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Abstract The article deals with the problem whether the metaphor considered from historical and logical perspective precedes the symbol as a linguistic phenomenon. The problem is analyzed in the context of Paul Ricoeur's symbolism of evil, related to the relevant metaphors of evil. The author disagrees with Ricoeur and claims that "metaphors of evil" precede symbols of evil. No symbol of evil contains more than is already contained in a corresponding metaphor. Without metaphors of evil symbols of evil would not have emerged.