a "carnival of meaning" is not necessarily the consequence of mythical thought. On the contrary, myth is "the bearer of possible worlds" and as Ricoeur has pointed out, the univocity of meaning in thought could be more paralysing than a multiplicity, because it does not include the element of choice. Particularly in Latin America, the dangers have always come from the tyranny of univocal interpretation -via

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(420) C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 136.

tradition- and not from the risk of openess to more meaningful options.
Obviously, scientific thought is represented here by Boff as "semantic
positivism", or the attempt to bring into interpretation the criteria of
explanatory coherence and falsifiability that, according to Ricoeur, social
sciences cannot meet (421). The risk of this position is the potential for
dogmatism and further constrictions of positivism.

Boff wants to find a workable relationship between positivism and an
"anarchic reading", which can represent a middle term of interpretation.
Ricoeur has resolved this tension complementing structuralism with other
methods of analysis. This also seems to be the position of Boff related to
the explanation of the text by a complementary use of different methods of
interpretation.

3.9.3.3 Structure and Meaning.

On this point Boff clarifies his position in relation to the moment of
explanation of the text. He agrees with Ricoeur that structuralism has
proved useful in counterbalancing the divinatory methods of Romanticism
with the autonomy of the textual structure, but we must remember here that
Ricoeur argues that structuralism needs to be rectified by the critique of
illusions, that is, the illusion of the source, the author and the

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(421) For the discussion on ideology and positivism in Ricoeur, cf. his
book Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, pp. 233 ff.

addressee. As we have seen, Boff keeps the first two, trying to preserve the original meaning of the Bible as intended and transmitted by tradition. From another perspective, Boff agrees with Ricoeur that meaning comes from the work of the hermeneutical arch of explanation and understanding.

3.9.3.4 Present and Past

Following Ricoeur, Boff claims that the text is open to the world and history, and this is one of the reasons why writing exists, to persist, that is to be read and re-read. Boff is concerned here with history and with the reference of the text. He discards the idea that faith is a referential point, because faith is an element that has been invested in the text; in this moment he does not discuss the point of faith as pre-supposition, assuming perhaps a Bultmannian position wich we have studied already in chapter 2.

Boff finds that the ultimate reference of the Bible is the present moment, as it has been seen in the context of Gadamer's fusion of horizons. Ricoeur has written that there are two moments of production of meaning in the text, the first being related to the author and the second, to the actual reader. The reading community belongs to a tradition of interpretation which is historical, but by the act of interpretation the community "interprets" itself, that is, the present moment (422).

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(422) Cf. R. Barthes; P. Ricoeur; A. Vergote et al., Exégése et Hermenéutique, p. 292.

3.9.3.5 Techné Hermeneutike and Hermeneia.

Boff continues trying to resolve the tension between a fixed meaning, as the result of a positivist interpretative technique, and an arbitrary bestowal of meaning on the text. He considers that the reading community replies to the text from its own context, and that interpretation implies a decision about meaning (or "closure", using a term of Croatto), which excludes other possible readings. It is then in the applicatio of the text, that the meaning is completed and the re-reading of traditions becames actual.

However, the Gadamerian concept of application or Anwendung used by Boff, should not be confused here with the moment of appropriation (Aneignung) from Ricoeur's work. As we have seen in chapter 1, appropriation is more related to praxis from a perspective of suspicion than application, which is not the final part of interpretation but rather a methodological moment related to Gadamer's fusion of horizons (423). It seems though that Boff uses application as synonymous with appropriation without further distinction between the two concepts.

Boff speaks of application as praxis, and as an ethical moment of interpretation. Thus he says that through application "hermeneutics flowers into ethics" (424). If we understand correctly, and by application Boff

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(423) Cf. Chapter one, 1.9.5.

(424) Cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 138.

implies the appropriation of the text (425), where the reader realizes the

textual meaning, this does not necessarily imply a so called ethical

practice. As Ricoeur has said, all ethical intention "arises in the context

of a situation which is already ethically delineated." (426). Ethical

actions depend on choices and structures of values; the history of the

Conquista of Latin America, and the role played by the Roman Catholic

Church in it, speaks about the right appropriation of an interpretation of

the Scriptures, mediated by traditions, and yet, deeply unethical in its

praxis of the dogma concerning the lack of soul of coloured people.

3.9.4 Hermeneutical Models: In search of the circle of interpretation for

a theology of the political.

Before outlining his own hermeneutical proposal, Boff presents two models

currently used in Latin American theology which he considers inappropriate.

The first is the "Gospel/politics" model and the second is the

"correspondence of terms" style of interpretation. these seem to be very

similar, and both are ultimately based on the "concordance" (concordismo)

pattern which Croatto criticises as simplistic (427).

The basic feature of these models of interpretation is the equation of

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(425) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., p. 148.

(426) P. Ricoeur, "The Problem of the Foundation of Moral Philosophy", in

Philosophy Today, Fall 1978. p. 176.

(427) Cf. Chapter three, 3.2.2.

categories. For instance, the Gospel is made to correspond with our modern political situation; Boff finds this proposal vague and dubious, and regrets that it is so widely used in Latin America, for instance in the pattern Scripture/newspaper, or God's Word/history. The historical context of the Scripture is not considered by this model, and the whole exegetical process is submitted to the political tendencies of the reader without any element of self-criticism.

The second model is also simplistic, although it has a degree of sophistication in the comparisons of terms. A typical example says Boff, is the equation exodus/liberation = enslavement of the hebrews/oppression of the people (428). There are other examples in the same pattern: Babylon/Israel = captivity/Latin America and Jesus/community = Christian community/current political context. In all of these examples the historical context of the text is not being taken into account, and the task of hermeneutics is reduced to a pre-defined political result to obtain. Here Boff criticises Fernando Belo's <u>A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark</u>, as an anachronistic account of Jesus, where Christ is presented by Belo as a marxist activist, nineteen centuries before Marx. At the end, these correspondence models are based on a literalist use of the Bible, that liberation theology has already criticised when used by right wing religious groups which, through correspondence models, have produced exegesis supporting the status quo.

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(428) Cf. C. Boff, <u>op. cit.</u>. p. 142.

3.9.4.1 The Correspondence of Relationship Model.

Boff presents his own hermeneutical project as "a relationship of

relationships". He sees in it an alternative model for a theology of the

political, which does not have anything in common with the correlation

models already seen. It is interesting to note that he validates this

method as "the practice of the primitive or apostolic church", and in this

way, Boff introduces his model as part of a community of interpretation, in

the historical tradition of Bible reading throughout centuries (429a).

Apart from that, Boff works in a permanent dialectical tension with the

axis freedom of reading/authority of traditions, which seems to be related

to categories of scientific validation in his hermeneutics.

This correspondence of relationship model considers elements pertaining to

the context in which the different books of the Bible were originally

produced (the Sitz im Leben of the text), and the history of the form and

redaction of the books. Boff stresses the importance of historical

criticism, and especially the Formgeschichte and Redaktionsgeschichte

schools. Boff sees here two important distanciations which have been

produced: the fixation of the canon, and the closure of meaning produced by

tradition. The Bible is in itself an interpretation of events, and puts a

distance between the reader and the "original event" of Jesus. The

commentaries and dogmatic assumption which have been later developed upon

the Scriptures, produce a double separation or distanciation of the reader

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(429a) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., p. 146.

from that original event.

Boff considers the New Testament as a re-reading of the Old, and the whole Bible as a product of tradition; this precise point of the role of the apostolic tradition in interpretation plays, as Boff says, an important part in his correspondence of relationship method. We will describe this model according to the example provided by Boff, before proceeding to its analysis. (429b)

This model is presented in the style of an algebraic formula, where terms are divided, and reduced to a minimum operation which cannot be further divided. The "operation" is a relationship, a term that needs some clarification. At the moment, we will say that Boff uses it as a <u>Sitz in Leben</u> of different elements. This is the basic hermeneutical model elaborated by Boff:

$$\frac{\text{Jesus of Nazareth}}{\text{his context}} = \frac{\text{Christ + Church}}{\text{context of the Church}} = \frac{\text{Church tradition}}{\text{historical context}} = \frac{\text{ourselves (a theology of the political)}}{\text{our context}}$$
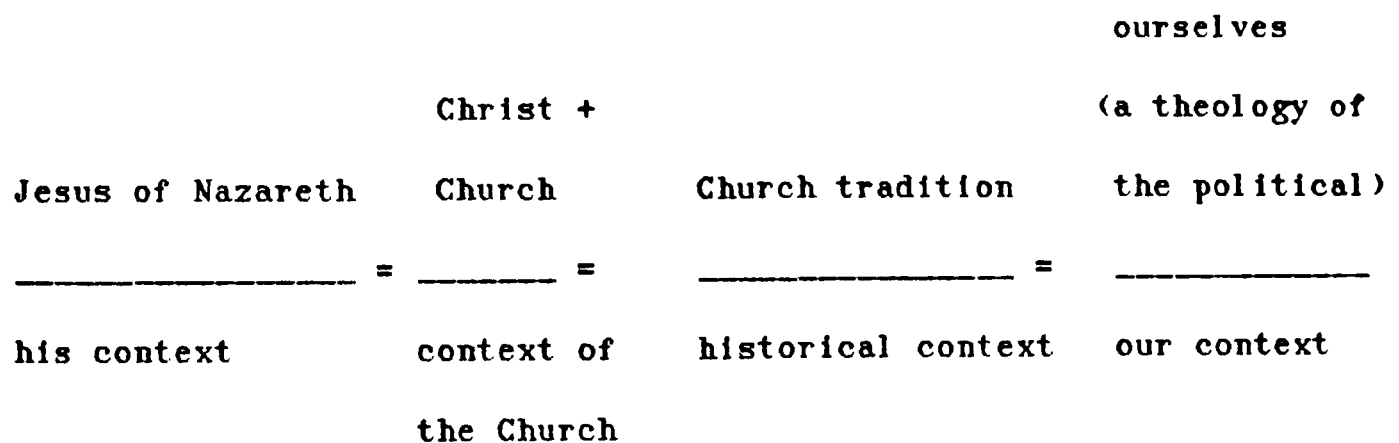
This formula is reduced to:

(429b) For more details about these diagrams, cf. C. Boff, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp. 146 ff.

$$\frac{\text{Scripture}}{\text{its context}} = \frac{\text{ourselves (a theology of the political)}}{\text{our context}}$$

The main elements that we need to study here are 1) Boff's understanding of the operation he calls a "relationship", 2) how the process of "reduction" is produced, and 3) how can we organise such concepts in the hermeneutical circle of interpretation outlined already according to Boff's understanding of Ricoeur's proposal.

3.9.4.1.1 Concept of Relationship.

We find three different definitions of "relationship" in Boff's description of this model of interpretation:

a) Relationship as a <u>Sitz im Leben</u>, which is basically the search for the historical context of an element, for instance Scripture, Jesus, theology, etc. It also implies the use of sociological analysis for the present situation of the church.

b) Relationship as hermeneutical mediation, which follows a chronological pattern of authority. An example of this can be found in the first sequence of terms related to Jesus, which are the (primitive) Church, tradition and theology of the political. In this operation called "reduction", from Jesus

of Nazareth we arrive to ourselves/a theology of the political, through a mediation of history and the church's traditions.

c) Relationship as a connection between message and context. Here the message is first defined as a "vehicle of sense", and later on as "Spirit", in its two connotations of "Holy Spirit" and "style". Context seems to be the socio-political and cultural situation which informs the Sitz im Leben of each first term.

Boff does not explain how he arrives at the "message", an important element of this correspondence of relationship model. The message seems to work as a pre-understanding and a production of meaning taken from the mediations, specifically, the traditions of the church. In general, Boff works in a similar style to Bultmann, if we consider that the German theologian's basic hermeneutical formula could be presented as:

$$\frac{\text{Scripture}}{\text{Mythical Thought}} = \frac{\text{Ourselves}}{\text{Scientific Thought}}$$

This formula also relates contexts, and can be mediated by Existentialism. The particularity of Boff's proposal then, seems to be more related to the introduction of socio-political mediation rather than the element of "relationship" in itself, but apart from that Boff even uses the same

concept of myth as Bultmann: Myth as a lie, and a product of a pre-scientific mentality (430).

3.9.4.1.2 Concept of Operation.

Boff describes an "operation", as the act of searching for an "identity of signification." This identity of signification is specified as "identification of message", and as we have seen before, the concept of message is not explained, neither is it clear how and when we arrived - hermeneutically speaking- to this term.

According to Boff, the message is submitted to a continuous and never ending process. At this point we are reminded of Ricoeur's proposal to postpone the final exegetical result, in order to avoid making a definitive reading of the text which can prematurely close the meaning. Boff is trying to keep the balance of the axis freedom of reading/authority of tradition, in a position of quasi-neutrality between positivism and hermeneutic improvisation. The mediation of tradition is the element that fixes the production of meaning, and yet Boff seems to advocate a new understanding (reading from the present), from the texts that regulate the novelty of interpretation.

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(430) Cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 140.

3.9.4.2 The correspondence of relationship model in practice.

As an example of how these ambiguities of Boff's model of relationships work in practice, we will refer now to an example taken from Boff's book The Bible, the Church and the Poor, which he wrote in collaboration with Jorge Pixley. In this case, Boff presents the following "relationship of relationship" model, built upon Luke 16:19-25. (431)

$$\frac{\text{Lazarus Then}}{\text{His context}} = \frac{\text{Lazarus Today}}{\text{Our context}}$$
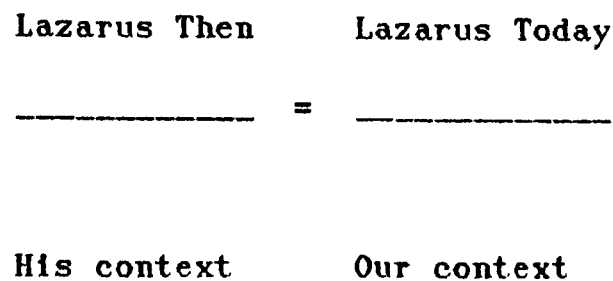
The relationship between Lazarus and his New Testament context is explained in these terms: Poverty is an individual problem, produced by selfishness of the rich, whom Lazarus asks for charity in this world while waiting for his reward in the Kingdom of Heaven. Here Boff reads the Gospel without using historical criticism or any other elements to understand the situation; this works simply as a "fact from the Gospel", and it seems that the message comes from this traditional reading of Luke 16:19-25. Later on, the analysis continues in terms of the search for the concept of poverty in the Bible, both in the Old as in the New Testament. The conclusion of the study is that the category of the option for the poor in liberation theology is not a novelty because "it has a *substantial continuity* with the

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(431) Cf. C. Boff; J. Pixley, The Bible, the Church and the Poor, p. 6.

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great tradition of faith" (Boff's emphasis). (432). At the same time there is a "formal discontinuity" produced with the tradition, due to the tenor of historical expression used.

The relationship between Lazarus and his Third World context, differs in terms of the modern understanding of poverty as a class problem; the ruling classes exploit nations who demand justice and an alternative economic system, which Boff allegorically calls "heaven". Boff is using historical materialism here, and he continues his analysis with a reviewing of economic theories such as functionalism and liberalism.

The identity of signification can be found in the love of God for his people which has not changed through history; perhaps it can be located in the parallel heaven/alternative system that Boff presents us, but since Boff's analysis is concerned with a socio-economic analysis of the situation in Latin America today, the model works as a model of comparisons, a sort of "negative correspondence model", although not a concordismo. The "love as charity" of Luke is contrasted with the "love of long terms relations", or neighbourly love of Ricoeur, this being the acceptable model for our time.

The tradition of the church's interpretation is not challenged in relation to the Scripture, except with the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic

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(432) Cf. C. Boff; J. Pixley, op. cit., p. 117.

Church. Interpreting or "re-reading" the Scriptures in se is not the way Boff chooses to produce an original meaning. At this point it becomes clearer that Boff has resolved his dialectical tension in relation to the tradition of the church, which can be challenged or critically accepted, but there is no "hermeneutics of the present" in the Scriptures.

3.9.5 Boff and Ricoeur: Coincidences and contradictions.

The hermeneutical circle presented by Boff is said to be based on Ricoeur's own proposal (433), but as we have seen some elements of the interpretation theory of the French philosopher are not considered, and some are even contradicted. Boff has taken the following concepts from Ricoeur:

a) A distinction in the general acceptance of the notion of "hermeneutics", as techné and as hermeneia.

b) The acceptance of the via longa or long way of interpretation, mediated by linguistics.

c) The task of interpretation, defined as a deciphering the "double meaning" of the symbolic language, which is constitutive of the religious discourse.

d) The notion of the hermeneutical circle, in which the interpreter has an active participation, putting him/herself as an "active" element of the circle.

e) The relevant concept of the hermeneutical arc, composed by the

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(433) Cf. C. Boff, Theology and Praxis. pp. xxvii and 137.

complementary work of explanation and understanding.

f) A criteriology or convergence of methods, including linguistic theories, such as structuralism, biblical criticism and sociology, is considered necessary for the task of interpretation.

g) The importance of some elements concerning the role of the metaphor in religious language, and the phenomenon of polysemy.

At the same time, these elements are contradicted by Boff's somehow Romantic position of returning to an original message, not from the Scriptures but from some "text of traditions." Although Boff has claimed to have taken a definitive option in the "hermeneutical war", because his definition of text is the written discourse, it is noticeable that he never fixes "the text" as such, and the only references to it that we have are covered by the expression "the tradition of the church." The use of concepts from Lévi-Strauss, who took elements of structuralism into anthropological analysis of primitive cultures, perhaps adds some extra confusion in relation to Boff's concept of text.

The Scripture is perceived by Boff as a threat of closure of meaning; the interpretation of the biblical text is not discussed, and this seems to be a key aspect of his hermeneutics of the political. The message is the message of traditions, from where the production of meaning evolves. It is true that Boff also sees a danger of closure in the traditions, but at the same time, he considers that they challenge us to re-interpret their meaning. The apparent contradictions of the axis, freedom of anarchic reading/positivism, becomes clear once we realise Boff's definition of text. Any element of a hermeneutic of suspicion is developed as in

Segundo's work, from the perspective of historical materialism, and in confrontation with the social doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church.

3.9.5.1 The short way of interpretation.

The Ricoeurian moment of appropriation of the text, is wrongly identified by Boff with Gadamer's applicatio. However, Boff's appropriation of the text does not differ from Ricoeur, except by the fact that in real terms, Boff has taken the short and not the long way of interpretation. The lack of suspicion by the interpreter him/herself, and the assumptions that are not challenged in the process such as the role of traditions, to the exclusion of the Bible are evident in his work.

An example of these elements are found in Boff's book Feet-on-the-ground-Theology. Latin American Christians are divided over the axis of freedom of interpretation/positivism, where the first term can be equated with the "return to the veritas hebraica", and the second, to keeping everything submitted to the authority of the traditions of the (Roman Catholic) Church. The "improvisation ad libitum" that Boff fears, is invariably represented by "the Evangelicals" (a common name given in Latin America to any Christian group of non-Catholic origin, e.g. historic protestantism, pentecostalism, Jehovah's Witnesses etc.), and confronted by the traditions of "the Catholics". Boff denounces the dangers of the free reading of the Bible made by the evangelical poor, as anarchic non-political readings, or right-wing interpretations which perpetuate the status quo. The example of the Catholic poor, repeating traditional prayers to "Santa Pelonia" to cure toothache, is not criticised, but regarded with benevolent eyes, as part of

popular religiosity. There is a lack of suspicion exercised by Boff in relation to the non-neutrality of intransitive consciousness, as Freire could have said, which does not respect either Catholics nor Evangelicals.

3.9.5.2 Scientific "Bricolage".

Our analysis of Boff's hermeneutical circle has brought to the surface elements from the influence of Ricoeur, and distinctive moments where Boff contradicts the French philosopher's theory of interpretation. This happens mainly as a result of the need to keep the pre-suppositions of traditions in a difficult balance with the novelty of biblical interpretation. What Boff has not perceived, is that his hermeneutic circle is at risk of being something he despises: a "bricolage" (Boff's definition, and not Lévi-Strauss). He is trying to open the process of understanding for a theology which sitz im leben is Latin America, in order to understand with fresh eyes the reality of the continent, through interpretation and a relevant praxis. But instead of allowing the Bible to speak a new word, from people's reading of the text and their own culture, Boff is using old materials of tradition, continuously re-arranged in a way related to mythical thought where the risk is non-critical perpetuation of dead meaning. Because Boff sometimes equates the church's traditions with science, we have called his methodology a "scientific bricolage."

The root of the conflict in Boff's hermeneutical praxis lies in the place of traditions in his pre-suppositions, which seem to come from Gadamer's theory. Gadamer gives an unique place in his theory to tradition, claiming that it "has a justification that is outside the arguments of reason"

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(434). Traditions are part of Gadamer's hermeneutics as a necessary continuum for his dialogue between past, present and future. Boff has taken this position, affirming that any hermeneutical practice "supposes ... and takes a position within the flow of traditions" (435), ignoring that, as Eagleton has pointed out, Gadamer's concept of tradition does not consider a history of oppression, neither does it exercise an ideological suspicion upon the corpus of the dogmatic tradition.

Obviously, to refrain from an ideological suspicion upon the history of the church traditions, and to give them a preferential authority in hermeneutics seems to be opposed to liberation theology's purposes. But the contrary is not necessarily an anarchic reading of the Scriptures, because, as Ricoeur has said, the "bracketing off" of the phenomenological process which Boff claims to follow, is a permanent questioning of the conditions in which the knowledge arises. The Heideggerian circle of interpretation also asks for a submission of the reader to the text, allowing it to interrogate and challenge the interpreter; it is from these elements that the praxis can then be liberated from non-pertinent interpretations.

3.9.5.3 Literacy and change.

In 1963, when Freire was called by the Brasilian Episcopal Conference of

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(434) Quoted by T. Eagleton, Literary Theory, p. 73.

(435) C. Boff, Theology and Praxis, p. 139.

the Catholic Church to teach the leaders of what was going to be known as Basic (or Base-Level) Ecclesial Communities, he established the phenomenological principle of no differentiation between being and meaning. Freire knew that interpretation theories are closely linked to ideological values and political systems, and that a new reading which could break with the domination of meaning was necessary to start a process of liberation in Latin America. Since that moment, the work of the Catholic and Evangelical groups in the continent has been associated with literacy campaigns following the principles of Freire, where the students educate themselves in community, re-discovering the alphabet and their own world at the same time. From this movement a lot of fresh insights about people's religiosity were incorporated in the churches, known later as "the popular church".

Boff somehow seems to depart from this position, seeing in the church a mediating role, like the one assumed by Catholicism during the middle ages, when reading was replaced by looking at stained-glass windows in cathedrals (436), and the interpretation of the Bible was the sole responsibility of the priesthood. Boff even suggests that the church should continue the people's oral tradition without introducing "certificates in reading and writing" (437). As Boff says, the Brazilian Literacy Movement is not a prerequisite for access to salvation.

Although it is true that salvation does not depend on the degree of

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(436) The Biblia pauperum; cf. C. Boff, Feet-On-the-Ground-Theology, p. 29.
(437) Cf. C. Boff, op. cit., p. 28.

education of the believer. Boff seems to be very naïve in his project of a theology of the political which does not reflect on relations of domination and exploitation produced in Latin America as a result of illiteracy. The fact that Jesus did not demand a reading certificate from the apostles (438), is used by Boff to perpetuate the structure of the church where the priesthood is made up of a large proportion of white men, mostly European, and this happens in a black country like Brazil. People's marginalisation on every ground, including education, is the main reason for their exclusion at the levels of responsibility of their own church.

It is clear that while the production of meaning is submitted to traditions of interpretation in the church, we will be perpetuating illiteracy, or the chronic inability to process information which opposes any practice for change in Latin America. As Freire has said, the church then perpetuates its role of "shelter for the masses", where the poor can be satisfied in their feelings of frustration, which arise from the "fatalistic" consciousness of the oppressed. The church becomes allied to the culture of silence and subordination, which has alienated the poor in Latin America. (439). Obviously, this proposal of dependence is opposed to the ideals of liberation and option for the poor that Boff declares in other works. The hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur has been Boff's inspiration, but somehow it

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(438) Boff's example; cf. op. cit., p. 28. The example is anachronistic, because Jesus demanded knowledge of the Scripture, which required study.
(439) Cf. P. Freire, Las Iglesias, la Educación y el Proceso de Liberación Humana en la Historia, p. 31.

seems that he has not taken the most radical elements of his theory, producing as a result, a hybrid project of interpretation which we have called "scientific _bricolage_."

In the next chapter we will continue this reflection on Boff, Croatto, and Segundo's in the light of the theory of Ricoeur which has been their inspiration. We will then give our final conclusions and will make some suggestions pertinent to the hermeneutical task of the Christian Church in Latin America both now and in the future.

Summary

Phenomenology has exercised a vast influence in liberation theology, mainly amongst Roman Catholic thinkers. The main points of influence of a phenomenological hermeneutics in liberation theology are the following: 1) The Bible as a text is considered to become "alive" only in relation to the interest of the readers who appropriate its meaning. 2) The re-reading of the text has replaced the author's intention, as in the Romantic hermeneutics. 3) The emphasis on openness and on the phenomenon of plurivocity in the text has been incorporated in the reading of the Bible.

J. Severino Croatto.

Croatto uses Ricoeur's idea of Biblical hermeneutics as part of a regional hermeneutics, but also as "an unique affair." He adopts the long way of hermeneutics and in his search for a Ricoeurian "convergence of methods", Croatto uses historical criticism, alongside other perspectives. He takes Ricoeur's criticism of Bultmann and the New Hermeneutics. One important point in Croatto is the dialectic text-truth, which gives the criteria of veracity of the text. In his case, such criteria is given through the "right actions of liberation" produced by God in the Bible.

The problem with this approach is that it can lead the reader into two positions, already rejected by Ricoeur and by Croatto: a) to come back to Schleiermacher's psychological method and b) to produce a comparative exegesis (Concordismo). Croatto elaborates an alternative method, which he calls Sintonía (or "tuning in" of the Scriptures with the reality). The Sintonía is worked upon Gadamer's "Fusion of Horizons" concept. Sintonía is the relation between the horizon of the consciousness of liberation in the Bible, and the horizon of liberation in Latin America. Another element from Gadamer which is very important in Croatto's work, is the "history of the effect". According to this concept, there are two worlds related to the act of interpretation: the world of the text (as Ricoeur describes it), and our present world. The first belongs to the linguistic level, but the second to a level of praxis. In this level of praxis, one event of liberation relates to another, and the narrated events share their meaning with the critical moments of the Latin American readers.

One of the key contributions from Ricoeur to liberation theology, and especially through the elaborations of Croatto, is the relation between myth and ideology. Croatto advocates a demythologisation programme, based on Ricoeur's de-mystification proposal. It does not desymbolise the Scripture, but returns to the original power of the mythical narrative, and encourages the production of new meaning from the Scriptures.

Juan Luis Segundo.

Segundo has worked on a hermeneutical circle of suspicion, elaborating upon Ricoeur's analysis on Nietzsche and Marx. He uses a phenomenological approach in his work, through the use of the epoché, and considers that the experience of reality (vivencia) gives a new depth to knowledge.

The circle of suspicion is organised into four steps:

1) We need to consider with suspicion our own manner of experiencing reality.

2) We should then extend such insights into the ideological superstructure.

3) We then became suspicious of current biblical interpretation.

4) Finally, we start a new hermeneutical process with the new elements at our disposal.

From Ricoeur's work on Freud, Segundo elaborates elements of the "master-slave" dialectic into his circle of suspicion. To unmask the structures of oppression requires hermeneutic suspicion applied to the "I" who interprets. Segundo also takes into account the Ricoeurian analysis on the early work of Marx, concerned with the relation of labour and alienation. The dialogue between faith and ideology is part of Segundo's anthropological project. Faith and ideology are broad categories related to the objective of human existence, which Segundo calls "happiness", and the way to achieve it. Segundo's preoccupation with the right methodology, as "ideology", is the core of his hermeneutical circle. Segundo's elaboration of ideological suspicion based in Ricoeurian thought, is partial. Ricoeur developed the positive and negative aspects of ideology, and even a dialectic of otherness, which is not taken into consideration by Segundo. However, liberation theology has worked on a hermeneutic of suspicion which follows Ricoeur, thus superseding some of the early reflection from Segundo

Clodovis Boff.

Boff acknowledges the necessity of taking the long way of interpretation, and highlights two elements from Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle: first, the reflection and self-criticism of the interpreters, and second, the incorporation of the criticism of religion made by the three "Masters of Suspicion". Boff is interested in Ricoeur's concept of diagnosis, as part of an interdisciplinary approach for a project of a theology of the political.

Boff defines hermeneutics according to Ricoeur's distinctions about the term. He considers the role of distanciation in hermeneutics, and the necessity to decode the present text, in order to re-appropriate the original sense of the written message. This last point puts Boff nearer to the position of Dilthey or Schleiermacher, than to that of Ricoeur. The "hermeneutics circles" from Boff are pairs of terms in dialectical oppositions. They work as pre-suppositions rather than interpretative paths. In all the "hermeneutical circles" that Boff develops, we find a permanent tension between "anarchy" (or freedom) of interpretation, and "authority" (or the role of traditions in the church). "Hermeneutical improvisation" is a permanent element of fear in Boff's work, and he uses the word bricolage to describe such a process.

The point is that Boff is afraid of the multiplicity of the discourse, although in Latin America the dangers have always come from univocal (and dictatorial) interpretation of the reality. Boff criticises the hermeneutical model which makes easy parallels between the Gospel and the present political situation; he has a very similar position to Croatto's criticism of concordismos. However, his own method (called "the correspondence of relationship") still keeps elements from a model of comparison, and is similar to Bultmann's work. Finally, we can say that although Boff has been inspired by Ricoeur, he has not taken the most radical elements from his theory. His concern with hierarchies and the dangers of ordinary Christians reading the Bible are opposed to the principles of liberation theology.

CHAPTER FOUR

L' IMAGINAIRE AS RUPTURE

Reflections and Conclusions

"Cultures create themselves by telling stories of their own past. The danger is ... that this reaffirmation can be perverted, usually by monopolistic elites, into a mystificatory discourse... The symbols of a community become fixed and fetishized; they serve as lies. Over against this, there exists the imaginaire of rupture, a discourse of utopia which remains critical of the powers."

Paul Ricoeur. (440)

Part I.

4. The influence of Ricoeur on liberation theology.

In chapter three we have seen how three important theologians from Latin America have developed their methodologies from Ricoeur's interpretation theory. In this final chapter, we will reflect on the contribution of Ricoeur to liberation theology in general, and in particular in the way that Croatto, Segundo and C. Boff have appropriated the French philosopher's theory. Liberation theology has elaborated upon many

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(440) P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney, Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers, p. 29.

elements from Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle, sometimes even to the point

of departing considerably from it, but at the same time, the hermeneutics

of liberation has also made a contribution to the Ricoeurian proposal.

Our thesis is that Ricoeur has contributed to liberation theology in three

main areas, regarding 1) the identity of the Latin American people, 2) the

search for what Ricoeur calls a "positive utopia" and 3) the praxis of

change in the continent. We use the word 'identity' here as Gutiérrez does,

in the sense of "the opposite to alienation" (441). These three areas are

related to each other through a key element of Ricoeur's hermeneutical

thought: l'imaginaire as rupture (442). According to Ricoeur, l'imaginaire

(a conglomerate of symbolic socio-politic discourses belonging to a

community) functions as the heritage of a nation; it fulfils the role of

legitimization of discourse, and is related to the national sense of

identity. However, sometimes it can work as a 'subversive' element,

introducing criticisms to a univocal discourse, and intervening actively in

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(441) Cf. G. Gutiérrez, "Entre las Calandrias" in Páginas, 100, p. 103.

(442) The French noun *imaginaire* refers to the content of the collective

imagination as distinct from the process. Paul Ricoeur in R. Kearney,

Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers, uses the phrase "the

imaginaire of rupture", but he explains it as the disruptive function of

the *imaginaire*, as opposed to its function as reaffirmation. (Cf. R.

Kearney, op. cit., pp. 24-9). Also cf. P. Ricoeur Lectures on Ideology and

Utopia, p. 266.

the process of creation and renewal of every culture.

In the first part of this chapter then, we will reflect on Ricoeur's contribution to the methodology of liberation theology, in relation to these three areas; in the second part, we will establish which Ricoeurian elements have most influenced the analysis of Croatto, Segundo and C. Boff, while considering the originality of their own proposals. Finally, we will demonstrate how liberation theology has also contributed to the hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur, providing an unique space in Latin America for the moment of appropriation and praxis of the interpretative process.

4.0.1 In search for the Latin American identity.

"He came yellowish, broken, without even a Chulo (a traditional hat). He came back with the same clothes, but with God in his eyes... -Which God? How do you know?- God is hope, God is courage. He came unpu (shrunken), ill, bent down. He left firm, steady as an eagle, like a young man."
José Maria Arguedas. (443)

Latin America has its cogito blessé, broken. Arguedas, the indigenista writer from Perú who inspired the work of Gutiérrez with his thought, wrote

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(443) J. M. Arguedas, "Todas las Sangres", in J. M. Arguedas, Obras Completas, IV, p. 413.

in his famous novel Todas las Sangres about an anonymous indio, who symbolically represents his nation, Perú. The indio is the symbol of the broken people, ill, subjugated (unpu) and poor. The discovering of God as a liberator (emphasised by the question 'Which God?'), is then equivalent to a self discovery. The cogito blessé of Perú, the broken thought of centuries of alienation produced by the Conquista and colonization, finds in God, "its original truth", in Ricoeur's words.

Such original truth seems to be related in Latin America to the Christian faith, and to the symbolic universe of the church's rituals and ceremonies. Dussel, in a study concerning the broken identity of the continent, has established two main breaking points in the history of Latin America: the first, produced by the Hispanic Conquista, and the second, in the XIX Century, by neo-colonialist structures, which have been responsible for the culture of dependence in Latin America (444).

The reason why the Latin American cultural ethos has suffered a process of disintegration and assimilation, has been the profound identification established between the Christian faith, and a specific external model of culture and civilization. This has produced a state of "disproportion" in which the Latin American people live, because, as Ricoeur might say, they do not coincide with themselves. It means that the "self knowledge" of Latin America is caught between the self justification of its faults and

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(444) Cf. E. Dussel, América Latina, Dependencia y Liberación. pp. 30 ff.

the lack of understanding of its possibilities.

For Ricoeur, there is only one way to heal the cogito _blessé_, through the long route of interpretation. The use of the hermeneutical circle and the work of a criteriology which has been incorporated into the theology of liberation principally by the analysis of Croatto, Segundo and Boff, has produced a better understanding of the possibilities of freedom and the responsibility of Christians in the process.

The broken identity of Latin America is due to a lack of understanding of its original truth, and is closely related to what Freire calls a false consciousness. In order to find the real subject (or addressee) of liberation theology, Croatto, Segundo, Boff and many others have been using a methodological and multidisciplinary approach, or criteriology, as suggested by Ricoeur. The work of a criteriology is important in order to recognise the limitations of the theological proposal in Latin America, where the multiplicity of meanings in the biblical text is accentuated by the cultural diversity of the people; at the same time, poverty and chronic violence seem to have common roots, and need a careful socio-politic mediation.

Following Ricoeur, Latin American theologians have tried to rescue their "discourse about God" from an absolutist discursive model. In order to do this, it has been necessary to consider other cultural texts alongside the Bible, and to study the work of myths and symbols.

Ricoeur's theory of myths is of particular relevance to the quest for identity in Latin America. According to his thought, the principal function of a myth is to integrate a community, but due to the destruction of the national ethos by the Conquista and colonization, which dissolved the religious and socio-economic systems, the national languages, science, culture, family structures etc, Latin America has lost many traditional myths, which can be found sometimes partially integrated in the syncretistic Christianity of the continent.

4.0.2 The place of the collective memory in liberation theology.

One important point from Ricoeur, which has contributed to the theology of liberation, is the challenge of the 'narrative order' (usually imposed by the dominant powers of a nation, such as the historians, for instance), and the search for what he calls recollections. This collective memory can be gathered from oral traditions, old sayings of the people, gestures, dances, etc, but also from the surplus of meaning which can be obtained from the ruins of the monuments of the past, and the geographical "signs" of the colonization. For instance, the location of the capital cities in Latin America, founded near ports and the construction of railway lines without internal connections but directed only to the ports, tell us of the industrial history of the continent. From a religious perspective, the images of Christ as studied by Míguez Bonino, and the worship of the black Virgin Mary (although the images have been covered with silver to produced the illusion of whiteness), are important elements in understanding the Latin American identity, through the interpretation of its symbolic universe.

The collective memory in Latin America can also be found in the social institutions and the design of townships, and in the poor people's language which carries remnants of a different grammatical structure (Quechua, Aymará, Guaraní etc.). We conclude then that by the use of a criteriology as suggested by Ricoeur, the real man and woman whose identity has been denied by a process of absolutism and absorption into a different system, can be rediscovered again. This criteriology means the dialogue of liberation theology with different disciplines, such as politics, sociology, anthropology etc.

It is interesting to recall here, how Arguedas from his cathedra chair in the University of San Marcos, in Lima, Perú, started a research into the Quechua myths: the myth of Adaneva; Achiqué and the Inca king, Inkarrí, etc, all of them very important in understanding how the people perceived their reality. For instance, the myth of Inkarrí explains how God created two humanities; the first (pre-hispanic) was imperfect, and needed to be destroyed to create a better, second humanity (post hispanic), which is associated with the birth of culture. Liberation theology, incorporating to its discourse the richness of traditions, oral poetry and legends, not only tries to understand the culture of the people whom it is addressing, but to contribute to the identity and self-knowledge of the continent.

The healing process of the cogito blessé starts, precisely, there. The inferiority and marginalisation of the people of the Andean region, for instance; their characteristic silence and sadness, needs to be related, to the mythical knowledge of being part of a first humanity destroyed by God due to its imperfections, and replaced by an Hispanic one, which has proved

to be the dominant force of the rest of Latin American history. As the Hispanic culture is associated with Christianity in the Continent, the task of the theologian is to discover elements of subjugation brought to the continent by the Church, and to revise the symbolic structure of the ecclesial communities, and any reading of the Bible, which still perpetuates them.

4.0.3 Tradition and the re-creation of meaning.

Ricoeur considers that the major contribution of Lévi-Strauss has been to discover how certain societies, which he calls "cold", never change their symbolic structures, while in others societies (called "hot"), there is a continuing process of reinterpretation (and re-creation) of their mythical universes. In accordance with that, we can say that Latin American society belongs to the second group, because its symbolic system has changed in relation to the challenges of history. In the same way, the texts of the church (the Bible in this century, and before that, the rituals, festivities, etc.) have been reinterpreted according to the readings from the realidad.

When Ricoeur speaks about the role of tradition in the hermeneutical process, he is refering precisely to this process of reinterpretation. "Tradition" has been defined by the French philosopher as "a diachronic process of reinterpretation" (445), and this is the same concept that

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(445) P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney Dialogues with Contemporary Continental

liberation theology uses. Tradition is then to be considered as part of the hermeneutical process; it provides the material considered in the moment of guessing, which, as we have seen, is a communitarian, shared process.

The community participate in this process by fulfilling a socially creative role, developing their own myths. The interpretative work of liberation theology has found in the study of symbols what Ricoeur calls the Lebenswelt (following Husserl), the "world of life" belonging to a pre-reflexive stage of knowledge, and the foundation of language. Gutiérrez, in a recent analysis of Arguedas' novels, has pointed out the importance of Andean symbols of "dirty" and "clean", which seem to be intimately close to a crisis of national identity; as such, they function as fundamental symbols, related to "renewal of national identity" and "alienation from cultural roots" (446).

Gutiérrez considers popular expressions such as "to clean my soul" (limpiar mi alma), and "coming back to my being" (volver a mi ser), as expressions of the natives experience of alienation in the cities, and the need to go back, even briefly, to their life and customs in the mountains. According to this analysis, "clean", as the opposite of "dirty", is related to love and forgiveness but also to the courage to denounce the injustices suffered by the people. The concept of the prophetic role of the church in Latin America has been elaborated upon such symbols, belonging to the people's

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Thinkers, p. 25.

(446) G. Gutiérrez, "Entre las Calandrias", in Páginas, 100, pp. 91 ff.

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own symbolic universe.

The hermeneutical task of reinterpreting the texts of the Latin American reality also implies the distinguishing between myths and mystifications. Ricoeur's approach to myths is exempt of uncritical naïvety; on the contrary, it encourages the use of a creative imagination, which can challenge the myth without falling into the error of de-symbolising its structure. According to Ricoeur, demythologising should not become a reification process. Myths and symbols, have a tendency to become "fixed and fetishized", and uncritical of dominant structures (447). Even the Bible has acquired a prescriptive order (or "exemplary", according to Ricoeur). However, the structure of narrativity in Ricoeur's theory establishes that the task of narrative is ambiguous: in a way, it is trying to organise the past, and thus, contributing to the building of a community's identity, but from another perspective, it is trying to fix a horizon of the future. The act of repetition of stories has the double function of closing the past, but also of projecting a future utopia.

4.0.4 The community as the social agent of creation.

This role of closure and cultural creation is not the task of an individual, but of the community, and specifically of l'imaginaire of a nation. L'imaginaire organises the cultural heritage of a nation, and is responsible for the prescriptive form of its sacred texts and institutions.

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(447) Cf. P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney, op. cit., pp. 29 ff.

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But it also has an "opening" function, and as such it can act as a deterrent to reductionist tendencies, as a subversive element with the power to dynamically re-symbolise the founding elements of a society. This is what Ricoeur has called "l'imaginaire" as *rupture*, "a discourse of utopia" of which the main function is to be critical of the dominant structures and to renew the prescriptive role of the Scriptures (448).

L'imaginaire as rupture has helped Latin American theologians to break away from Eurocentric readings of the Bible, and to confront social institutions sanctioned by the church, which were used to subjugate people. At the same time, what Ricoeur calls the "shared imaginaire" of the community started to reinterpret Christian symbols which shaped their universe, and to project them into the future community built utopia. The questioning of the "I" who interprets has been the hermeneutical key that liberation theology has incorporated in its project. The Latin American theologian, and the ordinary member of a church, need to ask who is the "I" who is interrogating the text, and therefore expose his/her own narcissistic attitudes.

This is another important contribution from Ricoeur to the search for the Latin American identity; the process of unmasking the exegete's identity, not as a mere individualist act, but as part of his/her own community of reference. L'imaginaire as rupture, working as a bridge between the telos and the arche of a community, is the element which has the power to

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(448) Cf. P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney, op. cit., p. 29.

maintain a tension between tradition and creation. In this process of community re-creation, the interpreters are not external observers, but are active participants in the work of self-knowledge. At the end, only in the community, can the exegete give an "I" to the "Ego" who interprets.

4.1 Praxis.

"The past is not passé.

Ricoeur (449).

4.1.1 Narrative and action.

Ricoeur has shown the interdependence between praxis and symbolic structures. Every human action has already been represented in works of narrative (of historical or fictional nature), and also in religious systems whose symbolic universes are in themselves reinterpretations of narrative based upon a collection of memorable actions. The idea of the pre-figuration of a praxis of liberation in a narrative, which can be reinterpreted, acted, and resymbolised again, describes the eisegetical process of liberation theology, as described, for instance by Croatto. The selection of the Exodus narrative, has provided Latin America with a symbolic pre-figuration of the liberative process, which, at the same time, has been reappropriated incorporating elements from the peoples' experience.

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(449) P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney, op. cit., p. 28.

The pre-figuration of praxis combined with the theory of the prescriptive
tendency of narrativity, has forced liberation theologians to demythologise
the traditional interpretation of the Bible in Latin America, whose roots
are related to the Conquista and colonization of the continent.
Christianity in Latin America still reflects elements of oppression and
naïve consciousness: the superiority of the white man, of the language of
the Conquistadores over the traditional languages of the natives, the
dismissal of Amerindian values, and the encouragement of attitudes of
resignation and passivity amongst the poor.

4.1.2 Events and metaphors of liberation.

Ricoeur considers that human actions suffer a process of "metaphorization",
in which the meaning of the events are inscribed in narratives, cultural
traditions and norms of the society. Even monuments, and other "texts" such
as traditional dances, rituals and ceremonies, give the reader or observer
the opportunity to perceive reality through the mediation of the literary,
the political, the religious and the scientific spheres. However, as
Ricoeur stresses, the reading should remain "open", that is, ready to break
established codes if necesary, in order to produce a new interpretation of
reality, and thus a new action. As we have already seen, l'imaginaire as
rupture already has this function in relation to the prescriptive life of a
society; now we can see that it also has an important role "liberating" the
praxis of freedom of a community.

Following Heidegger, Ricoeur has said that beyond a human discourse there
is a project of being-in-the-world. Such a project becomes fixed in an

action through a kind of objectivisation process, very similar to the one suffered by an oral discourse when it is written down. In complex actions, as in the composition of any narrative, there are effects which escape from the author's original intention, and whose meaning can be actualized or re-enacted in different social contexts. As Ricoeur has said, "the text rejuvenates itself" permanently (450). The hermeneutic function of distanciation in relation to praxis, helps us to understand that actions are not unnconnected amongst themselves, but belong to a historical tradition and to the social creativity of a community.

The study of the dialectic between praxis and symbolic structures, is one of Ricoeur's major contributions to the theology of liberation. Through his work on myth and action, Ricoeur has demonstrated how important is the idea that human consciousness is mediated through mythical expressions and symbolic structures. Latin American theology has been working on what Ricoeur calls the analysis of the constitution of the "imaginary nucleus" of culture, which is related to the sense of identity of a community.

The imaginary nucleus is the conglomerate of what constitutes culture. It works as a "totality", a symbolic system which expresses the economic, religious and politic order. The way to discover this nucleus (which Ricoeur also terms "hidden") is by means of the discourses of the society but also by its praxis. According to Ricoeur, this nucleus is constituted by a conglomerate of foundational myths, which influence the self-

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(450) Cf. P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney, op. cit., p. 30.

understanding of the society and the way it organises its institutional life. By discovering the imaginary nucleus, the praxis of a society becomes liberated from the prescription of the dominant elites, due to a deeper understanding of the process of symbolization of national identity (451).

Theology of liberation has two approaches to its search for the imaginary nucleus. First, through the study of the symbolic foundation of the culture of poverty, and second by the use of a criteriology (convergence of methods), analysing different aspects of Latin American society with the resources of the Social Sciences. The study of popular cultures, re-discovering primary symbols of the society, has been done by theologians such as Melano Couch, Aurora Lapiedra and Dussel. Melano Couch, in her article Culture of Poverty or Culture of Dependency? (452) analyses what she calls the diglottic phenomena (diglosia) of Latin America in the following terms. In Latin America several languages are used at the same time, but they are not translatable. If so, we would be able to speak of "bilingualism", but in reality, these languages are in mutual conflict because some represent the dominant culture and others, the dominated. The search for the hidden nucleus, requires the use of the circle of interpretation of Ricoeur, because the broken identity of the people, and

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(451) Cf. "Universal Civilization and National Cultures", in P. Ricoeur, History and Truth.

(452) Cf. B. Melano Couch, "Cultura de Pobreza o Cultura de Dependencia?", in I.S.E.D.E.T., Los Pobres, pp. 183 ff.

the "dis-organization" of life, are related to destruction and subjugation of the native languages (deslenguamiento) (453).

Apart from the pre-hispanic myths, the study of Christian rituals in Latin America, such as processions, celebrations of "The day of the dead" (Día de los muertos), and multiple expressions of syncretism, such as the popular worship of the 'Bandit-Saints' (Los Santos Bandidos), 'The Saint of Death' (San la Muerte), etc. also deserve to be carefully studied. In this sense, the Peruvian theologian Aurora Lapiedra, working on the spirituality of the Andean region, is a pioneer of a theology in search of the mythical nuclei of the people of the Andes (454).

4.1.3 The mythical nucleus of the poor.

Liberation Theology has taken from Ricoeur a "panchronic" approach for the understanding of social phenomena, that is, working at the same time in a synchronic and diachronic dimension. Ricoeur has established that myths can be distorted, or carry a selective memory, which can make of them mere deviant aspects of the foundational myths of the country. However, as the mythical nucleus is always working in the present moment, to ignore or to interpret it at a naïve level could be dangerous; for instance, racial prejudices and extreme forms of subjectivism which sometimes pervade

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(453) Cf. B. Melano Couch, op. cit., p. 206.

(454) Cf. A. Lapiedra, "Religiosidad Popular y Mujer Andina", in Cuadernos de Teología, vol. vii, 3, 1986, pp. 169-76.

history, can easily arise. Because of the relation between praxis and symbolic structures, liberation theology has worked with l'imaginaire as rupture, in order to discriminate between genuine and deviant myths. and the category used to do such discriminatory work, is the concept of liberation. In this, we remember what Ricoeur has said: "Only those myths are genuine which can be reinterpreted in terms of *liberation*" (455).

From this perspective then, the theme of the "option for the poor" is a contribution to the search for a mythical nucleus of Latin America. The poor are the subject of their own liberation; from their experiences, the praxis of freedom can be construed. The use of the Bible in the theology of liberation also has the task of finding this nucleus, and as such creating a new model of action. The Old Testament book of Exodus has been chosen because there is a coincidence of 'memories' between the Israelite narrative and the chronicles of the conquered Amerindians, who also elaborated stories of escape from oppression, such as the Guaraní legend of "the land without suffering" (La tierra sin males). The Roman Catholic Church has recently incorporated the memory of this myth in a popular mass called Misa de la tierra sin males. As Ricoeur said, "the question is not to try to repeat the past, but to try to find our roots, in order to be able to create something new." (456).

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(455) P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers, p. 40.

(456) P. Ricoeur, "Universal Civilisation and National Cultures", in History and Truth, p. 275.

The interdependence between the symbolic system and the praxis of liberation in Latin America also means that the church must assume a critical role for Christianity in the continent, and a desire to establish a more effective dialogue with native cultures. Only by a rediscovering of the symbolic universe of the continent can the process of liberation and freedom be accomplished, because as we have seen, it is closely related to the search for national identity. However, such work should not be confined to Latin America, but must have the horizon of humanity as a whole, because liberation according to Ricoeur, cannot be exclusive to one group of nations (457). One interesting implication of this is the necessity of establishing a genuine dialogue between liberation theology and European theology. The real project of Latin American theology can only be achieved in co-operation with the praxis (action and reflection) of the churches of the rest of the world.

4.2 A positive model of utopia.

"The memorial dimension of Liberation Theology is essential, for it gives direction and continuity to the utopian projection of the future, thus functioning as a garde-fou against irresponsible or uncritical futurism."
Paul Ricoeur (458)

Ricoeur's contribution to the elaboration of the concept of utopia in

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(457) Cf. R. Kearney, op. cit., p. 40.

(458) Ibid., p. 30.

liberation theology is manifested in two areas: first, in the relation
between utopia and efficacy, and second, in the integrative role of utopia
in a divided community.

4.2.1 Utopia and efficacy

Ricoeur's work on the concept of utopia comes from his reflection about
history and ideology. As we will see, l'imaginaire as rupture is again the
key element which provides utopia with a dynamic movement. The unification
of history, due to the result of the acceptance of the model of progress in
the XVIII Century, has resulted, according to Ricoeur, in the unification
of our horizon of expectancy, and thus, of utopia. As a consequence of
that, there is a chronic disconnection between our historical experience
(for instance, our everyday political life) and the utopian horizon, and a
difficulty in conceiving such a horizon of expectancy as something
concrete. In other words, utopia has become inefficacious, and as such
characterized by mystification.

The proposal from Ricoeur is to return to the polycentrism of our everyday
reality, recreating the concept of "histories", and concretising the
community's utopia which needs to be built by the action of the social
imagination. From this we can infer that only the community can fix its
horizon of expectancy, and design the paths towards it. An utopia without
means for its realization is dangerous, and equivalent to what Segundo
calls "a faith without ideology", and Míguez Bonino, "a faith in search of

efficacy" (459).

Segundo seems to use the term "faith" as equivalent to "utopia" in Ricoeur, associating the term with the future where freedom and justice will be established. Segundo has also used the term "utopia", but with the meaning of Ricoeur's concept of "negative utopia", that is without possibilities of being realized (460). In this sense, we can affirm that "faith" for Segundo is Ricoeur's concept of "positive utopia", which requires two components: a path designed by the community of reference in order to make the utopia concrete, and second, a mythopoetic nucleus, submitted to a process of demystification. As Ricoeur has said that a myth is genuine only through the presence of liberative symbolism, we can infer that an utopia is negative when the shared imagination which constructed it has become fetishized, and justifies any form of present oppression while hoping for a future liberation of humankind. In this case, according to Ricoeur, an ideology takes the place of the utopia.

Gutiérrez has also elaborated his concept of utopia based on Ricoeur's concept, although he also brings to his reflection the thought of Freire, and Paul Blanquart amongst others. Using the same basic concept, Gutiérrez calls the negative utopia an "evasion from reality" which, as Ricoeur affirms, is a deceitful escapism because it is not related to the concrete

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(459) Ricoeur calls an utopia without realization a "schizophrenic discourse"; Cf. P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney, op. cit. p. 30.

(460) Cf. J L. Segundo, El Cristianismo, Una Utopía?, vol. 1.

possibilities of a historical moment (461). The fact that a positive utopia is neither unachievable nor static, has made Gutiérrez reflect on two elements from the conscientization process studied by Freire: denunciation and annunciation. The horizon of expectancy is a denunciation of the present order, and as such requires the active participation of the community who announce the new order of existence which constitutes the utopia.

Somehow it seems that annunciation for Freire is a similar concept to l'imaginaire as rupture; it implies a change of consciousness produced by the re-reading of reality by a community, through a mediation process of admiration (462). At the same time, Freire describes the positive utopia as "prophetic" (463). The prophetic function of the church in Latin America is then a concept closed to Ricoeur's positive utopia and the dynamic of l'imaginaire as rupture, because it announces the horizon of the "not yet", denouncing (or demystifying) the present, by means of a process of

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(461) Cf. G. Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 136; also P. Ricoeur, From Text to Action, pp. 320 ff.

(462) Freire uses the Portuguese term ad-miraçao; originally from Husserl, this concept works in a very similar way to the hermeneutical function of distanciation. Cf. P. Freire, Pedagogía del Oprimido, p. 90. Also E. Husserl, Notas Relativas a una Fenomenología Pura y una Filosofía Fenomenológica, p. 79.

(463) Cf. P. Freire, Las Iglesias, la Educación y el Proceso de Liberación Humana en la Historia, pp. 39 ff.

social awareness and understanding of the complexities of the text of reality. The concept of utopia in the theology of liberation is also a hermeneutic presupposition for the reading of the Bible, especially in relation to the integrative role of the horizon of expectations, as Ricoeur has developed the concept.

4.2.2 The integrative role of utopia.

While ideology fulfills the necessity of confirming the past (because for Ricoeur both ideology and utopia are fruits of the social *imaginaire*), utopia remains open to the future. However, for Ricoeur, a positive utopia depends on the balance between the ideology and tradition. This point is also related to Ricoeur's criticism of the lack of reference in Structuralism (464). The reference of a text works as ideology and also as tradition.

An utopia based on the concept of tradition of Ricoeur, functions as a point of reunion for the community, because it works from the common symbolic heritage of the social *imaginaire* and produces a commitment towards the future horizon of expectancy, with the memory of the past (the collective memory). Gutiérrez took this aspect of utopia from Ricoeur as the force that mobilises society, in opposition to the negative concept of utopia characterised by producing social inactivity or "political

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(464) For this point cf. Chapter one, 1.6.3.1

dreamers" (465).

Liberation theology has further elaborated the socio-economic and political focus which utopia brings into a society in relationship with praxis. In the future horizon of Latin America this shared utopia is made of elements related to the arrival to a new social consciousness, and a social appropriation of culture. Gutiérrez sees that the integration of community towards their utopia takes the form of solidarity, both in the denunciation of injustice and in the common path towards their objective. The concept of the "Kingdom of God" as a political project and the Christian people as co-workers with God (co-trabajadores del Reino) to make it a reality, is also elaborated from the base of the dynamic of positive utopia.

This element of solidarity is also expressed by Gutiérrez in relation to Christian people and their communion with God, which he explains as "liberation from sin ... all explotation, and from all dissidence amongst people." (466). Communion with God, then, implies the dynamic of l'imaginaire as rupture, the creative process of tradition and the mythic-poetic nucleus that construct an utopia. To reclaim the social imaginaire is also to recreate solidarity amongst people, because without this work of co-operation none of the above mentioned processes could exist.

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(465) Cf. G. Gutiérrez, A Theology of Liberation, p. 139.

(466) Ibid.

This concept of communion with God, associated with the dynamic of a positive utopia seems to have been present in those Latin American priests who did not want to officiate at Eucharistic rites (Holy Communion). The Colombian priest and sociologist Camilo Torres gave up his rights to officiate at mass in 1965 with an argument which we can synthesize in the following way. The mass is a Christian communal activity, and the Eucharist is the culmination of it, as a symbol of the projected horizon of the Kingdom of God and its justice. The problem for Torres was that he considered this love-solidarity of the community betrayed by what he called "lack of consecration" amongst Christians, inside and outside the church's structures (467). Without a "path towards a positive utopia" (Ricoeur), or "a faith with the right ideology" (Segundo), such love-solidarity does not exist. Any utopia of the Kingdom becomes a negative utopia, which encourages inaction or dreams impossible to fulfil.

This is the reason why Torres, like many others before and after him, renounced the celebration of mass. The church does not have an efficacious utopia, and thus fails to integrate the community (through love-solidarity), making of the communal act of mass a mere ritual deprived of its real meaning. It is interesting to note that Dussel has used a similar line of reflection in the consideration of the work of Las Casas. According to Dussel, the reason why Las Casas denied the Eucharist to the governors

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(467) Cf. C. Torres, "Message to the Christians", in A. Kee (ed.), A Reader in Political Theology, pp. 144-7.

of his time was that the bread was not consecrated, because it was stolen from the people who produced it (468). The Eucharistic bread was the product of exploitation and crime, the mythic nucleus of the community had become fetishized to sustain a minority in power, and the utopia was an ideology to be demystified. According to Las Casas, the Christian horizon of justice was being denied, and the task of Christians was to break the project of the Conquista and replace it with a Christianity which could take into account the reality of the situation of the people of Latin America. Las Casas, as many centuries later Torres, was refering to the re-creation of tradition and l'imaginaire as rupture, in relation to the integrative role of a positive utopia.

4.2.3 The multi-dimensional role of utopia

Ricoeur has found that the integrative role of utopia is twofold; it works with the common horizon of a nation, in an universal dimension, but it is

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(468) Cf. E. Dussel, unpublished paper delivered to the Conference "In Search of a Larger Christ", Edinburgh, 1985. The theme of the Eucharist being incompatible with people's oppression runs through the whole of Latin American history. In Argentina, during the XIX century, Saint Francisco Solano broke a piece of bread during a banquet with a rich hacendado. The story tells that blood ran from the bread, and Solano said: "I will never eat at any table which offers bread kneaded with the blood of the poor." Cf. H. Brito, "La Organización de la Iglesia", in CEHILA, 500 años de Cristianismo en la Argentina, p. 57.

also related to the individuals of these communities who suffer from a process of dehumanisation and anonymity in this society. Ricoeur calls the first an integral dimension of utopia, and the second, a multi-dimensional aspect of utopia (469). What Ricoeur calls "the face of the single" in the midst of an industrial society, needs to be understood in terms of the peasant society in Latin America. The "singularity" is the characteristic not so much of an individual but of marginalised groups (communities found on the fringes of the elites who hold the socio-economic power of any nation), especially the indigenous population, women, and social sectors with a high incidence of illiteracy (470).

This concept of singularity as the option for the marginalised, or the "silent ones" as Freire calls them, has highlighted a series of elements to be incorporated in the theological discourse of Latin America. For instance, the reality of oral communication amongst indigenous groups, the use of Spanish or Portuguese as the official languages of the church, and the legitimacy of using native languages for education, theological research, and worship. In short, the problem of hermeneutics amongst the marginalised is related to basic levels of communication.

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(469) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "The Task of a Political Educator", in Philosophy Today 17, 1973, Summer; pp. 142-52.

(470) In relation to this point, cf. for instance S. Escobar and C. René Padilla in Comunicación, 100, pp. 89 ff.

The integrative role of utopia requires that the church value the experience of the marginalised people of Latin America, whose universe has suffered from a de-symbolisation process (a sort of Bultmannian demythologising) due to the lack of recognition of their languages. One can say that the Quechua communities in the Andean countries are not being taken seriously enough if their leaders cannot reflect theologically upon their reality in Quechua. Somehow, the symbol is still a prisoner of the elite of power, and unless some shared _imaginaire_ as rupture can be introduced, the praxis will suffer a lack of dynamism in its process.

The contribution of Ricoeur to liberation theology has been done in the areas of the rediscovery of the Latin American identity, the praxis of change and the formulation of utopia. These three areas are presently suffering from a problem of closure of the Latin American theological discourse, and a lack of self-criticism. The closure of the discourse can be explained as part of the tendency of the symbolic structures to become fetishised, thus maintaining the stillness of meaning needed by the mechanisms of social control. The church in Latin America participates actively in such mechanisms of control, and therefore, the only guarantee of any hermeneutics of freedom and justice is the work of the people's _imaginaire_ as rupture.

We will now proceed to highlight the influence of Ricoeur in the work of Croatto, Segundo and C. Boff, and consider how the potentialities of the "Hermeneutics of Solidarity" have been developed by them.

Part II

4.3 J. Severino Croatto:

The tension between ideology and utopia.

All the theologians studied in chapter three manifest a tension between the
role of the church's tradition and the necessity to open the text of their
interpretation to a modern interpretation. Sometimes, it is the biblical
text that is the object of their attention, but often they also refer to
the discourse of the social doctrine of the church, the structures of the
ecclesiastic institutions or simply, the text of the complex Latin American
reality; in this case, the object of interpretation is also the traditional
historic account of the continent.

However, each of these theologians has a characteristic way of confronting
this tension. In the case of Croatto, it is manifested in three main
aspects: 1) a tension between two methods: Concordismo and Sintonía; 2) a
tension in Croatto's veracity criteria for the text (actions of
liberation); and 3) a tension in his work with myths and mystifications.
Our understanding is that Croatto has resolved such tensions, although only
partially, in his development of an utopian project organised from the poor
as the Da of Dasein, and as the interpreting "We" who breaks with the
narcissistic ego of interpretation. The point is that at the very bottom of
Croatto's work there is a permanent attempt to balance the discourse of
utopia and ideology, which is not always succesful. We will proceed now to
reflect on the above mentioned three aspects of the ongoing tension of
Croatto's thought.

4.3.1 Between Concordismo and Sintonía.

Croatto advocates a hermeneutics of possibility, in which interpretation must be considered an ongoing and unfinished process. On several occasions, Croatto has referred to the scandalous situation created by the fact that the Bible has never been read using the tools provided by interpretation theories; thus, the message of the Scriptural text has been reduced to a concordism between the biblical situation and the present day. The word "scandal" used by Croatto, is very suggestive in this context: the scandalon (stumbling stone) of traditional hermeneutics, refers not only to the poverty of tools sometimes used in relation to the Scriptures, but also to the failure (in the sense of caída; fall) of the traditional interpretation of the Bible in Latin America.

Concordismo ("Concordism") is a hermeneutical position associated by Croatto with the use of historical criticism; it refers specifically to the abuse of the historical readings of the Scripture, and the closure of the meaning of the text from the perspective of the original sense (if such a thing could be recovered). The concordist attitude crystallizes the meaning of the text, and tries to apply it to any present situation which resembles the situation described in the Scriptures. The fundamentalism of this hermeneutic is manifested in the fact that it makes comparison between different symbolic systems, which have been produced at the level of institutions (such as the Israelite monarchy) and even around patterns of personal relations. The conflictive aspect of the use of Concordism, is always manifested in the absence of a symbolic level of interpretation.

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The method proposed by Croatto is "tuning in" or sintonia. Its objective is to open the text to a new interpretation, while remaining in what we have called the community of interpreters of the Scriptures; this is the importance of developing a hermeneutics of solidarity, where the modern interpreter keeps a critical position in the chain of exegetes of the text. The hermeneutics of sintonía is then also rooted in history, in the "before" (detrás) of the text, because the social and historical context condition the production of meaning of the written discourse. The tension between a Concordism and a Sintonía is related to the difficulties of using historical criticism and, at the same time, avoiding the closure of interpretation, or as Ricoeur says, the prescriptive (or exemplary) role of the Scriptures. This is what the French philosopher considers the kernel of biblical hermeneutics: the conjunction of narrativity and prescription in the Bible (471).

Ricoeur resolves this problem related to prescription (and therefore closure) in the Scriptures, following Julia Kristeva's notion of intertextuality (472). Kristeva speaks about the transposition of one or more system of signs into another; according to her theory every text functions in terms of other texts. Hence Ricoeur understands that because prescriptive texts have been read in coordination with other biblical

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(471) Cf. P. Ricoeur, in R. Kearney Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers, p. 21

(472) For the concept of intertextualité, cf. J. Kristeva, La Revolution du Langage Poetique.

narratives, the Scriptures have taken an exemplary role. Croatto uses this concept of intertextuality in the sense that the biblical texts have no clear boundaries, and all the signifying systems are interwoven with others, producing an inexhaustible plurality of meaning; the Bible, says Croatto, is "a text upon a text." (473).

The concept of Sintonía of Croatto incorporates the notion of intertextuality, and works, at the same time, with the hermeneutical function of distanciation as elaborated by Ricoeur. The characteristics of distanciation make possible the autonomy of the text, its de-contextualization from the original setting, and the re-contextualization by the act of reading. Appropriation of the text is only possible through the understanding that is mediated by distance. Sintonía differs from Concordism in the point that it welcomes the eventual de-contextualization of a text, in order to emancipate the discourse and allow it to break the crystallization of its meaning (which, for Ricoeur, tends to function as a negative ideology).

Another important element in the concept of Sintonía is Croatto's use of Gadamer's concept of the history of the effects, which Croatto refers to as "positive re-readings". The effects (or actions) of liberation of the Bible are rescued by Croatto through the use of historical criticism, and the category of pueblo pobre (the poor as a nation and as the people of God) is the subject that "opens" the reading of the text and reveals the "beyond"

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(473) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Hermenéutica Bíblica, p. 28.

of the text which needs exploration. The pueblo pobre relates itself to its own events of liberation in history, and tunes in with the intertextuality of other liberative events in the Bible. This concept of intertextuality also has another interesting implication: the most radical principle established in the Bible, tends to subsume texts where oppression is justified, according to Croatto. The theology of liberation has been accused of selecting the biblical texts which were convenient for a process of liberation, and ignoring the ones which contain oppressive elements. The key to understanding this selective reading is, precisely, the concept of intertextuality as part of the hermeneutical circle of Sintonía in Croatto, which takes from Ricoeur the concept of the dynamic identity of a text. The text is defined as happening at the intersection of the reader re-creation and the discourse. The reader provides the text then, with his/her own aleatory intertextuality.

4.3.2 The Action of Liberation as a Criteria of Veracity.

Is Latin America Israel or Canaan? It is obvious that for Croatto there is an identification between the Latin Americans and Israelites in their struggles for liberation, and keeping "God at their side." However, what is not so evident is that the experience of what we call "Amerindia", can be identified with Israel's hegemonic project in the Old Testament, instead of the invaded Canaan (474). Like the Canaanites, the Amerindians lost their

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(474) As Latin Americans we do not even have a name to call our continent for ourselves. Recently, the name Abya-Yala, (or "Ripe Land", from the Kuna

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land, their culture was suppressed and their gods suffered a process of demonization. The narrative of the natives after the Conquista bears the testimony of the alienation produced by what today we can call "systematic inculturization" of the Conquista; the people's personal names disappeared into a list of Spanish titles and names from the Santoral, reflecting the identity crises of the native writers, concerning the memories of their nations. For instance, it is common to read phrases such as: "In the year 3 Acatl was born 'Don Diego' Tiçaatzin..."; "At that time 'Don Pedro' Macuilxóchitl was king of Tepotzotlan..." The writer could not decide which name was the correct, and the Spanish names were put between inverted comas. Something similar happens with the names of their gods; between inverted comas, they are called "devils" and "she devils". Even the original accounts of the creation of the universe and humanity have been re-written as the action of "devils." (475).

The question now is to ask if Christianity in Latin America is a faith between inverted commas, and the memory of liberation -as narrated in the accounts of Israel in the Bible-, are significative enough or not for the

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language of Panamá) has been adopted in theological circles, but Amerindia (or América India) is still popular. Cf. L. Boff, Good News to the Poor, p. 10. Also "Introduction to Abya-Yala Consultation", in Ministerial Formation, 59, 1992, p. 4.

(475) Cf. for instance, the Náhuatl account of creation in the Códice de Chimalpopoca, p. 31.

descendents of the suppressed civilizations of the continent. One of the difficulties that Croatto does not acknowledge, is the fact that such biblical events are mediated by a process of destruction and colonization, produced by the people who "evangelized" Latin America. Following Ricoeur's concept of the dynamic identity of the text, which emerges at the intersection between the world of the text and the world of the reader, we claim that the actualization of the liberative narrative in Latin America suffers from the rejection of otherness manifested in the readers (476).

4.3.2.1 The "We" as the critical community of interpretation.

Croatto has tried to incorporate the concept of the "We" as opposed to the narcissistic "I" of traditional interpretation. The "We" as the critical community constituted by the poor, is for Croatto the key to open the interpretation of the Bible in Latin America. However, he seldom questions that this "We" is an almost aseptic concept, purified of the "We" of the indigenous people and their symbolic universe. In other words, "the poor" as a hermeneutical category needs to incorporate a wider concept of poverty, that is, the "spiritual" marginalisation of the traditional beliefs of the Amerindians. Without this acknowledgement, the Latin American universe remains de-symbolized, and more to the point, the symbols of liberation of the Bible become victims of an elite of power. The symbol is then "a prisoner of war", used to legitimise the structures of

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(476) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "The Text as Dynamic Identity" in M. Valdés; O. Miller, Identity of the Literary Text, pp. 175-86.

oppression of the people they claim to liberate.

Ricoeur has said that every human action must be understood by its ruling symbols (477). It seems that for Croatto, the liberative actions of the Bible constitute the sacrality of the text, in terms of the human construction of a discourse about God and history. While trying to understand the ruling symbols of the Old Testament (a preferential option for Croatto, as for many theologians of liberation), Croatto ignores the symbolic system which underlies the Christian belief and biblical interpretation of the "We who interprets" of the Latin Americans. Croatto has found the events of liberation in the Scripture in relation to political and religious subversion, for instance, the prophetic denouncement of Malachi against a wealthy clergy, and a religion prisoner of a process of colonization (478).

However, it is difficult to understand the biblical text (to the full extent of the Ricoeurian concept) if the "We" who interprets is silenced in its own history of liberation; the interpretation is deprived of the world of the reader. This is a common difficulty in the theology of liberation. We are not referring here to the memory of the acts of liberation from an enlightened priesthood (which always existed, although a minority), such as Las Casas or Montesinos, because we want to escape from the vicious circle of making role models of liberators from the exceptions in the files of the

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(477) Cf. P. Ricoeur, From Text to Action, p. 314 ff.

(478) Cf. J. S. Croatto, Notes on the Prophets, photocopy.

oppressors. It is important to recall that the Misiones Jesuíticas were succesful in evangelizing people submitted to different forms of slavery, with a paternalistic system whose merit was to protect and preserve some segments of the Guaraní culture (such as the language), but the Chamanes (religious leaders of the Guaraní people) were the ones who organised various insurrections against the dependency and abuses of the established system (479). The Chamanes addressed their own people as adults, and they appealed to their responsibility toward their Guaraní nation; not surprisingly, they identified the Jesuist as their enemies, because they gently persuaded people to abandon their own beliefs and traditions. From there they inferred that political independence could not be achieved.

Michel Foucault has said that every society has its policy of truth (480). Biblical interpretation in Latin America has had five hundred years of cooperating actively with the ideological system which has kept the continent in a chronic state of underdevelopment of its own possibilities. During four hundred years the Bible was not available for people to read or simply to have at home, and although the situation has changed recently, it does not mean that the church has opened biblical interpretation to what we have called the world of the "We" who interpret in Latin America. If the Bible is now accessible, the readers are still living in a culture of

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(479) For this point, cf. M.C. Liboreiro, "La Evangelización en la Colonia", in 500 Años de Cristianismo en Argentina, p. 47.

(480) Cf. M. Foucalt, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977.

silence. The poor still need to speak a foreign language (Spanish or Portuguese) in which they express themselves in simple terms, but find difficult to understand or conceptualise their own experiences, because they are linked to their native language (481). Liberation theology fails to recognise the legitimacy of the use of mother tongues in theological developments, and the unique insights that could come from the contribution of the traditional agraphic societies of Latin America.

The phenomenological approach proposed by Croatto uses an intimate contact with the studied subject, which requires the acknowledgement of feelings, intuitions, even dreams, and any observation taken from everyday life. It becomes obvious that the poor in Latin America are marginalised from any methodology where the subjective relates to the objective; their symbolic universe has been suppressed and biblical interpretation has its own policy of truth, in which the poor are only partially included.

4.3.2.2 The "Caananization" of the hermeneutical circle.

Our main concern is that Croatto should introduce an experience of difference in his hermeneutics, that we have called the "Caananization" of the interpretation process. It is necessary to understand this proposal in the light of the dialectic "Sameness-Otherness" (du Même et de l'Autre)

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(481) Cf. R. Paredes, "Theological Education for Marginalised Indigenous Groups", in C. René Padilla (ed.), New Alternatives in Theological Education, pp. 141-57.

of Ricoeur, and in the understanding of the other in his otherness, of Gadamer (482). Ricoeur, in his analysis of the narrative identity and the agent of action, distinguishes two concepts: ipséité (from the Latin demonstrative pronoun ipse/ipsa/ipsum: him/herself, itself) and identité (from the Latin idem/eadem/idem: the same). The difference between the "sameness" (identité) and the "selfhood" (ipseité), is that the second has an element of change, of a dynamic structure implied in the narrative which contributes to the constant refiguration of the narrative identity (a dynamic concept for Ricoeur). Instead of that, the "sameness" defines itself (its mêmeté) in terms of its permanency in time.

The point is that the identity as "selfhood" is constituted by alterity, (otherness), which saves it from the limitations of "sameness". This dialogical dimension between Sameness (Même) and Otherness (Autre), has ethical, moral and theological consequences (483).

To summarise, we can say that for the poor, "to find themselves in the Scriptures" means that they need to find the alterity, and the different

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(482) Cf. B. Stevens, L'Apprentissage des Signes. Lecture de Paul Ricoeur, pp. 225 ff. Also P. Ricoeur, Oneself as Another.
(483) For instance, Ricoeur wrote that "l'amitie nécessite l'autre: l'autre m'enjoint d'être juste" ("Friendship needs the other; the other will make me rejoice of being a just person"). Cf. B. Stevens, op. cit., p. 291.

meanings that do not necessarily result in contradiction (contrary to Boff's opinion) because the identity of the text is constituted by that which defies the permanence of the same (484).

Canaanazing biblical interpretation is then to accept and welcome the irruption of the alterity in the text, and to open up a dialogue where the criterion for truth could come from a dialogue where the experience of Israel could be understood in its possibility of experiencing the different, or in an aesthetic experience of otherness. But this would imply that the Latin American readers will experience their being in the dialectic of "finding the We who interprets" in the otherness of their experiences. It would have implications far beyond the biblical reading: in the praxis of appropriation of their reading, and in the communitarian construction of the utopia of freedom for the continent. It will complete the hermeneutical proposal of Ricoeur, which is ontological: through the mediation of the text, and thanks to its temporal dimension it is possible to find the identity of oneself in the otherness. L'imaginaire as rupture is the element which makes this possible. This dialectic of Sameness-Otherness (Même et l'Autre), is the force which will produce a revolutionary praxis *from* the marginalised people in Latin America.

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(484) Cf. Chapter Three, 3.9.5. It is important to take into account that, for instance, the constant features of a character define the sameness (mêmeté) of a person. Thus, Boff is somehow accentuating the same, at the expense of the different.

The poor as the <u>Da</u> of <u>Dasein</u> requires a broader vision of what constitutes poverty, the process of marginalisation of peasants, women and migrant workers in the continent, and the interrelation of this with their "non-beingness", and deep alienation from power. The Guaraní people use the same term for "word" and "soul". We can say then that Latin Americans lost their soul (religious experience) and word (language) at the same time (485). Only what we have called a process of Caananization could make the <u>pobres</u> readers and writers of their own biblical text (486).

4.3.3 Myths and Mystifications.

The use of historical criticism by Croatto and his search for the origins of the text while working with etymology, create some contradictions with his use of post-modern hermeneutical theories. The tensions are focused around the closure produced by the search for the original message of the Bible, in a kind of source-influences study, and the post-modern concepts (Gadamerian hermeneutics, Ricoeur's methodology etc.) that the text is open ended, and indeterminate. Croatto uses a soft approach to historical criticism, looking more for probabilities than definite meanings, but he

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(485) Quoted by B. Melano Couch in I.S.E.D.E.T., <u>Los Pobres</u>, pp. 183 ff.

(486) The concept of readers as writers comes from Stanley Fish; it refers to the fact that the interpretative community constitute the properties and determine the shape of what they read. Cf. S. Fish, <u>Is there a text in this class?</u>

does not discuss the historical discourse _in se_, that is, that events do not speak for themselves, but the historian or interpreter does (487). The risk of Croatto's work, as presented in his latest book _Isaias 1-39_, is to produce a recollection of meaning, or establishing a chronological authority as interpretative key. Ricoeur challenges the concept of history and the way that discursive events are studied.

De-mystification, as a political process, is the act of unmasking the sameness of the text, and in our case, the search for the alteritv in the Bible; it works here as a kind of de-ideologization project. This element of alienation (or _ipséité_) is the key element of praxis. De-mythologising instead, is a concept that implies the de-symbolisation of the mythical language, and as such, is an unacceptable proposition for Ricoeur and for Croatto. However, Croatto's use of historical criticism does not rescue elements of plurality in the discourse. More to the point, the dialectic "God of liberation vs. gods of oppression", or "YHWH vs. Baal", although redefining who is YHWH for the theology of liberation, implies the exclusion of the Other in the form of a different culture.

However, when Croatto chose the image of the Náhuatl god Xólotl for the cover of his book _Liberación y Libertad. Pautas Hermenéuticas_, he was identifying Xólotl (twin brother of Quetzalcóatl, the principal god of the Náhuas) with YHWH. The element that unites them is that both are gods of

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(487) Cf. H. White, "Historical Pluralism" in _Critical Inquiry_, 1986, 12, pp. 480-93

liberation, since Xólotl, according to the Maya religion, carries the symbols of the victory of light over darkness. If we understand correctly, far from suggesting a return to the Náhuatl or Inca pantheons in search of God, Croatto seems to have an incipient project of a cultural dialogue, sadly neglected in Latin America where Christianity has always been a religion of imposition, with "the cross and the sword." This suggested dialogue between YHWH and Xólotl will then require a de-mystification process, and a new reading (or writing) of history. In this way, the poor of Latin America will be able to speak from themselves, and from their rejected cultural traditions. This dialogue will enrich the praxis of the poor *and* the praxis of the church, which needs to became the Other to also rediscover itself. No doubt this dialogue will not only contribute to the biblical intepretation project of the theology of liberation, but will also open new ways to Christianity, and being Christian amongst the oppressed.

4.4   Juan Luis Segundo:

The Circle of Suspicion applied to the Ideological Text.

The hermeneutical circle of Segundo is, as we have already seen, a circle of suspicion, against which any praxis related to the goal of liberation of Latin America is tested. According to Segundo, such proposals are 'ideologies', and could come from the Bible, the life of Jesus or the social doctrine of the Catholic Church; the goal (or 'Faith' in Segundo's terminology) requires efficacious means and therefore, an ideology which can be related to the desirable end (the utopia of liberation).

On these grounds, the Bible is defined as a text which can produce several ideologically different programmes of social liberation, and therefore, a contradictory final message. To produce a hermeneutics of liberation from the Bible will then require to "mutilate" the text, choosing the suitable parts and discarding the inappropriate ones. The text of the Bible does not have relevance for Segundo. It is interesting to notice that Segundo is not the only one to maintain this position in relation to the Scripture's integrity; Croatto has said that the Bible "is too big as a book" and that "it would be sufficient to have it reduced to a few significative texts." Croatto also commented that a group of workers who attended one of his Biblical Seminars told him: "we have had enough of reading the Bible. Now we need action." (488).

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(488) From a private conversation with Croatto, 1983.

The difference between Croatto and Segundo, concerning the use of the Scripture, is related to Biblical authority. Croatto, following a Ricoeurian perspective, finds that the authority of any text is produced by the fusion of horizons of expectation (eg. an utopia of liberation) between the text and the reader. To deny authority to the reader can be equivalent to denying his/her participation in the process of re-creation of meaning. At the same time, Ricoeur considers that the tensions between different theological discourses in the Bible, are related to the confrontation of distinct narrative structures. For instance, the conception of time that underlines the books of Ezra and Nehemias is due to the form of "chronicles", while the prophetic texts, use a different concept of time more coherent with the narrative of "oracles" (489).

This element of consolidation and dislocation of time, presented in the Scriptures, adds a creative dimension to the interpretation of the discourse about God in history. The preference of Croatto for prophetic texts, is a preference for the time of the oracles, which is dynamically linked to the future and the re-creation of our concepts of God and the historical mission of the Church. In Croatto's hermeneutical work, there are elements of L'imaginaire as rupture and the de-construction of the subject's illusion, through an exercise of self-criticism by the reader, confronted with the world of the text.

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(489) Cf. P. Ricoeur, "Philosophical and Biblical Interpretation", in From Text to Action, pp. 94 ff.

Segundo, instead, emphasises the theory of ideology, defined in a negative sense, as the ultimate authority of the Bible. Although Ricoeur has inspired his "circle of suspicion", it is also true that the French philosopher did not want to establish a false dialectic "True interpreter/Ideologue"; and more to the point, Ricoeur has denounced the lack of perception about the fact that ideology is "the thought of my adversary, the thought of the *other*." Thus Ricoeur adds "He (my adversary, *the ideologue*) does not know it, but *I* do." (490).

Segundo does not take into account the notion of a critique of ideology, which requires a permanent work of interpretation (and self criticism), through what Ricoeur has called the "Long Way" of hermeneutics, that is, the process of explanation and understanding done in the terrain of linguistics. In opposition to Ricoeur, Segundo not only has not perceived the discourse of "the other" in the Bible, but has resorted to an external concept of textual authority, which seems in debt to Dilthey in the pursuit of an original meaning (from God and/or the biblical writers).

4.4.1 Elements of Marxist interpretation in Segundo's work

The desire to find a neutrality in his definition of ideology, and the opposition between "symbols" and "causes" in the context of liberation theology comes from Segundo's background in Marxist interpretation (491).

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(490) P. Ricoeur, <u>From Text to Action</u>, p. 248.

(491) Cf. J. L. Segundo "Capitalism versus Socialism: Crux Theologica", in

His concept of ideology allows him to relate a critique of the modes of production in Latin America to the system of the traditional theological discourse in the continent. Segundo tries to avoid the position of truth versus falseness which any concept of ideology implies, in order to exclude a position of external authority, which tends to repeat the vicious circle of power. The discarded discourse becomes ideology, and the ex-ideology, becomes the "other", marginalised from the dialogue. The Marxist concept of ideology also excludes the symbolic, privileging "reality" instead.

The problem with this position is, however, the difficulty in distinguishing between the "real" and the "symbolic", since such a distinction comes from socio-historical definitions, and is not therefore ontologically given (492). At the same time, material structures are also symbolic; Segundo has a discourse about symbolic (theological) systems of oppression in Latin America. Apart from that, we can see in Segundo a preferential option for the text of Latin American oppression, the meaning of which is related to the conflict of classes. The church has produced a misrepresentation of the signification of the text, and as a result of that, they bear responsibility for the invisibility of the poor as believers.

R. Gibellini (ed.), Frontiers of Theology in Latin America, p. 247.
(492) For this discussion cf. J. Frow, Marxism and Literary History, chapters 2-3.

This analysis (which is an oversimplification of Engel's The Condition of the Working Class in England) (493), is responsible for Segundo's position concerning the church: the structures must change, and in order to do so, the interpretation circle which has supported the church needs to be challenged with a circle of ideological suspicion.

Following the discussion in Segundo concerning the fields of the symbolic and the real, we will add that, in Segundo's opinion the concept of the Kingdom of God needs to be concretised as a revolutionary project which includes a concrete praxis of "the cause" of struggle. The lack of concretisation of the Kingdom is ineffective, and remains in the sphere of the analogical or symbolic. The criticism that we can make to this concept comes from Ricoeur himself, because Segundo's "concretisation" of the symbolic is a necessary historical option which, nevertheless should be aware of the danger of de-symbolising or reducing important symbols of the Christian faith to an univocal -ideological- discourse. The fact that Segundo considers it necessary to use manipulative strategies to mobilise people to act for the cause of liberation theology, deeply contradicts his former concept of "divine education" or an ongoing project of historical participation with which God convokes people to became subjects and not objects of their own society.

This concept, which has received the influence of Freire's Pedagogy of the

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(493) Cf. J. Frow, op. cit., chapter 2.

Oppressed, is also linked with Segundo's idea of God: "God-who-is-society", which we have considered an interpretative key in the hermeneutics of solidarity of liberation theology. The problem is that any pre-supposition of a dialogical process between God and God's people towards a "positive utopia" (borrowing Ricoeur's term) of the Kingdom is dismissed by an univocal interpretation of Christian symbols, and a declaration on the need to manipulate the masses in order to obtain the political objective of liberation. Freire would say that if liberation is not part of the process, then it will never be part of the result. Curiously, Segundo claims that his main interest in the Bible is related to the "divine education" process, which helps us to understand for instance, the development of ideology (or "faith", in Segundo's terminology). However, he does not have a clear proposal to implement the dialogical method in relation to issues of oppression and liberation.

Segundo's criticism of Bultmann, based on the lack of questioning of the Christian milieu of the de-mythologising method, has not been carried to its final conclusion. The circle of suspicion should have been incorporated into the dialogue on faith and ideologies amongst the marginal masses, who have always been silenced in relation to the two main themes of Latin America: religion and politics. In these two themes, the pueblo has always been a mere object and not a subject of its own history, at the mercy of the elites of power. The difference between Segundo's revolutionary "vanguards" and the controlling elites is minimal, as the failure of popular guerilla movements has proved in Latin America.

The questioning of the Cartesian Ego by Ricoeur also includes a criticism of ideologies, in the sense of an unmasking of the producers of knowledge. Segundo has criticised the ideology of the Bible, the Church as an institution and society, but unless he affirms the necessity of a dialogical process, the ideology of the theologians remains unacknowledged, and therefore uncritical. As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, according to Ricoeur, the positive utopia requires a solidarity work of the community's imagination and self-criticism; otherwise, the utopia becomes perverted and a negative factor related to the mechanism of social control and legitimation of oppression. The transformation of social and ecclesiastical structures requires a collective de-ideologisation, the product of a conscientisation process of textual and social interpretation.

4.4.2 Contradictory definitions of ideology.

The problem with Segundo is in part his contradictory understandings of "ideology". He has tried to show that ideology is a neutral concept, and as such is exempt from value-judgements; in the actual development of his thesis (his ideology, using Segundo's terminology), he accepts that non-neutrality is impossible. This is, precisely, a crucial category of interpretation for liberation theology, the non-neutrality of faith (as utopia, or a goal to achieve) and ideology (the proposed way to reach such an end). Segundo's book The Liberation of Theology was an early contribution to the criticism of the claims of neutrality of the circle of interpretation used in the church's analysis of Scripture, dogmas and social doctrine. The traditional circle of interpretation is not a non-

neutral ideology, neither is the one proposed by Segundo, which has a
definite bias towards the poor and Marxist criticism.

Segundo has formulated a concept related to "efficacious methodology"; his
circle of suspicion tries to unmask unrealizable proposals as "faiths"
without "ideologies", or in Segundo's own words "dead faith" (494).
According to his criteria, nobody has fulfilled the criteria of efficacious
methodology, not even Jesus; we may wonder if Segundo is suggesting that
Jesus' faith was also dead (he has already admitted that Jesus committed
ideological mistakes). This analysis comes from Segundo's interpretation of
Camus' Caligula, when he affirmed that "nobody has been able to reach the
goal which has been proposed" (495). One question that we may ask here is
why Camus' Caligula has been chosen by a Latin American theologian to
elaborate a concept related to Latin America's project of liberation. The
answer lies in Segundo's lack of dialogical criteria of interpretation. It
is doubful that Basic Ecclesial Communities could come with such paradigms
of interpretation. However, Segundo shows the absence of an interpretation
theory at work in the rich indigenous mythology of Latin America.

However, Segundo changes his position concerning inefficacious
methodologies as "dead faith", when he considers that the failure of a
politician who cannot reach his/her final goal could mean the proof of the

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(494) Cf. J. L. Segundo, La Liberación de la Teología, p. 158.
(495) Cf. J. L. Segundo, El Hombre de Hoy ante Jesús de Nazareth, p. 11.

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politician's "purity of intention and methodology" (496). In this case, Segundo does not consider that the politician's faith is dead, because according to the theologian, the criterion of politics is different from that of social doctrine. The criterion of the politician is purity of intentionality, and in the social doctrine it is the results. The problem is that as a consequence of this style of reasoning, Segundo has stopped the discourse on faiths and ideologies, since "purity of intention" can be understood as part of a moral terrain, and not related to his previous theory that only the goal reached determines the value of the actions. Therefore, we have discovered another contradiction in his concept of faith and ideology, which started as a theory of efficacious methodology of liberation, but also admits inefficacy, as an important proof of authentic values in the case of a politician.

4.4.3   The contribution of Segundo to liberation theology

The contribution of Segundo to liberation theology has been the development of a hermeneutic of suspicion inspired by Ricoeur, although he did not develop an interpretative methodology himself. In this case, as we have said before, his proposal is a "short way" of interpretation. However, the originality of Segundo (and the same can be said in a way about Croatto and C. Boff) is the incorporaton of political suspicion into the discourse of liberation theology in Latin America. Segundo's concept of "efficacious love", understood as commitment to transform the situation of oppression in

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(496) Cf. J. L. Segundo, op. cit., pp. 22 ff.

Latin America, is the moment of appropriation of the hermeneutical circle, or praxis of change of the present circumstances of our society. The difficulties arise due to the nature of the "short way" of interpretation. The moment of appropriation of interpretation comes too fast, without having previously followed the route of symbols and the language of myths, as, for instance, Croatto has tried to do.

There is a tendency in Segundo to produce an univocal discourse, without the participatory project which was anticipated in his early concept of "God-who-is-society", a key towards a hermeneutics of solidarity. This is what is lacking in Segundo; a dialogical work with the category of the poor, which needs to include the Latin American's symbolic universe, elements of a theology of culture, and the action of l'imaginaire as rupture, to allow the communitarian work of buiding an utopia, and the means to reach it too. The dismissal of the possibility of a different re-reading of the Scriptures on the grounds of contradictory goals, is related to his lack of interest in people's participation in the "reading of the text of reality"; thus, the element of manipulation of the masses arises. We believe that Segundo has not taken the most radical thought of Ricoeur, and has brought his proposed circle of interpretation to a premature end.

However, in spite of the difficulties in Segundo's ideas that we have highlighted, the merits of incorporating the unmasking of the "political Ego" into liberation theology will alway be recognised in his work. The circle of suspicion has influenced many different theological positions in liberal and evangelical circles alike, challenging the characteristic non-political approach of traditionalist sectors, and helping the more militant

groups (Christians and non-Christians) to produce a necessary self-criticism of their praxis. Perhaps, the most promising sign of the effect of Segundo's circle of suspicion can be seen in the new ecumenical understanding between a diversity of Christian denominations, such as the ones which work together in the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI).

The link between these churches, some of them of missionary extraction, others of immigrant movements or even native initiative, have been found not in their theological thought, or life-style, but in a basic hermeneutical suspicion about the traditional role of the churches in Latin America. Such ideological suspicion has been extended to their interpretative methods, and, as a result of that, the circle of suspicion has been incorporated in opposing traditions, from Pentecostalism (e.g. La Iglesia de Dios in Argentina) to the Reformed Churches. The future development of the work of CLAI (or the CEBs of ecumenical character) is yet to be seen, but Segundo's reflections concerning the unmasking of ideological discourses in Latin American theology has already had a substantial influence in the praxis of Christianity in the continent (497).

4.5 Clodovis Boff

Interpretation and Illiteracy.

We have already synthesised the basic points of the influence of Ricoeur in

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(497) For the influence of the "circle of suspicion" in Evangelical circles. cf. M. Branson; C. Padilla (eds). Conflict and Context. p. 66.

Boff's hermeneutical circle, concerning the need of a __Via Longa__ of interpretation, the task of interpretation, the use of a criteriology, and basically, the work of the "Hermeneutical Arc" of Ricoeur, that is, the relation between explanation and understanding (498). We have also noticed difficulties in some of Boff's definitions, for instance, his position in the "on going hermeneutical war" concerning what do we mean by text. He considers that a "text" is a written discourse, but obviously, such an approach creates some problems for a theology of the political (Boff's own model), which "reads" more than one text in order to understand the complexity of Latin American reality. We have also discussed his interpretation of the __Anwendung__ of Gadamer (__applicatio__), which Boff confuses with the final moment of appropriation of the hermeneutical circle, which is really, a methodological moment concerned with the fusion of horizons. The other difficulty that we have detected in Boff's work, which is more important, is his use of the concept of __bricolage__, originally from Lévi-Strauss (499).

4.5.1 Interpretation and legitimisation of dominant structures.

However, the main concern we have about Boff's proposal can be summed up as a tension between interpretation and illiteracy, which also implies that

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Also cf. Padilla's paper "Toward a Contextual Theology for Latin America", in __op. cit.__, pp. 81 ff.

(498) Cf. Chapter three, 3.9.5.

(499) __Ibid.__, 3.9.3.2/5.

he has an ambiguous position in relation to ideology (as legitimisation of structures of power), and the role of tradition (as the fluent dialogue between the elements of identity in a community, and its creativity, projected to a future utopia). As a result of this, Boff's hermeneutical circle lacks a very important element: l'imaginaire as rupture, and consequently, his whole anthropology is affected.

We have defined the concept of illiteracy as an inability to process information, which goes beyond people's common skills in reading, writing and numeracy. Such an inability is not an intrinsic element of Latin American people, but an acquired characteristic, which is the result of the convergence of different factors. From a diachronic perspective, such elements are basically related to the exclusion of vernacular languages from public spheres of representation and responsibility. For the indigenous people, the relation between Spanish or Portuguese and their own mother tongues is equivalent to the dialectic of power and marginalisation to which they have been submitted during centuries. Apart from this, agraphic societies such as the Latin American ones, have always felt a sense of inferiority in front of texts; since the Bible has never been available to the people, except in recent years, it is easy to understand the inference of power and authority which the poor associate with the literate priesthood who read the Scriptures. Surprisingly, Boff supports the mediation of the church in questions of interpretation, and even dismisses any literacy programme as a threat to indigenous oral cultures.

The colonial system brought to the continent an alliance between "King and Priesthood", and the imposition of a univocal interpretation of life and

the sacred. This means that a hermeneutical circle which served the church, has also served the claim of legitimacy of many undemocratic states rather than allow popular decision making. From a synchronic perspective, the most important ruptures with this chronic process of illiteracy have been Freire's conscientization programmes.

The literacy campaigns proposed by Freire, do not equate salvation with writing skills, but instead make interpreters of people who were previously mere passive recipients of the interpretation of the elites of power. The conflict between processes which favour creation of meaning and epistemological openness, and the "true meaning" of the Scripture according to closed church tradition, is a conflict between allowing people to become literate or letting them remain illiterate. The hermeneutical mediation of the church required by Boff is symbolically related to the "reading elites" of Latin America; curiously, the via longa of hermeneutics proposed by Boff, which includes self-criticism and serious reflection on interpretative processes, is incompatible with the privileged reading of any group.

4.5.2   The axis "Anarchy/Authority" in Boff's proposal.

Boff's fears are related to the production of anarchic meaning, and what he specifically calls a "carnival of new meanings." His whole discourse is elaborated upon dialectical opposition of authority/anarchy; for instance, Boff speaks about hierarchies of texts (the supremacy of the New Testament over the Old Testament, although liberation theology has stressed, precisely, the contrary), and he also opposes the original meaning of the

Scripture (as preserved in the tradition of the church) with a *bricolage* or hermeneutical improvisation (Boff's own understanding of Levi-Strauss). The Diltheyan position of the supposition of such a thing as "original meaning", departs considerably from the <u>via longa</u> of Ricoeur, where the reader recreates the text as received.

The discussion on the possibilities of popular hermeneutics becoming a <u>bricolage</u>, (according to Boff's own negative interpretation of the concept), shows a Bultmannian influence in his work, which makes him take an even greater distance from the hermeneutical circle of Ricoeur, which he claims to follow. The point is that Boff has not challenged the opposition between "primitive mind vs. scientific mind" in his analysis, and therefore at the background of his discourse there is a dismissal of myth as a language, which peculiar characteristics are related to expressing the experience of the sacred.

If myth is equated with lies, or misrepresentations produced by primitive minds, then we can understand why <u>l'imaginaire</u> as rupture in the interpretative process is distrusted as anarchic and misleading. More to the point, the so called "anarchic readings" are seen as backward interpretations, which tend to perpetuate politically oppressive systems. The interesting thing is that Boff associates freedom of reading with fundamentalist religious groups, which although they have returned the Bible to the people, do not necessarily allow their memberships to produce interpretations which have not been properly sanctioned by their traditions. However, because people now read the Bible, there are always new elements added to the process of interpretation of the Scriptures,

which do not need to be backwards. It seems that at the core of Boff's argument, there is a fear of liberation, although the declared goal is freedom.

4.5.3 A misleading hermeneutical circle of liberation

To summarise Boff's position, we find that he tries to keep a theoretical balance between two irreconcilable poles: a traditional hermeneutics, which works as a closed discourse of legitimation of political structures, and a hermeneutical circle such as the one proposed by Ricoeur, which is mobile and participatory. As a result, Boff produces a hybrid project which we have called a "scientific *bricolage*" (using Boff's own definition), that is, the non-critical perpetuation of the interpretation of the church (which in this case becomes in Ricoeur's words, a tradition of legitimisation or ideology). This is combined with a Bultmannian process of actualisation of the New Testament message, in his model of "Correspondence of Relationship". The "substantial continuity" with the great tradition of faith that Boff uses in this model, is actualised from a socio-economic analysis perspective. Although this method is far from being a Concordism, it works from a base of comparisons between the times of the Bible and the Latin American reality.

Boff has substantially rejected any hermeneutical project involving l'imaginaire as rupture, because he does not agree in the role of tradition as a permanent re-creation of meaning, shared by a community, which is the one which builds its own utopia, in this case of freedom. His "hermeneutical circles" are in reality, pre-suppositions for

interpretation, worked out in the fashion of dialectical pairs. Although we
have found such terminology confusing and misleading, unfortunately, it has
been adopted in some theological circles in Latin America, with the result
of an oversimplification of the hermeneutical process originally being
discussed, and as presented, for instance, by Croatto. The definition of
the hermeneutical project (also called, "hermeneutical spiral"), as the
"circularity between reality and Bible", although correct in principle,
tends to produce a short way of interpretation. Boff has fallen into the
difficulties of trying to avoid radical options, while using a Ricoeurian
theory; Ricoeur's methodology, instead, shows an integrity of principles
which cannot be merged in order to achieve a vacillating result, and a
balance between elements which cannot stand together. Literacy and
interpretation in Latin America are part of the same process of development
and liberation, and there is no such thing as a neutral position between
univocal discourses of legitimisation, and the poor, as *subjects* and
protagonists of their own history.

Part III

4.6 The Contribution of Liberation Theology to Ricoeur's hermeneutics.

Croatto, Segundo and Boff have been inspired by l'imaginaire as rupture of
Ricoeur, and yet, each of them has produced a different proposal of
interpretation. Croatto has followed Ricoeur's theory more closely than the
others, while Segundo has stressed the ideological suspicion of the "three
masters", Freud, Marx and Nietzsche. Boff's work on Ricoeur has been

curtailed by an ambivalence with regard to the position of authority of the church, regarding a hermeneutics where the poor, as the reader, can participate actively. However, the hermeneutical circle which is currently being elaborated in Latin America, has been deeply influenced by the contributions of these hermeneuticians, which, at the same time, are tested in the practice of Basic Ecclesial Communities (CEBs).

Many of the difficulties faced by the CEBs, for instance in relation to the opposition of the church to ordain leaders from the communities, in spite of the shortage of priests, and problems concerning the authority of the church and the clear political option of the CEBs, are closely related to the contradictions and difficulties we have found in the hermeneutics of Croatto, Segundo and Boff. Segundo's idea that the masses need to be manipulated toward the utopia of liberation, or Boff's ambivalent attitude concerning the amount of trust to give to the popular church's own interpretation, are continually recreated in the praxis of the life of the communities; the interesting thing is that answers to these crises come from the communities themselves. Whether the church will listen to them, or not, is still to be seen.

Because the hermeneutical function of the CEBs is the moment of appropriation of the theology of liberation, it also provides a dynamic source of ongoing criticism, which goes beyond any academic thought. Here is where the originality of the hermeneutical circle of liberation lies, and paradoxically, it is also the place where l'imaginaire as rupture is put into action, thus completing Ricoeur's own project of a philosophy of action. The CEBs own characteristic is the otherness (ipseité) of its

members; it is, precisely the alterity of its own life which produces a different meaning, taking distance from the sameness (mêmeté) of the church's interpretation. This is then the place where an ongoing "Caananization" of Scriptures takes place, challenging the same (même) from the *otherness* of the marginalised.

4.6.1   Sharing l'imaginaire as rupture in the Basic Ecclesial Communities.

The work of the CEBs is produced at two levels: first of all, subverting the symbolic political discourses from church and society, and thus, making an effective rupture of l'imaginaire which is not anymore shared by the community, because it has become an ideology. Second, the CEBs have the potential strength to heal the *Cogito Blessé* of Latin America, by the self-discovery of people's real identity in the "We" who interprets its own symbolic universe.

As an important consequence of that, we can now explain a concept which has been misunderstood in the theology of liberation, related to the project of the Latin American "new man/woman". This concept has been currently understood in terms of a socialist utopia, and criticised for its lack of theoretical support. However, we consider that the "new man/woman" is related to the project of being-in-the-world, which goes beyond any human discourse and tends to become objectivised in human actions. The CEBs style of work,
re-enacts or actualises this project, through a natural function of distanciation produced from the physical (and epistemological) location in

the church's structures. Therefore, the actualisation of the being-in-the-world of the *Other* is the result of the praxis of the Christian Base Communities, in their re-reading of their symbolic universe through the Bible, elements from popular religiosity (where the myths have been preserved) and discussion of reality.

4.6.2 The appropriation of transformation.

Labour, work and action, three elements which Ricoeur considers important in the disclosure of the "I" who interprets, are present and "alive" in the interpretative community of the CEBs. This then is the contribution of the hermeneutical circle of liberation theology to Ricoeur: the disclosure of the "We" of the Latin American <u>pueblo</u> who, interpreting its life and faith and sharing <u>l'imaginaire</u> as rupture, does an effective *poiesis* of social transformation, through the revealing of hidden structures of economical and linguistic oppression. The appropriation of a liberative hermeneutics, like the one elaborated by Ricoeur, is tested and enriched in the daily appropriation of the poor communities who re-interpret the Scriptures, their reality and their faith.

Liberating the "We" and understanding that poverty is the <u>Da</u> of <u>Dasein</u>, the Word of God, which, borrowing Ricoeur's terminology, can be said to be "the positive ideology and ultimate utopia" of the Christian people, will also be liberated to recover again its power and freedom. The strength of the revolutionary praxis *from* the marginalised, is based in the dialectic Sameness-Otherness (<u>Même-Autre</u>), from which an authentic "Hermeneutics of Solidarity" can be built. The CEBs have been shown to be instrumental in

the dimension of transformation of reality, implied in every hermeneutic, and particularly in Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle. Further advances on the hermeneutical circle of liberation theology, as inspired by Ricoeur, will now come in Latin America from the work of the Basic Ecclesial Communities.

4.6.3 The future task of liberation theology.

Croatto has defined liberation theology as a hermeneutics of liberation. The future then, lies in the development of its dynamics of interpretation. Liberation theologians have criticised Ricoeur's hermeneutical circle on the basis that he did not take into consideration the socio-political and economic situation. Thus, they claimed that liberation theology had gone further in the hermeneutical circle, being suspicious of the social background in which theological ideas are immersed. As far as we have studied Ricoeur, and his contribution to liberation theology methodology, this accusation seems to be without foundation. Ricoeur's purpose is and has been to work in a philosophy of action, adding a new dimension to the "abstract discussions about language" (500). Such a dimension is composed of the dialectic of work and power, and a philosophy of language which tries to liberate the discourse from it servitude to the elites of power.

Croatto, Segundo and Boff have developed such a dialectic in their work, and although they have different approaches to Ricoeurian hermeneutics,

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(500) Cf. P. Ricoeur in B. Melano Couch, Hermenéutica Metódica, p. 262.

they agree on two points. First of all, that no interpretation is

definitive, and second, that the circle of interpretation must keep its dynamics. This means the welcoming of new elements to enlighten the praxis of liberation theology, and the eventual changes in the hermeneutical process itself.

The question of the originality of liberation theology's hermeneutical circle can be found in the following points:
1) The addressee is different; the option is made for the poor, as addressee.
2) The hermeneutical process is based on a collective work of interpretation. This is the reason why we see contradictions in it.
3) The moment of appropriation is a collective moment too.

From this, we can say that Ricoeur's work has had a pastoral influence in the Latin American churches, which is obviously manifested in the communitarian religious life of the CEBs. Each CEB is in an ongoing process of appropriation of a new project of the world, and eventually, they will transform the hermeneutical circle too. To study the CEBs as communities of interpretation is beyond the scope of the present thesis. No doubt this will be the the next step to be taken in the study of the development of the Ricoeurian hermeneutical circle, as it is being used and transformed by the work of the church of the poor in Latin America.

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