

McEvoy's analysis of postmodernity, particularly Derrida's assertion that friendship is always haunted by an inherent impossibility, reveals a broader existential uncertainty that characterizes contemporary thought. McEvoy laments the marginalization of friendship in modern discourse, advocating for a return to understanding it as a fundamental component of the good life.

James McEvoy's "Love and Friendship in the Western Tradition" is a great exploration of two fundamental relationships that shape human existence. By weaving together historical, theological, and philosophical threads, McEvoy constructs a mind-provoking reflection showing how love and friendship have evolved and influenced Western culture. His engagement with key thinkers—from Plato and Aristotle to Augustine, Aquinas, and Derrida—reveals both the continuity and enduring relevance of these ideas over the millennia. McEvoy challenges readers to reconsider the importance of friendship not only in their personal lives but also within a broader cultural and philosophical context, making a convincing case for why friendship remains a vital aspect of human flourishing amidst the challenges to it.

Blaise D. Ringor

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Sacred has become one of the important themes of the current milieu, especially in the occasion of one's realization of his full potential as human being without the recognition of the Divine. This eventually leads man to pursue everything, even the profane, with the justification that it is towards the progression of man's mastery of oneself. In line with this, opening a new "conversation" on the sacred must take place. For this reason, Joseph Edelheit, James Moore, Mark Wallace, and other scholars of Paul Ricoeur emersed themselves in a conversation with what Ricoeur already stated in his work *Figuring the Sacred* – opening the possibility to dialogue the established ideas of the philosopher to other facets of reality. The book primarily ventures on the recognition of the sacred in line with the pre-established discourse set by Paul Ricoeur.

The first part of the book was divided into five chapters. First, among these chapters was Steven Kepnes' work entitled *Paul Ricoeur's Biblical Theology and Jewish Theology*. In this essay, Kepnes aims to provide an understanding how Ricoeur's biblical theology can be put into discourse with the Jewish theology by seeking for the implication of the former to the latter. Accordingly, this chapter is a good starting point for the readers to assess whether Ricoeur's stand on biblical text is philosophical or not, because Kepnes provides a clear distinction and stand between philosophical sense and religious sense of truth. Yet, he clarifies that there is still an effort to understand it, which makes sense by saying that, like any other text, biblical text is a text that needs 'work' to be understood. From this point on, Kepnes provides some points of connection between Jewish Theology and Ricoeur's claim on Biblical Theology. Alongside, Kepnes stated one important reality that can be useful for the deeper understanding between God and the sacred text, that biblical text as literature

is an expression of God, but God is not only contained in the text. The last part admits the limits of hermeneutics regarding the religious faith, which, makes the reader realize that human reason cannot encompass the entire reality of God.

The next chapter by George Taylor was entitled *Ricoeur and Religious Imagination*. This topic is something prevalent today, especially after the publication of the English translation of the *Lectures on Imagination*; and Taylor contributes a lot as the editor of the book. In the initial section of this chapter, Taylor immediately argued that religious imagination is under the category of poetic imagination, making human capacity of imagination related to his religious life. Taylor provides a different perspective of this claim by pointing out the difference among religious imagination in the view of believer and in the view outside belief. Accordingly, Taylor put into account two nuances that *Lectures on Imagination* also discussed about imagination – the productive and reproductive imagination – which are essential to consider if the imagination really makes something new or it just imitate a pre-established reality but in combination of some other pre-established reality. Hence, it established Taylor's claim that religious imagination is not apart from thought, insofar as religious imagination seeks to know about religious events which are part of 'prefiguration' – making it a process of thought.

Chapter three was entitled *The Bible: A Polyphonic Medium for Self-Identification* by Timo Helenius. The initial phase of his essay is essential especially for those have not yet read about Ricoeur's work, *Figuring the Sacred*, because it provides an overview of some important matters to be considered in the work – including the clarification that the main concern of the work is the human activity of figuration and not the sacred itself. Helenius presents biblical text with the presence of diverse voices that needs to be recognized. Though the author presented the polyphony in biblical text, he also speaks about the unification of these diversity for a comprehensible interpretation of the entire biblical text. In line with the recognition of the unified meaning posed by the biblical text, Helenius utilized Ricoeurian idea of 'concordant discordance' to strengthen the unity of the diverse voice in biblical text. The idea of 'discordant concordance' is initially discussed by Paul Ricoeur in the first volume of his work, *Time and Narrative*. This entails the reality that in a narrative there are episodes that can be taken independently, yet the comprehensibility of the entire narrative can only be grasped if this multiplicity of episodes is taken as interconnected. Just like Ricoeur, the end point of this goal to grasp a unified meaning is to identify the self in the text, providing a narrative identity. Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that this does not mean that the reader imposes himself to the text, but the text becomes revelatory to the self, that forms its identity.

In chapter 4, Stephanie Arel articulated Ricoeur's view on Hope in her essay entitled *Ricoeur and Hope: Living after Rupture*. Arel amplifies the reality that Hope as the passion for the possible is tied with human will. The author put in the conversation the possibility of overcoming psychological trauma in light of Ricoeur's claim on hope. This conversation grants an access in another facet of overcoming traumatic experiences. The readers must understand that hope was treated to be the passion for the possible because it is rooted from man's capacity of imagination – the anticipation of the possible but not yet which is embedded to the good. Arel would like to establish here that the hope drives the will to

pursue the betterment of the situation that makes man recover from the rupture. In the current condition of our society, that everyone seems to be so concerned with one's mental health, this essay can serve as an avenue to establish new methods of therapy for the ruptures that man experienced.

In the last chapter of the first part of the book, Dan Stiver presented the relationship of poetics and theology in its practical sense forming his essay entitled, *Practical Theology as Practical Poetics: Building a Bridge between Prose, Poetics, and Praxis*. This chapter highlights the importance of religious imagination, narrative and ethics in envisioning love and justice. By this, the thread among prose, poetics, and praxis, which are substantial in considering practical theology as practical poetics, is being established. This challenges the readers to use one's capacity of religious imagination to live their daily life in accordance with theologically right action. Likewise, this is also a good point to end the first part of the book, making imagination – one of the current discussions on Ricoeur – utilized in human moral choices tied with its theology.

The second part of the book was devoted to present two of the lectures that are supposed to be part of the collection of lectures in *Figuring the Sacred*, but the editor, Wallace, intended to make a separate publication of these two that make this part of this book. Wallace, in his introductory essay of the part two asserts that there is a maturity in Ricoeur's philosophy of religion (p.141). This assertion paves way for the scholars to determine the early and later claim of Ricoeur regarding religion, especially in terms of interpretation. However, it doesn't mean that the works of the philosopher are not interrelated, since Ricoeur would always say that everything, though episodic, are always part of the whole. There might be a maturity in contents and claims, but it is brought forth by the implications of the early phase of his venturing on religion and interpretation.

The maturity in Ricoeur's claim in the philosophy of religion, according to Wallace, was amplified in the contents of the part two which are, *The Self in the Mirror of the Scriptures* and *Fides Quaerens Intellectum: Biblical Antecedent?* The former can be easily understood if the reader already has an idea on Ricoeur's idea of the threefold *mimesis*, especially the second and third moment of *mimesis* – configuration and refiguration. Thus, it suggests an elaboration of these topic. Nevertheless, the reader's formation of the self through the scripture is the primary goal of the former; and this application of Ricoeur's earlier claim in his three-volume work, *Time and Narrative*, makes the reader appreciate the alignment of his life to the life presented by the scripture – making his actions an amplification of the biblical text. The latter, however, focused on how faith seeks for its reason, that is even portrayed in several biblical accounts. In the long discourse set by Ricoeur regarding this matter, it gives an impression to the reader that even biblical events and God's revelation in the text are not just a superstitious narrative that that is not founded in reason, rather, it proves that man always seeks for a reason behind his mystical experience of God. The entirety of the book is encapsulated to this reality, that the man is always seeking for the sense of sacred, that he ventures on the journey of refiguring it – in the case of this book, through Ricoeur's religious writings.

Dan Joseph DC. Guillermo