

Lund University  
Centre for Languages and Literature  
Supervisor: Eva Haettner Aurelius  
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Isak Hyltén-Cavallius  
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# Reading with Reference

## – A Study of the Limits of Formalist Criticism

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Georg Trakl’s “Klage”

## 1. Introduction

Philosopher Theodor W. Adorno says in "On Lyric Poetry and Society" ("Rede über Lyrik und Gesellschaft, 1957) that it is common practice in criticism to read into literary works nothing but the "experience of [them] as they are".<sup>1</sup> This would be to read with the eye of the exclusively formalist literary critic studying nothing else than the meanings of literary works which means effectively isolating herself to the semantics of a text.<sup>2</sup> Ricoeur says "that literary criticism is careful to maintain the distinction between the inside of the text and its outside. It considers any exploration of the linguistic universe as outside its range. The analysis of the text extends, then, to the frontiers of the text and forbids any attempt to step outside the text".<sup>3</sup> It is a thesis of this thesis that in doing this the formalist critic attempts to liberate the object of her criticism from any worldly implications in order to either study the text as an art-work in its own right or to claim what one might call the verifiability of her analysis. In the first case we will come to see that meaning without reference is impossible in discourse and we intend to study literature as language in use, as discourse. For that reason and because of lack of space, time and knowledge we will not touch upon the first issue but leave it behind after this. The question here is instead how the second approach which is in effect a bracketing of reference in discourse affects criticism's correspondence to the properties of the literary work as it stands at its full potential.

Adorno upholds that "[o]nly one who hears the voice of humankind in the poem's solitude can understand what the poem is saying" and we fortify this by quoting Ricoeur saying; "it seems to me, the distinction between the inside and the outside [of a work]

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore W. Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society", *Notes to Literature – Volume One*, New York 1991, p. 37

<sup>2</sup> Ricoeur, p. 106f. Formalism, *Filosoflexikonet*, ed. Poul Lübcke, Stockholm 1988, p. 167 and furthermore Logical formalism and Formalism in art, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, ed. Simon Blackburn, second revised edition, Oxford 2008 (1994), p. 137. Formalism is a term used by Ricoeur himself. See for example *The Symbolism of Evil*, New York 1969, p. 17. Professor of philosophy, culture and corporate management Bengt Kristensson Uggla has furthermore picked it up and uses it in his works on Ricoeur. See for example *Kommunikation på bristningsgränsen*, Stockholm/Stehag 1994, p. 178. The term is derived from a school of mathematics which holds that mathematics is simply a game of formulas according to rules. Formulas that are nothing but inscriptions on paper without essence, having only syntactical abilities and designating nothing but themselves. By transferring the concept of formalism to language philosophy it comes to stand for schools of thought that focus all their attention on the internal workings of language and the production of meaning while having no regard for the referential aspects of language. The strongest representatives for such thought are possibly French structuralism and semiotics. Furthermore and from here on 'exclusively formalist literary criticism' will be referred to as 'formalist criticism' for reasons of simplification and accessibility of the text. We say finally that Paul Ricoeur does not distinguish the formalist critic from the general literary critic. It seems however in this day and age that it is too much of a generalization to claim that the formalist criticism presented by this thesis applies to all critics and this is why we reserve ourselves by distinguishing formalist criticism from criticism at large.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative", *On Paul Ricoeur – Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood, London/New York 1991, p. 26

is a product of the very method of the analysis of texts and does not correspond to the reader's experience".<sup>4</sup> They ascertain thus that the inside and outside of literary works cannot be studied in separation without the risk of losing "something essential about the basis of their quality"?<sup>5</sup> While disagreeing upon, or rather having the opposite idea of what a more full reading will amount to, Adorno and Ricoeur seem to agree upon the state of affairs.<sup>6</sup>

However, granting a literary work's claim to a world inherits a massive problem of philosophy. This is the problem of reference and few problems have been the object of more philosophical thought since into the question of reference is laced the problematic of the cogito, of the distinction between epistemology and ontology and the philosophy of truth. Hence there is a multitude of writings by means of which one might approach the problem. There are however few philosopher to my knowledge who have been able to navigate this jungle of theories more clearly and adopted a stance on the issue of textual reference that is more relevant, at least for the study of literature, than Ricoeur. He truly follows the concept of meaning to the point where it touches upon the world. Perhaps other philosophers have achieved this with the same precision but what is interesting with Ricoeur, for the literary scholar and particularly in the present context, is how he locates the point of contact between language and the world within the kernel of poetic discourse. It is by enlisting the help of Ricoeur that we can get to know the full potential of the literary work in order to study the fittingness of formalist criticism to it.

It might from this introduction seem as if we are here attempting to present or construct an alternative to formalist criticism from the philosophy of Ricoeur. This is not so. Instead we are simply to point out the limits of formalist criticism. To locate these limits with precision however we contrast formalist criticism with Ricoeur's theory of poetic discourse and his poetic hermeneutics that correspond to it. This introduction has sketched a possible problem with the formalist critics' bracketing of reference in reading. To study this potential problem our main concern must be to point out the limits of formalist criticism and any consequences that might come to the study of literature with it.

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<sup>4</sup> Adorno, p. 37. Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative", p. 26

<sup>5</sup> Adorno, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Adorno attempts to show how the down side of bracketing reference is that it hinders an individual experience of an artwork to enter into the linguistic community and how this makes any experience utterly individual but never communal. Ricoeur instead holds that the individual, subjective, reading in itself is lost or at least trivialized by a mere formalist approach that only takes into account the meanings as they are deduced from shared linguistic competence while hindering the projection of the world of the work.

## 2. Delimitation and Material

Ricoeur has a rather extensive body of work and though several of his works have implications for or directly treats reference of literary works it is impossible to cover them all in a thesis of this volume. For this reason I have found it necessary to impose rather rigid limitations on how much to include in this study.

Ricoeur's great work *The Rule of Metaphor* (*La métaphore vive*, 1975) has been chosen to constitute the theoretical ground stone of this thesis. There are several reasons for this but three stand out clearer than any other.

First, the idea for this thesis springs from a several years long obsession with metaphor that climaxed, or branched out to envelop all poetic discourse with the reading of *The Rule of Metaphor*. In a way, anyone who is fascinated by metaphor and its workings is proven right to be so by the book since it holds that in metaphor we find the ultimate power of language, the power to make itself fit to new experience in the world. This means that in metaphor, language and world are abridged and thus it is the proper place to start when the referentiality of poetic discourse is on the agenda.

Secondly the book ties living metaphor directly to poetic discourse in particular which, in relation to the first argument, further points to the relevance of understanding metaphor in order to understand the full potential of the literary work. If poetic discourse is metaphor and metaphor is poetic discourse there can be no question of its relevance for this thesis.

Thirdly and most importantly, in *The Rule of Metaphor*, Ricoeur performs a re-modulation of romanticist textual hermeneutics so that it fits into the theoretical landscape of today. This critical hermeneutics that Ricoeur designs will supply the background to formalist criticism as we situate it.

For the presentation of Ricoeur's poetic hermeneutics I have, for reasons explained later, seen it fit to start in his hermeneutics of the symbol. In doing this I have briefly used another of Ricoeur's works *The Symbolism of Evil* (*La symbolique du mal*, 1967).

Several of Ricoeur's articles have been brought in to complete the picture that this thesis is to paint. Of these "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation" (1973) and "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics" (1974) stands out as particularly helpful.

Ricoeur is a great philosopher and is renowned for his ability to explain in a pedagogical and structured way. However he considers himself one in a never ending line of

philosophers partaking in an un-finalizable project of understanding.<sup>7</sup> Thus he is always in dialogue with his predecessors and contemporaries and repeatedly uses seemingly oppositional philosophies to establish paradoxes for his own dialectics. In doing this he never takes for granted that a philosopher has nothing to say to him but rather the opposite. Everyone from Aristotle to Derrida is given room to speak though filtered through Ricoeur's ever critical mind. This is of course a congenial stroke, one of many, of Ricoeur's but his literariness sometimes poses an obstacle for readers like me who are rather unschooled in philosophy. For this reason it has been necessary to use a couple of readers that explains some of the references that Ricoeur constantly makes. For this purpose professor of philosophy David Pellauer has written a book called *Ricoeur – A Guide for the Perplexed* (2007) which has been a true lifesaver at certain times and by the same token doctor of philosophy Karl Simms' guide named simply *Ricoeur* (2003) has helped me through the process of understanding.

Despite the help of Pellauer and Simms it has been necessary for me to consult several of Ricoeur's sources directly. Philosophers such as Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl, Gottlob Frege and Émile Benveniste are referred to so extensively by Ricoeur that it has been necessary to once in a while go back to them to try to form a deeper understanding of their work. This might not show in my references but has nevertheless constituted a decisive part of the material used to write this thesis.

In the cases where I have felt the need to enlist someone's help one work stands out as superior to everything else that I have read on Ricoeur. Bengt Kristensson Uggla has written an extensive doctoral thesis on Ricoeur named *Kommunikation på Bristningsgränsen – Paul Ricoeur* (1994) that basically covers Ricoeur's philosophical development up until 1994. It became apparent to me after a couple of months that it was practically impossible to lift out a couple of works of Ricoeur and study them in separation since they are all part of a long chain of realizations added on to one another.<sup>8</sup> Even if one considers his solutions to, for example the problem of metaphor, to be beautiful they can seem futile without the larger context of Ricoeur's whole body of work. I have been unable to find a more thorough guide through Ricoeur's philosophy than Uggla's. Furthermore Uggla deals with the dialectics of

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<sup>7</sup> David Pellauer, *Ricoeur – A Guide for the Perplexed*, London 2007, p. 1

<sup>8</sup> Ricoeur has been criticised for not having an overall project or problem that he tries to solve throughout his body of work. It is true that his books treat different subjects but I hold, in agreement with Uggla, that they all have one thing in common. They focus on the problem of communication or rather choose to consider problems from a communicational perspective.

Ricoeur, which to me stands out as the most difficult part of Ricoeur's work, with an inspiring simplicity but still without ever compromising with bringing Ricoeur's full point across.

There is also the extensive work of Monroe C. Beardsley, *Aesthetics – Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (1958), to be thankful to. As the last in a line of great interaction theorists, preceded by Ivor A. Richards and Max Black, Beardsley comes up with the idea of metaphor as the result of a semantic clash between two words and by this pushes metaphor theory to its limits as a phenomenon located purely within language and semantics. A limit which he, though resisting to admit it, comes to cross opening up the field for Ricoeur's own theory of metaphor.

In a small part of this thesis examples have been used. Since I use example to a very limited extent it seemed that shorter works of poetry would be preferable to novels. Furthermore different types of discourses borrow from each other in order to utilize each other's strengths and this can make the limits between them unclear. It is in fact so that no discourse stands on its own but always enlists the strengths of other types of discourse. But as long as a poem "knows itself" to be a poem it can be regarded as one, says Ricoeur.<sup>9</sup> For this reason a poem of high poetic density was needed so that it would be obviously poetic to anyone. With Ricoeur a high poetic density would be synonymous with a frequent usage of metaphor, which I would hold to be typical for expressionist poetry. This is part of the reason that Georg Trakl's poem "Klage" (1914) was chosen.<sup>10</sup>

Speaking of the referentiality of literary works it initially seemed important to me to at least try to find literary works from a historical context that was novel to its contemporaries, a context that might truly demand innovative language use in order to be spoken of. In many ways the Great War constituted such a context. Here a young generation, born after the peace of the Franco-Prussian war of 1871, became pawns in a game too great for any of them to understand. Military strategy of ancient times clashed with modern weaponry and the result was a massacre inapproachable by common language, something indeed unspeakable or at least previously unspoken. It is in the attempt to depict such situations that poetic language truly has to flex its muscles hence poetry written under such circumstances seemed to be the most probable to pay off when subjected to a referential reading. Since Georg Trakl died early in the war he only managed to write three poems in wartime. One, "Grodok" (1914), which has been worked on and analysed incessantly and indeed become representative of Trakl's oeuvre which is why we will not use it. This leaves the two poems "Klage" and "Im

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<sup>9</sup> Comp. Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, Toronto 1977, p. 367

<sup>10</sup> See: "Insert"

Osten” (1914), a number more than ample for my purposes, of which “Klage” has been chosen for no reason other than that I personally prefer it to the other.

### 3.Method

In order to study the limits of formalist criticism it is necessary to go through some introductory steps.

First the object of criticism, poetic discourse, must be defined as it is to be taken in the context of this thesis since the possible shortcomings of formalist criticism will only appear in relation to the fullness of its object.

Secondly formalist criticism must be presented as it is to be understood in the context of this thesis. Like any term formalist criticism does not refer to one static idea but to an idea that fluctuates over time. The reason for choosing philosopher Monroe C. Beardsley’s theory for explication of metaphor in order to present formalist criticism in this context is two-headed. First we are to prey upon the fact that both Beardsley and Ricoeur consider metaphor to be a poem in short. Since we will locate the essence of poetic discourse in metaphor, comparing Beardsley’s theory of explication of metaphor with Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of metaphor will allow us to avoid a voluminous digression over a full formalist theory of explication and a full textual hermeneutics.

Thirdly a critique of Beardsley’s theory of metaphor and explication of metaphor will be performed based in Ricoeur’s critique after which we will enter the chapter on the “Construction” of meaning in Ricoeur’s hermeneutics. From this we will go to the presentation of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of the symbol and subsequently that of metaphor in order to provide a background in front of which we will be able to clearly position the limits of formalist criticism.

Up until here the thesis will have followed roughly the path of Ricoeur’s philosophical project though reflections upon it relevant for the goal of this thesis will have been made upon the way. The next step of our study however is a concluding chapter that contains the actual delimitation of formalist criticism against the background of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics. Throughout this chapter the question of whether or not formalist criticism is up to par with its object at full potential will be our major concern.

To sum up the method is thus to reveal the full potential of poetic discourse and present a textual hermeneutics that corresponds to it. Then to study a school of criticism that is formalistic and see how well it corresponds to poetic discourse at its full potential in



comparison to said hermeneutics. By these few steps we intend to contrast formalist criticism so that its limitations appear at a great level of precision.

#### 4. Terminology

A decisive part of Ricoeur's work lies in the definition of terms. For example he spends many pages redefining mimesis for his readers first in *The Rule of Metaphor* and later in *Time and Narrative (Temps et récit, 1983 – 85)* and the term discourse gets a thorough run-over in his article "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics" but there is still a seeming problem with Ricoeur's use of terms. Quite large parts of Ricoeur's terminology are left undefined as his terms seem to develop and transform throughout his works. This actually has more to do with Ricoeur's basic linguistic model than what is initially realized. It will become clear as this thesis progresses that Ricoeur has adopted a stance where only words in context of other words have meaning. The explanation for this lies in the realization that all words are in fact polysemous, they always have more than one sense and have the potential to mean anything.<sup>11</sup> A trivial but illuminating example might be found in the language of the Smurfs where the word 'smurf' is used in an innumerable number of constellations and receives different meaning by interacting in different textual contexts. The result of such a linguistic model is that words out of textual context can just as well be said to have all and thus no meanings. In functional discourse however, like that of the Smurfs, this potentially infinite polysemy of words is reduced by their combination with other words in sentences so that they receive particular meanings distributed to them by the full textual context.<sup>12</sup> While speculative discourse typically sets out to optimize this function of language so that words seem to have almost static meanings poetic discourse challenges this function in order to find new objects for language. This will of course be expanded upon further later on but the digression here is justified since it is explanatory of why there are few direct definitions of terms in this thesis. Instead I have attempted to make the text clear by extending the textual contexts in which difficult terms are located. It is in fact not definition per se that Ricoeur performs with, for example, the term mimesis in *The Rule of Metaphor*. It is rather an extension of the textual context which in turn gives a greater precision in the reduction of polysemy of the terms.

There comes with this the question of what use we would have of dictionaries if language works like this. The answer of this question necessitates a rather vast digression that

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<sup>11</sup> It is by metaphor, we shall see, that words receive this ability which is a pragmatic condition for the existence of language itself.

<sup>12</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 77

would perhaps be inappropriate here. It will instead be answered in the chapter on “Construction”.

## 5.Original Language Vs. Translation

There is a seeming problem with this thesis that lies in the fact that I read Ricoeur in translation. It is a reoccurring problem for me since I am fascinated by French theorists and literature while I cannot yet speak or read French. However, there are forgiving strokes in Ricoeur’s discourse theory that seems to allow the translation of philosophy while upholding that literary texts are to be read in their original language. There is for Ricoeur, as we shall see, quite a difference between speculative discourse and poetic discourse. While the utmost purpose of poetic discourse is to redescribe new experience in the world, speculative discourse wishes to formalize in order to bring clarity to the communication of meanings already established in language. The translation of formalized language entails the finding of a synonymous word in another language and the proper contextualization of it to other words in order to approximate the same meanings in new words. But when it comes to poetic discourse no such words can be found without the translator first formalizing the poetic text which indeed would hinder it from doing all the aforementioned things that it is tasked to do. The living text would be lost and even if the resulting translation would be re-poeticized by the translator the text, alive again, would be another. Ricoeur says on the “non-translatability of poetic language” that it is “translatable with respect to meaning, and not translatable with respect to signification”.<sup>13</sup> In this very brief discussion of things that will be spoken of in much closer detail later I find a defence for reading philosophy in translation.

## 6.Dialectics

The dialectic approach to philosophy runs throughout Ricoeur’s work and cannot in its entirety be lifted out and explained separately from the rest of the thesis. This would basically constitute the thesis in itself. However, since it is complicated for most people who are schooled in deductive logic, like most of us are throughout our education, to see the productivity of paradoxes I feel that a brief introduction to Ricoeur’s dialectics might be helpful before this study is initiated.

One of the strengths of dialectic philosophy as I see it is its ability to consider dynamic systems. Where some schools of Analytic Philosophy struggle with definitions, with

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<sup>13</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 163

attempting to form static grounds for philosophy, dialectic philosophy takes into account the dynamism of systems. In the extension of this comes what I consider to be Ricoeur's major gain from dialectics. The ability to account for temporality or 'becoming' in the world, but this comes with a price. When one considers the world as in a constant state of 'becoming' the idea of absolute truth loses its foundation. On account of this many philosophers have turned their backs on dialectics but for Ricoeur the loss of absolutism comes as a blessing in disguise as it helps him question if understanding really is the unveiling of absolute truth. Instituting a mode of understanding that is dialectic and lies between a cogito centred within the subject that states its own world and accepts it and a cogito that is decentred and in the world that has primacy over it he answers the question with an implied: There can be no absolutes.<sup>14</sup>

Ricoeur's dialectic is not synthesising as Johan Gottlieb Fichte's and it is not negative as Adorno's. It is a dialectic that will never be mediated or equalized but is still constantly striving towards an impossible reconciliation of the paradox, impossible because of what Ricoeur calls the ever accumulating surplus of meaning in the world.<sup>15</sup> It is thus not like Friedrich Hegel's dialectics either since its paradoxes is not mediated by a greater context that is static but of one that can never be fully grasped. In Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics the strive towards this impossible reconciliation acts as motor for interpretation and this results in an idea of interpretation as something ongoing and eternal that will never reach its goal but still constantly expands toward better understanding. As have become general for this introductory phase I conclude with saying that Ricoeur's dialectics will be discussed in detail as the thesis progresses. Take this short chapter not as an introduction to these particular paradoxes that Ricoeur works from but as examples of the mechanics of Ricoeur's dialectics.

## 7. Poetic Discourse

Criticism deals with poetic discourse thus we need to find out what the identifying marks of such discourse are. First it will be necessary to understand the general concept of discourse from which we can develop an understanding of the particular case of discourse that is poetic.

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<sup>14</sup> I wish to make one reservation here. Ricoeur is a Christian and holds that the world is given to us in form of the constant surplus of meaning in the world that it is our task to interpret. This is postulated and taken for granted. The gift in itself, that is the ever evolving world, is in constant change since it is in a constant process of being given, the act of giving in itself however might be considered absolute. I must furthermore underline here that we must not focus on the theology from which the idea of the gift comes. Instead we might say, in a radically simplified way, that each and every human has a horizon that she pushes forward in an infinitely vast universe that evolves over time and she does so by interpreting that which lies beyond her horizon. The idea of the gift, the constant surplus of meaning, simply explains the represents the vastness of the world subjected to time in which our horizon expands. It represents the infinite amount of experiences left for Man to interpret.

<sup>15</sup> Comp. Uggla, p. 360

Secondly we must understand the concept of the literary work that is inhabited by such discourse.

From the outset Ricoeur gathers from his contemporary Émile Benveniste that even though the basic unit of language is the word, the basic unit of discourse is the sentence. To this corresponds an argument of levels of language where the level of the word is the semiotic level while the level of the sentence is the semantic level. This is derivative of the language model that has already been mentioned in the chapter on “Terminology”, of words having meaning only when they are contextualized by other words. This means that the “sentence is realized in words, but the words are not simply segments of it. A sentence constitutes a whole that is not reducible to the sum of its parts”.<sup>16</sup> This in turn means that when words are configured and organised together by a speaking subject they are enriched with meaning or that meaning, rather than being brought to the sentence by the words is doled out to the words from the level of the sentence.<sup>17</sup>

When looking for a theory of discourse Ricoeur realizes that the Structuralist theories will not suffice. He realizes that linguist Ferdinand de Saussure’s distinction between ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ is an abstraction from which no complete understanding of discourse can ever be derived.<sup>18</sup> On a theoretical level one can indeed study language from this perspective and it has been done in a fruitful way by linguists since de Saussure. But as language becomes discourse, as it is lifted into communication, ‘langue’ and ‘parole’ becomes inseparable. Ricoeur comments on Roland Barthes’ ‘Qui parle?’ by saying that it “does not apply” on the level of ‘langue’ since only discourse has speakers.<sup>19</sup> This realization comes from Benveniste’s definition of discourse as being produced by “someone who says something about something to someone”, that is; of discourse as language in use and as an event.<sup>20</sup> Let us break this statement into pieces in order to understand in depth the nature of the eventfulness of discourse.

The “someone” of the statement implies the basic need for a speaking subject in order to lift language into discourse. The first event of discourse lies in the actions of a speaking subject when she decides to contextualize words with each other in order to give them a communicable meaning.<sup>21</sup> Where ‘langue’ is a static structure outside of time ‘parole’

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<sup>16</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 77

<sup>17</sup> Uggla, p. 293f

<sup>18</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 79. Paul Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, *From Text to Action – Essays in Hermeneutics, II*, Ed. James M. Edie and John McCumber, Evanston 1991, p. 77

<sup>19</sup> Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, p. 77

<sup>20</sup> Comp. Uggla, p. 294. (“[N]ågon som säger något om något till någon”).

<sup>21</sup> Uggla, p. 294f

is always the result of an act of usage by a subject that makes a reference.<sup>22</sup> Ricoeur says: “Languages do not speak, people do”.<sup>23</sup>

The second event of discourse lies in the “something” that is the meaning that can be derived from the constellation of words in the statement. The meaning of discourse is eventful in that it is realised in time while the meaning of “the system of language is virtual and outside of time”.<sup>24</sup>

The “about something” constitutes the third event of discourse as it is the reference that the meanings make to an event in the world if the discourse is poetical and to a conceptual event or thought if speculative.<sup>25</sup>

Finally the “to someone” is the direction of the discourse towards a listening, or rather interpreting, subject. The fourth event lies in the eventfulness of the exchange of messages in communication. This gives that discourse is always communicative per definition and always has intention. Discourse is thus not first, like the ‘langue’ of the Structuralists, a structure that governs speakers but something that speakers produce for the purpose of communication.<sup>26</sup>

But not only is discourse always realized as an event it is furthermore always understood as meaning and Ricoeur says that it is not the “the fleeting event” that we wish to understand, “but rather the meaning which endures”.<sup>27</sup> This however does not mean that we are to return to the safe haven of ‘langue’, we are instead to instate a dialectics between event and meaning that is absolutely basic to discourse. Meaning is defined by its ability to be “identified and re-identified as ‘the same’” but the event of discourse is fleeting.<sup>28</sup> This paradox that is internal to discourse presents the basic dialectics of discourse that gives to it an intention to refer.

In the event of discourse language is invested with intention to refer and to project a world. This power is given to language by the paradox between event and meaning that appears as it is lifted into communication and it is in fact this very paradox that makes it discourse.<sup>29</sup> But as the event is passing the intended event in the world that it refers to must

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<sup>22</sup> Uggla, p. 295. Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, p. 77f

<sup>23</sup> Ricoeur according to Uggla, p. 295

<sup>24</sup> Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, p. 77

<sup>25</sup> Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, p. 78

<sup>26</sup> Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, p. 78

<sup>27</sup> Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, p. 78

<sup>28</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 80

<sup>29</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 85

pass with its inscription.<sup>30</sup> This is true but it leaves a trace in the meanings of the written text and this is what posits the task of poetic interpretation; to *attempt* to recreate the reference and reinstate the dialectics between the meaning given by the text and the reference that the text intends. Two things must be emphasised here. First; in literary texts it is not in any way the authorial intention that is transferred to the text it is the intention of the text to refer, the giving to it of its own intention the reference of which is to take form by interpretation. Secondly; speculative discourse differs in its intentions from those of poetic discourse.

Within the new dialectics between meaning and reference lies a paradox rooted in the fact that discourse while having intention and making reference to an outer world also has an inner life of signs referring only to each other.<sup>31</sup> It is within the space opened up by this paradox between linguistic meaning and extra-linguistic reference that interpretation takes place.<sup>32</sup> It lies in the very definition of discourse that it says “something about something” and is invested with, not an authorial intention, but the intention to intend on its own by the event of its creation. What we find here is nothing less than the justification of our cause, to explore the limits of a mode of reading that is formalizing and bracketing of reference. On our way however we must remember that the dialectics between meaning and reference in poetic discourse is not synthesising but eternal due to the surplus of meaning in the world which means that understanding of discourse, interpretation, is ever accumulative and ongoing as long as the reading does not formalize the text and ends the dialectics by bracketing reference.

The task of this chapter, that is defining what poetic discourse is, necessitated an understanding of how discourse in general is defined for this thesis. This definition of discourse in general has now met a predicted fork in the road where poetic discourse comes apart from non-poetic discourse. We must ask now what it is that poetic discourse does differently from other types of discourses.

To present what poetic discourse is not, Ricoeur differentiates it from what he calls speculative discourse. To illustrate the semantic aim of speculative discourse Ricoeur turns to philosopher Martin Heidegger. Ricoeur points out initially that Heidegger’s philosophy on the matter has great qualities when it comes to showing what the particular strengths of speculative discourse are. Heidegger will however, in an attempt “to make speculative thought resonate with the poet’s utterance”, come to place the two types of

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<sup>30</sup> If we concern ourselves with spoken discourse this is no problem since all participating parties are present at the instance of discourse. Furthermore the dialogical situation is self-correcting and far different from what this thesis is to study.

<sup>31</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 85

<sup>32</sup> Uggla, p. 295

discourses so close that they are practically indistinguishable from one another.<sup>33</sup> For this reason we must remain vigilant so that we do not come to accept Heidegger's philosophy in its full extent.<sup>34</sup>

Ricoeur departs from Heidegger's idea of 'sameness' between what he calls 'Ereignis', which is "the thing" that is the referential object that discourse searches for in the world, and 'Erörterung' which is the comment on said search.<sup>35</sup> With Ricoeur this also constitutes a distinction between the reference of discourse that reaches out to the world and the inner workings of discourse with signs referring only to one another.

Practically, the strive for 'sameness' that drives speculative discourse starts in the perfect reduction of polysemy in a text. One finds, as with the example of the Smurfs, that all words carry an infinite amount of possible senses in isolation. Textual contextualization, however, reduces the polysemy of both word and text by means of a call and response routine that takes place between the word alone and the whole of the text. This reduction is achieved when the whole text is formulated so that the singular words are bound to single senses that together form a singular meaning of the text as a whole.<sup>36</sup> This is the semantic process as it is internal to the text and thus, with Ricoeur who is interested in the world projected by a text, must be, not skipped, but looked beyond. Ricoeur, using Frege and Husserl, insists that language always makes reference to a world outside of language and that understanding merely passes through sense to do so. Ricoeur says in line with them that "understanding does not stop at the sense, but passes by sense towards reference" and that "[l]anguage is intentional par excellence; it aims beyond itself".<sup>37</sup> We have seen that polysemy is reduced in the reciprocity between word and text.<sup>38</sup> But, furthermore and more importantly, the meaning arrived at must be anchored in reality to express an experience. It is between the semantics of language and its non-linguistic counterpart in the world that 'sameness' must lie but it is

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<sup>33</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 365

<sup>34</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 365

<sup>35</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 366

<sup>36</sup> Paul Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", *New Literary History – On Metaphor*, Vol. 6, No. 1, Baltimore 1974, p. 99. Ambiguous phrases are excepted from this but must still have a fixed amount of senses. Like "she jumps in the sea" or "she rents the house". Such sentences however rarely stand alone and more often than not have their polysemy reduced by the further context of the text.

<sup>37</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 107, p. 86. I disagree somewhat here, with Ricoeur's reading of Frege. In Gottlob Frege's "On Sense and Reference", *Translation from the Writings of Gottlob Frege*, Ed. Peter Geach and Max Black, Oxford 1952, p. 58, Frege uses the example of "the celestial body most distant from the Earth" to show a phrase that has only sense and no reference. But as I said, I disagree with Ricoeur's reading of Frege and not with the idea that understanding always passes sense as it heads towards reference. Frege's argument does not take into account the referentiality of poetic discourse that we will find able to refer to worlds that are in part virtual and that we can access by means of our imagination. It is such a reference that "the celestial body most distant from the Earth" makes.

<sup>38</sup> Pellauer, p. 59, Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 110

achievable only by a perfect reduction of the polysemy of the words and text, or rather; only by finding the perfect linguistic meaning to fit the extra-textual experience.

What Heidegger proposes is that the making of a good reference is the perfect representation of the world by language. Believing this to be achievable would mean a total belief in either the primacy of language to reality, or in language as ideal or thirdly in the world as fully subjective in which case there would be one world for each subject in which all other subjects would be mere objects. Without upholding either of these three options Ricoeur agrees that the *goal* of speculative discourse is indeed Heidegger's 'sameness'.<sup>39</sup> In 'sameness' he finds a motor for speculative discourse which has its parallel in the lust for formalization in what we will later come to call explication as apart from interpretation. A lust for clarity derived from a static world view that is the result of a fear of subjectivity and relativism, or what Ricoeur calls a "positivist prejudice that scientific discourse alone states reality".<sup>40</sup> Ricoeur sees no fault in the goal of 'sameness' in speculative discourse, but sees instead a great fault in the notion of a world with which such 'sameness' is said to occur. The world is not static like the meanings produced by speculative discourse, it is dynamic and constantly evolving. By introducing this world view Ricoeur questions implicitly the aim of speculative discourse since the institution of 'sameness' would be corruptive of reference to the real world that is in constant change. But, why not allow speculative discourse its strive for clarity in reference to a moment abstracted from time and let it attempt to speak absolute truths while allowing poetic discourse to speak of the dynamic truths that really belongs to the ever evolving world? We see that Heidegger's failure to keep speculative and poetic discourse apart might lie in not allowing them to have different goals, due to an over-simplified notion of the world. Ricoeur's notion of the ever evolving world however can house speculative, poetic and more types of discourses while allowing them to be distinct, to have different strengths and goals.<sup>41</sup>

We can claim now that speculative discourse attempts to institute 'sameness' between 'Ereignis' and 'Erörterung' but that such 'sameness' presupposes a world abstracted from time. What is then the function of speculative discourse, what is its strength? Ricoeur says that speculative discourse "draws on resources of a conceptual field" and that "its

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<sup>39</sup> Comp. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 365

<sup>40</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 360, 367

<sup>41</sup> This occasions the question of why it is so important to distinguish discourses from one another. The reason for this is that in the differing natures of discourses lie the richness of possibilities that language gives. It is furthermore interesting to see here that at the precise point where Ricoeur encouraged vigilance against Heidegger's philosophy we are provided with an argument for keeping that of it which is sound and discarding that which is not. This is the typical way in which Ricoeur conducts his philosophy by critically examining prior philosophies.



necessity proceeds /---/ from the very structures of the mind”.<sup>42</sup> I would hold that a form of discourse that is intent on formalizing our reading of the world finds its role in for example philosophy and the natural sciences. In philosophy we refer to ideas that we formulate in meanings that are already established to us and already internal to language. We concern ourselves with structures of thought that are developed linearly even in the most dialectic of philosophies since the structures are built around the two definite poles that constitutes a paradox.<sup>43</sup>

What Ricoeur does in his critique of Heidegger’s philosophy on speculative discourse is simply to rid us of that “positivist prejudice”, that western culture has unknowingly suffered from during substantial parts of its history, to say instead that truth about the world is not arrived at by formalization.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore that the subject is not posited by the world since it would then take all experiences in directly and without subjectivity, the world is furthermore not a structure of language that the subject may control as she pleases, but nor is the world a fully subjective reading created by an isolated subject who could then only see all other subjects as objects in her own great scheme. This means that for Ricoeur language is not ideal and furthermore that it has no primacy over Man but we stress that this does not mean that every subject posits its own subjective world. The understanding of this lies in the idea of the ever evolving world and the hermeneutics of poetic discourse that is its counterpart and we will see this as the thesis unfolds.

In the critique above the positivist concept of reality and verificationist notion of truth is challenged.<sup>45</sup> We find that the new dialectic world view of Ricoeur is not consonant with the ideals of absolutism that are inherent to speculative discourse. We must now turn to poetic discourse to try to find a type of language use that truly “raises the experience of the world to its articulation in discourse”.<sup>46</sup>

We have already seen how language has both inner workings between signs referring to each other that posit the meaning of discourse and at the same time the ability to refer to an extra-linguistic world. The first of these instances gives a reflective ability to language which allows for it “to know that it is installed in being” and thus establishes an

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<sup>42</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 354f

<sup>43</sup> I do not doubt that our imagination and ability to see resemblance (abilities that are normally activated by poetic discourse) are activated when we are to understand what sort of understanding a paradox produces but the paradox in itself nevertheless has a definite structure that only speculative discourse can communicate properly.

<sup>44</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 360

<sup>45</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 362

<sup>46</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 359

ontology of language.<sup>47</sup> The conclusions drawn from this are many and great but we shall focus here on the overlapping of epistemology and ontology that this realization gives.

Only when we use a form of discourse that can produce such overlapping “something is brought to language”.<sup>48</sup> In such discourse, at the same time as language moves from sense to reference, when it is activated in discourse, something in the world moves “from being to being-said”.<sup>49</sup> It is in the nature of this ‘being-said’ that we must look for the form of discourse that overlaps epistemology and ontology.

With its lust for formalization speculative discourse attempts to speak of “being as actuality”, a phrase that truly connotes all that we have found to belong to a traditional world view. It is indeed a view according to which the world would be constituted by absolutes. Of course, in the instance of discourse the world can be said to have a certain configuration, but as soon as the instance of discourse passes the world would evolve into something else. Even if we consider an object such as a stone that erodes and changes very slowly, we will never look upon it the same way twice since the seeing of the stone in itself affects us and develops our way of seeing. This is to say that as we subject the world to time we are forced to correlate it to eternity and from this perspective all new experiences of the world must be new and unique. We are looking to poetic discourse in our search for a type of expression that can refer to such a world, “which at once precedes us and receives the imprint of our works”.<sup>50</sup>

From the extensive review of what constitutes speculative discourse we have gotten to know its strengths but we have also understood that such discourse is lacking and cannot fulfil the purpose of representing the world in full. Ricoeur will say that “Lively expression is that which expresses existence as alive” and from this we can deduce that a type of discourse with whole other powers than those of speculative discourse is needed.<sup>51</sup>

If speculative discourse describes the world as un-evolving poetic discourse redescribes the world as perhaps best illustrated by the metaphor “blossoming forth”.<sup>52</sup> One might say that where speculative discourse attempts to speak of “being as actuality”, poetic

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<sup>47</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 359. Comp. Uggla, p. 400. Ricoeur fortifies this foundationalism of his in Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 360 by saying: “This proposition makes reality the final category upon which the whole of language can be thought, although not known, as the being-said of reality”.

<sup>48</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 360

<sup>49</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 360. With this we must question traditional oppositions such as epistemology – ontology, inner – outer and intellect – world.

<sup>50</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 362

<sup>51</sup> Ricoeur according to Karl Simms, *Ricoeur*, London/New York 2003, p. 64

<sup>52</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 364

discourse speaks of “being as potentiality”.<sup>53</sup> If speculative discourse attempts to represent a moment in time where all things appear static poetic discourse projects a world of “things in act”.<sup>54</sup> The distinction between speculative and poetic discourse is a distinction between two movements. “One movement aims at determining more rigorously the conceptual traits of reality, while the other aims at making referents appear”.<sup>55</sup> How does then poetic discourse go about to fulfil this task?

It does so by means of a heuristic fiction that is produced by poetic discourse. This is a fiction that teaches us something about the world. Uggla says that it “explores, reorganizes and works as a redescription of reality”.<sup>56</sup> In this idea of a redescription, as apart from description, poetic discourse finds a means to refer to “things in act”. The idea of redescription as the making of reference fortifies the dialectic world view of Ricoeur. In a world placed in time, an ever evolving world, something that statedly ‘is’ always also ‘is not’ what it was said to be. This is because an instance of time can only be spoken of as an abstraction, as an instance is subjected to time it is lost, and this in turn gives that things and states of affairs that are said to ‘be’ never ‘are’ what they were said to be in an ever evolving world. The dialectic established here between ‘is’ and ‘is not’ gives birth to a dialectic between the ‘real’ in the traditional sense and the ‘possible’ or that which it might become.<sup>57</sup> An evolving world that both an aspect of ‘is’ and one of ‘is not’ can not be referred to by a description but must be referred to by a redescription that contains both the ‘real’ and the ‘possible’. A redescription that is both a discovery and a creation and that is made possible by the overlapping of ontology and epistemology that poetic discourse generates.<sup>58</sup>

By the power of poetic discourse the world is redescrbed as a dialectic reality that lies in between the ‘real’ and the ‘possible’, between ‘discovery’ and ‘creation’, between ‘actuality’ and ‘potentiality’, that “precedes us and receives the imprint of our works”, that ‘is’ and ‘is not’, a world that is truly “blossoming forth” as it is subjected to the winds of time. We will find that metaphor plays a key-role in languages ability to include these paradoxes, but this has been given its own space later on.

There is one further step that we have to take here. There are not only dialectics internal to the different discourses but modes of discourse also stand in a dialectical

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<sup>53</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 363

<sup>54</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 365

<sup>55</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 352

<sup>56</sup> Uggla, p. 399. (“[U]tforskar, omorganiseras och fungerar som en nybeskrivning av verkligheten”)

<sup>57</sup> Uggla, p. 400 (“verkliga”, ”möjliga”) It is on this ”real” that speculative discourse focuses in its strive for the clarity of verificationist truth.

<sup>58</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 361f

relationship to each other.<sup>59</sup> It might seem futile to have gone through all this hard work to isolate the differences in nature between speculative and poetic discourse only to say this. But Ricoeur emphasises that the ability to activate different types of discourse in the same work and to utilize their different strengths collectively is all well and good as long as it is distinct what sort of discourse the work intends to be.<sup>60</sup> You may well use a metaphor in philosophy. For example we have spoken of the “blossoming forth” of the world where we are indeed helped by poetic discourse’s ability to refer to “things in act”. In a speculative textual context the interpretation is not undermined but helped by such a transgression. In fact it is a basic strength of general language use that particular types of discourse are not isolated since they can reinforce each other. We see now that we do need the distinctions between discourses in order to, in the end, be able to utilize the collective strength of all discourses in communication.

When we look upon Trakl’s “Klage” we immediately register the metaphorical saturation and as we mentioned briefly before, metaphor plays a key-role in poetic discourse. There are however, as we will come to see, both dead and living metaphor and only living metaphor can speak of the ever evolving world. Furthermore we must recall that since different discourses have the ability to blend the metaphorical density does not alone give us the answer to what type of discourse “Klage” knows itself to be.

When it comes to the issue of dead and living metaphor an extensive digression is needed that would be unfitting for this chapter that is to concern discourse and its subdivisions. For this reason I will differentiate dead from living metaphor here in the simplest of manners but leave the explanation of the differences for later.

A dead metaphor is one that has been established in the linguistic community, it is a metaphor that has been formalized so repeatedly that it has lost its ability to speak of new experience. A living metaphor however is one that speaks of new experience in the world as it is interpreted, one that, which is perfectly in line with poetic discourse at large, “expresses existence as alive” and “raises the experience of the world to its articulation in discourse”.

There are, I would hold, some examples of both living and dead metaphor in “Klage”. Among the dead we have metaphors such as “dunkle Stimme”, “stürmischer Schwermut” and “Antlitz der Nacht” which have all, at least to me, quite determined senses and do not shock their reader with fresh aspects of the world. Of course, due to the unavoidable intermingling of discourses, this alone cannot make the work an instance of for

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<sup>59</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 358

<sup>60</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 367

example speculative discourse. There are several signals, in fact, of the opposite. For example “Schlaf und Tod, die düstern Adler” challenges its reader to seek for a reference that is neither obvious nor direct and does so in the very beginning of the poem. So does, seemingly to me, “die eisige Woge / Der Ewigkeit” and *perhaps* also “ängstlicher Kahn”. We see that if it was the balance between the *number* of dead and living metaphors that decided what type of discourse we were dealing with, we would not be able to identify this text as any distinct type of discourse and thus would not know how to treat it. It would make no sense to us since we would not know if we were to look for the clarity of communicated thought or new experience in it. It is in fact in discovering by which of these criteria we read the text that we can identify which type of discourse it belongs to.

There are practically no indications that we should consider “Klage” to be speculative discourse. We find in the phrases “[ü]ber dem Meer” and “[u]nter Sternen” vague references to location, phrases that together could of course be said to have non-poetical intentions. But from them we can only deduce a location that lies somewhere between the surface of the sea and the farthest star in the universe. We must conclude that if the communication of a location was the purpose of the text, it has performed its task very poorly. No, starting from the point of the first, strong and living metaphor “Schlaf und Tod, die düstern Adler” it is apparent to us that “Klage” is a poetic work in which we are to look for the dynamic reference that lifts the new experiences of an ever evolving world into language.

We might however ask what the supportive purpose of this instance of borrowing from non-poetic discourse is. There might be several reasons for a poem to want to produce ‘sameness’ in some of its meanings. For example, as it is that which seems more probable with “Klage”, it might simply be to set a scene for the poem. In this case that it underlines its place in this world and not in some fictional land beyond. Indeed that it concerns Man in the world between sea and stars but not that which lies beyond, that which we cannot know, at least not in this life. From this perspective the vagueness by which the boundaries of the location are described becomes something else, an inclusiveness of the poem saying: ‘All that is in this world is subjected to that of which I speak’. By the support of non-poetic discourse the boundaries for this poem are established with clarity that poetic discourse could not, or rather would not strive to achieve.

## 8. Metaphor and its Explication by Beardsley

Erklärung – Aufklärung, explication – interpretation and explanation – understanding.<sup>61</sup> These distinctions are of great importance for this thesis. In a way the formalist criticism and Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics can be contained respectively by these concepts. To start out we say that the methods of formalist criticism as they are to be taken here lies within the realm of explication.

To explicate is always to, in a way, retrace the particular to something general. To explicate a metaphor, as we shall soon see, is to consider its particularities and to look for a general explanation of them. If we say for example; 'the lamp of the world' the formalist critic wishes to retrace it back to a more 'correct' explication that takes the shape of a seemingly more general expression, for example 'the sun'. In the same way the formalist critic who wishes to explicate a passage that they find intricate might reach for the dictionary to find general meanings of the words of the particular passage in order to explicate it. Furthermore the literary historicist who looks for historical facts in order to explicate a literary work attempts to find a g<sup>62</sup>eneral historical explanation to the particular words on the page. This is explanation but it is not understanding.

We wish to indicate here also that there is a parallel between the ideals of formalist criticism and those of the natural sciences. This scientificity of the natural sciences is in many cases the adaption of an exclusively explicational stance to nature. This stance comes with among other things a dedication to causality, logical deduction and even statistics.<sup>63</sup> All this belongs to the scientificity of the natural sciences and also applies to formalist criticism as it is to be taken in this thesis.

There are however more ideas of formalist criticism that seems to have their source outside of the field of literary studies. The school of Analytic Philosophy, which is in a position of practically absolute hegemony in the philosophy departments of Sweden, is a school that in some of its configurations considers truth to lie in precise definitions of the meanings of words.<sup>64</sup> From the theory of speculative discourse that we have presented above this is perhaps acceptable, it is not the task of this thesis to say, but it is clear that as these

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<sup>61</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 355

<sup>62</sup> This is of course a generalization. The natural sciences has changed immensely in its practices with the entry of for example string theory. What we refer to here however are more traditional notions of natural science.

<sup>63</sup> Comp. Förklaring, *Filosoflexikonet*, p. 179f. Explanation, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 126

<sup>64</sup> When we speak of some of the configurations of Analytic Philosophy in this thesis we exclude for example the school of Common Language Philosophy which traditionally belongs to it. This is due to some reservations made by Ricoeur and a lack of knowledge on the subject on my side. See for example Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 380

ideas enter into the study of literature it has strong implications. The definition of the meaning of words is explanation that can never in isolation lead to understanding and we emphasize once more how all these ideals and ideas, in one way or another, has shaped formalist criticism or taken shape from it. Does it not seem, from all this, as if the methods for explication that formalist critics embrace as their own rhymes well with the aims of speculative discourse that we have found to be to “determine more rigorously the conceptual traits of reality” while at the same time appearing to be rather ill fitting to poetic discourse that we have found aiming at “making referents appear”?

One might raise a question as to the relevance of this thesis in a modern context since it utilizes a formalist theory that is several decades old as an example. In answer to this we hold that the intentions of Beardsley crystallize as exclusively, explicitly and puristically formalist in every way. Furthermore since the formalist school of criticism is obsessed with precise definitions it is of course also inherently conservative due to the fact that any development of ideas will cause imprecision in concepts. We hold with this that Beardsley is very much a representative for a way of thinking that is still present in our literary departments even if he is rarely, if ever, mentioned by name today. Furthermore it is important to say that this thesis in no way argues that critics of today are purely formalist like Beardsley and even if they were so it does not contend that their process of explication forgoes in the schematic way that the metaphor of the following chapter is explicated. The thesis however upholds the notion that Beardsley’s philosophy of aesthetics is indeed a perfect example of a philosophy to defend all the ideals and ideas of scientificity, analytical philosophy and exclusive formalism that are foregrounded above.

We have followed sketchily Ricoeur’s definition of poetic discourse towards its core until we came upon the metaphor which we left to study at a later time. Now is that time and we shall start to look at one of the great metaphor theories that preceded Ricoeur’s, namely philosopher Monroe C. Beardsley’s Controversion Theory of Metaphor and the theory of explication that comes with it. His is generally considered the last in a row of interaction theories of metaphor. Interaction theories are developed in opposition to substitution theories of metaphor. Where substitution theory speaks of ornamental metaphor that merely substitutes one word for another without changing the meaning of the metaphorical attribution, interaction theory *attempts* to demonstrate how metaphor speaks new meanings. Beardsley’s theory is one of those from which Ricoeur has received the most assistance with his own. But what is of greater importance here is that Ricoeur’s critique of Beardsley’s theory truly opens the eyes of any reader for the problems that we face in this thesis.

In a metaphorical expression such as “ängstlicher Kahn” the polysemy of the words is not reduced in the same way as it would be in a non-metaphorical expression. There is in fact a resistance to full polysemic reduction in the metaphorical expression. Nevertheless metaphor speaks to us, we understand it while knowing that we do so differently from other elements of discourse. As to the mode of what we now call understanding of metaphor, but will in the end come to reveal as mere explanation, Beardsley presents a theory. To in a way forestall the coming study Beardsley makes us aware of the impropriety of the combination of words in the expression “ängstlicher Kahn”, that the two words when read are seemingly not symbionts as words of any discourse would normally be in order to communicate their meanings properly. It is in fact in the understanding of this great observation that we will in the end identify precisely how the strength of poetic discourse to abridge epistemology and ontology in order to raise “the experience of the world to its articulation in discourse” comes to pass.<sup>65</sup>

Ricoeur grounds his theory of metaphor in philosopher Monroe C. Beardsley’s Controversion Theory of Metaphor as it is presented in his work *Aesthetics - Problems in the Philosophy of Criticism* (1958).<sup>66</sup>

Beardsley’s concern is the semantic mechanisms of metaphor and his quest is to avoid relativism in the positing of the meaning of a work.<sup>67</sup> This is a view connected to formalist criticism focusing on the verbal design, on the formalistic aspects, of a work. This means in effect bracketing the reference of a work. Beardsley explains his view like so:

[H]ow does discourse – switching back now to objective language – invest the objects it refers to with [their] characteristics? Only, I should suppose, by means of the secondary levels of meaning; only through connotation and suggestion. So that, even if we start with the world of the literary work, we come back in the end to its language, and that is the reason the Semantic Definition was put foremost.<sup>68</sup>

Knowing that Beardsley takes this formalist stance we can now present his theory.

Beardsley’s theory of metaphor is based in an observation made on the level of the attribution by which he means a combination of words amounting to more than a single

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<sup>65</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 359

<sup>66</sup> For a more thorough presentation of Beardsley’s theory of metaphor see my D-thesis: *An Application of Monroe C. Beardsley’s Controversion Theory of Metaphor – On Examples of Synaesthetic Metaphor from Proust’s À la recherché du temps perdu*, Unpublished 2009, p. 13-21

<sup>67</sup> Comp. Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 133f, 145

<sup>68</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 128



word. In some cases where a person speaks in a self-controverting manner, while still asserting what she says, something happens. Beardsley notices how the speaker, in such cases, “calls attention to something else that she has not explicitly stated”.<sup>69</sup> This is what Beardsley calls a “cancelling out of primary meaning to make room for secondary meaning” and it is his starting point in his search for the workings of the metaphor.<sup>70</sup>

The preferred way to achieve this upheaval of primary meaning in poetry is, according to Beardsley, to compose one’s attributions around a model of logical absurdity and the method for doing this lies within the pairing up of two terms in the sentence. This suggests in turn that the origin of the effect noted on the level of the metaphorical attribution, the level of discourse, is derived from a manipulation on the level of sense, the level of words. Beardsley calls the words denotation its primary meaning and its connotations its secondary meanings. The two active words in such an attribution are termed ‘subject’ and ‘modifier’ and together they form an attribution that can be constituted by more but never less than the two words. These can be configured to form a number of types of attributions. For example a redundant attribution where the primary meaning of the ‘modifier’ is the same as the ‘subject’s’, such as “two-legged biped”, or a self-contradictory attribution where the characteristics of the ‘modifier’ cannot be applied to the ‘subject’, such as “four-legged biped”.<sup>71</sup>

But considering instead a situation where an attribution is self-contradictory but where the ‘modifier’ holds some characteristics that do apply to the ‘subject’ in a meaningful way, called simply a significant self-contradiction, metaphor is close to delineated.

There are two forms of significant self-contradictory attributions, one that is direct, for example oxymoron such as “living death”, but there is also another variation in which the significant self-contradiction is indirect.<sup>72</sup> Beardsley’s basic example of this is “man is a fox” and with the definition of an indirect significant self-contradictory attribution Beardsley claims to have defined metaphor itself.<sup>73</sup> This is however with a reservation that while all indirect significant self-contradictions indeed are metaphors, all metaphors are not indirect significant self-contradictions. This regards cases such as D.H. Lawrence’s “You who take the moon as in a sieve, and sift / Her flake by flake and spread her meaning out”.<sup>74</sup> In

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<sup>69</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 138

<sup>70</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 138

<sup>71</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 138ff

<sup>72</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 141

<sup>73</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 141

<sup>74</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 141. Lawrence according to Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 141

such cases Beardsley promotes an idea of obvious falsity for identification of the metaphor but he does not delve deeper upon the subject.<sup>75</sup>

Beardsley's purpose with his theory is remarkably grand, it is indeed nothing less than the besting of relativism in the understanding of poetic discourse.<sup>76</sup> And where is the miracle cure for the disease of relativism to be found? In a model for explication of metaphor of his device.

Upholding metaphor to be a "miniature poem" this model is later to be expanded to encompass the entirety of a literary work.<sup>77</sup>

The problem of explicating a metaphor becomes, by Beardsley, one of finding the right connotation to attribute to the 'subject'. When the semantic clash of a metaphor is identified by a reader she starts looking behind the denotation of the modifying word where several connotations lie hidden, in order to make sense of the seemingly absurd indirect significant self-contradictory attribution. In an effort to reduce these connotations to find one fitting the textual context Beardsley insists that the reader applies two principles that together constitute the logic of explication.<sup>78</sup>

The principle of congruence is the 'fitting' of connotations to the 'subject'. By this principle we reduce the number of connotations that we use for the explication by deciding how fitting they are. Beardsley's example of an unfitting connotation lies in the explication of the metaphor "laminated modulation" where laminated "can connote the isolation of parts" while "modulations cannot have isolated parts".<sup>79</sup> The "isolation of parts" is thus eliminated from the row of connotations of the 'modifier' for the explication due to its lack of congruence with the 'subject'. This however does not mean that there are no connotations that fit the 'subject'. Enter the principle of plenitude. According to this principle "[a]ll the connotations that can be found to fit are to be attributed to the poem" (the poem here being the metaphor) so that it "means all it *can* mean".<sup>80</sup> After these principles are applied to the explication we must of course still check the results against the full textual context of the work, but this is in line with the workings of all discourse. All discourse is subject to a reduction of polysemy via an interaction between the isolated parts of the work and the full work.

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<sup>75</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 142

<sup>76</sup> Comp. Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 133f, 145

<sup>77</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 144

<sup>78</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 145

<sup>79</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 144

<sup>80</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 144

By applying the principles of congruence and plenitude all readers will achieve explications that will differ from each other in accordance with the deviations in cultural competence between the readers. What Beardsley holds is that the principles of congruence and plenitude, that always eliminates the impossible and accepts the possible, will make sure that all the explications will be in line with each other and not contradictory. This gives that all explications of metaphor might not be the same but can, and must, still add onto each other as stated by the principle of plenitude. This in turn makes any explication richer in meaning every time it encounters another explication. In this way the principles will constantly “maximize the poetic value” of a metaphor.<sup>81</sup>

Beardsley furthermore discusses the problem of ambiguity and explication. An ambiguous attribution such as “she jumps in the lake” would normally be reduced by the textual context in which it is situated. There is however the possibility of a whole literary work that is ambiguous. In such cases, Beardsley emphasizes, there are not an infinite amount of explications, which would open door for relativism, but a decided amount that are apparent to the reader. This, Beardsley holds, goes for ambiguous metaphor as well.<sup>82</sup>

## 9. An Explication by Beardsley

We identify metaphor by the logical absurdity that it carries but the word identify is somewhat misleading since it suggests that we actively look for logical absurdity and only when we have found it start explicating according to a method we have learned from philosophy. In truth the identification of metaphor is not something we learn from philosophy but something that we do regardless of how well versed we are in theory.

We will in this chapter attempt to explicate a metaphor by means of Beardsley’s theory of explication of metaphor. The metaphor “ängstlicher Kahn” from Trakl’s poem has been chosen as an example since it is one of the simpler metaphors of the poem because it isolates the ‘subject’ and ‘modifier’ without the involvement of other words that might otherwise confuse us. Furthermore this particular metaphor posits a second task for this chapter since there is a doubt as to whether or not it is living or dead. Whether or not it has the ability to speak of new experience and to open up for interpretation, or is already formalized. Perhaps Beardsley’s theory can help us establish this.

We can initially see that the attribution is not a simile since it is not explicitly comparative. It does not say ‘ängstlichkeit ist wie ein Kahn’ but “ängstlicher Kahn”.

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<sup>81</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 146

<sup>82</sup> Comp. Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 145

Quite straightforwardly we find that the human emotion of ‘ängstlichkeit’ cannot be attributed to “Kahn” since boats are not cognitive and have no feelings. We have indeed an attribution where the denotation of the ‘subject’ “Kahn” clashes with the denotation of “ängstlicher”. We can furthermore easily deduce that we are not dealing with oxymoron since “ängstlicher” and “Kahn” are not direct contradictions of each other. This is clearly an indirect self-contradictory attribution to which we must apply the principles of congruence and plenitude in order to find out whether or not it is significant.

The modifying word “ängstlicher” hides behind its denotation a row of connotations and it is among them we must search in order to explicate the poem according to Beardsley’s model. In the semantic clash we are forced to look beyond the denotation of the ‘modifier’ in order to make sense of the statement.

We find in “ängstlicher” an idea of instability, of fluctuation of feeling and thought. The word connotes internality, something that is rooted within but might still be effected upon the ‘subject’ from something located outside it. There is also a note of psychological pain carried by the word and it is negative to its very core. Even a child’s anxiety the day before Christmas is an inconvenience if it is isolated from the other feelings one might have on such occasions. We connect the word with fear and the unknown, perhaps even to that which we have close to us but cannot understand. It is an internal fear of something that we cannot control or the fear of not having control. There are also less serious connotations of “ängstlicher”, anxiety that lies in the anticipation of something, situations in which we cannot calm our mind because we know that something is about to happen to us.

Following the principle of congruence we must now eliminate any to “Kahn” unfitting connotations of “ängstlicher” to initiate the explication of the metaphor.

The instability that “ängstlicher” connotes is of course highly acceptable in relation to “Kahn”. A “Kahn” that reels in the waves and wind is experienced as unstable, so also a boat that is stowed improperly. The fluctuation of thought that anxiety brings is less admissible since boats have neither feelings nor thoughts. The fluctuation of feeling and thought however follows a pattern that mimes a boat moving up and down at the mercy of the waves. Can we speak of a ‘fluctuating boat’ without it being a metaphor in its own right, without it carrying its own semantic clash which would force us to eliminate it by the terms of the principle of congruence? The reader must ask herself if the understanding of the attribution is understood directly or takes a detour over the connotations of ‘fluctuating’. Anyhow, ‘ängstlichkeit’ is experienced internally but potentially and commonly effected by something outside of man like the waves outside the boat. The boat is always subject to the

sea and never the other way around but in calm weather a boat that is properly managed will hardly be affected at all. Since there are different levels of affectedness the explication ‘fluctuating boat’ does not seem redundant.

The fear of pending unknown of ‘ängstlichkeit’ might apply to a boat were it not for the reason that an object is not cognitive and hence of course experiences no fear. Due to this lack of cognition one might say that a boat is always headed towards the unknown, it does not know of anything, not of where it has been nor of where it is going. For this reason, perhaps, we should consider not admitting this to the final explication.

When it comes to being faced with something that we do not understand we end up in a similar situation. It goes without saying that a boat understands nothing so the connotation of the inability to understand makes the explication of “ängstlicher Kahn” into a redundant statement like “the boat that doesn’t know where it is going” and this is not desirable. There is however reason to keep the next connotation of inability to control. A boat can be in control via for example auto-pilot and thus it can also lose control by for example an engine breakdown.

Finally we have the connotation of anticipation which must, as with some prior examples, be removed by the principle of congruence. It does not fit since it is a feeling and would indeed only establish a new clash of denotation, a new metaphor. The ground rule of the principle of congruence is to find connotations that do not clash with the denotation of the ‘subject’ so that the explication does not relapse into metaphor.

With the principle of plenitude we now apply the connotations that we have kept. We have ‘unstable boat’, ‘a boat being internally affected by the sea outside of it’, ‘uncontrolled boat’ and arguably also ‘fluctuating boat’.

The next step of explication is to check these possible explications against the whole poem, partial explications against the full textual context. But this, as we might recall, is the task of the explication of any discourse so we can say that Beardsley’s theory for explication of metaphor leaves us here as we shall soon leave it behind. A few pressing questions however spring to mind.

It becomes clear quite soon in the reading of the poem that we are not being told a story about a boat at all. Or I should rather say, we might be hearing a story of a boat, but this would make the poem banal at best. Despite this the denotation of “Kahn” is that which we utilize in order to choose the connotations from “ängstlicher”. Even if we accept that explication is made in order to formalize, turn poetic attributions into speculative attributions and avoid relativism, what sort of clarity is it that this brings us?

There is furthermore the question of whether or not we are dealing with dead or living metaphor that we asked in the introduction to this chapter. We went in unsure of the status as to this “ängstlicher Kahn”. The only thing that we are able to say about this now is that the identification of a metaphor as dead or living lies in the eyes of the beholder and the linguistic competence that said beholder carries with her. I think we can furthermore say that if the metaphor was not dead when we started, it is now. What piece of living language that lifts the ever evolving world into our understanding could ever survive a treatment such as this?

With this, we have already initiated Ricoeur’s critique of Beardsley’s Controversion theory of metaphor.

## 10. Ricoeur’s Critique of Beardsley

We have now performed an explication of a metaphor by using Beardsley’s theory as method. The question is what we have achieved in doing this. Beardsley claims that his theory empowers metaphor with two things, the power to speak novel meanings while at the same time remaining uncorrupted by relativism.

Beardsley attempts to bracket the referentiality of metaphor in order to best relativism. He intends by this to perform an explication that is the perfect positing of the meaning of metaphor. He constructs his theory around the semantic clash between two words that instigates the cataloguing of the connotations of the modifying word. From the catalogue, he claims, the reader chooses the connotations that fit and apply them to the ‘subject’ according to two principles of rationalization called congruence and plenitude. In doing this, Ricoeur agrees, we remain safe within the limits of semantics. This is however, as we might recall, to remain within in ‘langue’, in that which is internal to language and in discourse always an abstraction since all meaning makes a reference. In answer to this Ricoeur cautions already before initiating his study of Beardsley that one must not forget the question of metaphor’s ability “to project and to reveal a world”.<sup>83</sup>

Beardsley’s claim that his theory allows metaphor to speak novel meanings in order to say something new contains a major problem with his theory. Ricoeur asks rhetorically what the row of connotations really is if not “something dead, or at least something already established”.<sup>84</sup> If connotations are fetched from within established language, how can they claim to speak something new? New experience is in the world not in

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<sup>83</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 108

<sup>84</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 102

language itself and by utilizing the row of connotations Beardsley merely keeps “linking the creative process of metaphor-forming to a non-creative aspect of language”.<sup>85</sup> The novel meaning of a living metaphor cannot be drawn from anywhere within language, it is “a momentaneous creation of language, a semantic innovation which has no status in language, as already established”.<sup>86</sup> The living metaphor is thus to be considered a trick up language’s sleeve by which it creates new meaning in order to make reference to new experience. Indeed to create the overlap of epistemology and ontology that we have previously spoken of. This is in fact a pragmatic necessity since the brain can remember only a limited number of words while the ever evolving world holds an infinite number of experiences.

In the face of critique similar to this, Beardsley writes a supplement to his theory called “The Metaphorical Twist” (1962) in which he complements his idea of the row of connotations to include what he calls potential connotations as well. “[T]he metaphor transforms” in accordance to this supplement “what were previously contingent properties of the things referred to /.../ into meanings”.<sup>87</sup> With this Beardsley, unwillingly and possibly unknowingly, leaves his formalist sphere and lets his theory stretch out toward the world “since ‘property’ belongs to the sphere of things, not of words”.<sup>88</sup> The problem is thus, that by using Beardsley’s model for explication in its original and formalist form, as done with the explication of “ängstlicher Kahn” above, we are actually still stuck with substitution theory. A theory by which we can substitute the improper attribution, the metaphor, with a proper attribution, the explication, that both have the same meaning.<sup>89</sup> No novel meaning can be spoken in this way. But if we would, were it possible, use the correction of “The Metaphorical Twist” we would no longer be explicating, but interpreting and our formalist reading would open up to the world and Beardsley’s project of besting relativism would fall.

Despite all the cases where Ricoeur cannot accept Beardsley’s theory he lifts out some great qualities from it. The idea of metaphor being produced by a semantic clash is truly inventive and it constitutes a beautiful definition. Furthermore Beardsley’s theory of explication of metaphor deals well with dead metaphor that is already established if we disregard “The Metaphorical Twist”. It too explains well the mechanisms by which we explicate such metaphors into proper language.

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<sup>85</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 102

<sup>86</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 103

<sup>87</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. xxxiv. Comp. Monroe C. Beardsley, “The Metaphorical Twist”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, Rhode Island 1962, p. 302

<sup>88</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 114

<sup>89</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 103

If we pay heed to “The Metaphorical Twist” however and let Beardsley’s project of besting relativism fall something truly great is discovered.

The chapters on Beardsley started out with an intention to perform a formalist explication of a metaphor to polemicize against using Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of metaphor. This has been achieved but in the meantime we have discovered something far greater. By writing “The Metaphorical Twist” Beardsley has unknowingly and unwillingly isolated the mechanism that allows language to perform its greatest task, to raise “the experience of the world to its articulation in discourse”.<sup>90</sup> When Beardsley explains how living metaphor, metaphor that speaks novel meanings and makes semantic innovations, “transforms what were previously contingent properties of the things referred to /.../ into meanings” he opens up the field for Ricoeur. He has by this inadvertently located the bridge between epistemology and ontology, meaning and reference and psyche and world. Furthermore he has done so within the workings of metaphor. With this we have established what poetic discourse can do at full potential. It is indeed ironic that it took the failure of a man intent on keeping within the limits of language to establish a ground for these onto-epistemological dialectics.

## 11. Construction

As we initiated the presentation of Beardsley’s theory of metaphor and explication of metaphor we made a digression upon the important distinction of explication from interpretation. As we proceed now to present Ricoeur’s hermeneutics first of symbol and consequently metaphor it is important to emphasise that the construction of meaning is always the foundation of Ricoeur’s textual hermeneutics which means that it in one way or another contains those explicatory aspects which belong to formalist criticism but goes beyond them. Upon entering the first step of a theory of interpretation we are thus not yet to leave explication behind. We will soon come to see the impossibility of keeping explication of metaphor separate from interpretation of metaphor without at the same time divesting it of its poeticism.

We know now that there are two fundamentally different approaches to poetic discourse. There is the approach of the formalist critic that works within ‘langue’ as abstracted from ‘parole’ and we have exemplified this by performing an explication according to the theories of Beardsley. There is furthermore the referential approach that starts in explication but subsequently turns into interpretation and by this avoids formalization and

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<sup>90</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 359



allows the critic to interpret in full. We hold that the second approach is that which is instinctive to any reader while the first contains a set of prejudices or rules that are methods developed out of formalist philosophy such as that of Beardsley. Before we proceed we say again that the prejudices of formalist criticism lie in the bracketing of reference in reading not in explication as such.

The internal workings of language that are rightfully formalist lie on the path to full understanding of discourse and it would be the result of as great a prejudice as the formalist if one were to attempt to bracket this aspect of language instead. Thus we do not distinguish here between the two approaches to literature in order to discard one of them, but in order to “demonstrate the fruitfulness in relating them to each other”.<sup>91</sup> The elimination of the prejudice of formalist criticism thus lies not in the elimination of explication from reading but in the realization that the full potential of poetic discourse can only be explored by looking beyond explication. We have said time and time again that “[e]xplanation [explication] is the obligatory path of understanding” and the practical implications of this will now be made explicit.

By allowing truly novel meanings enter into discourse the metaphor must be located somewhere on the border between the semantic region of discourse that is internal to it and the world to which its meanings refer. In other words and in a larger scope it constitutes a bridge between epistemology and ontology. In yet other words metaphor turns properties of ‘things’ into meanings and thus creates new senses of words increasing their polysemy allowing them to mean new things in their textual context.<sup>92</sup> This statement is to act as a reminder that we are still in the explicatory and formalist stages of Ricoeur’s textual hermeneutics. After finding a mode for explicating metaphor we are now to use metaphorical explication as a model for the explication of whole literary works. To do this however it is imperative to understand what the idea of a work entails.

Now, what is this concept of the work by the help of which we are to make an understanding of Ricoeur’s textual hermeneutics? Ricoeur defines it as “the closed sequence of discourse which may be considered as a text” the closed nature of which gives rise to some particularities. The work is always longer than the sentence.<sup>93</sup> That which differentiates works from the more general discourse, that also takes the sentence as its smallest unit, is thus the

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<sup>91</sup> Uggla, p. 305 (“det fruktbara i att relatera dem till varandra”)

<sup>92</sup> This meaning of words is however but a seeming word-meaning that is actually distributed to the words from the level of the sentence. Remember that a metaphor must have at least two words both of which are active in the production of the new meaning. The new meaning attached to the single word is but an illusion since the word placed on its own would again possibly carry all and therefore carries no particular meaning.

<sup>93</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 96f

closed nature of it. In the idea of the closed work lies the forming of a textual entity that projects a world and at the same time refers to itself.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore in the work “composition or arrangement /.../ makes of a poem or a novel a totality irreducible to a simple sum of sentences”.<sup>95</sup>

“[U]nderstanding – is to follow the dynamics of the work, its movement from what it says to that about which it speaks”.<sup>96</sup> This goes for all types of works but we are concerned here only with the literary works of poetic discourse. With this quote it becomes ever clearer that we are walking a hermeneutic ladder here. The first step of which lies in the explication of metaphor, in the construction of meaning. The quote now points us towards the next step of interpretation and the region of the full literary work. Interpretation starts with the explication of the smallest component of the work, with the sentence or in this case the metaphor, and is then extended in a reciprocal way to the full context that is the work.<sup>97</sup> This is because “[w]e construct the meaning of a text in a way which is similar to the way in which we make sense of all of the terms of [sic] metaphorical statement”.<sup>98</sup> It is clear from this quote that our quest is to find a homologue to the construction of the meaning of metaphor on the level of the work. It furthermore implies what we have already seen, that there is both a micro and a macro aspect of explication, or what we will come to call construction of meaning. One that is internal to the smallest unit of the work as discourse, the sentence or metaphor in poetic discourse, and one that is located outside the sentence to the greater context of the work. On the micro scale, sense is ascribed to words and meaning is ascribed to the sentence by a reciprocity between the two and on the macro scale the sentence and the work receives meaning by a reciprocal relation as well. We see that this forms a chain of reciprocity that moves inward and outward within the full girth of the work.

Ricoeur says that “[t]he decisive moment of explication is that of the construction of the network of interaction, which makes of the context an actual and unique context”.<sup>99</sup> This construction is the recreation of meaning which is why “the construction of interaction” is “decisive” when one is to explicate a work.<sup>100</sup> It is furthermore only in the

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<sup>94</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 100f, 105. Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation”, p. 132

<sup>95</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 259

<sup>96</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 106

<sup>97</sup> It is important here to understand that that which appears to be word-meaning is actually a segment of the sentence’s meaning that is doled out to the words from the level of the sentence. Just as with the work, the sentence in discourse is larger than the sum of its parts and cannot be taken as simply the sum of an addition of a number of word-meanings.

<sup>98</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 103f

<sup>99</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 103

<sup>100</sup> We recall that we define meaning by its ability to be identified and re-identified as the same.

accomplishment of this construction that the total meaning of a work, that by which it means more than the sum of its parts, can be seen.<sup>101</sup>

Since the construction is, in a way, a recreation of origin it becomes tempting to reintroduce the concept of authorial intention and it is here, where the risk of doing so is the greatest, that it is utterly important to fortify that the meaning is only what the text says and not that about which it speaks.<sup>102</sup> The construction concerns rather first the inscription in the work of its ability to refer, to have meaning and to become discourse, and not that which the work itself comes to intend as it meets its reader. This inscription occurs at the event of speaking or writing and this is why it is a condition for discourse, language in use, to be both event and have meaning. In the construction of the network of interaction the event, in which all the semantic lines of a work is gathered up to have meaning in the context of each other, is recreated, text becomes work and language becomes discourse.<sup>103</sup> Secondly, in interpreting poetic discourse, the construction concerns the closing of a text into a literary work that gives to it style and genre.

As we can see Ricoeur's critique of Beardsley's model for explication of metaphor doesn't reconstruct its mechanisms drastically. The majority of his critique concerns the implications of the model after the adaption of "The Metaphorical Twist", which he feels that Beardsley in his quest to best relativism has underestimated, rather than its workings.

Ricoeur sees Beardsley's stress on logical absurdity in metaphor as a stroke of genius and explication of metaphor must start here since explication of a work must start on the lowest level of discourse. On the level of the sentence which incidentally is the level of the metaphor as well.<sup>104</sup> But as the next step for Beardsley is to take the explication to the entirety of the textual context there must be a homologue of this logical absurdity on the level of the work. The model must be applicable on the level of the work since Beardsley's purpose is to demonstrate how explication of whole literary works forgoes and he only starts in the metaphor since he takes it to be a "poem in miniature", a model for the literary work. But where, in the literary work, can we find the homologue to logical absurdity by which we identify metaphor and are forced to jump to the row of connotations of the modifier and what is the homologue on the level of the work to the row of connotations?

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<sup>101</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 103f

<sup>102</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 105

<sup>103</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 103

<sup>104</sup> Though the semantic effects of metaphor are seen in the single word for which the polysemy is added on in that particular metaphorical context.

Ricoeur has identified how explication is transposed from the level of the metaphor to the level of the literary work. He holds that the metaphor and the work share both the need to have their meanings constructed in order to be understood and the manner in which they do so.<sup>105</sup> Lifting Beardsley's theory from metaphorical explication to the explication of a work, Ricoeur says that the initiation of the construction of the meaning of a work "takes the form of a guess".<sup>106</sup> This guess is made from clues in the text where any clue "is a kind of index for a specific construction" and it includes both "a set of permissions and a set of prohibitions".<sup>107</sup> The clue of the metaphor is the logical absurdity that makes us apply the principle of plenitude and that of congruence which are analogous to the "set of permissions and prohibitions" of the clues of the work. The clues of a work however are more general than logical absurdity simply because a work can be structured in an infinite number of ways and adheres to no one rule. Thus the guess made for the initiation of the explication of a work cannot be governed by strict rules. But what is it that is to be permitted and prohibited in the explication of a work? What is the homologue on the level of the work to the row of connotations that we utilize in the explication of metaphor?

If denotation is to be taken as a word-meaning of the word, connotation is normally to be understood as that which the word implies. There are however important challenges of this oversimplified notion. Beardsley prefers to speak of denotation as primary meaning and connotation as secondary meaning and in doing this he has a rather similar idea to that of Roland Barthes. Barthes does not differentiate connotation from denotation in essence, indeed to him denotation and connotation are not two essentially different things. He holds instead that there is a hierarchy of connotations within each word, established by its use in the linguistic community, the foremost of which is distinguished by being given the name denotation. Denotation is thus simply the first in a row of word-meanings pushed to the front by its extended usage within the linguistic community.<sup>108</sup> From this perspective any of the

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<sup>105</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 103

<sup>106</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 104. I feel that the word "guess" is somewhat vague in this context. It must be underlined here that this is a "guess" that is instructed by certain clues. It is not the shot from the hip that a "guess" would normally entail. It is an auto-correcting "guess" that simply initiates the reciprocity between the meanings of the isolated sentences of the work and the full context of the work which in the end comes to turn the "guess" into, at least a probability, or perhaps rather evolve it towards certainty.

<sup>107</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 104

<sup>108</sup> Roland Barthes, *s/Z*, Lund 1975, p. 16. Barthes' way of speaking of the phenomenon implies the existence of word-meanings internal to words but with Ricoeur we have learned that such meanings only seemingly belongs to the words themselves and are actually parcels of meaning that are distributed from the level of the sentence. It however has a point to present these views since they shine a light upon the fact that there is no essential difference between connotation, denotation and sense. That they are indeed all words for what is essentially the same thing. Belief in word-meaning is an unfortunate misconception from the Ricoeurian point of view, how

connotations of a word could be its denotation had the word been used more in textual contexts that promoted that particular connotation. If we take this perspective we might well say that the connotations are some of the potential senses of a word. If we recall now the linguistic model that Ricoeur uses, where words have the potential to hold any sense depending on their textual context, we can identify the homologue in the work to the row of connotations that are utilized in the explication of metaphor. On the level of the work we guess, from the clues inherent to it, which meanings are to be bestowed upon the sentences just like we apply the principles of congruence and plenitude to guess which connotations apply when we explicate the metaphor. To this comes something that we have spoken of before. The meaning of the full work is established by a call and response routine between the sentence and the full textual context, this is the model of reciprocity or the “network of interaction” that constructs the meaning. Because the establishing of meaning works with the same components on both the level of the sentence and the level of the work – we have shown how connotation is not essentially different from denotation and how denotation is merely the sense of a word that has the strongest connection to it due to its extended use in the linguistic community – we can transpose the model for explication of metaphor to the level of the entire work.

By this some questions are still left unanswered. One might ask wherein the difference between poetic discourse and non-poetic discourse lies if the connotations that we reduce when explicating metaphor are the same as the senses that we reduce when we explicate non-poetic works?

This becomes a question of the history of usage of words that defines them in the linguistic community. We say simply that non-poetic discourse utilizes the history of usage of words in order to construct meanings clearly and communicate them.<sup>109</sup> In metaphor however, the history of usage is challenged. By setting the words so that the senses that are predominantly tied to them by the history of usage contradict each other, the metaphor creates an absurdity that forces the reader to rearrange the hierarchy within the row of connotations. It is in radical instances of such reorganization that novel meanings are expressed, that new experience is brought to language.<sup>110</sup> The polysemy that is reduced in non-poetic discourse

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could word-meanings exist when living metaphorical sentences distributes new senses to its words without any regard to the linguistic community and its traditions.

<sup>109</sup> In this lies the usefulness of for example dictionaries.

<sup>110</sup> Not in the very extreme because in such a constellation of words the semantic lines will never converge and we will only recognize nonsense from which no meaning can be constructed. Such cases are however hard to find, if not impossible. We are all interpreting beings and our quest to find meaning (in order to reach reference) hardly knows any boundaries.

can never give new meanings since it uses words conventionally, the potential senses of the words are inherent to the linguistic community, even if they were possibly once brought into it by living metaphor. In non-poetic discourse we must consider the row of connotations tied to a word by its history of usage to be a row of potential senses with a hierarchy governed by this same tradition. This history of usage, this hierarchy, lends clarity to common language and establishes consensus among explications but at the same time it disables language's ability to speak new meanings and refer to an ever evolving world. It is in order to subdue this hierarchy and let the word mean something new in its textual context, something that is not among its intra-linguistic connotations, that metaphors are made.<sup>111</sup> However, as soon as a metaphor comes into extended usage within a linguistic community the hierarchy is rewritten, the metaphor dies and the rearrangement of connotations is satisfied if but in the particular word setting that constitutes the metaphor.

When we construct the meaning of a literary work, we use the clues provided by the full textual context to browse the row of possible meanings of the sentences in order to arrive at a particular meaning that is fitting to that particular setting of words.<sup>112</sup> This is done in a reciprocal way which effectively tests any potential meaning against the potential meanings of the rest of the sentences until one that is "more probable" is found.<sup>113</sup> "The most probable is that which (1) accounts for the greatest number of facts provided by the text, including potential connotations, and (2) offers a better qualitative convergence between the traits which it takes into account".<sup>114</sup>

To finish up this leaves another couple of questions unanswered. What are we to make of the denotation/connotation distinction? And how come dictionaries seemingly work when we use them if language indeed functions as has been stated above?

These questions lace into each other. Denotation and connotation are useable concepts in common language as long as we are aware that the division between them is prone to change with the tides of language use and that the number of connotations is not fixed but open. One must further understand that the distinctions of a hypothetical ideal dictionary will only seem perfectly proper to someone that is a perfect representative for the linguistic community, a perfect average of all its actants. We deduce that the answer to why a

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<sup>111</sup> The pragmatic ground for this we have mentioned before. Since man is only able to recollect a finite number of words all the while the number of potential experiences in the world is infinite words have to be adaptable in order to fulfil their purpose.

<sup>112</sup> In poetic discourse, centred on the metaphor, these meanings will mainly be new to language while in speculative discourse they will be established.

<sup>113</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 104

<sup>114</sup> Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 104. This is of course the transposed principles of congruence and plenitude said in yet another fashion.

dictionary works lies in what it truly is. A statistical demographic that gives not word-meaning but a measurement of how the majority of the speech community chooses to use language to produce meaning and communicate.<sup>115</sup> In the context of poetical discourse the applicability of a dictionary is however questionable since such discourse wish to speak new meanings. We might draw parallels between this line of reasoning and that which is stated in the chapter on “Original Language Vs. Translation”.

It becomes apparent from the critique of Beardsley’s theories that we can only find a theory of interpretation of poetic discourse, one in front of which the limits of formalist criticism will appear clearly, by studying in depth the hermeneutics of metaphor.

The project of Ricoeur is in one way analogous to that of Beardsley, who intends to transpose a method for explication of metaphor alone to the level of the whole literary work. What differs between Beardsley and Ricoeur is the level on which they intend to perform this transposition. Where Beardsley attempts to keep to explication within the limits of a formalist approach to texts Ricoeur intends to formulate a true textual hermeneutics as a model for how we interpret literary works.

Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of metaphor is based in a critique of Beardsley’s theory of explication of metaphor that was presented previously but is at the same time a further development of Ricoeur’s prior hermeneutics of the symbol which we precede to present below.

## 12.Symbol and its Hermeneutics by Ricoeur

We have presented the concept of explication, its interconnections to the scientificity of the natural sciences and to some subdivisions of Analytic Philosophy in the chapter “Metaphor and its Explication by Beardsley”. We have furthermore made it clear that explication is highly relevant also for interpretation in the chapter on “Construction” but as we proceed to present the dialectics of Ricoeur’s hermeneutics of symbol and metaphor the idea of interpretation will become more and more involved. We distinguish explication from interpretation by considering the difference of their objects. Where the goal of explication is explanation the goal of interpretation is understanding. With philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey we say that this is also the distinction between the types of knowledge of the Natural Sciences and the humanities respectively where, over-simplistically, the first attempts to explain the

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<sup>115</sup> It might be a very interesting study to use statistical means to measure the viscosity of a particular culture by testing the applicability of old dictionaries in new contexts. How people react to and in which context they use words from them and so forth.

world and the other to understand it.<sup>116</sup> The separation of explication from interpretation in the study of discourse is at the same time a separation of meaning from its reference which occasions us to say that we can understand discourse only by finding its intention and entering its referential world.<sup>117</sup> This statement is however based in a seemingly idealistic and phenomenological idea of language that Ricoeur objects to. By Ricoeurian hermeneutics of the literary text we do not enter a world of the work when we interpret literature, we place ourselves in front of its world by entering into a dialectics between meaning and reference or roughly between language and the world when we interpret. Meaning is reached by explication and is more or less directly accessible by all actants in a linguistic community.<sup>118</sup> The *understanding* of discourse however can be approximated only in interpretation and the conditions for interpretation of poetic discourse are as follows.<sup>119</sup>

For Ricoeur the symbol is intrinsically opaque.<sup>120</sup> This is due to a double intention ascribed to the symbol that forces it to hold both primary and secondary meaning and it is this polyvocality that is the trademark of the symbol.<sup>121</sup> Historically the symbol has constituted a problem for logical empiricists and positivists intent on formalizing language but for Ricoeur the symbol comes to open the door to a language philosophy that “preserves the *whole* fullness of language”.<sup>122</sup> A philosophy according to which symbolic language opens up towards human experience of the world rather than constitutes a problem of explication. For Ricoeur the opaqueness constitutes a resistance to formalization that is built in to the symbol

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<sup>116</sup> Dilthey, Wilhelm, *Filosoflexikonet*, p. 116f. Dilthey, Wilhelm, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 100f. We underline that this is indeed a simplification and that the Natural Sciences has had to adapt after Dilthey’s era. With the entry of String Theory and Quantum Physics for example we must suppose that a great change has come to the discursive practices of the Natural Sciences. What we draw parallels to here is instead the Natural Sciences in a more general and perhaps more traditional sense.

<sup>117</sup> Förståelse, *Filosoflexikonet*, p. 182f. Understanding, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, p. 373. We emphasize here again that with Ricoeur the intention of a literary work is not the intention of an author but the intention of the work itself.

<sup>118</sup> This is indeed an over-simplification but a longer digression into the semantic aspects of language and the mechanisms of the linguistic community has been made in the “Construction” chapter to a level that is sufficient for the purposes of this thesis.

<sup>119</sup> We say approximated here since we speak of poetic discourse that is living and has a surplus of meaning that can never be fully understood since it is ever increasing. Due to this, interpretation of poetic discourse can never close and be fully understood since it would mean the formalisation of interpretation, in case of which the instance of discourse will no longer be poetic.

<sup>120</sup> Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 15

<sup>121</sup> Uggla, p. 181, 178. Those who have read closely will protest when we say this since they know that no sense is inherent to any sign. We speak however here, and will throughout this part of the thesis, speak of a word in a textual context when we say symbol. It is thus the symbolic and semantic meaning distributed from the level of the sentence that we speak of when we speak of the meaning or sense of a symbol in this chapter. It is furthermore so that a very strong symbol in one context might have no symbolic meaning at all in another context.

<sup>122</sup> Uggla, p. 178. (“tillvarata språkets *hela* fullhet”)



and symptomatic of a great ability, the ability to speak of human experience of the world.<sup>123</sup> We say that “[t]he questions regarding meaning – and regarding the sources of *new* meaning – cannot, according to Ricoeur, be answered by the developing of more precise concepts”.<sup>124</sup> This quote constitutes among other things an implicit critique of the implementation of methods from Analytic Philosophy in literary studies and will be of importance for our continued study.

The opacity of the symbol is constituted by one primary meaning that is its semantic sense and a secondary meaning that is its symbolic sense. The symbolic sense is analogical to the semantic sense which means that the two are distinct but that we still have to pass over the primary meaning in order to get to the secondary.<sup>125</sup> Between the two senses lies a tension. We might say that the difference between the two senses stretches the sign that yields unwillingly into a symbol, and this entices the reader to interpret more.<sup>126</sup> In fact, as we will come to see, the tension instigates a process of interpretation that opens the symbol to a surplus of meaning that can never be fully explored. This is what breathes life into the symbol. In the act of interpretation an infinite surplus of meaning is tapped into and the symbol is given life.<sup>127</sup>

Karl Simms distinguishes between the semantic sense and symbolic sense of a symbol by use of the following example. The proposition  $2 + 2 = 4$  is verifiable, the truth of it is verificationist and can be tested. This verificationist truth lies within the semantic meanings of the proposition. However, in the context of Orwell’s novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) the proposition has further implications, it means more. It would seem that the idea of freedom that is internal to  $2 + 2 = 4$  in Orwell’s novel, that is; its symbolic meaning, is arrived at differently than its semantic meaning. The first difference between finding symbolic and semantic meaning is that symbolic meaning cannot be arrived at simply by studying a sentence. Instead one is forced to take into account the full context of the *work* to find the senses of the symbols.<sup>128</sup>

The opacity of the symbol gives that we must pass over its semantic sense in order to reach its symbolic sense. Ricoeur holds therefore that the symbol is of a giving nature in the sense that its primary meaning offers unto us a secondary meaning. Ricoeur says “the

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<sup>123</sup> Uggla, p. 179

<sup>124</sup> Uggla, p. 179. (“Frågorna om meningen – och om var källorna till *ny* mening står att finna – kan man enligt Ricoeur inte finna ett svar på genom att utveckla allt exaktare begrepp.”)

<sup>125</sup> Uggla, p. 181

<sup>126</sup> Uggla, p. 181

<sup>127</sup> Uggla, p. 183

<sup>128</sup> Simms, p. 31f

symbol gives rise to thought” and within this lies the basic dialectics of the symbol.<sup>129</sup> Uggla says that “[o]n the one hand the expression demarcates that the symbol is a type language that *gives* something to us, but on the other hand it demarcates that that which is given is something *to think about*”, that it is a task.<sup>130</sup> In other words the symbol is a gift from language that takes the form of a task or contains an incitement to act, a linguistic entity that presents itself to us but still tasks us to interpret it. The symbol is thus a gift that is not fully given, let us say that it is constantly in the process of being given.

We pass over the symbol’s semantic sense in order to reach its symbolic sense. This is necessary since the symbolic sense extends analogically from the semantic sense of the symbol.<sup>131</sup> But not only symbol, indeed any sign, has indirect senses as well as direct senses, as we might remember from the discussion on denotation and connotation. What is it then really that differentiates the symbol from other signs in language? What is the difference between the secondary meanings of an ordinary sign and those of a symbol?

Since denotation and connotation is assigned to a word by its predominant usage we can presume that they will in some way be in line with one another. The Symbol’s primary and secondary meaning however does not have to have any connections. Consider the example of  $2+2=4$  that we presented above. This is what sets the symbol in a perpetual state of being given to us and gives to it a surplus of meaning. In this surplus of meaning, intrinsic to the symbol, lies the fact that there will always be a region of the secondary meaning of the symbol that is untapped by our interpretation. This differentiates the symbol from the ordinary sign, the sign in a common setting, that has only the connotations and denotations that are agreed upon by the linguistic community and it allows for the symbol to speak about the ever evolving world.<sup>132</sup> While the ordinary sign keeps intra-linguistic denotation and connotations the symbol when read plunges its reader into an un-finalizable process of interpretation that stretches out towards new human experience.<sup>133</sup> We say with Ricoeur that human experience of the ever evolving world “requires the mediation of a specific language, the language of symbols”.<sup>134</sup> We see how the distinction between speculative and poetic discourse is fortified by this argument. How clarity of communication comes at a cost of that which would be most

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<sup>129</sup> Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 348

<sup>130</sup> Uggla, p. 180f. (“Å ena sidan markerar uttrycket att symbolen är en språkets gåva som *ger*, men å andra sidan markeras att det som ges är något *att tänka på*”.)

<sup>131</sup> Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 15. Uggla, p. 181f

<sup>132</sup> We underline here that the ordinary sign might well be symbolical in other contexts. The abilities of the symbol belong not to the single sign but are presented to it by a context where it is symbolical. When we speak of the ordinary sign we speak of any sign used in a non-figural setting.

<sup>133</sup> Uggla, p. 182

<sup>134</sup> Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 161. This, we will find, extends to include all poetic discourse.

natural for us to want to communicate.<sup>135</sup> We must however acknowledge here as well that using symbols to speak of new experience comes at a cost of clarity in communication. This presents to us the allowances and limitations that the hermeneutics of the symbol entails. It cannot seek to divest the symbol of its surplus of meaning in order to achieve clarity since this would hinder the symbol in its purpose of speaking of human experiences but as a hermeneutics it must still sustain interpretation. The new hermeneutics of the symbol must respect the origin of the symbol while resolving the task of interpretation. Without commenting in length we underline that we must reflect upon the consequences that this has for the applicability of formalist criticism in literary studies and that we will do so at a later stage of the thesis.

Ricoeur presents a hermeneutics of the symbol that explains how we are able to construct the meanings of the symbol while still optimizing and eternalizing the thinking process that it instils in us. In effect how we while striving towards explication in one end can keep the interpretation of its surplus of meaning alive in the other end. This is a hermeneutics that respects both the symbol as a gift, as it is presented to us, and the thought process that it instills, a hermeneutics that allows both boundness to the origin of the symbol and freedom of interpretation as it guides us on the route *towards* understanding.<sup>136</sup> Ricoeur realizes that he has to match his dialectic theory of the symbol with a dialectic hermeneutics and by presenting the idea of what he calls creative interpretation he does so. By being creative we interpret the symbol freely and tap into its surplus of meaning while allowing it to keep its bond to its origin.<sup>137</sup>

Creative interpretation is an act of invention that contains both an element of discovery and an element of creation, both an archaeological and a teleological aspect that is perfectly consonant with the dialectics of the symbol.<sup>138</sup> This is because we find the tools for establishing the nature of the gift that is the symbol in the discovery that belongs to creative interpretation while we find the means to think from our own perspective and explore the surplus of meaning of the symbol in the allowance that creativity offers.<sup>139</sup> We say now that the act of interpretation of a symbol is to result in an invention of a redescription that is the

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<sup>135</sup> Comp. Uggla, p. 223

<sup>136</sup> The word 'towards' is set in italics here in order to underline the infinite process of interpretation that belongs to the symbol and divests it of the clarity that understanding entails.

<sup>137</sup> Uggla, p. 182f. This argument concerns only the field opened by the secondary meaning of a symbol namely that of the symbolic sense and its reference. It is within this field that the interpretation of a symbol takes place after the field has been pointed out to us by the symbol's semantic sense.

<sup>138</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 361

<sup>139</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 361

reference of the symbol, a redescription that contains both the discovery of the origin of the symbol and its potential future state manifested in the result of our creativity.

To creatively interpret a symbol is to keep it open to its surplus of meaning, to that which makes it poetic in the first case. This makes the interpretation of symbols an un-finalizable process since they would no longer be symbols if one would formalise their meanings. But the formalist would ask; how can we find truth if interpretation does not finalize? Truth for the formalist is absolute and not dynamic. But truth in an ever evolving world can not be absolute since from the perspective of eternity that comes with the concept of time nothing is static. To rid formalist criticism of this prejudice we are in need of a new concept of truth that will be sketched in the chapter “*Le métaphore vive*” we will however say here that the seemingly new criticism that would extend from the hermeneutics of symbols as it is presented in this chapter is really a return of formalist criticism to a more original, naïve and intuitive state that comes to it with the “realization of its hermeneutic presuppositions”.<sup>140</sup> Indeed Ricoeur claims that this more original criticism, void of formalist prejudice, would enable critics to reach a pre-scientific, pre-philosophical meaning and reference of the symbol once more.<sup>141</sup> This is however not to be confused with a movement away from the intellectual but constitutes instead a step towards a new intellectualism that lies in Ricoeur’s textual hermeneutics.

The symbol in its formalized form (symbol that has seized being symbolical in the sense presented above) appears as a myth that is an allegory with a fixed secondary meaning. Living symbol is thus not only pre-scientific and pre-philosophical but also pre-mythical.<sup>142</sup> We say by this that symbol comes alive in a de-mythologization that is achieved as it is interpreted without the prejudices of formalist criticism. It is in de-mythologization that the symbol opens up to its surplus of meaning but it must not be de-mythologized “to such a degree that it loses all connection with any precise history”.<sup>143</sup> In this lies of course a rather explicit critique of the application of the scientific ideals of the natural sciences and the linguistic models of analytic philosophy via formalist criticism on the field of literary studies.

The archaeological aspect of symbolical interpretation lies in the discovery of the origin of the symbol while the teleological aspect lies in the creative process and both are contained in the hermeneutics of the symbol. We say that creative interpretation of the symbol

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<sup>140</sup> Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 351. Uggla, p. 323. (“inse sina hermeneutiska förutsättningar”)

<sup>141</sup> Uggla, p. 179

<sup>142</sup> Uggla, p. 179

<sup>143</sup> Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 201

is always a reinterpretation of the symbol that results in a redescription of its referential object.<sup>144</sup>

There is a point in using the term redescription here instead of description. A direct description could never be inventive and contain both an element of discovery and an element of creation, a redescription however is what Ricoeur would call an invention, something that is discovered creatively. While description could only stand for a world abstracted from time redescription contains both the archaeological and teleological aspect of a world subjected to time, it can indeed represent “things as in a state of activity”.<sup>145</sup> As we enter the hermeneutics of the symbol’s more radical brother metaphor, this will be explained further.

Because of the dialectics of the symbol we are tasked with pursuing its origin but at the same time to criticise this origin when we interpret and it is in the performing of this criticism that we are creative. This is the very ground stone of Ricoeur’s creative interpretation, since it is only in the dynamic relationship between gift and object for thought that the symbol comes alive and is truly symbolical. In creative interpretation these two tasks are not contradictory but complementary thus the interpretative process is what Ricoeur calls a conflict of interpretation to which the conflict is indeed central.<sup>146</sup> It is in the conflict between the lust to accept the origin of the symbol and the drive to be critical towards this same origin that the symbol lives. From a communicative perspective it is the conflict that keeps the symbol from collapsing “into a shared lie” that is communal to the linguistic community, in short the ongoing conflict is that which hinders the formalization of the symbol.<sup>147</sup>

The interpretation of symbols becomes in one part highly similar to the work of the etymologist’s who strives to restore an original meaning of a sign, but since we are instead dealing with symbolic meanings the process must become dialectical. The second part of the interpretation of a symbol lies in performing a critique of the discovered origin from the perspective of its present context. Only thus can we tap into the surplus of meaning of the symbol in fact only then, in the act of symbolic interpretation, will sign become symbol.<sup>148</sup> With this comes a problem of identification. If the symbol becomes symbolical in the interpretative act the symbol can only be identified after interpretation has started. But we are

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<sup>144</sup> Simms, p. 32f

<sup>145</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 362f

<sup>146</sup> Uggla, p. 99

<sup>147</sup> Uggla, p. 159. (“i en gemensam lögn”)

<sup>148</sup> Uggla, p. 183

all interpreting beings and thus interpretation is not something that we need to initiate by making the decision to interpret. As our eyes scan the letters of the text interpretation is instant. Are we then to understand that any symbol is always apparently symbolic to its reader?

We identify metaphor by the semantic clash alternatively the logical absurdity that it carries but the word identify is somewhat misleading since it suggests that we actively look for logical absurdity and only when we have found it start interpreting according to a method we have learned from philosophy. But one does not have to be schooled in philosophy in order to understand metaphor, on the contrary anyone who has the ability to use language must intuitively be able to understand metaphors since the very pragmatism of language, its correspondence to the world, lies in metaphor. Learning from this we ought to ask not how do we identify symbol but what is the identity of symbol?

The double meanings of the symbol produce a tension that convinces its reader that it has not said all it can say and thus entices her to interpret further. In the identity of a symbol lies thus a tension. In this tension we discover the giftedness of the symbol and open the door to its surplus of meaning. The sign becomes symbol only when it is interpreted as such argumentatively we must accept that there can be no active identification of a symbol, instead what a reader considers to be symbolical is fully dependent on her linguistic competence in the particular case. But does the strong reader really experience signs as symbols to a greater extent than the inexperienced reader? Would not a reader with a larger linguistic competence find proper intra-linguistic meanings of signs that fit the textual context in which it is located with more ease than a less competent reader and hence more easily avoid the discovery of secondary meaning?

It is apparent that the competence needed in order to formulate the meanings of speculative discourse differs from that needed when interpreting poetic discourse and its symbols. Again, I believe, the difference lies in the creativity and the power of the imagination that we have to utilize when we interpret symbol. A skilled reader of speculative works is skilled in the matching up of meanings that can produce a clear explication of a work, she is a follower, while a skilled reader of literature utilizes her imagination to question the contextualization of words in order to vivify the work and explore the fullness of its language. The skilfulness of reading literature thus lies in the reader's power of imagination. All people have imagination, I would even venture to say that it is a condition for self-reflexion, so all readers must be able to recognize the tension, not of any particular symbol, but of a symbolic status of signs in general. This however is one of the things that formalist

prejudice encourages its sympathisers not to do since such a practice would obliterate the whole foundation of formalism and force it to leave behind its non-relativistic ideal. There must however be cases where there are no explicitly rational explications of the work at all if one is to keep solely to the already intra-linguistic possible meanings of the word in its textual context. But with this we have reached the metaphor.

### 13. *Le métaphore vive*

The title of this chapter breaks a trend of the thesis. It is in French while all other chapters and the title of the thesis are in English. There is a stylistic reason for the French title of this chapter of course, the French might revive the interest of some readers that have succumbed to the seeming dullness of the theoretical text. Never the less there is a greater point to this title, as it is the original title of Ricoeur's great work on metaphor that is called simply *The Rule of Metaphor* in English. What the French title does and the English fails to do is to strongly emphasize the condition for a hermeneutic approach to literary works if one wants to breath life into poetic discourse, to awaken it from stasis and let it connect to the world.

What is dealt with by the great majority of formalist metaphor theoreticians is more often than not the explication of dead metaphor. We know already that dead metaphors are closed to their surplus of meaning and unable to relate to the world since they can say nothing new. This is what pushes us up the next step of the hermeneutic ladder that we are climbing, to the hermeneutics of metaphor which develops out of Ricoeur's critique of Beardsley's Controversion Theory of Metaphor and his hermeneutics of the symbol.

We have stapled in the preceding chapter the dialectics that belong to the symbol and as we take the next step on Ricoeur's ladder of hermeneutics we will have to demonstrate how we can transpose and develop the hermeneutics of symbol to fit the problem of metaphor. The reason that metaphor is of the utmost importance for our study has been touched upon earlier and will be affirmed as this chapter plays out.

We know that metaphor is present in even the oldest of literary writings. If the phenomenon was merely stylistic it would, I believe, be the most persistent of trends among all the cultural expressions in the world. Yet for a long time metaphor was referred to as nothing but an ornamentalist trope of the rhetoric. We call these early theories of metaphor substitutional, because they uphold metaphor to be simply an unconventional, improper, way of saying something that could be said conventionally and properly. What is substituted is according to such models simply one word for another that says the same thing.

Roughly we might say that the next development in metaphor theory was the Interaction Theories. The great realization of the Interactionists was that the metaphor could not be confined to the singular word, that there was no such thing as a metaphorical word but that metaphor could appear only as words contextualized each other. The most radical cases of Interaction Theory were constructed in order to break the by then very rigid boundedness of metaphor to the rhetoric and proposed that metaphor held greater claims than the mere ornamental ability that Substitution Theory afforded it. Such theorists held and still hold today that metaphor has the ability to create new meanings and that it is therefore a most essential component of language and by extension of the epistemologies of the seemingly unstoppable wave of lingo-centrist philosophy that were to sweep over the western world during the twentieth century.<sup>149</sup> It has however been demonstrated in this thesis how even the most developed of Interaction Theories can be nothing else than substitutional if they intend to stay purely within the limits of language.

There is no doubt that Beardsley is one of the Interactionists, in fact I would hold his theory to constitute the pinnacle of their efforts. It is right there, in the absolute centre of his argumentation, that metaphor theory is forced yet again to take on a new shape and grow to envelop more. These greater claims of metaphor are necessitated by the overlap of epistemology and ontology that Beardsley inadvertently locates in metaphor in his article “The Metaphorical Twist”.

Ricoeur formulates what might aptly be called an Interaction Theory of Living Metaphor that has its basis in common Interaction Theory. Living metaphor since it is explicatory of the way language reaches the world and comes alive, in contrast to the dead metaphor with established meanings that most theoreticians prior to Ricoeur have studied. As we have found the symbol to come alive by means of its inherent tension, so also metaphor comes alive by the tensions that it carries. These tensions constitute a productive dialectics of poetic discourse that are centred around and focused in the metaphor. These tensions are that between the subject and modifier of the metaphor, that between the literal and figural meanings of the metaphor and that between the ‘is’ and ‘is not’ of the metaphorical copula.<sup>150</sup> The last of these tensions is not directly graspable but an explanation will follow shortly.

Starting with the first we have said time and again that Ricoeur embraces Beardsley’s theory of a semantic clash in metaphor. Speaking of a clash however creates the

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<sup>149</sup> For further reading on Substitution and Interaction Theory see Gerhard Kurz, *Metapher, Allegorie, Symbol*, Göttingen 1982, and/or my D-thesis: *An Application of Monroe C. Beardsley’s Controversion Theory of Metaphor*

<sup>150</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 292f, 353



impression of a collision that makes two things into one. This imagery is helpful when we are to understand that metaphor creates something new by using already established components, the image however cannot support the dialectics between 'subject' and 'modifier' as Ricoeur formulates it since a dialectics presupposes, speaking topographically, a distance between two things. Therefore we speak here of tension rather than clash. The tension of the metaphor lies in the polarity between its two terms, its 'subject' and 'modifier', and interpretation forgoes in the field that this tension opens up.

It has been stated repeatedly that there is no such thing as word meanings, particularly in cases of living metaphor, since words are given meaning in context of other words. Within the linguistic community however, from the perspective of its actants, we have found words to seemingly carry senses that are derived from how they are commonly textually contextualized. The tension between the two terms of a metaphor is a tension between such senses that does not fit to one another. Regardless of this we have found that metaphor is not discarded as nonsensical, it inspires instead a lust in the reader to look further. This lust forces apart the senses of the two terms and produces the tension that is the first key to the surplus of meaning of the metaphor. By never letting the tension equalise we keep the metaphor and interpretation alive.<sup>151</sup>

The second tension is that between the literal and figural meanings of the metaphor. We have established that we attempt to understand the metaphor literally and only when we realize that this makes it nonsensical we proceed to the row of connotations of the modifier. In this lies the second and more basic tension of metaphor. Metaphor is a particular case of superficially and literally nonsensical attribution, an indirect self-contradiction to be exact that is configured so that it, despite of the clashing senses of its terms, is given a second chance by the reader so to mean something. Thus the indirect significant self-contradictory attribution receives a more profound figural meaning that is supported by the textual context. The clashing senses of the terms, the first tension of the metaphor, instigate a figural interpretation that gives meaning to the attribution in which no literal meaning can be found. This forces open the second tension and locates it between the literal explication of the metaphor, which can never be but that the reader envisions as ideal, and the figural explication that is reached by a detour over the connotations and potential connotations of the modifier.<sup>152</sup> We say that to keep metaphor alive and open to its surplus of meaning and by extension to the ever evolving world is to brace ourselves to the rebounding power of this

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<sup>151</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 292

<sup>152</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 292

paradox and never let the interpretation finalize. By this language is allowed to communicate the new experience in the world but the tensile strength of the metaphor is not infinite. If it breaks we are left with nothing but what we already know.<sup>153</sup> We see that the interpretation of metaphor means walking a painfully thin line between a constant threat of the equalization of the paradox into formalization and a full collapse of communication of new experience which would also formalize the meanings of the metaphor. This is however a line that we must walk in order to achieve understanding, a line we can scarcely avoid to walk.

By opening the metaphor up to its surplus of meaning, to its potential connotations as Beardsley would say, it will start turning “what were previously contingent properties of the things referred to /.../ into meanings”.<sup>154</sup> According to Ricoeur this semantic innovation that takes the form of an addition to the polysemy of words is the first and foremost function of the usage of metaphor and the meanings of the first tension are merely to act as guiding principles for it.<sup>155</sup>

The new polysemy of metaphorical expressions, now open to the properties of objects in the world, is exclusive to the particular textual context in which the metaphor appears. Thus, for metaphor to be considered poetic discourse and both be an event and have meaning, we must take on the perspective of the reader. Only then can the surplus of meaning of living metaphor be called identifiable and re-identifiable as the same, fulfil the basic condition for any meaning and partake in poetic discourse.<sup>156</sup> If we maintain the perspective of a linguistic community metaphor would have to be formalized in order to fulfil the criteria of meaning but this would instantly close the metaphor to its surplus of meaning and turn it into a common sign.<sup>157</sup> With this we must say that the hermeneutics of metaphor is intrinsically relative. This, of course, has implications for any formalist school of criticism.

Metaphor produces a “momentaneous creation of language, a, semantic innovation” that lifts properties of objects outside of language into it. By this it creates new meaning that makes new reference.<sup>158</sup> To make a reference is to claim that something ‘is’ and this brings us to our final tension of metaphor.

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<sup>153</sup> If the metaphor breaks in this way we ought perhaps to say that we will find nothing but nonsense in the attribution, but it seems practically impossible to find two words that fit each other so badly that absolutely no connotations of the modifier can apply to the subject. Beardsley considers this himself since he, when he wrote his book, could not claim to have ever found a definitely indirect *insignificant* self-contradiction. Comp. Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 143

<sup>154</sup> Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. xxxiv. Comp. Beardsley, ”The Metaphorical Twist”, p. 302

<sup>155</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 353

<sup>156</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 114

<sup>157</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 100

<sup>158</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 103

The third tension of metaphor is that between the ‘is’ and ‘is not’ of the metaphorical copula. The metaphor comes, in the process of interpretation, to mean what it did not mean before, the ‘is’ that is the copula of the metaphor, implied or explicit, supposed one meaning that was turned into another and these two meanings became the two poles of the second tension of the metaphor. Ricoeur says that the ‘is not’ is implied in the “impossibility of the literal interpretation, yet present as a filigree in the metaphorical ‘is’”.<sup>159</sup> This results in the most profound tension of the metaphorical attribution that expands between an ‘is’ and an ‘is not’ of the relational copula and it is here that the particular referentiality of the metaphor is revealed in full.<sup>160</sup>

The distinction between ‘is’ and ‘is not’ is not to be taken as a distinction between two senses of the verb ‘to be’ but as the tension between the unfitting senses of the subject and modifier as it is transposed through the tensional levels of metaphor and concentrated in its very core.<sup>161</sup> It is this tension internal to the copula that produces what Ricoeur calls a split reference, split because it carries two semantic aims. The first reference derives from what *would be* the literal interpretation of metaphor but this appears initially to be nonsensical to any reader. It is this that pushes the reader to browse among the connotations of the modifier in order to find some that can apply to the subject. While the formalist critic is satisfied with identifying intra-linguistic and established connotations which aim towards a field of known, direct and established characterizations the interpreter must find subjective and linguistically un-established connotations as well in order for the metaphor to be able to refer to new experience. The reference of the established meanings can never be a new experience in the world since such experience is unique per se and never established in the linguistic community before hand.<sup>162</sup> The second reference however extends from the figural interpretation of metaphor, of which the semantic aim is directed towards a field with no direct characterizations and for which we are unable to make identifying description by utilizing already known senses of words. Ricoeur says that the semantic aim when “[u]nable to fall back upon the interplay between reference and predication” must take “recourse to a network of predicates that already function in a familiar field of reference” and cast it “into the new referential field”.<sup>163</sup> In this way the split reference utilizes familiar regions of language to explore new and unnamed experience in the world. We say with this

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<sup>159</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 293

<sup>160</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 292

<sup>161</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 293

<sup>162</sup> The first reference here is not to be taken as the impossible reference of the ‘is’ of the copula but the reference of the formalist explication.

<sup>163</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 353f

that the reference to new experience is made possible by a dialectic relationship between a first impossible reference and a second implied reference produced by the metaphor and that the dialectics between the two creates the overlap of ontology and epistemology. In this dialectics “a portion of the trajectory of meaning” is moved so that it “goes beyond the familiar referential field” while at the same time an “unknown referential field” is drawn “towards language”.<sup>164</sup>

There are two forces at work in producing this abridgement: A “gravitational pull exerted by the second referential field” and a “dynamism” of meaning that gives to discourse a tensional strength to withstand the trauma of metaphorization.<sup>165</sup> The dynamism of meaning is determined by the linguistic model that we have presupposed for this thesis while the “gravitational pull exerted by the second referential field” is not. Ricoeur postulates that the gravitational force to stretch language like this lies in what he calls an “ontological vehemence” that “cuts meaning from its initial anchor /---/ and transposes it to a new field to which the meaning can give form by means of its own figurative property”.<sup>166</sup> Let us be satisfied by adding, with Ricoeur, “[a]n experience seeks to be expressed” and is allowed to be so by the dynamism of meaning that is never more manifest than in metaphor.<sup>167</sup>

With the acceptance of split reference in metaphor any ideal of verifiability goes out the window. Split reference allows us to speak of new experience in the world but at the same time it drastically impairs, perhaps even eliminates, the capacity for absolute truth corresponding to concepts and thoughts in poetic discourse. But we have already found the concept of absolute truth to correspond poorly to the ever evolving world. Be it rhetorical at this late state of the thesis we must still ask the question; might we in the split reference of metaphor have found the counterpart to the referential demands of the ever evolving world? But we must subsequently ask the more profound question; is metaphorical truth as we will sketch it below Truth per se?

We have distinguished the metaphorical relational use of ‘is’ as carrying a split reference apart from “the ‘is’ of determination”.<sup>168</sup> We have however yet to mention the importance of keeping the tension between the ‘is’ and ‘is not’ of the metaphorical statement alive. If we were to ignore the implicit ‘is not’ in metaphorical interpretation we would give in

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<sup>164</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 354

<sup>165</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 354

<sup>166</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 354

<sup>167</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 354

<sup>168</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 293

to an “ontological *naïveté*” that statifies meaning.<sup>169</sup> This would be to take the deterministic path of the formalist and with the loss of the dynamism of meaning the dialectics between it and the ontological vehemence, the gravitational pull of the second referential field, would perish in effect hindering metaphor to speak of new experience. If one on the other hand falls under the spell of the inverse ‘is not’ of the copula the ontological vehemence would be dissolved and the metaphor would state merely a reflective judgment of equivalence saying that something is ‘as-if’ it was something else. Indeed again the power of metaphor to speak of new experience would be lost to us.<sup>170</sup> If we keep this dialectics between ontological vehemence and dynamism of meaning alive, however, the tension of the copula in its “relational function” is transposed to the “existential function” of ‘is’.<sup>171</sup> It is by entering this existential mode that the ‘is’ and ‘is not’ of metaphor is applied to reality. Not until the tension is transposed from the relational ‘is’ configuration of the copula to the existential ‘is’ configuration will metaphor actually make its split reference. We see now how a “notion of *metaphorical truth*” becomes the truth of the ever evolving world and our task thus becomes one of defining the concept in order to be able to study formalist criticisms fittingness to it.<sup>172</sup>

What have we learned of metaphorical truth from the presentation above? That it must be tensional and dialectic. That it must be in its very essence unverifiable since it is stated by an ‘is’ that implies an ‘is not’ and furthermore since it is the truth of a referential field that is un-established and previously un-referred to by language. But, we ask once more, does this mean that metaphorical truth is apt to meet the referential demands of an ever evolving world?

Ricoeur says that the concept of metaphorical truth pertains to “the ‘realistic’ intention that belongs to the redescriptive power of poetic language”.<sup>173</sup> We have already in “Symbol and its Hermeneutics by Ricoeur” presented the idea of an invention as constituting the basis for the production of a truthful redescription in the interpretation of symbols. In order to transfer this to our present discussion on metaphor and its truth it becomes imperative to consider the conjunction of literary works and redescription, since metaphor is the very ground-stone of poetic discourse and by extension literature.

We have already found redescription to be the result of an interpretation that is the de-mythologization of the symbol and we shall transpose parts of that argument into this

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<sup>169</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 294

<sup>170</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 294ff

<sup>171</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 293f

<sup>172</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 294

<sup>173</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 292

discussion. Only interpretation of mythic discourse is inventive and contains both the element of discovery and creation that results in a redescription of “things as in a state of activity”.<sup>174</sup> Indeed only that which is mythic can be de-mythologized and introduce an element of discovery to interpretation. This is in effect to say that only mythic discourse can produce a truthful representation of the ever evolving world. The symbol is mythic in its own right and comes alive as it is demythologized in interpretation but ordinary language is not mythic. What Ricoeur finds in metaphor is nothing less than the power to mythologize discourse and as we said before, metaphor is the model for all poetic discourse which makes poetic discourse essentially mythic. If metaphor can mythologize discourse it has in fact the power to revive that which is dead as it, in mythologizing discourse, returns redescriptive power to language. This makes the conjunction of metaphor, by extension poetic discourse, and redescription apparent. Ricoeur concludes that “metaphor is that strategy of discourse by which language divests itself of its function of direct description in order to reach the mythic level”.<sup>175</sup>

The divestment of direct description in language is achieved by poetic discourse via the metaphor and this in turn allows metaphor to redescribe reality. Metaphorical truth has thus been found to meet the referential demands of the ever evolving world. Refusing the verificationist concept of truth by divesting language of direct description metaphor gains the power of representing “things as in a state of activity”.<sup>176</sup> A power to redescribe reality that is matched by the inventiveness of creative interpretation. Interpretation that appears in the dialectics between discovery and creation.

We have now explored the concept of metaphorical truth and its correspondence to the ever evolving world and with this we must leave the verificationist notion of truth that belongs to a positivist concept of reality behind in poetic discourse. For the conclusion we must ask whether or not formalist criticism can contain this development?

But can we from what has been presented above hold metaphorical truth to be Truth per se as we asked before? To answer this we would have to have an in depth knowledge of speculative discourse which it is not the task of this thesis to present, but in order to establish the limits of formalist criticism the question seems justified. In order to present a rudimentary answer a brief digression will be made that will risk entering

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<sup>174</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 362

<sup>175</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 292

<sup>176</sup> This however is also the moment where relativism enters interpretation by which the clarity of speculative discourse is lost. This however is, as we have said before, not a great loss in discourse concerning experiences in the world since the clarity of speculative discourse presupposes an essentially naive notion of the world and a verificationist notion of truth. See: Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 362.

superficially into the problem of designing a method for a more original school of criticism. This would be a project for a work much greater in size than this thesis, a project that this thesis has no intention, nor any possibility, to undertake. There is however an implicit intention of this thesis in that it might constitute a partial theoretical ground for such a project in the future and this is why we here dare pushing it somewhat beyond the limits of its aim.

The 'is' and 'is not' that lies in the copula of the metaphor extends a question of 'being' or 'not being'. While the ontological aim of speculative discourse is concerned solely with "being as actuality", something that belongs to the positivist notion of reality that is a reality abstracted from time, poetic discourse brings "being as actuality" into play with "being as potentiality" in its making of a split-reference that searches for and finds a new experience in the world.<sup>177</sup> All this upholds metaphorical truth as Truth per se. This is where we must enter briefly into the methodological problem of returning to an original criticism. Poetic discourse is only poetic and alive as long as it is open to its surplus of meaning, to new experience in the world, and this makes interpretation an eternal process that can not finalize in to an explicit result without formalizing it into non-poetic, dead, discourse that is no longer open to new experience in the world.<sup>178</sup> We find thus that practically "the ultimate meaning of the reference of poetic discourse" must be "articulated in speculative discourse", in discourse on "being as actuality", but without formalizing it.<sup>179</sup> The path for anyone who intends to draw up the methods for a more original school of criticism seems thus to be to explore an intrinsic dialectics between living poetic discourse and formalizing speculative discourse and on account of this we must be very wary of speaking of either verificationist or metaphorical truth, indeed of any modality of truth as Truth per se.<sup>180</sup> The limited theoretical base for this thesis cannot support any such argument.

After this digression we return to the concept of redescription as the result of metaphorical interpretation and interpretation of poetic discourse. Redescription is connected

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<sup>177</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 363. I venture to say that "being as actuality" is also 'being as an idea' since actuality cannot correspond to an ever evolving world unless it is combined with the critical incision of "being as potentiality". We say here furthermore that the critical incision of "being as potentiality" is the questioning of the ontological naïveté of a positivist notion of the world.

<sup>178</sup> This is in effect to substitute the metaphor for an explication which yet again reduces metaphor to a rhetoric ornament.

<sup>179</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 363. The notion of "ultimate meaning" I find problematic since it signifies something finalized. How can an ultimate meaning be open to the surplus of meaning in the world? Perhaps 'the ultimate tension of the meaning of poetic discourse' would be more proper though less concise. We say also that if the interpretation is not in the end articulated in speculative discourse the 'is' loses its existential ontological status and becomes nothing but the reflectional claim of something being 'as-if' something else. This effectively takes language out of the world and the world out of language.

<sup>180</sup> If we allow ourselves to speculate however can we not argue that the split reference of metaphor achieves exactly this. by bringing "being as actuality" and "being as potentiality" into play does it not construe a dialectics that is poetical but contains an element of the speculative? It is not for this thesis to say.

to fiction and poetic discourse by the split reference of metaphor. Metaphor releases poetic language from the bonds of direct description by instigating a dialectics between being as actuality, the being in a moment abstracted from time, and being as potentiality, being in the ever evolving world. But what knowledge is it that we receive from the redescription of the world? Ricoeur holds that redescription comes in the form of a heuristic fiction, a fiction that can teach us something about the world.

Uggla says that the heuristic fiction “explores, reorganizes and works as a redescription of reality”.<sup>181</sup> In this idea of a redescription, as apart from description, poetic discourse finds a means to refer to “things as in a state of activity”. The idea of redescription as the making of reference fortifies the dialectic world view of Ricoeur. In a world placed in time, an ever evolving world, something that stately ‘is’ always also ‘is not’ what it is said to be.<sup>182</sup> This we gather to be so because an instance of time can only be spoken of as an abstraction, as an instance is subjected to time it is lost, and this in turn gives that what is said to ‘be’ never ‘is’ what it was said to ‘be’ originally in the ever evolving world. With this Ricoeur establishes what Uggla calls an “ontology of possibility” in which “the possible is no longer subordinated to the actual but on the contrary is ontologically superior to it”.<sup>183</sup> The dialectic between ‘is’ and ‘is not’ of the metaphor and poetic discourse gives birth to a dialectic of the redescription between the ‘actual’ and the ‘possible’. Reference to an ever evolving world that both ‘is’ and ‘is not’ can not be made by a direct description but must be made by a redescription that contains both this aspect of the ‘actual’ and that of the ‘possible’ and thus refers to “things as in a state of activity”. Only an inventive redescription which is both a discovery and a creation can bring tensional reality to language and place language in the ever evolving world and we have demonstrated that redescription belongs to the heuristic fiction, to metaphor and to poetic discourse since it springs from the tension of the metaphorical copula.

Which are then the properties of reality more than its rather vague and intuitive, tenseness or ever evolvingness if it can be redescription as a heuristic fiction? It is a reality the constant process of creation of which is consonant with “the creation in the creative dimension of language”, a reality to which metaphor is counterpart.<sup>184</sup> Such a concept of

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<sup>181</sup> Uggla, p. 399. (“[U]tforskar, omorganiseras och fungerar som en nybeskrivning av verkligheten”)

<sup>182</sup> By claiming reference to be redescription rather than description Ricoeur is forced leave the already stretched thin reference in the Fregean sense behind. However in order to avoid confusion the term will be kept throughout this thesis.

<sup>183</sup> Uggla, p. 400. (“möjlighetsontologi”, ”det möjliga inte längre betraktas som underordnat, utan tvärtom som ontologiskt överordnat det verkliga”)

<sup>184</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 300



reality shakes the very foundations of the positivist conception of reality as the “vacillation of literal reference” that metaphor demonstrates calls into question “the very notions of fact, object, reality and truth, as delineated by epistemology”.<sup>185</sup> It is a concept of reality in which it becomes in itself tensional as it is stretched out between two eternities. Such a reality carries an infinite number of stories, of potentialities, that literature posits and as a reader interprets these stories, takes an interpretative detour over these heuristic fictions, she experiences herself in new contexts and thus acquires self-understanding. Or, in the words of Ricoeur; “[f]or us the world is the ensemble of references opened up by texts” and to interpret a text is to let “its world enlarge the horizon of my self-understanding”.<sup>186</sup> The heuristic fiction, resulting from the tension between the subject and modifier as transposed to all levels of poetic discourse and projected by the split reference of the copula, thus “places man in discourse and discourse in being”.<sup>187</sup> It is the poetic task to reach these worlds or more precisely and with Ricoeur; to “dismantle the reign of objects in order to let be, and to allow to be uttered, our primordial belonging to a world which we inhabit, that is to say, which at once precedes us and receives the imprint of our works”.<sup>188</sup>

We have drawn parallels back to the creative interpretation of symbols and insisted that it is applicable in the de-mythologization of the metaphor as well. If we recall however that the tension of the symbol’s reference lay between a historic origin and a critique of said origin the discovery and creativity of the creative interpretation finds rather obvious counterparts to correspond to within the symbol. We might ask ourselves however what it is that we discover and what we create when interpreting metaphor?

We must start out with saying that metaphor presents itself as a gift that is a task to at least as high a degree as symbol. One might even argue that metaphor is more of a given task than symbol since it is constituted by a semantic impertinence that has no ground in the linguistic community at all. The task of interpretation is thus seemingly greater which of course must be equalled by its payoff, by the extent of the surplus of meaning made accessible by creative interpretation. It lies furthermore in this un-established nature of the metaphor, in its lack of history in the linguistic community, that there is no particular origin to discover or to criticise and this returns us to our original question. What is it that creative interpretation of metaphor discovers and creates?

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<sup>185</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 299f

<sup>186</sup> Ricoeur, “Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics”, p. 106f

<sup>187</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 370

<sup>188</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 362

The metaphor overturns discourse's function of referring by means of direct description for the benefit of its ability to redescribe the ever evolving world. By using only established words and meanings known to its readers it still lets them tap into new dimensions of reality.<sup>189</sup> In pulling an unknown referential field to language metaphor lets us discover that something else than that which we know of beforehand 'is'. This new field of reference is however constantly criticised from the perspective of the impossible reference as it would be made by the 'is not' that is implied in the copula and this critical moment constitutes the creative aspect of metaphorical interpretation. By keeping this dialectics alive in creative interpretation we avoid on the one hand, as we have warned of earlier in this chapter, giving in to an "ontological *naïveté*" that statifies meaning. And on the other hand it allows us to avoid letting the metaphor state merely a reflective judgment of equivalence saying that something is 'as-if' it was something else. By claiming something to 'be' while critically and continuously upholding that it 'is not' the reference of metaphor becomes animated. Instead of directly describing the properties of things as if they were abstracted from time it comes to "represent things as in a state of activity".

## 14. Conclusion

I wish to initiate this conclusion with a reservation. The fact that I do not present in full, in fact only briefly and irregularly touch upon, an alternative method belonging to a more original criticism in this thesis takes some of the force of my arguments. I must admit that I do not know if there is a practical possibility to return to a more original criticism and it would perhaps be utopian to claim that there is such a possibility. I am however sure that it serves any practice well to know the limitations of its scope and I do believe that this thesis determines the limitations of formalist criticism to a high degree of precision.

In the very beginning of this thesis we chose a literary text that we believed to be particularly referential on account of its historical context and its author's experiences. It would of course have been reasonable from one perspective to go back and change this as we have learnt so many things that opposes such a line of reasoning as the thesis has progressed. However to do so would deny us the possibility to argue around the basic prejudices that formed the foundation for our process of selection.

To begin with there lies in the choice of example an infatuation with the historic event as the reference of the work that is created alongside it. This is, by extension, an

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<sup>189</sup> Comp. Uggl, p. 399f

infatuation with the idea of the ingenious author's perspective that it becomes the utter task of interpretation to divest her work of. The rejection of authorial intention is however built into both the approach of formalist criticism and Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics but in different ways. The formalist attempts to bracket reference no matter what or how it appears while interpretation according to Ricoeur is a perpetual dialectic between the seeking of intention and critique of found intention. The intention of Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics however is not authorial but belongs to the work itself as it is distanced from the author and context of creation as soon as it is written. There is, according to Ricoeur, no access to authorial intention after the event of creation has passed but with Ricoeur this is not a bad thing. Instead it is this distancing of inscription that releases poetic discourse from the boundedness to a particular context and moment in time and gives to it all the power to speak of new experience. The reasoning here indicates that the formalist approach would not be able to reap the benefits of this power of language. This remains however an indication that we will have to follow the development of the "Conclusion" in order to confirm or reject.

With the bracketing of reference by formalist critics we indicate that they indeed are cut off from new experience as redescribed by the literary work and from the creative function of language in full. There is however a less rigorous wing of formalist criticism that historicises in order to give relevance to and reinforce the 'truth-value' of their explications. This becomes in a way an artificial fusion of two quite different components that are both based in speculative discourse, one in linguistics and one in the study of history. Together they present a twofold neglect of the distance between authorial intention and literary work that Ricoeur upholds as fundamental to language's ability to refer to new experience. The first neglect lies in the bracketing of reference that comes with the exclusively semantic scope of formalist criticism which eliminates the region of understanding in which distancing between authorial intention and the intention of the work would appear. The second neglect lies, ironically enough, in the institution of an *illusory* reference that is historically verifiable. This reference implicitly upheld as the intended reference of the author and the correct reference of the work is in fact an elimination of the work's own intention and thus an elimination of distancing. In these two movements lie the twofold neglect of distancing that shows how the historicizing formalist critic is cut off from the reference of the literary work. This is in turn another indication that new experience as it is redescribed by the literary work is inaccessible to the formalist critic even if she adapts a historicizing approach. But there are further implications to this.

It seems as if historicizing formalist criticism finds an alibi for its intra-linguistic operations in the science of history that *seemingly* provides a verifiable reference for their meanings, a reference that is taken to be the authorial intent of the work. But to treat the literary work as if its reference lies in a historical context is in fact to proceed from an assumption that its aim is the same as that of scientific works on history, particularly if the historicism is performed in connection with a formalistic approach that seeks only explication.<sup>190</sup> Must we not question poetic discourse's aptness to fulfil this aim? Consider for example "Klage" and ponder upon its qualities as a historic work on World War I. This artificial conjunction of linguistic and historic science, which is at the same time a retracing of the particular to the general, strives for nothing else than the substitution of a work that uses language improperly for an explication that is of proper diction. Again we find that formalist criticism on its own, historicizing or not, will have great difficulty when it comes to finding the new experiences that literature has the ability to speak of. Ricoeur on the other hand does not intend to fuse anything but to demonstrate the productive tension that extends between linguistics and phenomenology in order to "escape both the futility of mere linguistic distinctions and the un-verifiability of all claim to direct intuition of lived experience".<sup>191</sup>

We continue now by looking to our example explication that, in containing all the elements that we ascribe to formalist criticism in this thesis, can be accepted as a model of formalist criticism at large. We repeat however before initiating this segment of the conclusion that this explication makes no claim of being anything else than a reduction of formalist criticism to a form that is more manageable and that this is done in accordance with the postulate that a metaphor is a "miniature poem". A postulate that Beardsley and Ricoeur agree upon.<sup>192</sup>

We entered the explication of "ängstlicher Kahn" with a doubt as to whether or not it was a dead metaphor and with a hope that Beardsley's theory of explication of metaphor had the ability to help us in deciding this. Neither the explications that were the outcome of our attempt nor the process of explication seemed however to deliver on this expectation.

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<sup>190</sup> It could of course be that the historicizing formalist critic wish only to find in its object of study the personal feelings and ideas of an author on a particular historical event. This would however give to the work only the speculative intention to refer to ideas and thoughts and not to any event in the world. Again we must ask if poetic discourse is really the ultimate form in which to do so? Would the literary work not again become a substitutional ornament that is only an improper but perhaps more beautiful way of explaining an author's thoughts on a historical matter? Is it not exceedingly and offensively reductive to in this way uphold the literary work as mere rhetoric after having located within it such awesome potential for referentiality?

<sup>191</sup> Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, p. 380

<sup>192</sup> Agree upon to an acceptable extent. With Ricoeur the metaphor cannot be a literary work since it constitutes only one basic unit of discourse. It can however be taken as a model for poetic discourse at large. See. Ricoeur, "Metaphor and the Main Problem of Hermeneutics", p. 98ff

Instead we came to realise that if the metaphor indeed was alive initially, the explications arrived at were not and did not in any way indicate this. If we consider the fact that Beardsley's theory, in its unrevised form, deals solely with established meanings this is not very surprising but there was the odd chance that the process in itself would be impossible or remarkably resistant if the metaphor was alive and that it thus could indicate that we were dealing with living metaphor. But say that "ängstlicher Kahn" is a dead metaphor from the beginning, then we must hold that Beardsley's theory never had a chance to prove an ability to separate dead from living metaphor in the first place.

Say then that we went to find another metaphor and tried to explicate the new one as well to see if the result of the study would differ, where would we look and what would we look for to make sure that this time it was living? It becomes clear that by explicating according to Beardsley we have simply understood this; that life of metaphor lies in the eye of the beholder. Indirectly this realization demonstrates that Beardsley's theory, no matter how un-relativistic its process of explication, is always initiated by a subjective assumption that the constellation of two words indeed constitute a significant indirect self-contradictory attribution.<sup>193</sup> We have the guidelines of our linguistic community to assist us in making this assumption but we are never the less radically individual in our use of language especially on a connotative level. It seems thus to be a formalist prejudice that all metaphors appear to be metaphorical to all actants within a linguistic community since the explication of metaphor and by extension poetic discourse would otherwise in some cases be based in a subjective assumption that an attribution is indeed indirectly and significantly self-contradictory. This same assumption regards by extension the identification of a work as literary. Some works the vast majority of the linguistic community would without being privy to surrounding facts of course deem to be poetic. This very argument was implied when selecting "Klage" as our example for this thesis. But in other cases this might not be so clear and such cases would of course constitute a great problem for formalist critics which makes us ask rhetorically if the bracketing of reference by formalists would really be enough to stay relativism in criticism. If so such criticism would have to be supplemented by a taxonomy of all works so that the literary could be perfectly distinguished from the non-literary.

As we proceed the principle of congruence is on the agenda. The principle on its own and as a first step of explication is a principle of fittingness of connotations of the

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<sup>193</sup> Remarkably enough Beardsley comments on this himself. Perhaps he holds that his model for explication is un-relativistic only after the metaphor and by extension the literary work has been identified as such but that identification in itself is subjective. In *Aesthetics* there seem to be some confusion on the matter but this may be fully due to misunderstandings on my part. See: Beardsley, *Aesthetics*, p. 143

modifier to the subject of the metaphor. As such it is tasked to rule out any connotations that risks turning the explication into nonsense, oxymoron, a redundant statement or a new metaphor.

For the formalist critic the relapse of explication into a new metaphor would simply mean more work. This underlines the basic substitutional drive that we have found inherent to the formalist critic who wants to find a proper way of saying what the metaphor says improperly. However, where the principle of congruence regulates the selection of established connotations of the modifier, the principles of metaphorical interpretation look for properties in a new referential field to turn into new connotations. We find thus that the very idea of fittingness of connotations risks halting interpretation before it can reach the new referential field. If a fitting connotation within language is found *and applied* the tension of the copula between 'is' and an implicit 'is not' would perish and interpretation would stagnate and formalize. This must mean that only metaphor where no established connotations can be found can be said to be alive. But we recall that Beardsley during his entire career has hardly ever put two words together for which he has not sooner or later found connotations of the modifier that fits the subject. We can only deduce by this that the task that comes with the gift of metaphor is laborious to an even greater extent than previously realized. Throughout our life-long process of interpretation we are condemned to be subjected to the temptation of fitting connotations and proper explications established in language that would equalize the tensions of poetic discourse and close the door to its surplus of meaning instead of opening it.

The task of the interpreter becomes then one not merely of identifying living metaphor but, as we have said before, of forcing two things into tension that yields unwillingly. That which is new in this conclusion is that the interpreter, while performing this task, will be constantly tempted to let go. But this work is a condition if metaphor is to be able to speak of new experience and if language is to be able to connect to the ever evolving world. It seems from this that formalist criticism reaches its limit at the moment where the greatest effort in interpretation is needed.

Beardsley's theories of metaphor and explication of metaphor preserves the denotation of the metaphorical subject and this idea is seemingly kept by Ricoeur as he transposes selected parts of Beardsley's theories of metaphor and explication of metaphor into his own. We commented in the explication of "ängstlicher Kahn" that the poem would seem banal at best if this metaphor referred simply to a boat that was unstable, being internally affected by the sea outside of it or uncontrolled and fluctuating. The comment constituted in

effect a critique of the seemingly preserved intactness of all the meanings of the subject by the explication of the metaphor.

With the grafting of parts of Beardsley's theory of explication onto Ricoeur's textual hermeneutics this critique must be brought along. However, when Ricoeur introduces the idea of the split reference of metaphor we see that not only "ängstlicher" would be affected but that "Kahn" as well would leave its semantic anchorage as it is questioned by the 'is not' that is implicit in the copula. As Ricoeur's hermeneutics of the metaphor reaches full bloom the ontological vehemence is put into play with the reflective 'as-if' and no part of the metaphorical attribution can describe directly an object in the world as abstracted from time under such circumstance. This goes to show yet again that we need to go beyond formalist criticism if we are to find anything but proper substitutions and linguistic explanations when reading poetic discourse.

We say with Uggla in "Symbol and its Hermeneutics by Ricoeur" that more precise terms cannot help us account for new meaning in language. Since the precision of a term is dependent on the degree to which it is established in a linguistic community increased precision of a term will only result in a restriction of openness to new experience that is not already established in language but in the world. Formalist criticism however is a criticism that looks for truth in the clarity with which terms describe an object in the world and if the meaning of a term is not clear enough they would hold that it is not defined to a sufficient extent. Such is the case with metaphor and this occasions the theory of explication that Beardsley presents. We see a clear parallel here to the ideas of a particular branch of Analytic Philosophy that upholds the clarity of terms as the highest virtue of language and that the difficulty of philosophical problems lies in misunderstandings due to lack of definition. This idea is perhaps acceptable when it comes to speculative discourse, it is not for us to say, but as the idea enters into criticism it endangers the redescriptive capabilities of literature as we have demonstrated throughout this thesis. We conclude that the limitations of formalist criticism lie in the degree of execution of their methods of clarification and definition. This in fact is to state quite bluntly that the more rigorous and exclusive the formalist criticism, the less access does it have to the referential qualities of literature. Blunt indeed but rightly so if we accept the basic arguments presented in this thesis.

That quality of literature which we have been found to be closed to exclusive explication but open to interpretation is its surplus of meaning. The creative interpretation is un-finalizable since the surplus of meaning in the world that it is to explore is ever growing. The formalist prejudice however acts as a constant reminder that there can be no truth if the

interpretation does not finalize, since truth for the formalist is absolute and not dynamic. But truth in an ever evolving world cannot be absolute since from the perspective of two eternities, the ancient and the ultimate, that comes with the concept of time nothing in the world is static. We say with this that the truth of an un-finalizable process of interpretation is better fitting to the circumstances of the world than that of the formalized explication. This is due to the fact that only living language can follow the trend of the ever evolving world and constantly incorporate a part of the ever growing surplus of meaning in the world. Living language does so by the accumulation of meaning that is inherent to an interpretation that never stops. Ridding formalist criticism of its verificationist notion of truth by introducing an understanding of the new notion of metaphorical truth would in effect reinvest formalist criticism with an aim towards the living and re-poeticize dead metaphor and poetic discourse that has been formalized. With Ricoeur this would constitute a regression of formalist criticism to a more original state that, had it not been for the formalist dogmas, would be intuitive to Man.<sup>194</sup> We say with Ricoeur that “the time of restoration is not a different time from that of criticism; we are in every way children of criticism, and we seek to go beyond criticism by means of criticism, by a criticism that is no longer reductive but restorative”.<sup>195</sup> If we become again able to read without the prejudiced grid of absolute truth in our field of vision we will once more be able to reach the pre-scientific, pre-philosophical and pre-mythical meanings and reference of poetic discourse.<sup>196</sup> In this lies the explicit and full-blown critique of the application of formalist dogmas in the study of literature.

What is to be released as formalist criticism returns to its pre-formalist state is the power of human imagination in which creativity lies. This however is not to make interpretation un-intellectual but to move towards a new intellectualism since creativity is governed by hermeneutic rules and always contains a principle of restriction paired up with one of openness. Where the intelligence of a reader of speculative discourse lies in her ability to perfectly reduce the polysemy of all the terms of the speculative work in order to achieve clarity the intelligence of a reader of poetic discourse lies in her drive to challenge an established usage of words in order to open poetic discourse to its surplus of meaning. In this sense formalist criticism is inherently conservative since it relies only on that which is established while the reader of literature must always be a revolutionary armed with the weapon of impeachment. Speaking topographically, the static limits of formalist criticism are

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<sup>194</sup> Comp. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 351

<sup>195</sup> Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, p. 350

<sup>196</sup> Uggla, p. 179



thus again found to be unfittingly narrow in comparison to the infinitely and eternally expanding borders of its object of study.

If we reflect upon the previously established fact that we have to enter the perspective of the particular reader and leave the perspective of the linguistic community behind in order to allow metaphor to be both event and meaning, a condition for it being poetic discourse, we find further problems for formalist criticism. Formalist criticism takes the perspective of the linguistic community and in order to remain un-relativistic it utilizes said community's consensus on word meanings or connotations to be more exact.<sup>197</sup> Even Beardsley however upholds that metaphor can produce semantic innovations though his formalist theory fails to show how. This however we have proven to be contradictory. The formalist critic thus has two choices. She could either adapt the position of the particular reader, which is to leave her goal of non-relativism behind, or adapt the position of the linguistic community, which is to turn metaphor and by extension the literary work into a rhetoric ornament. The unrevised theory of Beardsley is in line with the second option as we have demonstrated how it lets metaphor say nothing new. Put simply, the ideal of non-relativism in formalist criticism denies it any access to the world via metaphor and by extension via literary works at large.

As the concept of metaphorical truth develops in the thesis the question of whether or not formalist criticism can contain this development becomes more and more insistent. Ricoeur says that metaphorical truth lies in "the 'realistic' intention that belongs to the redescriptive power of poetic language". Initially this first observation seems positive for formalist criticism the object of which is of course also that which they hold to be real. But as reality in itself becomes tensional that which was initially a positive remark from the perspective of formalist criticism becomes negative. Verificationist truth differs from metaphorical truth by the tension between 'is' and 'is not' of the metaphorical copula that makes metaphorical truth essentially unverifiable. With this the abilities of formalist criticism to find the truth of the literary text goes out the window. Since poetic discourse does not describe directly but redescribes dialectically the directness of verificationist truth and formalist criticism is not relatable to it. In fact only by a similarly dialectic approach, for example that of creative interpretation, can we find a suitable counterpart to metaphorical truth and discover literature's "'realistic' intention".

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<sup>197</sup> This argument however seems to be reinforced quite poorly as we have demonstrated previously in the conclusion.

The inventiveness of creative interpretation finds a metaphorically truthful redescription of a tensional reality in literature. In the idea of an invention lies both an effort of creation and a gift in the form of a discovery, the first of which formalist criticism has no tools to perform on account of creativities built in subjectivity. Discovery however pertains to something already established in language and this allows some room for formalist criticism after all.

The discovery of creative interpretation lies in the construction of meaning that is the first step of interpretation and it shares much with formalist criticism. However this moment of construction can not rightly be referred to as formalist due to its practically diametric intention to formalism. Every interpretation starts with a construction of meaning and in metaphor this construction corresponds rather directly to the formalist explication of Beardsley. We have furthermore transposed this model for construction to the level of the full literary work. However, in metaphor for example, the construction of meaning ends as interpretation pushes itself past the fitting connotations of a 'modifier' and forces open the tensional field between the 'is' and 'is not' of the metaphorical copula and as this tension is reproduced throughout all the levels of poetic discourse.

After a thorough bashing of formalist criticism from the perspective of what it cannot do this final realization goes to what formalist criticism is actually able to perform to a great level of perfection. It is an embrace of the practical aspects of formalist criticism *as part* of interpretation but still contains the critique of exclusively formalist criticism that has reappeared time and time again throughout this thesis. This realization of the possibilities of formalist criticism effectively delimits it from the other end. We know now what formalist criticism can achieve, what it cannot achieve and we know the precise point in interpretation where formalist criticism succumbs to the temptation of clarity and loses the ever evolving world.

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## Georg Trakl's "Klage"

Schlaf und Tod, die düstern Adler  
Umrauschen nachklang dieses Haupt:  
Des Menschen goldnes Bildnis  
Verschlänge die eisige Woge  
Der Ewigkeit. An schaurigen Riffen  
Zerschellt der purpurne Leib  
Und es klagt die dunkle Stimme  
Über dem Meer.  
Schwester stürmischer Schwermut  
Sieh ein ängstlicher Kahn versinkt  
Unter Sternen,  
Dem schweigenden Antlitz der Nacht<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> Georg Trakl, "Klage", *Fünzig Gedichte*, Stuttgart 2001, p.70