

**Proceedings of the *Académie
Internationale de Philosophie des Sciences***

**Comptes Rendus de l'Académie
Internationale de Philosophie des Sciences**

Tome IV

**The Relevance of Judgment
for Philosophy of Science**

**Éditeur
Jure Zovko**

Judgement in hermeneutics

Hans-Peter Grosshans

Seminar für Systematische Theologie, Evangelisch-Theologische Fakultät, Universität Münster, Universitätsstraße 13–17, 48143 Münster, Germany

Hermeneutics¹ is a methodological approach used mainly in the humanities but also used in law and medicine. It is a theory of understanding, mainly of texts, but also of other representational forms of reality. In concentrating on “understanding”, hermeneutics sometimes is seen as distinguished from “explaining”. So, hermeneutics is directed to the methodological understanding of the representation of material and immaterial, visible and invisible realities in texts, symbols, art, models, etc., in which these realities and the knowledge and understandings of them are expressed by human beings. In a sense, hermeneutics is also about understanding the human being, who in various forms expresses its world.

To see what hermeneutics is about, it is helpful to remember the origin of the term “hermeneutic” in Greek (ἑρμηνευτική). As far as we know, this term was first used by Plato. According to the most ancient sources, hermeneutic means the interpretation of the signs of the gods—rather like the interpretation of dreams. Interpretation here is used in the twofold sense of “translating” and “giving meaning” to signs from elsewhere. In European philosophy, from Plato to Martin Heidegger, the origin of hermeneutic was connected with the god “Hermes”.² Hermes’s role was to interpret divine messages to human beings.³ In later Greek antiquity, the god Hermes was seen as the mediator *per se*, as magician and the inventor of language and scripture. All this shows that hermeneutics is seen as interpretation in the strict sense (as translating) and in a figurative sense. In the later history of hermeneutics, we find these two sides, especially in Friedrich Schleiermacher’s hermeneutics at the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Schleiermacher, in understanding texts we have on the one hand a grammatical analysis and on the other a divination, a prophetic reconstruction of a given text or speech by the reader and interpreter.⁴

¹This article is in most of its parts an English version of a text, which I have published in German; cf. Hans-Peter Grosshans, *Das Hauptproblem der Hermeneutik—ausgehend von Paul Ricoeur*, in: *Hermeneutische Relevanz der Urteilskraft—Relevance of Hermeneutical Judgement*, ed. by Jure Zovko, Wien/Zürich 2021, 35–51.

²Despite the similarity of the words this is etymologically questionable.

³According to Plato, Hermes especially had the competence of speech (περὶ λόγου δύναμις, *Platon, Kratylos* 408 a2).

⁴Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, transl. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1994).

The high emphasis on hermeneutics in recent decades was largely inspired by Martin Heidegger's philosophy, by the philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer, and generally by the antimetaphysical remodelling of philosophy and the humanities and the establishment of a new way of thinking, a post-metaphysical thinking—as Jürgen Habermas called it—which also was not only simple empiricism. So, hermeneutics became the main scientific approach in the humanities and beyond in the attempts to dissolve metaphysical orders and metaphysical realism into processes of interpretation. We find this approach—even under different names—among French phenomenologists, German idealists and American neo-pragmatists (like Richard Rorty).

Today the hermeneutical approach is also used in intercultural comparative studies as the signs (in its various forms) from foreign cultures seem also to come from elsewhere. To come to real and adequate understandings of foreign cultures, a reflected hermeneutic is essential.

This chapter shows, in what sense “judgement” is necessary in hermeneutics. This is not immediately self-evident. Someone may say that in understanding a text, for example, it is only necessary to read and then understand. Although in a text many judgements may be included about the subject of the text, it may seem, that in reading and understanding no specific judgement is necessary. Moreover, it may seem one only needs to grasp the judgements of the author. This paper shows, however, that this is an inadequate understanding of reading and understanding, which leads to serious misunderstandings and conflicts.

I.

What is meant by “judgement” or “the power of judgement”? Philosophers tend to refer here to Immanuel Kant's philosophically dominant understanding of judgement as he developed mainly in his “Critique of Judgment” from 1790. Kant distinguished logical, moral, and aesthetic judgement: In a logical, determining judgement, a particular (an intuited phenomenon) is subsumed under a given universal (concept); an aesthetic, reflective judgement involves the quest of a universal to reach a given particular; in a moral judgement, actions are subsumed under principles or laws.⁵

In recent decades, the concept of judgement has undergone an extended change in usage beyond Kant's analysis. An example of this can be found in Hans-Georg Gadamer's “Truth and Method”, in which the power of judgement is presented from the outset as one of four humanistic guiding concepts in respect to uncovering the question of truth in the experience of art.

⁵Birgit Recki, Urteil: I. Philosophisch, RGG⁴, Vol. 8, Tübingen 2005, 848f.

On the one hand, Gadamer draws on pre-Kantian understandings of the power of judgement, in which it is closely related to the concept of *sensus communis* (common sense). The *sensus communis* admittedly also subsumes a particular under a general, such as under a rule; thus, to a certain extent, it carries out a judgement without reflection. In aesthetics, however, the conditions are reversed for the power of judgement, as Gadamer explains in view of Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who stated: "What the power of judgement recognizes is the sensuous-individual, the individual thing, and what it judges in the individual thing is its perfection or imperfection. Now, in this determination of judgement, it must be noted that here a given concept of the thing is not simply applied, but that the sensuous-individual in itself comes to be apprehended by noticing in it the correspondence of many to one. Here, then, what is decisive is not application of a general, but inner agreement."⁶

In Gadamer's understanding, this is the same as what Kant called an aesthetic judgement. Such a sensuous judgement of perfection is then called "taste".⁷ "Taste" contains a critical discrimination and, to an extent, a mode of cognition. According to Gadamer, taste "belongs to the realm of that which, in the manner of reflective power of judgement, grasps in the individual the general to which it is to be subsumed. Taste as well as judgement are judgements of the individual with regard to a whole, whether it fits together with everything else, that is, whether it is 'fitting'."⁸ In this sense, taste and judgement are required in all parts of life.

Gadamer brings this power of judgement together with hermeneutics in relation to jurisprudence: "We know this function of judgement especially from jurisprudence, where the law-supplementing performance of 'hermeneutics' consists precisely in bringing about the concretion of law."⁹ Gadamer points out that this always involves "more than the right application of general principles ... Always, too, our knowledge of law and custom is supplemented, indeed downright productively determined, by the individual case."¹⁰ In the hermeneutics of jurisprudence, an (aesthetic or hermeneutic) power of judgement is required in the context of the general (legal text) and the particular (the concrete case), through which the two are related not only to each other, but also to the matter of law and custom.

Now, hermeneutics is admittedly first and foremost not a theory of judgement, but above all a theory of the *interpretation of* written and oral texts, in addition to the interpretation of symbols, images or signs in general.

⁶Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode. Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*, Tübingen ⁵1986, 36f. (translation of Gadamer quotes by HPG).

⁷Ibid., 37.

⁸Ibid., 43.

⁹Ibid., 44.

¹⁰Ibid., 44.

It is also more comprehensive than a mere analysis of texts (among other things), as it happens, for example, in theology in the historical-critical exegesis of biblical texts (and in a similar way in other sciences with other texts). This “more” or “different” than exegesis (and philology), and to that extent also the particular power of judgement is required in hermeneutics, comes into view when we reflect on the main problem of hermeneutics.

II.

The history of modern hermeneutics begins, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, with the Croatian scholar Matthias Flacius from Istria, who published two extensive volumes entitled “Key to Holy Scripture” (*Clavis Scripturae Sacrae*) in 1567, which was a hermeneutic for the methodological interpretation of the texts of the Bible.

Flacius’ hermeneutics was modern in his time, that he took the Bible in its material form—i.e., as a text—absolutely serious and removed any form of spiritual interpretation. Therefore, he outlined detailed rules for all available methods and rules of the interpretation of texts—according to the “state of the art” of his time. For Flacius, a kind of freehand interpretation of a spiritual meaning of the text was not adequate for this textual medium of God’s self-communication. Therefore, the focus in the methodology of the interpretation of the Bible was on the text as text. Here two principles became important for Flacius: the coherence of a text in the interplay of parts and whole¹¹, and the identification of the *scopus* of a text, that is, the central theme of the text. The Bible in all its parts has to be understood from the subject it is about in the whole. This can of course only be defined from the text itself, so that we could speak here of a further hermeneutical circle—in addition to that of part and whole of a text—the one between the text and its matter. Now, for Flacius, the overall subject matter of the Bible, the *scopus* and object of the whole Bible, was Jesus Christ¹² or the dialectics of law and gospel, which for Flacius was equivalent with Jesus Christ. Following Martin Luther, Flacius believed that the right handling of this difference must influence not only theological discernment, but also the correct interpretation of Scripture. One could say that the handling of the difference between law and gospel in the interpretation of biblical texts requires a special hermeneutical power of judgement. Doing so requires the specific reference point for judgement of a particular individual text of Scripture to the general dogmatic rule of the distinction between law and gospel.

¹¹In a fine essay Jure Zovko has drawn a line from Flacius to new theories of coherence (e.g., that of Nicholas Rescher); cf. Jure Zovko, *Die Bibelinterpretation bei Flacius (1520–1575) und ihre Bedeutung für die moderne Hermeneutik*, ThLZ 132 (2007), 1169–1180.

¹²Cf. Karl Adolf von Schwartz, *Die theologische Hermeneutik des Matthias Flacius Illyricus*, Munich 1933, 16.

III.

A very different direction of hermeneutics we find at the beginning of the 19th century in the hermeneutics of Friedrich Schleiermacher. The discussion in his time was about the interpretation and understanding of ancient texts in foreign languages and from foreign cultures. Friedrich Schleiermacher considered the methodology of textual analysis with all the philological knowledge and analytical rules to be too formal for many texts. According to Schleiermacher, we may not come to a true understanding of a text or writing by following the rules of textual analysis alone. Therefore, we cannot only look at the literal reality but have to consider the author and the interpreter as well. The formal, grammatical and historical interpretation needs to be supplemented by—as Schleiermacher calls it—a psychological interpretation. One has to understand a text as a moment in the life of a precise person (the author) or a group of people (to which the author belongs). To understand this, one needs a subjective interpretation rather than an objective interpretation, in which the interpreter has to reproduce the original production of the text. The interpreter has to anticipate, in a kind of inner imagination, the production of the author. For this reproduction of the textual production of an author, the interpreter has to make judgements in which one's understandings of general situations of human existence are applied to specific contextual conditions of the author. As such judgements are very individualized and not based on general rules, they result in the power of judgement of the individual interpreter.

IV.

In 1950, in explicit contrast to the subjective components of understanding, Rudolf Bultmann analyzed what he called the “Problem of Hermeneutics”. Against a subjectivist imagination by the interpreter of the production of a text in an author, as Friedrich Schleiermacher in particular had emphasized, Bultmann emphasized the object (the subject matter) that is of interest in the respective process of understanding. An interpretation is, according to Bultmann, “always *oriented to a certain question, to a certain wherefore*. But this includes ... that it is always guided by a prior understanding of the object according to which it questions the text.”¹³

The object to be understood in the interpretation of a text depends decisively on the questions asked of the text by the reader and interpreter. For example, an instruction manual for a washing machine can be questioned as to how a washing machine can be put into operation; however, it can also be questioned as to what attitude towards life of people in modern times

¹³Rudolf Bultmann, *Das Problem der Hermeneutik* (1950), in: R. Bultmann, *Glauben und Verstehen. Gesammelte Aufsätze*, vol. 2, Tübingen ⁵1968, 211–235, 216 (translation of Bultmann quotes by HPG).

is articulated in this text. According to Wilhelm Dilthey, “all texts can be understood as documents of historical-personal life”¹⁴, even if they mainly express something quite different. However, according to Bultmann, in order to explore and understand a certain subject matter in the interpretation of a text, a life-relationship of the interpreter to the subject matter that is directly or indirectly expressed in the text is required as a prerequisite.¹⁵ A factual reference is already required in order to better understand the matter in question by interpreting texts: “The interest in the matter motivates the interpretation and gives it *the question*, its *whereto*.”¹⁶ Here, according to Bultmann, it is important that such factual interpretation can only occur in communication with the texts (and also their authors). Thus, with regard to the understanding of philosophical texts, Bultmann can say: “The interpretation of *philosophical texts*, if it is to be a genuinely understanding one, must therefore itself be moved by the question of truth, i.e., it can only proceed in discussion with the author. Plato is understood only by those who philosophize with him.”¹⁷ Interpreter and author must refer to the same subject matter and must share the same intellectual practice.

For Bultmann in all texts, but especially in poetry and art and in the works of philosophy and religion, the “*question of understanding singular historical Dasein (existence)*” is at hand, and in this respect, it is a matter of “revealing revealed *possibilities of human existence*” in poetry and art, in philosophy and religion.¹⁸ Then “genuine understanding is not aiming at the contemplation of an alien individuality as such”, “but basically at the possibilities of human existence that reveal themselves in it, which are also those of the one who understands, who brings them to consciousness precisely in understanding. Genuine understanding, then, would be *listening to the question posed in the work to be interpreted, to the claim encountered in the work*, and the ‘completion’ of one’s own individuality would consist in the richer and deeper opening up of one’s own possibilities, in being called away from oneself (i.e., from one’s unfinished, inert self, always in danger of persistence) by the work.”¹⁹

If an interpretation proceeds in this way, then according to Bultmann the “‘most subjective’ interpretation . . . can be the ‘most objective’”, “i.e. only the one moved by the question of his own existence is able to hear the claim of the text”.²⁰ Here we can see, that for a successful interpretation of texts, which are about human existence, it is necessary, that the interpreter—like

¹⁴Ibid., 216.

¹⁵Cf. *ibid.*, 217.

¹⁶Ibid., 219.

¹⁷Ibid., 222.

¹⁸Ibid., 224.

¹⁹Ibid., 226.

²⁰Ibid., 230.

the author—share their reference to the subject matter in question (human existence).

Here also judgement is required: in connecting a general (human existence) with a particular (my existence), or, in connecting a particular (my existence) with another particular (existence of somebody else), which is even more challenging.

V.

In an essay from 1972 on “Metaphor and the Central Problem of Hermeneutics: La métaphore et le problème central de l’herméneutique”,²¹ Paul Ricoeur tried to identify the main problem of hermeneutics.

For some of the members of the *Académie Internationale de Philosophie des Sciences* (AIPS), who develop their approaches to philosophy of science not in the humanities, but related to other fields of science, it may be of interest to hear, that with his reflections on “metaphors” Ricoeur tried to overcome the opposition of interpretation to explanation, which was emphasised especially in 19th century hermeneutics. According to the Schleiermacherian and Diltheyian tradition, “interpretation has special subjective connotations such as the involvement of the reader in the process of understanding and the reciprocity between textual interpretation and self-interpretation”.²² Explanation, in contrast, is characterized by a kind of objectivity—in the sense of explaining objects—and dispenses with the involvement of the interpreter and knower.

Ricoeur considers a metaphor as a “miniature work” (111). Now, the metaphorical meaning of a word cannot be found in the lexicon, but has to be reconstructed in the context of its use. A Metaphor is a contextual change of meaning. It is opposed in particular contexts to other expressions understood literally (in terms of their lexical meaning).

In analysing a metaphor, we can find an explanation for all texts. Understanding metaphors always has two levels: first, “the immanent intention of the discourse”,²³ its sense; and second, “the intentional orientation towards a world and the reflexive orientation towards a self”—the reference of texts and words in two ways. In this respect, sense and reference are two aspects of the meaning of a metaphor or a text. A metaphor can neither be understood

²¹Paul Ricoeur, *La métaphore et le problème central de l’herméneutique*, in: *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 70 (1972), 93–112; here I use as reference for English quotations the German translation of this text (in my translation): Paul Ricoeur, *Die Metapher und das Hauptproblem der Hermeneutik*, in: Paul Ricoeur, *Vom Text zur Person. Hermeneutische Aufsätze* (1970–1999), transl. and ed. by P. Welsen, Hamburg (Meiner) 2005, PhB 570, 109–134.

²²*Ibid.*, 109f.

²³*Ibid.*, 118.

or explained only on the text immanent level of sense, but only in taking into account “the level of the work’s reference to a world and a self”.²⁴

The main difficulty in explaining metaphor is “to *identify a meaning that is a new meaning*”.²⁵ In doing so, the explanation of metaphor must come from its context. The lingual context of a metaphor is the sentence, to which a meaning is to be given. Now, in the case of metaphor, the meaning of the words used in it does not depend only on semantic and syntactic rules—as in their literal use. Here other rules apply, which are nevertheless followed by a linguistic community.

Max Black has called these the “system of associated commonplaces”. Thus, in the metaphor “Man is a wolf” the main object is characterized by one of the features of animal life that belong to the “wolf system of associated commonplaces”. Here, the metaphor is more than a substitution of a literal expression by a quasi-authentic expression. Given such an interaction, metaphor is translated into direct speech, cognitive content is lost.²⁶

Therefore, according to Ricoeur, it is rather necessary for an explanation of metaphor to take into account the “process of interaction” “in order to explain the appearance of new metaphors in new contexts”²⁷—or, to put it differently, to consider not only semantics and syntax, but above all the pragmatics of speech. Especially in the case of logically absurd metaphors often encountered in poetry, there is no other way of explanation at all than to give meaning to the expression or to such a sentence. But from where do we derive this new meaning?

According to Ricoeur, it is a fundamental mistake to try to determine this meaning by transferring it from somewhere else, because we would then still be attaching “the creative process of metaphor to a non-creative aspect of language”.²⁸ Metaphors, after all, do not actualize a potential connotation of an expression—one that is, as it were, largely ignored—“but establish it as the main meaning”.²⁹

Now, when we speak of properties of objects that have not previously had a designation, this implies that the new meaning, at least in language, “comes from nowhere”. “To say that a new metaphor comes from nowhere is to recognize it for what it is, a momentary creation of language, a semantic

²⁴Ibid., 119.

²⁵Ibid., 119.

²⁶Quotations from Max Black according to Ricoeur, *ibid.*, 119. Cf. Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, Ithaca 1962, 46.

²⁷Paul Ricoeur, *Die Metapher*, 121.

²⁸Ibid., 122.

²⁹Ibid., 122. Ricoeur here follows Monroe Beardsley, *The Metaphorical Twist*, in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 22 (1962), 302.

innovation that has no already established status in language, either as a designation or as a connotation".³⁰

If this is to be a meaning that can be identified again and again, then to do so one must "take the standpoint of the listener or reader and treat the newness of an emergent meaning as the counterpart, located on the author's side, of a construction on the reader's side".³¹ And then "the process of explanation is the only access to the process of creation".³² The "crucial point of explanation is that of constructing the network of interactions that makes of this context a real and unique one".³³ The reality and uniqueness of the context is expressed in "the semantic event" in which a metaphor is created or all words used together acquire new meaning.

Herein lies Ricoeur's actual setting apart from subject-oriented hermeneutics, such as that of Schleiermacher or Diltheys (or Gadammers). Schleiermacher's hermeneutics³⁴ is also about a construction by the reader or listener in the process of interpretation, but in the form of a re-construction of the author's process of production. In Schleiermacher's two-part interpretive process, a speech "is to be understood as taken out of language, and . . . as a fact in the thinker".³⁵ Accordingly, an interpretation consists of a grammatical interpretation and a psychological interpretation. The successful art of interpretation is therefore based, according to Schleiermacher, "on the talent of language and the talent of the individual knowledge of human nature"³⁶ in its diversity. The subjective historical reconstruction of a speech or a text thereby means "knowing how the speech is given as a fact in the mind, *subjective divinatory* means anticipating how the thoughts contained in it will continue to have an effect in the speaker and on him."³⁷

According to Ricoeur, authorial intent is of no interest at all in the reader's and interpreter's construction of the meaning of an expression or a text. Like a piece of music, a text is for Ricoeur "an autonomous space of meaning which the intention of its author no longer animates".³⁸ What is written is at the mercy of the reader's interpretation alone.

The interpreter's construction of the meaning of a text then is risky and, according to Ricoeur, resembles a methodological validation of a wager that

³⁰Ibid., 122.

³¹Ibid., 122f.

³²Ibid., 123.

³³Ibid., 123.

³⁴Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *La tâche de l'herméneutique: en venant de Schleiermacher et de Dilthey*, in: Paul Ricoeur, *Du texte à l'action*, Paris 1986, 75–100.

³⁵Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, ed. by Manfred Frank, Frankfurt 1977, 77 (§ 5). On Schleiermacher's hermeneutics: Jean Grondin, *Einführung in die philosophische Hermeneutik*, Darmstadt 2012.

³⁶Ibid., 81.

³⁷Ibid., 94.

³⁸Paul Ricoeur, *Die Metapher*, 123.

we have made. Accordingly, in such an interpreter's construction of meaning, the interpretation of a text can only be about probability and not about certainty: one interpretation is methodically proven to be more probable than another.

So, provided the insights gleaned from metaphor, a text can be explained as a lingual unity with all analytical means of the state of the art of textual analysis (as actually already Matthias Flacius proposed): explaining its meaning, the "what" of the discourse that the text presents. However, given the metaphorical insights, this explanation does not mean that the metaphor and the text has been interpreted. For this, the "what about" of the discourse must be taken into account, i.e., its reference. The reference of a discourse or a text or work is twofold: reference to something and self-reference.

According to pragmatist accounts of realism, reference can be guided criteriologically, but it can never be safeguarded. In real discursive situations, reference is usually unproblematic. Reference is ostensive: we can virtually point to what we are talking about. In written texts, especially complex ones, like metaphors, this is different. They too are about *something*. They are "about a world", "which is the world of this work". "Just as the text liberates its meaning from the tutelage of mental intention, so it detaches its reference from the limits of ostensive reference",³⁹ and so also from the situation or concrete environment in which the ostensive reference functions. The "world" is then "the totality of references opened up by the text".⁴⁰

To use the context of the AIPS meeting, at which this text was presented, as an example: If we talk about the "Mediterranean world", this metaphor is not understood if we refer only to the sea out there and the wonderful wine we drink on its shores, but this formulation denotes the cross-situational references and the possible symbolic dimensions of our specific overall being-in-the-world. When being-in-the-Mediterranean-world is addressed, the reference is not to something hidden behind the text or in the text, but to something "that is discovered and open". Such "something" gives itself to be understood in interacting with this world. "Texts speak of possible worlds and of possible ways of orienting oneself in these worlds".⁴¹

Understanding means "following the dynamics of the work, its movement from what it says to what about it says something".⁴² The understanding person, in a sense, offers oneself to the possible way of being-in-the-world that the text opens up and discovers for the person.

Methodologically, then hermeneutics is not about the reciprocal relation of two subjects (the reader and the author). So, what is appropriated in the

³⁹Ibid., 127.

⁴⁰Ibid., 127.

⁴¹Ibid., 127.

⁴²Ibid., 128.

understanding of a text is not the disclosure or reconstruction of an alien experience or intention, but in a very different orientation, “the horizon of a world to which a work is directed”.⁴³ Understanding is not about a fusion of consciousness, empathy or sympathy—and thus not about the recognition of another person—but about the world that is being addressed.

If the understanding of what a text refers to is about discovery and opening up, then the interpreter (and reader) is led away from one’s own subjectivity. For Ricoeur, then, to understand oneself in this interpretive process is to understand oneself in the *face of the world of the text*. Thus, through the work and its world, the horizon of understanding that a person gains of oneself also expands.

The hermeneutic circle has to be shifted from a subjectivist level to an ontological one: “The circle exists between my way of being—beyond the knowledge I can have of it—and the way that is opened up and discovered by the text as the world of the work”.⁴⁴ In interpretation, new ways of being or new forms of life are discovered (to which a text refers; that is, which are already present).

Once again this can be illustrated with metaphors and other figurative means of language, which all belong to the techniques of discourse. Aristotle already articulated this in his *Poetics*. A tragedy tells a story, a myth. Its reference, however, is to be distinguished from it. A tragedy seeks to imitate human actions in a poetic way. Thus, it expresses a world of human actions that is already there (to express the tragedy of life). However, this *mimesis* is not merely to duplicate reality. It is at the same time *poiesis*: construction and creation through which human actions and ways of being appear better and more significant (or comic) than they are in reality. Metaphors originate in this context of poetry: they serve *poiesis in mimesis*. But for Ricoeur, drawing new meanings from our language only makes sense if we have something new to say and a new world to project: “Language creations would have no meaning if they did not serve the general purpose of giving rise to new worlds through the grace of poetry”.⁴⁵

When a theory of interpretation such as Ricoeur’s places the accent on “opening up a world”, both with regard to the emergence of metaphors and with regard to the interpretation of texts, then the subject of “imagination” comes into view, and not only in the gaining of images from our sensory experience, but precisely with regard to ideas of possibilities of being-in-the-world. Then, however, in every interpretation, a hermeneutic power of judgement is also necessary, with which a particular text—even if it is only a small text—is set in relation to the general of being-in-the-world.

⁴³Ibid., 129.

⁴⁴Ibid., 130.

⁴⁵Ibid., 133.