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THE SYMBOLISM OF EVIL: THE FULL SHAPE OF OUR CAPACITY FOR MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Abstract. In this article, I examine the discourse around evil from the perspective of philosophical anthropology. Through an analysis of the religious symbolism of evil and an associated quest for a complete study of being, I intend in this article to explore fresh ways of establishing the relation between our rhetorical practices of evil and moral responsibility. I draw on Ricœur's work on the primary symbols of evil (stain, sin and guilt), which can be seen as a means for clarifying and extending our understanding of evil and moral responsibility. I employ the concept of "the double intentionality of symbol" to advance an expressive-performative model of speaking about the full shape of moral responsibility. At stake in my paper is the possibility of recognizing the need to valorise subordinate resources of knowledge that might prevent us from studying and responding to the elusive reality of evil in intellectual abstraction.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In this article I will attempt to determine whether Ricœur's early work on the language of evil can contribute to the problem of meaning in contemporary philosophical anthropology. In his *Symbolism of Evil*[1] Ricœur develops a model for extending the discourse around evil and being beyond the traditional limitations of structural phenomenology, such that a more concrete appreciation of evil will ensue. In doing so, Ricœur draws on the rich reservoir of meaning, corresponding to the old symbolism of the myth of the Fall (the Adamic myth). My concern throughout this article is not with the language of evil in general, but with a specific instance of it: *the double intentionality* of the primary symbols of evil (*stain*, *sin* and *guilt*). Accordingly, the double intentionality of the symbolism of evil suggests that our articulation of evil is bound to a manifold set of meanings, instead of a one-to-one description, where one word communicates one meaning.

The main argument that I will develop is that the double intentionality of symbol produces valuable epistemological work. The point is illustrated in reference to moral responsibility.

The aims of this article are threefold. First, I examine the distinctive role played by the double intentionality of symbol in Ricœur's quest for a more complete understanding of being and moral responsibility. Much contemporary epistemology is predicated on an overly abstract and conceptually-reductive theory of meaning that serves to designate the phenomenon of evil rather than enhance reflection. A danger of reconstructing the study of being and moral responsibility through lines of inquiry that fit this paradigm is the loss of any contact with the boundary expressions of the phenomenon of evil. It might very well lead us away from rather than towards a complete understanding of being and moral responsibility. Second, I attempt to validate the epistemology of the double intentionality of symbol and its reconstruction of moral responsibility. My claim is that, in spite of its elusive depiction of evil, that challenges the academic conventions of speaking about evil, the double intentionality of symbol can help shape a more complete sense of being and moral responsibility. Third, the ultimate stakes of my argu-

1 Paul Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil* (Harper & Row, 1967).

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ment concern the double intentionality of symbol and its ability to nurture and sustain being's capability of taking up a more complete sense of moral responsibility.

II. THE SYMBOL OF EVIL AND ITS RECONCEPTION OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

The attempt to establish the discourse around evil as a text-analogue for self-understanding marks Ricœur's work from its early beginnings in phenomenology to ethics and political philosophy in its later stage. Ricœur's earliest work on evil began by rising awareness of the difficulties we encounter when speaking about evil from the perspective of philosophical anthropology. Incorporated within the larger theme of his *philosophy of the will*, the challenges of grasping the reality of evil required a methodological transition from structural phenomenology[2] to hermeneutic phenomenology (*The Symbolism of Evil*).[3] In contrast to structural phenomenology, which claims direct access to the phenomena, hermeneutic phenomenology operates on the assumption that intelligibility comes to us in and through our use of language and its subsequent interpretation. Moreover, the limits of structural phenomenology are best observed in light of Ricœur's *Fallible Man*, which can only speak of the human self as a fallible self. Such fallibility is closely connected to the human self's continuous navigation between his finitude and infinitude. It is precisely the ontological fallibility of the human self and the narrow depiction of structural phenomenology that place ahead of Ricœur a double task.[4] On one hand, the human self has to understand himself more concretely- not only as a *fallible* self, but as a *fallen* self. On the other hand, the human self needs to bring to the surface those repositories of meaning which reaffirm his capability of responding to the elusive reality of evil

It is in view of this double task that Ricœur's work on *The Symbolism of Evil* and his transition to hermeneutic phenomenology might be understood. In Ricœur's own words: "I shall have a better understanding of man and of the bond between the being of man and the being of all beings if I follow the indication of symbolic thought."[5] In the end, it is the concrete appropriation of being by means of myths and symbols that allows Ricœur to portray being as *a fallen* self. For Ricœur, the fallen state of human self remains an enigma. And so, it is best approached through successive articulations and interpretations of the symbolism of evil. The need for successive articulations and interpretations of the symbolism of evil is based on the fact that symbol is an endless resource of meaning and, therefore, it communicates more than it articulates. Moreover, Ricœur captures being's confession of evil, as it relates to the myth of the Fall, through the primary symbols of evil: the symbol of *stain*, *sin* and *guilt*.[6] Accordingly, the penitent experiences evil as being defiled (stained) by something exterior to him, as a broken covenant (sin) and as his personal responsibility (guilt). What is important to note here, is that the expressiveness of symbol and its subsequent interpretation form the basis of a widening of the study of being from an immediate consciousness of moral responsibility to an augmented shape of moral responsibility and being.

The idea of an augmented shape of moral responsibility is best understood through the penitent's confession that he is guilty for the instances of evil that fall within his moral control, as well as for those instances of evil that fall outside of his moral control. Such instances are clarified in the symbol of stain, and its feeling that the penitent has been defiled by something exterior to him.

Essential in Ricœur's depiction of augmented moral responsibility is the "double intentionality" of symbol. In describing the epistemology of symbol, Ricœur acknowledges that:

> Symbol conceals in its intention a double intentionality. There is, first, the literal intentionality, which, like any meaningful intentionality, implies the triumph of the conventional over the natural sign: this is the

2 Paul Ricœur, *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and Involuntary* (Northwestern Univ. Press, 1966); Paul Ricœur, *Fallible Man* (Fordham Univ. Press, 1986).

3 *Fallible Man* and *The Symbolism of Evil* were published jointly in 1960, under the title of *Finitude and Guilt*.

4 Theodoor M. van Leeuwen, *The Surplus of Meaning: Ontology and Eschatology in the Philosophy of Paul Ricœur* (Rodopi, 1981), 67.

5 Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 355.

6 Ibid., 13-19.

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> stain, the deviation, and the weight — words that do not resemble the thing signified. But upon this first intentionality is built a second intentionality which, through the material stain, the deviation in space, the experience of burden, points to a certain situation of man in the Sacred; this situation, aimed at through the first meaning, is precisely stained, sinful, guilty being. The literal and obvious meaning, therefore, points beyond itself to something, which is like a stain, like a deviation, like a burden. [7]

In view of this, the first expression of language creates the context for a second meaning, which then becomes the foundation for a potentially more appropriate articulation of evil. This leads us to believe that for Ricœur, speaking comprehensively about evil, from the perspective of philosophical anthropology, is subject to an antiphonal ("give" and "take") articulation of evil. In the end, Ricœur's antiphonal articulation of evil appears to mediate a concrete appreciation of the quasi-tragic dimension of humankind and moral responsibility. Drawing on the myth of the Fall (which acts as second-order symbol, though not a tragic myth *per se*), Ricœur captures the tragic (the exterior) meaning of evil through the imagery of the serpent, which is *already there*, before any "evil" act or confession is realised. Moreover, the "non-posited" aspect of evil — that any posited (confessed) evil involves — allows for a more complete vision of moral responsibility to be glimpsed at.[8] Paradigmatic here is the imagery of the "Suffering Servant" which is marked by a willingness to voluntarily participate in the unjust suffering.[9] Along these lines, (the voluntary) *guilt* is grasped not only in the proximity of retribution, but also within the possible horizon of a more merciful concern for the other.

So far, we have shown the way in which the profuse meaning of the symbolism of evil mediates a concrete understanding of being and his moral responsibility for evil. To show how the symbolism of evil might help reaffirm being's capability for confessing an augmented sense of moral responsibility, Ricœur introduces the domain of concrete philosophical anthropology under the heading of a *phenomenology of being able (l'homme capable)*. His analysis of human capability differentiates between the phenomenology of "I can speak," "I can act," "I can narrate," and "I can designate myself as imputable" (*imputabilité*). Significant in this pluralistic rendition of "I am able to …" is its emergence within the concreteness of man's actions and suffering.[10] Such positive correlation between symbol and being's capability to designate oneself imputable for things that fall outside one's control is worked out through a continuous articulation and interpretation of the confession of evil. By learning to identify those meanings that reaffirm the ontological goodness of being ("primary affirmation"), the human self is enabled to hope and act against evil.

It has been suggested in this section that there are at least two directions in which the hermeneutic liaison between Ricœur's symbolism of evil and philosophical anthropology can be explored. The first direction relates to the double intentionality of symbol and its capacity to open up new models of inquiry into the conflicted experience of moral responsibility for evil. The second direction suggests that by appropriating the double intentionality of symbol, the human self might discover new capabilities of responding to evil.

To better understand Ricœur's symbolism of evil and its impact on our understanding of moral responsibility, the distinctive epistemology underlining a mythic-symbolic articulation of evil needs to be determined.

III. AUGMENTED RESPONSIBILITY: AN EXPRESSIVE-PERFORMATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY

To begin with, Ricœur locates the prospect of making sense of our experiences of evil in language and its power to enhance reflection by accommodating and forming new meanings. The upshot, is an epistemological paradigm in which the object-world of perception is replaced by the language-world of ex-

7 Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbol and Philosophical Reflection: I", in *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. Don Ihde (Northwestern Univ. Press, 1974), 289.
8 Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 313.
9 Ibid., 324–25.
10 Richard Kearney, *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers* (Fordham Univ. Press, 2004), 44.

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pressions.[11] Moreover, by seeking to articulate our experience of evil and moral responsibility through symbol and its continuous interpretation (*energeia*), Ricœur's epistemology falls within an *expressive-performative* theory of meaning. [12] To view language as process and not as a finished enterprise (*ergon*) is particularly important for Ricœur's expressive-performative account of moral responsibility. For in order to grasp the elusiveness of evil, one needs to be continually engaged in enlarging their language beyond that of a conceptually-reductive theory of meaning. In this sense, Ricœur suggests that a reconceived discourse around evil and moral responsibility must proceed from the multifarious meaning of language:

> In the very same age in which our language is becoming more precise, more univocal, more technical, better suited to those integral formalizations that are called precisely "symbolic" […]. It is in this age of discourse that we wish to recharge language, start again from the *fullness* of language. [13]

At a first glance, it would seem that the passage reinforces Ricœur's belief that the preferred language of evil is based on imagery. It is worth noticing here that an expressive-performative discourse allows Ricœur to enhance the intelligibility of evil, by exploring the symbol of stain, sin and guilt in their complementarity. As we have already suggested, this paves the way for a reconfiguration of the meaning of symbol into a disconcerting duality of evil: *a passive evil*, which is "already there," before any moral action is taken and *an evil committed*.[14] Implicit in this duality of evil is the idea that our responsibility for evil is worked out beyond the proximity of our encounters with others and the immediate effects of our moral actions. It also indicates that the full shape of moral responsibility relies, in part, on "future" articulations and elucidations of evil.

Recent developments in philosophical anthropology, advanced by philosophers such as Susan Neiman, appear to bring under pressure an expressive-performative discourse around evil and moral responsibility. Susan Neiman's insightful work, *Evil in Modern Thought: An alternative History of Philosophy* has played an important role in restating the philosophical discourse around evil as a text-analogue for self-understanding. In doing so, Neiman suggests that the human quest for self-understanding cannot be separated from the discourse around evil and suffering. Since evil is understood as a learning resource for philosophical anthropology and moral responsibility, any variations in the way we speak about it could alter the way we view ourselves and our framework of responding to it.[15] Moreover, Neiman suggests that our efforts to make evil intelligible are petitioned by moral consideration. Here, she embraces a line of thought that she traces from Rosseau to Arendt.[16] The two paradigmatic events that mark the beginning and the end of the modern conception of evil are represented by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 and Auschwitz. Lisbon underlined the need for a more restrictive appreciation of moral evil. This is because the sheer quantity of gratuitous evil it conveyed makes the link between moral evil (sin) and natural disasters (punishment for sin) ethically and logically untenable. In the case of Auschwitz, the Enlightenment conceptualisation of moral responsibility for evil as something that requires intentionality is brought under pressure by the "thoughtfulness" of people like Eichmann (Arendt's "banality of evil"). Given the limitations of the modern conception of evil, Neiman argues that the most suitable discourse of the problem of evil must be expressed in secular terms. Fundamental to this construction is the Kantian idea that our innate drive to make sense of the world must be articulated within the boundaries of practical reason. As with Neiman, Ricœur regards Kant as the philosopher who has produced the greatest threat to the tradition of Western theodicy.[17] It is at this juncture that Kant and, for the same reason, Neiman bring us face to face with the responsibility of action against evil. However, Kant's practical response to evil should

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11 Don Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricœur* (Northwestern Univ. Press, 1971), 95-131.
12 Wilhelm von Humboldt and Peter Heath, *On Language: The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988), 157; See also Angela Esterhammer, *The Romantic Performative: Language and Action in British and German Romanticism* (Stanford Univ. Press, 2000),107-9; See Charles Taylor, *The Language Animal: The Full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2016), 4.
13 Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbol and Philosophical Reflection: I", 288.
14 Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil,* 101.
15 Susan Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought: An Alternative History of Philosophy* (Princeton Univ. Press, 2002), 9.
16 Ibid., 7-9.
17 Paul Ricœur, *Evil: A Challenge to Philosophy and Theology* (Continuum, 2007), 26.

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not be conceived simply as an attempt to make the failure of traditional theodicy productive. While this might be the case, Kant also wants us to realise that the practical locus of responding to evil is also epistemically more tenable than its speculative counterpart.

Unlike Ricœur, who locates the prospect of making sense of evil in language and its power to accommodate the contingent expressions of evil, Neiman grounds our resilience to evil on practical grounds alone. In spite of her insightful work on the historic development of theodicy, Neiman has little to say about the kind of meaning one is supposed to make intelligible. Nor does she analyse the discourse of evil in terms of the models of engagement empowered or precluded by her Kantian reading of evil. [18] It is Neiman's account of September 11, 2001, that gives us some indication of the theory of meaning underlining her post-theodical response to evil. In Neiman's own words, "Those who care about resisting evils must be able to recognize them however they appear."[19] On this account, Neiman's discourse around evil appears to entail a quasi-empiricist framework that introduces evil and moral responsibility as "an object" to be recognised.[20] This is indicative of a theory of meaning in which knowledge appears conditioned by the acquisition of brute data. What is important to concede here is that a quasi-empiricist appreciation of evil, such as Neiman's, does not lend itself to conflicting interpretations. Hence, by obviating the need for further clarification one is epistemically reassured that her views are objectively justified. On this account, the concept of moral responsibility for evil is understood by means of causal relations and its immediate effects. In contemporary epistemology, this language paradigm has been commonly associated with *the designative* theory of meaning. [21] Thus, in order to acquire knowledge, one's designations must square perfectly with reality. An apparent limitation of a *designative* reading of evil is that it fails to analyse our discourse around evil in terms of its rhetorical impact. This is important because our language of evil should not be limited to the mere designation of a particular phenomenon as evil. If the discourse around evil is underpinned by ethical concerns, this only begs the question of how do we speak of evil in such a way that a more complete understanding of man and a more transformative horizon of responsibility is obtained? Another potential limitation of a *designative* appropriation of evil has to do with the assumption that the reality of evil can be exclusively described from a rationalistic perspective. Such epistemology ignores the fact that at its lowest point of description human language is presented with a rather ambiguous picture of evil and moral responsibility. It is here that Ricœur's recourse to symbol shapes a model of speaking about evil that feels more at home in the space between contingency and the oversimplified designations of Neiman's response to evil. But if our discourse around evil should not be limited to the deliberative realm of critical thought, nor should it be confined to the realm of pure symbolism alone. This belief is aptly captured in Ricœur's most celebrated aphorism, "The symbol gives rise to thought." [22] Given that the meaning of symbol is meant to be clarified at the level of critical thought, Ricœur believes that the proper way to speak about evil is always subject to a "composite discourse."[23] This is well documented in his later essay, *Evil: A Challenge to Philosophy and Theology*, where he states that myth is "the first level of discourse from which a growing rationality emerges."[24] The fundamental characteristic of a composite discourse suggests that the double intentionality of symbol is never subsumed in the deliberative discourse of reflective philosophy. There is always a surplus of meaning in symbol that resists a complete translation in philosophical terms. This, it appears to me, would compel Ricœur to side not with Neiman's Kant of the *Critique of Pure Reason* but with Kant of *Religion* and his philosophy of the epistemic limits. Unlike a philosophy of totalisation, which sees our limits as something that needs to be triumphed over, Ricœur's non-conclusive dialectic of evil embraces a more productive appropriation of the concept of epistemic limits. As such, Ricœur understands Kant's reflection on limits not so much as

18 Ella Myers, "Evil's Effects", *Political Theory* 33, no. 1 (2005), 106.
19 Neiman, *Evil in Modern Thought*, 286-87.
20 Myers, "Evil's Effects", 106.
21 Taylor, *The Language Animal,* 4.
22 Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 348.
23 Paul Ricœur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (Yale Univ. Press, 1970), 340.
24 Ricœur, *Evil,* 39.

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a static boundary that confines our knowledge, but rather as "an active and sober self-limitation."[25] By the same token, a more detailed examination of the relation between limits, and being's response to evil in post-theodicy ought to emphasise the future-orientated nature of a philosophy of epistemic limits. In this sense, a complete resolution to the question of evil belongs, one would think, to the "meaning" that is yet to emerge. Such remarks about the nature of cognitive limitation indicate Ricœur's unwillingness to inquire into the reality of evil along the epistemological model we employ when seeking to acquire knowledge of empirical objects. Conceivably, what we need to recover from a post-theodical discourse around evil is not, as Neiman suggests, a purely rationalistic appreciation of evil and moral responsibility, but something nearer to Kant's own philosophy of epistemic limits, which recommends the concept of radical evil as a philosophical exegesis of the mythic-symbolic confession of evil. Ricœur's "schematism" of a *servile will* which emphasises the externality (stain) of evil and its power of seduction is very instructive in this regard.[26] For Ricœur the schematism of a *servile will* is echoed in Kant's conceptualisation of radical evil, which rests on the assumption that as incomprehensible as evil might be, it can never be as radical as goodness. In other words, on the one hand the *servile will* forms the basis for seeing evil as a contingent overlaying on man's freedom and on the other hand, the confession of evil as such is the condition of the consciousness that in spite of its corruption, freedom is free to conspire and rebel against its own self-enslavement.[27] In essence, Kant's epistemology of limits indicates a strong association between a philosophy of limits and the non-conclusive dialectic of the composite discourse around evil shaped by Ricœur's symbolism of evil.

So far, it has been shown that a symbol-instructed epistemology, takes us outside a language paradigm in which the meaning of evil and moral responsibility is conceived as the result of various objective arrangements. Hence, the semantic logic of symbol must be understood not in its ability to designate but to accommodate and shape new meanings of a phenomenon that is neither meaningless nor fully within our grasp. To this end, a symbolic confession of evil is always an invitation to accept more responsibility for evil rather than less. In retrieving an expressive-performative epistemology, one does not deride the commitment to clarity and rigour, associated with Neiman's method of analytic philosophy. By contrary, one recognises the need to valorise subordinate resources of knowledge that would prevent us from studying evil in intellectual abstraction. Such resources would involve not just a language that strives for clarity, but also one that seems capable to deploy our emotional and imaginative modes of awareness to the elusive reality of evil, corresponding to symbol and myths. With this in the background, we should now turn to the question of how do we validate the augmented sense of moral responsibility inaugurated by Ricœur's primary symbols of evil?

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III.1 Augmented responsibility: epistemic validation

Our starting point must be linked to the "deciphering" sequence in which double intentionality of symbol is being articulated. It is worth emphasising here that the elucidation of the experience of evil and its linguistic articulation are coeval. In this sense, Ricœur's symbolism introduces a linguistic paradigm that attempts to describe a phenomenon that is not yet within its grasp. Language as such, is always interested in shaping new models of inaugurating the existence of the unfamiliar other and our existence for the other.[28] For this reason, the deciphering of language seems more concerned with the possibility of shaping and accommodating new meanings, instead of simply "designating" the phenomenon of description. Also, it is significant to note that within the process of articulating and deciphering the experience of evil, the emerging meaning is not arbitrarily constituted. Ricœur has emphasised the importance of a *hermeneutics of suspicion.*[29] to prevent his interpretation from sliding into relativism and self-deception.

25 Ricœur and Ihde, *The Conflict of Interpretations*, 303.
26 Ricœur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 151–57.
27 Paul Ricœur, "A Philosophical Hermeneutics of Religion: Kant", in *Figuring the Sacred*: *Religion, Narrative, and Imagination*, ed. Mark I. Wallace (Fortress Press, 1995), 81.
28 George Steiner, *Extraterritorial: Papers on Literature and the Language Revolution* (Atheneum, 1971), 6.
29 Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbol and Philosophical Reflection: I", 65.

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Drawing on Freud and Hegel, Ricœur places at the core of his theory of meaning a suspicion of the immediate consciousness of the Cartesian legacy. Suspicion, at this stage, stands in contrast with a willingness to believe certain things about the symbol of evil. As Ihde suggests, "The meaning of symbolism is other than is first evident *and other* than that which consciousness may "intend."[30] In this sense, the deciphering and articulation of evil provides our expression of moral responsibility with a sense of direction. Thus, one must always think between the apparent and the hidden meanings of language expressions. If this is the case, the endless attempt to say as much as one can about evil and moral responsibility is what distinguishes a symbol-instructed discourse around evil from a mere designation of evil and its reductive sense of responsibility. Hence, the "deciphering" sequence, involved in the symbol-shaped confession of evil, is meant to exchange the univocal meaning of speaking about evil and moral responsibility for a whole series of potential elucidations.

Another important point to consider in validating Ricœur's discourse around evil is the link between the multifarious expressions of symbol and their "affective" layer. Drawing on a theory of meaning that valorises emotions, allowed Ricœur to depart from Husserl's attempt to make intuition the absolute foundation of philosophy.[31] In addition, Ricœur resists the tendency to describe feelings primarily in subjective terms, as that which opposes the objective. To this end, he proposes a synthesis between *knowing* and *feeling*. Ricœur believes that while knowledge "detaches" the object from the "I" by producing a gap between the object and the subject. Feeling acts as that which is meant to "restore our complicity" with the world in a more profound manner than "all polarity and duality."[32] The value of Ricœur's reading of emotions for our research lies in the fact that it opens up the possibility to understand the relation between evil and moral responsibility through being's inter-subjective relation with the world. The upshot is the experience of a continuous flux of meaning, which renders questionable an approach to moral responsibility predicated on complete and immediate cognition. Thus, Ricœur's symbolism of evil is voiced within a framework in which the shape of our moral responsibility does not follow the articulation of evil but takes on a distinguishing shape at the moment of speaking. Moreover, it is significant that the reality of evil impinges on our meanings through a myriad of feelings. It is no wonder that Ricœur's description of evil and moral responsibility is bound to a manifold set of meanings. This implies that the realm of affection always points towards an object, which is clarified by the interpreter in his interconnectedness between the realm of affect and that of meaning of its expression. On this account, the meanings of emotions "are not about their objects merely in the sense of being pointed at them and let go […]. Their aboutness is more internal, and embodies a way of seeing."[33] The point that I would like to make here is that the symbolic language of evil guides us towards some deeply entrenched forms of experiencing the reality of evil and moral responsibility.

Finally, the connection between the deciphering, the affective realm of language and their "impact" on our disposition towards the realm of moral responsibility must be acknowledged. It is not an overstatement to say that in the process of speaking about the reality of evil, the penitent is drawn even more into a mode of practical engagement. All things considered, an expressive-performative epistemology appears to endorse a strong correlation between the nature of meaning distinction and its impact on our centring and re-centring within the realm of moral responsibility.[34] Ultimately, it is the deciphering realm of symbol, the affective realm of symbol and their impact on our practical response to evil that may help validate a symbol-instructed model of speaking about evil and moral responsibility. What this means is that by listening and interpreting the double intentionality of symbol we are drawn even more deeply into our understanding of moral responsibility and our capabilities of responding to evil - to such an extent, that in a world in which evil is to be opposed, the burden of an augmented sense of responsibility appears worth striving for.

30 Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology,* 142.
31 Paul Ricœur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distaciation", in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*: *Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation*, ed. Paul Ricœur and John B. Thompson (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1981), 104-5.
32 Ricœur, *Fallible Man*, 85.
33 Martha C. Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 27.
34 Ibid., 29.

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III.2 Augmented responsibility: an ethical approximation

My analysis of the primary symbols of evil and their ability to shape an augmented sense of moral responsibility, has been carried out within Ricœur's early work on the *philosophy of the will* and the hermeneutics of the symbolism of evil as a text analogue to self-understanding and moral responsibility. In addition, I have sought to validate the augmented sense of moral responsibility in relation to an expressive-performative theory of meaning. The commitment of an expressive-performative language paradigm to valorise subordinate resources of knowledge, allowed us to imagine and inaugurate a sense of moral responsibility that moves beyond the proximity of the other and of the things that fall outside our moral control.

Perhaps we will have better understanding of symbol and its conception of moral responsibility by spelling out Ricœur's later reflection on ethics and justice. In his later essay entitled *The Concept of Responsibility* (1994), Ricœur draws on the widespread belief, particularly among the jurists, that the object of responsibility has changed over time. At the core of this change in the object of responsibility is a transition from responsibility for one's past actions and their effects to a notion of "preventive prudence" in which responsibility involves a prospective concern for *other people*, particularly those who are most vulnerable and likely to be harmed. For Ricœur, the notion of "preventive prudence" translates into moral philosophy under the sign of an "entrusted responsibility," which means that one "becomes responsible for harm because, first of all, one is responsible for others."[35] Ricœur draws support for this broadening of the concept of responsibility from Levinas and his theory of intersubjectivity, which shows that one is accountable for harm because one is first responsible for other people. But Ricœur's broadening of the concept of responsibility is not limited to the individuals living in our proximity. Given the extension of moral responsibility in time and space, Ricœur speaks of a virtually unlimited expansion of our responsibility. Hence, his belief that our responsibility for harm extends as far as our capacity to do harm extends in space and time. On this account, the augmented sense of moral responsibility becomes the object of a teleological wishing for good with and *for others* in *just institutions*.[36] At this stage, however, an augmented shape of moral responsibility and its underlining wish for good is revealed as an optative. In moving towards a more "deontological" assessment of augmented moral responsibility, Ricœur returns to Hans Jonas' "principle" of responsibility. For Ricœur Jonas' "principle" stands for a second Kantian imperative, which compels us to live so that the life and the flourishing of the human species are secured.[37] But Ricœur's reconstruction of moral responsibility led to a series of difficulties concerning the possibility of knowing who the author of the harmful effects is, what the genesis of a harmful action is and how can reparation be ensued when there exists no relation of reciprocity between the authors of harmful effects and their victims. Ricœur's attempt to address these difficulties revolves around the idea that moral responsibility designates an orientation of prevention of future harm not only reparation for harm already done. In the end, Ricœur's ethical reflection on moral responsibility must be grasped within the realm of critical *phronesis*. This is a form of practical wisdom (hermeneutical appropriation, at the level of symbol) that mediates one's reach for an augmented sense of moral responsibility and the imperative of Hans Jonas' call to unlimited moral responsibility. And so, Ricœur suggests, that the subject of responsibility is the "indivisibly individual persons and systems in whose functioning individual acts intervene in a sort of infinitesimal way."[38] It is in relation to this small but real and conflicted scale of action that the practical wisdom of *phronesis* might help inaugurate a clearer grasp of prospective responsibility. In this sense, *phronesis* is more contextual and sensitive to the conflictual character of a moral responsibility that conceives the human self as an agent and a patient (the receiver) of an action at once.

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35 Paul Ricœur, *The Just* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 2000), 29.
36 Paul Ricœur, *Oneself as Another* (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1992), 72.
37 Paul Ricœur, "Fragility and Responsibility", in *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, ed. Richard Kearney (Sage Journals, 1995), 16.
38 Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbol and Philosophical Reflection: I", 31.

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From these observations on the rich epistemic role that symbol and Ricœur's ethical reflections play in shaping an augmented sense of moral responsibility, let me turn more specifically to symbol's capacity to nurture one's capability of taking responsibility for more rather than less.

IV. SYMBOL, AUTHORSHIP AND THE POSSIBILITIES OF ACTING OUT AN AUGMENTED SENSE OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

As far as Ricœur is concerned, the way we avail ourselves of symbol's augmented moral responsibility requires a "re-enactment" of fault in "sympathetic imagination."[39] Unfortunately, his lack of practical examples leaves our understanding of the concept of "re-enactment in sympathetic imagination" within the realm of abstract. Likewise, his imagery of the "Suffering Servant," while certainly apt to stand for various morally enlarged forms of responsibility may, nevertheless, seem so theologically charged that no ordinary man will take their cues from it. But perhaps, if one were to consider the moral geography entailed in Dostoevsky's polyphonic novel, the chance of gazing more closely into the possibilities of acting out an augmented sense of moral responsibility may not seem so eccentric. Hence, the character of Sonya Marmeladova (*Crime and Punishment*), and the concept of "authorship", that she has been endowed with by Dostoevsky, will serve as the point of convergence for the numerous layers of meaning inherent in our discussion. Rowan Williams' insightful work entitled *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith and Fiction* will be instrumental in helping clarify these points.[40] Like Ricœur, Dostoevsky pursues the idea of an augmented sense of moral responsibility within the tradition of an expressive theory of meaning.[41] Thus, both Dostoevsky and Ricœur have developed philosophical anthropologies based on the assumption that being's grow in self-conscience is acquired through ceaseless dialogue. As with Ricœur, Dostoevsky's ethics of action is shaped by one's capability of listening to what is different in the unfamiliar other and by openness to self-transformation in response to the other. Again, in looking at Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* we seek to show the close relationship between the expressive-performative language of evil and its ability to nurture one's capability for taking up an augmented sense moral responsibility.

The main character of *Crime and Punishment* is Raskolnikov, a penurious student who believes that as long as his greatness contributes to humanity he has the right to commit any crime. Not surprisingly, he ends up murdering an old, dreadful pawnbroker and her half-sister. Later, he becomes attached to Sonya, the daughter of a man he tried to assist after a carriage hit the man as he stumbled across the street in a drunken stupor. Sonya had been forced into prostitution to provide for her family, while her father had embraced alcoholism. Encouraged by Sonya, Raskolnikov confesses the murder and is taken into a Siberian prison. Sonya willingly follows him to Siberia. The immediate context of our discussion is defined by the open dialogue between Raskolnikov and Sonya. Hence, Raskolnikov's conversational attempt to figure out the nature of his responsibility is captured by Dostoevsky through an exchanging of crucifixes. The imagery of crucifixes in Dostoevsky's work is not accidental.[42] In fact, it is through the interpretation of the crucifixes that one may deepen and refine his moral responsibility. The first reference to the sign of the cross is attributed to Sonya, who — after hearing of Raskolnikov's desire to go and confess his crimes — spontaneously asks him if he is wearing his cross. As he is not, she goes on to explain that, while she was still alive, Lizaveta (Raskolnikov's second victim) exchanged her cross for Sonya's little icon. Now, that she has two crosses, Sonya insists that she wears Lizaveta's cross and begs Raskolnikov to wear hers so that they will "go to suffer together and together we will bear our crosses."[43] The prospect of hurting her feelings made him reach for the cross, but then he drew his hand back, saying that "now"

39 Richard Kearney, "On the Hermeneutics of Evil", *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, no. 2 (2006), 200.
40 Rowan Williams, *Dostoevsky: Language, Faith, and Fiction* (Baylor Univ. Press, 2008), 151-89.
41 Malcolm V. Jones, *Dostoyevsky after Bakhtin: Readings in Dostoyevsky's Fantastic Realism* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1990), 6.
42 Sophie Ollivier, "Icons in Dostoevsky's Works", in *Dostoevsky and the Christian Tradition*, ed. George Pattison and Diane O. Thompson (Cambridge Univ. Press, 2001), 51.
43 Fyodor Dostoevsky, "Crime and Punishment", accessed July 10, 2019, http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/Crime-and-Punishment.pdf, 746.

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might not be the right time. It is worth noting here, that Raskolnikov's lapse into the justificatory practice of his misfortune and the rationalisation of his responsibility is received by Sonya with patience and understanding: "Yes, yes, better […], when you go to meet your suffering, then put it on. You will come to me, I'll put it on you, we will pray and go together."[44]

The second significant reference to the crucifix is attributed to Raskolnikov. In contrast to Sonya's spontaneous mention of the cross, Raskolnikov's "I have come for your cross", reveals a hermeneutical appropriation of his guilt and responsibility for evil.[45] This suggests that for Sonya the outward enactment of the exchange of the sign of the cross corresponds to her taking on the burden of acting as a connector between the killer and his victims. From that position, she facilitates the space for Raskolnikov to acknowledge his "anonymous" victims as human, while still allowing him to reveal his humanity, by means of confession and genuine repentance.[46] There is a sense in which Sonya's solidarity with Raskolnikov and his victims is indicative of an augmented conception of moral responsibility. At the heart of this conception of responsibility is the idea that one finds himself morally responsible for evil before any crime is committed. In taking responsibility for the brokenness of her family and for her relation with Raskolnikov and his victims, Sonya reveals her commitment to a sense of augmented responsibility.[47] For Rowan Williams, the full shape of augmented moral responsibility can be seen in light of Zosima's (from *Brothers Karamazov*) belief that one needs to "take responsibility for all."[48] Markel, Zosima's dying brother, entrusted Zosima this celebrated insight of being "guilty for all." Zosima constantly works out the unspecific task of taking responsibility for all in a language that strives to recollect the memory of his dying brother. This sense of augmented moral responsibility is then gradually acted out through various events that recognize the humanity of his servant and his opponent in the duel and through his Sonya-like insistence that one should publicly take up the burden of moral guilt.[49] While Dostoevsky does not provide a highly conceptualised analysis of moral responsibility, he offers an orientation for understanding the kind of moral responsibility an antiphonal description of reality may favour. It is clear that such responsibility moves away from a detached assessment of reality in which one's guilt can be squarely measured against his actions and effects in the world. Conversely, an antiphonal description of reality invites us to surrender the attempt to define our guilt solely by our actions and their consequences. In essence, Dostoevsky's augmented moral responsibility, unfolding through characters such as Sonya and Zosima, is not an invitation to pure passivity (Levinas), but an expansion of self's problem of being a moral agent and a moral patient at once. For Dostoevsky, this is never a retreat into the self, but a way of creating a moral space that nurtures and sustains being's capabilities for taking up the burden of moral responsibility. This is best observed in light of Williams' claim that Sonya might be perceived as a "Dostoevskian author." What he really means is that by defining the context in which the killer and the victim become part of one narrative of common humanity, she becomes a "Dostoevskian author." [50] In more practical terms, by willingly accepting to bear responsibility for Raskolnikov's actions, Sonya did not lessen his opportunity to consider himself as a criminal and to act accordingly. On the contrary, by using her conversational "authorship" in a way that allowed Raskolnikov to clarify and reconsider his thoughts she provided "space for unforced human growth."[51] To clarify this, Sonya's "authorial" privileges need to be looked at from a different angle. By willingly placing herself between the murderer and his victims, Sonya generates the locus for a new moral responsibility to emerge. Consequently, in mediating the meanings of the new-moral responsibility, rather than simply imposing them, Sonya creates space for Raskolnikov to reconsider his past and his future-orientated actions within a flux of meanings. What

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44 Ibid., 746.
45 Ibid., 921.
46 Williams, *Dostoevsky*, 171.
47 Octavian Gabor, "Two Kinds of Responsibility in "Crime and Punishment"", *Mundo Eslavo* (2017), 108.
48 Williams, *Dostoevsky*, 168.
49 Ibid., 163.
50 Ibid., 157.
51 Ibid., 157.

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is essentially transformed in this process, I would note, is his schismatic attitude towards the world and its pernicious effects. Not surprisingly, Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov stands for the Russian "schism."[52] Thus, Raskolnikov's idealistic reading of history, which allowed for an objectification of his victims as something less than beings, has been replaced with a more inclusive approach to the moral order — perhaps with an approach that fosters an increasing sense that our lives are much more closely connected.

Thus, unlike Neiman's *designative* language paradigm that reaches for the immediate and detached meaning provided by a clear-cut and systematic description of evil, Dostoevsky and implicitly the "Dostoevskian author" have continued to look for new opportunities to interrogate freedom and its debt to the reception and disruption of the other. As such, the point that I am trying to make in emphasising Dostoevsky's distinctive approach to freedom and blame is simply this: one needs to make enough room for the "other" voice (meaning) to emerge, regardless of how burdensome this is or, perhaps, how fragile humanity might look as a result. In this regard, I would like to suggest that Ricœur's symbol and the concept of becoming a "Dostoevskian author" stimulates a moral space in which one is drawn ever more deeply into countering those instances of evil arising in the ordinariness and the concreteness of our lives. Broadly speaking, this course of action is stimulated by the absence of any predetermined ethical aspirations and fixed ideals. In this sense, the double intentionality of symbol and its continual reconfiguration of meaning are reinforced as *a site of possibility*. On one hand, it opens up a space in which our self-understanding is diversely captured in the transfer of meaning between the symbols of *defilement*, *sin* and *guilt*. On the other hand, the symbol of evil constantly challenges us to accept an augmented sense of blame. With this, our language of engagement with evil shifts from justice to generosity and, thus, to a more tragic, yet hopeful, logic of being-in-the-world.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper I argued that Ricœur's "double intentionality" of symbol could help to form a more appropriate model of speaking about evil and moral responsibility. In particular, the move beyond a *designative* theory of meaning guided our focus towards the theme of augmented moral responsibility and its paradoxical response to evil. This, however, was not the necessary conclusion of analytic reasoning. Neither was it something that we could have appropriated from a mere designation of an action as evil. Paradoxical as it may be, the idea of augmented moral responsibility for evil has been figured out for us in the double intentionality of symbol and its hermeneutic appropriation. The main task was then to show how the positive correlation between Ricœur's antiphonal expression of evil and an augmented sense of moral responsibility could be worked out in the concreteness of our life. The important thing here is that our response to evil is always performed against the background of a prospective expression of moral responsibility and practical wisdom. At this juncture, our immediate impulses, and perhaps our highly intellectualised pursuits, can be "bracketed", and, thereafter, the "other" is seen more clearly and afforded more space to discover her capabilities of moving beyond a conceptually-reductive description of being and justice. Hence, drawing on the complementarity between Ricœur's double intentionality of symbol and Dostoevsky's concept of "authorship" was important in showing that in spite of his ontological fragility and his fragile semantic of evil, human being has not lost their capabilities (*l'homme capable*) to inaugurate a more benevolent sense of justice.

52 Charles Taylor, "Dostoevsky and Terrorism", *Lonergan Review* 4 (1993-1994), 139.

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