WITTGENSTEIN, RICOEUR, AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF
ORDINARY LANGUAGE

THE OVERLOOKED RAPPROCHEMENT
OF THE ANALYTIC AND CONTINENTAL TRADITIONS

BY

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A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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(c) January, 1994

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ISBN 0-315-92258-3

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to establish that a rapprochement betweenthe analytic and Continental traditions of philosophy has been possible since 1959, although this possibility has been ignored or overlooked. The study compares the philosophy of language of Ludwig Wittgenstein, a representative of the analytic tradition, and that of Paul Ricoeur, a representative of the Continental tradition, in order to establish its goals. We maintain that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur come from fundamentally different philosophical backgrounds, and yet agree on many important aspects of the philosophy of language, specifically the paramount importance of ordinary language usage. The thesis includes evidence to support three areas of similarity between Wittgenstein and Ricoeur: their criticism of the ideal language programs of logical analysis, their identification of sign, symbol and polysemy as the irreducible elements of ordinary language, and their analysis of religious language as including concepts which can be discussed only in ordinary language. We maintain that the similarities identified by the study are striking. We conclude, therefore, on the basis of the similarities between Wittgenstein and Ricoeur, that the potential for benefical philosophical communication between the analytic and Continental traditions has existed for over thirty-five years, and that it is lamentable that this potential has been overlooked.

I. INTRODUCTION

Throughout the better part of this century, the analytic and Continental traditions of philosophy have been in conflict. Members of each tradition have believed that there were no similarities to be found between the two traditions. During the last several decades, although there has been significant rapprochement between the two traditions, the frustrating conflicts that existed not so long ago have been preserved. This thesis is designed to alleviate some of the frustration caused by this conflict, and to show that similarities have existed between the analytic and Continental traditions for some time, but have not been recognized. We will attempt to accomplish these goals by comparing the philosophies of language of Ludwig Wittgenstein, chosen representative of the analytic tradition, and Paul Ricoeur, chosen representative of the Continental tradition.

The analytic tradition surged powerfully to the philosophic surface in the early part of this century, bringing to prominence such philosophers as Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Analytic philosophy is most often identified with British and American philosophers, although some philosophers born on the Continent, most notably Wittgenstein, have embraced the analytic method. The criteria for inclusion in the analytic tradition is the use of the analytic technique, which strives for clarity, especially in language, and the clarification of conceptual schemes. For analytic philosophers, such as Britons Bertrand Russell and John L. Austin, as well as Europeans Ludwig Wittgenstein, Rudolf Carnap and Moritz Schlick, philosophy *is* the activity of clarification.

The Continental tradition is represented exclusively by philosophers of European origin, notably Edmund Husserl, Sören Kierkegaard, and more

recently, Jean-Paul Sartre and Paul Ricoeur. Continental methods vary a great deal, and are not practised in the context of a unified methodological creed such as that of analysis. However, Continental philosophers generally consider "grander", more macroscopic questions than those posed by analytic philosophers: historical, sociological, religious and political questions that are of relevance to the individual human being.

Underlying the general distinctions between analysis and Continental philosophy which we have mentioned, there seems to be a fundamentally different approach to philosophy. Historically, the two traditions have practised philosophy according to different paradigms of knowledge. Their philosophical pursuits have taken place within the context of different aims, goals and motives. Analytic philosophers very frequently come to philosophy through mathematics and physics. For example, Ludwig Wittgenstein, our chosen representative of analysis, was an engineer before he became a philosopher. In contrast, those in the Continental tradition tend to come to philosophy from studies which are not scientifically based, such as religion, ethics, and metaphysics, although Husserl, a former mathematician, is a noted exception. For example, Paul Ricoeur's initial philosophical work, which led him to consider the problem of language, focused on Christian and theological themes, such as guilt, sin and the problem of evil.

What is at the foundation of the conflict between analytic philosophy and Continental philosophy? One important point of contention has been the focus of analytic philosophers on the philosophy of language, which has not historically been of particular interest to Continental philosophers. Spurred by the devastation of the second World War, Continental philosophers instead considered philosophical questions of freedom and the meaning of human life.

Most prominent in post-war Europe was existentialism, which had its roots in the work of the Danish philosopher Sören Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Existentialism delved into the vast subject of the nature of the human condition, by studying each person's determinant social, political and historical contexts--philosophical questions apparently far removed from the activity of clarification engaged in by analytic philosophers.

Until recently, the frustrating lack of communication between the two traditions has been remarkable. Not only were philosophers of each tradition ignorant of developments on the other side of the Channel; each was also of the opinion that the other's philosophical pursuits were futile. Post-war Continental philosophers despaired at what they perceived to be the desiccation of philosophy by those in the analytic tradition, and believed that the focus on language left no room for the important issues of humanity. Meanwhile, analytic philosophers believed the questions posed by the Continental philosophers were ridiculously vast and unanswerable, and wondered when those on the Continent would realize that their field of study was hopelessly broad and needed desperately to be limited. The two traditions have long appeared to be operating completely at cross-purposes, with the English philosopher being described as "insular" (Barrett and Aiken 3: 125) and the vastness of the study of the Continental philosopher as obscure and pretentious. (White 237)

> This is undoubtedly why so many English and American observers of the present philosophical scene in Europe deplore the persistence of obscurity and pretentiously displayed learning that seem so irrelevant to the real problems of philosophy. It is also why so many Continental

philosophers. . .regard English and American analysts and positivists as heartless philistines. (White 237)

Throughout this century, the two traditions have seemed unreasonably to wish to preserve their differences. The conflict could be compared to a family feud, which endures long after the cause of the dispute is forgotten. The bitterness is obvious in the way each describes the methods of the other, as is illustrated by Barrett and Aiken.

[T]he British philosopher can afford to indulge himself in the trappings of logic, dialectically paring away at his fingernails, while the Continental philosopher seems to be speaking in some more literary, imaginative, or generally less logical mode. (Barrett and Aiken 3: 126-127)

This historical sketch suggests, as intended, that the analytic and the Continental philosophical traditions are absolutely irreconcilable. Justin Leiber, in his article "Linguistic Analysis and Existentialism", eloquently describes the lack of communication between the two traditions that has fostered the above perceptions.

The lack of communication between Anglo-American and Continental philosophers goes far beyond any linguistic barriers: there *seems* a fundamental difference in method, subject matter, common assumptions. . .In crude brevity, the Anglo-American analytic philosopher considers his European counterpart as a fuzzy-minded, illogical and unprofessional pseudopsychologist who talks windy nonsense about "being", "anxiety", and "dread". While our Continental existentialist. . . regards the Anglo-American philosopher as a narrow and sterile logician with a hopeless predilection for trivia, for nit-picking about common-place and unimportant words and sentences. (Leiber 48)

It would appear that the two traditions have embraced apparently radically different methods, and have displayed open hostility. We might therefore conclude that no similarity could possibly be found between two philosophers who come from different traditions. This study will attempt to bridge the geographical and philosophical gaps between the two traditions, primarily by comparing the philosophy of language of Paul Ricoeur, French theologian, existentialist and phenomenologist, with that of Ludwig Wittgenstein, the Austrian-born enigma who has gained near-legendary status in the analytic tradition. In this study, we argue that there are solid, clear parallels to be drawn between the philosophies of language of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Paul Ricoeur. Although Ricoeur and Wittgenstein wrote in different periods, countries and traditions, they share one very important common belief: that ordinary language is central to the philosophy of language. On the basis of these similarities, we will argue that Paul Ricoeur was the first of a new generation of Continental philosophers, who accomplished a rapprochement with the analytic tradition. We hope to conclude that there is no longer any reason to preserve the stubborn hostility between the two traditions.

We will begin by presenting the biographical and philosophical background which is necessary to fully understand the philosophies of language of Wittgenstein and Ricoeur. We will then argue that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur are philosophically defined by their philosophies of language. Our comparative study will begin in chapter three, where we will establish that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur criticize the ideal language program of logical analysis. The third chapter also includes a discussion of structuralism, a second threat to ordinary language, which is of particular concern to Paul Ricoeur. Our fourth chapter will attempt to show that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur describe ordinary language in very similar

ways, and further that ordinary language is central to the philosophy of language of each. Sign and symbol, irreducible elements of ordinary language, will be discussed, along with the interpretations that they require. The fifth and final chapter takes two textual excerpts on the subject of religious language and the possibility of religious knowledge. Through careful analysis, this chapter strives to support the centrality of ordinary language, and begins to draw the conclusions which are suggested by the similarities our comparative study has uncovered. Although chapter five will show that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur reach opposing conclusions on the subject of religious language and religious language, the two philosophers nonetheless achieve common philosophical ground. The study of these textual excerpts will attempt to establish that not only do Wittgenstein and Ricoeur defend ordinary language, but also that this defence is fundamental to the way in which each "does" philosophy.

II. WITTGENSTEIN AND RICOEUR: BIOGRAPHICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUNDS

Ludwig Wittgenstein was born on April 26, 1889 in Vienna, and died in England on April 29, 1951. While serving in the Austrian army during the first World War, Wittgenstein was captured and held as a prisoner of war. The writings he completed during the war eventually became the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, the only major work Wittgenstein published in his lifetime. The views proposed in the Tractatus were characteristic of logical atomism, a movement within analytic philosophy which combined a metaphysic founded upon Gottlob Frege's and Bertrand Russell's work in mathematical logic, with a reductive analytic method which advocated the construction of an ideal language. Although Wittgenstein recognized the limitations of his own program in the Tractatus, he nonetheless held that language is made up of linguistic atoms, and that in order to accurately represent the logical structure of reality, language needs to be distilled to its simplest elements. Wittgenstein's later work, most especially the Philosophical Investigations, rejects the atomistic slant of the Tractatus. In his later period, Wittgenstein sought instead to examine the actual workings of language, and its usage in everyday discourse (Weitz 10-11)

The early Wittgenstein was undeniably an analytic philosopher. Wittgenstein's philosophy reflected a scientific paradigm of knowledge. After receiving extensive schooling in mathematics and the physical sciences, Wittgenstein studied to become a mechanical engineer. While in England conducting aeronautical engineering experiments, Wittgenstein read Bertrand Russell on the philosophy of mathematics, was deeply interested, and in 1912 went to Cambridge to study with Russell. So began both a philosophical

collaboration and a friendship. Wittgenstein and Russell collaborated on the development of the theory of logical atomism. In many ways, Russell was Wittgenstein's philosophical mentor. Wittgenstein's relationship with Russell was fundamental to the former's early philosophical development. However, the two philosophers ceased to agree when Wittgenstein decided to repudiate the position he had taken in the Tractatus.

Wittgenstein's philosophy of language changed radically over the course of his career. It has therefore been argued that although Wittgenstein was undoubtedly an analytic philosopher in his Tractatus period, he revised the analytic technique to such an extent that he forfeited the label of "analytic philosopher". However, we argue that in spite of the radical changes in Wittgenstein's philosophical doctrine, he remained an analytic philosopher throughout his philosophical career. From the logical atomism of the Tractatus to the ordinary language study of the Blue and Brown Books and the Philosophical Investigations, Wittgenstein continued to implement the most fundamental aspects of the analytic method. Wittgenstein never ceased to seek clarity in language, and to clarify conceptual schemes, by describing, and attempting to understand, the ordinary language we use. Any page of the Blue and Brown Books or the Philosophical Investigations shows that Wittgenstein is preserving the fundamental tenets of the analytic method. Even further, Wittgenstein never wavered on his beliefs about the nature of philosophy itself and what philosophy ought to accomplish. This stance is supported further by the work of Anthony Kenny:

> Despite the differences between the Tractatus and the Investigations there is continuity in Wittgenstein's conception of the nature of philosophy. He continued to regard philosophy as an activity rather than a theory; as the

activity of clarifying propositions and preventing us from being led astray by the misleading appearances of ordinary language. (Kenny 17)

Paul Ricoeur was born almost thirty years after Ludwig Wittgenstein, in Valence, France, in 1913. Paul Ricoeur's early philosophy was vastly different from that of the Austrian. Captured and held as a prisoner of war in Germany during the second World War, Ricoeur was exposed to the German philosophers, and was profoundly influenced by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), and the phenomenological method, as he states very clearly in his autobiographical article "From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language". In phenomenology, Ricoeur found a sufficiently concrete method, which retained the connection between the individual and her experiences of the world. Husserl's phenomenology was not systematic, but rather descriptive, and Husserl rejected attempts to construct elaborate artificial systems, advocating instead the description of things as they are. The fundamental beliefs which are at the root of Husserl's phenomenological method are reflected by his now-famous philosophical rallying cry "to the things themselves".

> [L]et the philosopher turn "to the things themselves" to see what it is that is really given in experience when we scrutinize it without any obscuring and empty preconceptions. (Barrett and Aiken 131)

As we will discuss shortly, although Husserl was in many ways Ricoeur's philosophical mentor, Husserl's method was not sufficient for Ricoeur to effectively carry out his philosophy of language. Ricoeur was therefore forced to implement a new program. Before discussing the additions made by Ricoeur, however, it is important to trace his path from Husserl's influence, to the philosophy of will, to the philosophy of language, for it is a path very different from that of Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Ricoeur began, early in his philosophic career, with critical studies of the work of other philosophers, most notably Karl Jaspers. However, when he began to develop his own independent philosophy, Ricoeur, a Christian, was especially interested in theology and the philosophical issues it raised, most especially the philosophy of will. As Ricoeur progressed in his studies, he began to be troubled by the difficult issues of guilt and sin which were raised by his theologically-oriented study of the philosophy of will. Guilt and sin, and the more pervasive problem of evil, caused significant difficulties for Ricoeur, for he realized that these concepts required an "indirect approach". ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 90) Ricoeur discovered that discourse about guilt, sin and evil, indeed all theological problems, requires symbolic language. This non-purposive language was indirect, and riddled with both metaphors and symbols. Nonetheless, Ricoeur remained confident in the availability of a direct language to handle purposive requirements. For example, it is possible to express the idea of "I can" without the need of anything more than a direct language. ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 90) Religious language, although it is a *form* of ordinary language, was not so easily handled, and the problem of language was presented to Ricoeur for the first time.

Ricoeur realized that all religious language is symbolic. Symbols of stain, spot or cleansing are fundamental to the language of confession, and we "speak of evil by means of metaphors such as estrangement, errance, burden and bondage." (Ricoeur, "From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 90) Ricoeur also recognized that interpretation was essential for understanding in religious language, because symbols render it indirect. For example, the

religious symbol of a stain does not mean that one is literally or physically dirty. "Stain" is a symbol, and must be interpreted in order to be fully understood. The necessity of interpretation in religious language was also the genesis of Ricoeur's hermeneutic program, which, as we shall see, came to be of great importance in his philosophy of language.

As Ricoeur progressed from the philosophy of will to the philosophy of language, he found that he would have to expand upon Husserl's method, due to the latter's incredible naïveté about language. In the series of lectures entitled The Idea of Phenomenology, Husserl suggested that linguistic ambiguity could be handled without any great effort or any special process. As George Nakhnikian comments in the introduction to the lectures, Husserl displays a "somewhat naïve view of the role of language. . . as if language were the sort of thing that the phenomenologist could create at will in the image of ultimate facts." (Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology xxii) The passage to which Nakhnikian is referring is found in the second lecture.

> We talk about them not in just vague hints and empty intention. We inspect them, and while inspecting them we can observe their essence, their constitution, their intrinsic character, and *we can make our speech conform in a pure measure to what is "seen" in its full clarity.* (Husserl, The Idea of Phenomenology 24) (italics mine)

Husserl's naïve confidence in language indicates a remarkable lack of awareness of the confusing and misleading aspects of language. Husserl believes that language will somehow take care of itself, and that the individual will unfailingly produce the language necessary to express herself. Husserl fails to recognize that language can affect our ability to express our concepts, and even our ability to grasp those concepts.

Because Ricoeur recognized, early in the development of his philosophy of language, that many aspects of language are potentially confusing and misleading, he was obliged to alter Husserl's phenomenological method. Ricoeur adopted a hermeneutic program, which, he believed, in combination with phenomenology, could overcome Husserl's linguistic naïveté while still preserving the beneficial elements of the phenomenological method. Hermeneutics, from the Greek *hermeneuein*, meaning "to interpret", is an interpretive technique which is not exclusive to philosophy, but rather can be applied in numerous different fields, including that of Biblical study and the interpretation of theological writings. Ricoeur's hermeneutics is holistic in that it encompasses all aspects of language, religious or otherwise. Ricoeur's hermeneutic theory establishes a translating technique, designed to handle the complexity of the symbols he believes to be inherent in language. Because hermeneutics reveals the meaning of words or expressions that would otherwise be hidden, it can be used to avoid misinterpretations, by setting out guidelines by which to interpret.

Ricoeur proposes the *grafting* of hermeneutics onto phenomenology. Ricoeur believes that the combination of hermeneutics and phenomenology has the benefit of connecting hermeneutics, and the philosophy of language, to existence, to ontology, and to lived experience. In his article "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics", Ricoeur explains that the fusion of hermeneutics and phenomenology allows the preservation *and* the radicalization of Husserl's method. Hermeneutics, built on the solid foundation of the phenomenological method, is able to reach further, towards the problem of language.

> [H]ermeneutics is erected on the basis of phenomenology and this
> preserves something of the philosophy from which it nevertheless differs:
> phenomenology remains the unsurpassable presupposition of
> hermeneutics. (101)

Retaining the phenomenological method in combination with hermeneutics allows both the study of the problem of language and the preservation of the phenomenological connection with the "lived", the experience. The phenomenological influence prevents hermeneutics from slipping into purely linguistic philosophy, whereas the hermeneutic influence corrects the phenomenological belief that meaning is univocal and not problematic. (Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics" 15) Hermeneutic phenomenology is designed to ensure that interpretation remains attached to the individual human being and her experiences.

Beyond its necessity in connection with phenomenology, hermeneutics has a more general importance in Ricoeur's philosophy of language. As we will explain, Ricoeur believes that ordinary language must always be the focus of a philosophy of language. Indeed, Ricoeur refers to ordinary language as the "fullness of language." However, Ricoeur also recognizes that ordinary language, though rich and symbolic, is also admittedly problematic. Therefore, Ricoeur must continually wield his hermeneutic tool, working his way down through the fullness of language in an endless process of interpretation. According to Ricoeur's hermeneutic program, any symbolic and potentially problematic aspect of language is interpreted and therefore defused before it endangers the understanding of a given word or expression. Hermeneutics can handle the symbol, although the symbol veils its true meaning beneath a potentially deceptive surface meaning. Hermeneutics can also handle

multivocity and polysemy, which do not conceal meaning intentionally, but rather have variable meanings depending on context.

Having placed Wittgenstein and Ricoeur in their philosophical contexts, we must ask why is it important to attempt to discover similarities between the philosophies of language of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Paul Ricoeur. If such similarities are found, why should they be considered philosophically important or even interesting? Our position is that the philosophy of language is central to the philosophical methods of Wittgenstein and Ricoeur. The parallels which we will attempt to bring to light do not constitute merely peripheral, accidental similarities. Rather, they represent more general, compelling similarities between Wittgenstein and Ricoeur, and the way they "do" philosophy. Therefore, we believe that these two philosophers, from the two opposing traditions which we have discussed, have similar views about an issue which is central to their philosophical outlook and method.

We have already discussed the radical ways in which Ludwig Wittgenstein changed his philosophical views and methods in the course of his career. However, despite Wittgenstein's surprising repudiation of his own earlier work, his philosophical interest was always focused clearly on language. When Wittgenstein advocated logical atomism and ideal language in the early Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, he was both articulating a philosophical position in which the philosophy of language was central, and practising a philosophical method to which close attention to language was indispensable. When Wittgenstein revised the analytic style characteristic of logical atomism and instead began to study the workings of ordinary language, he was continuing to do philosophy in the same linguistically oriented fashion. Published lectures on

other subjects, from ethics, to religion, to aesthetics, show that even in these varied areas, Wittgenstein did not stray from the philosophy of language. Wittgenstein, although he has been described in many ways corresponding to the many changes which he made over the course of his career, never stopped being a philosopher of language. Therefore, if similarities may be found between the philosophies of language of Ricoeur and the later Wittgenstein, they are of extreme importance, for the philosophy of language defines Wittgenstein as a philosopher.

The case for viewing Ricoeur as a linguistically oriented philosopher is somewhat more difficult to make, in that he is what could be described as a "dynamic" philosopher. Whereas Wittgenstein changed his views on the philosophy of language in the course of his career, Ricoeur changed his philosophical interests altogether. In his early career, Ricoeur was akin to a Christian existentialist, and theological themes were his primary interest. His interest in theological themes led Ricoeur to the philosophy of language, and he has more recently begun to study literary criticism and theory. We are considering Ricoeur in the period stretching from his first interest in the philosophy of language to his first interest in literary theory, roughly from 1959 to 1976. We maintain that during this period the philosophy of language defined Ricoeur's philosophical activity. Ricoeur considered less traditional issues in the philosophy of language, such as symbols in religious language, the language of myths, and language in psychoanalysis; but nonetheless, the philosophy of language remained a primary interest. Again, therefore, if we can show that Ricoeur's philosophy of language is similar to that of Wittgenstein, it will be a discovery of importance, because in the period which we consider, the

philosophy of language was the context in which all of Ricoeur's philosophical activity took place.

III. IN DEFENCE OF ORDINARY LANGUAGE: THE THREATS TO ORDINARY LANGUAGE

1)The Ideal Language Program of Logical Analysis

In this chapter, we will begin to support our argument that fundamental agreements exist between the philosophies of language of Ricoeur and Wittgenstein. This chapter will proceed according to a strategy of "negative" argument. In other words, this chapter will discuss Ricoeur's and Wittgenstein's opposition to logical analysis, and its ideal language program, and argue that we can therefore conclude that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur strongly support ordinary language as an alternative. The second part of this chapter will discuss Ricoeur's views on structuralism, which Ricoeur views as yet another threat to ordinary language, although structuralism differs from logical analysis. However, we will begin with an explanation of logical analysis and its two most prominent forms: logical atomism and logical positivism.

Logical analysis, which was widespread in the period from the beginning of the century to the outbreak of the second World War, consists of analytic methods which advocate ideal language construction. As Morris Weitz explains, the goal of logical analysis is "to make every statement an adequate picture of the reality it describes." (Weitz 7) Two groups of philosophers using the analytic technique were the logical atomists and the logical positivists.

Logical atomism is identified with Bertrand Russell and the early writings of Ludwig Wittgenstein, two philosophers who, as we have discussed, collaborated on the development of the theory. Logical atomism is primarily a

reductive theory in that it advocates breaking language down in an attempt to expose its true meaning and structure. Logical atomism therefore seeks a distillate of ordinary language, which is designed to eliminate or correct the defective elements of ordinary language. Russell explained in The Philosophy of Logical Atomism that he was pushed towards logical atomism by his study of the philosophy of mathematics. In mathematics, Russell discovered logical concepts which could be grasped cognitively but could not be expressed accurately in natural language. Therefore, Russell attempted to develop a logically perfect and ideal language so that he might express those logical concepts. "[I] want a single word for my fundamental idea, and cannot find any word in ordinary language that expresses what I mean." (Russell 125) Due to what he perceived to be the shortcomings of ordinary language, Russell felt *forced* to create an ideal language. "This shows how difficult it is to say clearly, in ordinary language, what I want to say about complexes." (Russell 173) However, it is important to recognize that Russell intended the ideal language for specific philosophic purposes. As Russell said, the ideal and logically perfect language would be used on "State occasions" only (Russell 59). Indeed, Russell knew that ideal language is not appropriate for all purposes, and admitted that in everyday situations, an ideal language would be "intolerably prolix" (Russell 59) and "the most hopeless and useless thing imaginable." (Russell 56)

Ludwig Wittgenstein outlines the theory of logical atomism in the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, written early in his philosophic career. Wittgenstein concurs that ordinary language cannot always accurately express concepts, and lays the blame for its shortcomings on the many words of ordinary language which have two or more meanings. "In the language of everyday life it very often happens that the same word signifies in two different

ways. . ." (3.323) In this early work, Wittgenstein recognized that words with two meanings can cause confusion and errors when we attempt to use natural language to express logical concepts. It will be interesting to show that in his later philosophy, Wittgenstein did not alter his beliefs about the nature of ordinary language. The change occurred in his confidence in philosophy's ability to handle the confusion that is caused by ordinary language. However, in the Tractatus, Wittgenstein was convinced that it was necessary to implement a logical syntax or logical grammar which would eliminate the confusion by ensuring that language reflects the logical structure of reality. Wittgenstein believed that the creation of a logical language could eliminate the possibility of error, and would therefore allow logical concepts to be expressed without confusion.

> In order to avoid these errors, we must employ a symbolism which excludes them, by not applying the same sign in different symbols and by not applying signs in the same way which signify in different ways. A symbolism, that is to say, which obeys the rules of logical grammar. . . (3.325)

Like Russell, Wittgenstein did not believe that logical language should replace natural language altogether, but did hold that a logical language was required for the avoidance of errors of expression.

Logical positivism was founded in the 1920s by a group of philosophers known as the Vienna Circle. Rudolf Carnap has become the most prominent of the positivists, but at the time of the founding of the Vienna Circle, Carnap was a very young philosopher. It was not until shortly before he moved to the United States that Carnap became well known. Logical positivists adhere to the basic tenets of the analytic method in that they believe that the task of philosophy is to

study language, to clarify word meaning, and to identify those areas of language where meaning is lacking. (Flew 214) Like logical atomists, logical positivists advocate an ideal language which is designed for the utmost accuracy of linguistic expression. However, logical positivists reject all metaphysical notions such as 'the logical structure of reality'. The rejection of metaphysics distinguishes logical positivism from logical atomism.

In order to explain the difference in method between Ricoeur, Wittgenstein, and the logical analysts, we will compare language to a building. If language were a derelict building that clearly needed to be repaired, how would each approach that problematic language-building? Please note that this extended analogy is for the purpose of context, and is not, for the most part, based on actual textual references. Nonetheless, we believe the analogy is helpful for the purposes of comparison of the various philosophies of language which we wish to consider.

Let us begin by describing the way in which logical analysts would handle the problematic language-building of ordinary language. Logical analysts believe that some thoughts cannot be accurately expressed in ordinary language, and therefore that an ideal language is essential for philosophic purposes. Presented with the problematic language-building, therefore, logical analysts would likely take the building down, brick by brick, in an attempt to isolate its component parts, the equivalent of linguistic atoms, and to reveal the true structure of the building. With the resultant rubble of bricks, logical analysts would construct a new language-building, an ideal language-building, which would adhere to their strict specifications and express their logical concepts. As Russell states in The Philosophy of Logical Atomism, "sound philosophizing, to

my mind, consists mainly in passing from those obvious, vague, ambiguous things. . .to something precise, clear, definite. . ." (37) Russell's definition of 'good' philosophy fits into the language-building analogy. To Russell, the ordinary language-building would be vague and ambiguous, and he would therefore want to abandon ambiguity in favour of the precision which only an ideal language-building can offer. Some of the bricks from the original language-building would be discarded, because logical analysts believe that if elements of ordinary language were permitted to remain in the ideal language, some thoughts would still be inexpressible, and confusion and inaccuracy would not have been eliminated.

In stark contrast to the logical analysts, Ricoeur respects the fullness and richness of ordinary language. He would admire the problematic language-building in the same way an architect would admire a neglected heritage building which nonetheless showed what he believed to be great potential. Ricoeur would begin by examining the language-building, and identifying problem areas of ambiguity, polysemy, and misunderstanding. Using his hermeneutic tool, Ricoeur would work his way through the building, floor by floor, making subtle alterations and careful repairs. This application of the hermeneutic tool would gradually permit Ricoeur to eliminate the language-building's structural problems.

Because Ricoeur values the fullness of language, he is concerned with the language-building in its entirety rather than with each individual brick. Therefore, Ricoeur's view of the language-building is holistic. Ricoeur avoids any discussion of how the language-building *ought* to be, preferring to preserve the building as it stands. Ricoeur would rather carefully renovate the language-

building, with his hermeneutic program, than gut it and build a new, perfect language-building that would lack the richness of the original. Ricoeur's renovated language-building would be structurally rich, and would include polysemy, multivocity and context sensitivity, all of which are essential elements of ordinary language.

Ricoeur's language-building would also include the linguistic equivalents of such architectural features as gingerbreading and gargoyles, which are structurally superfluous, but do add a great deal to the richness of a building, and on occasion make possible some economies of expression which are both elegant and convenient. For example, there are rhetorical 'flourishes' or metaphors in ordinary language which are able to replace lengthy, wordy scientific expressions. Albert Einstein, in a criticism of quantum mechanics, stated the following: "I shall never believe. . .that God plays dice with the universe." (Frank 208) With this very brief statement, Einstein communicated his opposition to an aspect of quantum mechanics that would have required extensive explanation if it had been attempted in scientific language. Although Ricoeur knows that his renovated language-building will always have need of the hermeneutic tool, he believes it is suitable for all linguistic purposes, both everyday and philosophical.

Ricoeur's language-building might look like the Gothic buildings described in The Stones of Venice, a work by English author John Ruskin (1819-1900). An architectural critic, Ruskin vigorously defended the virtues of Gothic architecture, which was maligned for its roughness and its superfluous elements, much as ordinary language was attacked by logical analysis for its complexity and inaccuracies. Ruskin's emphatic defense of Gothic architecture is similar to Ricoeur's defense of ordinary language. The Gothic style, which is characteristic

of Northern Europe, was often criticized because of its rudeness and wildness. Ruskin, however, believed that the lack of regularity and uniformity was a point in favour of the style. Gothic structures are beautiful *because* of the evidence of the expression of the builder and the workers. For example, Westminster Abbey and Canterbury Cathedral are covered with intricate carvings and embellishments, each completely different from any other in the building. If the builders and workers are to be permitted to express themselves, uniformity must be sacrificed, for uniformity and self-expression cannot co-exist.

> Its elements are certain mental tendencies of the builders, legibly expressed in it; as fancifulness, love of variety, love of richness; and such others. . . It is not enough that it has the Form, if it have not the power and the life. (Ruskin 159)

Ruskin's defence of Gothic architecture could well be extrapolated to apply to ordinary language. In effect, Ruskin is defending the same elements which Ricoeur values in ordinary language: fancifulness, variety and richness.

> It is true, greatly and deeply true, that the architecture of the North is rude and wild; but it is not true, that, for this reason, we are to condemn it, or despise. Far otherwise, I believe it is in this very character that it deserves our profoundest reverence. (Ruskin 161)

Although architecture is only a metaphor in our discussion of language, Ruskin's enthusiasm for the Gothic style is based on the same elements that Ricoeur and Wittgenstein want to protect from the analysts: rudeness, wildness, yes, but also beauty, richness, and power. The language-building Ricoeur constructs contrasts with the logical analyst's sterile construction in the same way that a Gothic cathedral would contrast with a modern office building. Without the self-expression of builders and architects, the great Gothic cathedrals would

not possess such beauty and majesty. Perhaps it is equally difficult to construct great philosophical ideas with a language devoid of variety and richness.

Like Ricoeur and Ruskin, Wittgenstein believes that richness is a positive result of ordinary language's lack of uniformity, and defends the richness which he believes is inherent in ordinary language. Wittgenstein choses a metaphor slightly different from the language-building metaphor which we applied to Ricoeur. The metaphor is one of a city, which like language, includes dead-end alleys and deteriorating structures. The language-city, as a composite of language-buildings, would also be affected by an ideal language program. Any city suffers, esthetically at the very least, if it ceases to demonstrate architectural variety. It could be argued that a street lined with identical buildings is not esthetically pleasing, although European rowhouses are deemed by some to be of architectural value. Wittgenstein believes that language will suffer in similar fashion under an ideal language regime. Wittgenstein illustrates his belief by comparing the heart of an ancient city with its more recent surrounding neighbourhoods.

> Our language can be seen as an ancient city: a maze of little streets and squares, of old and new houses, and of houses with additions from various periods; and this surrounded by a multitude of new boroughs with straight regular streets and uniform houses. (Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations §18)

This passage shows that the charmingly confusing but richly varied ancient city is to be preferred over the new boroughs. Something is lost when the city succumbs to straightness, regularity and uniformity. A compilation of identically deficient buildings is nothing more than that: deficient. A city whose buildings

reflect its citizens, its history and its culture is as valuable as a language which reflect the past of its users, their history and their culture.

Wittgenstein clearly finds the ancient city infinitely more interesting than the new boroughs, and ordinary language more so than an ideal form. However, just as it is easy to get lost in ancient cities, ordinary language can also cause problems. Wittgenstein knows, as we have mentioned, that ordinary language is rife with "misleading analogies. . .grammatical mistakes. . .pieces of nonsense. . ." (Brand xi) Rather than giving up on ordinary language and becoming dependent on ideal language, as he had been tempted to do in his youth, the older Wittgenstein assumes a therapeutic approach to language. He hopes to expose the pitfalls of ordinary language so that we may avoid getting trapped. In fact, Wittgenstein's therapeutic approach is rather like mapping out ordinary language. We know that a good map of an ancient and confusing city is invaluable.

Our analogies and metaphors about language, buildings and cities clearly illustrate that Ricoeur and Wittgenstein, in his later period, believe that ordinary language should be the focus of any philosophy of language, and must be therefore protected from the ideal language program of the logical analysts. These metaphors serve as an introduction to our detailed discussion of the criticisms which Ricoeur and Wittgenstein mount against logical analysis and ideal language.

Some of Ricoeur's strongest criticisms of the analytic method are found in his article "Philosophie et langage". This article illustrates that Ricoeur was very aware of developments in the philosophy of language of the analytic tradition.

Ricoeur's awareness is quite rare among Continental philosophers of the period. Later in this study, we will argue that Ricoeur may very well have been among the first Continental philosophers who respected and were aware of analytic philosophy, and that Ricoeur may therefore be identified as the instigator of a potential reconciliation between the analytic and Continental traditions. First, however, we must establish Ricoeur's opposition to logical analysis and support of ordinary language. In "Philosophie et langage", Ricoeur begins by detailing the various forms of analysis. Ricoeur then attacks logical analysts on the basis of their failure to consider ordinary language, and, more specifically, one of ordinary language's important functions: speech. ("Philosophie et langage" 287) Because logical analysis ignores ordinary language and its irreducible abilities, Ricoeur believes the method is in danger of falling into the philosophical trap of excessive detail.

> Le danger est réel que l'analyse du langage s'épuise dans la cage de l'écureuil, se dissipe en minuties sans portée, se ruine dans un jeu sur les jeux du langage. ("Philosophie et langage"287)

Although Ricoeur believes that the clarification of language is a valid philosophical goal, he fears that the focus on minute linguistic details by logical analysis will defeat its more general usefulness. Ricoeur feels that any study of language needs to consider *more* than the minute details of the structure of language. Philosophers must consider both the philosophical and the everyday uses of language. Ricoeur fears that logical analysis forgets that language has both philosophical and everyday purposes, and will therefore produce a form of language so systematized and regimented that the individual's ability to communicate will be jeopardized.

Ricoeur also criticizes ideal language programs because of what he perceives to be their elimination of the symbol. By symbol, Ricoeur intends a word or expression with two meanings: one which is literal and direct, and another which is indirect and hidden, and which can only be uncovered via the first meaning. (Ricoeur, "Existence et herméneutique" 16) We will discuss the symbol in greater detail in the next chapter, but in this context it is important to note that Ricoeur believes the symbol to be the very source of ordinary language's richness. Ricoeur therefore wants to protect the symbol at all costs. Ricoeur believes that the ideal language program of logical analysis threatens the symbol by its reductive elimination of polysemy and multivocity. If words and expressions are not permitted to have dual or multiple meanings, the symbol will be removed from language completely. Ideal language's threat to the symbol is the fundamental motivation for Ricoeur's rejection of ideal language programs.

Ricoeur recognizes that the symbol, although it provides ordinary language with its richness, can cause linguistic headaches. Because the symbol has two meanings, and because its true meaning is hidden by its superficial meaning, it creates an enormous potential for misunderstanding and misinterpretation. Would not the elimination of the symbol be therefore linguistically beneficial? Ricoeur refuses to accept that this is the case. Ricoeur's hermeneutic program is designed to meet these objections: to preserve the symbol *and* reduce the chances of misunderstandings. The method of interpretation can reduce potential misunderstandings without stripping language of its richness.

Ricoeur believes that another consequence of the removal of symbols by an ideal language program as proposed by logical analysis will be the elimination of language's ability to provide a link to reality.

> [L]a voie de *l'analyse*, de la décomposition en unités plus petites. . . consacre l'élimination d'une fonction fondamentale du symbolisme. . . qui met le symbolisme en relation avec la réalité, avec l'expérience, avec le monde, avec l'existence. . . (Ricoeur, "Le problème du double-sens" 65)

Ricoeur believes that the analytic method of reducing language to its smallest component parts, because it also debilitates the symbol, risks a detachment of language from reality. "[S]ur la voie de l'analyse se découvrent les éléments de la signification, qui n'ont plus aucun rapport avec les choses dites. . ." ("Le problème du double-sens" 65) Ricoeur believes that the tiny linguistic elements which are the end result of the method of logical analysis can no longer represent the way the world really is, although it is not clear why Ricoeur believes that *only* the symbol is able to represent reality. It is possible, however, that Ricoeur believes in this context, as in the context of religious language, which we will discuss later, that the symbol allows us to speak of deeper realities or truths which would otherwise be inexpressible.

Ricoeur's defense of the symbol and his criticism of the ideal language program of logical analysis may not be entirely valid, particularly his belief that language's capacity to refer to things in the world will be removed along with the symbol. Bertrand Russell, co-founder of logical atomism, a philosophy which consistently applied the method of logical analysis, actually presents a theory of symbols in The Philosophy of Logical Atomism--a theory which, surprisingly, is not limited to mathematical and logical symbols.

I think some people think you only mean mathematical symbols when you talk about symbolism. I am using it in a sense to include all language of every sort and kind. . .When I speak of a symbol I simply mean something that 'means' something else. . .(45)

The fundamental purpose of Russell's symbol is to represent or "mean" something other than itself. Admittedly, Russell's symbol does differ from that of Ricoeur. Whereas Ricoeur's symbol is deceptive, Russell's symbol is unambiguous, and univocal. Nonetheless, Russell's symbol is designed to represent the world, and therefore establishes a connection between language and the world.

Ricoeur seems to make two errors in his criticism. Firstly, it is not entirely correct that logical atomism removes symbolism from its ideal language program. The double-meaning deceptiveness described by Ricoeur is removed, but the symbol's ability to reach outside language to represent something other than itself is preserved. This ability to represent is the second element misrepresented by Ricoeur. Ricoeur stated that symbolism's ability to relate to reality and the world is eliminated by logical analysis. ("Le problème du double-sens" 65) This is simply not the case. As we have described, Russell's symbol *does* represent things in the world. Ricoeur is not entirely fair in his assessment of the ideal language program. Russell presents a theory of the symbol which, though not depicting the symbol as deceptive, does not break the representational link between language and the world.

Wittgenstein's opposition to the ideal language program of logical analysis, and his defence of ordinary language against an ideal language, is just as vehement as that of Ricoeur. Wittgenstein presents several arguments against

ideal language. Among the most compelling is an argument which targets the role of rules in ordinary language. By "rule", Wittgenstein means a fairly technical, carefully spelled out strategy, as is found, for example, in mathematical processes such as calculus. Ideal language advocates are often motivated by their desire for such strict rules in language. Such is the case for logical atomists, who are in favour of strict rules of language use, for they hope such rules will lead to more accurate use of words and expressions, and more precise distinctions of meaning.

Wittgenstein disagrees with the quest for strict rules, because he does not believe it is realistic to expect all aspects of ordinary language to function according to strict rules. The rules which govern the use of ordinary language are flexible and therefore also effective.

> [I]n general we don't use language according to strict rules-it hasn't been taught us by means of strict rules, either. We, in our discussion on the other hand, constantly compare language with a calculus proceeding according to exact rules. (Wittgenstein, Blue Book 25)

Wittgenstein has come to believe that ideal language advocates have no grounds for insisting that strict rules are necessary in language. The gap between the way language really works, and the way ideal language advocates want it to work, is so vast that Wittgenstein no longer thinks it plausible that an ideal language could be used to illuminate ordinary usage, much less provide an model for it. We implement rules in our use of ordinary language, but we do so unconsciously, and are most often unable to explain what the rules are or how we use them. "...[W]hen we are asked to give such rules, in most cases we aren't able to do so. We are unable clearly to circumscribe the concepts we use..." (Blue Book 25) Wittgenstein seems to suggest that the rules of ordinary

language are learned almost unconsciously through our acquisition of language itself, and that we are never entirely aware of the actual form of those rules.

Wittgenstein presents examples to illustrate his views about ordinary language and rules. Wittgenstein does not believe we should expect ordinary language to be completely governed by calculus-like rules, such as those advocated by logical analysts. In many situations, a word escapes the context and application of a strict rule. Wittgenstein uses the game of tennis as an example, which, although it is a relatively complicated game, is not completely rule-governed.

> It [language] is not everywhere circumscribed by rules; but no more are there any rules for how high one throws the ball in tennis, or how hard; yet tennis is a game for all that and has rules too. (Philosophical Investigations §68)

Just as it would be unreasonable to expect every aspect of the game of tennis to fall under the application of a strict, technical rule, so it would be unreasonable to expect every aspect of ordinary language to be rule-governed. There is no rule governing how high one ought to throw the ball when serving in tennis, because the height of the ball will not likely affect the success of the serve. Rules of tennis strategy are also an excellent example of highly effective, non-technical rules. It is impossible to construct a strict, technical rule which will apply to every possible situation in tennis, where more generalized rules of strategy may be invoked. There is no technical rule to determine where to place the ball on the court, how hard to hit the ball, or whether to use a forehand or a backhand, because innumerable variables must be considered. General rules of strategy which are not situation-specific are much more effective. In ordinary language, as in tennis, flexible, non-technical rules are required.

The rules of ordinary language are flexible enough to bend with the variations of language, and can handle the potential problems that arise. Wittgenstein turns this description of ordinary language rules into an attack on ideal language and its strict rule requirements. Wittgenstein believes that it is both misguided and unnecessary to attempt to create a language with exact rules. "Why then do we in philosophizing constantly compare our use of words with one following exact rules?" (Blue Book 25) Wittgenstein concludes that ideal language, and its attempts at exact rules, are both unnecessary and unreasonable. Ordinary language does not *need* to be replaced, for its rules, although not always exact, are efficient and effective. Philosophical ideas, even logical concepts, do not need a language with strict rules in order to be expressed. Ordinary language is sufficient for all philosophic purposes.

As we have mentioned, Ricoeur believes that an ideal, symbol-free language would be unable to *represent* the world, because it would rupture the link between language and reality, and therefore affect language's ability to represent reality. Wittgenstein, however, believes ideal language does not accurately *reflect* the world, because it attempts to establish linguistic distinctions of meaning which are not found in reality. Wittgenstein focuses his attack on the hazy meaning distinctions of ordinary language, which logical analysts believe should be sharpened. Because ideal language seeks to express concepts with the utmost clarity, it also strives to radically sharpen distinctions of meaning. Wittgenstein believes that a language with sharp distinctions of meaning cannot accurately reflect reality. *Real* distinctions are rarely razor-sharp, and it is therefore unreasonable to expect language, which includes among its functions the representation of reality, to reflect sharp distinctions which don't actually

exist. For example, it is unlikely that an ideal language would be able to clear up the problem of the heap, or the problem of the beard. How many grains of sand make up a heap? How many hairs on a chin constitute a beard? These are hazy distinctions which are not likely to be sharpened by an ideal language--or if they are, it will be in a wholly arbitrary fashion which lacks any basis in actual linguistic practice.

> 'If, for the sake of explanation and to avoid misunderstandings in such a use of language, I want to draw sharp boundaries, these will be related to the flowing boundaries in our natural use of language the way sharp contours in a pen drawing are related to the gradual transitions of colour patches in the reality being represented.' The pen drawing, however, is not the represented reality. (Brand 129)

Ordinary language is like a watercolour, with soft and hazy edges which add to, rather than deter from, the painting's beauty. We would never suggest that a watercolour could be accurately copied in the medium of pen-and-ink, which has very sharp edges and defined lines. Neither can ordinary language be replaced by ideal language, even if the replacement is only temporary.

> [I]f the colours in the original merge without a hint of any outline won't it become a hopeless task to draw a sharp picture corresponding to the blurred one? (Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations §77)

Wittgenstein does not accept the belief of logical analysts that an ideal language is sometimes necessary. Wittgenstein maintains that ordinary language is all that is required, and that any perceived inaccuracies in ordinary language are caused by a lack of understanding on the part of ordinary language users. (Philosophical Grammar §72) Wittgenstein believes this problem of understanding is the source of users' lack of confidence in ordinary language. Philosophers should

therefore attempt to achieve understanding of ordinary language, and then use it accurately and succinctly. Ideal language would no longer be needed.

Ricoeur extends his argument against logical analysis by emphasizing that philosophy is dependent upon ordinary language. All philosophic study and discussion necessarily occurs within the confines of ordinary language. In certain philosophical situations, other linguistic forms may merge with ordinary language, as is the case with symbolic logic, where logical symbols are fused with ordinary language. Nonetheless, philosophy is unavoidably "stuck in the middle" of ordinary language, and philosophic discussion always occurs in ordinary language *in medias res*. Ideal language and ordinary language are inextricably entwined, for no ideal language can be built from a context other than that of ordinary language.

Ricoeur's argument raises some interesting questions. He assumes that ideal language is a distillate of ordinary language, which is the case with the analytic ideal language. However, Ricoeur implies that all ideal languages are similarly derived from ordinary language, which may not be accurate. Is Ricoeur justified in stating that language cannot be created in a linguistic void, or that ideal language is shackled to ordinary language? At some point in the admittedly distant past, language must have developed from a context in which no language previously existed. It is true that philosophic discussion, especially the discussion of language, is always in the context of ordinary language. However, Ricoeur's belief that a new language, ideal or otherwise, can emerge only from the context of existing language, is questionable. A further blow against Ricoeur's argument is the fact that logical analysts realize that ideal language, distilled from ordinary language, is dependent on ordinary language.

Analysts have always been troubled by their obligation to use a metalanguage to speak of the syntax of ideal language. Especially puzzling is the fact that *ordinary* language does not seem to require such a metalanguage, and is somehow able to speak of its own syntax. For example, grammarians and philosophers alike have discussed the structure of English at great length *in English*, without any apparent need for a metalanguage. Natural languages are successful in a very practical sense. Attacking logical analysts on the basis of a problem they themselves recognize is not a good strategy for Ricoeur to adopt. This criticism of ideal language is particularly weak.

Like Ricoeur, Wittgenstein points out that philosophy is necessarily preceded by ordinary language, because ordinary language is the vehicle of all philosophical discussion. In the particular case of the philosophy of language, philosophers cannot simply temporarily step out of ordinary language in order to discuss it. Studies of language always take place in the context of *ordinary* language, and cannot occur in a *tabula rasa* context, as Wittgenstein explains in Philosophical Grammar: "In giving philosophical explanations about language I already have to use language full blown (not some sort of preparatory, provisional one). . ." (§77) a similar explanation is found in the Philosophical Remarks: "[A]ny kind of explanation of a language presupposes a language already. . . I cannot use language to get outside language." (§6) Like Ricoeur, Wittgenstein maintains that philosophy and ordinary language have an *in medias res* relationship. Wittgenstein believes that ordinary language is essential to philosophy, and that philosophy should therefore use ordinary language, rather than formulating an unnecessary ideal language.

Wittgenstein believes ideal language is neither desirable, nor beneficial, nor *necessary*. Even the most sophisticated analytic attempts to construct an ideal language cannot improve upon ordinary language. As Brand comments, Wittgenstein feels that ideal languages are "poorer and narrower than the language of everyday and need it in order to be construed and interpreted." (Brand 64)

> [T]he word "ideal" is liable to mislead, for it sounds as if these languages were better, more perfect, than our everyday language; and as if it took the logician to shew people at last what a proper sentence looked like. (Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations §81)

Ordinary language can fulfill all our expressive needs, although careful study of ordinary language is necessary to clarify confusing aspects of ordinary language. Further, ordinary language users would not function well within the confines of an ideal language, even if this were required only occasionally on "State occasions". Although ideal language satisfies the logical analysts' wish for exactness and accuracy, ordinary language users require the familiar variability of meaning and polysemy in order to function linguistically.

> We have got on to slippery ice where there is no friction and so in a certain sense the conditions are ideal, but also, just because of that, we are unable to walk. We want to walk: so we need *friction*. Back to the rough ground. (Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations §107)

The rough ground of ordinary language provides the language user which much better footing than the smooth and slippery conditions proposed by the ideal language program of logical analysis. The conditions become slippery, believes Wittgenstein, because as philosophers strive to create an ideal language, it becomes increasingly evident that the strict requirements for an ideal language conflict with our actual linguistic needs.

The more narrowly we examine actual language, the sharper becomes the conflict between it and our requirement. . . .The conflict becomes intolerable; the requirement is now in danger of becoming empty. (Philosophical Investigations §107)

To this point, this chapter has adopted a "negative" strategy. We have shown that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur oppose the ideal language program of logical analysis. We hope to argue, on this basis, that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur support ordinary language. We have attempted to show that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur support ordinary language on the basis of their rejection of the ideal language program of logical analysis. However, a more positive approach is now required. Is our extrapolation to the support of ordinary language justified?

All of Wittgenstein's criticisms of logical analysis, specifically the ideal language program, are made in the context of his description and defence of ordinary language. Therefore, it is undeniable that the above textual evidence shows that Wittgenstein believes ordinary language should be the focus of any philosophy of language. Wittgenstein can also be linked to John L. Austin, who is a renowned ordinary language philosopher. Austin states that his goal as a philosopher is to describe the workings of ordinary language. Wittgenstein never explicitly expressed his philosophical reasons for studying ordinary language, but the later philosophy of Wittgenstein, most especially the Philosophical Investigations, exemplifies a philosophy that results from the same insight expressed by Austin. It is undeniable, therefore, that Wittgenstein is "doing" ordinary language philosophy, although he never explicitly outlines this activity as his philosophical goal. Ricoeur's philosophy of language, however,

does not seem to have such a strong ordinary language context. Therefore, we need to strengthen our position that Ricoeur agrees that ordinary language should be the focus of a philosophy of language.

Much of Ricoeur's criticism is based on his opposition to the elimination of the symbol from language. Ricoeur believes this elimination would occur were an ideal language constructed as a temporary replacement for ordinary language. When Ricoeur explains his characterization of ordinary language, however, he always defines the symbol as the *source of the richness of ordinary language*. Therefore, by extrapolation, because Ricoeur believes the symbol provides ordinary language with its richness, and because he believes that the symbol must be preserved at all costs, he therefore also believes ordinary language itself must be preserved. Only a careful study of ordinary language can handle the problems caused by ordinary language's problematic richness. Ricoeur's philosophy of language must therefore be one which assigns a central role to ordinary language. There is even further evidence that Ricoeur believes ordinary language should be at the foundation of any philosophy of language. That evidence is found in a remarkable comparison with John L. Austin, the best known of the group of philosophers of language actually known as "ordinary language philosophers".

John L. Austin's ordinary language philosophy devotes a great deal of attention to ordinary language details, but this attention is motivated by a wider goal. Austin seeks to achieve "conceptual elucidation." That is, he wants to clarify ordinary language words and expressions, so that the concepts these words and expressions convey might be better understood. Austin believes the best way to "elucidate concepts" is to study ordinary language usage. Although

he is concerned with the analysts' seemingly obsessive attention to "minuties sans portée", Ricoeur does not object to Austin's goal-oriented attention to detail. In fact, Ricoeur approves of Austin's ordinary language philosophy because it never loses sight of the importance of ordinary language usage.

Ricoeur believes that ordinary language is important not only because it is a refuge for the symbol, but also because it acts as a "conservatory for expressions which have preserved the highest descriptive power as regards experience. . ." ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 95) Ricoeur believes that ordinary language has harboured and protected those words and expressions which are most linguistically efficient: those words and expressions which are best able to describe our experiences. Therefore, for Ricoeur, ordinary language is the most suitable vehicle for the accomplishment of the phenomenological goal of the description of experience. Because the ultimate philosophical goal of phenomenology *is* the description of experience, ordinary language could be seen as accomplishing the essential aims of philosophy itself. This quotation strongly emphasizes Ricoeur's belief that ordinary language has proved itself to be preferably to any ideal form.

Austin, in "A Plea for Excuses", mirrors Ricoeur's opinion. In an attempt to justify his ordinary language method, Austin explains his belief that "our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth marking. . ." (Austin, Philosophical Papers 182) Austin agrees that ordinary language consists of words and expressions which have been shown worthy of preservation. Austin also suggests, like Ricoeur, that those words and expressions which are not efficient, or are descriptively weak, or which reflect distinctions not deemed

worth making, have been discarded from ordinary language. In a sense, ordinary language is *already* a distilled, ideal form of language, for it consists of words and expressions which "have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest. . ." (Austin, <u>Philosophical Papers</u> 182) As a result, the words and expressions of ordinary language will serve ordinary language users better than "any that you or I are likely to think up in our arm-chairs of an afternoon. . ." (182) Austin believes that the study of ordinary language allows us to establish a sort of metaphysics of the commonsensical. Ordinary language instructs us as to what the world is like and what we can know about the world.

The similarity between Ricoeur and Austin is extremely important, for Austin and Ricoeur are in fundamental agreement about the nature of ordinary language and the nature of philosophical study. Austin is motivated by the desire to describe the workings of ordinary language because he believes ordinary language reflects that which has been shown to be worth saying. Ricoeur's depiction of ordinary language as a "conservatory" suggests that he is similarly motivated. Even further, the characterization of ordinary language by Austin and Ricoeur indicates the possibility of more far-reaching clues about their metaphysical and epistemological views. Because both philosophers describe ordinary language as having preserved that which is worth knowing, we could argue that they also believe that ordinary language reflects our views about the world, and what we can know about the world. Ordinary language reveals forms of folk-metaphysics and folk-epistemology, for it has preserved those linguistic elements that describe the world, and what we can know about the world. An ideal language will always contain the metaphysical and epistemological views of its creator. Ordinary language, however, is not so immediately malleable, for it is a composite of the well tested metaphysical and

epistemological views of generations of ordinary language users. Ordinary language has more than linguistic implications: it may be a reliable source, instructing us as to what the world is like and what we can know about the world.

Wittgenstein and Ricoeur oppose logical analysis because of its ideal language program, which attempts to replace ordinary language in order to express logical concepts with the utmost accuracy. Whereas logical analysts attempt to eliminate the problems of ordinary language, Ricoeur and Wittgenstein strive to understand that which *causes* those ordinary language problems: a constructive rather than a reductive approach to language. Ricoeur and Wittgenstein present a variety of criticisms of the ideal language program of logical analysis. There are two criticisms which are critical to our comparison of Ricoeur and Wittgenstein. Firstly, Ricoeur and Wittgenstein defend the richness and fullness of language, as was illustrated by the language-building and language-city analogies. Secondly, both Wittgenstein and Ricoeur believe that ordinary language is sufficient for all of our linguistic and philosophic needs. In short, both philosophers challenge the very motivation behind the ideal language program of logical analysis. Ordinary language can express any and all concepts, including logical concepts. Linguistic inaccuracies, which are inherent in ordinary language, can be handled either by an interpretive program such as Ricoeur's, or simply by the careful descriptive study of ordinary language, as suggested by Wittgenstein. Careful study will allow us to understand how ordinary language works, and therefore to express anything succinctly and accurately. Quite simply, Ricoeur and Wittgenstein believe not only that a multitude of problems are caused by the construction of an ideal language, but also that ideal language is unnecessary. By comparing Ricoeur and Wittgenstein,

this part of the chapter has attempted to show that the two philosophers criticize the ideal language program of logical analysis in very similar ways. The second part of this defence of ordinary language will discuss a second threat to ordinary language, structuralism, which Ricoeur finds particularly troubling.

2)Structuralism

Ricoeur and Wittgenstein agree that the ideal language of logical analysis is neither beneficial nor necessary, and attempt to fend off the analytic threat to ordinary language. However, ordinary language must endure a second attack--structuralism--a challenge which is of particular concern to Ricoeur. For our purposes, it does not matter if Ricoeur's characterization of structuralism, which will follow, is accurate. What is important is that once again, Ricoeur defends ordinary language against a perceived threat. The following discussion of structuralism is designed to strengthen our stance that ordinary language is central to Ricoeur's philosophy of language. However, in the interest of context, a brief historical account of structuralism is appropriate before we examine Ricoeur's criticisms.

Structuralism is a theory of language and grammar which studies the irreducible morphological and phonological units of language. The Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) founded the structural movement with his work Course in General Linguistics. The method was adopted by the Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev in the 1940s, but it was not until the French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss began to expand the theory in the 1960s that it became more prominent. Lévi-Strauss applied the structural model, designed for application to language, to a wider variety of fields, especially the anthropological fields of culture and society. Ricoeur was concerned about the seepage of the structural model into philosophy, which was almost inevitable, considering philosophy's focus on language in this century.

In many ways structuralism is similar to logical analysis. Both theories are reductive: logical analysis reduces language to its smallest components, and structuralism reduces language to its smallest morphological and phonological units. However, the motivation of logical analysis differs from that of structuralism. Logical analysts reduce language to an ideal form, designed to replace ordinary language in particular situations, because they do not believe the latter can accurately express their logical ideas. Structuralism, however, is exclusively a theory of language, whose reductive approach is designed as a study of the structure of language itself, and does not seek to replace it by a different version of language.

Interestingly, to add to our previous architectural analogies, Tom Wolfe, American architectural critic, believes that structuralism can also be viewed from an architectural perspective. In the late 1960s, an architectural group known as the "Whites" or the "New York Five", developed a style which was described as a "return to first principles". (Wolfe 118) The group designed plain, starkly white buildings. Wolfe believes the development of the architectural style paralleled the popularity of structural linguistics in American universities.

> The Structuralists assumed that language (and therefore meaning) has an
> immutable underlying structure. . .Structuralists were people dedicated to
> stripping the whole bourgeois mess down to clean bare bones. (120)

Wolfe believes structuralism and the "Whites" architectural style developed simultaneously and in similar fashion.

Against structuralism, Ricoeur once again adopts the mantle of defender of the "fullness of language", which is how he describes ordinary language. Structuralism has a systematizing approach to language, and it considers only

the elements of language rather than the "fullness" of language. Structuralism therefore depicts language as a system which does not resemble the actual use of language. Even further, in Ricoeur's opinion, structuralism also alienates the language-user.

> [L]anguage, before being a process or an event, is a system, and that this system is not established at the level of the speaker's consciousness. . ."
> (Ricoeur, "From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 92)

Because structuralism studies language in terms of its structural and morphological elements, it views language as a closed system, a system "within which each element merely refers to the other elements of the system." ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 93) Ricoeur believes the structural model of language excludes both symbolism and polysemy, which are fundamentally important aspects of ordinary language. Ricoeur feels the structural approach represents language as nothing more than a sterile and anonymous structure. Clearly, Ricoeur views structuralism and logical analysis as equal threats to ordinary language. Ricoeur also fears that structuralism, by excluding symbolism, creates a model of language which does not refer to anything outside of itself, and therefore has nothing to say about the world. ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 93) Structuralized language is able to preserve *sense*, yet although it does have meaning, it destroys the *reference* of language.

> For structuralism, language does not refer to anything outside of itself. Not only the reference of the text to an external world, but also its connections to an author who *intended* it and to a reader who *interprets* it are excluded by structuralism. ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 93)

Clearly, a theory of language is not likely to affect the way in which ordinary language users operate linguistically. Ricoeur, therefore, is not really afraid that structuralism will damage the way ordinary language is used everyday. However, Ricoeur's criticisms of structuralism serve to emphasize his belief that the fundamental elements of ordinary language must be preserved, and therefore that any theory of language which does not preserve those elements is damaging.

Ricoeur believes that the individual, who is, after all, the 'consumer' of language, should be an important part of any philosophy of language. Ricoeur is at least partly the product of the existential movement, prominent in France during the beginning of his philosophical career. Existentialism strongly emphasized the role of the individual in all philosophic study, and it is likely for this reason that Ricoeur is especially troubled by the shift of emphasis to pure linguistic structure. Ricoeur feels that structuralism's focus overshadows the individual.

> [T]he primacy of subjectivity which was so strongly emphasized by existentialism is overthrown by this displacement of analysis from the level of the subject's intentions to the level of linguistic and semiotic structures. ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 92)

Ricoeur believes that structuralism creates a debilitating model of language. If language is nothing more than structure, it is tied to that structure, locked into it. The individual is therefore unable to transcend the linguistic structure to communicate her experiences. The "universal link between the human existing and the world..." ("New Developments in Phenomenology in France" 8), a most important feature of ordinary language, is altered by the structural model. A reduction of the complexity of ordinary language, and the replacement of

ordinary language with the structural model, would weaken or even sever the link between the individual and the world. Language's function is to establish a rapport with things other than itself, but it cannot effectively accomplish this task if it is nothing more than that which it appears to be when viewed from the structuralist point of view.

> [P]lus la linguistique s'épure et se réduit à la science de la language plus elle expulse de son champ ce qui concerne le rapport du langage avec l'autre qui lui-même." ("Philosophie et langage" 276-277)

Ricoeur does not deny that structure is an important part of language. Even ordinary language requires a certain amount of structure in order to be coherent and efficient. However, Ricoeur believes it is essential to *surpass* pure structure in order to access the true meaning and significance of language. A dynamic, symbolic and polysemic language cannot be developed if we "get stuck" on structure. Ricoeur believes that structuralism and structural methods ignore the dynamic aspect of language, or its "living" character. Structuralism also ignores the subjectivity of language, where the individual uses language to communicate an experience to another individual, as Ricoeur emphasizes in his article "Structure et signification".

> [P]lus nous avançons vers la structure, plus nous nous enfonçons dans les langages mortes, et ce qu'il faut retrouver c'est le langage vivant, lorsque quelqu'un dit quelque chose à quelqu'un d'autre. ("Structure et signification" 119)

Ricoeur believes that the most important characteristic of language is not its structural composition but its ability to communicate individual experiences. Ricoeur hopes to preserve language's communicative ability in his opposition to both structuralism and logical analysis.

Wittgenstein developed his philosophy of ordinary language before structuralism became a widespread theory of language, although it is possible that the structural theory of language originated in broader theories of structure such as that developed by Immanuel Kant. Kant believed that "the way in which we perceive, identify, and reflect upon objects might itself have a form or structure which in some way moulds or contributes to our experience." (Flew 190) Although Kant did not propose a structural theory of language, his emphasis of the importance of structure could be viewed as a foreshadowing of the development of structuralism itself. Wittgenstein may have been aware of this foreshadowing, although the structural theory of language had not been fully developed. However, Ricoeur's concerns about structuralism are reflected in certain passages in Wittgenstein's writings, where the latter criticizes the ideal language proposed by logical analysis.

Wittgenstein believes ordinary language should be preserved, because it is a dynamic entity, composed of signs and symbols, which are able to reach out beyond themselves. (Blue Book 16) Like Ricoeur, Wittgenstein does not want language reduced to a closed and static system. In the following quotation, Wittgenstein expresses his opposition to ideal language. Because structuralism views language as a closed system, the criticism of ideal language may be extrapolated to apply to structuralism as well.

> The strict and clear rules of the logical structure of propositions appear to us as something in the background-hidden in the medium of the understanding. . .The ideal, as we think of it, is unshakable. You can never get outside it; you must always turn back. There is no outside; outside you cannot breathe.-Where does this idea come from? It is like a pair of

glasses on our nose through which we see whatever we look at. It never

occurs to us to take them off. (Philosophical Investigations §102-103)

Ideal language is like a locked box which prevents signs and symbols from functioning naturally, like a pair a glasses which colour our perception of the world. According to Ricoeur, structuralism is an equally distorted view of language. Wittgenstein clearly believes that ideal language is stultifying, and that we need to realize just how constricting it can be, so that we may overcome its negative effects. Structuralism also proposes a constricting and stultifying model of language. If we would only remove the glasses from our nose, perhaps we would see that language should be studied in its everyday, ordinary form, although it is possible that the world might be reduced to chaos and confusion. Wittgenstein did not actually criticize structuralism, but it seems safe to assume that he would have agreed with Ricoeur's opposition to the structural model.

Ricoeur views structuralism as another threat to ordinary language, one which must be warded off. Although Wittgenstein did not write about structuralism as such, his defence of ordinary language can be extrapolated to apply to the structural model. The discussion of structuralism serves to emphasize Ricoeur's and Wittgenstein's staunch position in favour of ordinary language, although the similarities between the two philosophers are less obvious in this case. Wittgenstein and Ricoeur believe that ordinary language is suitable for all purposes--both for everyday use and for use on "State occasions", when we are engaged in philosophical investigations. The careful study of ordinary language is admittedly required to avoid misunderstandings due to ignorance about the workings of ordinary language. Nonetheless, Ricoeur and Wittgenstein maintain that the study of language should always focus on the fullness of ordinary language. If one focuses only on the minutiae of language,

or only on structure, one will lose sight of the rich variability of ordinary language, and one will suffer accordingly. In the chapter which follows, we will explore those elements of ordinary language which Wittgenstein and Ricoeur believe are irreducible, and which must therefore be preserved against the threats of programs such as logical analysis and structuralism.

IV. SIGN, SYMBOL AND POLYSEMY: INTERPRETING THE IRREDUCIBLE ELEMENTS OF ORDINARY LANGUAGE

We have attempted to establish that Ricoeur and Wittgenstein vehemently oppose logical analysis on account of its reductive method and its program of replacement of ordinary language in situations of philosophical investigation. Wittgenstein and Ricoeur agree that replacing ordinary language with ideal language eliminates elements of ordinary language which are essential and must be preserved--even against only occasional and highly use-specific replacements. We have also begun to build a case to establish our position that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur are in fundamental agreement in that each identifies ordinary language as the focus of his philosophy of language. We argue that the essential common element of Wittgenstein's and Ricoeur's criticisms of logical analysis and ideal language is the importance which they assign to signs and symbols in ordinary language. Ricoeur and Wittgenstein agree that signs and symbols are of paramount importance in ordinary language, and that language will suffer if logical analysis is unable to preserve signs and symbols in ideal language.

In our introduction to Ricoeur's philosophy of language, we explained his interest in hermeneutics. Hermeneutics, a method of interpretation, is required by the presence of the symbol in ordinary language. As we will explain, the symbol must be interpreted, for although it is the source of the richness of ordinary language, it can cause some confusion. A symbol is a linguistic entity, a word or expression, which has a structure which inherently includes a double meaning. Each symbol has two separate and distinct meanings: the surface meaning puts forth a second, *deeper* sense or significance. The interpreter can

immediately access the symbol's apparent meaning, but must interpret the apparent meaning before the indirect meaning becomes accessible. The symbol's second meaning can only be accessed, and therefore understood, indirectly. For example, the Christian errance symbol of the "lost sheep", when interpreted, reveals its true meaning: that of a person who has "wandered" from, or abandoned, God. The apparent meaning, "lost sheep", only leads to the true meaning. The indirect meaning is described as the "true meaning" because it is the meaning which is intended, but veiled, by the symbol.

> J'appelle symbole toute structure de signification où un sens direct, primaire, littéral, désigne par surcroît un autre sens indirect, secondaire, figuré, qui ne peut être appréhendé qu'à travers le premier. (Ricoeur, "Existence et herméneutique" 16)

The symbol must be interpreted in order to lift the veil of the initial sense, and to access the symbol's true meaning. Although indirect meaning-accessibility is potentially problematic due to a risk of misunderstanding or misinterpretation, Ricoeur nonetheless defends the symbol as an essential part of ordinary language.

Ricoeur distinguishes between symbolism and polysemy. The distinction is important because although both symbolism and polysemy consist of multiple meanings, and are important features of ordinary language, symbolic and polysemic words conceal their true meanings in very different ways. Whereas a symbol *intentionally* veils its true meaning, a polysemic word or expression simply has a meaning which varies according to the context in which it is found, or the interpretation assigned to it. The essence of polysemy is variation, whereas the essence of symbolism could be said to be deception. Polysemy is "that remarkable feature of words in natural languages which is their ability to

mean more than one thing." (Ricoeur, "Word, Polysemy, Metaphor" 65) A polysemic word or expression must be interpreted before its meaning can be definitively established. A simple example could be the polysemic word "chair". Depending on the context in which it is found, "chair" can refer to a piece of furniture, or to a person presiding over a meeting. Polysemy allows a very high degree of sensitivity and variability to be achieved in ordinary language. Ricoeur does not believe that an ideal language can preserve this sensitivity and variability.

> There is something irreducible in ordinary language. The variability of meanings, their displaceability, and their sensibility to the context are the condition for creativity and confer possibilities of indefinite invention. . .("Word, Polysemy, Metaphor" 75)

Ricoeur believes that polysemy is linguistically advantageous, although it does require interpretation. One polysemic word can assume a wide variety of meanings, depending on the context in which it is found or the interpretation which it inspires. Therefore, polysemy operates like a linguistic Occam's razor, and allows the greatest possible word economy to be achieved in ordinary language. Without polysemy, language would be cluttered with a plethora of stodgily univocal words which would allow absolutely no context-sensitivity. However, logical analysts recognize that this is a problem, and for this reason restrict the use of the ideal language to specific situations. For example, Russell admits that an ambiguity-free language used for everyday purposes would be "intolerably prolix." Ricoeur seems to be ignorant of the fact that analysts are aware of the everyday impracticality of univocity. Nevertheless, Ricoeur believes that both polysemy and symbolism are essential aspects of ordinary language, which allow ordinary language to be highly elegant and versatile.

Ricoeur's program not only permits but also *encourages* symbolic and polysemic language. As a result, Ricoeur must defend himself against those who fear that his program will cause problems such as fallacious arguments and inaccurate expression of logical concepts. These philosophers believe that if words are not univocal in arguments, the words may be misinterpreted and the validity of the arguments may therefore be negatively affected. Logical analysts would also object to Ricoeur's program, because they believe the symbolic and polysemic nature of ordinary language prohibits the accurate expression of logical concepts. However, Ricoeur recognizes the objection and believes that it can be handled.

> In the eyes of the logician, hermeneutics will always be suspected of fostering a culpable complacency toward equivocal meanings. . . (Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy 52)

Ricoeur replies to the objection by emphasizing the strength of his hermeneutic program, which we described in the earlier "language-building" analogy. Ricoeur insists that interpretation can handle the ambiguity which is caused by symbolism and polysemy. Admittedly, active interpretive skills are required to restrict the possible meanings of polysemic language. Nonetheless, those skills can narrow down the possible meanings and determine the true meaning which is intended. Although a univocal language would eliminate the need for an interpretive program such as Ricoeur's, the price paid to achieve univocity would be far too high. Polysemy and symbolism are the sources of the richness of ordinary language, and in the search for univocity, they would be lost, and ordinary language's richness with them. Even further, as we will explain, Ricoeur believes the symbol is required for the expression of what he believes to

be fundamental theological beliefs, for non-symbolic language is unable to communicate profound religious truths.

Wittgenstein agrees that polysemy is philosophically acceptable. Ordinary language has a naturally high degree of multiplicity of word meaning and use. Wittgenstein believes in fact that ideal languages, with univocal expressions, are constructed not out of necessity, but to alleviate the embarrassment which results when one is forced to admit that one doesn't understand ordinary language.

> If we construct 'ideal languages' then our goal is mainly this: that we want to eliminate someone's embarrassment, which has arisen through his believing that he understood the precise use of a word of everyday language and then used it one-sidedly and falsely. (Brand 131)

It is clear that Wittgenstein believes that polysemy is not inherently problematic. In fact, polysemy is a problem only when combined with a lack of understanding of ordinary language.

> That a word has no strict meaning is, therefore, just as little a failing as the assumption that the light of my reading lamp is not a real light because it does not have a sharp boundary. (Brand 131)

Rather than speaking of symbols, as Ricoeur does, Wittgenstein refers to signs, which he identifies as integral parts of language. Although Wittgenstein does describe signs as standing for something other than themselves, he is reluctant to provide a direct and concrete account of signs. He prefers to discuss how signs are used.

> If we say thinking is essentially operating with signs, the first question you might ask is : "What are signs?"- Instead of giving any kind of

general answer to this question, I shall propose to you to look closely at particular cases which we should call "operating with signs." (<u>Blue Book</u> 16)

Wittgenstein believes the important question is not how a sign is defined, but rather how it is used, and how it operates in ordinary language. In fact, the meaning of a sign becomes clear only when it is used. (<u>Blue Book</u> 5). Wittgenstein's sign is similar to Ricoeur's symbol in that both the sign and the symbol play active roles in ordinary language. The sign gains meaning in active use--the symbol requires active interpretive participation before its meaning becomes clear. This serves as an initial comparison of the sign and the symbol, a comparison which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Wittgenstein explains in the <u>Blue Book</u> that even thinking consists of operating with signs, which is congruent with his belief that signs gain their meaning only when used. Wittgenstein describes how we think with signs in the important example of the grocer (<u>Blue Book</u> 16-17), which illustrates that signs are used even in the most mundane and everyday task of grocery shopping.

> The words "six apples" are written on a bit of paper, the paper is handed to the grocer, the grocer compares the word "apple" with labels on different shelves. He finds it to agree with one of the labels, counts from 1 to the number written on the slip of paper, and for every number counted takes a fruit off the shelf and puts it in a bag.- And here you have a case of the use of words. (16-17)

The grocer invokes a matching process in order to interpret the signs used, and to determine what is wanted. He matches the list's written word "apple" with the labels on his bins, understands what is required, and produces an apple. The matching process is really an interpretation of the sign, the word "apple". The

sign is used, and therefore takes on a meaning. In fact, Wittgenstein believes that most words are signs, which stand for objects in the world or for concepts. To use words in ordinary language is to use signs, and a matching process or process of interpretation is required.

Ricoeur presents an account of perpetual interpretation which resembles Wittgenstein's belief that signs gain meaning only when used. Ricoeur's theory of interpretation is not really *parallel* to the "meaning is use theory", but nonetheless harmonizes very nicely with Wittgenstein's theory. Ricoeur believes that interpretation is constantly being employed in language. For example, in conversation, the spoken form of language, the listener must interpret the speaker's sentences in order to access and therefore understand the meaning the speaker is trying to communicate. In the same way, a reader must interpret an author's words, for the author's meaning is not always immediately apparent. Further, because the author is not present and accessible, the reader obviously cannot question the author in order to make the meaning clear. (Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics" 90) The meaning of the text almost 'escapes' from the author, and becomes, to an extent, dependent upon the reader. "...[T]he meaning of the text has become autonomous in relation to the intention of the author..." (90) Ricoeur believes the meaning of a symbolic word or expression cannot be accessed without the interpretive process. Therefore, a symbolic word must be used in some way, whether in spoken or written language, before the interpretive process may begin.

Ricoeur and Wittgenstein agree that meaning is accessed when a word or expression is used. The difference between the two theories is that whereas Ricoeur believes that meaning is accessible through interpretation when

language is used, Wittgenstein believes that meaning is inherent in the use itself. Wittgenstein's theory of meaning as use suggests that the meaning of a word, which is a sign, becomes apparent as soon as the word is used. However, according to Ricoeur's account of perpetual interpretation, meaning is not immediately apparent when a word or expression is used. Rather, a word or expression must be used and *then* interpreted before its meaning becomes clear. Both Ricoeur and Wittgenstein assign an essential role to the active use of language. Meaning, so obviously central to language, becomes accessible, or is contained, in language *as used*.

We have explained that both Wittgenstein's signs and Ricoeur's symbols require active linguistic participation on the part of the linguistic subject. However, both philosophers agree that signs and symbols require more than mere participation. Signs and symbols require intellectual effort, an effort which Wittgenstein and Ricoeur seem to agree is to our advantage. For example, Wittgenstein's signs require active and occasionally strenuous attempts at understanding. In fact, Wittgenstein's signs require a sort of two-tiered participation. Signs force us to *think*, to study the sign, and then to *interpret* the sign before we can access its meaning.

> The action of language consists of two parts; an inorganic part, the handling of signs, and an organic part, which we may call understanding these signs, meaning them, interpreting them, thinking. (Blue Book 3)

Ricoeur agrees that symbols require us to exercise our thought processes. "Symbols give, they are the gift of language; but this gift creates for me the duty to think, to inaugurate philosophic discourse. . ." (Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy 38) It could be argued that Ricoeur's symbols also require two-tiered participation, for even after they are interpreted, symbols still force our thought

processes to function. Both signs and symbols require some additional effort on the part of the linguistic subject. In order to understand the sign or the symbol, the subject must use and then interpret the sign or symbol. The active handling of signs and symbols is an integral part of operating with ordinary language. Although this active handling does require an additional effort which may be tiresome, it is essential for the inclusion of symbols in ordinary language.

It should be noted that Wittgenstein's signs and Ricoeur's symbols do differ in several ways. Wittgenstein's signs do not conceal meaning as Ricoeur's symbols do. The sign stands for something other that itself, but it does not necessarily conceal a second, indirect meaning. The sign adds an additional step or matching process before full understanding can be achieved. The symbol also requires an additional step, but whereas the second step required for the sign is very straightforward, the symbol's second step is rarely so clear. Understanding the symbol requires a more significant effort, because it "conceals in its intention a double intentionality." (Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection" 289) Ricoeur presents the example of Christian symbols in order to illustrate what he means by "double intentionality".

> The literal and obvious meaning, therefore, points beyond itself to something which is *like* a stain, *like* a deviation, *like* a burden. . .the first, literal, patent meaning analogically intends *a second meaning which is not given otherwise than in the first.*" (290)

Ricoeur describes the symbol as possessing a double intentionality because he believes it has two meanings: the first, direct and literal, which shows the way to the second meaning, which though like the first (as sin is like a stain), is distinct. The key concept here is *concealment*--the symbol is designed to restrict access to its second, true meaning. Although both Wittgenstein's sign and Ricoeur's

symbol necessitate interpretation, the two accounts are different in that the symbol is secretive and *hides* its meaning, while the sign is an indicator, a sign-post, which points the way to that for which it stands. It is possible that the nature of Ricoeur's symbol could be traced back to the Christian symbols which initially piqued his interest. Originally, Christian symbols were understood only by an elite group of scholars or theologians, which could explain Ricoeur's "secretive" account of general symbols. Nonetheless, the sign and the symbol are remarkably similar, and we may therefore conclude that Ricoeur and Wittgenstein share positive accounts of the irreducible aspects of ordinary language. Signs and symbols, as well as the interpretive or matching processes they require, are essential elements of ordinary language which allow creativity and variety of expression and meaning.

In this chapter we have attempted to provide an explanation of Ricoeur's and Wittgenstein's opposition to the ideal language program of logical analysis, and more importantly, an explanation of the reasons for which Ricoeur and Wittgenstein support ordinary language. Ricoeur and Wittgenstein agree that symbols, signs and polysemy, which logical analysts find so threatening, are neither philosophically nor linguistically detrimental, and may even be advantageous, allowing word economy and creativity. Ricoeur and Wittgenstein present very similar accounts of symbol and sign respectively. Wittgenstein and Ricoeur criticize logical analysts and their ideal language program on similar grounds, and describe the irreducible elements of ordinary language in similar fashion. Our final chapter will focus on texts from Ricoeur and Wittgenstein, where we have caught the two philosophers "doing philosophy". The texts we will discuss are examples of the direct application of their respective philosophic methods, rather than the discussion or explanation of those methods. This final

chapter will attempt to show that the examples reveal to what extent ordinary language is central in the philosophies of language of Ricoeur and Wittgenstein.

V. THE CENTRALITY OF ORDINARY LANGUAGE: A TEXTUAL STUDY OF ORDINARY LANGUAGE AND RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE

Although we have discussed at great length the methodology implied by the philosophies of language of Ricoeur and Wittgenstein, we have not yet had the opportunity to see that methodology at work. This chapter will examine textual excerpts, from Ricoeur and Wittgenstein respectively, which allow us to examine the two philosophers at work. This close comparison will hopefully permit more far-reaching conclusions about that which is really at the root of the philosophies of language of Ricoeur and Wittgenstein. The texts we have chosen may be somewhat surprising, for they concern a subject which has not been discussed at great length in this study. Earlier, we indicated that Ricoeur came to the philosophy of language via the back door of theology, the philosophy of will, and religious language. In fact, Ricoeur first considered symbols, which he came to identify as the source of the richness of ordinary language, in the context of religious language. Therefore, we feel that the excerpt from "The Symbol. . .Food for Thought" is an appropriate selection, for in it Ricoeur is at his most descriptive, as he explores the nature of basic symbols of religious language.

Our choice of text for Wittgenstein, however, is somewhat more controversial. The manuscript for one of Wittgenstein's lectures, delivered in English, was published in 1965 in Philosophical Review under the title "Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics". In the context of his discussion of ethics, Wittgenstein continues to practice ordinary language philosophy, exploring the use of such words as "good" and "right". As a result, Wittgenstein is led to consider the field of religious language, and, as we will argue, describes religious

language in a way very similar to Ricoeur. Following the quotation of each text, we will proceed with a detailed analysis of the text and what it implies for each philosopher, before comparing the texts, and the implications. The lengthy quotations are necessary for the reader to appreciate the extent of the similarity we hope to uncover.

Ricoeur:

> It is most remarkable that there is no language for guilt but symbolic language. This means in the first place the highly archaic language of the stain, where evil is apprehended as a spot, a blot, and then as something positive which affects from without and pollutes. This symbolism is absolutely irreducible. It can be endlessly transposed and renewed, in conceptions that are less and less magic. Thus Isaiah evokes his temple vision in these terms; "Woe is me. . .because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people with unclean lips." And modern men still talk about a tarnished reputation or a pure intention.

> But there are other symbols of human evil: the symbols of going astray, of rebelling, of wandering and getting lost, which show up in the Hebrew context of the Covenant, but which you can also find in the Greeks' *hybris* and *hamartema*. There is likewise the symbol of captivity, which the Jews took from their subjection in Egypt and in relation to their experience of the Exodus, which ultimately symbolized any deliverance.

> Now it is most remarkable that these symbolisms are not superadded to a consciousness of evil; rather they are the primordial language of, constitutive of, the confession of sins. The symbolism here is surely revealing: it is the very *logos* of a sentiment which otherwise would remain vague, indefinite, non-communicable. We are face to face with a

language that has no substitute. ("The Symbol. . .Food for Thought" 10-11)

This quotation emphasizes once again Ricoeur's early interest in religious language. As we will discuss, the excerpt also shows that Ricoeur believes symbolic ordinary language can express fundamental philosophical and theological truths that would otherwise not be expressible. Religious language is symbolic, necessarily so; but religious language also makes use of ordinary words to construct its symbols. "Stain", "spot", "blot": these are all symbols when in the context of religious language, but are also standard words of ordinary language with direct meanings which require no interpretation. Ricoeur also restates his view, which we have already discussed, that ordinary language allows for the greatest possible linguistic efficiency. The words of ordinary language we have mentioned above do double duty as religious symbols, and as symbols can be "endlessly transposed and renewed" (10), reducing the need for further words or symbols. If words of ordinary language did not possess this symbolic ability, concepts of religious language could not be expressed.

Also interesting is the example proposed by Ricoeur of Isaiah, who describes himself as "a man of unclean lips". There is no doubt what meaning Isaiah is attempting to convey with this Biblical example of symbols. What is particularly important is the connection Ricoeur makes between this ancient religious symbol and the words and expressions we still use in ordinary language today. We argue that Ricoeur claims that religious symbols can often work their way into our language of everyday. Ricoeur accurately points out that our ordinary language, even today, contains symbols such as "a tarnished

reputation" or "a pure intention". These two ordinary language symbols have their origins in the ancient symbols of filth and cleanliness found in religious language. Ricoeur describes a close and compelling relationship between ordinary language and religious language. The symbols of religious language make use of appropriate words which are found in ordinary language, but those religious symbols also make their way back into ordinary language.

Ricoeur adopts a descriptive method in this quotation which is reminiscent of ordinary language philosophers. However, perhaps the most revealing phrase is the following, in which Ricoeur expresses his conviction that symbolic, religious language is irreplaceable. "The symbolism here is surely revealing; it is the very logos of a sentiment which otherwise would remain vague, indefinite, non-communicable. We are face to face with a language that has no substitute." (11) This phrase allows us to argue that Ricoeur believes that without the symbolism which is inherent in religious language, we would not be able to express the concepts of evil, sin and guilt. Because ordinary language provides religious language with its symbols, the concepts could not be expressed without ordinary language. Ricoeur believes this instance shows that ordinary language is indispensable.

We argue, therefore, that Ricoeur's philosophy of language, even at this early stage, targets ordinary language. As Ricoeur himself states, there is no substitute for the words of ordinary language which are used as religious symbols. Ordinary language is required to convey the truth of the concepts that Ricoeur describes. In his later philosophy of language, Ricoeur focused less heavily on religious language. However, we believe that it can still be reliably argued that ordinary language, shown to be so important in religious language,

continues to be central to his philosophy of language. It has been made clear that Ricoeur believes that the symbol is the source of the richness of ordinary language. The above text shows that Ricoeur also believes that in many cases the symbol is able to convey concepts that could otherwise be neither expressed nor understood. Therefore, Ricoeur's continued defence of the symbol, which even in the case of religious language is rooted in ordinary language, allows us to conclude that ordinary language is central to Ricoeur's philosophy of language.

We would, however, hesitate to name Ricoeur an ordinary language philosopher in the sense which would apply to certain analytic philosophers. From a stylistic point of view, whereas ordinary language philosophers such as John L. Austin work according to an extremely descriptive method, Ricoeur tends to proceed according to a more methodical strategy. For example, any page of the work of Austin, or of Wittgenstein in his later period, shows each philosopher "doing" ordinary language philosophy, describing how ordinary language works, exploring various problematic words and expressions, and attempting to clarify ordinary usage. It is much more difficult to catch Ricoeur "doing" ordinary language philosophy, although he does explicitly recognize "the growing influence of the British and American school of ordinary language philosophy on my inquiries." ("From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language" 95) We would also argue that Ricoeur considers ordinary language in a narrower sense than do Austin and Wittgenstein. Ricoeur's interest in ordinary language is caused by his wish to defend the symbol, which he believes provides ordinary language with its richness and therefore also with its expressive ability. This wish to defend the symbol is undoubtedly traceable to Ricoeur's initial interest in religious language and its symbolic terms which are

drawn from everyday language. In spite of these limitations which prevent us from describing Ricoeur as a *true* ordinary language philosopher, it is nonetheless undeniable, on the basis of our discussion of the above quotation, that ordinary language is central to Ricoeur's philosophy of language. Therefore, if we are able to prove not only that Ricoeur and Wittgenstein express similar views about ideal language and ordinary language, but also that ordinary language is central to the philosophy of language of each philosopher, then we may be able to conclude that Ricoeur's work marked the beginning of the rapprochement which is now evident between the analytic and Continental traditions.

Wittgenstein:

> Now I want to impress on you that a certain characteristic misuse of our language runs through *all* ethical and religious expressions. All these expressions *seem*, prima facie, to be just *similes*. Thus it seems that when we are using the word *right* in an ethical sense, although, what we mean, is not right in its trivial sense, it's something similar, and when we say "This is a good fellow", although the word good here doesn't mean what it means in the sentence "This is a good football player" there seems to be some similarity. And when we say "This man's life was valuable" we don't mean it in the same sense in which we would speak of some valuable jewelry but there seems to be some sort of analogy. Now all religious terms seem in this sense to be used as similes or allegorically. For when we speak of God and that he sees everything and when we kneel and pray to him all our terms and actions seem to be parts of great and elaborate allegory which represents him as a human being of great power whose grace we try to win, etc., etc. But this allegory also

describes the experience which I have just referred to. For the first of them is, I believe, exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world; and the experience of absolute safety has been described by saying that we feel safe in the hands of God. A third experience of the same kind is that of feeling guilty and again this was described by the phrase that God disapproves of our conduct. Thus in ethical and religious language we seem constantly to be using similes. But a simile must be the simile for something. And if I can describe a fact by means of a simile I must also be able to drop the simile and to describe the fact without it. Now in our case as soon as we try to drop the simile and simply to state the facts which stand behind it, we find that there are no such facts. And so, what at first appeared to be simile now seems to be mere nonsense. ("Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics" 9-10)

Initially surprising in this quotation is the discovery of Wittgenstein examining religious language. For the most part, religious issues were not considered by Wittgenstein in his philosophical writings. However, the discussion of religious language does not commit Wittgenstein to any sort of religious belief. It is important to note that Wittgenstein was, at one point in his philosophic career, tempted by the mystical--tempted by that which does not seem to be explicable by scientific means. In the Tractatus, Wittgenstein admits to the shortcomings of science: "We feel that even if all possible scientific questions be answered, the problems of life have still not been touched at all. . .There is indeed the inexpressible. This shows itself; it is the mystical." (Tractatus 6.52, 6.522) Wittgenstein's early method of logical atomism did not permit the exploration of this temptation by the mystical, but as a result, we

should not be completely surprised at the discovery of this article, in which he explores religious language.

Wittgenstein analyses religious language in a manner akin to Ricoeur. Ethical and religious expressions are similes or allegories. To return to an example offered by Ricoeur, religious language expresses the belief that sins are *like* stains or *like* blots- not, obviously, that sins really are physical, perceivable stains. The examples which Wittgenstein presents show various words of ordinary language which have meanings which vary when used in religious or ethical contexts. A "good football player" refers to a player with some sort of athletic ability, while a "good fellow" refers to some radically different, intangible, ethical quality possessed by the fellow. The same is the case for "value" which, when applied to a material good, refers to a monetary scale, but when applied to a person, or that person's life, again represents some intangible, immeasurable quality that has nothing to do with money.

To this point, Wittgenstein's description of religious and ethical language corresponds closely to Ricoeur's account of religious language. Wittgenstein presents numerous examples of words of ordinary language and expressions which assume much different meanings when used in the context of religious or ethical language. Wittgenstein believes that these words of ordinary language, when in the specific context, are similes, and express religious or ethical concepts which correspond to everyday concepts that are easily expressed in ordinary language. Therefore, Wittgenstein agrees that words of ordinary language do double duty by taking on a deeper meaning when used in religious or ethical language. Even further, Wittgenstein agrees that these religious and ethical concepts can only be apprehended via ordinary language similes. There is no

way to describe the inherent goodness or value of a person without resorting to words of ordinary language that, in everyday contexts, mean something different altogether. In the same way, we are unable to speak of God without "a great and elaborate allegory which represents him as a human being of great power". (9) Indeed, Wittgenstein is suggesting that religious and ethical concepts are so far removed from our everyday experience, that we have no other recourse but to speak of them by referring to our everyday experience, and using everyday language. Otherwise we would neither understand nor be able to speak of religious and ethical concepts.

Wittgenstein doing ordinary language philosophy is nothing new; any page of Wittgenstein's later philosophical works, from the <u>Blue and Brown Books,</u> to the <u>Philosophical Investigations,</u> shows that ordinary language is absolutely central to Wittgenstein's philosophy of language. However, to discover that Wittgenstein views the role of ordinary language in religious language the same way as Ricoeur does, is of great interest. Wittgenstein and Ricoeur both recognize that ordinary language is necessary for the understanding of religious and ethical concepts. The two philosophers further agree that in the context of religious language, ordinary language words and expressions assume a symbolic or allegorical meaning, because religious and ethical concepts simply cannot be described or grasped directly.

However, it must be recognized that Wittgenstein does not draw the same conclusions from his study of the relationship between ordinary language and religious language as Ricoeur does. Ricoeur believes that the symbols of ordinary language allow understanding of concepts that would otherwise be "vague, indefinite, non-communicable." ("The Symbol. . .Food for Thought" 11)

Wittgenstein, however, despite his temptation by the mystical, cannot accept Ricoeur's conclusions. Wittgenstein accurately describes a simile as something which must be connected in some way to a fact. "And if I can describe a fact by means of a simile I must also be able to drop the simile and to describe the facts without it." ("Wittgenstein's Lecture on Ethics" 10) However, when Wittgenstein attempts to "unpack" the similes which he finds in religious and ethical language, he does not find any facts behind the similes. Therefore, he is left *not* with fact-less similes, but with nonsense: with nothing at all. We believe that Wittgenstein's final conclusion about religious similes is due to his reluctance to accept what Ricoeur would describe as theological truths. However, although their final conclusions about that which is described by religious language differ, Wittgenstein and Ricoeur agree whole-heartedly that religious language uses similes, or symbols, to describe theological concepts. The two philosophers also agree that the similes or symbols in religious language have their source in ordinary language. In fact, the similes or symbols of religious language are really only re-worked ordinary language words and expressions. Ordinary language is the only way in which religious concepts may be expressed. The two philosophers differ only in their views about whether religious concepts have any grounding in fact.

This comparison of text on the nature of religious language allows us to conclude once more that ordinary language is central to the philosophy of language of both Ricoeur and Wittgenstein. During the period in which Ricoeur's primary interest was in the philosophy of language, ordinary language remained central to that philosophy. Whether discussing religious language, or criticizing structuralism and ideal language programs, ordinary language remained a common theme in Ricoeur's philosophy of language. The same can

be said of the philosophy of language developed by Wittgenstein in his later period. Whether criticizing his previous atomistic views, or simply describing ordinary language, or even discussing religion and ethics, ordinary language was an equally common theme in the philosophy of language of Wittgenstein.

On the basis of the textual study just completed, we would like to argue that significant philosophical contact has been made between Ricoeur and Wittgenstein, unbeknownst to either philosopher. Ricoeur's article, in which he expressed his views of religious language, was first published in 1959. He makes no mention of analytic philosophy in this article, although later articles quite often made reference to various philosophers of the analytic school, if only for purposes of context. Wittgenstein's lecture, although written in either 1929 or 1930, was not published in any form until 1965, six years after the publication of Ricoeur's article. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that Ricoeur accessed the lecture. Nonetheless, when Ricoeur's article was published, it opened a dialogue, a line of communication, between the two philosophers, and, indeed, the two traditions, although the rapprochement does not appear to have been recognized. Wittgenstein and Ricoeur clearly share the same views about ordinary language and the philosophical goals it is able to accomplish. However, as we have seen, the debate is between a religious believer (Ricoeur), and a religious sceptic (Wittgenstein). No disagreement exists on the question of the philosophy of language, but only on the question of the status of religious truths. Therefore, we can say that, without any awareness, Ricoeur actually entered into a dialogue with a representative of the analytic tradition of philosophy, for the grounds for lively and compelling debate most certainly exist in this context.

The centrality of ordinary language in the philosophies of language of both Ricoeur and Wittgenstein provides a context for our entire comparative study. What has this comparative study been able to prove? We argue that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur were both philosophers of language, that ordinary language was central to their philosophies of language, and that compelling and undeniable similarities exist between their philosophies of language. We believe this is sufficient evidence to derive much broader conclusions with regard to the two philosophic traditions which Wittgenstein and Ricoeur represent: analytic philosophy and Continental philosophy.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to bring to light the similarities which exist between the philosophies of language of Wittgenstein and Ricoeur. The two philosophers, who are defined by their philosophies of language, criticize the ideal language program of logical analysis. As illustrated by the language-building and language-city analogies, Ricoeur and Wittgenstein believe language's confusing and misleading elements can be handled internally, and do not require an ideal language. Ricoeur and Wittgenstein even suggest that ordinary language's inherent inexactness can be an advantage, because it allows for linguistic richness, creativity and the representation of the hazy distinctions of reality. Having vigorously attacked logical analysis, Wittgenstein and Ricoeur describe the irreducible elements of ordinary language. The sign and the symbol provide ordinary language with its fullness, richness and variability, which in turn permit word economy. Wittgenstein's sign and Ricoeur's symbol are not identical, but the similarities are nonetheless remarkable. Both the sign and the symbol have double meanings which require some sort of active interpretive process in order to be understood. Textual excerpts revealing Wittgenstein's and Ricoeur's description of religious language allow us to conclude not only that these two distinct philosophers agree on many aspects of their philosophies of language but that ordinary language occupies a central role in their philosophies. Wittgenstein and Ricoeur also agree, as shown by the discussion of religious language, that there are numerous linguistic instances in which ordinary language is absolutely required in order to achieve accurate expression and understanding: there is no substitute.

What does this fundamental agreement between Wittgenstein and Ricoeur on the nature of the philosophy of language, and on the indispensable role of ordinary language, allow us to conclude? In our introduction, we explained the generally hostile and disrespectful relationship which has existed between philosophers of the analytic and Continental traditions. The comparison which we have undertaken, however, shows that there is no reason for this hostility. Here are two philosophers, one from different traditions, who are in fundamental agreement about the most important aspects of their philosophies. Recently, the relationship between the two traditions has been significantly more cordial, and in some cases, philosophers from different traditions have been in agreement. This rapprochement notwithstanding, historians continue to maintain that similarities between the two traditions have developed only within the last decade, and that before that time, they were fundamentally different. We argue, however, on the basis of our comparisons, that there is no excuse for this characterization, and that there has been no excuse since Ricoeur first discussed symbols in religious language in his 1959 article. We therefore dispute the typically divisive historical sketch presented in the introduction.

It was with the publication of Ricoeur's article in 1959 that the true potential for rapprochement and possibly reconciliation of the analytic and Continental traditions was established. This potential was created unknowingly by Ricoeur, for his article "The Symbol. . .Food for Thought" was published prior to Wittgenstein's "Lecture on Ethics", and there is no reason to believe that Ricoeur had access to Wittgenstein's unpublished works. Our comparisons have clearly established that Wittgenstein and Ricoeur agreed on fundamental aspects of their philosophies of language, most importantly the indispensable nature of

ordinary language. The fact that the two philosophers come to different conclusions regarding the reality of the religious entities which only ordinary, symbolic language can express does not negate this agreement. The door to reconciliation has been open for over thirty-five years, but for reasons unknown has been historically ignored or overlooked. Since 1959, it has been both inaccurate and philosophically frustrating to stubbornly preserve the perceived differences between the two traditions. It likely has been to the detriment of both traditions that the potential for beneficial philosophical communication was overlooked.

It is hoped that our study of the similarities between Wittgenstein and Ricoeur may show that analytic and Continental philosophy have been approaching reconciliation for over thirty years. The recently touted rapprochement is not an entirely new phenomenon. Indeed, if Wittgenstein and Ricoeur had been contemporaries, it is possible that the rapprochement between analytic and Continental philosophy would have been achieved long ago. It is lamentable that this potential has not been acknowledged. However, *why* the similarities between Wittgenstein and Ricoeur, and the resultant possibility of reconciliation of the two traditions, have been overlooked, is the topic of another study.

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