



VANHOOZER, Kevin J., *Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur. A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology*

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[See table of contents](#)

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On appréciera par contre que l'A. ait inclus, dans la référence aux articles répertoriés par NTA, l'indication précise de l'endroit où NTA décrit le contenu de l'article en question.

Rares sont les bibliographies qui présentent comme exhaustifs leurs listes de travaux. L'A. de la présente bibliographie a eu la prudence de ne pas s'attribuer le mérite de l'exhaustivité, même pour la période d'une quinzaine d'années à laquelle il a limité ses recherches. À propos de Luc 1-2, par exemple, je ne retrouve pas dans la bibliographie de Van Segbroeck les cinq références suivantes que je lis dans mon fichier bibliographique personnel: FULLER, R.H., «The Conception/Birth of Jesus as a Christological Moment», JSNT no 1 (1978) 37-52; GALOT, J., «Riflessioni sul primo atto di fede cristiana. Maria la prima credente» CC 1 (1978) 27-39; HILL, D., «Review of R.E. Brown, *The Birth of the Messiah*», JSNT no 1 (1978) 61-65; REICKE, B., «Christ's Birth and Childhood», dans *From Faith to Faith* (en collab.) (1979) 151-165; AUGUSTO TAVARES, A., «Infancy narratives and historical criticism», TDig 28 (1980) 53-54. Or, trois de ces cinq références renvoient à des revues que l'A. dit avoir dépouillé (JSNT et TDig).

Nous pourrions faire les mêmes constatations, pour ne citer qu'un deuxième texte de Luc, à propos de Luc 24,13-35. Je ne retrouve pas dans le relevé de Van Segbroeck cinq autres références de mon fichier personnel, qui a été fait, lui, à partir des *originaux*: CERBELAUD, D., «Bribes sur Emmaüs», VS 133 (1979) 4-7; RANQUET, J.-G., «Sur la route d'Emmaüs», VS 133 (1979) 26-31; BERRY, P.J., «The Road to Emmaus», ExpTim 91 (1980) 204-206; CHARPENTIER, É., «L'officier éthiopien (Ac 8,26-40) et les disciples d'Emmaüs (Lc 24,13-35)», dans *La Pâque du Christ, mystère de salut* (en collab.) (1982), 197-201; PERROT, C., «Emmaüs ou la rencontre du Seigneur (Lc 24,123-35), dans *La Pâque du Christ, mystère de salut* (en collab.) (1982), 159-166. Or, ces cinq références renvoient à des revues que l'A. dit avoir dépouillées, ainsi qu'à un ouvrage collectif qu'il connaît bien (voir la référence 2068 de la bibliographie de Van Segbroeck).

L'ouvrage de Frans Van Segbroeck rendra de grands services aux chercheurs qui exploreront l'évangile de Luc. Un tel relevé est le fruit d'un long travail austère pour lequel l'A. mérite toute notre reconnaissance.

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Kevin J. VANHOOZER, **Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur: A Study in Hermeneutics and Theology**. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, xiii-308 pages.

Platonic in sheer literary virtuosity, Aristotelian in the wide range of his interest and competence, Augustinian in his sensitivity to human temporality, Cartesian in his commitment to clarity and rigor of thought, Kantian in his recognition of the limits of human reason, Kierkegaardian in his appreciation of the tension of the eternal, Heideggerian in his hermeneutic approach, Paul Ricœur is without doubt one of the most erudite and seminal thinkers of the twentieth century. It is to Vanhoozer's credit that in his attempt to encompass and plumb the multifaceted and multilayered thought of Ricœur, he not only depicts a philosopher securely grounded in the tradition, but also succeeds in presenting a profile of Ricœur as a philosopher-exegete.

More specifically, the author states his purpose as follows: "The aim of this book is to render Ricœur's thought, particularly his recent work on narrative, accessible to Englishspeaking

students of religion and theology, and to offer an appreciative yet critical interpretation of his hermeneutics and its application to the Gospels" (p. 3). To support the specific nature of his task, he quotes from an article by Mary Gerhart: "Ricœur deserves to be presented as the most theologically sophisticated of the major contemporary theorists of interpretation" (p. 3). In fact, Vanhoozer finds it surprising that "few booklength studies have explored Ricœur's 'theological sophistication', and this despite Ricœur's many forays into matters biblical and theological" (p. 3). Such studies are undertaken on a small scale because, strictly speaking, philosophers are not theologically adept. Moreover, since Ricœur's writing is philosophically technical, those who feel intellectually comfortable with him tend to share a similar formal philosophical background. Having said this, I want now to focus on the central nerve of Vanhoozer's ambitious and engaging study.

The author's primary claim is that the driving force behind Ricœur's philosophical enterprise is "a passion for the possible". He qualifies this phrase by reminding us that it is Kierkegaard's definition of hope, and with which Ricœur is in full agreement (p. 6). I have no problem with this. But a price must be paid for compressing the content and thrust of Ricœur's reflections into this single rubric and from its vantage point try to access the extensive range of his endeavors in psychoanalysis, linguistics, philosophy of language, the symbolism of religious discourse, socio-political thought, and biblical exegesis. In this respect, what gets undermined is the overwhelming sense of complexity, ambiguity, ambivalence, opacity, discordance, disproportion, and tension in human reality which unequivocally informs Ricœur's work.

Admittedly, Vanhoozer restricts his study to an examination of Ricœur's hermeneutics and its application to the Gospels. In this regard, the author never wavers in pursuing his goal: to render Ricœur's hermeneutics in such a way that its preeminent concern with fiction and metaphorical discourse is aptly associated with the eschatological vision of the world characteristic of the Gospels. Vanhoozer accomplishes this feat by linking the poetic capacity of metaphor to create meaning to the biblical concept of hope, which always bespeaks a "more than actuality" (p. 70). Hence, to the extent that metaphor expands our vision beyond the actual, that it refers to hitherto unforeseen possibilities, and enables us to entertain visions of what might be, it correlates with St. Paul's phrase, "how much more" (p. 72). Thus, according to Vanhoozer, a deep conceptual kinship is established between metaphor's "surplus of meaning" and the Gospels' "superabundance of life" in the work of Ricœur.

Since they are both forms of poetic language, what has been said of metaphor equally applies to narrative. In metaphor the emphasis is placed on semantic innovation and its ability to offer different ways of seeing the world. Narrative, which presents "different ways of seeing human being in the world", orders an otherwise meaningless sequence of temporal moments in a disconnected life into a meaningful experience. Both metaphor and narrative, then, attest to the fact that human being is not limited to present actuality; there is a "surplus of being" in human existence: possibility. And it is by virtue of this possibility that humanity can hope.

Hope is the referent of religious discourse; and religious discourse is a species of poetic language. It is the capacity in religion, says Ricœur, "to create a new way of life and to open my eyes to new aspects of reality, new possibilities", that makes it "poetical". Indeed, "I believe that the fundamental theme of Revelation is this awakening and this call, into the heart of existence, of the imagination of the possible. The possibilities are opened before man which fundamentally constitute what is revealed. The revealed as such is an opening to existence, a possibility of existence" (p. 120).

Although similar in being creative, poetic and religious discourses can be distinguished in three ways: (1) Poetry explores human possibilities merely *imaginatively*; religious language

includes the dimension of *commitment*. Religious language also requires membership in a specific community with a particular code of ethics. (2) Unlike poetical language, which features any human possibility, religious language is concerned with “limit possibilities”. Moreover, not only does it speak of any commitment, but of total commitment, ultimate concerns or “limit-experiences” (e.g., wonder, joy, love; guilt, anxiety, mortality). (3) “It is the naming of God by the biblical texts that specifies the religious at the interior of the poetic.” Here the distinction between religious and theological language is crucial. The reference of religious discourse is the first-order or “originary” expressions of faith; theological language deals with their subsequent conceptual clarification. Furthermore, since there are several forms of speech that name God, Ricœur takes into account the various kinds of discourse that together make up “religious language” (p. 121).

What cannot escape notice in Vanhoozer’s analysis is the key role played by the imagination in Ricœur’s project. In both poetry and religion the organ of freedom, the source of selftransformation, is the *imagination*. In the former imagination projects possibilities, in the latter it *appropriates* them, thereby enabling the individual to have a new life: the subject of the Gospels (p. 224). Given the theme of this study: biblical narrative, it is significant that the author connects the centrality of imagination in Ricœur’s program to Kant and Heidegger. “From Heidegger Ricœur borrows the notion of temporality of human being, future-oriented to the not-yet possibilities... From Kant Ricœur takes up and develops the notion of the creative imagination as the ‘power of the possible’...” (p. 17).

Even when Vanhoozer engages Ricœur in conversation with theologians such as Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, Moltmann, Hans Frei, and David Tracy, Ricœur is depicted as relying almost exclusively on the inspiration of the two philosophers mentioned above. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the biblical exegesis attributed to Ricœur by the author has a distinctively secular impulse. “In the end”, Vanhoozer writes, “the Gospels achieve their theological importance in Ricœur as works of the creative imagination” (p. 278). Hence, although Ricœur does not straightforwardly deny the historicity of the Gospel accounts, “it is... evident that his hermeneutic philosophy as a whole is slanted in favor of ‘the idealism of the word event’ where new forms of self-understanding arise in front of poetic metaphors and narratives” (*Ibid.*).

In brief, the author does not make it clear where exactly Ricœur stands on biblical matters in general and on theological realism in particular. To a large extent the scope of human possibilities is determined by the texts that bear witness to human existence, and the Gospels are among such texts. But the Gospels singularly proclaim that despite the presence of evil, God still loves the world, and this love is ultimately greater than any evil. However universal the possibility of God’s love may be, human beings need the *events* of the poetic and proclaimed word for its apprehension (p. 264). That is to say, the priority of the creative word is a *sine qua non* for faith. On this accounting, the Gospels are true not because they recount historical acts as such, but because they express how meanings have been concretely experienced in the past. Thus, what the Gospel narratives illustrate is something that is essential in the human condition (p. 263).

I have greatly enjoyed reading Vanhoozer’s book. It differs from most studies on Ricœur in that it’s written in clear, readable prose. Except for some technical terms that are peculiar to the disciplines discussed, the study is free of the esoteric and recondite second-order

terminologies which are commonly used in philosophical and theological writings. Besides being a positive contribution to hermeneutic and biblical scholarship, this book has the additional quality of being a stimulus for a further reading of Ricœur.

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Paul MOREAU, **L'éducation morale chez Kant**, Paris, Les Éditions du Cerf, coll. «Thèses», 1988, 421 pages.

On ne compte plus les écrits sur la pensée de Kant. Rares sont toutefois ceux ayant pour toile de fond la place de l'éducation ou, pour employer un langage qui sied mieux au siècle des lumières, de la pédagogie dans le corpus kantien. Hormis les introductions, fort riches mais trop brèves, de Barni, de Philonenko et d'About aux traductions des notes de cours de Kant réunies par son disciple Rink sous le titre *Über Pädagogie*, nul auteur, à notre connaissance, n'avait encore osé aborder de front cette épineuse question en langue française. Voilà ce à quoi le beau livre de Paul Moreau entend remédier. L'auteur s'évertue à monter en épingle le rôle important sinon central que revêtaient les préoccupations pédagogiques aux yeux de Kant. «S'évertuer» n'est pas ici un terme trop fort, puisque le principium movens de l'auteur est de ne pas se limiter aux uniques *Réflexions sur l'éducation* mais de s'inspirer d'éléments épars dans l'ensemble de l'œuvre du philosophe afin de mener son entreprise à bon port. Par-delà cette intention première, aisément classifiable sous la rubrique des études kantiennes, se profile une tout autre ambition qui est du même coup l'originalité propre de cette thèse : découvrir chez Kant rien de moins qu'un consensus implicite possible concernant une pratique (et pas simplement une théorie) éducative viable pour notre temps. Selon le diagnostic de l'auteur, notre époque se caractériserait entre autres par une éducation purement utilitaire et pragmatique, depuis que la religion n'est plus à même de prétendre à être seule à fonder morale et éducation. C'est donc, d'un seul tenant, faire fi des nombreuses approches du phénomène éducatif issues de la psychologie, de la biologie et de la sociologie, et se tourner (plutôt que de lancer de plates invectives à leur endroit) vers une *philosophie* de l'éducation, susceptible d'éclairer les fins vers lesquelles doit tendre toute éducation morale digne de ce nom. La philosophie de Kant apparaît dans ces conditions à Moreau comme un véritable sésame. Projet apparemment audacieux mais qui ne fait en définitive que tirer la conséquence impliquée dans la célèbre phrase de Kant, essentielle pour l'intelligence de toute sa pensée : «l'homme ne peut devenir homme que par l'éducation».

Dès l'introduction sont clairement posées et sérieuses les questions directrices : 1- Quelles sont les conditions générales de l'éducation morale ? 2- Qu'est-ce que l'éducation morale ? 3- Quelle place doit-elle occuper entre l'anthropologie et la métaphysique, puis entre l'histoire et la décision éthique ? La réponse à la première de ces questions couvre quatre chapitres. Dans le premier, intitulé «Pourquoi éduquer ?», l'auteur nous rappelle que pour Kant la nature n'est pas en mesure d'assurer le développement complet de l'homme. Ce dernier n'est pas seulement un être naturel et, par conséquent, parmi toutes les créatures, il est la seule qui doive être éduquée. Encore faut-il rendre compte du rôle de cet art qu'est l'éducation. Moreau propose cinq explications ou directions possibles pour l'éducation, qu'il puise dans divers ouvrages de Kant : 1- aider la nature à développer l'homme, 2- suppléer une nature absente, 3- contrer une nature ennemie, 4- assumer une nature dérégulée, 5- guérir une nature corrompue. Autant d'explications qui laissent suggérer au lecteur une certaine équivocité dans la pensée de Kant, puisque Moreau ne libère pas en bout de course l'aporie. Il aurait assurément eu la main plus