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Kevin J. Vanhoozer

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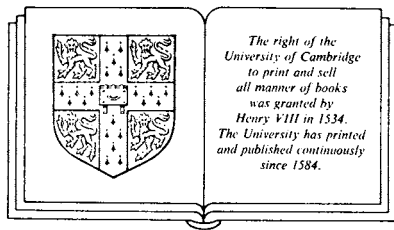
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Biblical narrative in the philosophy of Paul Ricoeur

*A study in hermeneutics
and theology*

KEVIN J. VANHOOZER

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School



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TO MY PARENTS

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Frontmatter

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To believe only possibilities, is not faith, but mere Philosophy.

Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*

My soul has lost its potentiality. If I were to wish for anything, I should not wish for wealth and power, but for the passionate sense of the potential, for the eye, which ever young and ardent, sees the possible. Pleasure disappoints, possibility never. And what wine is so foaming, what so fragrant, what so intoxicating, as possibility!

Sören Kierkegaard, *Either-Or*

Nothing great has ever been accomplished in the world without passion.

G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*

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 Kevin J. Vanhoozer
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page</i> ix
<i>List of abbreviations</i>	xi

INTRODUCTION

1 The passion for the possible: preface to Paul Ricoeur	3
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I. THE PASSION FOR THE POSSIBLE IN RICOEUR'S PHILOSOPHY AND HERMENEUTICS

2 Human being, possibility, and time	19
3 Hope within the limits of Kant alone?	38
4 Metaphor, poetry, and the possible	56
5 Narrative: the "substance" of things hoped for	86

II. THE PASSION FOR THE POSSIBLE AND BIBLICAL NARRATIVE: STORIES OR HISTORIES OF JESUS?

6 A newer hermeneutic: postscript to Bultmann	119
7 A literal Gospel?	148
8 The Gospels as "tales about time"	190
9 Passion of Jesus, power of Christ: the possibility of human freedom	224

CONCLUSION

10 The Bible and one philosopher	275
<i>Select bibliography</i>	290
<i>Index</i>	302

Cambridge University Press
0521344255 - Biblical Narrative in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: A Study in
Hermeneutics and Theology
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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

PREFACE

The present work began its life in much different form as a doctoral dissertation at Cambridge University. The present text sets out on a career of its own, however, by focusing on the theme of a “passion for the possible” and aspiring towards greater clarity and readability than its predecessor. I am most grateful to Nicholas Lash, who first started me reading Ricoeur and who supervised my research with enthusiasm and critical care. I wish also to thank John Macquarrie, the external examiner of my thesis, for his comments. I am especially grateful to Stephen Sykes, my internal examiner, for encouraging me to pursue publication and for his many helpful remarks.

I would like to acknowledge two groups who together made possible a wonderful year of post-doctoral study in Cambridge, where I was able to begin the process of rewriting: first, the Fellows of Wolfson College, Cambridge, who elected me into a Junior Research Fellowship, and second, the Trustees of the Burney Studentship in the Philosophy of Religion, who gave considerable financial aid along with the Studentship for the academic year 1985–6.

I am indebted in other ways to Hans Frei, who was good enough to meet with me twice at short notice and who was most generous with some of his unpublished manuscripts. I owe a special debt of gratitude to Paul Ricoeur for agreeing to meet with yet another graduate student and making himself available for several extended discussions and, of course, for providing the works from which I have greatly profited over the past few years.

Parts of the book and many of its arguments were forced upon students in my seminar on Ricoeur’s philosophy of religion. I am grateful both to those students and to those colleagues who have offered suggestions or simply moral support. I have also benefited from, at one time or another, conversations with Robert Gundry and Stuart Hackett.

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Frontmatter
[More information](#)

I owe a special acknowledgement to two long-standing (and often long-suffering!) friends for their influence on my thinking and their faithful support. I benefited from discussions with Dustin Anderson during the early stages of this work. Philip Clayton read the entire manuscript (some parts more than once) and made more comments and criticisms than I can here enumerate. Both have saved me from making costly mistakes and, for any errors that are left, I ask their pardon in advance.

To my parents, who have played a Kantian role as “conditions of the possibility” of my graduate studies, I owe a “transcendental” thanks. Their support of my career has been constant and is deeply appreciated. Dedicating this work to them is but a small token of my respect. Lastly, it is my pleasure to thank my wife Sylvie for her cheerful toleration of this project. While I labored over minutiae, she doubled the size of our family, learned to drive, and managed the household with efficient resourcefulness. Even my two daughters helped with the book after their own fashion: my intermittent descent from the rarefied stratosphere of the philosophy of language to prattle with Mary Dorothea and Emma Clare was always an eagerly anticipated monosyllabic relief.

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ABBREVIATIONS

References to Aristotle's works follow the standard pagination of Bekker's edition of the Greek text. References to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* give the A and B numbers to his first and second editions respectively. The abbreviations to Ricoeur's works are of two kinds: initials for books and shortened words for articles. When possible, I have used the English translations of Ricoeur's works. All translations from works cited in the bibliography in French are my own.

Works by Ricoeur

BOOKS

CFH	<i>The Contribution of French Historiography to the Theory of History</i>
CI	<i>The Conflict of Interpretations</i>
EBI	<i>Essays on Biblical Interpretation</i>
FM	<i>Fallible Man</i>
FN	<i>Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary</i>
FP	<i>Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation</i>
HHS	<i>Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences</i>
HT	<i>History and Truth</i>
H	<i>Husserl</i>
IT	<i>Interpretation Theory</i>
LIU	<i>Lectures on Ideology and Utopia</i>
PPR	<i>The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of his Work</i>
RHP	<i>The Reality of the Historical Past</i>
RM	<i>The Rule of Metaphor</i>
SE	<i>The Symbolism of Evil</i>
TN	<i>Time and Narrative</i> (3 vols.)

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Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

List of abbreviations

ARTICLES

“Autonomy”	“Beyond Autonomy and Heteronomy”
“BibHerm”	“Biblical Hermeneutics”
“BibImag”	“The Bible and the Imagination”
“Creativity”	“The Creativity of Language”
“Critique”	“The Critique of Religion”
“Fiction”	“Can Fictional Narratives be True?”
“Foreword”	“Foreword”
“Foundation”	“The Problem of the Foundation of Moral Philosophy”
“Function”	“The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality”
“History”	“History as Narrative and Practice”
“HistHerm”	“History and Hermeneutics”
“Hope”	“Hope and the Structure of Philosophical Systems”
“IdeologyCrit”	“Ideology and Ideology Critique”
“Ideology”	“Ideology, Utopia, Faith”
“Imagination”	“Imagination in Discourse and in Action”
“Interpretation”	“On Interpretation”
“Jaspers”	“The Relation of Jaspers’s Philosophy to Religion”
“Kierkegaard”	“Philosopher après Kierkegaard”
“Manifestation”	“Manifestation et proclamation”
“Metaphor”	“The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination and Feeling”
“Myth”	“Myth as Bearer of Possible Worlds”
“Naming”	“Naming God”
“NarDisc”	“Pour une théorie du discours narratif”
“NarFunc”	“The Narrative Function”
“NarHerm”	“Narrative and Hermeneutics”
“NarTime”	“Narrative Time”
“Objectivation”	“Objectivation et aliénation dans l’expérience historique”
“PhilHerm”	“Philosophical Hermeneutics and Theological Hermeneutics”
“PhilRel”	“Philosophy and Religious Language”
“Poétique”	“Poétique et symbolique”
“Poetry”	“Poetry and Possibility”
“Power”	“The Power of Speech: Science and Poetry”
“Preface”	“Preface: Response to My Friends and Critics”

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 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

List of abbreviations

xiii

“Proclamation”	“From Proclamation to Narrative”
“Récit”	“Le récit interprétatif: Exegèse et Théologie dans les récits de la Passion”
“Reply”	“Reply to Lewis S. Mudge”
“SchlHerm”	“Schleiermacher’s Hermeneutics”
“TempsBib”	“Temps biblique”
“Temps”	“Le temps raconté”
“Unity”	“The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limiting Idea”

Other works

<i>BT</i>	Heidegger, <i>Being and Time</i>
<i>CD</i>	Karl Barth, <i>Church Dogmatics</i>
<i>CJ</i>	Kant, <i>Critique of Judgment</i>
<i>CPR</i>	Kant, <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i>
<i>CPrR</i>	Kant, <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i>
<i>JAAR</i>	<i>Journal of the American Academy of Religion</i>
<i>JR</i>	<i>Journal of Religion</i>
<i>NT</i>	New Testament
<i>OT</i>	Old Testament
<i>PT</i>	<i>Philosophy Today</i>