ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: "The Theme of Freedom in the Anthropology of Paul Ricoeur."

Author: Harold George Wells, B.A., B.D., M.Th.

Submitted to: The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, Department of Religious Studies, McGill University.

Degree: Doctor of Philosophy.

Summary

The purpose of the thesis is to elucidate the mystery of freedom as central to the anthropology of Paul Ricoeur. It shows how he has developed a unique philosophy of freedom as real, but limited. The thesis follows Ricoeur's thought through his four major books, showing that, through a variety of methods, he consistently de-centers the ego, taking detours away from introspection through intentional analysis, interpretation of symbols and myths, and an appreciative critique of psychoanalysis. At each phase a reciprocity, polarity, or dialectic within man is revealed. Ricoeur is attempting to understand human freedom and subjectivity in the context of the Transcendent.

THE THEME OF FREEDOM
IN THE
ANTHROPOLOGY OF PAUL RICOEUR

by

Harold George Wells

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy to the
Faculty of Graduate Studies of
McGill University

1972

Short title:

FREEDOM IN THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF PAUL RICOEUR

PREFACE

This essay proposes to elucidate the theme of freedom in the philosophical anthropology of Paul Ricoeur. I chose to undertake an intensive study of Ricoeur's philosophy of man because he appeared to be an immensely erudite and profound thinker who is concerned with questions of vital importance for contemporary thought. As will become evident in the course of this paper, Ricoeur's learning reaches out in many directions, but he finds a multiplicity of problems converging upon the doctrine of man:

> Philosophical anthropology has become an urgent task of contemporary thought because all the major problems of that thought converge on it, and its absence is deeply felt. The sciences of man are dispersed into separate disciplines and literally do not know what they are talking about. The revival of ontology, for its part, raises the question in its own way: who is this being for whom being is in question? Finally, the very "modernity" of man indicates the vacuum which this meditation must fill: if man can lose himself or find himself in labour, in pleasure, in politics, or in culture, what is man?[1]

Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology has developed to date through two of three substantial volumes, constituting La Philosophie de la volonté, which is centrally concerned with the relation of freedom to necessity. Some smaller books and a myriad of published articles serve to clarify this major project. The other monumental and most recent publication is De l'Interprétation, a large methodological study carry-

---

[1]Paul Ricoeur, "The Antinomy of Human Reality and the Problem of Philosophical Anthropology," in Readings in Existential Phenomenology, ed. N. Lawrence, D. L'Connor, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967, p. 390.

ing forward the hermeneutics of symbols, which had already appeared as the key to his fully developed anthropology. The essay proceeds through each of his books in turn, first noting their varying procedures, then drawing out their message regarding freedom.

How will this essay constitute an original contribution to knowledge?

First, it deals with a contemporary thinker, who, while he is rising rapidly in stature and public recognition, is still relatively unknown beyond a small circle of specialists. Very little secondary material exists on Ricoeur. Only one book has been published which deals solely with his work, namely Don Ihde's Hermeneutic Phenomenology, (1971), which, although very helpful for an understanding of Ricoeur, focuses not on the theme of freedom, but on method. Only a handful of articles deal with Ricoeur's thought, and none of these treats the theme of freedom explicitly.

Secondly, this essay attempts to elucidate Ricoeur's thought, that is, to unravel, analyze, and reflect upon its significance. Exposition is laced with comment. I have attempted particularly to show the continuity of thought through the various phases, and the parallelism of key concepts that appear from the beginning to the end of the works published to date. I have written in an almost entirely appreciative vein, and have only rarely been critical in the negative sense, since I am in fundamental agreement with Ricoeur's philosophical

convictions and have learned much from his particular procedures.

Thirdly, I have tried to show how Ricoeur's philosophy relates to that of other men and other disciplines. His relation to Psychology, Theology, the History of Religions and Psychoanalysis is most illuminating. I have made a point of showing, in extended footnotes, his relation especially to such thinkers as Skinner and Sartre, Barth and Tillich, Eliade and, of course, Freud.

A sub-theme of this paper is Ricoeur's interesting relation to Christian theology and my suggestion that Ricoeur's books have to be read and understood as "Christian philosophy."

The juxtaposition of the two main concepts of the title -- freedom and anthropology -- serves to indicate that each is essential to the other. Freedom is central to Ricoeur's anthropological concern, but this doctrine of freedom can only be expounded and defended in the context of a full and wider philosophy of man as subject. My thesis is as follows: Ricoeur's unique contribution to an understanding of the mystery of freedom is his manner of proceeding by detours; this indirect method yields, in every phase, a reciprocity, polarity, or dialectic of freedom and its limitation.

I am happy to acknowledge the helpfulness of my thesis director, Dr. Joseph McLelland, who originally introduced me to Ricoeur's books, and carefully edited the first draft. I am also indebted to the library staff of the Faculty of Religious Studies, especially those responsible for inter-library

loans, and to some of my fellow students, whose work was sometimes complementary to my own.

July, 1972 H. G. W.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

Antinomy	Paul Ricoeur, "The Antinomy of Human Reality and the Problem of Philosophical Anthropology"
BN	Jean-Paul Sartre, Being and Nothingness
CD	Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics
CH	Mircea Eliade, Cosmos and History
CPW	The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud
FM	Paul Ricoeur, Fallible Man
FP	Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy
HA	Paul Ricoeur, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology
HS	Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection"
HP	Don Ihde, Hermeneutic Phenomenology
HT	Paul Ricoeur, History and Truth
ID	Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams
MT	Paul Ricoeur, "Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the Will"
PB	E. C. Tolman, Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men
PCR	Mircea Eliade, Patterns in Comparative Religion
PM	Herbert Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement
SE	Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil
SFT	Paul Ricoeur, "The Symbol... Food for Thought"
ST	Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology
Unity	Paul Ricoeur, "The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limiting Idea"
VI	Paul Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature: the Voluntary and the Involuntary

Biographical Note on Paul Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur was born on February 27, 1913 at Valence, France. His father was Jules Ricoeur, professeur de lycée, and his mother was née Florentine Favre. He was married in 1935 to Mlle. Simone Lejas, and is the father of five children. He studied at the lycée at Rennes and the faculty of letters of Rennes and of Paris, and graduated as agrégé de philosophie and Docteur ès lettres. He taught at the lycée at St.-Brieuc (1933-1934), at Calmar (1935-1936), Lorient, (1937-1939). He spent most of his war years in a German prison as a captured officer of the French army. He was decorated with the croix de guerre. After the war he was research attaché for the French national center for scientific research, (1945-1948), then professor of the History of Philosophy at the University of Strasbourg (1948-1956), and professor of Philosophy at the University of Paris (from 1956), where he continues to teach. In 1969-1970 Ricoeur was doyen of the faculty of letters of Nanterre in the University of Paris. He participated in the creation of Esprit in 1947 and is a frequent contributor to that journal. He is the author of a large number of books and articles, chief amongst his publications being La Philosophie de la volonté. Ricoeur is widely travelled and a frequent lecturer at many universities in Europe and North America.

Chapter One

PLACING RICOEUR

We shall see, in the course of this chapter, that Paul Ricoeur does not practice merely one philosophical method, nor does he simply and unambiguously belong to any one philosophical school. It will become evident, as we proceed, that Ricoeur is deeply indebted to Plato in his doctrine of man and to Kant in his ethics and epistemology. He acknowledges indebtedness also to such diverse figures as Pascal, Hegel, Freud, Nabert, Merleau-Ponty, Eliade, Heidegger, Mounier. However, it is obvious that in his first major anthropological work he has utilized the method of eidetic analysis, and many of the basic concepts of Edmund Husserl, the recognized founder of contemporary phenomenology. The other to which he is avowedly most indebted is his teacher Gabriel Marcel, generally regarded as a representative of existentialist philosophy. Also, the older philosopher, to whom he owes the very fundamental notion of the Cogito is, of course, Descartes. It seems important, then, to understand clearly his relation to the Phenomenological Movement, and to existentialism, and to Cartesian philosophy; also to note his dependence upon and departures from these thinkers whom he regards as his mentors. Ricoeur himself has instructed us regarding the value of such typological studies in his article, "The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth." Typology, he concedes, has a pedagogical function in orienting the beginner's mind toward a sphere of problems and solutions and serves to identify a philosophy by

situating it within a familiar group. However, he argues, true comprehension "begins precisely at the point where this identification is ended. The unity of a philosophy is a singular unity."[1] This singularity of every philosophy points up the limited nature of human reflection, despite its aspiration for universality and objectivity. Since man's being, as Ricoeur sees it, stands intermediately between this infinitude of reflective thought and the actual limitations of finite existence, philosophy must aim at an intersubjectivity of understanding mediated through the communication of individual minds.[2] If, then, we are to follow Ricoeur's own guidance in this respect, we must appreciate his dialogue with other philosophers, situate him in the philosophical scene, but then go on to indicate the unique singularity of his thought.

(a) Ricoeur's Relation to Husserlian Phenomenology

Phenomenology is notoriously difficult to define and delimit. Beyond the philosophical sphere, for example in the natural sciences, the word is sometimes used to refer to descriptive, as opposed to explanatory studies. In the scientific study of religion the word is often used to indicate the description and classification of religious "phenomena" without explaining them or raising the question of truth,[3]

---

[1]"The History of Philosophy and the Unity of Truth," (1953), in History and Truth, trans. C. A. Kelbley, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1956, p. 46.

[2]Ibid., pp. 42-55.

[3]Herbert Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement, (2 Vols) Vol. I, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1965, pp. 8-10.

(e.g. G. van der Leeuw's Phanomenologie der Religion). Philosophically, the concept of "phenomenon" goes back to Kant's distinction between phenomenon and noumenon, the thing as it appears, and the thing-in-itself. But the phenomenological movement of the twentieth century, in which we are interested here, takes its beginning from Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), who attempted to focus philosophy upon phenomena, the appearances of things as we perceive them. We cannot begin, in this paper, to offer a full account of Husserl's thought or even of his methods, but we do need to take note of certain basic concepts and procedures which Ricoeur has adopted from him for his anthropology.

Husserl was essentially an epistemologist, coveting for philosophy the sure and rigorous methods of natural science. As a doctoral student in mathematics, his first philosophical problem was the theoretical foundation for logic and mathematics. His first book, Philosophie der Arithmetik (1891), expounded a psychologistic theory of logic which derived the fundamental concepts of mathematics from psychological states.[4] But the decisive beginning of his philosophical contribution came with the dramatic reversal of this position in his Logische Untersuchungen I, 1900. Here he rejected the reduction of logical laws to psychological states with its implied denial of the possibility of all knowledge. Anti-psychologism and

[4]Paul Ricoeur, "Introduction: Husserl (1858-1938)," in Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1967, pp. 4-5.

anti-reductionism were to remain basic, constant features of his thought; as late as 1929 in his Formale und Transzendentale Logik, he extended this principle, renouncing all attempts to "psychologize" in the fields of ethics, aesthetics, etc., that is, to explain away such experiences in psychological terms.[5] As we shall see later, anti-reductionism has been basic to phenomenological philosophy, and certainly to Ricoeur's anthropology.

The key concept growing out of Husserl's logical investigations and central to his whole epistemology is the "intentionality" of consciousness. Since Ricoeur has adopted a revised version of this concept, it is important for us to consider it here briefly. Intentionality is that property of consciousness to be consciousness of..., of moving out from itself toward something else. Intentionality is the essence of consciousness for Husserl, that is, consciousness in the "pregnant sense of the term."[6] The word implies not only outward directedness but also an active participation of consciousness in perception, for every object is presented to us as that which it is for us, that which we take it to be. Objects, therefore, are to be understood as relative to consciousness. In his earlier and middle phenomenological periods, Husserl insisted that he was not a subjective idealist in the style of Berkeley.[7] He is in

---

[5] PM, I, p. 94.

[6] Edmund Husserl, Ideas, General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, (1913), trans. W. R. B. Gibson, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1931, p. 242.

[7] Ibid., p. 168.

line with the fundamental doctrine of modern philosophy, initiated by Descartes and carried forward by Hume and Kant, that the only immediate and direct objects of knowledge are our own mental states.[8] He uses the term "noema" to denote the object as meant and intended, including the mode of perceptual experience, as distinct from the thing perceived. A multiplicity of perceptual noemata are related to the same thing, and a multiplicity of meanings refer to the same object. Consciousness, as intentionality, is a "noetico-noematic correlation," so that consciousness and meaning are essentially connected. It is commonly agreed that Husserl later came to adopt a thoroughgoing idealism which has been the most unpopular aspect of his philosophy.[9] Ricoeur, commenting on Husserl, tells us that "the Cartesian Meditations are the most radical expression of this new idealism for which the world is not only 'for me' but draws all of its being-status 'from me'.... Constitution becomes a gigantic project of progressively composing the signification 'world' without an ontological remainder."[10] In the Fifth Meditation, Husserl attempted to overcome this solipsistic conclusion by maintaining the transcendence of the Other. Ricoeur doubts whether he has successfully overcome his own subjectivism in this way, since the Other's body must still, according to Husserl, be understood as constituted "in"

---

[8]Cf. Aron Gurwitsch, "Husserl's Theory of the Intentionality of Consciousness in Historical Perspective," in Phenomenology and Existentialism, ed. E. N. Lee, M. Mandelbaum, Baltimore, John Hopkins Press, 1967, p. 33.

[9]Cf. Fernando Molina, "The Husserlian Ideal of a Pure Phenomenology," in Invitation to Phenomenology, Chicago, Quadrangle Books Inc., 1965, p. 162.

[10]HA, p. 10.

one's own consciousness.[11]

The concept of intentionality is closely linked, in Husserl, to phenomenological reduction (the word being used in an entirely different sense than in the previous discussion of psychologism and anti-reductionism). Pursuing his ideal of philosophy as a rigorous science, Husserl called for a return to the "things themselves," and enunciated a "principle of all principles:"

> that every primordial dator Intuition is a source of authority for knowledge, for whatever presents itself in "intuition" in primordial form (as it were in its bodily reality), is simply to be accepted as it gives itself out to be, though only within the limits in which it then presents itself.[12]

He greatly admires Descartes' resolve to found philosophy securely on an indubitable basis, but rejects the Cartesian doubt in favour of a universal epoché, an abstention, or suspension of belief. He insists it is neither denied nor doubted; it is untested, but also uncontested.[13] Only the ego, the consciousness itself, escapes the reduction, for Husserl agrees with Descartes that the ego, the only "apodictically certain being," can be neither doubted nor suspended.[14] Thus the being or existence of all things, naively assumed by the natural standpoint, is bracketed, in order to allow for undisturbed investigation of phenomena. Phenomena are then

---

[11] "Kant and Husserl," in HA, p. 197.

[12] Ideas, p. 92.

[13] Ibid., pp. 109-110.

[14] Husserl, Paris Lectures, trans. P. Koestenbaum, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967, p. 4.

subjected to intentional analysis, as that which they are and mean for consciousness. Moreover, they are analyzed by means of eidetic reduction (eidos: Idea, Form, or universal Essence). Phenomenology is therefore conceived not as a science of facts but of essential being, aimed at establishing knowledge of essences.[15] This means that all references to individual and particular is dropped and attention focused on the analysis of essential structures of phenomena as they are presented to intentional consciousness.

All this is of interest to our project because of the use Ricoeur makes of basic Husserlian concepts in his anthropology. He shares Husserl's enthusiasm for Descartes, and the irreducible subjectivity of the ego, and opposes all naturalistic, or psychologistic reductionism of the nature of man. He utilizes Husserl's concept of intentionality; indeed makes it central to his understanding of human freedom and knowledge, and to the nature of linguistic signification. He makes use of the Husserlian transcendental and eidetic reductions in the first part of his philosophy of the will.

However, Ricoeur's own statements about his relation to Husserl and phenomenology are cautious and ambiguous. In the first volume of La Philosophie de la volonté, he seems happy to align himself, in a qualified way, with phenomenology, and in De l'Interprétation he repeatedly takes up the cause of a radicalized phenomenology. Yet the very limited nature of his

---

[15] Ideas, pp. 43-44.

commitment to phenomenology is evidenced in his somewhat auto-biographical comments in History and Truth, where he identifies himself as a teacher of the History of Philosophy, a member of the team Esprit (a leftist Christian journal) and a listener to the Christian message.[16] It is apparent that his philosophical concern is broadly anthropological, hermeneutical and linguistic, and his concerns as a human being and a Christian are practically ethical, social and political. He is not markedly devoted to the promotion of phenomenology as such. In an article of 1968, David Stewart reports:

> Although Ricoeur is doubtless the best authority on Husserl in France, he rarely uses the word phenomenology in his writings, and the term appears nowhere in the titles of his books. When I asked him why he seldom used the term, he replied he did not want to presume on the authority the word implied; besides he did not know whether he could be orthodox enough, as he put it, to call his work phenomenological.[17]

Yet Ricoeur realizes that phenomenology is broader than orthodox Husserlianism:

> All of phenomenology is not Husserl, even though he is more or less its centre....
>
> Beyond this phenomenology is a vast project whose expression is not restricted to one work or to any specific group of works. It is less a doctrine than a method capable of many exemplifications of which Husserl exploited only a few.... Phenomenology is both the sum of Husserl's work and the heresies issuing from it.[18]

With these facts in view it is not seriously debatable that Ricoeur is indeed part of an identifiable phenomenological movement. As Herbert Spiegelberg makes abundantly clear,

---

[16] HT, p. 5.

[17] David Stewart, "Paul Ricoeur and the Phenomenological Movement," in Philosophy Today, Vol. XII (1968), pp. 230-231.

[18] HA, pp. 3-4.

the bounds of the movement (so-called) are extremely vague and it would make no sense to exclude Ricoeur from the group. Spiegelberg suggests that the common feature among phenomenologists is not doctrine but method, specifically that of direct intuition as the source and final test of all knowledge, and insight into essential structures as a genuine possibility and need of philosophical knowledge.[19] The term "indirect intuition" would not be applicable to the later hermeneutical philosophy of Ricoeur, and perhaps not even to the first volume of The Philosophy of the Will. Ricoeur suggests a different test of what constitutes phenomenology in a relatively early article: "Fundamentally phenomenology is born as soon as we treat the manner of appearing of things as a separate problem by 'bracketing' the question of existence, either temporarily or permanently."[20] In his later work he broadens his method, pushes beyond the Husserlian bounds of thought, which he feels remain too narrowly epistemological, and aims at an ontology of man using an "indirect" or hermeneutical method.

Ricoeur's dissatisfaction with Husserl is not limited to the argument that he remained too narrow and provisional, but is directed most vigorously at the manner in which his epoché developed into a solipsistic idealism. He finds the epoché

---

[19] PM, I, p. 6.

[20] "Au fond, la phénoménologie est née dès que, mettant entre parenthèses-- provisoirement ou définitivement--la question de l'être, on traite comme un problème autonome la manière d'apparaître des choses. ("Sur la phénoménologie," in Esprit, XXI (12), Dec. 1953, pp. 821-839; p. 821.

a useful tool, and even defines phenomenology in terms of it (though we shall see later that he uses it in a very qualified way). But he accuses Husserl of losing the genius of his methodological procedure: "The Second Cartesian Meditation clearly shows this clandestine shift from an act of abstention to an act of negation."[21] Ricoeur himself, as we shall see below, avoids idealism with the help of Marcel's concept of Incarnation. Husserlian phenomenology, he charges, does not take bodily existence seriously, and is to that extent misleading for philosophical anthropology. The atmosphere of Husserlian studies is devoid of the mystery of human reality, he feels, for

> the bond which in fact joins willing to its body requires a type of attention other than an intellectual attention to structures. It requires that I participate actively in my incarnation as a mystery. I need to pass from objectivity to existence.[22]

Before going on to look at his relation to Marcel and existentialism, it will be useful to note that Ricoeur brings a similar criticism to bear upon the work of another of his great mentors.

(b) Descartes: the Cogito

A term that appears constantly in Ricoeur's writing is the "Cogito," the "I think" of his French philosophical fore-

---

[21] "Kant and Husserl," in HA, p. 190.

[22] Paul Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature: the Voluntary and the Involuntary, trans. E. V. Kohak, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1966, p. 14.

bearer, René Descartes (1596-1650). He does not fail to honour his great compatriot for having made the theme of subjectivity the heart of all modern philosophy:

> I assume here that the positing of the self is the first truth for the philosopher placed within that broad tradition of modern philosophy that begins with Descartes and is developed in Kant, Fichte, and the reflective stream of European philosophy.... The positing of the self is a truth which posits itself; it can be neither verified nor deduced; it is at once the positing of a being and an act; the positing of an existence and of an operation of thought: I am, I think; to exist, for me, is to think. Since this truth cannot be verified like a fact, nor deduced like a conclusion, it has to posit itself in reflection; its self-positing is reflection; Fichte called this first truth the thetic judgment. Such is our philosophical starting point.[23]

This does not mean that Ricoeur follows Descartes' attempt to build a water-tight, logically deduced system upon the Cogito.[24] As we have already seen, he does not believe that any final system of truth is possible for men because of their inevitably finite perspective; it is for that reason that philosophers are dependent upon one another to correct one another's limitations, and that philosophy must be conducted in the context of communication with others, past and present. Husserl too had attempted to do philosophy as a rigorous indubitable science beginning with the Cogito. Now for Ricoeur too the Cogito is the starting point for philosophical reflection. In his phenomenology of the human voluntary and involuntary, he tells us that we must first reconquer

---

[23]Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation, trans. Denis Savage, Yale University Press, 1970, p. 43.

[24]Descartes, Discourse on Method, in Philosophical Works of Descartes, Vol. I, trans. E. S. Haldane, G. R. T. Ross, London, Dover Publ. Inc., 1931, p. 92.

the Cogito in the first person grasped from the natural standpoint,[25] i.e., as with Descartes and Husserl, the Cogito is not to be doubted nor suspended in reflection. He uses a Husserlian concept, however, to criticize Descartes' epistemological use of the Cogito:

> Descartes puts us on the wrong track at the very start when he defines thought in terms of self-consciousness.... Our entire analysis will strive to show the bonds between consciousness and the world and not the isolation of a consciousness which retires into itself.... Thought can at first be understood better in terms of its least reflexive aspect, its intentional relation towards the other.[26]

Ricoeur sees Descaftes' reflexive, deductive, and rather abstract account of knowledge as closely related to his sharp dualism of soul and body, thought and extension. Rejecting this dualism, Ricoeur suggests that we have to reintroduce the body into the Cogito, to include the extended as a mode of subjective existence, in order to do justice to the sense of being incarnate. Awareness of our corporeal situation makes us realize that knowledge is "transcendental," beginning not with the self but with the objects of intentional consciousness.[27]

However, there is no question of submerging the Cogito in a naturalistic psychology of "mental fact." Ricoeur highly appreciates, and indeed follows, Descartes' conception of man as a "disproportionate" relation of finite and

---

[25] VI, p. 9.

[26] VI, p. 42.

[27] VI, pp. 217, 451.

infinite.[28] Reflective philosophy that starts with the mystery of the Cogito knows that the physical and the psychological cannot be merely co-ordinated:

> The ultimate consequence of the Cartesian revolution seems to us to lie here, in the discovery that the originality of consciousness with respect to all objectively conceived nature is such that no cosmology can any longer engulf this consciousness.[29]

The paradox of mind and body, freedom and nature, lies at the heart of Ricoeur's anthropology. We should only note here that, although he is critical of the way in which Descartes has understood this relationship, he feels a great dependence upon him for the discovery of the Cogito, and therefore of the mystery of human subjectivity.

(c) Gabriel Marcel and Existential Phenomenology

We have seen that Ricoeur found Husserl's philosophy lacking in a sense of the mystery of human reality, and felt the necessity of passing "from objectivity to existence." Descartes' sense of the mystery of the Cogito stimulated him in this direction. It is evident, however, that the call for a return to "existence" and involvement was the great contribution of that European philosophical movement known as Existentialism in the years of Ricoeur's youth. It will be necessary now to note his relationship to that movement.

The themes of "involved" philosophy, of participation

---

[28] Paul Ricoeur, Fallible Man, trans. C. Kelbley, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1967, p. 38.

[29] VI, p. 191.

in Being and emphasis on the situation of man as bodily, as well as on the mysterious nature of man as freedom, and as belonging to community, are common to all the philosophers called "existentialist." Among the most prominent of these are Gabriel Marcel, Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It has always been a delicate matter to use the word "existentialist" of these men, since they have successively claimed and disclaimed the title, wishing to dissociate themselves from one another's positions. As well as the common emphases mentioned above, these men also share the influence of (or at least, in some respects, similarity to) certain of their philosophical forebearers, and their work can perhaps profitably be termed "existential phenomenology." Ricoeur, discussing philosophy of this type, suggests that it has several sources.[30] One is the transcendental phenomenology of the later Husserl, which turned toward an investigation of man's life in the world (Lebenswelt). Most markedly, Sartre, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty have thought of themselves as phenomenologists and have utilized Husserlian methods. Other major sources of inspiration shared by all these thinkers are, according to Ricoeur, Hegel and Marx, as well as the obvious Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Ricoeur finds already in Kierkegaard, especially in The Concept of Dread, the Fragments, and Postscript, a rigorous phenomeno-

[30]Paul Ricoeur, "Existential Phenomenology," in HA, pp. 203ff.

logy of freedom and individual existence; and in Nietzsche a genuine reductive and genetic phenomenology of moral phenomena in The Geneology of Morals.[31] Ricoeur too must be placed in this list as amongst those heavily indebted to these sources. But he relates variously to his several fellows in this existential phenomenological bed.

Ricoeur's first book, with M. Dufrenne in 1947, dealt with the Existenzphilosophie of Karl Jaspers,[32] and the same year he published his Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers. He learned from Jaspers' notion of ciphers and of the antinomies of human nature, but rejected his confusion of guilt and finitude, and his emphasis on the tragic.[33] His later thought resembles that of Heidegger in regard to their common interests in ontology and the hermeneutics of texts.[34]

French existential phenomenology, even more than German, is to be situated at the confluence of Husserlian phenomenology and the great germinative existential founders. In his major books we find Ricoeur referring often to Sartre, either agreeing or taking up a position over against him, so that it is quite apparent that Sartre has been very much a part of his milieu. We will frequently refer to his relation to Sartre throughout this essay. And certainly there is much in common

---

[31] HA, pp. 206-208.

[32] Paul Ricoeur, M. Dufrenne, Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1947.

[33] Paul Ricoeur, Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, Paris, Temps Présent, 1947.

[34] Paul Ricoeur, "The Critique of Subjectivity and Cogito in the Philosophy of Heidegger," in Heidegger and the Quest for Truth, ed. M. S. Frings, Chicago, Quadrangle Bks Inc., 1968, pp. 62-74.

between Ricoeur and Merleau-Ponty, whom he has called "the greatest of French phenomenologists," and whose movement of thought he wishes to take up.[35] Once again, in the case of Merleau-Ponty, he objects to what he regards as the confusion of finitude and guilt; he also feels that he has inserted man in nature to such an extent that there is no ground left for man's transcendence of nature. As over against the negativity of both Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, Ricoeur represents an "existentialism" of affirmation, which is, I think, founded ultimately on his Christian faith.[36]

By far the most important positive influence on Ricoeur in this context is the French Catholic philosopher and playwright Gabriel Marcel (born 1889), his teacher after 1935 through the graduate years until his departure as an officer

---

[35] Paul Ricoeur, "New Developments in Phenomenology in France: the Phenomenology of Language," in Social Research, Vol. 34 (1967), pp. 1-30; p. 1.

[36] In the Preface to the first edition of History and Truth, a collection of articles (1955), Ricoeur explicitly states the relation of his Christian faith to his philosophic work. He wishes to convert a potential "mortal contradiction" into a living tension,--"to live Christian hope philosophically as the directive principle of reflection," (p. 7). Again, in the same volume, in his article "Christianity and History," he writes, "Ambiguity is the last word for existentialism; for Christianity it is real, it is lived, but it is the next to last word. That is why the Christian, in the very name of this confidence in a hidden meaning, is encouraged by his faith to attempt to construct comprehensive schemata .... In this respect, Christianity is closer to Marxist than to the existentialist temper....
.... Hope tells me that there is a meaning and that I should seek it." (p. 95).

of the French army in 1939. He had been much influenced by the frequent philosophical gatherings that occurred in Marcel's apartment and by his "Socratic" method of teaching, emphasizing personal, first-hand experience.[37] The overriding theme of Marcel's thought is Mystery. The "Mystery of Being" consists in the fact that we are "involved" in Being. Philosophical reflection is not appropriately "objective" (in the sense of "detached"), for we must become aware of our participation in Being. Philosophy is therefore properly concerned not with problem but with mystery.

> A problem is something which I meet, which I find complete before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is something in which I myself am involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and its initial validity. A genuine problem is subject to an appropriate technique by the exercise of which it is defined; whereas a mystery, by definition, transcends every conceivable technique. It is, no doubt, always possible, (logically and psychologically) to degrade a mystery so as to turn it into a problem. But this is a fundamentally vicious proceeding....[38]

The central instance for Marcel is the mysterious relation of oneself to one's body. This is a theme which remained constant in his thought from the time of his Metaphysical Journal of 1927 to his Gifford Lectures of 1949. As Marcel understands it, Incarnation is the central given of metaphysics, the situation of a being who is bound to a body. "Of this body I can

---

[37] Don Ihde, Hermeneutic Phenomenology, The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1971, p. 8.

[38] Gabriel Marcel, The Mystery of Being, (2 Vols) Vol. I, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1950, p. 260.

neither say that it is I, nor that it is not I, nor that it is for me (object). The opposition of subject and object is found to be transcended from the start."[39] Ricoeur, studying Husserl after his lengthy exposure to Marcel, judged that the former had not taken the body seriously, whereas Marcel had even written, "I declare, confusedly, that I am my body."[40] Again, in his "Outlines of a Phenomenology of Having," (1933):

> Contrary to the belief of many idealists, particularly the philosophers of consciousness, the self is always a thickening, a sclerosis, and perhaps--who knows?--a sort of apparently spiritualised expression (an expression of an expression) of the body, not taken in the objective sense, but in the sense of my body, insofar as it is mine, insofar as my body is something I have.[41]

We shall find in our next chapter that Ricoeur will use Marcel's notion of my body as basic to his own concept of le corps propre or le corps-sujet, variously translated as "subject body," or "personal body," "body-as-myself," or "an own body."[42]

Ricoeur has paid great homage to Marcel, in that the first volume of La Philosophie de la volonté is dedicated to him, and he goes so far as to say that "Meditation on Gabriel Marcel's work lies at the basis of the analysis of this book."[43] The atmosphere of Ricoeur's whole thought resembles that of Marcel, in that he is critical of the detached "homo philosophicus, who has cut the umbilical cord which joins the existent

---

[39] Marcel, Being and Having, An Existentialist Diary, trans. K. Farrer, New York, Harper and Row, 1949, pp. 11-12.

[40] Ibid., p. 12.

[41] Ibid., p. 167.

[42] Cf. the usage of "le corps propre," and "le corps-sujet," in Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, Paris, Aubier Editions Montaigne, 1950, pp. 14, 15.

[43] VI, p. 15; cf also Entretiens Gabriel Marcel, Paul Ricoeur, Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1968, p. 1.

to his body, to his historical moment, to others."[44] He is with existentialist thought in his recognition of freedom as central to philosophical anthropology, and in his rejection of attempted objectivities and neutralities, even those pretending to be merely descriptive.[45]

However, he diverges from Marcel and other existential phenomenologists in his desire for a more rigorous method. He believes that the death of speculative thought lurks in the shadows of Marcel's over-critical attitude to intellectualism.[46] His positive, receptive (though still critical) attitude to the social sciences also distinguishes him from most existentialists. And closely related to this is his greater emphasis on limits within the subject rather than on the external limits of man's situation in the world.[47] Ricoeur would correct the "romantic effusion" of some existentialism, and the shallow intellectualism of some phenomenology by combining the clarity which he believes is afforded by Husserlian methods, with the depth of Marcel's thought nourished by the mystery of my body.[48] His anthropology begins, therefore, with a structural, eidetic analysis of lived experienced exercise of the will, using the findings of empirical science as an indispensable diagnostic, but goes on, in successive phases, to disclose man's fallibility, and avowal of brokenness through a method of textual interpretation.

---

[44] Paul Ricoeur, "Le Renouvellement du problème de la philosophie chrétienne par les philosophies de l'existence," in Les Problèmes de la Pensée Chrétienne, Vol. 4, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1949, pp. 43-67; p. 47.

[45] Ibid., p. 49.

[46] Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, p. 120.

[47] HP, pp. 28-29.

[48] VI, pp. 15, 17.

(d) The Three Phases of the Philosophy of the Will

Ricoeur is a philosopher unusually conscious of the problems of method, and we have already noted some of his highly deliberate approaches and attitudes in relation to his most important mentors. Since it is not a primary concern of this essay to study his method, we can perhaps best observe his complex and carefully devised procedures as the content of his anthropology unfolds through the following four chapters. It seems useful nowever, however, simply to indicate the three methodological phases of La Philosophie de la volonté: eidetics, empirics, and poetics.

It is clear even from his Introduction to Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, (English translation: Freedom and Nature: the Voluntary and the Involuntary,) of 1950 that Ricoeur envisaged these three successive phases from the beginning.[49] This first book is deeply indebted, as we have already seen, to the existential insight of Marcel, and to the phenomenological method of Husserl. It is an intentional analysis of the structure of man's being carried out within double (Husserlian) brackets: phenomenological brackets and eidetic brackets, suspending the characteristics of actual, "existential" existence. The latter epoché means specifically the abstraction of the fault (la faute) and the dimension of Transcendence, both of

---

[49] VI, pp. 29-30.

which are to be dealt with in later phases. His reasons for the use of eidetic brackets constitute an important aspect of his anthropology, and it is best that we deal with it thoroughly in Chapter Two. The title of the book accurately indicates its central concern: the real but limited character of human freedom.

The second volume, Finitude et Culpabilité, was published in two separate parts both in 1960, the first being L'Homme faillible, (English translation: Fallible Man). This book begins to fill in what was left unsaid in the previous volume, investigating man's possibility for evil. "Eidetics" is replaced by "empirics." The characteristics of actual existence are no longer excluded from consideration. This remains an intentional, structural analysis, still dealing with possibilities, but this time with existential, rather than essential possibilities. The second part, La Symbolique du Mal, (The Symbolism of Evil) moves away from the mere possibility to the experienced fact of evil now studied through men's confessions in religious symbols and myths. Here Ricoeur has momentously passed from a descriptive to a hermeneutic phenomenology. His hermeneutics of symbols will prove to be the key to his ripening philosophy of man; particularly the Symbolique is rich in insight concerning human freedom.

Before moving forward to the final volume of his Philosophy of the Will, Ricoeur temporarily turned aside to a major methodological study, De l'Interprétation: Essai sur Freud, (Freud

and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation), 1965, which deals with very fundamental questions of hermeneutics and carries out a lengthy debate with Freud, one that bears immense implications for our theme of freedom.

The third volume of the trilogy, a poetics of the will, is still unwritten. It proposes to deal with man's vision of Transcendence and reconciliation, which is as much a part of human reality as the fault. Ricoeur informs us that "the completion of the ontology of the subject demands a new change of method, moving on to a kind of 'Poetics' of the will, suitable to the new realities that need to be discovered."[50] He affords us one tantalizing glimpse of the relevance of the projected poetics to the theme of freedom.

> The 'Poetics' of the will can hereafter rediscover the desire for God only thanks to a second revolution which breaks through the limits of subjectivity, as the latter had broken through the limits of natural objectivity.... We believe... that there is a hiatus of different significance between Transcendence and terrestrial good, and this good may be freedom itself, taken as the supreme good incarnate in the world: the transition to the 'Poetics' is already a conversion.[51]

But we must now imitate the patience of our philosopher and proceed to follow his painstaking path to an understanding of human freedom, beginning with the eidetic description of the voluntary and the involuntary.

---

[50] VI, p. 30.

[51] VI, pp. 191-192.

Chapter Two

FREEDOM AND NATURE

(a) General Principles and Strategies

Paul Ricoeur has frequently reiterated his belief that the business of philosophy is to make man its theme, and in doing so, to make explicit and relate itself to the view of man current in the contemporary human sciences.[1] In his eidetics, Freedom and Nature: the Voluntary and the Involuntary, we find him constantly in dialogue with behavioral psychology, as well as with Husserl and existentialism. Moreover, we often find him taking positions that are of interest to, and are apparently influenced by, Theology. It is our purpose here, while elucidating his philosophy of freedom, to explore his relationship to these various elements of his intellectual environment.

The eidetics is preliminary to a full ontology of man, attempting to free the interpretation of the will from mere empirical, "objectivistic" observation. However, he does not practice here a merely "intuitive" method, for he is already de-centering consciousness by an indirect method of intentional and diagnostic analysis. Our first task is to note the reasoning that lies behind the basic principles and strategies of this first volume.

---

[1] Paul Ricoeur, "Philosophie et ontologie," in Esprit, Aout, 1955, (8), p. 1378.

Intentional Analysis and the Question of the Phenomenological Reduction

There is some confusion amongst commentators on Ricoeur whether the philosophy of the will is carried out within phenomenological, transcendental brackets. In the Translator's Introduction to the eidetics, E. V. Kohak explicitly tells us that all three phases are intentional analyses excluding the concerns of objectifying consciousness.[2] Kohak says that the absence of "causal explanation" with regard to the will is, at least in part, the function of the phenomenological brackets. Don Ihde, in his book on Ricoeur, also indicates that this is the function of phenomenological bracketing. Ricoeur applies an epoché or suspension of belief, he writes, regarding causal theories of what may or may not lie behind or "explain" the will.[3] True enough, Ricoeur does say:

> The first principle which guided our description is the methodological contrast between description and explanation. To explain always means to move away from the complex to the simple.[4]

But, on the other hand, Ricoeur leads us to believe that he disapproves of the Husserlian reduction when he writes,

> all our considerations drive us away from the famous and obscure transcendental reduction which, we believe, is an obstacle to genuine understanding of personal body.[5]

Again, a few pages later, he adds:

> The transcendental "attitude" instituted by the transcendental reduction and the natural attitude alike avoid the presence of my corporal existence

---

[2] VI, p. xvi.
[3] HP, p. 10.
[4] VI, p. 4.
[5] Ibid.

> which is in a sense self-affirming. If I pay closer attention to this first underivable and uncharacterizable presence of my body, I also can no longer suspend the existence of a world extending that of my body as its horizon without seriously disrupting the very Cogito which in losing the existence of the world also loses the existence of its body and finally its marks as a first person.[6]

Does the distinction between description and explanation in fact constitute a use of phenomenological brackets? Another scholar, Klaus Hartmann, no doubt basing his opinion on the above statements, tells us in "Phenomenology, Ontology and Metaphysics," that Ricoeur "discounts both phenomenological reduction and the theory of constitution."[7] Certainly it is true that Ricoeur rejects Husserl's idealist doctrine of constitution. But perhaps there is a sense in which he does not reject the phenomenological reduction.

In his article, "Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the Will," Ricoeur explains that he wants to extend Husserl's intentional analysis to the practical sphere of consciousness.[8] The descriptive analyses of the eidetics are noetico-noematic analyses, spelling out the appearances of intermingled intentionalities. The Husserlian formula, "All consciousness is consciousness <u>of...</u>" is applied to the will. Thus "deciding" has as its object-correlate the <u>project;</u> "acting" and "moving" the <u>pragma,</u> and "consenting" <u>necessity.</u> The analysis involves "spreading out" the various moments of subjective life, con-

---

[6]<u>VI,</u> pp. 16-17.

[7]Klaus Hartmann, "Phenomenology, Ontology and Metaphysics," in <u>Review of Metaphysics,</u> Vol. XXII (1), Sept. 1968, p. 86.

[8]"Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the Will," <u>HA,</u> p. 213.

centrating not only upon the intending itself, but also upon its correlate. Since, therefore, this is an intentional, noetico-noematic analysis, Ricoeur is using the transcendental reduction, but of a quite different kind than Husserl's. He is not, as Husserl did, suspending the question of existence, and is therefore not ruling out the possibility of ontology. Rather, as Kohak and Ihde suggest, he is suspending the question of the ontological status of the will in the sense of an ultimate explanation. Thus even Hartmann admits, "One might say... that Ricoeur's understanding of eidetics retains an element of Husserl's phenomenological reduction."[9]

By performing such an intentional analysis of "the willed" as such, Ricoeur argues, he gains access to the distinction among acts themselves. He complains that some existential phenomenologists, having leaped too quickly to the later Husserl's concept of the Lebenswelt, "offer a description too quickly synthetic for my liking.... blurring the outline of different functions within a sort of indistinct existential monism."[10] For this reason, he argues (and here again he assumes the reduction in question) the phenomenological or transcendental reduction, "which restores the general sense of consciousness," cannot be practised without the eidetic reduction[11] that defines specific functions, such as perceiving, deciding, imagining, acting, moving, etc.

---

[9]Hartmann, op. cit., p. 88.

[10]MT, pp. 214-215.

[11]Ibid.

Analysis of Eidetic Structures

Intentional analysis must also be eidetic analysis, that is, must strive to discern eidetic (essential) structures of man. Thus in the opening of his first chapter, entitled "Pure Description of Deciding," Ricoeur explains that pure description is to be understood as an elucidation of meanings. "The words decision, project, value, motive, and so on, have a meaning which we need to determine. Hence we shall first proceed to such analyses of meanings."[12] How does he defend the possibility of discerning essential structures by such analysis of meanings? He explains that his procedure is to describe

> the ideal contents capable of fulfilling the many and varied significational intendings which language employs everytime we say "I wish," "I desire," "I regret".... If what is "other" could not signify what is the "same," in short, if some relatively incomparable situation could not be understood and spoken about, then the twofold difference (altérité)-- the temporal difference within a single consciousness and the mutual difference among several consciousnesses--would render each consciousness ineffable to another.
>
> Even in the obscure forest of the emotions, even in the course of the blood stream, phenomenology gambles on the possibility of thinking and naming.[13]

An eidetic description, then, is not "empirical," in the sense of "factual," but deals with man's structures or fundamental possibilities, bracketing the fact and elaborating the meaning; interpreting essences as principles of the intelligibility of man.[14] Specifically, Ricoeur's eidetics brackets out the fault and the dimension of Transcendence.

Abstraction of the Fault

When he chose to exclude the fault from a consideration

---

[12] VI, p. 37.
[13] MT, pp. 215-216.
[14] VI, p. 4.

of the essential structures of human reality, Ricoeur made a major philosophical decision. It aligned him with classical teleological or essentialist philosophy as against historicist and certain existentialist philosophies. He explicitly separates himself from Jaspers, who placed the fault among limit situations, and from Heidegger, who understood it within the structure of "care."[15] It is also very much in keeping with his Christian faith, aligning him closely with certain contemporary theologians.

The faulted region of human reality Ricoeur identifies as "the universe of the passions and of the law, in the sense in which St. Paul contrasts the law which kills with the grace which gives life." He is using the word "passion" partly in the Cartesian sense. Descartes had said that the soul has two forms of passivity: the spontaneity of its body, according to which it receives its motives, etc., and the passivity of its own corruption, according to which it submits to the bondage it imposes on itself.[16] As we have already seen, Ricoeur does not share Descartes' dualism of soul and body, but he does use the word "passion" to refer to an "aberrant principle" of improper passivity or bondage. Now he does not believe that passions such as ambition and hate are alien to the will; they are indeed the will itself, he declares, and their exclusion from a study of the essential structure of

[15] VI, p. 25n.

[16] VI, p. 20n.

human possibilities needs to be justified.

We may well ask just how Ricoeur discerns the fault as fault, how he avoids a merely arbitrary, subjective decision regarding what constitutes fault, and what an essential structure of man. E. V. Kohak, in the Translator's Introduction, suggests that the confrontation with Transcendence and the vision of innocence may be what reveals the fault as fault.[17] It may well be that Ricoeur is writing the beginning of his philosophy of the will with the end in view, but he has not in fact given us an account of Transcendence and innocence. Perhaps we have a hint of a criterion when he writes of the fault that "there is no principle of intelligibility of involuntary and voluntary functions, in the sense that their essences complete each other within the human unity. The fault is absurd."[18] On the same page he describes the passions as "vanity," as "unhappy," as "the absolute irrational in the heart of man." He needed to be much clearer and more explicit in his delineation of criteria for the fault. But he has disclosed, if not the logic, at least the source of his judgment on this matter:

> Might not the philosopher take exception to introducing the absurd on the pretext that it is dictated by a Christian theology of original sin? Yet if theology opens our eyes to an obscure segment of human reality, no methodological a priori should prevent the philosopher from having his eyes opened and henceforth reading man, his history and civilization, under the sign of the fall.[19]

---

[17] VI, p. xviii. [18] VI, p. 24. (Ricoeur's italics)
[19] VI, p. 25.

Ricoeur's eidetic, essentialist understanding of man is notably similar to that of the philosophical theologian Paul Tillich, who speaks of man's "existential" being as fallen from his "essential" being.[20] Ricoeur's decision to describe the essential structure of man's being minus the fault also resembles the Christocentric anthropology of Karl Barth, who builds a theology of "real man" upon the doctrine of the humanity of Jesus Christ.[21] But Barth's anthropology is explicitly based on God's revelation as an authoritative criterion, not excluding the eschatological visions of innocence. As a philosopher, Ricoeur does not cite any authoritative grounds, nor, as we have seen, does he offer any deductive or closely reasoned argument. He simply refers to the "opening of our eyes," inviting us to share an intuitive insight into the fault as fault, and into the fault as absurd.

He believes, then, that the fault, as absurd, cannot be an element of fundamental ontology homogeneous with the essen-

---

[20] Paul Tillich: "Finite freedom is the possibility of the transition from Essence to Existence." (Systematic Theology, Vol. II, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957, pp. 31ff.)

[21] Karl Barth raises the question how it is possible to see beneath man's sin to reach a doctrine of his creaturely essence, of his proper human nature as such. Man has no power of vision, he holds, to see through his perverted state to his true nature. The Word of God must tell him what he is, and does so in the Person of Jesus Christ. Barth writes, "As the man Jesus is Himself the revealing Word of God, He is the source of our knowledge of the nature of man as created by God." Anthropology has to be founded upon Christology, because Jesus Christ is "real man." "Real man" is unperverted man, man without sin. Because sin does not belong to the nature of man as such, explains Barth, it is not part of the doctrine of creation, but rather of the doctrine of reconciliation. Cf. The Doctrine of Creation, pt. 2, (Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, pt. 2, ed. T. F. Torrance, G. W. Bromiley, Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1960, pp. 41ff.

tial structures described by eidetics. It is to be regarded as an accident, an interruption, which cannot be dealt with by eidetic method, but which must await the "empirics" of the next volume. Not eidetics, but empirics, is suited to a "topography of the absurd."[22] But is eidetics possible at all if the essential structure of human being is shot through with the fault? Note that in his view man is not part free and part guilty; rather, he is "totally guilty."[23] Yet Ricoeur holds (and here he is in good theological company)[24] that the fault does not destroy the fundamental structures. Rather, he would say that "the voluntary and the involuntary, as they are in themselves, fall into the power of Nothing, like an oc-

---

[22] VI, p. 24.

[23] VI, p. 26.

[24] John Calvin, the great formative theologian of French Reformed Protestantism, to which Ricoeur belongs, is most noted for his doctrine of the totality of human sin. As for Luther, Calvin sees the totality of sin corresponding to the sola gratia of salvation. However, even Calvin wrote, "We perceive some remaining marks of the image which distinguish the human race in general from all other creatures." (Institutes of the Christian Religion, Book II, ii, xvii, pp. 237-238, trans. J. Allen, Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936). Man remains rational, maintains his sense of right and wrong, etc. Thus he speaks of a "remnant" or "relic" of the image of God. In Ricoeur's language, the essential structures of humanity remain, but they are alienated totally.

Also, in the theology of Karl Barth, the image of God in man remains in spite of sin. "The sin of man cannot be a creative act, an act of primary significance," he writes. Man remains man even as a sinner, and so also remains God's image. (Cf. CD, III, 2, p. 33.)

Ricoeur, despite his Christian belief, does not, at least in eidetics or empirics, use the word "sin," but fault, an indication that he does not consider himself to be doing theology.

cupied country surrendered intact to the enemy. This is why anthropology is possible."[25] Nor does eidetics attempt to describe some inaccessible non-existent innocence of man.

> It is not the lost paradise of innocence which we propose to describe, but the structures which are the fundamental possibilities offered equally to innocence and to the fault as a common keyboard of human nature on which mythical innocence and empirical guilt play in different ways.[26]

In the eidetics, (we are not sure what he plans for the poetics), Ricoeur has carefully remained within the bounds of philosophical anthropology, as distinct from, for example, the theological anthropology of Barth, which does attempt to describe "real man" as obedient man on the basis of Christology.[27] Ricoeur does offer us further light on this whole matter in one of his most important articles, "Negativity and Primary Affirmation," first published in 1956, six years after the eidetics. It helps us to realize that the abstraction of the fault from his eidetic phenomenology is in keeping with the ontology of man which gradually unfolds in his later books. He helps us to place him, particularly as over against Sartre, (and perhaps shows us something of the attitude that causes him to abstract the fault from eidetics) when he asks the question:

> Does being have priority over the nothingness within the very core of man, that is, this being which manifests itself by a singular power of negation? Stated in these terms, the question destroys the stages of

---

[25] VI, p. 25. [26] VI, p. 26.

[27] Cf. Ricoeur's comment on the relation of philosophy and theology in The Symbolism of Evil, trans. E. Buchanan, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967, pp. 309-310.

> its own elaboration and therefore seems abstract. Yet as we shall see, it governs a whole philosophical style, a style of "yes" and not a style of "no," and perhaps even a style characterized by joy and not by anguish.[28]

Abstraction of Transcendence

The grounds for "joy" are not to be dealt with in the eidetics anymore than the grounds for repentance. Just as the fault is excluded, so also is man's vision of Transcendence and reconciliation. By abstracting Transcendence, Ricoeur once again distinguishes clearly between a philosophical and a theological anthropology. The latter must of necessity spell out the nature of man in terms of his relation to God.[29] Ricoeur would not, I think, quarrel with this. But what he is pursuing here is quite strictly an autonomous philosophical statement regarding the structure of human being.

Ricoeur means by "Transcendence" "a presence which constantly precedes my own power of self-affirmation."[30] Its abstraction is inseparable from the abstraction of the fault. The vision of innocence, he points out, is the mythical counterpart to the fault, since the fault is experienced as "before God," that is, as sin. Furthermore, Transcendence is what liberates freedom from the fault. "Captivity and deliverance of freedom are one and the same drama."[31] It would be impossible, therefore, he argues, to deal with Transcendence

---

[28]Paul Ricoeur, "Negativity and Primary Affirmation," in HT, p. 305.

[29]Karl Barth: "To be man is to be with God." (CD, III, 2, p. 135)

[30]VI, pp. 32-33.

[31]VI, p. 29.

without also dealing with fault. As he pointed out in connection with the abstraction of the fault, he is not concerned in eidetics to describe either a lost innocence or the corruption of man. Rather, he is concerned to show that bondage (the result of fault) and deliverance (the gift of Transcendence) are "things that happen to freedom."[32] Through abstraction of the fault and Transcendence he wants to establish the meaning of human freedom and responsibility as incarnate freedom in dialogue with nature. But in doing so, he emphatically denies a conception of the Cogito as self-positing: "the self as radical autonomy, not only moral but ontological, is precisely the fault."[33]

This first stage of philosophical anthropology, excluding reference to Transcendence, is distinctly not theological, but it goes on <u>beside</u> theological anthropology and, in the case of Ricoeur, is definitely not opposed to it. Whether his account of man's experience of Transcendence, as promised in the <u>Poetics</u>, will unite philosophical and theological anthropology remains to be seen.

<u>The Principle of Reciprocity</u>

A key operative principle which Ricoeur consistently applies in this eidetic phenomenological description is what he calls "reciprocity."

We have already seen that the "first principle" guiding

---

[32] <u>VI</u>, p. 33.

[33] <u>VI</u>, p. 29.

his account of the voluntary and the involuntary is the contrast between description and explanation. This means he rejects the attempts of some psychologists to "explain" the voluntary in terms of the involuntary, finding in the latter a meaning of its own independent of the will. Rather, he wishes to say that the will is entailed in a right understanding of the involuntary functions. Accordingly, he contends that

> the initial situation revealed by description is the reciprocity of the involuntary and the voluntary. Need, emotion, habit, etc., acquire a complete significance only in relation to a will which they solicit, dispose, and generally affect....[34]

Thus the involuntary has no meaning independent of the voluntary. This opinion is offered to us as an insight which throws light on our experience of the mystery of freedom and nature. We are invited to see that the voluntary and the involuntary are only intelligible in this reciprocal relation. The remainder of the book attempts to illustrate this intelligibility. Moreover, in the same way he asserts a priority of the voluntary in its reciprocal relation with the involuntary.

> Not only does the involuntary have no meaning of its own, but understanding proceeds from the top down and not from the bottom up. Far from the voluntary being derivable from the involuntary, it is, on the contrary, the understanding of the voluntary which comes first in man. I understand myself in the first place as he who says "I will."[35]

Here is an existential phenomenological assertion deliberately opposed to deterministic behaviorism, which does precisely de-

---

[34] VI, p. 4.

[35] VI, p. 5; compare the dialectic of archeology and teleology in Freud and Philosophy, this essay, chapter V (c).

rive "freedom" from involuntary organic processes.[36] A key word for Ricoeur in justifying his position as over against behaviorism is, once again, intelligibility. While for "explanation," (for Ricoeur this word generally carries a derogatory connotation) the simple is the basis and reason for the complex, for "description and understanding, the one is the reason for the many. The will is the one which brings order to the many of the involuntary."[37] For this reason, throughout the eidetics he always begins with a description of the voluntary, and only thereafter considers the involuntary structures which constitute the sine qua non, that "nature," the organ of freedom that makes the voluntary actual. Ricoeur's guiding formula -- "the voluntary is by reason of the involuntary while the involuntary is for the voluntary"[38] -- means that nature becomes meaningful only in its relation to the mysterious Cogito which is incarnate in it, and freedom becomes actual

---

[36] B. F. Skinner, the prominent behavioral psychologist (in his book Beyond Freedom and Dignity, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1971) believes that the concept of freedom is used to "explain only the things we are not yet able to explain in other ways," (p. 14). In this pre-scientific view, he tells us, a person's behavior is to some extent his own achievement, but in the scientific view, "a person's behavior is determined by a genetic endowment traceable to the evolutionary history of the species and by the environmental circumstances to which an individual has been exposed." He opines: "Neither view can be proved." But, "as we learn more about the effects of the environment we have less reason to attribute any part of human behavior to an autonomous controlling agent." (p. 101).

[37] VI, p. 5.

[38] VI, p. 471.

only through the nature upon which it is dependent.

"Reciprocity," then, is the concept which renders intelligible the mysterious link between the involuntary and the voluntary in such a duality that each requires the other.

Subject Body and Object Body:
The Diagnostic Relation

The principle of reciprocity affords sufficient importance to the role of both involuntary and voluntary aspects of man that Ricoeur is enabled to strike a fruitful relationship between phenomenology and the "objective" human sciences. He is, we should not overlook, tersely negative in his attitude to a psychology which makes man a mere object or thing. Yet he recognizes a validity in the empirical human sciences and finds in their results relevant data for philosophical anthropology. The relation of phenomenology to the objective sciences is a "diagnostic" one.

The problem arises when we consider man's body. As Ricoeur readily admits,

> The body is better known as an empirical object elaborated by experimental sciences. We have a biology, endowed with an objectivity which appears to be the only conceivable objectivity, for knowing the objectivity of facts within a nature encompassed by laws of an inductive kind.[39]

But treating the body as an object tends to divorce knowledge of the involuntary from the Cogito, and psychological science, proceeding according to the same assumptions as biology, deve-

[39] VI, p. 8.

lops a science of mental facts (a "monstrosity") thus degrading human consciousness to the level of the object. The concept of an objectified consciousness misses the distinctive sense of the "I" and the intentionality which is the essence of freedom. When the involuntary is reduced to an empirical "fact," the voluntary dissipates, because, in Ricoeur's words, "Freedom has no place among empirical objects; it requires a reversal of viewpoint and a discovery of the Cogito."[40] The dissipation of freedom, of course, is precisely the acknowledged conclusion of the behaviorists.

As we saw in our last chapter, Ricoeur rejects Descartes' dualism of mind and body. Man is not so divided. But he believes that a common subjectivity is the basis of the unity of voluntary and involuntary as well as of mind and body. Taking his inspiration from Gabriel Marcel, he speaks of <u>le corps-sujet,</u> body as <u>personal body,</u> or <u>subject body.</u> The body as subject body is the body as a source of motives, as an organ of action, and as a necessary nature. The distinction between object body and subject body is not limited to introspection, for subject body is <u>my</u> body <u>and your</u> body, simply a subject's body. In communication with others we discover the subject body of the other, and, finding there decision, action and consent, know that we cannot appropriately treat it merely

---

[40] <u>VI,</u> p. 12.

as empirical object. Similarly, we know ourselves to be readable to the other not merely as object body but as subject body.[41]

However, this does not mean simple bracketing of the objective facts of biology or even of naturalistic psychology, for

> we cannot pretend that we are unaware of the fact that the involuntary is often better known empirically, in its form, albeit degraded, of a natural event. Thus we need to enter into a close dialectic between the body as a personal body and the object body, and to establish specific relations between the description of the Cogito and classical empirical psychology.[42]

Just how, then, does Ricoeur establish these relations? What specifically is the relation of object body and subject body? They are, of course, the same body. But they do not, he insists, simply "coincide." Their relation is "diagnostic" in character.[43]

The concept and method of the diagnostic relation is a

---

[41] Ricoeur's distinction between subject body and object body bears some resemblance to Jean-Paul Sartre's distinction between the "body-for-others" and the "body-for-itself" (Being and Nothingness, trans. H. E. Barnes, New York, Citadel Press, 1966, pp. 282f, 315f). Sartre's distinction, however, finds "objectivity" in the point of view of the other as such, and "subjectivity" in one's own point of view. Thus he equates the physician's (the empirical scientist's) view of the body with the view of others as such: "So far as the physicians have had any experience with my body, it was with my body in the midst of the world and as it is for others. My body as it is for me does not appear to me in the midst of the world." (p. 279). On the other hand, Ricoeur locates "objectivity" not in the view of the other as such, but in the attitude of the other. The other can experience my body as subject body also (and I his); moreover I can experience my own body as object body, i.e., from the objective, factual, point of view of empirical science. And for Ricoeur, both object body and subject body are "in the midst of the world."

[42] VI, pp. 11-12.

[43] VI, pp. 12-13.

medical metaphor, but in reverse.[44] The doctor may diagnose a patient's illness by taking as his clue the articulated subjective experience of the patient and relating it to the objective characteristics of diseases. But the phenomenologist takes as his clue the objectively observed facts of empirical science and uses them as signs or pointers (indices) to expose obscure areas of experience. Ricoeur explains that the need for this indirect diagnostic method does not arise out of the relation of two realities, consciousness and the body. The non-coincidence arises as a problem of our language, which is inadequate to the mystery of the relation of consciousness and body. It is a problem of

> the relation of two universes of discourse, two points of view of the same body considered alternately as a personal body inherent in its Cogito, and as object body presented among other objects. The diagnostic relation expresses this encounter of two universes of discourse.[45]

What Ricoeur is suggesting is highly relevant to the long standing disagreements of some philosophers and some empirical psychologists concerning freedom. The latter, (e.g. Skinner, whom we quoted above) have frequently found the "anthropomorphic" or "pre-scientific" language (e.g. intentions, motives, desires, etc.) of ordinary language of no scientific value, or at least as misleading for a proper scientific understanding of man. Similarly, some philosophers have found the lan-

---

[44] Cf. HP, pp. 29f.

[45] VI, p. 88.

guage of "cause" and "drive" inadequate to express human realities.[46] Ricoeur, rejecting mind-body dualism, but also the reduction of mind to body (or of voluntary to involuntary) is suggesting that the undeniable unity of mind and body (also of subject body and object body) is a mysterious reality that involves two languages, i.e., there is one reality but two conceptual systems.[47] This is why man cannot know himself simply by direct introspection, why philosophical anthropology must proceed by way of detour, -- in this case, by an indirect "diagnostic" procedure. He explains,

> In some cases it will appear almost impossible to discover the subjective indication, in the language of the Cogito, of a function or an occurrence which is well known in biology or in empirical psychology (for example, personality type or the unconscious; birth, which we shall dwell at length...)
>
> This is why our method will be most responsive to scientific psychology, even though it will make only diagnostic use of it. Description of the Cogito will frequently recover from empirical psychology the vestiges of a phenomenology which it discovers there in an objectified and in some way alienated form. But with equal frequency a phenomenological concept will be no more than a subjectivization of a concept far better known along an empirical path.[48]

We shall have to observe the diagnostic method as Ri-

---

[46] E.g., A. I. Melden, a British philosopher (in his book Free Actions, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961) writes that it is a fundamental mistake to suppose that the causal model employed in the natural sciences will fit with everyday explanations of actions in terms of intentions, interests, desires, etc. (p. 199). He finds a "logical incoherence" in the supposition that actions, desires, intentions, etc. stand in causal relations. (p. 201).

[47] Cf. Charles Reagen, "Ricoeur's Diagnostic Relation," in International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. VIII (1968), pp. 586-592; p. 589.

[48] VI, p. 13.

coeur actually applies it in the body of his eidetic analysis of deciding, acting and consenting. But first we should note that this indirect diagnostic method is characteristic of a more general strategy of opposing two sides of a polarity leading to a reconciling limit concept.

Paradox, Copernican Revolution and Reconciliation

We have seen that Ricoeur insists upon attention to the mysterious character of incarnate freedom as over against both Husserlian phenomenology and "objectivistic" psychology. The root of the mystery is the relation of freedom and nature in man. Sometimes he refers to the mystery as a paradox. Paradox means the co-existence of polarities and the impossibility of systematization. He explains,

> Consciousness is always in some degree a disruption and a bond. This is why the structures which connect the voluntary and the involuntary are structures of rupture as well as of union. Behind these structures lies the paradox which culminates in the paradox of freedom and nature.... There is no logical procedure by which nature could be derived from freedom (the involuntary from the voluntary) or freedom from nature. There is no system of nature and freedom.[49]

Nevertheless, philosophical anthropology cannot rest easily in paradox which, as such, threatens its rationality and offers little to the intelligibility of man. The eidetics attempts only a limited contribution to a "reconciled ontology" which is to be carried forward in the empirics and poetics. But in the last analysis, the conflict of freedom and necessity

[49] VI, pp. 18-19.

can be reconciled, Ricoeur believes, "only in hope and in another age."[50]

The limited contribution of the eidetics is to present the play and counterplay of phenomenology and counter-phenomenology in such a way as to offer a critique of what he regards as the naiveté of objectivism. Yet he is also dissatisfied, as we have already pointed out, with a merely introspective existential phenomenology, which he accuses of engaging in a "second-level naiveté." This he identifies as the illusion that philosophy can be reflection without spiritual discipline (ascèse) and without a purification of its own seeing.[51] Through the whole project of the philosophy of the will, Ricoeur aims at a radicalization of phenomenology which would constitute a "second Copernican revolution."

"Copernican Revolution" is an important concept for Ricoeur:

> The beginning of philosophy is a Copernican revolution which centers the world of object on the Cogito: the object is for the subject, the involuntary is for the voluntary, motives are for choice, capacities for effort, necessity for consent.... This entire work [the eidetics] is carried out under the sign of that first Copernican revolution.[52]

The eidetics, then, is an aspect of the first Copernican revolution which restores to subjectivity its due. But even this first volume, using indirect methods, limits subjectivity and freedom by understanding it dialectically as over against the objectivity of nature. Objectivity is also given its due.

---

[50] VI, p. 19.
[51] MT, p. 232.
[52] VI, pp. 471-472.

Thereby the eidetics begins to expose the second-level naiveté, the vain illusion which does not recognize the dependent and limited character of freedom in its relation to nature and the Transcendent.

> The Ego must more radically renounce the covert claim of all consciousness, must abandon its wish to posit itself, so it can receive the nourishing and inspiring spontaneity which breaks the sterile circle of the self's constant return to itself.[53]

The exposure of this illusion begins precisely in the dialectic between polarities -- subjectivity and objectivity, phenomenology and the empirical human sciences -- which appears in the eidetics by means of the diagnostic method. Implicit in the diagnostic and its indices is the development of a reconciling "third term" which will become explicit in the empirics. Meanwhile, the eidetics leaves us with the recognition of two partially overlapping circles which depict the paradox of freedom and nature.[54]

The "first Copernican Revolution" then, enabled us to see the paradox. The "second Copernican revolution" carries us beyond it. The paradox is not ultimate for Ricoeur. It will fulfil its function, he says, if "in wearing itself out, it will succeed in showing the basic adherence of necessity and freedom."[55] Thus he informs us in the Introduction to the eidetics, that

the intention of this book is to understand the mystery

---

[53] VI, p. 14. [54] Cf. HP, p. 16.
[55] VI, p. 353.

> as reconciliation, that is, as restoration, even on the clearest level of consciousness, of the original concord of vague consciousness with its body and its world. In this sense the theory of the voluntary and the involuntary not only describes and understands, but also restores.[56]

Now in our next section we shall have to see how Ricoeur actually applies these general principles and strategies to spell out the limited nature of man's freedom as the relation of the voluntary and the involuntary in terms of decision, action and consent.

(b) An Only Human Freedom

Now we must try to identify clearly the contribution that Ricoeur has made to our understanding of human freedom in the main body of his eidetics, Freedom and Nature: the Voluntary and the Involuntary. This is his only book which concentrates solely and directly upon the theme of freedom, and it therefore demands our closest attention. In our discussion of its general principles and strategies we have already previewed some of its content and glimpsed something of its intricate complexity. A lecture delivered by Ricoeur to the Société française de philosophie in 1951 and published and translated as "The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limiting Idea," is a helpful and lucid complement to the large book. There he states:

> It is the task of the philosophy of the will to transpose the "dualism of understanding" into a "dramatic dua-

---

[56] VI, p. 18.

> lity" of the voluntary and the involuntary, under the regulative idea of a merely human freedom, that is to say, a freedom not creative but motivated, achieved, and situated in its body.[57]

His reference to "the dualism of understanding" reminds us of his statements regarding paradox and reconciliation. Man, as freedom and nature, soul and body, subject body and object body, voluntary and involuntary, is yet a unity. The "dramatic duality" is the reciprocal relation of the pairs, to be understood dialectically by the diagnostic method. The mysterious character of the one reality, however, involves us, we recall, in two universes of discourse. We must strive to see how the voluntary is limited by its unity with the involuntary, and the involuntary by its unity with the voluntary. Ricoeur explains:

> We think of "freedom" and "nature" as two by reason of the double movement in which the Cogito separates itself in reflection and objectifying thought reduces the involuntary to the status of things. The understanding of the voluntary and the involuntary, the one by the other, is a struggle against this double movement.[58]

The eidetics presents an analysis of three moments of the will: decision, action and consent. Each cycle begins with an intentional analysis, i.e., it offers a noematic account of the world-directedness of the will, then returns reflectively to the subjective life of the Cogito, and to the subject as incarnate. Having read the will "from the top down," from the voluntary aspect, a second reading of bodily

---

[57]Paul Ricoeur, "The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limiting Idea," in Readings in Existential Phenomenology, ed. N. Lawrence, D. L'Connor, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967, (pp. 93-112), p. 94.

[58]Ibid., p. 93.

existence is undertaken, this time with reference to the involuntary, using the diagnostic method to draw insight from the objective sciences.[59] The aim of the eidetics, we remember, is to display the fundamental possibilities of the will, that is, to define both the reaches and the limits within which all willing occurs. What Kant attempted to do for the philosophy of knowledge, Ricoeur now attempts for the philosophy of the will. Just as Kant both established and limited knowledge, so also Ricoeur both establishes and limits the will. The eidetics, while affirming the mysterious unity of the voluntary and the involuntary, concludes that the relation of freedom and nature is a paradox: <u>freedom bound by nature.</u> "To will is not to create,"[60] for ours is "an only human freedom."

Ricoeur explains, in "The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limiting Idea" why he has chosen to deal first with decision, then successively with action and consent. He wishes to exhibit the progress of a "practical mediation"[61] between freedom and nature, that is, to show the way in which the two sides of the dialectic come together and limit one another in the practical functioning of the human will. This is best achieved, he feels, if the three aspects are made to appear in a <u>progressive order.</u> The intentional character of willing involves decision as its first moment

---

[59] Cf. <u>HP,</u> pp. 30ff. [60] <u>VI,</u> p. 486. [61] Unity, p. 93.

(I decide that...), turned toward some project. But then action "fills the empty intention of the project." Finally, practical mediation requires consent to necessity, to that which cannot be changed by decision and action.

Without further discussion of procedure, let us look closely at his three-fold analysis of the voluntary and the involuntary in terms of decision, action and consent.

(i) Decision and Motivation

The first part of the eidetics deals with decision as voluntary and motivation as its corresponding receptivity or relative involuntary.

The Voluntary of Deciding

Although the whole first volume is eidetic in the sense of exploring essential structures and abstracting the fault and Transcendence, the first chapter is eidetic in the strictest sense, that is, a "pure description" of deciding by way of an analysis of meanings in "instantaneous segments cut out of the flux of consciousness" without reference to time.[62]

First, to decide is not necessarily to act. The pure description of moving and acting will follow in a separate chapter. Not that a temporal interval always separates decision and action; the interval is one of meaning, not of temporality. On the one hand, the decision and the action can be instantaneous as, in his example, rolling a cigarette while speaking,

[62] VI, p. 37.

wherein decision is concealed within an automatic yet voluntary action. Why is such an automatic action not merely the involuntary and mechanistically determined action of an organism meeting its need for stimulation or relaxation, as a behaviorist would understand it? Ricoeur argues that it is capable of being reflected upon and remembered as voluntary:

> To the extent to which an automatic action is even minimally observed--in a sense out of the corner of my eye--and an explicit will could recognize it after the fact and go back over it, it begins to correspond to the pattern we are trying to disentangle.[63]

On the other hand, execution of a decision may be delayed, perhaps indefinitely. An action is voluntary, says Ricoeur, and therefore a decision is involved, if we can recognize in it even an implicit projected intention. And an authentic decision has occurred also even in the case of a delayed action, if the projected action appears to be within that person's power. His definition: "A decision signifies, that is, designates in general, a future action which depends upon me and which is within my power."[64]

The will is most emphatically not a "force." To decide is to project an action <u>intentionally.</u> Intentionality of the will resembles thought in the Husserlian sense. Just as thought can best be understood in terms of its intentional relation to the other (Consciousness is consciousness <u>of</u>...), so also the will is best understood, in the first instance, as the inten-

---

[63] <u>VI,</u> p. 39.

[64] <u>VI,</u> pp. 40-41.

tion of a project, the project being the "object" of the decision. To decide is to decide something. The most distinctive trait of the something, the project, is its reference to the future.[65] But already the voluntary is limited, for "the future is what I cannot hurry or retard." The voluntary agent must live among resistances and opportunities, so that he must not "miss a chance" but must "seize opportunities." Thus the will is inhibited within the necessities of its bodily condition and must reconcile its projects by consent to the possibilities that present themselves.[66]

But a study of its intentional aspect does not exhaust the phenomenology of deciding. While a decision most commonly occurs pre-reflectively, and while the agent does not normally notice himself willing, he can say "Je me decide...." "I make up my mind." On returning from attention to the project back to the subject, one can say "It is I who..." In doing so, one takes responsibility, and sees oneself in one's decisions and projects.[67] This reflexive moment, he argues, is not merely superadded, altering the character of intentional willing, for he detects also a "prereflexive imputation of myself," a self-reference which is not yet self-observation, but which contains the possibility of reflection, and of the "It is I who...." This relation both to the self and to the object is expressed in the French reflexive verbs, e.g., "Je

---

[65] Unity, p. 96. [66] VI, pp. 52-54. [67] VI, pp. 55-56.

me decide à...." "Je me souviens à...." "Je me rejouis de..."

It is a self-reference not without reference to a project, active, not observational.[68] If we are indeed free persons, if the voluntary has any reality at all, then, Ricoeur holds, it must be the case that

> all acts carry with them a vague awareness of their subject pole, their place of emission. This awareness does not suspend the direction of perceiving, imagining or willing towards the object. Specifically in the acts which French expresses with reflexive constructions there is a juncture of the vague consciousness of being subject and of the subject as object, involved in the project, which takes place prior to all reflexive dissociation.[69]

Therefore explicit reflection ("It is I who...") simply raises a more primitive affirmation of self to discourse, making the practical pre-reflexive affirmation thematic. As we quoted Ricoeur earlier,[70] it is by reason of the double movement in which the Cogito separates itself in reflection and objectifying thought reduces the involuntary to the status of things, that we think of freedom and nature as two. But in fact the "practical mediation" of voluntary and involuntary within the one reality of man is such that in normal prereflexive deciding and acting, freedom is yet operative in a concealed manner, making its way through obstacles and possibilities of its own nature and its surrounding world.

Motive and Cause

Lest the previous discussion of the voluntary nature of deciding leave us with the impression that a decision can be

---

[68] VI, pp. 58-59. [69] VI, p. 60. [70] Cf. p. 46.

an arbitrary decree, Ricoeur introduces motives and values immediately, still within the strictly eidetic pure description of deciding. There are no decisions without motives, he declares. Every decision involves a receptivity: "I decide this because...."[71]

The first distinction he wishes to make--and it is cardinal for his whole philosophical anthropology--is that between motive and cause, which we already met in his discussion of the distinction between subject body and object body. It will be worthwhile to quote his key statement regarding motive and cause:

> It is the nature of a cause to be knowable and understood prior to its effects. A set of phenomena can be intelligible without reference to another set of phenomena which result from it. The cause confers its meaning on its effect. On the other hand, it is the essence of a motive not to have a complete meaning apart from the decision which refers to it. I am not able to understand the motives first and in themselves, deriving an understanding of the decision secondarily from them. Their final meaning is tied in a basic way to that action of the self on the self which is decision. The will, in a single movement, determines both itself and the definitive form of its affective as well as its rational arguments. It imposes its decree on future existence and invokes its reasons.... Thus the relation is reciprocal: the motive cannot serve as the basis for a decision unless a will bases itself on it. It determines the will only as the will determines itself.[72]

"Basing oneself" is an intentional act, for every motive is a motive <u>of</u> a decision. Ricoeur, therefore, radically rejects any mixture of the languages of physics and psychology which

---

[71]Unity, p. 97.

[72]<u>VI</u>, p. 67.

would attempt to integrate them into a general causal determinism.

> There are no gaps in determinism--it is total or not at all, its supremacy is in principle co-extensive with empirical objectivity. To think of anything as an empirical object is to think of it in terms of law. Thus we must renounce the attempt to lodge fundamental structures of willing... in the interstices of determinism, that is, in a general cosmology which would take the phenomenal order of physical causality as its initial datum....[73]

Rather, pure descriptive phenomenology begins by restoring the "primordial status of consciousness in relation to objective structures," rejecting an objectification of the Cogito in a monistic naturalism of the kind he identifies in behaviorist psychology.[74]

Motives and Values

As soon as we begin to speak of motivation in its relation to the Cogito we meet the philosophy of values. Ricoeur

---

[73] VI, p. 68.

[74] The important behaviorist to whom Ricoeur often refers, E. C. Tolman, provides an excellent example of the causal determinism here opposed (Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men, New York, Meredith Publishing Co., 1967). Tolman defines Behaviorism as: "Any type of psychology which, in contrast to mentalism, holds that 'mental events' in animals and human beings can for the purposes of science, be characterized most successfully in terms wholly of the ways in which they function to produce actual or probable behavior." (p. 439). For "mentalism" minds are streams of inner happenings; for "behaviorism" mental processes are inferred determinants of behavior (p. 3). Tolman rejects what he regards as the simplistic behaviorism of John B. Watson, insisting on the purposive and cognitive character of both human and animal behavior. However, he makes it very clear that these purposes and cognitions are wholly objective as to definition, defined by characters and relationships which we observe out there in the behavior (p. 13). Thus environmental stimuli and initiating psychological states are the ultimate or "initiating" causes of behavior (p. 19).

does not want to do ethics at this point; he is still in the midst of a description of deciding, but the nature of ethical decision is part of that description. Borrowing from an older phenomenologist, Max Scheler, Ricoeur formulates that a motive represents and "historializes" values and their relations.[75] Keeping in mind the distinction between motive and cause, to give a reason for a decision or act is not to "explain," but to justify or legitimate. Not that the values behind every project are value "judgments," self-conscious and self-imputed. But when we do reflect on our evaluations we do so by drawing back from the prereflexive thrust of the project to question its legitimacy. Thus ethical consciousness

> moves from the reasons for its projects to the reasons for its reasons, reopening the question of its value references and unceasingly questioning its proximate, remote, penultimate, and ultimate values.... Ethics is such a radicalization.[76]

Despite the reflective nature of ethics, however, values always appear in the practical context of loyalty and dedication. For the purposes of pure description, he says that

> value is valuable in relation to an eventual project, which means that values only appear to me in a historical, qualified situation within which I orient myself and seek to motivate my action. Motivation of a specific project is where moral judgments enter in.... I would say that values are not timeless ideas but suprapersonal existences, thereby stressing that their appearance is tied to a definite history on which I collaborate actively with all the power of my dedication, briefly, a history which I invent.[77]

To orient motivation and value to project in this way empha-

---

[75] VI, p. 72. [76] VI, p. 74. [77] VI, p. 75.

sizes their subjective nature, and also seems to emphasize the voluntary aspect of decision. But it is not Ricoeur's purpose to stress the voluntary at the expense of the involuntary or the transcendent. While he proceeds "from the top down," it is his thesis, we recall, that freedom is bound and "only human." He does not wish to speak (with the existentialism of Sartre for example)[78] of a free, or arbitrary, or sovereign

[78]Jean-Paul Sartre, Ricoeur's older contemporary French philosopher, represents the voluntaristic existentialist position perhaps more lucidly than any other. He identifies the common element of existentialist philosophy as the assertion that "existence precedes essence" (p. 15) This doctrine denies that man has a given human nature or that there is any universal concept of man of which each man is a particular example. Atheistic existentialism specifically holds, he writes, that "there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and that this being is man...." (p. 18). This means that "man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards, defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing.... Thus there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence" (p. 18).

This is precisely the position Ricoeur is criticizing when he speaks of those who see the will as sovereign and arbitrary, non-receptive to motives and values. The consequences for ethics are drawn with perfect logic by Sartre: "The existentialist... thinks it very distressing that God does not exist, because all possibility of finding values in a heaven of ideas disappears along with him; there can no longer be an <u>a priori</u> Good, since there is no infinite and perfect consciousness to think it. Nowhere is it written that Good exists, that we must be honest, that we must not lie; because the fact is we are on a plane where there are only men. Dostoievsky said, "If God didn't exist, everything would be possible." That is the very starting point of existentialism. Indeed, everything is permissible if God does not exist...." (pp. 26-27). If existence precedes essence, then, says Sartre, there is also no determinism. Not only is there no God to legitimize our conduct, but

creation of values. Rather, he speaks of a paradox of value:

> it is not completely a product of history, it is not invented, it is recognized, respected, and discovered.... I encounter values in motivating a project (the project being itself a moment of militant consciousness). If there is such a thing as a contemplation of the good, it is sustained only by the thrust of consciousness which incorporates its values in a project.[79]

If values are recognized, respected, discovered and encountered, then they carry an objectivity; they are 'over-against' the deciding agent. Still, however, values are not recognized impartially as empirical objects are recognized in their objectivity. They are recognized by a will. "I do not will unless I see, but I cease to see if I absolutely cease to will."[80] Freedom is not sovereign or arbitrary, but it always remains freedom in relation to values.

Far from abstracting freedom and willing from the actualities and limitations of human existence, Ricoeur proceeds to show the rooted, receptive character of decision in the bodily nature of man. "The physical involuntary," he tells us, "is the existential source of the first stratum of values and the affective sounding board of all values, even the most refined values."[81] He next enters upon a long and rich study of moti-

---

78 (cont)
there are no excuses: "We are alone, with no excuses.... That is why I shall try to convey that man is condemned to be free." (p. 27). Note that this atheistic existentialist position stands not only over against classical views, but also over against behaviorist views. Increasingly, we shall see that Ricoeur stands somewhere between these positions. (Cf. Sartre, Existentialism, trans. B. Frechtman, New York, Philosophical Library, Inc., 1947).

79 VI, p. 75. 80 VI, p. 76. 81 VI, p. 78.

vation and the corporeal involuntary. Here we move away from the abstractions of the strictest eidetics to an elucidation of actual existence still within the limits of the objectivity of essences.[82]

The Involuntary of Motives and Needs

It is consideration of the body as the basic source of motives that introduces the existential note breaking the bounds of strict eidetics. The body is the initial underivable involuntary, that which a man does not decide upon or choose, but which is simply given. This involuntary must be understood reciprocally, however, with the voluntary of deciding. My body is "body-for-my-willing," and my willing is project "based(in part)-in-my-body." Pure description had the function of guarding against a reduction of the voluntary to the involuntary. The guiding principle of reciprocity, we remind ourselves, was that "The involuntary is *for* the will, and the will is *by reason of* the involuntary."[83]

If the body is source of motives, it is the *needs* of the body that are referred to. Needs, says Ricoeur, are the material of which motives are made. When we speak of "feeling a need" we are in the realm of personal or subject body, even though also in the realm of the involuntary. Thus need stresses the paradoxical ambiguity of the body, for while needs are "felt" subjectively, they are also observable objectively.

---

[82] *VI*, p. 84.

[83] *VI*, pp. 85-86.

The tendency to stress the latter to the point of reducing subject body to the status of an object or thing is, in Ricoeur's words "the first invitation to treason." He cannot stress too strongly, he believes, how need is misrepresented by "psychophysiology."[84] That is why the diagnostic method must be called upon to mediate between two standpoints regarding need. Need is known, after all, not from the outside as an empirical event, but from within as my lived need, and, through empathy, as your lived need. But objective symptoms of need display themselves as the deterioration of blood and tissue, etc. To gain clarity of understanding of need and motive, consciousness is not used as a symptom of the object body; rather the observed conditions of the object body are used as indications of personal body.

Empirical science can identify need as pertaining to appetite, i.e., to alimentary or sexual assimilation. It is a directed, intentional urge, an impetus towards... (food, beverage, other sex). To understand it properly one must recognize its bodily, physical nature, as the biologist or psychologist does when he speaks of inner sensations and of stimulus-response.[85] However, Ricoeur rejects what he calls a parallelistic hypothesis which holds that sensation duplicates psychological processes.[86] He denies that need is the

---

[84] VI, p. 87.

[85] E.g., PB, cf. p. 53.

[86] J. J. C. Smart, in "Sensations and Brain Processes," (Philosophical Review, Vol. 68, 1969, pp. 141-156), argues that sensation is identical with brain process. He thinks the relation of the words "experience" and "brain process" is

sensation of an organic defect followed by a motor reaction, and that the language of hunger, for example, "translates" the organic defect. It is true that the defect exists, and is indeed the cause of the hunger. But the defect as such is not what is experienced. One does not experience contractions and secretions. Rather, "I am aware of the I-body as a whole lacking...."[87] But the impetus of need is precisely not an automatic reflex. It is of the utmost importance for the philosophy of freedom that a need can become a motive (not a cause) which inclines without compelling. That is why there can be "men who prefer to die of hunger rather than betray their friends."[88] Men are able to confront their needs and sacrifice them. It is essential to a true understanding of humanity to recognize that a hunger strike, or chastity, or self-exposure to extreme cold or to danger, even to the point of death, are structurally possible. Bodily needs, Ricoeur thinks, are one motive among others. But they are not a motive like the others. He thinks that need is the primordial

---

86 (cont)
comparable to the relation of the words "citizens" and "nation." They refer to the same thing, but neither mean the same thing nor have the same logic (p. 151). But surely these relations are not at all the same. The one entails a distinction of objectivity and subjectivity; the other involves nothing but a difference between singular and plural aggregate terms. His argument seems close to that of Ricoeur, but fails to make positive reference to the subjective aspect of the experience which Ricoeur points to in his concepts of subject body and Cogito; thus in fact, in Ricoeur's terms, he reduces subject body to object body in an illegitimate manner.

87 VI, p. 91.

88 VI, p. 93.

spontaneity of the body. As the initial form of the involuntary, bodily needs reveal values immediately, i.e., values emerge out of needs without having been freely posited by the will. As he points out, bread is good, wine is good before I will it, just because I exist in the flesh. Here is the first instance of the involuntary receptivity of the will: the body as existing, life as value. Need is not properly speaking a motive, however, if its fulfillment is not capable of resistance, as in the case of a reflex. Need as motive is neither a reflex nor an instinct. Need becomes motive and properly human when it is regulated by learned knowledge of the lack and the object necessary for its fulfillment. Thus imagination of the missing thing and action towards it is an essential aspect of need as motive (as distinct from need as cause).[89] Freedom, then, is limited and bound in that the fundamental value of life is simply given without reference to any pre-chosen project of the Cogito. Yet the knowing, imagining and evaluating Cogito remains free in relation to the fulfillment of its needs, even the basic needs of life.

The pure description of deciding excluded any temporal reference, presenting only instantaneous segments of consciousness. Now Ricoeur must do justice to the fact that the reality to be described has a history. Choice is the resolution of that history. The process of decision takes time. "For an incarnate being, freedom is temporal," he writes.[90] Deciding,

---

[89] VI, pp. 93-99.

[90] VI, pp. 135-136.

then, is not reducible to a terminal act or sudden fiat, but springs from a continuity of voluntary existence. Thus Ricoeur finds in hesitation a mode of willing.

Hesitation

Because it falls short of choice, hesitation is a kind of painful "in-decision," an anxiety of powerlessness, despite the fact that it faces real possibilities within its power. However, he finds in it three basic traits of decision itself, affirming its volitional character. Hesitation is absorbed in practical aims that depend on the person in question. Its conditional mode ("I wonder whether...," "What should I do?") does not destroy its project structure. Also, hesitation entails the imputation of self, though also in the conditional mode. The possible action is "to be done by me," so that I must decide which "I" I shall be. Finally, hesitation is an indetermination of motives, for a conditional project is "based" not on conflicting potential causes, but on unstable motives. Thus hesitation is a will which is, and is not yet.[91]

The corporeal involuntary must also enter the study of hesitation. It is because a man is in large measure submerged in the passivity of bodily existence that he is not immediately a self-determined project. He is torn between two or more needs or desires, and their disorder, their lack of

---

[91] VI, pp. 137-143.

a clearly evident hierarchy, requires time to be sorted so that he may come to a choice. For this reason incarnation and temporality must be understood together. How is the man so faced by conflicting alternatives to be described? In this context Ricoeur speaks of man as "an open totality, as a field of inquiry, enclosed by a horizon." But the totality is never given; rather he seeks himself from horizon to horizon.[92] Here Ricoeur is consciously placing himself over against Gestalt psychology, which he thinks reduces the "open totality" to a system of tensions.

> It supposes that resolution is already contained in the tensions, and that the indeterminateness of the resolution is dominated from the beginning by the determinateness of the tensions themselves .... It destroys the basic character of consciousness: it reduces to the form of oriented tension the intentionality by which consciousness surpasses even the limits of the field laid down by the body and annuls the specific relation to myself which lies at the very heart of this intentionality, by reducing it to a special system of tensions within the interior of the total field.[93]

The same argument is advanced under the heading of "Attention" when he attempts to lay out yet more clearly the process by which "tensions" are resolved by freedom, i.e., by the power of freedom over the formation of a choice in time, and its execution as project.

Attention

The history of decision is a process, or succession. But wherein is its voluntary character? It must be discover-

[92] VI, pp. 143-145. [93] VI, p. 145.

ed, Ricoeur thinks, in the realization that succession is experienced in both active and passive modes. It is both undergone and carried out. In part it depends on me, in part it does not. Certainly it does not depend on the will that time drifts on. But the active mode of succession is attention. While attention has to be attention to..., and is therefore dependent upon the receptivity of the senses, it is by attention that one does orient oneself in the process. Attention, more precisely, is the mastering of the process whose flux is itself involuntary.[94] Here Ricoeur is dependent on Husserl's analysis of perception as intentionality. Attention is active in the manner of appearance of the object:

> the object stands out and acquires a special clarity...; the plain and obscure are not qualities of an object but rather characteristics of its appearance. Herein lies the secret of attention; when an object becomes detached from the background of which it is a part, it remains the same as to its meaning. I do not know another object but the same one more clearly....
> ...The distinction of the background and the object noted implies in principle that I can let the object slide into the background and bring out another object--or another aspect of the same object--from the background. Background means that it can become the foreground, that it lends itself to attention.[95]

He does not here fall into the trap of an idealistic epistemology which he has already rejected. He recognizes that the "object itself guides me by the solicitation of its context." Attention properly begins with the naiveté, the innocence, the receptivity of observation. "The true name of attention,"

---

[94] VI, pp. 149-156.

[95] VI, p. 154.

he writes, "is not anticipation but wonder."[96] Error arises from inattention to the object obscured by pre-conceived notions. Nevertheless,

> I orient myself among the appearances, I displace the main accent, I turn the object or perhaps I develop the same side in order to exhibit the multiple details, or I grasp it as part of a greater whole.[97]

Now this Husserlian analysis of attentive perception applies also to the "I" that must survey alternatives and pass from hesitation to choice. Attention shows clearly the difference between motive and cause, Ricoeur points out. "Bad faith," is the ommission of attention, the hiding behind a determinism which "makes passion fateful."[98] Nor is determination by reasons rather than by feelings enough to guarantee the freedom of an act. An act of judgment would yet be, he feels, only a determinism of ideas without the act of attention. An act based upon feelings rather than logically linked ideas can also be a free act. The rational and impulsive act share the operation of attention, the "freedom of the look" which renders an act one's own.[99]

Choice

The question of the basis of choice in rationality or impulse brings Ricoeur back to the central problem of the history of decision: how the Cogito passes from hesitation to choice. As we have seen, it does so by attention. But how

---

[96] VI, p. 155.
[97] Ibid.
[98] VI, pp. 157-158.
[99] VI, pp. 158-163.

is the final choice itself (as distinct from the process that leads to it) to be characterized? Ricoeur offers two readings of choice, first, as the resolution of deliberation, second, as irruption of the project, and finds it necessary to hold both readings simultaneously.

The first reading, he tells us, is that of classical philosophy. He makes reference particularly to Stoicism, Thomas A quinas, Descartes and Spinoza. In this view, the project, though a novel event, does not appear suddenly from a context which makes no allowance for it. Choice is seen not as an irruption, but as a resolution of a preceding hesitant consciousness. Classical writers thus emphasize the mastery which we exercise over our judgment. The perfection of freedom is the perfection of judgment. Consequently, they de-emphasize the daring and anxious risk, which they see as the lowest degree of freedom. This view implies that the resolution is nothing in itself, that the process of rational deliberation is all. Ricoeur, as we have already seen, accepts the view that choice does indeed come from a context of hesitation and deliberation. But he rejects the latter implication, for he holds that the resolution of attention, as the last practical judgment of the deliberative process, is a work of freedom. To adopt the contrary opinion would be to deny the indetermination of acts, whether highly rational or indifferent to reasons.[100]

---

[100] VI, pp. 168-171.

The second reading he identifies as that of voluntarist and existentialist philosophies, referring particularly to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, William James and Karl Jaspers, and seems to have in mind also the thought of Jean-Paul Sartre. In this view, to become resolved is the most important moment of freedom. To leap, to jump, the irruption of choice into project, is freedom par excellence. But this view tends to ignore the receptivity of attention to motives and values. Ricoeur, as he indicated in his criticism of the classical view, agrees that the moment of choice is a free act, and is sympathetic with voluntarist and existentialist insights about the necessity of risk. "I create myself as an actual living unity in my act: in that moment of choice I come to myself. I come out of the internal shadows, I irrupt as myself...."[101] Such an irruption in choice is necessary to human existence.

> Because man finds himself in a corporeal, historical situation... he must decide in the course of a brief life, on the basis of limited information and in urgent situations that will not wait. Choice surges forward in a context of radical hesitation which is a sign of finitude and infirmity, a sign of the constriction of human existence. I am not divine understanding: my understanding is limited and finite.[102]

But the emphasis on choice as irruption is frequently accompanied by a concept of the will as sovereign regarding meaning and value. In this view, the authentic individual continually invents a new existence in every moment. "Exist-

---

[101] VI, p. 172. [102] VI, p. 175.

ence precedes essence." Thus, as behaviorism reduces the voluntary to the involuntary, existentialism submerges evaluation in decision and the involuntary in the voluntary. It rightly rejects the "bad reason," the pretext or sham motive which attempts to escape from freedom. However, Ricoeur judges it false to so de-emphasize motives and values:

> Far from freedom reigning where motivation is in retreat, it is still a naive virgin motivation which crops up together with my deepest self.... The error of some romantic views of life is that they do not know how to recognize the spring of values from which freedom drinks....
>
> It is precisely the root of all law, namely value and respect for value, which is undermined by a segment of modern literature: it makes it appear that to appeal to values which the mind recognizes rather than institutes would be the principle of alienation.[103]

Ricoeur concludes that the two positions must be held together. The risk, so emphasized by the one side, must be understood as the resolution of motivation and values, so emphasized by the other. The reality of choice is a <u>paradox of continuity and discontinuity.</u> The act of basing oneself on..., sustains the continuity of consciousness; the act of irrupting from... introduces the discontinuity of consciousness moving forward as novelty. The theoretical paradox is reconciled practically in the act itself, which also throws light on the paradox of the voluntary and the involuntary. "Practical prereflexive consciousness...," he concludes "reconciles willed existence with received existence."[104]

---

[103] <u>VI,</u> pp. 178-179.

[104] <u>VI,</u> pp. 180-181.

Indetermination

Ricoeur unequivocally renounced all determinism with regard to the will when he first introduced his central distinction between motive and cause. Now in his discussion of choice he finds it necessary to clarify a concept of indetermination,[105] which he understands as a potestas ad opposita.

First, this indetermination cannot be the freedom of indifference, the will without motives that he has already rejected. All choice, he reiterates, is determined by motives. But "determined" here is not to be interpreted causally. The event of irruption is a "determination by the self," but always

[105] Professor Donald O. Hebb, in an unpublished address at McGill University Faculty of Religious Studies, Feb. 3, 1972, suggested a concept of freedom excluding indetermination. His view is clarified in his book, A Textbook of Psychology, (Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders, Co., 1966). There he tells us that in an earlier day "free will" meant that voluntary behavior was not subject to scientific law, not determined by cause and effect. But in modern psychology "the terms 'volition' and 'will' or 'will power' have disappeared. 'Voluntary behavior' still has a certain usefulness as a rough classification; it is, in short, behavior that cannot be predicted from a knowledge of the present environmental stimulation alone because a systematic variability is introduced by mediating processes" (pp. 99-100). It is clear, however, that he has not in fact preserved anything like freedom or volition in the usual sense of those words, but has simply moved determinism back one step, away from the immediate circumstances. All decisions and actions, therefore, are more or less remotely "caused." Any significant sense of "freedom" is lost, it seems, if indetermination is entirely excluded, and the concept of motive, as distinct from cause, is discarded. Hebb is ruling out as "unscientific" what Ricoeur is here insisting on, a genuine potestas ad opposita. It is clear that, all Hebb's protestations to the contrary, this does eradicate any concept of moral responsibility as distinct from the non-moral concept of social conditioning.

by the determination of one's reasons; an indetermination of the attention which can consider alternatives, thus a potency for opposites. Determination by the self means that motives incline without compelling. This implies the indetermination of attention, since it depends on oneself to look or not to look, to look at this or that.

> As I reflect on my acts, I recognize them as the resolution of a broader power. Remorse particularly is based on the painful certitude that I could have done otherwise. A reproach arises from unused power which could have been devoted to a betrayed value; it besets the act which has wasted freedom and, more than the act, calls the self whose spokesman in the world the act is, to expiation. First comes the irruption, then the reflective return to the used and unused potency....
>
> What does this venture mean? I know well, on the one hand, that it makes me a man....[106]

In a lengthy critique of the Thomist doctrine of freedom, Ricoeur rejects a cosmology of nature which subsumes subjects and things in one system, thus regarding freedom as a moment in nature, and which indeed includes God, consciousness and things together in one universe of discourse, thereby in the last analysis avoiding the <u>hiatus</u>, the leaps and mysteries which underlie the transitions. Ricoeur realizes that here he is on the threshhold of ontology:

> We have adopted Husserl's views concerning the plurality of "regions" of being and of regional ontologies. The region "consciousness" and the region "nature" bear with them their appropriate concepts which Descartes would call "primitive." The eidetics of the will which we have elaborated at the beginning of this book presupposes such a regional ontology.[107]

---

[106] <u>VI,</u> p. 188.

[107] <u>VI,</u> p. 195.

But now we must return to the modesty appropriate to eidetics, and to Ricoeur's analysis of action and capability.

(ii) Action and Capability

The second cycle of the eidetics carries the progressive order of the will one step further to the fulfilment of the empty intention of decision in action. "'To decide' has the meaning 'to designate in outline' what I am to do," Ricoeur explains. Now "'to act' is 'to realize it in full,' fleshing it out in movement, carrying out my project."[108] As we noted earlier, the distinction is not one of time but of meaning, since the decision and the act may be separated either by no temporal interval at all, or by indefinite delay. He begins again with pure description.

Action and Pragma

Ricoeur is first concerned, once again, to establish the intentional nature of the will, and to expose the confusion of "psychology loaded with physics." Acting must be seen as a relation of a subject to objects in a relation of "practical intentionality."[109] As decision had as its intentional object the project, now action has as its intentional object the pragma. The pragma is not the movement of part of the body. "I do not do such or such a movement--I hang a picture." Using the findings of the Gestalt psychologist Koffka as diagnostic evidence,[110] he insists that action is not a mere sum

---

[108] Unity, p. 97. [109] VI, pp. 206-208.

[110] K. Koffka, in Principles of Gestalt Psychology, (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1935) follows Tolman's

of movements. When one acts one is not concerned with one's body; the action "traverses" the body, and the intention of the action is its product, i.e., the new, changed situation in the world, the pragma. The world, moreover, is not a mere spectacle, but a problem and a task to be worked over, a world for project and action. Ricoeur finds this confirmed and usefully analyzed, for example, in Tolman's concept of the world as a "means-end field."[111]

---

110 (cont)
distinction of molecular behavior (the process which starts with an excitation on the sensory surface of an animal and is conducted by nerve fibres to nerve centres, etc.) and molar behavior (whole or complete behavior that cannot be known even inferentially from a mere knowledge of the underlying, molecular facts of physics and biology). The complex physical processes that occur are distinguishable from whole actions and movements. Further, Koffka's distinction between behavior and accomplishment (pp. 37ff) resembles Ricoeur's distinction between movement and pragma.

111 Tolman (PB) devotes the whole of his Part II, "The Rat in the Maze," and some of Part III to this central concept of "means-end field." Note his definition: "Any sequence of behavior-acts involves a sequence of commerces with selected pairs of means-objects and subordinate goal-objects in order to get to, or from, some relatively final goal-object. The total complex of successively selected (and rejected) means-objects (hierarchy of superordinate and subordinate goal-objects and means-objects) plus the ultimate goal-object itself, together with all the means-end-relations... holding between such means-objects and goal-objects, in so far as this total complex can be shown to determine the given sequence of behavior acts, is to be called a means-end manifold, means-end field, or means-end hierarchy.... Finally it is to be observed that the extent or complexity of any such means-end field which can determine a given behavior in a given organism will depend not only upon the objective environmental situation but also upon the degree of the organism's means-end capacities--both formal and dimensional." (p. 450).
These results of empirical studies Ricoeur identifies as indices of the teleological, intentional character of acting, though he rejects their deterministic implication.

Bodily Motion

Even within this pure description we must turn to consider the body. The movement of the body, Ricoeur has already maintained, is not the terminus of action. "The body is not the object of action but its organ." An organ is not properly speaking a tool or an instrument, for an instrument merely prolongs the organ, and is external to it. Rather, the body is an organic mediation between oneself and one's action; it is "my body-moved-by-me."

> In the consciousness of moving the significance of the Cogito is voluntary incarnation and no longer incarnation which happens to me.... but rather an active incarnation, control exercised over my body, over I-body.[112]

As in the case of deciding, the intentional character of acting is normally unreflecting and totally engaged in what it is doing.[113]

It is when we return to ourselves to reflect upon our action that we come up against a mystery once again. Effort, for example, is an experience of applying oneself, who is not an object, to one's body, which is oneself, but also an object. It was the experience of this mystery that led Descartes to establish his sharp dualism of soul and body. Ricoeur has already discarded this dualism as unfaithful to the unity of man as soul and body. On the other hand, he also discards the naturalism of scientific psychology which dissipates the mystery by treating the Cogito as a "mental fact." Ricoeur wants

[112] VI, pp. 215-216.

[113] VI, pp. 212-216.

to do justice to the insight at the basis of Descartes' dualism: the duality of certitude, the certitude of the Cogito and the certitude of space. An absurd problem, he says. To break the impasse, he suggests that we have to "reintroduce the body into the Cogito." Once again the paradox is to be reconciled in a dialectical understanding which preserves the mystery:

> We have to give up the attempt to co-ordinate two orders of facts, psychological and physical, of mental and biological objects, and, starting with the Cartesian Cogito, rediscover the subjective mark of movement, bodily motion in first person....[114]

"Bodily motion in first person" is an experience of the subject body. This raises the question again regarding the dualism of points of view regarding the body. "Molar" behaviorists like Tolman and Gestaltists like Koffka, Ricoeur thinks, offer descriptions of behavior which depend heavily on introspection and include an implicit phenomenology. But in the last analysis they objectify the Ego in the total field of perception and action. Action is seen as a suppression of tensions in such a way as to exclude the specific concepts of subjectivity.[115] Ricoeur wants to accept much of the data of the psychologists regarding object-body, but use it diagnostically to shed light on subject-body,[116] for he seeks to

---

[114] VI, p. 218.

[115] E.g. Koffka speaks of the Ego as a "Field Object" which "seems to behave like any other segregated object in the field" (p. 319) Action is "a process of relieving existing stresses" (p. 342) (Principles of Gestalt Psychology).

[116] Ricoeur says that "We shall see in Part III that these facts can be integrated in a doctrine of the subject" (VI, p. 226).

understand both the voluntary and the involuntary as subjectivity. The concepts of subjectivity are alone capable of overcoming the contrasting results of introspection and empirical observation of behavior. What is necessary, he feels, is a passage from the "natural" viewpoint to the "phenomenological attitude," for only in this way is it possible to do justice to our actions as meaningful incarnate intentions.[117]

But not to lose the knowledge afforded by empirical science, Ricoeur will spell out what he calls the "dramatic duality" of voluntary and involuntary under the heading of "Bodily Spontaneity." "Voluntary motion," he writes, does not present itself as a native power of an imperium over an inert body, but as a dialogue with a bodily spontaneity...."[118] In a study of preformed skills, emotions and habits, he will distinguish the powers of the will from causal powers, for

> The cornerstone of the edifice is not the ideo-motor reflex, that is, the mechanical bond of a movement to the idea of that movement, but the preformed connection of our highly supple motor patterns to regulating perceptions....[119]

Reflexes and Preformed Skills

Reflexes and pre-formed skills are the most obvious terms to express involuntary activity. How are they to be understood in terms of subjectivity, and how are they related to freedom?

Ricoeur distinguishes clearly between the two. A reflex is a fundamentally incoercible structure in relation to the will, and entirely unassimilable to a voluntary system. For

---

[117] VI, pp. 216-227. [118] VI, p. 227. [119] VI, p. 228.

example, the reflexes of defense and protection, such as blinking, flowing of tears, sneezing, coughing, vomiting normally function automatically without the will, (though they can occasionally be frustrated or postponed voluntarily). Again, the reflexes of appropriation, accommodation and exploration, as Ricoeur delineates them, such as the sucking of the newborn, salivation, the focusing of the eyes, etc. function as immediate, involuntary, stereotyped reactions of the organism to the world which impinges upon it.[120]

Pre-formed skills, while resembling reflexes, are quite different, he argues. The infant, for example, without having learned it, can follow an object by moving his eyes and head. When his bodily development permits he will raise his hand to ward off a blow, extend his hands when he falls, etc. These are not reflexes such as the above. They differ in that they are capable of elaboration and correction, are supple, highly variable motor units governed by perception.

> I know roughly how to go about hitting without having learned it, but I do not attempt it except in fear or apprehension. The motive element here is not the signal, but the impulse which the will can make its own... --this schema cannot be reduced to a mechanistic type.[121]

The relative involuntary of pre-formed skills differ, then, from the absolute involuntary of reflexes. The reflex is not to be understood as an obstacle to the will. Rather, it constitutes its indispensable preface; it does well and quickly

---

[120] VI, pp. 232-239. [121] VI, p. 242.

what the will cannot do. This bond, however, does not constitute a reciprocity of the voluntary and involuntary. "It refers back to the specific solidarity between the will and life," which, Ricoeur promises, he will deal with under the heading of Consent. "The reflex is in me apart from me."[122] The pre-formed skill, however, is an involuntary that operates reciprocally with the voluntary.

> That I know how to perform certain elementary gestures without having learned them is in addition the condition of all voluntary learning. I cannot learn everything.... That is the initial given, the initial foundation granted to the will by nature.[123]

He articulates well the subjective character of pre-formed skills, when he writes:

> The hold which I can have in the world and which makes freedom efficacious presupposes this initial continuity between the perceiving Cogito and the movement of personal body.... Here the mental and physical Cogito, thought and movement, bring about an undecipherable unity, beyond effort.[124]

Emotion

Ricoeur is now concerned to point out the reciprocal relation of voluntary and involuntary in relation to emotion. Emotion is studied as a means or organ of willing rather than as a motive because emotion contributes no ends or objectives to the will. Emotion is an involuntary which sustains voluntary action and serves it by preceding and limiting it. It has a power of stimulating action, not driving it, but drawing it out of inertia.[125] He does not interpret it as funda-

---

[122] VI, p. 243.
[123] VI, pp. 243-244.
[124] VI, p. 249.
[125] VI, pp. 251-252.

mentally a derangement and thus does not derive it, as some psychologists do, from shock, nor describes it as a crisis. Rather, following Descartes, Ricoeur derives emotion from wonder, and describes it as incitation.

Wonder, he believes, is more basic than love and hate, desire, joy and sorrow, all of which can be understood in terms of it. Wonder is not a reflex, but an impact of knowledge and a disturbance of the body. Though its lightning-fast character might deceive us into thinking it reflexive, wonder always involves valuation of novelty and an implicit comparative judgment. Yet it is, of course, spontaneous and involuntary in that it arises from astonishment at some object that imposes itself on thought. This is a relative involuntary, for it is capable of being controlled by the attention of the mind.[126]

Emotion is wonder, then, both intellectual and corporeal. It always introduces a visceral element. For example, in the emotion of joy and sorrow:

> What would joy be without the slight acceleration of pulse, that pleasant warmth in the whole body and expansion of the whole being? And sorrow, without the tightness around the heart and a general languor?[127]

It is in the "conquering" emotion of desire that the corporeal involuntary reaches its highest point, says Ricoeur. Desire arises from the needs of the body to willing; it is the initial

---

[126] VI, pp. 253-256.

[127] VI, p. 262.

thrust towards the object. It functions as a *motive*, in terms of need, but also as a *motor*, for "desire belongs to the body in terms of visceral intensity and muscular alerting which orchestrate... the most subtle movements of the soul."[128] It too is understandable in terms of wonder, and cannot be understood as reflexive, for "the body moved by desire is a true description of the soul grasped by its values."[129] In all its aspects as involuntary, wonder is subjective and illustrates the subjective character of the corporeal involuntary.

However, beyond wonder, willing reaches its limits in the experience of *shock*, in which Ricoeur judges, emotion is obliterated and which must be understood as disorder. "Here man becomes unknowable, he becomes a cry, a tremor, a convulsion." In the *fit* of rage or fear, or the *crisis* of exultation or dejection, (an excess of wonder) the agitated body ruptures voluntary control for a brief duration. Shock resembles a reflex in its incoercibility, but differs in that it entails a comprehension and evaluation, thus remaining, brokenly, within the category of emotion. Here emotion is revealed as nascent disorder. Thus, says Ricoeur, "having a body or being a body means... knowing order only as a task and as a good to be won from nascent disorder."[130]

Ricoeur further discusses the involuntary factor of *passion* as emotion. This he defines as the consciousness which binds itself, the will imprisoning itself as a captive to

---

[128] *VI*, p. 264. [129] *Ibid.* [130] *VI*, pp. 267-276.

Nothing, to Vanity. Passion is used as an alibi which flees responsibility.[131] It needs to be indicated and recognized by eidetics, but is more thoroughly dealt with by empirics.

Emotion, then, is understood by Ricoeur in the general context of the reciprocity of voluntary and involuntary, in which emotion, as involuntary, is for the voluntary of action; and the voluntary of action is (in part) by reason of the involuntary of emotion. More specifically, emotion is a circular relation of thought and bodily agitation.

Habit and Capability

Habit is yet another form of bodily spontaneity of which we might be inclined to miss the subjective character. Ricoeur shows that habit too is an example of the reciprocal relation of voluntary and involuntary.

Habit, as he defines it, is an acquired and relatively stable way of sensing, perceiving, acting and thinking. It is not itself an intention but affects the intentions of consciousness. It has to do with the "hold" we acquire on our bodies and, through them, on things. Habits are more than pre-formed skills and more than reflexes, since they are acquired in time and involve learning. Neither are they conditioned reflexes, for they involve modification of oneself by one's own activity. A habit is not formed entirely apart from the will, yet the will cannot directly decide upon it.

---

[131] VI, pp. 276ff.

One may activate it, e.g., by practice, but it is the practice as such which has the spontaneous power to form the habit.[132]

A habit is "acquired" and affects the will as a kind of second nature. Habits are the disciplines of life, not in the sense of effort, but in the sense of the automatic supports of everyday existence. As such they are a kind of "alienation" of the voluntary. Still, habits are indispensable to human functioning. To have a habit is <u>to know how,</u> to have available a ready power or capability to solve practical problems: "I can play the piano, I know how to swim." Ricoeur rejects the romantic prejudice that finds in habit only a regrettable banality, but also the empirical psychological prejudice that finds in habit a mere automatism.[133] He admits that it does hold the seed of a "drift towards the

---

[132] <u>VI,</u> pp. 280-282.

[133] Tolman does not speak of habit but of <u>means-end-readiness,</u> or sign-gestalt-readiness: as "one of the most important kinds of <u>immanent determinant.</u> It is a selective condition which an organism, due to innate endowment or past training, brings with him to specific concrete stimulus situations. It is set in action by virtue of a demand to get to or from some given type of goal-object. It is equivalent to a 'judgment' that commerce with such and such a 'type' of means-end object should lead on by such and such direction-distance relations to some instance of the given demanded type of goal-object. It causes the organ to be responsive to stimuli and to perceive, to mnemonize or to infer particular instances of such 'ready-for' means-objects. That is, it is means-end-readinesses (sign-gestalt readinesses) which determine the selective responsiveness of organisms to stimuli." (<u>PB,</u> p. 451). The frequency of such words as "cause" and "determine" do place the organism in the class of an automatism. Ricoeur's treatment of habit as <u>know how</u> is no doubt indebted to his "diagnostic" use of such psychological data as Tolman has here provided.

thing" in degraded consciousness. But eidetics properly thinks of habit as flexible, plastic willing and ability, an extension not of reflex, but of pre-formed skill. Nor is consciousness abolished in habit, only reflexive consciousness: "I do not think the movement, I make use of it."[134]

Not only the body, but the intellect also is invaded by and depends upon habit. Most obviously the knowledge and use of a language depends on acquired skills and knowledge of structures. All thought, involving recognitions and associations of ideas, etc. function spontaneously. Thus "knowledge is that which I do not think, but by means of which I think." The paradox of freedom and nature appears once again. It seems that an "it thinks" is present in the "I think."

> I can neither think myself distinct from my capacities, as if they were outside of me, in the brain-object perceived by the physiologist, nor think myself identical with them, as if they were myself without escaping me in any way.... We need to lay hold of the essential union of my capacities and myself, and the type of alienated existence which nonetheless remains in the first person in the Cogito. Habit is a nature, but a nature in the very core of my self.[135]

Habit too, then, is an involuntary <u>for</u> the voluntary, by which freedom is enabled to exist as freedom. But habit understood as the mere automatism of a thing strips it of its meaning, and destroys the mysterious character of man as freedom.

<u>Effort</u>

With the study of effort we return to the voluntary side

---

[134] <u>VI</u>, pp. 282-286. [135] <u>VI</u>, p. 295.

of the dialectic of action and capability. Effort is an aspect of action, which is the more basic concept. It is primarily resistance, either in oneself or in the world in which one wills to act which brings about the consciousness of effort. Generally, voluntary movement passes unnoticed, expressing the docility of a yielding body, but effort is accentuated in consciousness by the resistance of the obstacle. Resistance, especially resistance against oneself, says Ricoeur, is a crisis of the unity of the self with itself, and here he is hard put to avoid becoming enmeshed in the fault. However,

> ...what makes man intelligible to himself is his myth of himself, the ancient dream of his fulfilment in innocence and graceful action; the practiced ease of a dance, the supple joy of a Mozart are momentary, fleeting glimpses in the direction of a final stage of freedom where there would be no hiatus between willing and ability, where no effort would ruffle the docile coursing of movement with its misfortunes. What complicates the description is the coursing of passions which have made this happy union of will and all its abilities impossible....[136]

Eidetics, of course, abstracts the fault, and here, says Ricoeur, the myth of innocence aids psychological understanding to see resistance still as a moment of docility. It is not the business of eidetics, we recall, to describe a lost innocence, but rather to "inquire into the intelligible network on which the terrible game of passions is plotted."[137]

Of course man experiences the resistance of things in the world, but experience of the resistance of things occurs only when excess effort is confronted by the inertia of organs.

---

[136] VI, p. 310.

[137] VI, pp. 308-311.

As we saw from the previous studies of pre-formed skills, emotions and habits, the body is available and empowered and prepared for motion. But these three carry with them a certain spontaneity which, while they enable the will, also threaten it. Thus, says Ricoeur, my hold on my body is always a recapture, indeed, an effort.

Now emotion and habit are the two modes of the involuntary which function alternately as basis for and obstacle to willing. He explains: "In emotion I am on the verge of being forced, possessed. Through habit I take possession of my body.... In turn effort is also what says no to habit on the basis of emotion."[138] The existence of freedom depends on this intimate, complementary relation of emotion and habit, moved by willing effort.

Ricoeur throws more light on the manner in which effort "moves" the body when he speaks of "motor intentions." He denies that motor intention can be reduced to an image of movements to be performed. Consciousness of effort, he argues, eludes a description of sensations and states, for it involves a non-representative practical dimension. In most cases there is no unconscious kinesthetic image; rather it is the formal properties of perceived objects, bearing no resemblance to the movement, which govern the movement. While not denying the existence and role of images, he denies that they themselves produce movement.[139] Thus he rejects the severe limi-

---

[138] VI, p. 315.

[139] VI, pp. 318-323.

tation placed on the realm of the voluntary by such a psychologist as William James, who thought that a movement is voluntary only if a representation of it precedes its execution.[140] Contrarily, "motor intention," defines Ricoeur, "is transitive action--whether or not governed by a representation of movement to be executed--through which a specific effort or covert permission moves the body."[141] He acknowledges here again the valuable work of such psychologists as Tolman and Lewin, when they speak of "determining" and "behavioral adjustments," and "resolution of tension," etc.[142] The introspective subject as such can know absolutely nothing of the neuromuscular mechanisms uncovered by the empirical scientist that permit the realization of motor intentions for the release of tensions and the satisfaction of needs. The "causal dynamics" of Gestalt psychology function for phenomenology as an objective

---

[140] Ricoeur cites William James, Psychology: Briefer Course, New York, 1900, pp. 426, 432, 449.

[141] VI, pp. 318-323.

[142] Kurt Lewin, in his article "On the Structure of the Mind," (subtitled "On the Causes of Psychical Events," in A Dynamic Theory of Personality, Selected Papers, trans. D. K. Adams, K. E. Zenger, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co. Inc., 1935, pp. 43-65) speaks of the organism's tendency to equilibrium served by psychical processes: "The transition from a state of rest to a process, as well as change in a stationary process, may be derived from the fact that the equilibrium at certain points has been disturbed and that then a process in the direction of a new state of equilibrium sets in" (p. 58). A state of equilibrium may contain tension (e.g. a spring under tension, a container with gas under pressure) if the system possesses a certain firmness of boundaries, but otherwise, there occurs a process which encroaches on neighboring regions, tending toward an equilibrium at a lower level of tension (p. 59). Lewin also speaks of a "tension system" as that which drives toward discharge and "causes activities which serve the execution of the purpose." (p. 242).

symptom of the "immersion" of the Cogito in the body.

> Here the diagnostic is more important than the tangled affective revelation of our incarnate existence; and yet it is that revelation of our living presence by the fundamental affectivity of the synthesis which, on the level of the Cogito, bears the whole meaning of our body. Thus the motor intention of desire and of skill is "immersed" in the absolute involuntary of structure.[143]

Motor intention too, then, must be understood in a reciprocal relation. Motor intention is the power of willing, for there can be no willing without ability. But also, there is no ability without possible willing. Willing and ability must be understood in terms of each other. The structural involuntary has to be seen as properly subordinate to willing, and therefore as involuntary facilitation. The voluntary is not to be understood, then, as limited to conscious and forceful effort. Subdued effort, or permission, e.g. again, the automatic rolling of a cigarette, is also voluntary. Forceful effort helps us to understand "faint willing" of this kind as voluntary, because forceful effort, says Ricoeur, is a "reflexive reiteration of faint willing." The transitive action of prereflexive "faint willing," however, is the more common mode of the practical mediation between the Cogito and its body.[144]

Throughout his study of decision and action, Ricoeur has consistently applied his principle of reciprocity to oppose both voluntarism and determinism in order to establish as well as limit the freedom of the will. His method and insight

---

[143] VI, p. 326.

[144] VI, p. 331.

face a more difficult challenge in the problems of consent.

(iii) Consent and Necessity

Ricoeur has ingeniously laid before us an analysis of decision and action which asserts the non-reflective aspects of the voluntary and the subjective aspects of the involuntary, in accofdance with his stated principle of reciprocity. Can the same method be used and the same insights be established when he comes to consider a quite different mode of willing: consent to necessity? He will indeed use the same approach here as elsewhere. Of this he writes:

> More than once we have come up against a set of facts which seemed to block the three guiding ideas of this book, the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary, the necessity of going beyond psychological dualism and seeking the common standard of the involuntary and the voluntary in subjectivity and finally the primacy of conciliation over paradox.[145]

The voluntary in question is the act of consenting, corresponding to the triple involuntary of character, the unconscious and life. His goal is to uncover the "active," voluntary character of consent, and to rediscover the stamp of subjectivity in necessity.[146]

Consenting as Intentional Act

The pure description of consenting, as in the case of deciding and acting, has to be understood intentionally. As decision decides upon a project, as action effects a pragma in the world, now consent consents to necessity. Necessity

---

[145] VI, p. 341. [146] Unity, p. 104.

plays a double role in this schema. The voluntary of deciding was receptive to motivation; the voluntary of acting was receptive to capability. Now the voluntary of consent is receptive to the involuntary of the necessity of its nature. The involuntary and the intentional come together in the case of necessity, for here decision and action stumble upon that which cannot be changed. Yet consenting is still an act. Wise men, Ricoeur reminds us, have always construed the recognition of necessity as a moment of freedom. Nor is that moment of freedom a mere recognition or judgment in a spectator's sense; rather consenting is an active adoption of necessity. To consent is to take upon oneself, to make one's own, to say "Yes let it be." Thus to consent is still to do, he insists; it is an "engagement in being." As decision is concerned for legitimacy, and action for effectiveness, consent takes the form of patience. To be patient is not merely to be passive, but

> to embrace the real and to extend the realm of freedom even into the region of necessity where nature no longer confronts our will with the docility of bodily powers. Consent is the movement of freedom towards nature in order to become reunited with its necessity and convert it into itself.[147]

But Ricoeur does not suppose that such an account of consent is easily accomplished. One is tempted to betray freedom and responsibility here as nowhere else, and so to describe

---

[147] VI, p. 347.

man's condition in terms of character, the unconscious and life by total objectification. Personal knowledge of these aspects of man are dim and fleeting, while the objective, empirical knowledge attainable by psychology, psychoanalysis and biology are much clearer, more coherent and informative. A detour through such objective knowledge is certainly required, for, despite the improper and inadequate language of causality in which it is usually enmeshed, it provides an indispensable index to the character of human freedom as immersed in necessity. However, we must be careful, he warns us, not to fall under "the spell of objectivity," thereby regarding the body as a mere machine or tool. In the analysis of motivation and capability, the involuntary was found to be an aspect of the subjective life of the Cogito. So also, he contends, necessity can be discovered in the intimate experience of the subject. Thus he embarks upon a three-fold study of "experienced necessity" as character, the unconscious and life. He does so in a <u>regressive</u> order, for the three are not on the same level and mark a regression toward an increasingly subduing necessity.[148] He begins with character which, he writes, is the necessity closest to the will.

<u>Character</u>

First, character cannot be thought of as an indefinitely plastic human nature chosen and changeable through effort.

---

[148] <u>VI.</u> pp. 347-354.

Nor can it properly be reduced to a man's lot, having all his decisions and actions inscribed within it. Ricoeur suggests instead

> a conception of freedom which <u>is</u> in some respect a nature, the conception of character which is an <u>individual mode</u>--neither chosen nor modifiable by freedom--of freedom itself.[149]

Character is that which is most stable about a person, as well as that which makes him unique and inimitable. Still, we can speak, with some measure of accuracy, of character "types," an idea which has given rise to a considerable body of scientific studies on character known as "ethology." Ricoeur offers an exacting critique of its methodology, which, he thinks, assumes determinism from the beginning. He writes:

> The attempt to build up complete psychographs, including habits, aptitudes, passions, virtues, vices, bodily dispositions, etc., presupposes a total objectification of the individual and suspension of precisely that communication through which alone we would have some hope of reaching the other as an existence indivisibly free and necessary. Science demands it, but at the cost of an ultimate problem: for there is no discoverable relation between the "I will" and a psychograph which is only the portrait of the other.[150]

The character type can only be a kind of portrait for an external observer. And its systematic study operates according to a small number of general properties (e.g. emotivity, activity, secondarity) which are used not merely as descriptions but as explanations, along the lines of the interplay of tendencies, thereby totally objectifying the Cogito and

---

[149] <u>VI</u>, p. 355.

[150] <u>VI</u>, p. 358.

dissipating freedom. This is inevitably the case, he thinks, since character type and freedom derive from incommensurate points of view. The distinction is identical with that between subject body and object body, for

> on the one hand the self apprehends its own subjective realm and senses its limits and conditions, but is unable to treat them as an object of observation or a portrait; on the other hand the psychologist offers us a table of tendencies built up from without and elaborated according to the postulates of mental physics.[151]

Moreover, ethology feels it must abandon the unique and work from general ideas. It attempts to arrive at dispositions on the basis of statistical averages. But Ricoeur denies that an average of actual individual conduct amounts to a disposition; the "character" of the psychograph does not indicate a disposition, but rather the inclusion of the individual in the class which most frequently exhibits certain behavior. He argues that

> Frequency of a conduct exhibited by individuals within a class cannot be equated with a disposition of one individual in that class with respect to this form of conduct.[152]

The whole approach, he points out, implies a limitless determinism, so that the explanation of the whole individual is in principle exhaustive.[153]

But when I consider this invincible character which pre-

---

[151] VI, p. 360. [152] VI, p. 362.

[153] VI, pp. 357-364. Ricoeur frequently cites, among others, G. Heymans, Le Mensonge et le caractère, (Paris, 1930).

scribes my willing, and posit a determinism in which I am included, then, surely, the spell is broken and the subject is rediscovered. Ricoeur declares that "to think of my character consistently as an object is already to deliver myself from it as subject: it is I who thinks it, it is I who wills to be an object comprehensible within laws."[154] With this precarious token of freedom we can begin to see our way through the determinism of ethology, which tempts us to abandon responsibility, to live up to the other's opinion of us, to see ourselves as victims of our nature. Rather, he suggests, the irremediable must never be looked at by itself, but as a counterpart of what can change, as the background of an involuntary relative to the voluntary. As over against ethology, Ricoeur asserts that character is not only the outward, observable and measurable aspect of man, but also the nature which "clings" so closely that

> the very decision I make, the way I exert effort, the way I perceive and desire all bear its mark. It affects me as a whole. Bearing, gestures, inflection of my voice, my handwriting, etc., all point to the omnipresence of character down to the way my mind works. This intimacy of character makes of it, for the mind, an unseizable, intangible reality.[155]

One's character, then, is not general, but a unique, concrete totality, infinitely more complex than any psychograph could grasp, and always carrying the stamp of subjectivity.

To so stress the subjectivity of one's character, how-

---

[154] VI, p. 365. [155] VI, p. 367.

ever, does not involve a denial of its necessity. "Man's character is his fate," says Ricoeur with Democritus. One absolutely cannot change one's character in this sense, for that would be to become someone else, and one is necessarily and inalienably situated by one's character. He finds here again a conciliation, however, a practical mediation, for "my character in its changeless aspects is only my freedom's mode of being." Freedom's relation to character must also be understood by way of its relation to decisions and actions, for character is never perceived itself but always as interwoven with motives and capabilities. One's desires and habits have a particular way of arising, erupting, subsiding, a style or permanent manner, and this is necessity. But, he argues, these regularities of one's nature do not determine which desires or which habits are at work at a particular time. Desires and habits possess a certain plasticity within limits, subject to discipline, so that "I do not know where the limits of my sovereignty lie unless I exercise it."[156]

Having scorched ethology with as biting a critique as we find anywhere in his writing, Ricoeur finally admits that the science must be rediscovered, that psychophysiology can function diagnostically along with psychoanalysis and biology as a provider of clues, or indications from outside of the

---

[156] VI, pp. 366-371.

fate within. In order to understand the character types which even common sense so easily identifies, we have to conceive of them as genera surrounded by differences, as indications of the necessity at the heart of the Cogito, or, in his words, "the destiny which is only the particularity of freedom."[157]

The principle has held here again. The absolute involuntary of character serves as a vehicle for the voluntary; and the voluntary is situated within the confines of character as its necessary mode of being.

The Unconscious

In his large and latest book to date, De l'Interprétation: Essai sur Freud, Ricoeur offers a thorough and major treatment of the unconscious and psychoanalysis as part of the problem of hermeneutics. We shall be dealing with that work in our last chapter. Here in the eidetics, written eighteen years earlier, he deals with the unconscious in a much briefer way as part of "experienced necessity." The later work is more appreciative of Freud, in that he finds in some of his books implications that point beyond determinism. This earlier treatment of Freud remains valid, however, in that, despite the implications hidden within Freud's thought, he remained essentially a determinist. We must deal with the matter briefly here in order to see its place in the eidetics of consent.

First, we recall, eidetics does not deal with the fault.

---

[157] VI, pp. 371-373.

Therefore Ricoeur brackets the question of the lie, the self-deception, which both Nietzsche and Freud so brilliantly exposed, and which Freud elaborated in such concepts as censorship, guardian consciousness, disguise, etc. Rather, Ricoeur is concerned at this point to expose another lie, i.e., the shifting of man's responsibility to "the ruses of that unconscious demon" which lives within. Thus he opposes what he regards as the error which attributes thought to the unconscious, but also the error of the "transparence" of consciousness.

The doctrine of the transparence of consciousness really denies the reality of the unconscious, holding that consciousness is always transparent to itself. All that seems unconscious is then assigned to bodily mechanisms and denied psychological status. Although Ricoeur agrees that thought is not attributable to the unconscious, he does recognize

> a certain principally affective matter which presents consciousness with an indefinite possibility for self-questioning and for giving meaning and form to itself. The unconscious certainly does not think, but it is the indefinite matter, revolting against the light which all thought bears with it.[158]

"The unconscious," then, is simply a name for one more aspect of the absolute involuntary which is given to man, which, like character, he cannot change, but to which he can only consent.

Ricoeur argues for the reality of the unconscious by

---

[158] VI, p. 378.

reminding us of his analysis of need, emotion and habit. These have a psychical, intentional character, yet have behind them a certain spontaneity. When we choose to meet some needs and deny others, do not the rejected tendencies assume an obscure, hidden power which haunt us again in moments of regret or resentment? Is it not surely true that emotive shocks of childhood leave an impression which, though hidden from us, blends with other factors to colour the character of our lives? In our experience of habit, which so often threatens to degenerate into automatism, do we not sense that we are barred from an area of ourselves which crops up spontaneously? These familiar facts in themselves are enough to persuade us of the inadequacy of the principle of the transparence of consciousness. But to these must be added the findings of psychoanalysis regarding unnoticed acts, lapsing, forgetting, tics, etc. involuntarily carried out,[159] and the vast data compiled especially by Freud regarding dreams and neuroses. In all this Ricoeur has to admit the indispensability of the naturalistic causal point of view <u>as a working hypothesis.</u> The mechanisms of repression, condensation, sublimation, dramatization, for example, apparently function as aspects of an absolute involuntary with all the characteristics of a thing. However, writes Ricoeur,

> my task is to try to understand myself subsequently as a subject capable of such phenomena and accessible to

---

[159] Sigmund Freud, <u>The Psychopathology of Everyday Life,</u> in <u>CPW,</u> Vol. VI.

such objective and causal treatment.[160]

It is highly significant that the operation of these mechanisms can be unravelled only when the subject co-operates, and that the analyst must function as interpreter of meaning, applying his empirical, scientific knowledge to dreams, associations, and neurotic symptoms. The decisive factor of cure is the reintegration of traumatic memory into consciousness. This is the heart of psychoanalysis, that

> far from being a negation of consciousness, psychoanalysis is on the contrary a means of extending the field of consciousness.... It heals by means of a victory of memory over the unconscious. We cannot overstress the importance of this twist of Freudian theory....[161]

Thus Ricoeur insists on the psychological and subjective nature of the unconscious (as over against those who would reduce it entirely to bodily mechanism) without denying its absolutely involuntary and hidden character.[162]

However, he vigorously opposes what he calls the doctrine of the "realism of the unconscious," which he regards as a Copernican revolution displacing the center of human being from consciousness and freedom to the unconscious and absolute involuntary. This view is a result of the application of the concept of causality to the psyche, which sees the conscious and unconscious as homogeneous, and which in fact explains consciousness by the unconscious. "We are led," he concludes, "to dissociate the psychoanalytic method and its working hypo-

---

[160] VI, p. 381. [161] VI, p. 384. [162] VI, pp. 376-384.

thesis on the one hand, and the Freudian system and its implicit philosophy of being on the other hand."[163] Ricoeur rejects, then, the inclusion of consciousness as a small circle within the larger circle of the unconscious, a view which finds in the unconscious the real essence of the psyche. Here he quotes Descartes with approval, when he says that of every man

> there is nothing which belongs to him more truly other than this free disposition of his will, nor for which he could be praised or blamed except for the good or bad use he makes of it.[164]

Part of the misunderstanding, Ricoeur thinks, is the limited conception of consciousness as explicit self-knowledge, and a failure to understand consciousness as intentional, i.e., as object-directed. Perception, for example, is not in itself reflexive, though it does include a diffuse presence to the self. Consciousness, then, is not always or essentially reflexive, but it is essentially intentional. If we realize this, it is not necessary to attribute so much to the unconscious. Ricoeur insists, "the unconscious does not think, does not perceive, does not judge." These are acts of the Cogito, the I think, the conscious, responsible, willing agent. He notes that a dream, for example, only becomes a complete thought when, upon wakening, it is recounted. It is the wakened and conscious dreamer, or the analyst, who thinks, who judges, etc. The psychoanalytic cure occurs by

---

[163] VI, p. 385. 165

[164] Descartes, The Passions of the Soul, in The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Vol. I, pp. 402-403.

way of uncovering a hidden meaning and reintegrating forgotten memories in consciousness. But the contents of the unconscious are not thoughts; they become thoughts only to consciousness. This means that consciousness, the Cogito, is much more than a superadded quality of the psyche. The precise status of that "something," the impressional matter which we call the unconscious, is very difficult to define, but the "working realism" of the psychoanalyst, Ricoeur believes is not philosophically tenable.[165]

His philosophical critique of Freudian "physics of the unconscious" rules out once again all causal language. Rather than causality, he would speak of unfree motivation. Is he splitting hairs in distinguishing unfree motivation from determinism? It is indeed, as he himself says, a fragile distinction, yet he holds it absolutely essential to say that

> the unconscious and unconscious mechanisms are not immediately "objects," "things," but affective automatisms make them as much as possible like physical entities whose determinism they simulate. Thus while the determinism of things is incompatible with consciousness and its freedom, this quasi-determinism is the obverse of consciousness and freedom.[166]

Philosophy relates to psychoanalysis, then, as it relates to biology, for the psychic functioning lends itself to objective treatment just as the body does, and there is an object-psyche as well as an object-body.

---

[165] VI, pp. 384-394.

[166] VI, pp. 397-398; N.B."une motivation absolument non-libre," in Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 373.

> Yet a distance, no matter how small, always separates an automatic motivation from the determinism of things.[167]

If the difference is small, it is absolutely crucial, for if the unconscious were purely and simply a thing, homogeneous with the nature of objects, he contends, there could be no room for a voluntary and free superstructure.

> Determinism devours all because it is not reciprocal with a freedom. That is why methodological determinism which lies at the basis of psychoanalysis can be interpreted as the inevitable and legitimate objectification of a <u>necessity</u> which is the obverse of free subjectivity.[168]

In his discussion of Freudian geneticism, which links genetically all higher psychic life with lower instincts, he grants that it is the same affective potential that nourishes infantile sexuality and adult morality. Indeed all thought is fed from below, as it were, by an entirely hidden factor.[169] Of this Ricoeur formulates what he calls the paradox of <u>definite form and indefinite matter,</u> or of an <u>infinite finite,</u> i.e., that all freedom is an infinite possibility tied to a constitutive particularity; the capacity for being and the way of being given are inseparable. He wants to recognize the necessity, the involuntary givenness of the unconscious in such a way as to avoid the suicide of freedom. While recognizing the dependence of consciousness upon the unconscious, he rejects the reduction of the former to the latter, wherein

---

[167] <u>VI,</u> p. 398.

[168] <u>VI,</u> p. 401.

[169] Cf. Ricoeur's discussion of Freudian archeology in <u>Freud and Philosophy,</u> pp. 419ff; also this essay, Chapter v (c)

> nothing hinders us from going to the very end of a total explanation of man in terms of this repressed repressing consciousness, sexual and autopunitive, infantile and ancestral. Freudianism serves as a vehicle of a general mentality according to which all non-vital values are considered a disguised manifestation of the unconscious. The Cogito means something else than what it thinks it means: consciousness is a coded appearance of the unconscious.[170]

As over against this genetic reductionism he declares, "I save myself by the affirmation of the Cogito." It is essentially the same argument advanced at every other stage of the involuntary: <u>It is I who</u> think, give meaning, weigh my motives, wish and move my body. Against the absurdity of the reductive viewpoint, he argues powerfully:

> A consciousness can denounce itself as dupe only before an undeceived consciousness.... If he who deciphers meaning is deceived by his unconscious in the moment when he denounces the devices of the other's unconscious, the suspicion becomes endless.... This is no longer an argument but a pledge to myself: I shall not attribute thought to the beast in me and instead of me and I shall not flee into irresponsibility.[171]

Consent to the hidden, then, does not properly entail the surrender of freedom and a consequent escape into the unconscious as alibi. Consent to the unconscious--for one <u>cannot</u> deny, control, or oppose it,--must be understood reciprocally with its counterpart, which is, in his words, a resolute spirit.[172]

<u>The Absolute Involuntary of Life as Given</u>

Delving further still into the sphere of experienced ne-

---

[170] <u>VI,</u> p. 402.

[171] <u>VI,</u> p. 404.

[172] Ricoeur's assessment of the curative role of psychoanalysis is most instructive: "Consciousness should not consider an explanation of desires of higher values in terms of sublima-

cessity, Ricoeur finds that freedom is bound not only to a finite manner (character), an indefinite matter (the unconscious) but also to the pure basic fact of existing "in life." Philosophical anthropology must now take account of biology, as it has already taken account of ethology and psychoanalysis. Here Ricoeur does full justice to the intimate unity of mind and body, as, for example, when he writes

> when I feel my breath raise my chest, my blood pulsate in my temples, I am, so to speak, in my breath, at the center of my pulse, co-present and co-extensive in the volume felt and the movement experienced.[173]

Life is experienced as the living, indivisible totality of all the aspects of the "myself-body." And it is experienced as ne-

---

172 (cont)
ted need of lower values a good exegesis of its own meanings whenever this explanation does not have a curative value. It is a good use and the limit of psychoanalysis to be defined by its therapeutic function: it is good that consciousness actively adopts and formulates for itself the thoughts of return to the womb, of Oedipus Complex, etc. when these thoughts free it from the weight which burdens its flight. Apart from this function, the influence of Freudianism can be inauspicious, even degrading." In connection with this he footnotes (VI, p. 407) R. Dalbiez La Méthode psychanalytique et la doctrine freudienne, (Paris, 1936), who wrote that "Freud's work is the most profound analysis which history has known of that in man which is no longer human." (Op. cit., II, p. 513). Perhaps this is to suggest that the unconscious operates as the determinism of an object at the pathological level. The curative task of psychoanalysis, then, is to deliver freedom from a kind of pathological determinism, rather than reduce freedom to a determinism of the unconscious. We should recall that the eidetics deliberately does not take the pathological into account, (cf. VI, p. 229), and therefore does not deal with that in man which is "no longer human."

173 VI, p. 412.

cessity, as absolute involuntary, because I simply find that I exist. Ricoeur deals with life in three moments: structure, growth and birth.

The temptation to anthropology once again is to dissolve away the mystery of the Cogito as a mere problem to be solved in terms of the biological structure of life. All alleged freedom might be seen then as a balance, regulation or adaptation of biological forces.[174] The autonomous functioning of the organism is not only undeniable but astonishing, for

> it is extraordinary that life functions in me without me, that the multiple hormone balances which science reveals constantly reestablish themselves within me without my help. This is extraordinary because at a certain level of my existence, I no longer appear to myself as a task, as a project. I am a problem resolved as though by a greater wisdom than myself. This wisdom is a nourishing one: when I have eaten, it is not up to me to make the food into myself and grow on it. It is a wisdom of movement: the circulation of my blood and the beating of my heart do not depend on me.... The marvellous spectacle of healing, sleep, and convalescence confound my will with its feeble means and meagre patience. Life builds life--the will only constructs things. The spectacle of life always humbles the will.[175]

Yet life is ambiguous. As absolute involuntary it is only a preface to humanity, the background to the relative involuntary of motivation and capability. It is at the same time a resolved problem and a problem to be solved. While a man has nothing to do with the beating of his heart, he has a great deal to do with the care and use of his body.

---

[174] Cf. PB, Chapters XIII, XIV. [175] VI, p. 418.

This ambiguity, however, does not amount to an ontological dualism of soul and body. Ricoeur frequently sounds as though it is precisely that Cartesian position he is defending, as when he denies that subjects and objects can fit together homogeneously in a unified cosmology, as when he refuses to "place the subject into nature." He is applying here again the diagnostic method of bridging two universes of discourse, those of subject body and object body. This is to avoid the totalitarian claim of explanation by structure. Rather, the laws of biological structure function as an <u>index</u>, a pointer to the experience of life as the absolute involuntary. We must remember, though, that subject body and object body are indeed the same body. He explains:

> The subject, insofar as incarnate, is precisely nature in the first person: personality, unconscious and life. I can say that it is the <u>same</u> life which is experienced as the absolute involuntary in the <u>total</u> Cogito and which is known objectively as structure.[176]

Life is to be understood first, then, as the <u>conditio sine qua non</u> of the will, but its meaning is found in the will <u>for</u> which, in man, it exists as nature in the first person.[177]

While the involuntary of life is basically structure, an aspect of that structure is growth. A man's life is temporality, says Ricoeur: birth, growth and aging. Eidetics tends to deal with mature man as normative, and yet each age has its perfection. Childhood and adolescence strive toward

---

[176] <u>VI</u>, p. 424. [177] <u>VI</u>, pp. 409-425.

the equilibrium of maturity, yet they have their appropriate innocence, energy, wonder and awe of which the loss is experienced as atrophy in adulthood. Similarly old age is experienced as descent from the fulness of maturity, yet the ancients rightly honored its unique prudence and wisdom. All of this assumes that age is a kind of given, a fate like character, one of the finite bounds of freedom which, like the passing of time, absolutely does not depend upon oneself, but which operates reciprocally with the will.[178]

We reach the rock bottom of the absolute involuntary when we consider our birth. One's birth of course is beyond memory, something of which we can have no subjective experience. It is not the radical beginning in which "I" begin to be, but an incident preceded by conception, and by the germination of reproductive cells. The spell of objectivity grasps us here more powerfully than in any of our foregoing considerations, for here we must consider our origin in our parents, indeed in a long chain of ancestors. Our character and unconscious is in large part the product of a history of genes, in principle knowable and predictable by the geneticist. Am "I" then simply <u>contained</u> in this complicated genetic formula which I have received? Certainly the geneticist informs us that existence is capital received as a collection of genetic properties contained in a chromosomic structure. But the philoso-

---

[178] <u>VI</u>, pp. 425-433.

pher, says Ricoeur, uses this objective knowledge to diagnose the relation of this basic aspect of the involuntary to the subject, and finds that

> this multiple capital is the indivisible unity of my life, of my sheer existence; this capital received from the other is not the burden of an external nature, it is my self given to myself.... I have, first of all to conceive of heredity as in me....[179]

The contribution of philosophy, therefore, is a return from combinations of the things that constitute me to the unity and identity of the self. One's heredity is one's character as externalized, "the finite mode and indefinite matter of freedom --plus the idea of an ancestor." Ricoeur insists on saying, "It is I who have come from..., and not the ancestor who is the cause of...."[180] The birth and early childhood which can never be reached by consciousness is the lower limit of the Cogito which can only be integrated into consciousness by consent.

> Yet to consent to being born is to consent to life itself, with its opportunities and obstacles. In assuming a limit which escapes me, I take upon myself the individual nature which presses on me so intimately: I accept my character.[181]

Consent and Refusal

But the way of consent is neither easy nor automatic. Freedom is the possibility of saying No to necessity, the possibility of refusal, of not accepting the conditions of human existence. The possibility arises out of the dualism of free-

---

[179] VI, p. 438.
[180] VI, pp. 438-439.
[181] VI, pp. 442-443.

dom and necessity, wherein necessity appears as essentially injurious and as a negation of freedom. The paradoxical unit of freedom and necessity in man remain a scandal to the intellect, because, says Ricoeur, of a lesion in being itself.

> We do not break man's living unity only by thinking it: a secret wound is inscribed in the human act of existing.[182]

It is thinking itself, the fundamental act of human existence, which constitutes the rupture of what would otherwise be a blind harmony. It is free reflective thought that reveals negation, that is, all that, in our freedom, we hope to overcome. Not that freedom is itself the sole source of negation.[183]

---

[182] VI, p. 444.

[183] Ricoeur's thought at this point is diametrically opposed to that of Sartre, who understands freedom as the nothingness of man. Sartre finds between past and present a cleavage which is precisely nothing. This nothing is freedom, in that nothing in a man's past compels or justifies him. "Freedom is the human being putting his past out of play by secreting his own nothingness." (BN, pp. 34-35). This nothingness which separates freedom from the past places existence prior to essence. Ricoeur, on the other hand, does not see freedom arising out of nothingness, for it always relates reciprocally to motives, capabilities and necessities, and this is a relation neither of cause (as with behaviorism) nor of rupture (as with Sartre) but of support.

Ricoeur finds the basis of what he regards as Sartre's error in a "flimsy conception of being" (Cf. "Negativity and Primary Affirmation," in HT, p. 324) which confines being to the factual, to the mundane "thing." He has prematurely "sealed off our idea of being,... closing it up within the notion of the in-itself wholly constructed upon the model of the thing. Ricoeur suggests that we can have an ontology which is the root of being in the sense of the factual and in the sense of subjectivity and value. Quoting Plato, he exclaims to Sartre: "But tell me in heaven's name! Are we so easily convinced

Rather, says Ricoeur, negation is bipolar; it is both willed and undergone. It is willed in the moment of refusal, but precisely as refusal, freedom reacts to its own negation.

Ricoeur meditates upon the three moments of necessity, character, the unconscious and life, in terms of the double negation as suffered and willed. He finds negation first in the necessity of a given character, and calls it the "sorrow of finitude," that a man suffers from being just one finite perspective on the world, that he must be particular, and therefore so utterly limited in his possibilities:

> Ah! If only I could grasp and embrace everything!--and how cruel it is to choose and exclude. That is how life moves: from amputation to amputation; and on the road from the possible to the actual lie only ruined hopes and atrophied powers. How much latent humanity I must reject in order to be someone! [184]

A man must will his own negation in that he must choose to do and be this and not that; yet he suffers the necessity of this limitation as a negation. Similarly, in the necessity of the unconscious, the dark and obscure shadows of our existence present themselves as negation. Willing consent is the only way to overcome the "sorrow of formlessness," the fear of "the

---

183 (cont)
that change, life, soul and mind actually have no place within the core of universal being, that it has neither life nor thought, but stands immutable in solemn aloofness, devoid of intelligence?--That, sir, would be an appalling doctrine to accept" (Op. cit., p. 328).

Rather than speaking of freedom as nothingness, Ricoeur speaks of necessity as non-being (VI, pp. 444f.). Freedom and necessity mutually negate each other. Necessity is the non-being of character (the limitation of being individual), of the unconscious (as beyond control), of life (as contingent). But freedom negates necessity in consent, and, as we shall see, in hope.

184 VI, p. 447.

monstrous potentialities crouching in consciousness," which in their eruptions can render a man passive and impotent. "Thus all self-possession," he writes, "is fringed with non-possession, the terrible is only a step away and with it all discord and all folly."[185] Again, our existence in life which we have not chosen and the structure of which we cannot change, which submits us to pain, also confronts us as negation. We are subject to the irreversible process of aging, but even more basically to the ex nihilo of existence, so that

> the necessity of being already born is a present and permanent trait of consciousness which conceals a present and permanent negation which I can call my contingence. My past birth implies a present structure which includes non-being of contingence: "man born of woman (Job) lacks aseity."[186]

In the foreknowledge of one's certain death one experiences an "extra-systematic" negation, which interrupts the Cogito from without, an external necessity, which carries with it the anxiety of sensing oneself unnecessary.[187]

Freedom's response to the negation of its radically limited condition may be refusal. It may, in Promethean manner, deny the limiting nature of character as necessity. It may assert a total transparence of consciousness in a philosophy of "know thyself," positing a dimensionless subject without the shadows of the unconscious. Or, in a gesture of power it may refuse contingency and posit itself as sovereign. He sees "black existentialism" as a disappointed idealism arising

---

[185] VI, p. 447. [186] VI, p. 455. [187] VI, pp. 456-462.

from the suffering of a consciousness which thought itself divine, but became aware of itself as fallen. Consequently suicide appears to refusal as the highest expression of freedom, so that the No becomes no longer a word but now an act. Or, as in the thought of Camus,[188] one might decide to exist in the absurd, persevering in refusal in the face of the non-being of necessity.

What legitimate ground could there be for departing from Camus at this point and opting for consent rather than refusal? Why is this not base and abject surrender? Now at the end of the eidetics, Ricoeur begins to usher us forward into empirics and poetics, for the choice between refusal and consent is a metaphysical one.

> How can we justify the yes of consent without passing a value judgment on the totality of the universe, that is, without evaluating its ultimate suitability for freedom? To consent does not in the least mean to give up if, in spite of appearances, the world is a possible stage for freedom. When I say this is my place, I adopt it, I do not yield, I acquiesce. That is really so; for "all things work for the good for those who love God, those who are called according to his plan."
>
> Thus consent would have its poetic root in hope, as decision in love and effort in the gift of power.[189]

Here Ricoeur has burst out of the framework of an eidetic phenomenology into "wisdom and poetics," and has brushed, if he has not actually entered, the sphere of Theology. But he has been led there, he believes, precisely by the philosophy of the subject, for, "the Cogito affirms itself but is not

---

[188] Cf. Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays, New York, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1969, pp. 3-65; also The Rebel, New York, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1956, pp. 23ff.

[189] VI, p. 467.

its own creator, reflection attests itself as subject but not as self-positing." Such reflection involves a leap, he concedes. Although it rests on no logical necessity, the leap is not arbitrary, but implicit in the response of subjectivity to Transcendence. "A philosophy of the subject and a philosophy of Transcendence -- which is what a philosophy of Transcendence is in the last resort -- are both determined in one and the same movement."[190] The deepening of subjectivity, he is saying, calls for the second Copernican revolution in which subjectivity is decentered by Transcendence. Refusal is then overcome in a reconciliation of contemplation, admiration and adoration. On the other hand, defiance is the fault.

> To refuse necessity from below is to defy Transcendence. I have to discover the Wholly Other which at first repels me. Here lies the most fundamental choice of philosophy: either God or I.[191]

However, a man's consent is never complete. He cannot unreservedly say yes to suffering and evil, nor to the sorrow of finitude, of formlessness, of contingence. "Evil is the scandal which always separates consent from inhuman necessity." How can I not quote Ricoeur's eloquent words regarding admiration and hope:

> Admiration is possible because the world is an analogy of Transcendence; hope is necessary because the world is quite other than Transcendence. Admiration sings of the day, reaches the visible miracle, hope transcends in the night. Admiration says the world is good, it is the possible home of freedom; I can consent. Hope says: the world is not the final home of freedom; I

---

[190] VI, p. 468. [191] VI, p. 477.

consent as much as possible, but hope to be delivered of the terrible and at the end of time to enjoy a new body and a new nature granted to freedom.[192]

* * * * *

Conclusions to Chapter Two

How shall we precisely identify Paul Ricoeur's contribution to the philosophy of man's freedom as we find it in the eidetics? We can do so first by once again situating him philosophically, but also by indicating the mediating, interdisciplinary character of his work.

1. In our first chapter we situated Ricoeur within the general phenomenological movement and in close proximity to existentialism. Certainly in the eidetics he makes important use of Husserlian methods and exhibits many of the attitudes broadly identifiable as existentialist. With regard to the eidetics, however, it is more significant to situate him between the behaviorism of, for example, a Skinner, and the atheistic existentialism of a Sartre.

I do not suggest that Ricoeur offers a facile eclecticism of these opposed viewpoints. Rather, he holds the insights of each in a dialectical tension. On the one hand, he recognizes the great strength of empirical psychology and

---

[192] VI, p. 480.

insists upon listening to and doing justice to its results. Thus he acknowledges, using empirical science diagnostically, the free man's receptivity to involuntary structures, all those aspects of man which such psychologists as Freud, Tolman, Koffka, Lewin and Skinner have investigated so thoroughly. He feels the strength and tempting power of their quasi-philosophical conclusions, yet in the end rejects their objectification of man and their total dissipation of freedom. On the other hand, he is sympathetic to the heroic assertion of freedom on the part of atheistic existentialism, which defies all objectification of man, insisting upon the creative risk of authentic existence, and renouncing every flight from responsibility. But this position does not do justice to the facts of empirical psychology, nor even to the findings of reflective phenomenology, which knows that man's freedom is not a sovereign, arbitrary decree, but greatly limited by its own nature as well as by external circumstances.

2. The genius of Ricoeur's eidetics lies in his delicate principle of reciprocity, which preserves the mystery of the dramatic duality of freedom and nature in the unity of the incarnate Cogito, thus mediating in an original way between behaviorism and existentialism. We should note that the indirect method of "detour," much more clearly evident in later phases of his work, has already begun here, -- in the intentional analysis by way of project, pragma and necessity, and in the diagnostic of the empirical sciences.

3. Ricoeur's erudite awareness of both the human sciences and of Theology allows him to play supremely well one of the chief roles of a philosopher: the mediation amongst disciplines and points of view (and here he is in line with the aspirations of Husserl).

There is actually little reference to Theology in this first volume, but he does acknowledge both Scripture and Theology as sources of philosophical insight. He is not doing Theology, which, we shall see, he understands as the discipline whose task is to serve the proclamation of the Christian community, and thus does not use Scripture or tradition as authoritative for philosophy. But his eidetic philosophy is profoundly in line with Biblical faith, and can appropriately be described as a Christian philosophy. As evidence, we point to his exclusion of the fault as an aspect of the fundamental structure of human existence; also the affirmation of Transcendence as an implication of the philosophy of the subject and as the ground of hope. The philosophy of Transcendence is touched upon toward the end of this book as a corollary of the philosophy of the subject as limited and non-sovereign. His argument is rather tenuous; particularly he has not discussed the "goodness" of Transcendence, which he seems to assume. He has, however, deliberately abstracted this theme from eidetics, and has promised to deal with it more fully in the poetics. Perhaps he can be excused for having here only

glimpsed Transcendence as a limiting horizon to the philosophy of the subject.

On the basis of Ricoeur's analysis we can actually see an affinity between behaviorism and Biblical faith as over against atheistic existentialism with regard to the description of freedom as anchored in the body, as receptive, limited, as only human, not divine. On the other hand, we can see an affinity of Biblical faith with that same existentialism with regard to the insistence upon the responsibility and dignity of free persons.

4. I suggest that Ricoeur's constructive, mediating role amongst disciplines extends also to Ethics. In asserting the limited character of freedom as receptive to objective values and needs he is lining himself beside classical, teleological ethics (and here even shows us an affinity of classicalism and behaviorism!) finding that values are in one sense given and prescribed for man prior to his choosing. And yet he is with existentialism in that he sees that freedom must willingly recognize these values, adopt them as its own, and apply them practically, creatively, sometimes with risk, in actual situations.

We find in Ricoeur's first volume, then, a mediating philosophy, attempting to reconcile the radically diverse insights of behaviorism, existentialism, classicalism and Biblical faith, also a mediating interdisciplinary work spanning the concerns of Psychology, Theology, Ethics and Philosophy.

The clue to their successful reconciliation is a philosophy of the reciprocity of voluntary and involuntary, disclosing man's freedom as <u>real</u> freedom, yet <u>bound</u>, and <u>only human</u>.

Chapter Three

FREEDOM AND FALLIBILITY

As we have seen, the first volume of Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy of the Will described man as a dramatic duality of voluntary and involuntary, not reducing the one to the other, nor allowing a divisive dualism of body and mind. His second volume carries forward this dialectical view of man as a unity of apparently opposing polarities. But here he is concerned to elucidate first fallibility, that fragility which renders man capable of the fault; and then, using religious symbols and myths as sources of insight, he attempts to shed light upon man's actual experience of fault. Ricoeur at this point removes only the eidetic brackets from the fault. Transcendence remains bracketed until the poetics. In this chapter, freedom continues to be our central concern, though Ricoeur exhibits in Volume II a wider concern for philosophical anthropology in general, i.e., for an understanding of human knowledge, language and feeling.

Our task is to explore the anthropology of Fallible Man to discern its significance for Ricoeur's philosophy of freedom.

(a) Away from Eidetics to Empirics

Fallible Man resembles the eidetics very closely in that it remains a structural phenomenology. As Freedom and Nature: the Voluntary and the Involuntary described the neutral structure of man's fundamental possibilities, the "undifferentiated

keyboard upon which the guilty as well as the innocent man might play," now Fallible Man asks, "What... is the human 'locus' of evil, what is its point of insertion in human reality?"[1] This book forms only the first step in an "empirics" of the will, departing from a thoroughgoing abstraction of the fault, yet still not becoming a full, existential ontology of man. Not only does it continue to abstract Transcendence, but Fallible Man also abstracts the "actuality" of the fault, and deals only with its possibility. How will Ricoeur proceed differently here than in the eidetics, in a study which continues to be "pure reflection?" An eidetics, being an essential description, cannot shed light upon the fault, (so he tells us in the Preface) because of its absurd and opaque nature. Unlike motives, powers, conditions and limits, fault remains a foreign body in the eidetics of man.[2] But note that he is discussing here not the fault itself but only its possibility, and that Fallible Man continues to be concerned with the fundamental structure of the will. It will differ from an eidetics by concentrating only upon this possibility, and will attempt to disclose, as he puts it, "a new thematic structure." It will not continue to describe man in terms of the reciprocal duality of voluntary and involuntary, but rather will focus on man from a new standpoint, disclosing a new set of polarities which relate to the question at hand, i.e., man's capacity for

---

[1] FM, pp. xvi-xix.

[2] FM, p. xvii.

evil. The standpoint of this question calls for new working hypotheses and a new method of approach.[3]

An Ethical Vision of the World

A fundamental decision at the very beginning of this book has to do not with method but with content: to understand evil by freedom, and thus to propose an ethical vision of the world. Such a vision operates as a "working hypothesis." As Charles Kelbley points out in the Translator's Introduction, Ricoeur is not concerned for a radical point of departure, some safe and absolute starting point. He begins in the midst of things, "with the whole of man,"[4] justifying his working hypotheses by their ability to shed light and thereby render man more intelligible to reflection. Ricoeur indicates his basic working hypothesis for Fallible Man when he says that he could have chosen Grandeur and Limitation of an Ethical Vision of the World as a suitable subtitle.

> What do we mean here by an ethical vision of the world? If we take the problem of evil as the touchstone of the definition, we may understand by the ethical vision of the world our continual effort to understand freedom and evil by each other....
>
> To try to understand evil by freedom is a grave decision.[5]

However, this is not a decision concerning the root origin of evil. Nor is he concerned here with "evil" in the sense of natural catastrophe. Even if the evil in which man himself is involved came from an external source, the other source

---

[3] FM, p. xvii. [4] FM, p. xiv. [5] FM, p. xxiv.

would be knowable to us only in its relation to us, since evil manifests itself in man's humanity.

> The decision to understand evil by freedom is itself an undertaking of freedom which takes evil upon itself. The choice of the center of perspective is already the declaration of a freedom which admits its responsibility, which vows to look upon evil as evil committed, and avows its responsibility to see that it is not committed.[6]

This decision is quite central for the theme of freedom. If man's involvement with evil cannot be understood in terms of freedom, if it is understood wholly in terms of a behavioristic causality or a mythical fatalism, then in reality both the concepts of evil and freedom are lost in their full sense. Thus Ricoeur writes, following Jean Nabert,

> I am constituted as a self over and above all my choices and individual acts. In this work it became apparent that the avowal of fault is, at the same time, the discovery of freedom.[7]

Again,

> Accordingly, in an ethical vision of the world, not only is it true that freedom is the ground of evil, but the avowal of evil is also the condition of the consciousness of freedom.[8]

We shall find that Ricoeur's understanding of fallibility is in profound concord with his description of man in the eidetics as a bound and only human freedom. Note that he speaks here not only of the "Grandeur" but also of the "Limitation" of an ethical vision of the world. An ethical vision is limited because man's freedom is limited. As we shall see again when we come to consider The Symbolism of Evil, man, as fra-

---

[6] FM, p. xxv.

[7] FM, p. xxvi; Cf. Jean Nabert, Eléments pour une éthique, (Paris, Aubier, 1943).

[8] FM, p. xxviii.

gile and fallible, as the one who in freedom posits evil, is also the victim of an adversary, and "no less a victim than guilty."[9]

Pure Reflection and
Non-Philosophical Precomprehension

Ricoeur proposes to elucidate the concept of fallibility by pure reflection, by which he means a way of understanding that does not come through image, symbol or myth. This assumes a working hypothesis: that man's fragility and liability to err is "wholly accessible to pure reflection."[10] Once again, as we shall see, he will substantiate his hypothesis by the value of his formulations to render man intelligible. But, as we have already seen, in Ricoeur's view, philosophy, even as pure reflection, does not properly begin with some pure and simple starting point.

> This means that we must completely dissociate the idea of method in philosophy from the idea of a starting point. Philosophy does not start anything independently: supported by the non-philosophical, it derives its existence from the substance of what has already been understood prior to reflection.[11]

Even in the eidetics, Ricoeur did philosophy as a reflection on everyday experience and the findings of the empirical sciences of man. Again in the symbolics he will find himself explicitly dependent upon the data of symbol and myth. His concept of non-philosophical precomprehension is a crucially important hinge of his whole philosophical method. He explains:

---

[9] FM, p. xxix. [10] FM, p. 3. [11] FM, pp. 8-9.

> if philosophy is not a radical beginning with regard to its sources, it may be one with regard to its method. Thus, through this idea of a difference of potential between the non-philosophical precomprehension and the methodical beginning of elucidation, we are brought closer to a working hypothesis which is well defined.[12]

This precomprehension allows philosophy to proceed not from the simple to the complex, but from the totality of man. We see what he means by this when he speaks of his second working hypothesis: that the "global disposition" of human reality, the universal condition of man, is a certain <u>non-coincidence</u> with himself, a <u>disproportion</u> of self to self.[13] Ricoeur has not merely pulled these concepts out of thin air. He has learned from his philosophical forebearers, such as Plato, Pascal, but especially Descartes. He refers us to Descartes' paradox of finite-infinite in the fourth <u>Meditation</u>, where he wrote of man as <u>intermediate</u> between God and nothingness and found man's liability to err located in his participation in nothingness.[14] Ricoeur rejects the manner in which Descartes has explained this intermediate nature of man, for he thinks it tempts us to treat man as an object whose place is fixed by its relation to other realities. Rather, Ricoeur suggests,

> Man is not intermediate because he is between angel and animal; he is intermediate within himself, within his selves. He is intermediate because he is a mixture, and a mixture because he brings about mediations.[15]

He does agree with Descartes that man must be understood from the beginning in this intermediate sense as finite-infinite,

---

[12] <u>FM</u>, p. 9.
[13] <u>FM</u>, p. 4.
[14] <u>Philosophical Works of Descartes</u>, pp. 172-173.
[15] <u>FM</u>, p. 6.

thus disagreeing with those who characterize man decisively in terms of finitude.[16] Ricoeur will locate man's fallibility precisely in this disproportion, in virtue of which

> man appears to us to be no less discourse than perspective, no less a demand for totality than a limited nature, no less love than desire.... Man is no less destined to unlimited rationality, to totality and beatitude than he is limited to a perspective, consigned to death and riveted to desire....[17]

He is arguing, then, that philosophical anthropology must once again see a "dramatic duality," must recognize both sides of a polarity in order to see the disproportion that makes for fallibility. And this insight can be derived, he believes, from man's non-philosophical precomprehension, more specifically, in what he calls the pathétique of misery, the pathos of the pre-philosophical expressions found, for example, in the mythical and rhetorical writings of Plato and Pascal. It appears as if Ricoeur is already passing into hermeneutics, and away from the "pure reflection" that does not come through image, symbol or myth. But for Ricoeur, "pure reflection" does not mean thought without source or data. What he intends is to sketch the non-philosophical precomprehension prior to beginning the project of pure reflection. The pathétique is only a brief intimation of the fuller hermeneutical studies he will introduce in the next stage. Meanwhile, he insists, "Philosophy recommences rather than commences. The beginning

---

[16] Cf. Austin Farrer, Finite and Infinite, Glasgow, Robert Maclehose and Co. Ltd., 1943, discusses Man as Finite Substance, pp. 63ff.

[17] FM, p. 7.

of philosophy is only a beginning of elucidation." He explains, "In order to reach this methodical beginning, we will have to bring about a reduction of the pathétique... and initiate an anthropology which is genuinely philosophical."[18]

Before proceeding to pure reflection, Ricoeur finds in the pathétique something of the same insight he discovered ~~in~~ first in Descartes: the bipolar, disproportionate nature of man as non-coincidental with himself. He notices this theme in Plato's dialogues: e.g., the myth of the two winged horses and the charioteer (Phaedrus 246b), and the myth of the original androgynous nature of man (Symposium, 190), and the political symbol of the soul as composed of three orders (Republic, Book IV, 441).[19] All of these depict man as a mélange, a mixture or disproportion. The last mentioned especially makes the soul appear as a field of forces torn between the attraction of reason and desire. A third term, θυμός, is the ambiguous power which undergoes this struggle. "Anger," or "courage," both stem from the heart, the unstable and fragile function par excellence. Again, in the Pensées of Blaise Pascal, Ricoeur finds a kind of pathetic rhetoric concerning man's disproportion: his place (lieu) as a mean between the infinite greatness and infinite smallness of the surrounding universe, his lamentable limitation, yet his infinite ability

---

[18] FM, p. 9.

[19] Cf. The Dialogues of Plato, trans. B. Jowett, Vol. I (New York, Macmillan Co., 1892), Phaedrus, pp. 250ff., Symposium, pp. 316-319; Republic, IV, pp. 704ff.

or infinite presumption to know the whole.[20] This too Ricoeur regards as strictly speaking a pre-philosophical exhortation or rhetoric which is nevertheless enlightening material for the philosopher's meditation. It remains paramythia, he thinks, because it starts from a purely spatial schema of man's "place," which is an imaginative picture attempting to express the sense of disproportion. In Fallible Man Ricoeur simply mentions Kierkegaard's Concept of Dread as a further progression of the pathétique toward discourse. But in his article, "The Antinomy of Human Reality and the Problem of Philosophical Anthropology," he especially cites Kierkegaard's Sickness Unto Death and its treatment of man as finite and infinite as the nearest approximation to a proper philosophical treatment of the theme. However, this too he regards as rhetoric, confession, and appeal.[21] No doubt Ricoeur's thought has been fed by Plato, Pascal, and Kierkegaard. He now proposes to reflect with more careful precision on the disproportionate nature of man, to locate it and describe it in such a way as to lift the language of myth and rhetoric to the level of philosophical discourse.

(b) Transcendental Reflection On the Power of Knowing

Our author proposes to elucidate the disproportion of man in pure reflection first by looking into man's power of knowing. Here he follows the lead of Kantian philosophy for reflection of

---

[20] Blaise Pascal, Pensées, trans. H. F. Stewart, New York, Random House, 1965, pp. 18-23.

[21] "Antinomy," p. 393; Cf. Sören Kierkegaard, Sickness unto Death, "trans. W. Lowrie, Princeton University Press, 1941, pp. 41ff.

a "transcendental style," which does not start introspectively with the self, but begins with the object of knowledge, subsequently tracing back to the conditions of the possibility of knowledge in man.[22] This is consistent also with Husserlian theory of intentionality as applied in the eidetics, which undertook to understand decision, action and consent intentionally, that is, in terms of their object. In his words,

> it is a reflection which begins with the object, or to be more precise, with the <u>thing</u>. It is "upon" the <u>thing</u> that it discovers the specific disproportion of knowing, between receiving it and knowing it.[23]

Thus reflection is not introspection, because it takes a detour <u>via</u> the object; consideration of the conditions for knowledge of the object, and the manner in which it is known, throws light on the man who knows it.

<u>Finite Perspective</u>

The first major point Ricoeur wishes to establish is that all of man's knowledge is limited by finite perspective. According to Husserlian theory, consciousness is first directed toward the world. One finds that one's bodily existence is open <u>onto....</u> We are open to the world through the instrumentality of our bodies, and the finitude of our perception consists in perspectival limitation of our bodies. Because of my bodily standpoint, "I never perceive more than one side at any given time and the object is never more than the presumed unity of

---

[22] <u>FM.</u> pp. 9-10; cf. <u>HP.</u> pp. 59ff. [23] <u>FM.</u> p. 28.

the flux of these silhouettes."[24] Following Kant, Ricoeur identifies finitude and receptivity: the finite being does not create its objects, but receives them. Although our philosopher here emphatically dissociates himself from Husserl's idealism, he has learned from Husserl too regarding finite perspective:

> ...I <u>can</u> make the object's aspect change; a certain behavior of my body commands the passivity of the perceived being.... <u>if</u> IF turn my head, <u>if</u> I extend my hand, <u>if</u> I move about, <u>then</u> the thing appears in such and such a way.
>
> Here we have the ultimate referende: the otherness that my free mobility brings into play is an otherness in relation to an initial position which is always the absolute "here."[25]

Primal finitude, then, consists in <u>perspective,</u> or <u>point of view.</u> An appreciation of this finitude of man's perception is crucial for an understanding of freedom as limited. As Ricoeur states it,

> I was born somewhere: from the moment I am "brought into the world" I perceive this world as a series of changes and re-establishments starting from this place that I did not choose and that I cannot find in my memory. My point of view then becomes detached from me like a fate which governs my life from outside.[26]

Ricoeur might well have noted here the limitation placed upon our points of view by the community into which we are born and in which we are raised and educated, the manner in which our fundamental attitudes, concepts and commitments are influenced by our social environment as well as by our bodily perspective.

---

[24] <u>FM,</u> p. 32.

[25] <u>FM,</u> p. 34.

[26] <u>FM,</u> p. 36.

This is an aspect of the finitude of human freedom which, at least in this phase of his work, he has neglected.

Transcending Finite Perspective

The disproportion, or non-coincidence of man with himself, arises from the fact that he is not only tied to his finite perspective, but also capable of transcending it. It is finite man himself, Ricoeur reminds us, who recognizes his own finitude. "In order for human finitude to be seen and expressed, a moment which surpasses it must be inherent in the situation, condition or state of being finite."[27] A man transcends his finite perspective by situating his perspective in relation to other possible perspectives; i.e., he relates the side that he sees to those that he does not see but which he knows nevertheless. This "transgression," says Ricoeur, "is the intention to signify." Language always involves this transcendence of finitude, because of its significative function; that is, it conveys not the finite perspective of perception, but the signified whole, the "sense" of the intended object. When a man speaks of something not present, or of something impossible (an absurd signification, e.g., a square circle) he attests his transcendence of perspective: "I say more than I see when I signify."[28] Again, the act of naming grounds the new perspectival unity of a thing (e.g. tree). Ricoeur contends:

This transcendence of signification over perception, of

---

[27] FM, p. 38.

[28] FM, pp. 41-44.

> speaking over perspective, is what makes the reflection on point of view as such possible: I am not immersed in the world to such an extent that I lose the aloofness of signifying, of intending, aloofness that is the principle of speech.[29]

However, it is in the verb that Ricoeur finds the most significant relation of language to freedom, and indeed important evocative evidence of the reality of freedom. Following Aristotle in his treatise On Interpretation,[29b] (and Aristotle had borrowed in this matter from Plato), Ricoeur notes that the verb is a noun-meaning shot through with additional meaning: the temporal dimension of the tense, and the attribution to a subject. By this double intention of the verb human speech possesses the capacity of truth and error. A verb can multiply the significations of nouns, by false negation, false affirmation, true affirmation, true negation. The possibility of both affirmation and negation, of denying what one has affirmed and affirming what one has denied, reveals, says Ricoeur,

> the electio, the liberum arbitrium, which may also be termed liberum judicium, the power of contraries, the power to affirm or deny. In short, it is what that tradition called "volition in judgment."[30]

Volition in judgment is similar to what he wrote of so cogently in the eidetics under the heading of Attention. This possibility of a multiple volition about the same things shows us the intimate relation of knowing and willing, and the dimension of infinitude in man: "The extension, the vastness of the will is thus its independence as an indivisible quality."[31] It in-

---

[29] FM, pp. 41-44.

[29b] Aristotle, On Interpretation, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon, New York, Random House, 1941, p. 41.

[30] FM, p. 52.

[31] FM, p. 53.

cludes within it the power we have of pursuing the worse although we know the better. The dialectic of finite and infinite is operative, Ricoeur tells us, between Doing and Receiving, or between the actions and passions of the soul. In other words, we receive, passively, perceptions and cognitions, and this is our finitude, our non-creative receptivity; but we attend, we affirm and choose in virtue of an indeterminate, indivisible independence, and this is our infinitude. We should note that "infinitude" does not mean unlimitedness for Ricoeur. He is not suggesting a voluntaristic conception of human will as sovereign, arbitrary, unmotivated or unbound. That would be drastically inconsistent with the argument of his previous volume. He enlightens us on his use of the word in his earlier discussion of Pascal:

> The very word infinite is more expressive than meaningful. It does not and could not denote a concept of reason, for it is rather indefinite as to greatness and smallness than a reference to infinity and nothingness. The words infinite and nothingness, fraught with dread, rather manifest the astonishment of the imagination which exhausts its powers of thinking and stands in amazement before these marvels....[32]

Man's capacity to know and to speak, like the greatness and smallness of the universe, is a marvel, -- more precisely, a mystery.

Ricoeur continues to unfold and illumine the mystery in his discussion of the transcendental synthesis. Man is not, as Kant knew well, and as Ricoeur has now pointed out in a

---

[32] FM, p. 21. For Ricoeur's critique of voluntarism, see this essay, p. 66.

new way, merely a passive receiver of sense impressions. With the two poles of perspective and transgression or transcendence, man effects a synthesis of meaning and appearance through what he calls, in Kantian manner, "pure imagination." Thus, "to know being is not merely to let it appear, but also to determine it intellectually, to order it, to express it." The finitude of receptive perception is not all; nor is the "infinite" transgression of perspective all. "A philosophy of synthesis--the synthesis of finitude and rationality is required."[33] The synthesis, or third term, Ricoeur explains in "The Antinomy..." is given in the object of perception, the thing:

> Man makes himself intermediate by projecting himself into the mode of being of a thing; he makes himself a "mean" between the infinite and the finite by outlining this ontological dimension of things, namely, that things are a synthesis of meaning and presence.[34]

A man is a synthesis of finite and infinite, or perspective and speech, in that he "opens a space" for appearance and discourse. But he carries out his synthesis intentionally, that is, in the Husserlian sense, in his relation to objects. That is why it was necessary to expound the disproportion in the first instance in terms of man's knowing relation to things, and his capacity for language.

Ricoeur feels, however, that there remains an overflow of meaning in the pathétique which the transcendental analysis has not been able to integrate into philosophical discourse. Therefore he proceeds to a consideration, in turn, of the

---

[33] FM, p. 67. [34] "Antinomy," p. 394.

"practical" and the "affective" dimensions of man.

(c) Practical Disproportion

We can best approach Ricoeur's intentions concerning the "practical" disproportion of man by quoting what he announces in italics:

> All the aspects of "practical" finitude that can be understood on the basis of the transcendental notion of perspective may be summed up in the notion of character. All the aspects of "practical" infinitude that can be understood on the basis of the transcendental notion of meaning may be summed up in the notion of happiness. The "practical" mediation which extends the mediation of the transcendental imagination, projected into the object, is the constitution of the person by means of "respect." This new analysis aims at showing the fragility of this practical mediation of respect, for which the person is the correlate.[35]

The Practical Finitude of Character

"Character" is to practical finitude what point of view is to the finitude of knowing. We have already seen how Ricoeur deals with character in the eidetics as an aspect of the absolute involuntary, part of the necessity of man's nature.[36] One's character is given, received. It is out of one's given character, one's "affective perspective" that things appear interesting, attractive, lovable, hateful. One's given character involves a receptivity of motivation also.

> It is no longer the sensory receptivity of seeing and hearing, but the specific receptivity which signifies that I do not create my projects radically from nothing, no more than I produce my objects through creative intuition. I posit actions only by letting myself be influenced by motives.[37]

Here is a practical receptivity corresponding to the theoreti-

---

[35] *L'Homme faillible*, p. 67, *FM*, p. 76.

[36] Cf. this essay, pp. 88ff.

[37] *FM*, pp. 79-80.

cal receptivity discussed previously. As in the eidetics he noted the involuntary structure of values and needs, here he speaks of desire as an experienced lack _of..._ and impulse _toward..._ as something given, something we have not chosen. Moreover, this affectivity which we discover in ourselves is utterly individual:

> ...to find oneself in a certain mood is to feel one's individuality as inexpressible and incommunicable.... It is here that egoism, as well as vice, finds its opportunity: out of difference or otherness it makes a preference. But self-preference finds that inherent in every inclination is what the Stoics called a self-attachment, an innate tendency to will oneself good, a love of one's own make-up, what I would readily call self-love as point of view.[38]

Practical finitude must be seen in the second instance with regard to the powers which serve the will. Habitual behavior is the primary characteristic of the "closed" nature of a man's practical dimension. As he wrote of it in his first volume, Ricoeur sees habit in the service of freedom, not as the mechanical operation of an automatism.[39] Yet it is an aspect of finitude, for "Habit _fixes_ our tastes and aptitudes and thus shrinks our field of availability; the range of the possible narrows down, my life has taken shape."[40] The sphere of one's practical activity is finite also, of course, because of a general bodily impotence and inertia, which must be understood reciprocally with effort and perseverance.

The finitude of character, then, is the "limited openness

---

[38] _FM_, p. 85.

[39] Cf. this essay, p. 79.

[40] _FM_, p. 88.

of our field of motivation taken as a whole." It means that our freedom to create ourselves is, to say the least, severely limited.

Happiness

Ricoeur finds the practical disproportion of man evident in the coincidence of this practical finitude of character with the practical infinitude of happiness. What can he mean by this? Certainly not that infinite or perfect happiness anywhere exists as an actuality. Certainly not that the limitations placed on our projects are ever removed.

"Happiness," he first points out, is not merely a sum of the satisfaction of many desires. It is the total aim of every man. Happiness is to the aggregate of human aims what the world is to the aims of perception. "Just as the world is the horizon of _the thing_, happiness is the horizon of every point of view." Or again, it is "man's existential project considered as an indivisible whole."[41] For a rational being the demand for happiness is the demand for a totality of meaning, and therefore for total rationality and freedom.

> I who am finite perspective, dilection of my body, habit and inertia, am capable of conceiving a "complete volition of an omnipotent being".... The idea of a complete volition and the destination of reason hollow an infinite depth in my desire, making it the desire for happiness and not merely the desire for pleasure.[42]

This idea of totality is the source of disproportion, straining a man between the limitedness of his character and his aspira-

---

[41] _FM_, pp. 100-101. [42] _FM_, p. 103.

tion for total meaningfulness and freedom, which is happiness. Just as he can strain beyond finite perspective and become aware of the narrowness of his own point of view, and thus, in a measure, transgress it, so also he can, in certain privileged, precious moments receive the assurance of his own freedom and meaningfulness, so that "Suddenly the horizon is clear, unlimited possibilities open up before me; the feeling of the immense then replies dialectically to the 'narrow'."[43] We hear intimations of Christian eschatology, more of which we can expect in the poetics, when he writes,

> I could not make out these signs or interpret them as "transcending anticipations" of happiness if reason, in me, were not the demand for totality. Reason demands totality, but the instinct for happiness, insofar as it is a feeling which anticipates its realization more than it provides it, assures me that I am directed toward the very thing that reason demands. Reason opens up the dimension of totality, but the consciousness of direction, experienced in the feeling of happiness, assures me that this reason is not alien to me, that it coincides with my destiny, that it is interior to it and, as it were, coeval with it.[44]

Respect for the Person

If finite perspective and infinite verb find a "transcendental synthesis" in pure imagination, can there also be a "practical synthesis" of character and happiness? Ricoeur here introduces the concept of the person. The person, however, is only a projected synthesis. In other words, as he writes in "The Antinomy," the unity of happiness and character is a task, and this task is the idea of the person.[45] The idea of the person implies for Ricoeur, following Kant, the

---

[43] FM, p. 104.

[44] FM, p. 105.

[45] Antinomy, p. 398.

idea of an end in itself, one whose value is not subordinated to anything else, but also an existence, a presence with which one enters into relationship.[46] Whereas in the transcendental synthesis the intention of the thing was theoretical, now in this case the intention is practical, having to do with attitudes and actions. The person, then, is a way of treating others and of treating oneself, and the synthesis is constituted in a moral feeling, namely respect.[47] How is respect for persons the practical synthesis of finitude and reason? It belongs both to the faculty of desiring and to the power of obligation (practical reason). Like the transcendental imagination, it is "an art concealed in the depths of the soul" that provides an incentive which touches the heart of free choice, as well as the rational recognition of duty.

> The important thing is that through this emotion of subdued desire the faculty of desiring is "elevated" to the level of reason and that in this way self-esteem is born in the heart of this finitude elevated to reason.[48]

However, respect for the person, Ricoeur thinks, is a fra-

---

[46] Cf. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Practical Reason, in Kant Selections, ed. T. M. Greene, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929, pp. 314ff.

[47] FM, p. 114. Note that Immanuel Kant speaks similarly of moral feeling: "The appeal to it is superficial, since those who cannot think expect help from feeling, even with respect to that which concerns universal laws.... Nevertheless, the moral feeling is nearer to morality and its dignity, inasmuch as it pays virtue the honour of ascribing the satisfaction and esteem for her directly to morality, and does not, as it were, say to her face that it is not her beauty but only our advantage which attaches us to her." (Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. L. W. Beck, New York, 1959, p. 61).

[48] FM, p. 114.

gile synthesis, for the possibility of discord and fault is inscribed in this disproportionate, double nature of man as finite and infinite. This fragility of which he speaks must now become our centre of interest.

(d) Affective Fragility and Fallibility

In the transcendental synthesis man's disproportion was apprehended on the objectivity of the thing, and in the practical synthesis on the humanity of the person. Now, proceeding from consciousness and self-consciousness to feeling, from the theoretical and practical to the affective, Ricoeur wishes to deal with the inwardness of man. He has found a certain fragility at both the previous levels, but at the level of feeling he believes he discovers the fragile par excellence. His philosophic concern to understand the "heart" of man is awakened by the myths of Plato's dialogues, which speak of the θυμός, the transition from βίος to λόγος, the mediating principle of the Symposium that both separates and unites vital affectivity or desire and spiritual affectivity, and which, in the Republic, sometimes takes the side of reason, sometimes of desire.[49] Again, Ricoeur wishes to recover for philosophical discourse the insight of the Platonic myth and rhetoric, to see and state clearly the lived experience of the misery of the intermediate being to which the myths already bear witness. He proposes to elucidate the thumos by a phenomenological ana-

[49] FM, pp. 123-24. Cf. Plato, Republic, IV, in The Dialogues of Plato, p. 704.

lysis of feeling.

Feeling and Knowing

Ricoeur finds the significance of affectivity in the reciprocal genesis of knowing and feeling. Feeling interiorizes knowing. But it must also be understood by its reference beyond the self, that is, intentionally. Feeling is a type of consciousness _of...,_ it is a feeling of something, e.g., the lovable, the hateful. But it is a strange intentionality, for in this case "an intention and an affection coincide in the same experience, a transcending aim and the revelation of an inwardness."[50] While feeling is intentional, it is not quite accurate to say that the correlates of feeling are _objects._ The hateful and the lovable are "meant" on things, qualities that are "founded" on perceived objects. Feeling does not posit an object as such, but rather manifests the way in which _I_ am affected, "_my_ love, _my_ hate." This inward and yet outward reference which Ricoeur calls "the paradox of feeling" is highly illuminative of the disproportionate nature of man. It exposes our relation to the world as both _over against_ and _within._ Knowing as such sets up the otherness of the object, but

> Feeling is understood, by contrast, as the manifestation of a relation to the world which constantly restores our complicity with it, our inherence and belonging in it, something more profound than all polarity and duality.[51]

Here we have a recurrence in Ricoeur of the Marcelian incar-

---

[50] _FM,_ p. 127.

[51] _FM,_ p. 129.

nation that is so prominent in the eidetics. Feeling, he is telling us, is the mode in which our "pre-predicative" or "hyper-objective" relation to the world, that is, our embedded, incarnate relation to the world, is revealed. But, we recall, feeling remains intentional, reciprocal with knowing, and thus

> can be defined only by this very contrast between the movement by means of which we "detach" over against us and "objectify" things and beings, and the movement by means of which we somehow "appropriate" and interiorize them.

This being so,

> feeling can only be described paradoxically as the unity of an intention and an affection, of an intention toward the world and an affection of the self.[52]

Disproportion as Inner Conflict

The disproportion of feeling is a continuation of the disproportion of knowing. It divides man in two like knowing, and yet in the mode of an inner conflict. This inner conflict arises between Plato's ἐπιθυμία, which Ricoeur calls "vital" or "sensible desire," and ἔρως, "spiritual joy," of which the middle term is Θυμός.

> If one does not take into consideration the primordial disproportion of vital desire and intellectual love (or of spiritual joy), one entirely misses the specific nature of human affectivity. Man's humanity is not reached by adding one more stratum to the basic substratum of tendencies (and affective states) which are assumed to be common to animal and man. Man's humanity is that discrepancy in levels, that initial polarity, that divergence of affective tension between the extremities of which is placed the "heart."[53]

There are two kinds of termination of affective movement. One

---

[52] FM, p. 134. [53] FM, p. 140.

is pleasure, which "completes and perfects isolated, partial, finite acts or processes." The other is happiness, which is "the perfection of the total work of man; this would be the termination of a destiny, of a destination or an existential project."[54] This duality of ends between pleasure and happiness (ἐπιθυμία and ἔρως) is felt as inner discord, and constitutes the disproportion and misery of man par excellence. The two must be constantly balanced, and the one sacrificed to the other. The middle term, the θυμός, or "the human heart," as Ricoeur expresses it, constitutes the Self. The Self, then, is a "between-two," a transition, and the fallibility of man is to be located in this fragile synthesis.

> Self-preference, which is fault, or an aspect of fault, finds in this make-up of difference the structure which makes fallibility possible without making it inevitable.[55]

He proceeds to illustrate this thumos or self following the lead once again of Kant in his distinction of three kinds of passion: for possession (Habsucht), for power (Herrschsucht), and for honour (Ehrsucht).[56] These are appropriate, Ricoeur feels, because they involve essentially the interhuman, the social and cultural, and are not reducible to the non-human. Thus they illustrate the thumos of man midway between epithumia and eros. Ricoeur's treatment differs at the outset from Kant's, however, in that he wishes to discern the primordial state, without reference to fault. This does not

---

[54] FM, p. 140. [55] FM, p. 163.

[56] FM, pp. 161ff; Ricoeur cites Kant, Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View, FM, p. 182.

mean that he intends to return to eidetics, for he does want to deal with the search for possession, power and honour as passions also, i.e., as fallen.

> Although we only know these fundamental quests empirically through their hideous and disfigured visages, in the form of greed and the passions of power and vanity, we understand these passions in their essence only as a perversion of....[57]

The primordial must be understood first by a kind of imagination of an "innocent kingdom," imagination not as a fanciful dream, but as an "imaginative variation" wherein "I perceive the possible, and in the possible, the essential."[58] We can use his discussion of power to illustrate the point he wishes to make concerning essential having, power and worth. He argues:

> I could not understand power as evil if I could not imagine an innocent destination of power by comparison to which it is fallen. I can conceive of an authority which would propose to educate the individual to freedom, which would be a power without violence...; the utopia of a Kingdom of God, a City of God, an empire of minds or a kingdom of ends, implies such an imagination of non-violent power. This imagination liberates essence...; ...By means of this imagination and this utopia I discover power as primordially inherent in the being of man.[59]

This very aspiration for the essential points up the conflict, the fragility, which is our concern here. In Fallible Man Ricoeur offers a rich and lengthy phenomenology of the conflicting nature of having, power and worth, which we cannot here deal with thoroughly.[60] His point is made clearly

---

[57] FM, p. 170.
[58] Ibid.
[59] FM, p. 182.
[60] FM, pp. 161-190.

and briefly in "The Antinomy...". Possession, power and honour, he explains, constitute the thumos, the self of man midway between the life of the body and the life of the spirit. When one examines how these demands are to be satisfied, one perceives the inherent instability between the vital and the spiritual:

> We are immediately struck by the fact that the self is never guaranteed, and that the demand in which it searches for itself is in a certain sense without end.... Between the finitude of pleasure which rounds off a clearly delimited act and is the seal of its repose, and the infinitude of happiness, thumos drifts along, an undefined power, and already there is a threatening menace attached to an endless pursuit.[61]

The human heart is restless, perpetually striving, for the thumos must constantly resolve the tension between pleasure and happiness. It is in this "mediation" of thumos that the fragility of human life occurs.

The thumos, however, is not merely situated "between" the vital and the spiritual. It is truly the third term which constitutes man as a "mixture."[62] Sexuality, Ricoeur thinks, has a special place in anthropology, because it displays so well the disproportionate nature of man as a mixture of βίος and λόγος. Its obvious "instinctual" bodily character, and its similarity to animal functioning is opposed by the specifically human coloring of possession, domination and mutual recognition. Thus "genital desire is sublimated into tenderness beyond sex, whereas the desire for recognition in embody-

---

[61] Antinomy, p. 401.

[62] FM, p. 194.

ing itself in tenderness, takes on a sexual coloring..."[63]

Fallibility

Our fragility, then, is the disproportion of βιος and λογος, of the living and thinking, of finite and infinite. It is this specific nature of man's limitation as non-coincidental with himself which Ricoeur has laid out in terms of knowledge, practicality and feeling. The human synthesis all too easily loses its balance, and this is man's fallibility, or capacity for evil.

In what sense is fragility the capacity to fail? First, it is the occasion for evil, the point of least resistance. But this occasion of itself does not account for or explain evil. Between the possibility and the reality, says Ricoeur, there is a gap, a leap. This means that the fall is not essential to man, and that his leap and fall are an enigma.

If fallibility is the condition of evil, evil is the revealer of fallibility. It is only through the actual evil condition of man's heart that we can detect the unfallen or primordial. The "passions" (e.g. avarice, tyranny and vainglory) manifest the "quests" (possession, power and honour) of which they are the perversion. "Thus the evil of fault refers intentionally to the primordial."[64] The innocence of the primordial is only known in imagination. Yet it manifests fallibility as pure possibility, as distinct from actual fal-

[63] FM, p. 196.

[64] FM, p. 221.

lenness. Ricoeur is insisting here again on the non-essential character of human evil. Yet he also wants to say that man's disproportion is not only the occasion for, but, more positively, the capacity for evil. A certain yielding weakness, in which I find myself subject to... is "something like a dizziness which leads from weakness to temptation and from temptation to fall."[65]

Fallible Man ends abruptly without drawing explicit conclusions about the relation of fallibility to freedom. There is merely the closing statement that "evil arises from this weakness only because it is posited. This last paradox will be at the center of the symbolics of evil."[66]

* * * * *

Conclusions to Chapter Three

Ricoeur has only begun to perform the task he set for himself at the beginning of this book: to elucidate an ethical vision of the world (not only its grandeur but also its limitations), to understand evil by freedom, and yet to show that man is no less victim than guilty. He has claimed here to show only the possibility of evil. Completion of the larger task awaits the second book of this volume, which, he tells us, will require a new method. How shall we identify

---

[65] FM, p. 223.

[66] FM, p. 224.

and evaluate his contribution here?

1. Ricoeur has taken a classical theme, the dual, disproportionate nature of man, and has developed it very profitably for philosophical anthropology. As he is the first to acknowledge, he did not discover this characteristic of man, and has ample and august backing for its reality in Plato, Descartes, Pascal and Kierkegaard. Unquestionably he has taken their theme and illuminated it far beyond any of his predecessors, relating it in a unique way to the philosophy of freedom.

2. In doing so, Ricoeur has offered additional evocative evidence over against the two positions opposed in the first volume: existentialism and behaviorism. Man, in the finitude of his perspective, in the givenness of his character, and in the provisional nature of his search for pleasure, is limited in his freedom. He is only human. And yet he is always distinctively human, capable of transcending his point of view in truth and falsehood, aspiring for and sometimes glimpsing total happiness in total rationality and freedom. It is impossible to reduce man to an automatism.

3. Fallible Man is very much a transitional book. We have pointed out several times in this chapter its consistency with the eidetics. It continues to see man as a dramatic duality of reciprocal, or in this case, conflicting polarities. The duality of involuntary and voluntary is overlapped by the poles of finitude and infinitude. But Fallible Man also begins

to pass over into the hermeneutical phenomenology that will blossom in The Symbolism of Evil. I refer to his use of pre-philosophical myth and rhetoric as sources of insight, and his attempt to transpose them into precise philosophical language. His grasp of the inner conflict of man as presented in this book will prove important, as we shall see, for his dialogue with Freud.

4. Perhaps the one weakness of Fallible Man is his neglect of the limiting role of human communities. He has said nothing of social "conditioning" as a part of finite perspective, or as a factor in the shaping of character or the formation of goals. Surely his own descriptions of normative having, power and worth, for example, and his vision of the primordial condition of man, are heavily influenced by his position in modern western civilization. Once again we can say that Ricoeur's is a Christian philosophy, influenced by the values and hopes of Christian thought.

While it is true that he acknowledges none of this in Fallible Man, we shall see that he does so in a measure in The Symbolism of Evil.

Chapter Four

THE FREEDOM OF MAN IN THE SYMBOLS OF EVIL

We turn now to the thought of the second book of Finitude et culpabilité, the sequel to L'Homme faillible, which was published in the same year, La Symbolique du Mal. This book, now translated into English as The Symbolism of Evil, is by far the best known of Paul Ricoeur's works in the English speaking world. Together with certain articles which present its argument in briefer form, The Symbolism of Evil offers an important and truly original contribution to the whole philosophy of freedom. We shall see in this chapter that Ricoeur carries forward his understanding of freedom as bound and only human, which he first established so cogently in Le Volontaire et l'involontaire. We shall note its profound consistency not only with the dialectical view of man in that volume as a reciprocity of voluntary and involuntary, but also with the anthropology of finite-infinite bi-polarity presented in Fallible Man. As in Volume I we found him in dialogue with behavioral psychology and existentialism, and in Fallible Man with the formulations of earlier philosophers, we now find him in fruitful dialogue with the history of religions, as well as Biblical and historical theology.

Ricoeur's new objective in The Symbolism of Evil is to understand the transition from the possibility of evil, as

spelled out in the previous book, to its reality, i.e., from fallibility to fault, and, we might say, to continue his exploration of "the grandeur and limitation of an ethical vision of the world." He believes the shift from the possibility to the reality of fault calls for a major shift in method, a shift which carries him deeply into the philosophy of language and hermeneutics and the history of religions. Our treatment will have to overlap these areas considerably, but of course continues to focus on the theme of freedom.

As in every phase of Ricoeur's work, it is impossible to appreciate his results without taking note of his highly deliberate methodology.

(a) From Structural to Hermeneutical Phenomenology

The structural phenomenology that we have been examining in the last two chapters dealt with human possibilities and limits in a descriptive, reflective manner. Ricoeur wrote of essential possibilities in the eidetics, and existential possibility in the first part of the empirics. We recall that he refused to deal with the fault[1] in any essential description of man, insisting that it must be regarded as a departure from the essential structure of human reality. Again, he could speak only of the possibility of fault in his second book, which continued to deal with fundamental structures. It is clear, then, that an entirely new approach is required

[1] La faute, an analogy from geology.

in order to understand the absurdity of actual evil. The brackets hitherto placed upon fault as actual are now removed, and the abstractions of structural phenomenology are replaced by reflection upon man's concrete expressions of evil in symbols and myths.

The change in mood from Fallible Man to The Symbolism of Evil is abrupt and startling, and yet we must say that the latter book is also consistent, and in some ways continuous with the previous phases. Ricoeur's method is here obviously indirect, seeking its truth by way of a detour through symbols and myths. But we should remember that the previous phases of his anthropology also took detours. The eidetics used the diagnostic method, seeking to read the human condition with the help of the empirical human sciences. Moreover, it proceeded by intentional analysis, viewing the moments of the will, decision, action and consent, through their intentional correlates, project, pragma and necessity. Again, in Fallible Man, Ricoeur, having drawn insight from the pathétique of misery in pre-philosophical myth and rhetoric, founded his understanding of man's fragility on a detour through an intentional, transcendental analysis of the object of knowing. In his view, "know thyself" is not a simple matter of introspection. It is because he glimpses the contradictory, disproportionate nature of man, that he believes these subtle, indirect paths are necessary. In this new phase, as previously, his method is guided by the anthropological problematic of the will. When

he finds that the phenomenological method as used to this point excludes consideration of important aspects or dimensions of experience, Ricoeur refashions it to serve his philosophical ends.[2] Methodological consistency notwithstanding, The Symbolism of Evil appears as a "leap" in method, and this is precisely in accordance with the irrational character of evil. A phenomenological, intentional analysis of structures will no longer suffice, since it is no longer "structure" or possibilities that are being considered, but the absurdity, the non-structure, the non-sense of actual evil. An understanding of evil must be gleaned from the avowal or confession of evil found in symbols and myths. He believes that the prespeculative language of ancient man, in spite of, or because of its blind character, bears true witness to the contradictions of human evil, for it is

> still embedded in the matrix of emotion, fear, anguish...; the confession expresses, pushes to the outside, the emotion which without it would be shut up in itself, as an impression in the soul. Language is the light of the emotions. Through confession the consciousness of fault is brought into the light of speech, through confession man remains speech, even in the experience of his own absurdity, suffering and anguish.[3]

The Languages of Confession

Ricoeur points to three "languages" of confession in which man's avowal of evil is to be found. The most sophisticated of these is the language of "speculation," of which the best example is the concept of original sin. "Speculation" rational-

---

[2]Cf. David M. Rasmussen, "Ricoeur: the Anthropological Necessity of a Special Language," in Continuum, Vol. VII, 1969, pp. 121-122.

[3]SE, p. 7.

izes experience. Ricoeur calls it "pseudo-philosophy," which, because of its inept attempt at rationality, cannot be used as a starting point for an understanding of human evil. It is necessary, he thinks, to get behind speculation to that on which it is based, i.e., the second "language," that of myth.[4]

A myth, says Ricoeur, following the dominant conclusions of the history of religions, is

> a traditional narrative which relates to events that happened at the beginning of time and which has the purpose of providing grounds for the ritual actions of men of today and, in a general manner, establishing all the forms of action and thought by which man understands himself in the world.[5]

He does not wish to present a total theory of myth, since he limits himself to those that speak of the beginning and end of evil. Following Eliade, he interprets these myths as expressions of "the bond between man and what he considers sacred," but he says this still at the level of a phenomenology that does not raise the question of truth. His first concern is simply to identify myths for what they are and to determine

---

[4]Note a further discussion of Ricoeur's critique of the doctrine of original sin, below, pp.199-200.

[5]SE, p. 5. Ricoeur is here dependent particularly upon Mircea Eliade, who has given us massive evidence and useful generalizations regarding the nature and function of myths. He explains (in Cosmos and History, trans. W. R. Trask, New York, Harper and Row, 1954) that among primitives not only rituals, but all human acts acquire effectiveness to the extent to which they exactly repeat acts performed at the beginning of time by a god, a hero, or an ancestor. (p. 22). The myths, then function as the narrative rationale providing a basis, in primordial events, for the meaningfulness of the patterns of man's life.

their significance for philosophical anthropology. They are so significant, he believes, because "an understanding of human reality as a whole operates through the myth by means of a reminiscence and an expectation."[6]

The language of myths, however, is already highly developed, already a "spontaneous hermeneutics" of the most basic language of confession, that of symbols. In fact, myths are themselves a species of symbol, a symbol developed into a narrative form with reference to a time and space unknown to critical history and geography. The myths "mediate" the primary symbols,[7] that is, they carry them and relate them, and thereby in a sense already interpret and apply them. The Exile, to use his example, is a primary symbol of alienation; the mythical story of Adam and Eve driven from Paradise puts the symbol into play by articulating primitive insight into evil at a more explicit level. Myth and speculation, then, are respectively secondary and tertiary symbols. To interpret them it is necessary in turn to go beneath the level of myth to the most primitive language, which is symbolic.

Eidetic Analysis of Symbols

Ricoeur first suggests that symbols emerge in three distinct areas: the hierophanic or cosmic, wherein man reads the sacred on some aspects of the world, such as sky, sun, moon, water or stones;[8] the oneiric, in dreams, wherein one finds

---

[6] SE, p. 6.

[7] Paul Ricoeur, "The Symbol... Food for Thought," trans. F. B. Sullivan, in Philosophy Today, Vol. IV (1960), pp. 196-207, p. 201.

[8] SE, pp. 10-11. Ricoeur frequently cites Eliade as authority

the most stable human symbolisms; and poetic imagination, wherein symbol becomes language most explicitly. He finds the same fundamental symbolic structure present in all three. What he offers in the first part of The Symbolism of Evil and in his article, "The Symbol... Food for Thought," is an eidetic reflection upon symbols, distinguishing the symbol from the sign, the symbol in the sense of symbolic logic, and from myth and allegory.

First, symbols are signs, in that they are expressions communicating meaning with the intention of signifying. They are essentially tied to discourse. Even when elements of the universe are taken as symbols (e.g., sky, tree, etc.) it is only in discourse (e.g., in words of consecration, mythical utterances, etc.) that they take on their symbolic dimension. Dreams too, he says, are close to words, since they can be

---

8 (cont)
and source of ideas, especially his Patterns in Comparative Religion, (trans. Rosemary Sheed, Cleveland, World Publ. Co., 1958). He uses Eliade's work on The Sky and Sky Gods to show the source of symbolism in the communicative nature of the world. Eliade wrote, "it would be a great mistake to see it as a logical, rational process. The transcendental quality of 'height' or the supra-terrestrial, the infinite, is revealed to man all at once, to his intellect as to his soul as a whole.... Let me repeat: even before any religious values have been set upon the sky it reveals its transcendence. The sky "symbolizes" transcendence, power and changelessness simply by being there...." (p. 39).

Ricoeur carries the point further: "The symbolic manifestation as a thing is a matrix of symbolic meanings as words. We have never ceased to find meanings in the sky (to take the first example on which Eliade practices his comparative phenomenology). It is the same thing to say that the sky manifests the sacred and to say that it signifies the most high, the elevated, the immense, the powerful and the orderly, the clairvoyant and the wise, the sovereign, the immutable. The manifestation through the thing is like the condensation of an infinite discourse; manifestation and meaning are strictly contemporaneous and reciprocal;...." (SE, p. 11).

told and interpreted, and poetic images are themselves words.[9] However, while symbols are signs, not all signs are symbols. The distinctive characteristic of a symbol as distinct from a sign is its double intentionality. Ricoeur speaks most lucidly of this in his later major work, De l'Interprétation:

> I have decided to define, i.e. limit, the notions of symbol and interpretation through one another. Thus a symbol is a double-meaning linguistic expression that requires an interpretation, and interpretation is a work of understanding that aims at deciphering symbols.[10]

In order to do justice to the consistency and unity of the different kinds of symbol (hierophanic or cosmic, oneiric, and poetic), Ricoeur explains,

> I define it by a semantic structure that these manifestations have in common, the structure of multiple meaning. Symbols occur when language produces signs of composite degree in which the meaning, not satisfied with designating some one thing, designates another meaning attainable only in and through the first intentionality.[11]

---

[9] Paul Tillich also distinguishes sharply between sign and symbol, but differently than Ricoeur. He writes, in Systematic Theology, Vol. I, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1951) that "while the sign bears no special relation to that to which it points, the symbol participates in the reality of that for which it stands. The sign can be changed arbitrarily according to the demands of expediency, but the symbol grows and dies according to the correlation between that which is symbolized and the persons who receive it as a symbol. Therefore, the religious symbol, the symbol which points to the divine, can be a true symbol only if it participates in the power of the divine to which it points" (p. 239). Ricoeur makes no reference to Tillich's distinction. We should note that Tillich is using the word in a theological context, and is concerned with language about God. Ricoeur is speaking strictly as a philosopher and is dealing with anthropological symbolism. However, he does make a point resembling Tillich's when he distinguishes between symbol and allegory (see below). There he notes the integral and essentially appropriate relation of symbol to what it signifies, and the merely external, artificial relation of allegory to what it signifies.

[10] FP, p. 9.

[11] FP, p. 16. Ricoeur pointedly distinguishes himself here from

For example, the word "stain" has a primary intentionality of physical uncleanness. But a second intentionality points to a situation of man as "defiled" or "impure" with regard to the sacred. The literal sense of the word points beyond itself to something that is <u>like</u> a stain or spot. A sign has no such double meaning. It is simply transparent. The symbol, on the contrary, is essentially opaque, because the first meaning points analogically to a second meaning. The analogical correspondence is not between signifying word and signified thing (the relation of signs to their referents) but between first meaning and second meaning.[12]

Symbol in the sense in which Ricoeur speaks of it has nothing to do with <u>symbolic logic,</u> and in fact is the very inverse of the symbols of formal logic. In the latter, expressions are replaceable by signs or letters without regard to their content. But symbolic language of the kind we are considering here is essentially bound to content.[13]

We have already noted his understanding of the relation

---

11 (cont)
Ernst Cassirer in <u>The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms,</u> (3 Vols) trans. R. Mannheim, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957) Vol. III, who holds that the concept of symbol is meant to "encompass the totality of those phenomena in which the sensuous is in any way filled with meaning, in which a sensuous content, while preserving the mode of its existence and facticity, represents a particularization and embodiment, a manifestation and incarnation of meaning" (p. 93). Ricoeur thinks this definition too broad: "Thus a fundamental distinction is wiped out, which constitutes, as I see it, a true dividing line: the distinction between univocal and plurivocal expressions." (<u>FP,</u> p. 11).

12 SFT, p. 200.

13 <u>SE,</u> p. 17.

of symbol to myth. But most importantly, symbol is to be clearly distinguished from allegory.[14] Allegories are artificial, featuring only an external relation of what is primarily and secondarily signified. An allegory can be translated simply. A symbol must be interpreted. An allegory is invented by one to whom the meaning is already clear; that is, an allegory is already hermeneutic, and when the disguise is removed, it can be discarded and the meaning expressed in non-symbolic form. But symbols arise spontaneously and precede hermeneutics. The symbol yields its meaning as an enigma, not by translation, but by evoking or suggesting an interpretation.[15]

The question arises how we are to pass from the enigmatic symbol to clear thought. If the symbol cannot be reduced to an allegory, and cannot be translated, how can it help us? Modern man, as Ricoeur well knows, cannot believe in the ancient myths as primitive man did. How, in particular, will he formulate a richer understanding of man's freedom starting from symbols? Ricoeur deals with this question according to the maxim, "Le symbole donne à penser."[16] "The symbol gives rise to thought."

Toward a Philosophy of Symbols

Ricoeur wishes to think by starting from the symbolic. But he insists that he remains a rational philosopher.

> For my part I do not in the least abandon the tradition of rationality that has animated philosophy since the Greeks. It is not a question of giving in to some kind

[14] Ricoeur cites M. Pépin, Mythe et allegorie, Paris, 1958.
[15] SE, p. 16; SFT, p. 200.
[16] La Symbolique du mal, p. 323; "Le Symbole donne à penser," in Esprit, XXVII, (1959) pp. 60-76, trans. as SFT.

> of imaginative intuition, but rather of thinking, that is to say, of elaborating concepts that comprehend and make one comprehend, concepts woven together, if not in a closed system, at least in a systematic order.[17]

He wishes to attempt a "path of creative interpretation" that respects the enigma of symbols while learning from them. This is in accordance with his whole approach to philosophical anthropology from the first volume. Mystery is to be recognized as such, and is not to be "explained" or "translated" away. The mysteries to which symbols and myths bear witness in their opaque way are not entirely unlike the mysteries of the Cogito, of human consciousness and freedom uncovered by structural phenomenology. He wishes to acknowledge such mystery, but in the full responsibility of autonomous thought, a thought which is both <u>bound</u> and <u>free</u>.[18] bound to the insight and wisdom of its sources, yet freely responsible where the question of truth is concerned.

In keeping with his earlier discussion of "finite perspective," Ricoeur realizes the contingency of his thought, a contingency which is not in any way alleviated, but rather radicalized by recourse to a limited number of symbols and myths. We had cause to complain in our last chapter that he had not acknowledged the influence upon the intellect of one's cultural environment. Here he emphasizes the cultural contingency of his own thought, rooted in the intersection of Jewish faith and Greek philosophy:

> ...my field of investigation is oriented, and because it is oriented it is limited. By what is it oriented?

---

[17] "The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection," trans. D. Savage, <u>International Philosophical Quarterly</u>, Vol. II (1962) pp. 191-217, p. 200.

[18] SFT, p. 202.

> Not only by my own situation in the universe of symbols but, paradoxically, by the historical, geographical, cultural origin of the philosophical question itself.
>
> Our philosophy is Greek by birth. Its intention and its pretension of universality are "situated." The philosopher does not speak from nowhere, but from the depths of his Greek memory, from which rises the question Τί τὸ ὄν ? what is being?[19]

Ricoeur does not pretend, then, to deal with the great mythologies of the Far East, for he believes that a phenomenology oriented by philosophical questions of Greek origin cannot do justice to the experience of India or China. Of necessity he limits himself to the consciousness of fault in ancient Greece, Israel and the Middle East.[20]

A strictly philosophical reflection starting from symbols must be preceded, Ricoeur thinks, by two preliminary stages. The first is a phenomenological study, that is, a descriptive and comparative analysis of symbol by symbol. This is the kind of study carried out by Eliade, for example, in his Patterns in Comparative Religion, which attempts to tie together the world of symbols as a consistent whole, to expose patterns and structures, and to relate the various kinds of symbols to one another.[21] But this first stage leaves unanswered, indeed unasked, the question of truth:

> Do I believe that? What do I make of these symbolic meanings, these hierophanies? That question cannot be raised as long as one remains at the level of comparativism, running from one symbol to another, without oneself being anywhere,... curious but not concerned.

---

[19] SE, pp. 19-20.

[20] SE, pp. 19-22.

[21] SFT, pp. 202-203.

> It has been necessary to enter into a passionate though critical, relation with the truth-value of each symbol.[22]

One must pass to the stage of hermeneutics. Because modern man can no longer naively believe the myths literally,[23] he must seek a "second immediacy," a "second naiveté," which is the postcritical equivalent to the precritical hierophany. It is by interpreting that we have to get in touch again with the precomprehension of the myths. "Hermeneutics, the child of 'modernity,'" he writes, "is one of the ways this 'modernity' overcomes its forgetting of the sacred."[24]

This is no easy or merely technical task. Ricoeur tells us that hermeneutics must proceed according to the Anselmian circle: "We must understand in order to believe, but we must believe in order to understand." He means simply that the interpreter must attempt to live in the aura of the material he is interpreting.[25] He must also understand in order to believe, and thus, in truth, to be enlightened. Therefore, interpretation of myths will necessarily be "demythologization." The modern tools of scientific and historic criticism must be used

---

[22] SE, p. 354.

[23] Ricoeur's comments about the "forgetfulness" of modernity once again reflect the attitude of Eliade, who speaks, for example, of the "absolute spiritual catastrophe" of the swallowing up of the ancient societies in the economic framework of colonialist and semi-industrial societies, (PCR, p. 464). He holds that "philosophical anthropology would have something to learn from the valorization that pre-Socratic man (in other words, traditional man) accorded to his situation in the universe." (CH, p. xii.)

[24] SFT, p. 204.

[25] Ricoeur makes frequent favorable mention of Rudolf Bultmann, who is most noted for his "demythologization." Cf. Jesus Christ and Mythology, London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1958.

diagnostically to "exorcise" the literal, explanatory function of the myth. But they must not be allowed to "demythize" in the sense of reducing the myth to a mere mistaken primitive explanation. Proper interpretation means sympathetic "re-enactment" in imagination, letting oneself be taught by the obscure but fundamental human experiences expressed in the myths.[26] Ricoeur believes that modern thought can be recharged and rejuvenated by attention to symbols and myths, for they bring to light once again the mysterious dimensions of human reality. Particularly, as we shall see, he finds that they provide precious nourishment for a philosophy of the freedom of the will.

However, Ricoeur considers that both phenomenology and hermeneutics of symbols are preliminary to philosophical reflection strictly speaking, that is, thought starting from symbols. Beyond the sympathetic interpretation of individual texts there still lies the necessity to articulate in clear philosophic terms what the symbols have taught us in an autonomous, systematic way. "The symbol gives rise to thought," but the task of thinking starting from symbols still remains. Philosophical anthropology will treat the interpreted symbol as <u>detector,</u> or <u>index</u> of man's position at the heart of being, in order to "reinstate man within the whole, the transcendent whole of sky, the immanent whole of vegetation and death and rebirth."[27] The strictly philosophical stage aims at being a

---

[26] <u>SE,</u> pp. 161ff.

[27] SFT, p. 207.

full ontology of man.

As in the previous phases of the philosophy of the will, Ricoeur exhibits no anxiety about an absolute starting point, but begins "in the midst," with the fulness of language.

> I wager that I shall have a better understanding of the bond between the being of man and the being of all beings if I follow the indication of symbolic thought. That wager then becomes the task of verifying my wager and saturating it, so to speak, with intelligibility.[28]

We recall that he used this same criterion of "intelligibility" in the previous phases of the philosophy of the will. In "The Symbol... Food for Thought," he explains more fully what he means by "verification." Here again his mentor is Kant:

> I would venture to speak here again of a kind of "transcendental deduction" of symbols. If "transcendental deduction" means justifying a concept by showing how it makes possible the framing of an area of objectivity, then the symbol used to decipher human reality is "deduced" (in the technical sense) when it is verified through its capacity for evoking and lighting up and putting in order a whole field of human experience.[29]

We must now leave behind our methodological considerations and look closely at Ricoeur's actual practice of hermeneutics in the main body of The Symbolism of Evil, and the conclusions he draws therefrom for the philosophy of freedom.

(b) The Symbolism of the Servile Will

Ricoeur discerns in Greek, Jewish and Babylonian avowals of evil a "progress of conscience" from a very primitive sense of defilement to the idea of sin, and then of guilt. This is

---

[28] SE, p. 355. [29] SFT, p. 206.

a progress toward a fuller realization of free responsibility, and therefore toward an "ethical vision of the world." His hermeneutical conclusion, or interpretation, is that the concept to which they all tend is the servile will. This is a paradoxical concept, since freedom and servitude cannot be thought together. The concept must remain "indirect," deriving its meaning from the symbols which point to it.[30]

1. Defilement

The primitive sense of defilement is pre-ethical, in that it has nothing to do with an offense against an ethical deity, nor violation of a neighbour's well-being. Following the phenomenologist Pettazzoni, Ricoeur defines defilement as "an act that involves an evil, an impurity, a fluid, a mysterious and harmful something that acts dynamically--that is to say, magically."[31] This consciousness places no importance on the freedom of a responsible agent but stresses the objective violation of a taboo, and does not yet dissociate personal evil and misfortune. The notion of defilement most frequently involves sexual prohibitions, so that, for example, an infant would be regarded as born impure, having been contaminated by the paternal seed and the maternal genital area, and once again by child-birth itself. It is difficult for us to appreciate, or "re-enact" the avowal of defilement, because of its irrational character. We have largely left behind the

---

[30] SE, pp. 150-151.

[31] SE, p. 25. Ricoeur cites Raffaele Pettazzoni, La confession des péchés, Vol. I, 1931, p. 184.

sense of defilement. Yet it is not certain, says Ricoeur, "that such beliefs do not continue to prowl in the consciousness of modern man."[32]

"Man enters into the ethical world through fear and not through love," he writes.[33] The precursor of the ethical dread of condemnation is the primordial association of defilement and vengeance. The violation of order is repaid by suffering. In fearing defilement, man fears the wrath of that which transcends him.

The symbolism of defilement is exhibited in rites which act out its meaning: most prominently a ceremonial ablution or washing, or other purifications such as burning, spitting out, covering, burying, which attempt to remove a "stain" or "spot," to purify the "impure."

> Hence defilement, insofar as it is the "object" of this ritual suppression, is itself a <u>symbol</u> of evil. Defilement is to stain or spot what lustration is to washing. Defilement is not a stain, but like a stain; it is a symbolic stain. Thus it is the symbolism of the rites of suppression that reveals in practice the implicit symbolism contained in the representation of infection.[34]

However, Ricoeur tells us, there is no rite without words that

---

[32] <u>SE.</u> pp. 28-29.

[33] Ricoeur offers interesting comment in this connection regarding social ethics and philosophy of education: "It is not the <u>immediate</u> abolition but the <u>mediate</u> sublimation of fear, with a view to its final extenuation, which is the soul of all true education. Fear remains an indispensable element in all forms of education, familial, scholastic, civic, as well as in the protection of society against the infractions of citizens....

Hence the abolition of fear could only be the <u>horizon</u> and, so to speak, the eschatological <u>future</u> of human morality. Before casting out fear, love transforms and transposes it.... Only <u>perfect</u> love casts out fear. (<u>SE.</u> pp. 44-45).

[34] <u>SE.</u> pp. 35-36.

institute it and define its meaning. Thus the "pure" and the "impure" create for themselves a language, which is the first avowal of fault, of which we have testimony, for example, in the historians, orators and dramatists of classical Greece. Greek philosophy was written in the cultural context of these myths and dramas, and they form part of the non-philosophical source of philosophical reflection.[35]

While we have now largely left behind this irrational, pre-ethical consciousness of defilement, there is a sense in which it is retained in the background of all our feelings regarding fault. We still use the symbolism of stain and spot, of purity and impurity, (e.g., "a blemished reputation," "impure motivation,"). When man's consciousness progressed to an understanding of fault involving a greater ethical content, it retained the sense of defilement within it.[36] This could be so only because of a genuinely ethical dimension implicit in the sense of defilement. It already included a demand for <u>just</u> punishment, for <u>legality.</u> It was precisely the discovery of the Babylonian and Hebrew Job that broke the strict causal association of doing evil and suffering.

> This conquest was a costly one. The price to be paid was the loss of a first rationalization, a first ex-

---

[35] <u>SE,</u> pp. 36-39. Note that Thucydides tells us that the family of Alcmaeonides was ἐνάγεις , impure or defiled. The dominant word expressing purity and exemption from the impure was καθαρός (noun, κάθαρσις). Cf. E. R. Dodds, <u>The Greeks and the Irrational,</u> University of California Press, 1951, Chapter II, "From Shame-Culture to Guilt-Culture," pp. 28-50.

[36] <u>SE,</u> pp. 25, 36.

> planation of suffering. Suffering had to become inexplicable, a scandalous evil, in order that the evil of defilement might become the evil of fault.[37]

The transition from defilement to a new stage, which Ricoeur identifies as the sense of sin, is illustrated in the words of the prophet Isaiah, which include the consciousness of defilement:

> 'Woe is me! I am undone. For I am a man of unclean lips... and mine eyes have seen the king, Yahweh Sabaoth.' And after the Seraph had touched his lips with the live coal from the altar: 'Behold, this hath touched thy lips,--thy sin is taken away, thine iniquity is expiated.' (Isaiah 6:5, 7).[38]

2. Sin

The Greeks never did attain to the sense of sin in its peculiar quality with the intensity that the Hebrews did. The category which dominates the notion of sin, says Ricoeur, is "before God." Sin is a religious dimension and not a moral one. It is not the transgression of a rule, but the violation of a personal bond.[39] However, the gracious God of the covenant, who has brought Israel out of Egypt, is also the infinitely demanding and infinitely threatening God. Especially in the proclamations of the classical prophets, the demands of this God are explicitly ethical, and do involve responsibility: justice, faithfulness, humility.

The symbolism of defilement thus gave way to a language which could express the essential sense of the rupture of a relation. The symbolism of sin cannot be understood except

---

[37] SE, p. 32. [38] SE, p. 34.

[39] SE, p. 52. Cf. also W. Eichrodt, Theologie des alten Testaments, Band 3, Leipzig, 1939, p. 23.

in relation to the symbolism of redemption, (just as defilement could not be understood except in relation to purification). Fundamentally, the symbolism of sin-redemption expresses the loss of a bond, and a return.[40] The key symbolic words are chattat, missing the mark, and 'awon, a tortuous road.[41] The Greek ἁμάρτημα corresponds approximately to the first of these, and the concept of the way or the road is familiar in the work of such pre-Socratics as Pythagoras and Parmenides. The two together produce the concept of divergence from order, deviation from a straight road (an almost universal symbol). The note of deliberate intention and responsibility comes out unmistakably in a third symbol, pesha', revolt or rebellion, which stresses initiative in the rupture of the personal bond by human opposition to the holy will of God. For the Hebrews the key associated concepts were infidelity, adultery, refusal to listen. For the Greeks, rebellion was seen in terms of hubris, pride and arrogance, or jealousy of man towards the gods. The Hebrew word shagah designates the situation of one who is gone astray and lost. The similar but slightly different concept for the Greeks is "being in error." The key symbols of redemption corresponding to these symbols of sin are pardon and return, holding within them paradoxical concepts of divine initiative and sovereignty, and man's freedom to

---

[40] SE, pp. 50-70.

[41] Cf. Gerhard von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. I, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, New York, Harper and Row, Publ. Inc., 1962, pp. 262ff.

respond or rebel. They contain by implication all the later problems of theology concerning grace, predestination and free will.

Sin is distinct from defilement in being less objective, less external. Sin is first of all vanity, a nothing, as distinct from the concrete "something" of defilement. Yet sin is also conceived as objective, that is, it is not reducible to subjective guilt, for God knows and sees a man's sin: "The Eternal knows the thoughts of man; he knows that they are vain," (Ps. 94:11).[42] Moreover, this vanity of sin is a kind of potency, and here again we see the continuity of sin and defilement. The sinner is often conceived of as possessed and bound, as in the Babylonian confession, dominated by the symbols of binding, enslavement and seizure: "May the evil that is in my body, in my muscles and tendons, depart today."[43] Sometimes sin is seen as the result of a fascinating frenetic force which takes possession of a man, as for example when the prophet Hosea judges that "a spirit of debauchery leads them astray, and they go awhoring, abandoning their God," (Hos. 4:12). Both Old Testament and Greek tragedians envisage God Himself or the gods blinding a man, hardening his heart. A common theme also finds the origin of sin in birth itself: "Alas! I was born in iniquity and in sin did my mother con-

---

[42] SE, pp. 81-86.

[43] Quoted from S. Langdon, (ed.) Babylonian Penitential Psalms, (Oxford, 1927) in SE, p. 48. Cf. also S. Langdon, (ed.) Babylonian Wisdom, Oxford, Luzac & Co., 1923.

ceive me." In accordance with this theme we find the symbolism of captivity and buying back.

The symbolism of sin, then, carries forward the sense of defilement, maintaining in a measure its characteristic of externality, but advancing the internalization of free responsibility. In other words, the paradox of the servile will gradually unfolds in the consciousness of fault.

3. Guilt

Ricoeur finds a further stage in the development of the consciousness of fault in guilt. It too carries forward the earlier symbolism of defilement and sin, and here the paradox of the servile will, of man both responsible and captive, is most clearly to be found.

Guilt, as Ricoeur uses the term, is not as clearly and sharply distinguishable from sin as a new developmental stage as sin was from defilement. He finds it useful to define it as the subjective moment in fault, as sin is its objective or ontological moment. As "sin" designates an actual ruptured relation of man to God, guilt is the painful awareness of this situation. This subjective moment is at first very subordinate. It is already dimly present in defilement as the sense of being burdened down by a weight. But guilt in its fully developed sense is quite revolutionary in respect to defilement, in that what is primary is no longer the objective, external reality of impurity, or the vengeance that follows the violation of taboo. Rather, what is primary is

> the evil use of liberty, felt as an internal diminution of the value of the self. This revolution is considera-

> ble: it reverses the relation between punishment and guilt.... It is guilt which demands that the chastisement itself be converted from vengeful expiation to educative expiation--in short, to amendment.[44]

In relation to sin, Ricoeur sees guilt as a deepening of the feeling of sin. "The feeling of sin is a feeling of guilt; guiltiness is the burden of sin.... In this sense guilt is the achieved internality of sin."[45] But there is a shift of emphasis from the "before God" and "against thee and thee alone" of sin to the feeling of "It is I who...." In modern times guilt is often entirely substituted for sin. Man is guilty as he feels himself guilty. "Guilt in the pure state," writes Ricoeur, "has become a modality of man the measure."[46] However, ancient religious literature never entirely loses the objective moment of sin. He shows at length the progress of this sense of guilt as distinct from sin in terms of the increasing individualization of penal imputation, the appearance of personal scrupulousness, and concern for personal justification as a deliverance from deserved condemnation.[47]

A circular relation exists among the symbols of evil, in that the last bring out the meaning of the earlier ones, but the first lend the later ones their power of symbolization. But guilt offers no new set of symbols. It can express itself only in the language of "infection" and "captivity," etc. from the two prior stages.[48]

---

[44] SE, p. 102. [45] SE, p. 103. [46] SE, p. 104.
[47] SE, pp. 108-150. [48] SE, p. 152.

Hermeneutical Conclusion: The Servile Will

Out of the primary symbols of human involvement in evil Ricoeur reads the concept of the servile will as their "intentional telos:" that man is free, but captive; that he is enslaved, but self-enslaved by his own will. The Greek, Babylonian and Jewish confessions of evil all bear witness in their different ways to the dim knowledge of ancient man that his bonds are in some way his own work. And yet the evil in which he is immersed is not nothing, not a simple lack or absence of order, but the power of darkness. However internal and however "willed" it may be, evil binds man as "the outside of freedom," as the other than itself in which freedom is taken captive.[49] This schema suggests that man is not absolutely wicked; he is seduced. Man is "infected" by his own bad choice which binds him. Nevertheless, Ricoeur believes the symbols teach him that

> evil is not symmetrical with the good, wickedness is not something that replaces the goodness of a man; it is the staining, the darkening, the disfiguring of an innocence, a light and a beauty that remain. However radical evil may be, it cannot be as primordial as goodness. The symbol of defilement already says this about the servile will, and it says it through the symbol of captivity; for when a country falls intact into the hands of the enemy, it continues to work, to produce, to create, to exist, but for the enemy; it is responsible, but its work is alienated. This superimposition of servitude on self-determination, which an occupied country may experience, suggests the similar idea of an existential superimposition of radical evil on primordial good;....[50]

Thus we have an example of the hermeneutics of symbols.

---

[49] SE, p. 155.

[50] SE, pp. 156-157.

The symbols reveal once again the bound nature of man's freedom. He will find the same theme expanded and deepened in the second-order symbols, the myths of the beginning and the end of evil.

(c) The Myths of the Beginning and the End of Evil

The symbols that we have been considering are really abstractions lifted out of the world of myths. The myths, or second-order symbols, as Ricoeur calls them, were abstracted for the sake of a semantic interpretation of their main constituents, the primary symbols. In the first section of this chapter we already discussed the relation of myth and symbol. Myth is a species of symbol, symbols set into dramatic, narrative form. Ricoeur now deals more closely with their relation in order to discern just what the myth as such adds to the revelatory function of the primary symbols. He limits himself here again to the myths of human evil that lie behind western thought.

The Symbolic Function of Myths

The first function of the myths, Ricoeur tells us, is to embrace mankind as a whole in one ideal history, in order that experience may escape its singularity. Through the representation of one figure, -- "man" (Adam), or hero, ancestor, Titan, etc.,-- it is possible to sum up human being as a whole, and thus to say "man."

Further, the narrative character of the myth speaks of the universality of mankind in terms of a movement, recounting

the origin and end of fault. It attempts to account for the contradictory, faulted condition of man, the discordance between man's fundamental reality, as a state of innocence or essential being, to his actual defiled, sinful and guilty situation. Because it envisages a transition, it utilizes a narration. Here we find in Ricoeur a consistency with his point of view in the first volume of The Philosophy of the Will, where he insisted on speaking of essential structures and abstracting the fault as absurd. His insight there was in keeping with the insight of the myths. He explains that the myth

> is a narration precisely because there is no deduction, no logical transition, between the fundamental reality of man and his present existence, because his ontological status as a being created good and destined for happiness and his existential or historical status, experienced under the sign of alienation. Thus the myth has an ontological bearing. It points to the relation --that is to say, both the leap and the passage, the cut and the suture--between the essential being of man and his historical existence.[51]

As phenomenologists of religion such as Eliade have taught us, the mythical narration is a "verbal envelope" expressing life as felt and lived. Moreover, the myth develops in conjunction with rituals, and together they point beyond themselves to a model or archetype which they repeat or imitate. Ritual gestures and verbal repetition are conceived as participation in their original exemplar act.[52] Ricoeur notes the interpretation which Eliade so frequently reads

---

[51] SE, p. 163.

[52] Eliade, CH, pp. 21-22; SE, pp. 166-167.

out of the myths and cults of ancient man:

> the intimate accord of the man of cult and myth with the whole of being;... an indivisible plenitude, in which the supernatural, natural, and the psychological are not yet torn apart.[53]

However, Ricoeur, being primarily interested at this point in understanding human fault, protests against any idealization of mythical man. The myths of human evil do precisely carry a message quite other than that of an indivisible plenitude and accord with being.

> The essential fact is that this intuition of a cosmic whole from which man is not separated, and this undivided plenitude, anterior to the division into supernatural, natural and human, are not <u>given</u>, but simply <u>aimed</u> at. It is only in intention that the myth restores some wholeness; it is because he himself has lost that wholeness that man re-enacts and imitates it in myth and rite. The primitive man is already a man of division....
>
> ...If myth-making is an antidote to distress, that is because the man of myths is already an unhappy consciousness; for him, unity, conciliation and reconciliation are things to be <u>spoken of</u> and <u>acted out</u>, precisely because they are not <u>given</u>.[54]

The great diversity of myths corresponds to this discrepancy between the plenitude symbolized, and the finite, broken character of human experience. The totality is <u>signified</u> in many diverse ways, because, strictly speaking, it is not experienced.

The diversity of myths makes the task of the hermeneutical philosopher more difficult. This is partly why he cannot remain detached and merely curious. "The world of symbols is

---

[53] <u>SE</u>, p. 167; cf. Eliade, <u>PCR</u>, pp. 31-33.

[54] <u>SE</u>, pp. 167-168.

not a tranquil and reconciled world; every symbol is iconoclastic in comparison with some other symbol...."[55] Ricoeur suggests that there are four mythical "types" concerning human evil: the theogonic drama of creation, the Adamic myth, the "tragic" myth of the wicked god, and the myth of the exiled soul.[56] He studies them separately, then indicates how they conflict and complement one another. Our interest in them here is limited to their significance for the philosophy of freedom.

1. The Theogonic Drama of Creation

The origin of evil has nothing to do with human will in the Babylonian theogonic myths of which Enuma elish ("When on high") is an illustration.[57] Anterior to all order is chaos, represented by Tiamat and Apsu, the primordial mother and father, whose union is signified by the commingling of the marine and fresh waters. They have produced younger gods who conspire to destroy Apsu. To avenge him, Tiamat gives birth to monsters, -- viper, dragon, sphinx, lion, mad dog, scorpion-man, to destroy the younger gods in turn. In the decisive combat Tiamat is vanquished by her son Marduk, and the cosmos and man are created from her divided corpse.[58] Ricoeur comments,

> Thus the creative act which distinguishes, separates, measures, and puts in order, is inseparable from the criminal act that puts an end to the life of the oldest gods, inseparable from a deicide inherent in the

---

[55] SE, p. 354.

[56] SE, pp. 171-174.

[57] English translation, E. A. Speiser, in J. B. Pritchard, (ed.) Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Princeton, 1950, pp. 60-72.

[58] Text of Enuma elish in A. Heidel, The Babylonian Genesis, University of Chicago Press, 1942, pp. 7-47.

> divine. And man himself is born from a new crime...; man has now the task of serving and nourishing the great gods in place of the vanquished gods.[59]

Marduk personifies the identity of creation and evil, for creation is the violent victory of the creator over a more primordial enemy. He is a brute force, no more ethical than the conquered force. The origin of evil, then, is co-extensive with the origin of things, and human violence is justified by the original violence of the gods.[60] Despite the non-ethical character of Marduk's triumph over Tiamat however, it is a victory over chaos. It is the event of creation, the establishment of the present world-order, but also the event of salvation from chaos. This schema of primordial conflict is re-enacted ritually by means of the king, representing a humiliated, then triumphant god. Through the ritual the people participate in the victory and renew it, and thereby find the meaning of their existence.[61]

Freedom finds very little place in this scheme of things. Evil comes not from man, for it is "doubly original," in the primordial chaos, and in the conquering, creating god. Man must simply serve the gods by re-enacting, and thereby renewing the original triumph.

The Hebrew Bible carries forward some of the same schematism of primordial chaos prior to creation, but the belief that creation is good, and that man himself is responsible

---

[59] SE, p. 180. [60] SE, pp. 172, 181.
[61] SE, pp. 191-198.

for the entry of evil into the world dominates the narrative, and in fact produces a different "type" of myth that we shall discuss below.

2. The Tragic Myth of the Wicked God

In that predominantly Greek type of myth which Ricoeur calls "tragic," man is the unfortunate one whose lot is impotence in the face of the gods, and who is fated to death. Here again the initiative in fault is ascribed to the divine, and the "wicked god" is accused of blinding man or punishing him unjustly. Ricoeur agrees with Plato in the Republic, (II, 379c-380a) that such a non-distinction between the divine and the diabolical is unthinkable and scandalous. The "jealous" god (e.g. Zeus in Homer's Iliad) cannot endure the greatness of man. Such moralists as Theognis and Solon moralize the divine jealousy as the justifiable response of the gods to human arrogant pride (ὕβρις), and thus do away with the tragic in the strict sense.[62] But it returns with greater poignancy than ever in the tragedies of the classical Greek poets Aeschylus and Sophocles. In Prometheus Bound, Aeschylus envisages a polarity of the Olympian and the Titanic, wherein hostile transcendence ("pitiless god, thy hand alone has guided all")[63] is pitted against authentic and heroic defiance. The note of freedom is essential to the genuinely tragic.

---

[62] SE, pp. 211-217.

[63] Aeschylus, Prometheus Bound, in Greek Tragedies, (3 Vols), Vol. I, pp. 65ff.

Prometheus is able to say No to Zeus. His freedom delays the fulfilment of fate:

> the freedom of the hero introduces into the heart of the inevitable a germ of uncertainty, a temporary delay, thanks to which there is a "drama" -- that is to say, an action the outcome of which, while it is taking place, is uncertain...; the unstable mixture of certainty and surprise is turned to terror by the drop of transcendent perfidy that tragic theology lets fall on it.[64]

Prometheus' grandeur is heightened by the benevolence of his defiant act. His theft of fire for the good of mankind made him guilty, but a proud, heroic "guilty innocent." Even when he falls under the dreadful wrath and punishment of the god he withholds consent.

We know there was a Prometheus Delivered, now lost, which resolved the tragic conflict. Sophocles, in Oedipus at Colonus, also resolves a tragic conflict when he speaks of time as having "worn out the claws and teeth of the wrath of gods and men." But this, Ricoeur points out, is deliverance not within but from the tragic, envisaging a coming-to-be of the divine, something like a Hebrew "repentance of God."[65] However, salvation, or the "end" of evil for the tragic type as such excludes any deliverance other than sympathy, an aesthetic participation in the hero's suffering, "weeping with him and purifying the tears by the beauty of the song."[66]

---

[64] SE, p. 221.

[65] SE, pp. 227-229; cf. Sophocles, Oedipus at Colonus, trans. R. Fitzgerald, in Greek Tragedies, (3 Vols) Vol. III, ed. D. Greene, R. Lattimore, University of Chicago Press, 1960, pp. 111ff.

[66] SE, p. 227.

In the tragic myths, then, a distinct freedom of man appears, but within the context of a prior "guiltiness of being." Man's heroic freedom tends to be nullified by divine predestination.

3. The Adamic Myth and the Eschatological Vision

The theme of human freedom is central to what Ricoeur calls the "Adamic" myth,[67] or the "anthropological" myth par

[67] Ricoeur holds that the presupposition for understanding the Adamic myth is to recognize that it is a myth (SE, p. 235). He means particularly to distinguish it from history.

It is well known that Karl Barth strenuously resists the use of the word "myth" with regard to the creation stories of the Bible: "The creation stories of the Bible are neither myths nor fairy tales. This is not to deny that there are myths, and perhaps in part fairy tales, in the materials of which they are constructed." (CD, III, 1, p. 84). He recognizes also that they are not history, simply speaking, and prefers to call them "sagas" (Ibid., pp. 78-82). He finds the concept of a creation myth "intrinsically untenable." Myths, he thinks, have to do with that which is cyclic and timeless (CD, IV, 1, p. 245), whereas creation must be understood as a once-for-all pre-historical event. Myths, he believes, also "confuse the world and man with God," (Ibid., p. 201). However, I do not find him explicitly denying that the story of Adam's sin is mythical. He does at one point refer to it also as "saga" (Ibid., p. 508). He perhaps realizes that the story of the beginning of sin in Genesis 3 does present a general, "timeless" truth about man. He writes: "It is the name of Adam the transgressor which God gives to world history as a whole. The name of Adam sums up this history as the history of...mankind.... It constantly re-enacts the little scene in the garden of Eden. There never was a golden age. There is no point in looking back to one. The first man was immediately the first sinner." (Ibid., p. 508).

It is interesting to note that Ricoeur does not define myth in terms of cyclical or timeless truths. For him, myth is understood in terms of symbol, as a narrative which puts the symbols into movement; and symbols are understood in terms of double intentionality. Ricoeur does recognize the radical distinction between the Hebrew accounts of creation and the theogonic myths (SE, pp. 198f). However, his motivation in this matter is different from Barth's. As we

excellence. It situates the beginning of evil in the bad use of freedom by man himself. Unlike the previous two "types," this myth radically separates the origin of the good from the origin of evil. Evil is historical rather than structural; its origin in an ancestor of the human race whose condition is homogeneous with ours makes it secondary to the primordial goodness of creation. It is not actually a myth of "fall," Ricoeur points out. "Fall" is a Platonic or Plotinian word foreign to the Biblical vocabulary. Rather, this is a myth of "deviation" or of "going astray."[68]

The myth arises from the Hebrew faith in one ethical God. That faith undermined theogony and the wicked god of tragedy, since conflicts, crimes, trickery, vanity are expelled from the sphere of the divine. Creation is not conflict, but "Word." "Jealousy" is no longer the offended vanity of a god, but a rejection of idols by the true God. The anthropological concept of the origin of evil is a corollary of this faith in the holiness and innocence of God. It is the fruit of the prophetic

---

67 (cont)
shall see, Ricoeur interprets the myths as complementary, and wishes, as a philosopher, to show their value as sources of philosophical wisdom. Barth's theological motive is to show the radical difference between the Hebrew and other creation stories in the context of a Christological theology which distinguishes sharply between religion and revelation. Their divergent definitions of myth reflect their divergent motives.
While the Genesis stories are indeed distinct from the others (even Ricoeur wants to give the Adamic myth "weighted focus") it seems clear that it has much in common with the other myths in terms of symbolic function and structure, and it is therefore useful to include it in the category of myth.

68 SE, pp. 232-235.

call to repentance, which affirms human responsibility for evil. Nor can God be accused of having created man evil, for it posits a beginning of evil distinct from the beginning of creation.

> By thus dividing the Origin into an origin of the created and an origin of the wickedness in history, the myth tends to satisfy the twofold confession of the Jewish believer, who acknowledges, on the one hand, the absolute perfection of God and, on the other hand, the radical wickedness of man. This twofold confession is the very essence of repentance.[69]

For the Adamic myth, fault is sin, that is, the rupture of the bond between God and man. It is not first of all disobedience to an ethical law, but grasping after "the knowledge of good and evil." This breaks the relation of trust between God and man. "What is forbidden," Ricoeur points out, "is not this or that, but a state of autonomy which would make man the creator of the distinction between good and evil."[70] It is the "evil infinite of human desire," the refusal of his condition as "finite freedom." The lapse of time between creation and the beginning of evil is the way in which the myth communicates its insight that sin is not the "original" reality of man. Sin does not define what it is to be a man.

> The myth puts in succession that which is contemporaneous and cannot not be contemporaneous, it makes an "earlier" state of innocence terminate in an instant that begins the "later" state of accursedness. But that is how it attains its depth; in telling of the fall as an event, springing up from an unknown source, it furnishes anthropology with a key concept: the <u>contingency</u> of that radical evil which the penitent is always on the point

---

[69] <u>SE.</u> p. 243.

[70] <u>SE.</u> p. 250.

> of calling his evil nature.... The "anteriority" of innocence to the "oldest" sin is, as it were, the temporal cipher of a profound anthropological fact.[71]

However, the beginning of evil is not in fact attributed solely to man. Man is indeed responsible, and the myth allows him no alibi. But the figure of the serpent, who tempts the woman, who in turn tempts the man to disobedience, is the one surviving monster from the theogonic myths. The serpent symbolizes a reality of evil prior to man. His presence in God's good creation remains a mystery. We are only told that he, like man, is a creature. He is the quasi-externality of temptation, the sense of being seduced from without, which man uses as an excuse. Thus both Adam and Eve accuse the serpent of responsibility for their disobedience. But Ricoeur also interprets the serpent as evil already there.

> Evil is part of the interhuman relationship, like language, tools, and institutions; it is transmitted; it is tradition, and not only something that happens. There is thus an anteriority of evil to itself, as if

---

[71] SE, p. 251. Note that Paul Tillich's account of the matter is similar. He speaks of "the fall" as a symbol, and interprets the myth as a "transition from essence to existence," (ST, II, pp. 29f). This he calls a "half-way demythologization" of the myth of the Fall: "The element of 'once upon a time' is removed. But the demythologization is not complete, for the 'transition from essence to existence' still contains a temporal element.... Complete demythologization is not possible when speaking about the divine." (Ibid.) His discussion of the possibility of the transition from essence to existence resembles Ricoeur's discussion of fallibility as disproportion of finite and infinite. Tillich is somewhat more Greek, however, in that he writes: "Man is finite, excluded from the infinity to which he belongs. One can say that nature is finite necessity, God is infinite freedom, man is finite freedom. It is finite freedom which makes possible the transition from essence to existence." (ST, II, p. 31).

> evil were that which always precedes itself, that which each man finds and continues while beginning it, but beginning it in his turn. That is why, in the Garden of Eden, the serpent is already there; he is the other side of that which begins.[72]

Furthermore, Ricoeur suggests that the serpent represents not only a cultural, but a cosmic structure of evil:

> not, doubtless, the lawfulness of the world as such, but its relation of indifference to the ethical demands of which man is both author and servant. From the spectacle of things, from the course of history, from the cruelty of nature and men, there comes a feeling of universal absurdity which invites man to doubt his destination; Gabriel Marcel speaks of the "invitation to betray" which seems inherent in the structure of our universe when we confront it with the fundamental intention of man's being and with the desire for truth and happiness.[73]

The serpent, then, symbolizes something about man, but also something about the world, the aspect of evil which could not be dealt with in terms of man's responsible freedom. Man is not depicted in this myth as the absolute evil one, but the evil one of second rank, evil not substantivally, but adjectivally. Thus, "to sin is to yield."[74]

The Adamic myth, like the others, features a corresponding account of salvation, or of the end of evil. As the beginning of evil is related as a history, so its end comes at the end of history. Deliverance is eschatological. Just as evil began by the disobedience of a man, so also the return to innocence is thought of as coming through a human figure. The figure of Abraham may be thought of as the "first answer"

---

[72] SE, p. 258. [73] Ibid. [74] SE, pp. 258-259.

to the figure of Adam. He it is who first receives the promise of God. His faith in God's promise is counted to him as justice, (Gen. 15:6). In the teaching of the great prophets, the Kingdom of God is conceived as coming through a Messianic King, a Good Shepherd, a Suffering Servant, the Son of Man, each of whom, in various ways, both personifies and initiates the return of man to his relationship of obedience to God. In the New Testament, Jesus is identified as the one who embodies each of these figures in his own life, death, resurrection and return in glory. In reply to the Adamic myth of the beginning of evil by the first man Adam, Jesus is identified as the Son of Man and Second Adam. Sinful man is "justified," that is, made just and restored in his relationship to God by faith in this Son of Man. Participation in his death and resurrection brings acquittal for sinful, guilty man. His bondage to sin is broken and he lives in freedom under grace.[75]

At this point Ricoeur's very delicate relationship to Christian theology becomes most evident. We must recall that Ricoeur personally stands within Christian faith, and yet he has frequently insisted that he is not doing theology. Nor does he regard his philosophical work as a form of preaching. For example, in his article "Religion, Atheism and Faith," he writes, "The philosopher is not a preacher. He may listen to the preachers, as I try to do, but he does not speak with

---

[75] SE, pp. 260-269.

their finality; his discourse is a preparatory discourse."[76] Further on in the same essay he speaks wistfully, hopefully, of the theologian's task:

> This philosopher envisions a prophetic preacher who would actualize for our time this message of Exodus, which is prior to any law: "I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage." He envisions a preacher who would pronounce only a word of liberation relevant to our time, and no word of prohibition or of condemnation; who would preach the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ as the beginning of a creative life and would define for our time all the consequences of the Paulinian antinomy between Gospel and Law.[77]

In The Symbolism of Evil Ricoeur refuses to be a theologian. He points out that the historical man Jesus is proclaimed as the fulfilment of Jewish hope, that Jesus Himself is not a "figure" in the same sense as the others in that "no Christological title, no Christian concept was invented by Jesus or by the Christians."[78] He states, enigmatically,

> It is the problem of the theologian, not the philosopher, to understand what can be meant by the...affirmations from the New Testament.... That Jesus could be the point of convergence of all the figures without himself being a "figure" is an Event that exceeds the resources of our phenomenology of images. All the images we have examined are subject to our hermeneutic method insofar as they are scattered images, but their temporal and personal unity is not; the event announced in the Gospel, the "fulfilment," is properly the content of the Christian Kerygma.[79]

What he is doing at this point is a comparative phenomenology of images. The Christological images fall within that phenomenology as "mythical," i.e., they are symbolic (carrying

---

[76]"Religion, Atheism and Faith," in Alasdair MacIntyre, Paul Ricoeur, The Religious Significance of Atheism, New York, Columbia University Press, 1969, p. 60.

[77]Ibid., p. 69. [78]SE, p. 269. [79]Ibid.

double intentionality) and are found in narrative form. However, he is saying that their actual historical fulfilment in Jesus is beyond the scope of his work as phenomenologist and philosopher. He recognizes that "the phenomenology of the images as such remains an abstraction in relation to that faith."[80] Nor does he take a position toward the theological controversies regarding myth and history that have occurred amongst theologians such as Barth and Bultmann.

The theme of freedom in the Adamic myth, as we have said at the beginning, is central and decisive. It is the anthropological myth that locates the beginning of evil in a man's disobedience and his return and pardon in the obedience of a new man. But freedom is not all, even here. Man in his freedom is seduced by evil <u>already there.</u> Again, he is pardoned and freed from his bondage to evil by the initiative of God's grace. As we saw in the eidetics, man's freedom to decide and act are limited. His freedom is finite. It is for man to consent: at first, to obey, and then, to receive pardon.

4. <u>The Myth of the Exiled Soul And Salvation Through Knowledge</u>

An ancient discourse beside those of Hesiod and Homer, traditionally called Orphic, constitutes an important part of the background of Platonic and neo-Platonic philosophy, and of all western thought. We do not possess it in its original form, but we do have references to it in Plato, and what Ri-

---

[80] <u>SE,</u> p. 275.

coeur calls a "post-philosophical myth" which he suspects is of neo-Platonic invention. According to this "myth" the infant god Dionysos was assassinated by the Titans, who boiled and devoured his members. Zeus punished them with a blast of lightning and created mankind from their ashes.[81] Ricoeur comments,

> That is why men today participate both in the evil nature of the Titans and in the divine nature of Dionysos, whom the Titans had assimilated in the course of their horrible feast.... The mixture that constitutes the present condition of human beings stems from an anterior, pre-human, superhuman crime, and so evil is inherited.[82]

Plato speaks of the Orphic myth in the Cratylus, (400c).[83] The myth conceived of the body as a prison of the soul. The body as such is not the origin of evil, rather the soul suffers from an anterior evil, and is punished by its imprisonment in the body. The body, then, is the place of exile. The punishment is not purifying, however, but a degrading sanction, both a result of evil, and a new evil. Life and death alternate, so that the punishment is not only incarnation, but also reincarnation. Since life in the body is exile, the soul is considered quite distinct and separate from it. The soul comes from elsewhere, it is not at home in the body; indeed it is divine. None of the other mythical schemata divide body and soul in this way. While it is true that Homer conceived a survival of the soul, he did not understand its survival as a return

---

[81] SE, pp. 279-282; cf. W. K. C. Guthrie, Orpheus and Greek Religion, London, 1935.

[82] SE, p. 282.

[83] Dialogues of Plato, Vol. I, p. 190.

to its true condition. The odyssey of the soul for this myth is a return to its true divinity. Thus man is no longer defined as mortal, but as divine. Its divinity is not merely the survival beyond death (reincarnation), but to escape the wheel of birth and rebirth.[84]

In its final state, as developed by the Neo-Platonists, the Orphic myth is, as we have seen, combined with a theogonic drama of creation. This gives a cosmic dimension and an ontological depth to the misery of the soul, says Ricoeur. The key figure of the drama is the Titan. He explains,

> The Titan is not truly other than man: we are born from his ashes; he is the inherited and contracted part of evil choice, that which Plato calls our Titanic nature.... This savage possibility in ourselves, beginning from which our freedom becomes humanized is relegated by the myth to the origin and incarnated in a crime older than any human fault; and so the Titan represents the anteriority of evil in relation to actual human evil.[85]

This myth also features a type of salvation corresponding to its vision of the origin and character of the evil situation. That situation is one of a distinct divine soul exiled in a body. The act in which man perceives himself as soul and the hope of his salvation from bodily exile is knowledge. Plato informs us that the Orphic mendicant priests and soothsayers taught ritual sacrifices as a way of purification. But there are also indications that they were concerned to "give reasons" and were on the way toward "purification by philosophy."[86]

---

[84] SE, pp. 282-289. [85] SE, p. 299.

[86] SE, pp. 302-303; cf. Republic, II, 364b-365a, Dialogues of Plato, Vol. I, p. 627, and Phaedo, 69, (op. cit., p. 453.

Certainly Plato himself and his Neo-Platonic successors, who seem to have rewritten the myth, find salvation in knowledge.

In this type of myth, freedom is projected to a mythical time and to superhuman forebearers of the human race to account for the beginning of evil. But the awakening to awareness of the soul as exiled and deliverance through sacrifice or philosophy is a free act, of which the soul, as divine, is capable.

(d) The Dynamics of the Myth

Toward the end of The Symbolism of Evil, Ricoeur tells us that the transition to philosophical hermeneutics begins when we pass from the statics to the dynamics of the mythical symbols. The world of symbols is a world of struggle, and this is the point where the disinterested spectator must become involved.[87] We cannot live in all the mythical universes at the same time, for they contain contradictory interpretations of man and his freedom. Consequently, we men of immense memories, tempted to be "Don Juans of the myth," must finally ask the question of truth.[88] He asserts, first, his presupposition that all the myths do address us and challenge us in some way. But he elects to discern a dynamic relation of the myths to one another by giving "weighted focus" to the Adamic myth.

The Adamic Myth as Weighted Focus

Ricoeur first acknowledges that "nobody asks questions from nowhere," and so renounces any pretension of regarding

---

[87] SE, p. 354.

[88] SE, pp. 306, 354.

all the myths with equal sympathy, without memory or perspective. Does he then also renounce philosophy's rational quest for truth of universal validity? No, he attempts to give reasons. It is obvious here that he speaks from the perspective of a Christian believer, and is, perhaps, doing "Christian philosophy," (though he does not explicitly say this), while continuing to avoid doing theology.

First he shows that the Adamic myth might be defended by reference to its bond of suitability to the preaching of salvation. But this first way, he recognizes, belongs to theology, and not to philosophy.[89]

The second way, he thinks, is philosophical. His argument here is familiar, akin to his frequent appeals to "intelligibility:"

> Is not the revelation of this myth, then precisely its power to challenge? St. Paul spoke of the "inner witness of the Holy Spirit." What can that witness signify in the particular case of the understanding of evil, its nature, and its origin, if not "the discerning of spirits"? And is that, in its turn, anything other than the election of the best myth, the recognition of the most significant, the most revealing myth, and, at the same time the myth that can most appropriately be co-ordinated with the advent of salvation, serving as a prolegomenon to the faith? If it is in this sense that we must seek for some quality of revelation in the Biblical story of the fall, that quality is not irrational; it calls for verification of its revealed origin by its revealing power.[90]

The choice of one myth over the others is a hermeneutical wager. Ricoeur, I suggest, makes this wager from within his

---

[89] SE, pp. 307, 309. [90] SE, p. 308.

specifically Christian perspective. But the wager is "verified," he explains, by the ability of the chosen myth to contribute to self-understanding. This is to be distinguished from a theological mode of verification. As Ricoeur understands this distinction,

> The philosopher verifies what is revealed by that which reveals; the theologian testifies to the agreement of the Adamic myth with Christology. Like St. Paul, he places the "in Adam" with relation to the "in Christ," and determines the relevance of the symbol of the fall to the totality of the Kerygma; that relevance constitutes its authority in an ecclesiastical theology. The philosopher who does not pretend to annex Christology to his enterprise can have recourse only to the verification of the revealing character of the myth. The belief accorded to the pre-eminence of the Adamic myth is common to the way of the philosopher and the way of the theologian, but their modes of justifying the belief are different.[91]

The third way of justifying the pre-eminence of the Adamic myth is to show that, while it is opposed to all the others, it also reaffirms in various degrees essential truths of the other myths. Thus he posits a <u>circularity</u> among the basic mythical types, in which he places the tragic myth nearest, the myth of the exiled soul farthest, from the Adamic.

<u>The Affirmation of the Tragic in the Adamic Myth</u>

The Adamic myth is fundamentally anti-tragic, confessing as it does the holiness of God and the sin of man. Yet it does contain tragic features.[92] The serpent symbolizes, as we have

---

[91] <u>SE,</u> p. 310.

[92] Ricoeur writes similarly in his earlier article, "Culpabilité tragique et culpabilité biblique," (in <u>Revue d'Histoire de Philosophie Réligieuses,</u> Strasbourg, Tome XXXIII, 1953, pp.

seen, "an evil concerning which I confess that it is already there in the very instant in which I avow that I put it there."[93] It is expressed also in the theogonic myth as the anteriority of evil, and in the Orphic myth as externality. It can only be represented dramatically, theatrically, as a fate.

Ricoeur thinks the Adamic myth contains not only a touch of tragic anthropology, but of tragic theology as well. Its ethicization of both God and man presents a moral vision of the world wherein God is the judge, and suffering is just retribution for sin. But Jewish thought concerning the suffering of the innocent in the book of Job makes that moral vision fly to pieces by dramatizing the "suffering of the Just One," displaying thereby the irreducibility of evil to human fault. The intensity of the drama is a product of that moral vision itself, since Job's complaint presupposes it. In the situation of the suffering of the innocent, it becomes reasonable to turn the accusation back upon the God of the Adamic vision. He appears as an aggressor and an enemy, so that the "eye of God," which constantly surrounds and spies on Job, becomes a source of terror. The book has an unmistakable note of the tragic pity which we found in the myths of the wicked god. Yet Yahweh

---

92 (cont)
285-307): "La vision tragique de la culpabilité--la faute tragique -- d'une part, et la vision biblique de la culpabilité -- le péché biblique -- d'autre part, vont nous fournir les deux poles de cette ambivalence; encore que la faute tragique soit souvent bien près de se confondre avec le péché biblique et que le péché biblique ait souvent aussi une resonance tragique fort troublante...." (p. 287).

93 SE, p. 311.

is not Zeus. Job appeals to God against God. "I know that my defender is living, and that at the end he will rise upon the earth. After my awakening he will raise me up beside him and in my flesh I shall see God," (Job 19: 25-26). The Old Testament Job, (unlike the Babylonian Job) is not merely crushed in silent resignation. He is vindicated for having spoken rightly of God (42:7), and finally receives an answer. It is not a simple reaffirmation of the ethical vision, such as Job received from his friends, but a reversal of the relation of questioner and questioned.

> The God who addresses Job out of the tempest shows him Behemoth and Leviathan, the hippopotamus and the crocodile, vestiges of the chaos that has been overcome, representing a brutality dominated and measured by the creative act. Through these symbols he gives him to understand that all is order, measure and beauty--inscrutable order, measure beyond measure, terrible beauty. A way is marked out between agnosticism and the penal view of history and life--the way of unverifiable faith.... Suffering is not explained, ethically or otherwise; but the contemplation of the whole initiates a movement which must be completed practically by the surrender of a claim, by the sacrifice of the demand that was at the beginning of the recrimination, namely, the claim to form by oneself a little island of meaning in the universe....[94]

As Ricoeur points out, what was at stake was the renunciation of the law of retribution. Satan had made a bet that Job would not fear God "for nothing." While Ricoeur interprets this as a triumph over the ethical vision of the world, it seems more accurate to see it as a shifting and a deepening of that vision. It is, as he suggests, the dimension of the tragic in

---

[94] SE, p. 321.

Job that protects Biblical theology from the platitudes of ethical monotheism. God remains mysterious, as the Deus Absconditus. But the ethical vision, while limited, is not destroyed. The story of Job does not leave us with a sense of total absurdity. As Ricoeur himself says, the silence of Job is not altogether the seal of meaninglessness. What is affirmed in this story is God's demand for disinterested righteousness, and that is placed within the context of a vision of a totality of meaning. Our author says,

> Only the "seer" of Greek tragedy and the "fool" of Shakespearian tragedy escape from the tragic; the seer and the fool have ascended from the tragic to the comic by their access to a comprehensive vision.[95]

However, there is a sense in which Job too escapes from the tragic, even within a modified ethical vision of the world.

Now Ricoeur sees Job as a kind of counter-weight to Adam. Adam represents evil committed, and its just exile. Job represents evil suffered as unjust deprivation. The first calls for the second, and the second corrects the first. A third figure transcends the contradiction. That, Ricoeur suggests, is the Suffering Servant, through whom suffering is given a new meaning beyond that of retribution. When the Suffering Servant undergoes suffering by voluntary consent, it becomes an action, capable of redeeming the evil committed. "In truth, the suffering that is a gift takes up into itself the suffering

---

[95] SE, pp. 322-323; Ricoeur's discussion of Job, pp. 314-323.

that is a scandal, and thus inverts the relation of guilt to suffering."[96]

Ricoeur sees the tragic as an invincible theme which has been taken up into the Adamic schema. Familiarity with the tragic myths and the associated Hebraic literature aids an understanding of the Adamic myth itself. It contributes a certain pity for human beings, who are subject to the anteriority of evil, but who are nevertheless accused, and must stand in fear and trembling in the light of the divine holiness.

The Appropriation of the Theogonic Myth

Just as the tragic dimension could not be entirely disposed of, so also the theogonic myth of primordial chaos continues to reassert itself in more sophisticated ways. Although the naive theogonies are dead, certain "onto-theologies," philosophical equivalents of theogony, have appeared, Ricoeur points out, in Heraclitus, in medieval German mysticism, in German idealism, according to which evil is an original element of being. These are attempts, he thinks, to acknowledge the invincibility of tragedy and yet to render it intelligible. Reflection on the tragic lends him the belief that ethical monotheism must be transcended. There are two possibilities, and Ricoeur identifies them clearly: "either consolidation of the tragic in a logic of being, or its inversion in a Christology. The choice between these two possibilities depends on a Poetics of freedom that is not yet in our power."[97] Does he mean that phi-

[96] SE, pp. 324-325. [97] SE, p. 329.

losophy must pass over into theology in order to answer this question? He does write: "the only thing that could dissolve the spell of that absolute genesis of being and that hypostatization of evil as a category of being would be a 'Christology'."[98] It would appear that he regards a Christian theology, even a Trinitarian theology, as the only alternative to the "learned theogonies" of philosophy. Of this he writes:

> By Christology I mean a doctrine capable of including in the life of God itself, in a dialectic of divine "persons," the figure of the suffering servant which we evoked above as the supreme possibility of human suffering.
>
> According to "Christology," that suffering is a moment in divinity; that moment of abasement of annihilation of the divine life, both completes and suppresses tragedy....[99]

"The Son of Man must be delivered up." Fate is exalted, and Christ is glorified precisely as the absolute victim, the one whose voluntary suffering is a gift. However, Ricoeur speaks in this way only cautiously, almost apologetically, for

> the doctrine that hypostatizes in God the suffering which is a scandal, itself having been taken up into the suffering which is a gift, does not belong to the symbolism of human existence, because it does not reveal a possibility, even an extreme one, in man.... Hence tragedy as completed and suppressed in Christology is not within the power of a philosophical anthropology.[100]

Writing philosophy beside theology, Ricoeur has found himself at the limits of his discipline, and has indeed brushed theology, perhaps thereby also nudging it to a better understanding of itself.

---

[98] SE, p. 328. [99] Ibid. [100] SE, p. 329.

Ricoeur has neglected in this discussion to draw attention to a survival of the theme of primordial chaos in Gen. 1:2. That reference, along with the serpent, constitutes a continuing, though subdued presence of the theogonic schema in the Hebraic mind. At any rate, he has drawn out for us again the ancient insight into the anteriority of evil which must be understood as reciprocal with human freedom.

The Struggle with the Myth of the Exiled Soul

Ricoeur thinks the myth of the exiled soul is farthest of all from the Adamic myth because of its anthropological dualism of soul and body. Yet he feels it must be significant that the myth of the fall has been so frequently "contaminated" by it, that Nietzsche could with some semblance of truth call Christianity a "Platonism for the people." Here again he discerns a play of underground affinities of the two myths for each other.

Once again the key point of affinity is the theme of evil already there, limiting the theme of freedom. In this case, the externality of evil is located in the human body, as distinct from the soul. The soul is in "exile," a variation of the theme of deviation. The Hebraic schema is also one of deviation and subsequent banishment or exile: Adam and Eve expelled from the garden, the wandering of Cain, the dispersion of the builders of the Tower of Babel, the destruction of evil men by the flood, and, most obviously, exile in Babylon. A related theme of captivity, central to the Jewish

story (Egypt, Babylon) resembles the theme of the soul captive in the body-prison. Ricoeur comments: "It may be said that captivity, in the Biblical sense, is to the exile of the soul what the Exodus of the Jews is to the odyssey of the soul according to the Orphics."[101] There is even a touch of suspicion toward the body in Biblical literature, as in Ezekiel and Jeremiah, when they speak of the "heart of stone," "the lewdness of the adulterer like the rut of beasts." Ricoeur thinks that what lies behind it is the symbolism of defilement. The body is felt as the seat of everything that happens in me without my will.

> Now seduction is also in me without my doing; and so it is not astonishing that the quasi-externality of the involuntary motivations of the body could serve as a schema of externality....[102]

A similar note sounds in the thought of Paul concerning the "flesh," when he speaks of man as a slave to sin, because "sin dwells in me," as "another law in my members." Paul is perhaps already under the influence of Hellenistic wisdom when he speaks of "the body of death." The Pauline concept of "flesh" and "body" designates the whole field of the passions, that is, of bondage, of passivity, which boasts in the law, and which needs to be liberated by the "desires of the Spirit." Whether or not we regard this Pauline material as regrettably "contaminated," it does express a real experience of the "cleavage between me and myself," as Ricoeur expresses it.

---

[101] SE, p. 331.

[102] SE, p. 332.

The dualism of the Orphic myth, of Platonism and Neo-Platonism expresses this same sense of inner rupture or fault, and sees it as in some way anterior to the will.

The Adamic myth, and its Hebraic literary milieu does include, then, something of the same insight as is to be found in the Orphic myth. It also confirms some of the conclusions of Ricoeur's earlier structural phenomenology of the bodily involuntary as reciprocal with the voluntary, and reaffirms his earlier comments in Fallible Man about the "grandeur and limitation of an ethical vision of the world."

Hermeneutical Conclusion:
The Limitation of an Ethical Vision of the World

Toward the end of The Symbolism of Evil Ricoeur states clearly his basic hermeneutical conclusion drawn from the study of the dynamics of the myths.

> One thing we have acquired, at the end of our exercise in hermeneutics, is a conviction that the three myths of chaos, of divine blinding, and of exile, reveal the hyper-ethical dimension of the myth of the fall and so indicate the limitations of any "philosophy of the will" which tries to remain an ethical vision of the world. The myth of the fall needs those other myths, so that the ethical God it presupposes may continue to be a Deus Absconditus and so that the guilty man it denounces may also appear as the victim of a mystery of iniquity which makes him deserving of Pity as well as of Wrath.[103]

In his important article "The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection," Ricoeur carries this point further in an explicitly philosophical discussion. There he

---

[103] SE, p. 346.

identifies the "moral vision of the world" as a rejection of the dualist myths, and an attempt to recapture the Adamic narrative in philosophical language. It tries to understand evil solely as an invention of freedom, and freedom as capability for digression, deviation, subversion and wandering.

Ricoeur sees Augustine, in his debate with the Manicheans, as the first great thinker to assay this seriously, when he said that evil has no nature, is a "nothing." Freedom is simply the power of saying "No" to being. Thus, "If there is penitence, it is because there is guilt; if there is guilt, it is because there is will; if there is will in sin, it is not a nature that constrains us."[104] Augustine, as we shall see later, did pass beyond the ethical vision of the world in the theology of grace elaborated against Pelagius. Kant also offers a radically ethical vision by his sharp insistence on the importance of motivation, respect for the moral law, understanding evil not as "something," but as bad faith or the subversion of a relationship.[105] But Ricoeur thinks that Kant, and Augustine in his anti-Manichean stage, are lacking a sense of the "darksome experience of evil" which is found in the dualist myths: the evil already there, evil as tradition. To take account of this, Ricoeur says,

> We are going to try to think something like a <u>nature</u> of evil, but a nature which would not be a nature of things but an originative nature of man, a nature of liberty, hence a contracted <u>habitus</u>, freedom's manner

---

[104]Augustine, <u>Contra Felicem</u>, 8, (quoted, HS, p. 206).
[105]HS, pp. 207-208.

of having come to be."[106]

Here his thought resembles his earlier concepts in the eidetics, where, for example, he spoke of "character" as "my freedom's mode of being," a "freedom which is, in some respect, a nature."[107] The idea resembles the traditional doctrine of original sin, insofar as that means a guilt inherited biologically from an actual historical ancestor. It was an attempt to combine the juridical concept of imputable guilt with a biological concept of heredity. Ricoeur regards the formulation with considerable scorn:

> This is an intellectually inconsistent idea... inasmuch as it mixes two universes of discourse--that of ethics or of right, and that of biology. It is an intellectually scandalous idea, inasmuch as it returns on this side of Ezechiel and Jeremias to the old idea of retribution and en masse inculpation of men. It is an intellectually derisory idea, inasmuch as it throws up again the eternal theodicy and project of justifying God.[108]

Though he believes the concept is a kind of "false-knowing," a "quasi-gnostic concept," which has to be broken, he appreciates its profound intention. It aims at rationalizing the same obscure feelings we found expressed in the symbols and myths of evil.

> Its force lies in intentionally referring back to what is most radical in the confession of sins, namely, the fact that evil precedes my awareness, that it cannot be analyzed into individual faults, that it is my pre-given impotence. It is to my freedom that which my birth is to my actual consciousness, namely, always already there: birth and nature here are analogous concepts.[109]

Displaying a close parallelism with his eidetic phenomenology,

---

[106] HS, p. 209.
[107] VI, p. 355.
[108] HS, pp. 210-211.
[109] HS, p. 211.

Ricoeur says that "evil is a kind of involuntary at the very heart of the voluntary...." Again, "evil, which always begins by freedom, is always already there for freedom: it is act and habit, arising and independence."[110]

The symbols and myths have taught us, -- and the concept of original sin has haltingly attempted to confirm their witness -- that we must pass beyond a purely ethical vision of the world. Men are indeed free and responsible. But evil cannot be understood solely in terms of freedom. Its possibility lies, as we saw in Fallible Man, in the disproportionate, fragile nature of man. The transition from fallibility to fault is the "mystery of iniquity," unresolvable, irreducible, yet experienced and confessed as both predictable and freely chosen, discovered and initiated. Ricoeur refuses to dissolve away the mystery, just as, in his first volume, he refused to dissolve the voluntary and involuntary into one another. What he sees is a dialectical relation, indeed, once again, a reciprocity of freedom and bondage, of act and state.[111]

As Ricoeur closed his first volume with a statement of hope for a condition of total consent, now his discussion of the symbols of evil also closes in hope. The ethical vision

---

[110] HS, pp. 211, 212.

[111] Cf. HP, p. 122. Note that Ricoeur particularly rejects the attempts of Plotinus and Spinoza to dissolve freedom or contingence into necessity, and the tempting solution of Hegel to absorb evil into the system of the logic of being as the necessary principle of negativity. (HS, pp. 214-218).

of the world is not to be destroyed by an ultimate absurdity, but limited by a theology of grace. He confesses that he is not in a position to expound it fully. He only glimpses a direction for meditation. He affirms that

> reconciliation is looked for in spite of evil. This "in spite of" constitutes a veritable category of hope, the category of contradiction. However, of that there is no proof, but only signs; the milieu, the locus of this category is a history, not a logic; an eschatology, not a system. Next, this "in spite of" is a "thanks to"; out of evil, the Principle of things brings good.... The third category of this meaningful history is the "how much more" (πολλῷ μᾶλλον). This law of superabundance englobes in its turn the "thanks to" and the "in spite of." That is the miracle of the Logos; from Him proceeds the retrograde miracle of the true.... What in the old theodicy was only the expedient of false-knowing becomes the intelligence of hope....[112]

* * * * *

Conclusions to Chapter Four

Except for the minor critical comments I have made in the course of the chapter, my conclusions regarding the symbolics are highly appreciative.

1. In The Symbolism of Evil and the articles that surround it, Paul Ricoeur has made a truly original contribution to the philosophy of freedom. No other philosopher has offered a similar phenomenological and hermeneutical study of ancient symbols and myths as sources of philosophical wisdom

---

[112]HS, p. 218.

into the character of human freedom. Other men, particularly some theologians (e.g., Paul Tillich and Reinhold Niebuhr) have come to similar conclusions, but not with comparable fulness, depth or clarity.

2. Ricoeur has founded his philosophical work not only upon a thorough knowledge of the history of philosophy, but also upon very extensive knowledge of the history of religions, Biblical scholarship and historical theology. I have frequently footnoted his sources in the works of leaders in these fields, in order to show the soundness of the scholarly basis on which he works.

3. As we pointed out in section (a), the symbolics is strikingly different from the structural phenomenology of the two previous phases because it deals with the absurdity of evil, and yet it is also consistent with what preceded it in many ways. We find here a continuing basic respect for "mystery" and a rejection of "explanation." The enigma of freedom and necessity is recognized again at a new level, affirming the coinciding bi-polarity of the two in man. The indirect method of "detour," noted already in the previous two phases, is even more explicit here, in that philosophical conclusions are reached only after comparative phenomenological and hermeneutical studies have been undertaken. Even then, the enigma of the symbols is respected. He offers no allegorizing interpretation of the paradox that the symbols

communicate; it is allowed to stand in all its unexplained mystery. But his analysis has clarified the mystery, and has shed light on the "servile will" as, once again, bound and only human.

4. Ricoeur has here again departed from Husserl's concern for an absolute "scientific" starting point in his acknowledgment of the western, Greek and Jewish orientation of his thought. However, he has not openly acknowledged the specifically Christian bias which so obviously colours his procedures and conclusions. It is not difficult to make our point once again that Ricoeur is doing "Christian philosophy." As he himself says, "no one asks questions from nowhere." Ricoeur both asks and answers his questions as a Christian believer. Yet his claim to be a philosopher and not a theologian is fair, for he does "give reasons" which reach outside the theological circle of faith. While he does describe his philosophical work as "preliminary" to theology, he does not suggest that theology might be built upon his philosophy as a dependent superstructure. Rather, as I have suggested previously, Ricoeur does philosophy beside theology. His work suggests not a dependent, but a mutually beneficial relation of the two.

5. His Kantian mode of verification by the value of concepts to render reality intelligible is of course easily set aside by those who do not see what he sees. This student believes his wager on symbolic thought has payed off, in that

the symbolics, together with the structural phenomenology, has greatly illuminated the otherwise obscure reality of human freedom.

Ricoeur encounters a serious obstacle to his understanding of freedom in the rival hermeneutics of the great psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. We must now consider how well his hermeneutical phenomenology stands up to that challenge.

Chapter Five

THE THEME OF FREEDOM IN THE CRITIQUE OF FREUD

We have seen that at every stage Paul Ricoeur has offered a philosophical anthropology that proceeds by detours. The symbolics especially, which we have just examined, is an explicitly indirect, hermeneutical reading of the will. Five years later, in 1965, Ricoeur published another hermeneutical study, a massive, detailed critique of the thought of Sigmund Freud. De l'Interprétation: Essai sur Freud, (translated under the title Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation, 1970) is not the next phase of La Philosophie de la volonté, but a methodological side-step from the philosophy of the will. The long expected Poetics is still to come. Indeed this constitutes Ricoeur's most extensive detour to date. De l'Interprétation rarely addresses itself directly to the issue of freedom, and for this reason it will not be relevant to deal closely with all of it. However, it is an important contribution to philosophical anthropology, and specifically to the philosophy of the subject, and the problem of freedom is a major underlying concern. Our task is to draw out its implications for the theme of freedom in Ricoeur's anthropology.

Ricoeur finds in Freud's thought a serious challenge to his whole hermeneutical approach, and, in truth, to his whole philosophy of man. And yet he exhibits great respect for Freud,

and wishes to pay tribute to him, for he feels that his study of Freud has in some respects confirmed and greatly enriched his own understanding.[1] First we must note his perception of what Freud's work means. The great battleground, Ricoeur thinks, is hermeneutics.

(a) The Hermeneutical Detour

Freud and Philosophy is set out in three books: the Problematic, the Analytic, the Dialectic. The first book, with which we are concerned now, is an attempt to grasp the implications of Freud's thought for philosophical anthropology.

The Hermeneutics of Suspicion Versus the Hermeneutics of Belief

Ricoeur sees that Freud's broadest aim is

> not only the renovation of psychiatry, but a reinterpretation of all psychical productions pertaining to culture, from dreams, through art and morality, to religion. This is how psychoanalysis belongs to modern culture. By interpreting culture it modifies it; by giving it an instrument of reflection it stamps it with a lasting mark.[2]

Although the works of culture are among Freud's latest publications, it is clear that they are no mere arbitrary and accidental addition to his basic psychology. Ricoeur points out that it was as early as 1900, in his Traumdeutung, The Interpretation of Dreams,[3] that Freud first linked dream to myth,

---

[1] FP, p. 310.

[2] FP, p. 4.

[3] Sigmund Freud, The Interpretation of Dreams, (Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. IV), p. 262.

and proposed that they be interpreted in the same way. More than that, dreams were to be understood as basic, as the model of all the disguised, substitutive expressions of desire. Ricoeur agrees that myths and dreams are indeed alike in that they do carry symbols, that is, double meaning expression, and both are language. Dreams, he notes, are always recounted in words, and it is in fact this telling of the dream that constitutes the text for interpretation.[4] Hermeneutics is the theory of the rules that preside over an exegesis or interpretation. As we saw in our last chapter, Ricoeur defines interpretation and symbol through one another. "Thus a symbol is a double-meaning linguistic expression that requires an interpretation, and interpretation is a work of understanding that aims at deciphering symbols."[5]

Now in The Symbolism of Evil Ricoeur dealt with symbol as enigma in a positive sense, that is, an expression which signifies, which does not block understanding, but provokes it. Symbols are indirect expressions which serve to release the mute opacity of the mystery of human evil. This is generally the approach of the phenomenology of religion, which finds in the symbols and myths of ancient man the manifestation of a depth, or the revelation of the sacred. Ricoeur has read a philosophy of fault, an important dimension of his philosophy of freedom, precisely through such a positive,

[4] FP, pp. 4-8.

[5] FP, p. 9.

trusting, listening stance toward symbols and myths. It is particularly characteristic of philosophical phenomenology to avoid reductionism, especially causal explanation, and, in the case of the phenomenology of religion, to participate in the belief in the reality of the religious object, but in a neutralized mode. The phenomenologist as such brackets the question of the reality of the sacred, but tentatively "believes with the believer," in order to perceive what he perceives. Ricoeur thinks that the philosopher cannot indefinitely remain in this detached attitude. The phenomenologist must investigate in an attitude of expectation, opening himself to the possibility that he will be addressed by the sacred. This expectation implies a certain confidence in language. Ricoeur remarks, "To be truthful, I must say it is what animates all my research."[6] He has been practising what he calls a "hermeneutics of belief."

But Freud's whole work implied that such a stance is not appropriate, that one must adopt an attitude of suspicion to the double meanings of both dream and myth. He saw a new possibility for error, which is no longer a mere intellectual mistake, nor lying in a moral sense, but <u>illusion.</u> Interpretation, then, must become a tactic of suspicion and a battle against masks. Double meaning is not revelation, but dissimulation. Ricoeur sees Freud as one of three masters of the

---

[6] <u>FP,</u> p. 30.

school of suspicion, three great "destroyers," with Marx and Nietzsche. They take up the fundamental attitude of doubt initiated into modern philosophy by Descartes, but penetrate even into the last Cartesian stronghold, consciousness itself. Marx, Nietzsche and Freud are the thinkers who teach modern men to doubt consciousness. Marx exposed the unconscious link of every aspect of culture, -- art, ethics, religion, political and social philosophy -- to economic motivations. Nietzsche explicitly introduced the notion of interpretation into philosophy, in the radical sense in which all philosophy <u>becomes</u> interpretation, and exposed the relation of morality and religion to the will to power. Both of these attempt to expose illusions. In a sense Freud brings their efforts to a summarizing conclusion in his carefully developed theory of the illusion of consciousness.

> What is essential is that all three create with the means at hand, with and against the prejudices of their times, a mediate <u>science</u> of meaning, irreducible to the immediate <u>consciousness</u> of meaning. What all three attempted, in different ways, was to make their "conscious" methods of deciphering coincide with the "unconscious" <u>work</u> of ciphering which they attribute to the will to power, to social being, to the unconscious psychism. <u>Guile will be met by double guile.</u>[7]

Ricoeur reminds us that, although they all expose the <u>illusion</u> of consciousness, their aim is in fact to <u>extend</u> consciousness. We might add that, while two of them, Marx and Freud, were determinists, they all in fact aim at the extension of human

---

[7] <u>FP.</u> p. 34.

freedom by the extension of consciousness.

> What Freud desires is that the one who is analyzed, by making his own the meaning that was foreign to him, enlarge his field of consciousness, live better, and finally be a little freer and, if possible, a little happier.[8]

Ricoeur wishes to include the insight of the hermeneutics of suspicion in his philosophical anthropology. He declares, with Heidegger, that "Destruction is a moment of every new foundation." The conflict of hermeneutics, which we have just outlined, is, Ricoeur thinks, the truest expression of our modernity. While he will find the attitude of suspicion ultimately lacking, he believes that hermeneutics has to be animated by this double motivation: "willingness to suspect, willingness to listen; vow of rigour, vow of obedience.... It may be that extreme iconoclasm belongs to the restoration of meaning."[9]

Hermeneutical Reflection Versus Intuition of Consciousness

The Freudian hermeneutics of suspicion points up the necessity of the hermeneutical detour for philosophical anthropology. Ricoeur had already understood something of this when he embarked upon an interpretation of the symbols of evil. He found that the only way to break through to an understanding of the absurdity of evil was to attend to the equivocal language of avowal. He feels that the philosophic recourse to symbols

---

[8] FP, p. 35. [9] FP, p. 27.

has something scandalous about it, since symbols are so irreducibly singular to particular cultures, and philosophy must aim at universality of discourse. And further, "Can philosophy systematically cultivate the equivocal?" he asks.[10] The question becomes even more serious when we consider the conflict of possible interpretations that are mutually exclusive. The whole of Freud and Philosophy is an attempt to grapple with this problem of opposing interpretations, which use the same symbolic starting point to arrive at opposed anthropologies. Ricoeur believes, however, that philosophy's recourse to symbols is ultimately validated by showing that philosophical reflection, in its innermost nature, requires interpretation, and that requirement justifies the detour through cultural contingency and the war of hermeneutics itself.[11]

We saw in our first chapter that Ricoeur follows his great compatriot Descartes in positing the self as the first truth of philosophy. As we have seen, he does not follow him (or Husserl) in the attempt to build upon it a water-tight philosophical system. The immediate consciousness of self is undeniable, he agrees, but in itself it remains abstract and empty. Even in the eidetics, Ricoeur saw that reflection had to attend to the projects, acts, ideas, institutions, etc. that "mediate" the I am, I think. Ricoeur explains his point

[10] FP, p. 41.

[11] FP, pp. 41-42.

very lucidly in terms of Descartes and Kant:

> Descartes cannot be dislodged from this incontestable proposition: I cannot doubt myself without perceiving that I doubt. But what does this apperception signify? A certitude certainly, but a certitude devoid of truth.... In Kantian language, an apperception of the Ego may accompany all my representations, but this apperception is not knowledge of oneself; it cannot be transformed into an intuition of a substantial soul....[12]

Reflection, then, for Ricoeur, is not intuition. The positing of the self is not given; it is a task. Nor is it merely, in Kantian manner, a mere epistemological problem. It is "ethical" in Spinoza's broad sense. It attempts to lead us from alienation amongst things to freedom and beatitude. It is Spinoza's *conatus* and Plato's *Eros*, the effort, the desire to posit the self as singular being. Reflection cannot be mere intuition. Rather, "Reflection is the appropriation of our effort to exist and of our desire to be, through the works which bear witness to that effort and desire."[13] Reflection, which cannot be intuition, must become interpretation, because the act of existing as a self cannot be grasped except in "signs scattered in the world." That these signs are always culturally contingent reaffirms what Ricoeur has said before: that the philosopher does not speak from nowhere. It is only abstract reflection that speaks from nowhere.[14] The finite orientation of the philosopher is inescapable in any event.

The necessity of the hermeneutical detour shows us the

---

[12] *FP*, p. 44. [13] *FP*, p. 46. [14] *FP*, p. 48.

philosophical value of the hermeneutics of suspicion. Freudian interpretations especially help us to see the inadequacy of direct intuitive self-consciousness for an understanding of man. The rival hermeneutics of belief and of suspicion have in common a shift from self-consciousness as origin of meaning to the external signs of man, particularly dreams and myths. The "watchful ego," anxious and attached to self must be de-centered, says Ricoeur, by the hermeneutical detour. This is a discipline resembling Husserl's phenomenological renunciation of the "natural attitude." Profoundly in keeping with all that he has written previously in the philosophy of the will, Ricoeur writes that

> it is no doubt necessary for us to be separated from ourselves, to be set off center, in order finally to know what is signified by the I think, I am.[15]

Now we must follow Ricoeur into his immensely detailed "Analytic" of Freud, in order that philosophical anthropology may be arduously chastened by his hermeneutic challenge.

(b) Analytical Reading of Freudian Determinism

We have already indicated that Freudian thought constitutes a challenge not only to Ricoeur's hermeneutical practice, but also to the philosophy of man as subject. The interpretation of all human culture in terms of the instincts and illusions

---

[15] FP, p. 55.

of desire is intimately connected to a mechanistic, "economic" determinism which (using Ricoeur's terms from the eidetics) effectively absorbs the voluntary into the involuntary, freedom into nature, and subjectivity into objectivity. In Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary, Ricoeur has already rejected what he calls the "realism of the unconscious," which attributes thought to the unconscious, and reduces consciousness to a mere surface phenomenon entirely prey to the ruses of the unconscious, where all that is truly significant takes place.[16] Ricoeur is more appreciative of Freud in this later work. While noting and rejecting the reductive approach, he discloses elements in Freud's thought itself which point beyond its own determinism. His first concern is to expose the uneasy relation of Freud's "energetics" to hermeneutics.

Energetics and Hermeneutics

Ricoeur believes he sees a fundamental ambiguity in Freudian psychoanalysis. It attempts to be an explanation of psychical phenomena through conflicts of forces, i.e., an energetics. Yet it is also an exegesis of meanings, a hermeneutics. It deals at both "objective" and "subjective" levels. At issue is the question of how these are to be related. He sees a paradoxical relation, which, we might point out, resembles the relation of voluntary and involuntary:

---

[16]See this essay, pp. 93-100.

> on the one hand we will see that the only possible way for psychoanalysis to become "interpretation" is by incorporating the economic point of view into a theory of meaning; on the other hand the economic point of view will appear to us to be irreducible to any other by reason of what we will call the unsurpassable character of desire.[17]

This tension between energetics and hermeneutics (we might say objectivity and subjectivity) is already evident in Freud's early "Project for a Scientific Psychology" of 1895. His mechanistic determinism is at first stated uncompromisingly:

> The intention of this project is to furnish us with a psychology which shall be a natural science: its aim, that is, is to represent psychical processes as quantitatively determined states of specifiable material particles and so to make them plain and void of contradictions. The project involves two principal ideas: 1. That what distinguishes activity from rest is to be regarded as a quantity (Q) subject to the general laws of action. 2. That it is to be assumed that the material particles in question are the neurons.[18]

Fundamental to this "mental physics," or "economic explanation," is the principle of inertia, which says that the system tends to reduce its internal tensions to zero, and the principle of constancy which says that the system keeps the level of tension as low as possible.[19] Tension creates unpleasure, while pleasure is the release of tension. The quantity (Q) is understood as homologous to physical energy: a current that flows, that "stores," "fills," "empties," or "charges" neu-

---

[17] FP, p. 62.

[18] Sigmund Freud, The Origins of Psychoanalysis, trans. E. Mosbacher, J. Strachey, New York, Basic Books, 1954, p. 355.

[19] FP, p. 74; cf. also Kurt Lewin, A Dynamic Theory of Personality, pp. 58-59, referred to in this essay, p. 84.

rons. The storing, filling activity is called a "cathexis." This psychology articulated in terms of anatomy would not again appear in Freud's work. The "neurons" could not be located, nor could the quantitative current be measured. Ricoeur comments that all the "mechanisms" here described are not discovered in the laboratory, but in fact deciphered by clinical treatment of neurotic patients. The energy concepts are already correlative with the clinical activity of interpretation. Thus hermeneutics, and therefore also a dimension of personal intersubjectivity is already present in this early text.[20]

Ricoeur points out that five years later, in his major book The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), Freud has removed all anatomical reference. Dream "thoughts" are understood as the accomplishment or fulfilment of a desire or wish, that is, something "psychical." The book speaks not of cathected neurons but of cathected ideas, of psychical apparatus and psychical force (eine psychiche Macht).[21] In chapter seven he advances to his first topography of the apparatus: unconscious-preconscious-conscious,[22] which is a metaphorical picture moving away from a schema in terms of spatial localities. Ricoeur thinks that at this stage Freud wavers between a realism of "things," and a metaphorical representation of dynamic pro-

---

[20] FP, pp. 71-82.
[21] FP, p. 94; cf. Freud, ID, (CPW, IV), p. 307.
[22] ID, (CPW,) IV, pp. 541-542, 610ff.

cesses. Certainly Freud has not departed from deterministic, economic explanation, but this explanation is now seen to be accessible only by a work of interpretation. Dreams (invariably, in Freud's view, a work of wish-fulfilment)[23] lie precisely at the intersection of meaning and force. Ricoeur argues:

> To say that a dream is the fulfilment of a repressed wish is to put together two notions which belong to different orders: fulfilment (Erfüllung) which belongs to the discourse of meaning (as attested by Husserl's use of the term) and repression (Verdrängung), which belongs to the discourse of force.[24]

Ricoeur's point here is reminiscent of what he said in the eidetics about the two universes of discourse referring to subject-body and object-body. In psychoanalysis the two languages are strangely interwoven. The concept of censorship is a good example: censorship alters a text by repressing a force, and it represses a forbidden force by disturbing the expression of the force.[25] In the dream-work, psychical elements of high intensity are reduced in tension through overdetermination (multiple determination) of meaning by a process of their transference and displacement.[26] Ricoeur comments that this indicates the same relation between over-determination and displacement as between meaning and force. We can say, then, that The Interpretation of Dreams does, in a measure, advance the subjectivization of the psyche in comparison with the previous work by its departure from mental anatomy and its emphasis on

---

[23] ID, (CPW, Vol. IV) pp. 553ff.
[24] FP, p. 92.
[25] FP, p. 93.
[26] ID, p. 307.

interpretation of meanings. But it does not depart from the deterministic constancy principle. Freud does not, and perhaps does not wish to, avoid what Ricoeur calls "the snare of thingness."[27]

The snare still lies in full force in the "Papers on Metapsychology" of 1914-1917. The really basic concept here is the "instinct." Ricoeur notes that in these works, "To be conscious and to be unconscious are at most secondary characteristics: what alone count are the relations of psychical acts to instincts and instinctual aims...."[28] He sees here a kind of Husserlian epoché in reverse, a reduction not to consciousness, but of consciousness. Consciousness is treated here as a surface phenomenon. The reversal occurs as a result of positing instinct (Trieb) as the fundamental concept and interpreting all else as a vicissitude of instinct. This approach, he says, is anti-phenomenological, that is, it no longer takes the "objects" of (intentional) consciousness as the guide, but rather the "aims" of the instincts. The "subject" for whom objects appear is no longer the pole of reference. The aim of an instinct, of course, is always satisfaction by removal of an internal tension or state of stimulation.[29] But this notion of instinct is deepened by

---

[27] FP, p. 105.

[28] FP, p. 120.

[29] Cf. Freud, "Instincts and their Vicissitudes," (CPW, Vol. XIV) pp. 122ff.

the introduction of narcissism. Narcissism, in one sense, is a perverted sort of sexual self-love, but "normal" narcissism is simply the "libidinal complement to the egoism of the instinct of self-preservation."[30] Self-love, with the Ich as object, really places the ego over on the side of objects. The "I" is no longer related to instincts as subject but as object. "The point we have been trying to make," Ricoeur explains, "is simply that the ego of psychoanalysis is not what presents itself as subject at the outset of a description of consciousness."[31]

The person as subject has all but disappeared, but Freud must account for "ideas" in terms of his basic concept of instinct. The specifically "psychic" or subjective dimension comes forward in his concept of representation: the instincts are represented to consciousness by something psychical such as ideas, purposes, decisions, etc. Ideas are still very much the economically determined product of the instincts. But, Ricoeur argues,

> This movement would be unintelligible if the economic point of view were to free itself entirely from the interpretation of meaning through meaning. Psychoanalysis never confronts one with bare forces, but always with forces in search of meaning; this link between force and meaning makes instinct a psychical reality, or, more exactly, the limit concept at the frontier between the organic and the psychical.[32]

This is precisely the point Ricoeur wanted to make over against

---

[30] "On Narcissism: An Introduction," (CPW, XIV), pp. 73-74.
[31] FP, p. 132. [32] FP, p. 151.

Freud in his discussion of the unconscious in the eidetics.[33] Here he finds it at least implied in the "mixed discourse" of Freud's own work that the human unconscious always carries the stamp of subjectivity.

The Interpretation of Culture

We have already seen that Freud extends his psychoanalytic concepts to a general interpretation of human culture. Art, morality and religion are explained in terms of his basic psychological economics of instinct. For example, the motive force of artistic productions, -- painting, sculpture, creative writing and drama -- is the unfulfilled wish, a correction of unsatisfying reality.[34] The broadest aim of a work of art is to enable us to enjoy our fantasies without shame, to detonate highly intensified charges in the psyche. Artistic expressions are to be understood analogously with dreams, in terms of condensation, displacement, censorship, overdetermination, etc. This procedure is once again obviously a hermeneutical one. We have access not to instincts themselves but only to their psychical expressions. Hence, the economics is dependent upon the deciphering of a meaningful text. Nevertheless, aesthetic creativity, along with ethical ideals and religious beliefs, are to be understood as elements of the economic balance sheet of instincts. The theory of culture

---

[33] Cf. this essay, pp. 99-100.

[34] E.g., Freud, Creative Writers and Daydreaming, (CPW, Vol. IX), pp. 143-153.

is applied psychoanalysis. The application of psychoanalysis to culture served to transform the model itself, however, and thus we find at this later stage of Freud's thought a corresponding second topography of id-ego-superego.[35]

Of greater interest to us than art are ethics and religion. As we have seen in his previous books, Ricoeur understands morality in terms, at least in part, of objective obligation. In The Symbolism of Evil he traced an historical growth toward a greater sense of ethical responsibility. We also know that he regards religion at its best as a genuine response to the Transcendent. A "hermeneutics of belief" presupposes a human freedom which answers responsibly to the transcendent claims of the good and the sacred. But the Freudian interpretation of culture, quite predictably, reduces these dimensions of experience to a deterministic explanation that excludes free responsibility. The key concept here is sublimation, the re-direction of an instinct toward an aim other than sexual (libidinal) satisfaction in accordance with the demands of society.[36] Man is essentially threatened from within. He is threatened by his own instincts, the source of anxiety, and the menace of conscience, the source of guilt. But he is so threatened because of the necessity to live in society. Thus not only the neurotic is enslaved from within, but also the ethical man as such, who must keep the libidinal energy of his "id" in check,

---

[35] FP, pp. 153-177.

[36] E.g., Freud, The Ego and the Id, (CPW, Vol. XIX), pp. 45-47.

in accordance with the demands of his superego, the internalized voice of the societal authorities. The whole of civilization is built upon the repression, particularly of the sexual instincts, which Freud believes are "polymorphously perverse," which must therefore be limited in their expression and in a measure diverted in socially useful directions.

> Hence, institutionalization is necessarily painful: man is educated only by "renouncing" archaic practices, by "abandoning" former objects and aims;... human beings can experience entry into culture only in the mode of conflict. Suffering accompanies the task of culture like fate, the fate illustrated by the Oedipus tragedy.[37]

Fundamental to all successful civilization is the banning of incest. The "Oedipus complex" which Freud believed he discovered as a universal phenomenon (and sublimely depicted in Sophocles' ancient tragic drama) is a psychic remnant of the repressed drive to parricide and incest. Generally, then, Freud sees morality as a wounding of desire, as interdiction and not as aspiration. Ricoeur thinks he fails to distinguish between the genesis and ground of ethics.

> We must not, of course, demand from psychoanalysis what it cannot give: namely the origin of the ethical problem, i.e., its ground and principle; but it can give its source and genesis.... The question is this: How can I, by starting from another -- say, from the father -- become myself?[38]

Ricoeur only suggests briefly a major point of his later dialectic in criticism of Freud's reductionism: "Could it be that the true meaning of sublimation is to promote new mean-

---

[37] FP, p. 196.

[38] FP, p. 186.

ings by mobilizing old energies...?"[39]

Ricoeur's analytic reading of Freud proceeds to the treatment of religion, once again reserving his main critique for the dialectic. Freud's discussion of religion has two themes: practices or observances, and belief. As early as 1907 in his "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices," he noted a close parallelism between the obsessive repetitive acts of the neurotic and the performance of religious ritual. Ricoeur finds it illuminating to point out the neurotic appearance of such religious practice; the qualms of conscience brought on by the omission of a ritual act, protection of the ritual against interruption, the conscientiousness, even pettiness with regard to detail, etc. Freud wrote:

> In view of these similarities and analogies one might venture to regard obsessional neurosis as a pathological counterpart of the formation of a religion and to describe that neurosis as an individual religiosity, and religion as a universal neurosis.[40]

Ricoeur asks whether this resemblance is due to the underlying intention of religion, or to its degradation and regression with the forgetfulness of meaning in religious observances. (Or, "Does it pertain to a still more fundamental dialectic, the dialectic of religion and faith?")[41] Again, when Freud comes to the theme of belief, he links it to the unconscious psyche, comparing belief to the wish-fulfilment of dreams. If introjection is the internalization of ethical ideals by

---

[39] FP, p. 175.

[40] "Obsessive Actions and Religious Practices," (CPW, IX), pp. 126-127.

[41] FP, p. 233.

the agency of the superego, projection is now the fantasy function of the superego, the positing of stories, or of divine omnipotence, and credence in these projected realities is illusion. In The Future of an Illusion, Freud wrote,

> What is characteristic of illusions is that they are derived from human wishes.... Thus we call a belief an illusion when a wish-fulfilment is a prominent factor in its motivation, and in doing so we disregard its relations to reality, just as the illusion itself sets no store by verification.[42]

Unfortunately, in Moses and Monotheism, Freud set forth several unsupportable historical hypotheses, -- e.g., that Moses was an Egyptian under the influence of the Pharaoh Akhenaten, and that Moses was murdered -- in order to interpret the Jewish passover and Christian belief in Christ as attempts to atone for the primordial killing. But he does recognize that religion functions not only in a prohibitive, but, even more predominantly, in a protective way. The illusion of religion is man's way of dealing with the harshness of life, more specifically, the harshness of three masters, the id, the superego, and reality.[43] Thus it is desire, more than fear, that creates religion.

Ricoeur judges that all this constitutes a "well-founded analogy."[44] Believers ought not to discard too quickly this Freudian interpretation of religion, for it has a valuable iconoclastic function: "this 'destruction' of religion can be the counterpart of a faith purified of all idolatry." But the de-

---

[42]Freud, The Future of an Illusion, (CPW, Vol. XXI), p. 31.
[43]The Ego and the Id, (CPW, Vol. XIX), pp. 48, 56.
[44]FP, p. 254.

cision of faith or of nonfaith cannot finally rest with psychoanalysis.

Our author's first reading of Freud on culture is highly appreciative. He has shown its consistency with the basic psychology, which, of course, characterizes it as part of a deterministic and objectifying anthropology. He has given us only brief glimpses of the critique he will offer in the Dialectic.

Beyond the Pleasure Principle
To a Philosophy of Necessity

Ricoeur wants to show in this analytic reading that, despite Freud's rigorous effort to explain all of man's psychic life, including all cultural expressions, within a "scientific" deterministic framework, the actual method and content of his thought keeps pointing beyond this mould in a way very enlightening for philosophical anthropology. He thinks this is especially so in his writings from 1920, starting with Beyond the Pleasure Principle.

There was always a "beyond the pleasure principle" in Freud's doctrine in the reality principle. Reality is that harsh necessity to which the organism must relate successfully in order to survive. The mechanism of wish-fulfilment in dreams, hallucinations and illusions must be limited to avoid failure. But this functioning of the reality principle is demanded by the pleasure principle itself which uses it for its long-term triumph over unpleasure. Everything regresses back to the pleasure principle. It seems impossible, then,

for the psychism ultimately to move from a rule of fantasy to a rule of reality, and, therefore, also to move from the status of thing to responsible subject. Strangely enough, Freud sees in religion a temporary victory of the "reality principle," in that it projects one's own desired omnipotence to the profit of the gods. It is the best example of the abandonment of desire by the reality principle, and the subsequent victory of the pleasure principle, through fulfilment by illusion.[45] Freud does in his later work posit a "beyond the pleasure principle" which he believes is more than this mere modification, or roundabout path. He finds in certain dreams, which cannot be understood in terms of wish-fulfilment, i.e., compulsive, repetitive dreams that rehearse situations of distress and failure, something more primitive, more elementary, more instinctual than the pleasure principle which it overrides, an "urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things..., the expression of the inertia inherent in organic life."[46] This principle of inertia he proceeds to name the "death instinct," and declares: "the aim of all life is death."[47] Freud thinks sexuality is the great exception, and thus posits a new dualism of instincts: Eros versus Thanatos. Eros moves toward life with another, but Thanatos, the death instinct, is aggressive, destructive and hostile. However, Ricoeur doubts that Freud's death instinct

---

[45] Freud, Totem and Taboo, (CPW, Vol. VIII), p. 88.
[46] Beyond the Pleasure Principle, (CPW, Vol. XVIII), p. 36.
[47] Ibid., p. 38.

is in fact the significant breakthrough Freud thinks it is. He comments:

> The death instinct turns out to be the most striking illustration of the constancy principle, of which the pleasure principle is always regarded as a mere double. It is impossible not to relate the tendency "to restore an earlier state of things," which defines the death instinct, with the tendency of the psychical apparatus to maintain the quantity of excitation present in it at the lowest possible level or at least to keep it constant. Must one go so far as to say that the principle of constancy and the death instinct coincide? But then the death instinct, introduced precisely in order to account for the instinctual character of the compulsion to repeat, is not beyond the pleasure principle, but is somehow identical with it.[48]

But perhaps there are hints of a more genuine "beyond the pleasure principle" in Freud. Ricoeur points out that there are many allusions in Freud's writings which imply that reality is reached only through devoted scientific work. For Freud the analyst and scientist,

> it is science alone that completely satisfies the reality principle and assures the triumph of the useful over the pleasurable, of the reality-ego over the pleasure-ego. Science alone triumphs over the substitute figures, increasingly complicated and sublimated, in which the pleasure-ego pursues its dream of omnipotence and immortality.[49]

---

[48] FP, p. 319.

[49] Herbert Marcuse, in Eros and Civilization, (New York, Random House Inc., 1962) also points out Freud's implicit affirmation of the accessibility of reality by reason: "The notion that a non-repressive civilization is impossible is a cornerstone of Freudian theory. However, this theory contains elements that break through this rationalization;.... His work is characterized by an uncompromising insistence on showing up the repressive content of the highest values and achievements of culture. In so far as he does this, he denies the equation of reason with repression...." (pp. 16-17). Cf. FP pp. 275-276.

Ricoeur questions the "scientism" which reduces reality to observable facts, yet he lauds the strenuous effort for honesty which turned Freud's thought to the theme of renunciation of fantasy and resignation to necessity.[50] Is not this recognition of Ananke a moment of freedom? Surely Freud has, despite himself, broken his own determinism. In his vision of the battle of Eros and Thanatos and their resolution in Ananke, Freud the scientist has become the philosopher, even the poet. "Ananke, it seems to me," writes Ricoeur, "is a symbol of a world view, and not merely the symbol of a principle of mental functioning."[51]

Freud did not in fact consciously or explicitly move away from determinism. His colleague and biographer Ernest Jones assures us that he never did abandon determinism for teleology.[52] But Ricoeur proposes to show us that there is, by implication, still more in Freud that can inform and enrich our philosophy of man as subject, free, but limited by necessity.

(c) Dialectical Critique of Freudian Reductionism

The last book of Freud and Philosophy is a philosophical interpretation in which Ricoeur places Freudian psychoanalysis as a discipline of thought between scientific psychology and philosophical phenomenology. He then attempts to "ground"

---

[50] FP, p. 276. [51] FP, p. 328.

[52] Ernest Jones, The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, (3 Vols), Vol. I, New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1953, p. 45.

psychoanalytic discourse philosophically. In this context the problem of two opposed hermeneutics inevitably arises again, and Ricoeur suggests that in the light of Freudianism, the rival hermeneutics can be characterized as a dialectic of regression and progression, i.e., as two opposed but complementary directions of interpretation. In the course of this discussion, he offers his decisive and most important contribution to date to the philosophy of the subject.

Placing Freud

Ricoeur notes that Freudian concepts have been subjected to severe criticism by scientific psychologists and analytical philosophers. For example, the logician Ernest Nagel argues that the energy notions of Freudian theory are too vague and metaphorical to be deduced in a strictly scientific, verifiable way.[53] Certainly psychoanalysis shares much with the dominant gestalt psychology, in that it attempts to explain all behavior as integrated and indivisible, and according to the economic model of tension reduction. It speaks in terms of crucial determinants, drives, stimulus-response, etc. But such concepts as id, ego, superego, death instinct, libido, Oedipus complex, etc., are not "observed" phenomena in the usual empirical sense. Ricoeur agrees that as long as psychoanalysis is placed among the observational sciences, Nagel's criticism is unanswerable. The problem lies in the hybrid character of psychoanalysis,

[53]Ernest Nagel, "Methodological Issues in Psychoanalytic Theory," in Psychoanalysis, Scientific Method and Philosophy, (ed.) S. Hook, New York, New York University Press, 1959, pp. 38-56.

that is, that it uses energy concepts, but derives them by way of intersubjective communication, and thus by interpretation. The behaviorist B. F. Skinner, speaking from the standpoint of scientific psychology, argues that "Freud's explanatory scheme followed a traditional pattern of looking for a cause of human behavior inside the organism," thus assuming the "traditional fiction of a mental life."[54] Ricoeur agrees again: if psychoanalysis is an empirical science, all the forces at work must be quantified if they are to be homogeneous with the forces of nature, and if the discipline is to be integrated into behaviorist psychology. But Skinner has missed the point if, in fact, as Ricoeur believes, psychoanalysis is a different work of thought, a work of interpretation and not of measurement. Ricoeur insists that

> the difference comes at the beginning or never: psychology is an observational science dealing with the facts of behavior; psychoanalysis is an exegetical science dealing with the relationships of meaning between substitute objects and the primordial (and lost) instinctual objects. The two disciplines diverge from the very beginning, at the level of the initial notion of fact and of inference from facts.[55]

The distinction is of great importance for a philosophy of the subject that includes a notion of freedom. Empirical psychology speaks in terms of causal explanations. Psychoanalytic propositions are irreducible to explanation through causes, and speak rather of motives, intentions, and meanings.[56] The analyst

---

[54] B. F. Skinner, "Critique of Psychoanalytic Concepts and Theories," in The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis, ed. H. Feigl, M. Scriven, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 1956, pp. 79-80.

[55] FP, p. 359.

[56] Ricoeur cites two articles by analytical philosophers who

is concerned not with "fact" so much as with what the fact means to the patient. Clinical psychoanalysis (unlike laboratory psychology) is a work of speech with the patient in which the patient's personal story or history is told. Epistemologically, then, psychoanalysis is more closely related to the historical disciplines that seek to understand the reasons for human actions than to an empirical psychology of observable behavior. The problematic of an historical science, Ricoeur argues, is quite different from that of a natural science. Thus "the same questions must be put to Freud that are put to Dilthey, Weber and Bultmann, and not those posed to a physicist or biologist."[57]

However, Ricoeur points out that psychoanalytic discourse is not just like the phenomenological discourse of motive either.

> Since it deals with a psychical reality, psychoanalysis speaks not of causes but of motives; but because the topographic field does not coincide with any conscious process of awareness, its explanations resemble causal explanations, without, however, being identically the same, for then psychoanalysis would reify all its notions and mystify interpretation itself.[58]

Psychoanalysis utilizes a strange language which has to be deciphered. Its similarity to (but not identity with) causal explanation has to do with the topographical determination of

---

56 (cont)
corroborate his decisive distinction between Motive and Cause: Stephen Toulmin, "The Logical Status of Psychoanalysis," in Philosophy and Analysis, ed. M. Macdonald, New York, Philosophical Library, 1954, pp. 132-139; also Antony Flew, "Motives and the Unconscious," in The Foundations of Science..., pp. 155-173. Compare also Ricoeur's distinction between Motive and Cause, VI, p. 67; p. 51 of this essay.

57 FP, p. 374.

58 FP, p. 360.

double meanings. Thus

> the distinction between motive and cause does not resolve the epistemological problem posed by Freudian discourse: such discourse is governed by a unique type of being, which I call the semantics of desire; it is a mixed discourse that falls outside the motive-cause alternative.[59]

Freudian thought cannot, therefore, be simply refuted and discarded by the behaviorist and analytical criticisms, despite the legitimacy of their arguments against its status as a science of behavior and observation. It has to be judged on its own grounds, more as a historical, than as an observational science. Once again, it should be criticized, that is, verified or falsified, after the manner of the Kantian transcendental deduction. Analytic concepts must be shown to be necessary to account for analytic experience, i.e., the conditions of possibility of a semantics of desire.[60]

This "mixed discourse" of which Ricoeur speaks corresponds to the position of psychoanalysis between scientific psychology and philosophical phenomenology. We have seen that psychoanalysis resembles in some ways but also differs from psychology. Ricoeur thinks that it also has much in common but is not identical with Husserlian phenomenology. The latter, we recall, begins with a reduction of immediate consciousness. Husserl wrote, "Adequacy and apodicticity of evidence need not go hand in hand."[61] As Ricoeur expresses it, "The resolute certitude

---

[59] FP, p. 363.

[60] FP, pp. 343-375.

[61] Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, trans. D. Cairns, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960, p. 22.

of the I am involves the unresolved question of the possible extent of self-deception."[62] Husserl taught us the unconsciousness of the implicit or co-intended. If we "perceive" only the noesis, we "intend" the noema.[63] Intentionality itself, so central to phenomenology, resembles the unconscious in its outward direction, in that it is always consciousness of.... intention of the other: "Engrossed in the other, it does not at first know itself intending."[64] Husserl and Freud, Ricoeur remembers, both studied under Brentano, and share the heart of his original insight: that the psychical should be defined as meaning, and that this meaning is dynamic and historical. But the psychical is not identified with consciousness. Phenomenology, in Husserl, speaks of "passive genesis," the operation of linking together the various aspects of the spatial and temporal flux to create a meaning which is given, which comes about apart from my conscious willing. But psychoanalysis carefully and concretely shows this very process going on in the topographical interplay of desire as incarnate meaning. Thus, Ricoeur concludes, "the reduction is like an analysis."[65]

However, they are far from identical, for psychoanalysis uses a peculiar technique to uncover the unconscious of which phenomenology knows nothing. The concept of repression, for example, is not merely the phenomenological concept of the co-intended. Similarly the energy metaphors, such as dream-work

---

[62] FP, p. 378.
[63] Husserl, Ideas, pp. 286ff. Cf. this essay, p. 5.
[64] FP, p. 378.
[65] FP, p. 389.

condensation, displacement, etc. have no parallel in phenomenology. It is this very intersection, this mixed discourse of the natural and the signifying from which phenomenology can learn. Thus Ricoeur makes it quite clear that he does not reject the Freudian "economics:"

> The linguistic interpretation does not constitute an alternative to the economic explanation; it simply prevents the latter from being reified by showing that the mechanisms that come under the economics are accessible only in relation to hermeneutics. To say that repression is a "metaphor" is not to replace the economic hypothesis but rather to parallel it with a linguistic interpretation and thus relate it to the universe of meaning without reducing it to that universe.[66]

While not rejecting the Freudian economics, Ricoeur does propose a concept by which it can be understood and criticized. He suggests that "the philosophical place of analytic discourse is defined by the concept of an archeology of the subject."[67] This is not a concept of Freud himself, but a critical concept of Ricoeur. He notes in Freud an absence of any radical questioning about the subject, a "flight" from the question of the I think, I am.

> Are we to look for it in the consciousness? Consciousness presents itself as the representative of the external world, as a surface function.... Are we looking for the ego? What we find is the id. Shall we turn from the id to the dominating agency? What we meet is the superego. Shall we try to reach the ego in its function of affirmation, defense, expansion? What we discover is narcissism, the great screen between self and oneself. The circle has come full turn and the ego of the Cogito sum has escaped each time.[68]

---

[66] FP, p. 396. [67] FP, p. 419. [68] FP, p. 421.

This "anti-phenomenology" is a necessary discipline for the phenomenologist to undergo: to perceive the self-deception, and shake off the false knowledge of immediate self-consciousness. The metapsychology achieves what phenomenology by itself could not, a de-centering of the home of significations, and a displacement of the "birthplace" of meaning. But this first task of displacement must be followed by a second task, which is the recapture of meaning through interpretation. Freud's theory is at once liberating, in that it exposes the illusions of consciousness, and disappointing, in that it fails to give the ego of the cogito any meaning. Is the I not simply lost in the economics of the instincts? Ricoeur admits that "Freud's naturalism is 'well-grounded'; and what grounds it is the thing aspect, the quasi-nature aspect of the forces and mechanisms in question."[69] But he finds in Freud himself the key to the resolution of this puzzle in the theory of the psychical representatives of instincts. "An instinct," said Freud, "can never become an object of consciousness -- only the idea that represents the instinct can. Even in the unconscious, moreover, an instinct cannot be represented otherwise than by an idea."[70] All this militates against a reduction of the subject to the status of thing. Consciousness cannot be reduced to the role of a mere surface phenomenon, or a small circle within the all-important system of unconscious mechanisms. Ricoeur

---

[69] FP, p. 434; compare VI, pp. 397-398, also this essay, p. 98.
[70] Freud, "The Unconscious," in CPW, Vol. XIV, p. 177.

explicitly draws out of Freudianism what was already implied, that is, that

> the fact of being conscious can be neither suppressed nor destroyed. For it is in relation to the possibility of becoming conscious, in relation to the task of achieving conscious insight that the concept of a psychical representative of an instinct becomes meaningful.... In short, psychoanalysis is possible as a return to consciousness because, in a certain way, the unconscious is homogeneous with consciousness; it is its relative other, and not the absolute other.[71]

Here again, as in the eidetics, he has made a strong case for the "subjective" nature of the psychism, and the primary significance of consciousness. Surely this conclusion is crucial if the Cogito is not to be conceived as merely the dupe of unconscious mechanisms, but as, in some measure, free.

Phenomenology and psychoanalysis both begin, then, with a wounding or humiliation of consciousness, in that both are an affront to a philosophy of man that does not fully recognize the limitation of conscious freedom. It is the peculiar vocation of phenomenology to recapture a sense of the subject through a reflection disciplined by psychoanalysis. Ricoeur does not, of course, accept the Freudian determinism, but

> The fiction of absence of motivation, on which consciousness based its illusion of self-determination, is recognized as fiction; the fullness of motivation is revealed in place of the emptiness and arbitrariness of consciousness.[72]

Ricoeur has placed psychoanalysis as a unique and irreducible praxis between psychology and phenomenology. Its uniqueness lies

---

[71] FP, p. 430; compare VI, p. 398, also this essay, p. 99.

[72] FP, p. 391; compare VI, pp. 178-179, also this essay, p. 66.

in its mixed discourse of force and meaning, and it must be evaluated in accordance with its peculiar technique and object of inquiry. Its great contribution to a philosophy of man is its "archeology," in that it shows us what phenomenology cannot: "our relation to our origins, and our relation to our models, the id and the superego."[73]

Archeology and Teleology

Ricoeur's treatment of Freud should be designated a "critique" in the Kantian sense, for it seeks to both establish and limit the validity of psychoanalysis. That critique comes to its conclusion in the dialectic of archeology and teleology. He sees in Freud an original and indispensable probing into the instinctual sources of behavior, but also a mere reductionism of the higher possibilities of man.

Central to what Ricoeur calls Freud's archeology is the concept of the id, that impersonal, neuter aspect of the human psyche which, "never being an *I think* is something like an *It speaks*, which expresses itself in laconisms, displacements of emphasis of meaning, and the rhetoric of dreams and jokes."[74] Freud calls it "the reservoir of the libido."[75] The passage of time can produce no alterations in its processes, for the impressions that pass into the id are virtually immortal. This *zeitlos* characteristic is part of what Ricoeur calls the "unsurpassable character of desire." Since Freud sees all

---

[73] *FP*, pp. 375-418. [74] *FP*, p. 443.
[75] *The Ego and the Id*, (*CPW*, Vol. XIX), p. 30.

cultural productions as analogues of dreams and neurotic symptoms, his interpretation of culture is an archeology, referring in this regressive manner back into the id. While Ricoeur wants to pass beyond this reductionism, he sees it as important testimony to a truth about man. The genius of Freudianism is precisely to have unmasked the archaic from the human in its rationalizations and idealizations, reducing what is apparently noble and creative to what is actually a revival of childhood fantasies. "One should not be in a hurry to correct this reductive hermeneutics," he warns us, "but should rather stay with it, for it will not be suppressed, but retained, in a more comprehensive hermeneutics."[76]

The superego too is an "archaic" aspect of the psyche, constituted as it is by the internalization of social demands in early childhood. In moving from the oneiric to the sublime, Freudian interpretation continues its function of "unmasking," so that the phenomenon of the ethical is seen to derive solely from an internalized external threat. Moral injunctions, then, are not essentially different from taboo. Again, Ricoeur will find this inadequate, but first insists that we must learn from it something quite crucial:

> I regard this critique of moral alienation as an extraordinary contribution to the critique of "existence under the law" begun by St. Paul, continued by Luther and Kierkegaard and taken up again in a different manner by Nietzsche. Freud's contribution here consists in his discovery of a fundamental structure of ethical life,

---

[76] FP, p. 447.

> namely a first stratum of morality that has the function both of preparing the way for autonomy and of retarding it, of blocking it off at an archaic stage. The inner tyrant plays the role of premorality and antimorality. It is the ethical moment in its dimension of non-creative sedimentation....[77]

Now Ricoeur proposes that this archeology of the subject must be understood dialectically with a teleology of the subject, and that this dialectical relation is the key to showing the complementarity of the two opposed hermeneutics discussed at the beginning of the chapter. He has arduously searched through Freud's work to find within it its dialectical contrary, that is, an implicit, unthematized teleology. In his search he has enlisted the help of a counterexample, the Hegelian phenomenology, which he regards as essentially a teleology of the subject, undergirded by an archeology.

Hegel's phenomenology of spirit contrasts sharply with Freud's regressive analytic approach in that it is a progressive synthetic movement. For Freud, any sublimation to apparently "higher" expressions of life is understood economically and regressively in terms of the constancy and pleasure principles, whereas for Hegel, spirit is itself the truth and goal of natural life. Self-consciousness emerges from a dialectical progressive synthesis. Here too an off-centering of consciousness is involved. For example, when spirit passes through the dialectic of master and slave, consciousness enters the pro-

---

[77] FP, p. 449.

cess of self-recognition in relation to another.[78] But most importantly, "the truth of a given moment lies in the subsequent moment.... because the later meaning is immanent in each of its anterior moments." Ricoeur comments, "this advance of spirit or mind upon itself constitutes the truth, unknown to itself, of the anterior figures."[79] However, Hegel's thought does not exclude archeology, for the positing of desire is essential to the "spiritual" process of coming to consciousness. Hegel's concept of Befriedigung, satisfaction, is comparable to the Freudian pleasure principle. The ego knows its own existence in the experience of satisfaction. Thus Hegel wrote: "The satisfaction of desire is indeed the reflexion of self-consciousness into itself, is the certainty which has passed into objective truth."[80] Ricoeur finds in this a confirmation of his own position. His statement here is reminiscent of the eidetics:

> The teleology of self-consciousness does not reveal simply that life is surpassed by self-consciousness; it also reveals that life and desire, as initial positing, primal affirmation, immediate expansion, are forever unsurpassable. At the very heart of self-consciousness, life is that obscure density that self-consciousness, in its advance, reveals behind itself as the source of the very first differentiation of the self.[81]

There is a kind of "mixed discourse" in Hegel as in Freud. Hegel speaks of a struggle for recognition, indeed a passion to achieve recognition, which goes beyond an animal struggle

---

[78] G. W. F. Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baillie, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1949, pp. 229ff.

[79] FP, p. 464.

[80] Phenomenology of Mind, p. 226.

[81] FP, p. 469.

for survival. Behind it lies the unsurpassable positing of life and desire,[82] but, as Ricoeur describes it, this is "a struggle to tear from the other an avowal, an attestation, a proof that I am an autonomous self-consciousness."[83] The self emerges as specifically human, as novelty, yet not outside life, but within it. Ricoeur might have said that freedom too emerges not outside life but within its basic biological and psychical limitations. At any rate, he has shown Hegel as an inverse model of Freud: an archeology within a teleology. He thinks that in a less explicit way Freud's archeology contains a teleology.

Ricoeur does not pretend that Freud would agree with what he thinks he finds in his work. He only suggests that, inevitably, Freud has employed concepts which he has not reflected upon theoretically. He finds an "Implicit Teleology of Freudianism," a dialectic of "life" and self-consciousness, in the dichotomous relation of such concepts as life and death instincts, conscious and unconscious, object-libido and ego-libido, etc. Again, when he discusses the superego as the heir of the Oedipus complex, Freud speaks of the "abandonment of the Oedipus complex" and its replacement by an intensification of identification with parents.[84] But Ricoeur sees the process of identification as a progressive, creative process of growing self-consciousness relating to the specifically human and sub-

---

[82] Phenomenology of Mind, p. 234.

[83] FP, p. 471; compare FM, pp. 183ff; this essay, p. 139.

[84] Freud, New Introductory Lectures, (CPW, Vol. XXII), p. 64.

jective quest for recognition;[85] here is an implied and undeveloped teleology of the subject. Even more significantly, Freud's concept of sublimation is open to this kind of teleological development. Freud treats sublimation as a displacement of energy, but not a repression of it. It is the mechanism designated to account for the passage from the "lower" to the "higher."[86] But Ricoeur doubts whether this process is really intelligible within a purely regressive "economic" archeology. He detects here again a specifically human, subjective element which Freud has not developed.

> What does it mean that the ego evaluates, is capable of respect or blame, engages in approval and self-approval, disapproval and self-repudiation?.... If the ego can fear castration, and later on anticipate social blame and punishment and internalize them as moral condemnation, the reason is that it is sensible to threats other than physical danger. For the fear of castration to take on ethical significance, the threat to one's self-regard must initially be distinct from any other menace; to acquire the meaning of condemnation and punishment, the threat to physical integrity must symbolize the threat to existential integrity.[87]

Ricoeur is contending that sublimation, the diversion of an aim of libidinal instincts toward cultural objects, is a mixed concept which designates both a derivation of energy and an innovation of meaning. Freudian archeology, very enlightening in itself, must be complemented by, shall we say, a certain progressive openness inherent in the human psyche which constitutes the human, the subjective dimension of man, the locus

---

[85] FP, pp. 472-483.

[86] Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," (CPW, Vol. XIV), p. 94.

[87] FP, p. 491.

of his freedom. Freud's reductive system, he thinks, contains concepts which, when reflected upon philosophically, invite such a teleological development.

The Complementarity of the Rival Hermeneutics

The key to the solution of the rival hermeneutics, the hermeneutics of belief and of suspicion, of progression and of regression, lies in the dialectic of archeology and teleology. The two are opposed, but complementary. Each without the other misses what Ricoeur has elsewhere called the "dramatic duality" or the "disproportionate" character of man. The concrete "mixed texture" which bears witness to this bipolarity is the symbol. The symbol, Ricoeur shows us, carries two vectors: they mirror or repeat our childhood, but they also explore our adult life. This is the "over-determination" of symbols:

> We nourish our least carnal symbols with desires that have been checked, deviated, transformed. We represent our ideals with images issuing from cleansed desire. Thus symbols represent in a concrete unity what reflection in its antithetic stage is forced to split into opposed interpretations.[88]

Ricoeur gives an example of the dialectical nature of symbols in two possible interpretations of Sophocles' Oedipus Rex. Freud said that King Oedipus who murdered his father and married his mother shows us the fulfilment of our childhood wishes. His destiny moves us only because it might have been our own. The tragic suffering of Oedipus expresses the vio-

---

[88] FP, p. 497.

lence of our own oneiric repression against the revival of those wishes.[89] But Ricoeur, in an alternative interpretation, points out that on the basis of the drama of parricide and incest, Sophocles has created another. Oedipus falls into a second and more serious guilt, an adult guilt of arrogance and of deliberate nonknowing, when he calls down curses upon the unknown person responsible for the plague. Oedipus' pride must be broken through suffering. Ricoeur writes of this:

> By reason of this impure passion with respect to the truth, his hubris rejoins that of Prometheus: what leads him to disaster is the passion for non-knowing. His guilt is no longer in the sphere of the libido, but in that of self-consciousness....
> ...The underlying link between the anger of Oedipus and the power of truth is thus the core of the veritable tragedy. The core is not the problem of sex, but the problem of light.[90]

These two antithetical interpretations must be combined, however, in order to decipher the full wisdom of myth regarding the nature of man. It is striking, and no accident, Ricoeur thinks, that the drama of truth centers around the mystery of birth (a frequent dramatic theme). The childhood Oedipal dream is potentially the drama of truth. The tragedy of truth is not artificially superimposed upon the drama of origin, for the material of the tragedy, as Freud discovered, is identical with the dream material.[91] The myth displays

---

[89] ID. (CPW, Vol. IV), pp. 262-264.
[90] FP, p. 517.
[91] FP, pp. 515-519.

both an archeology and a teleology. Philosophical anthropology must hold the two together as witness to the disproportionate nature of man.

What of the hermeneutic conflict regarding religion? As we have seen, Ricoeur has practiced a phenomenology of religious myths and symbols to explore the bond of man with the sacred, an important aspect of his existence as free subject. We have also seen that Freud would invalidate all of that by his reductive hermeneutic. Now Ricoeur will not attempt to ground religious faith in a human capacity. He shows considerable sensitivity to contemporary theological discussion when he insists that the problematic of faith pertains to a new dimension which he will not deal with until the poetics.

> In the context of the present work, I describe this new dimension as a call, a kerygma, a word addressed to me. In this sense, I am in accord with the way in which Karl Barth poses the theological problem. The origin of faith lies in the solicitation of man by the object of faith. Hence I will not employ the ruse of extrapolating the question of the radical origin from an archeology of the Cogito, or the question of the final end from a teleology.... Compared to this archeology of myself and to this teleology of myself, genesis and eschatology are Wholly Other.[92]

---

[92]Note Ricoeur's comments on this matter with regard to Barth and Bultmann in "Préface à Bultmann," in Le Conflit des Interprétations, Essais d'herméneutique, (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1969): "Ici Bultmann se retourne contre Dilthey pour qui, comprendre le texte c'est y saisir une expression de la vie; si bien que l'exégète doit pouvoir comprendre l'auteur du texte mieux qu'il ne s'est compris lui-même. Non, dit Bultmann: ce n'est pas la vie de l'auteur qui règle la compréhension, mais l'essence du sens qui vient à expression dans le texte. Ici Bultmann est parfaitement d'accord avec Karl Barth, lorsque celui-ci disait, ... que la comprehension est sous le commandement de l'objet de la foi." (p. 382).
FP, p. 525.

At this point Ricoeur has again brushed into the sphere of Christian theology. But an appeal to a revelation does not dispense with the hermeneutical problem: "to believe is to listen to the call, but to hear the call we must interpret the message. Thus we must believe in order to understand and understand in order to believe."[93] The Freudian hermeneutic of demystification calls in question this Anselmian circle. In doing so it initially performs an important service in exposing the idolatry of an illusionary "supreme being," a wish-fulfilment by projection, showing that the sphere of religious objects, institutions and powers are part of our sphere and not truly transcendent. The "sacred" is the crucial area of ambiguity:

> The sacred can be the sign of that which does not belong to us, the sign of the Wholly Other; it can also be the sphere of separate objects within our human world of culture and alongside the sphere of the profane. The sacred can be the meaningful bearer of what we described as the structure of horizon peculiar to the Wholly Other which draws near, or it can be the idolatrous reality to which we assign a separate place in our culture, thus giving rise to alienation.[94]

Recognition of this salutary function of psychoanalysis regarding religious idolatry does not, of course, imply total acceptance of the hermeneutic of demystification. Despite the resemblance of some religious observances to neurotic symptoms, psychoanalysis has no way of showing whether religion is in

---

[93] FP, p. 525.

[94] FP, p. 531; Ricoeur also makes this point at length in his article, "The Atheism of Freudian Psychoanalysis," in Concilium, Vol. 16, (2), 1966, pp. 59-72.

fact nothing but a "universal neurosis." The possibility of not resembling the neurotic remains as a task for the man of faith. As in the case of art and morality, Freud refuses to see in religion any possibility of a genuinely novel or creative growth beyond the archaic. Ricoeur notes that Freud, on his romantic and philosophic side, was able to say that Eros is "the power that holds everything together."

> But he never suspected that this mythology of Eros might concern an epigenesis of religious feeling, nor that Eros might be another name for the Johannine God .... And why may it not be that "our god Logos, who promises no consolation, whose voice is soft but does not rest till it has gained a hearing," is -- in spite of Freud's ironic tone on this occasion -- another name for Eros, in the profound unity of the symbols of Life and Light?[95]

Freud excludes, without good psychoanalytic reason, the possibility that faith is a participation in the source of Eros, and has to do not so much with the consolation of the child in us

---

[95] FP, p. 536. It is surprising that Ricoeur seldom refers to Carl Jung, the other great name in analytical psychology and Freud's major antagonist. It is obvious that in some ways Ricoeur's position resembles that of Jung regarding religion and the nature of man, as when Jung writes, "I prefer to look at man in the light of what in him is healthy and sound, and to free the sick man from that point of view which colours every page Freud has written. Freud's teaching is definitely one-sided in that it generalizes from facts that are relevant only to neurotic states of mind; its validity is really confined to those states." (Cf. Modern Man in Search of a Soul, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1936, p. 135). But Ricoeur tells us he admires Freud's firmness and rigor: "With Freud I know where I am and where I am going; with Jung everything risks being confused: the psychism, the soul, the archetypes, the sacred." (FP, p. 176). Certainly Jung does not treat religion with the same reductive scorn as does Freud, and is concerned to affirm the "soul" and freedom of man. But perhaps Jung cannot play the same purifying, disciplining role that Freud does; that is, he does not help us to distinguish between God and idols.

as with the power of loving.

> He excludes the possibility that faith aims at making this power adult in the face of the hatred within us and outside of us -- in the face of death. The only thing that can escape Freud's critique is faith as the kerygma of love: "God so loved the world...."[96]

We can say that Ricoeur has defended very well his practice of a hermeneutic of belief as restoration of meaning against the reductive hermeneutic of suspicion. His detour from the philosophy of the will through Freud has been most fruitful for the philosophy of freedom. The detour has confirmed the conclusions of the eidetics, that man's freedom is motivated, incarnate, contingent, and "only human." But the hermeneutical method has yielded much beyond the insights of the eidetics. Through the symbols of evil, and even more, through a reflection disciplined by psychoanalysis, he has discovered not a felt dependence, but a "deciphered dependence" of the Cogito on the absolute involuntary of "life."

We can best close with a question that Ricoeur the philosopher has posed to the philosopher in Freud: "Is reality merely Ananke? Is reality simply necessity offered to my resignation? Is it not also possibility opened to the power of loving?...."[97]

* * * * *

---

[96] FP, p. 536.

[97] FP, p. 550.

Conclusions to Chapter Five

What has Ricoeur achieved in De l'Interprétation, and how does it contribute to an anthropology of freedom?

1. In my judgment, Ricoeur has effectively met the challenge of the hermeneutics of suspicion which threatened to bring about the collapse of not only his own, but of any philosophical anthropology that takes man seriously as subject. He deserves credit not only for his incisive solution, but also for the acute manner in which he has identified and posed the problem.

2. He has handled the Freudian challenge not in any facile way, but with great scholarly rigor. His close knowledge of the whole voluminous Freudian corpus as well as the surrounding psychological and psychoanalytic literature is abundantly evident throughout the book. He has taken the trouble both to understand and to appreciate Freud, and has ingeniously succeeded in turning his genuine insight to the advantage of a deepened anthropology of freedom. In the process he has led us to perceive the colossal greatness of Freud. We might say again that this book constitutes a serious "critique" in the Kantian sense, in that it both establishes and limits the validity of psychoanalysis.

3. The most important new offering of this book is, I would say, the proposed dialectic of archeology and teleology of the subject. As far as I know this is an entirely original formulation, which, in the context of his philosophy of symbols, constitutes an immense contribution to philosophical anthropology.

4. Perhaps Ricoeur can be faulted for accepting uncritically too much of Freud. No doubt Freud's opponents in psychoanalysis and analytical psychology would think so. He has offered very little criticism, for example, of Freud's pansexualism, and his seemingly arbitrary and excessive sexual (as opposed to more broadly libidinal) interpretations of dreams and cultural productions. Perhaps Ricoeur can be defended in this regard, in that he claims no clinical experience or competence in the field, and does not care to enter into debate at that level. It is apparent, though, that generally speaking, he does accept the broad outlines of the Freudian metapsychology, and thinks it "verifiable" as the conceptual framework necessary to account for psychoanalytic experience.

EPILOGUE

Conclusions have appeared at the close of chapters two to five, and these do not require repetition. However, a final word of summary and evaluation is perhaps in order.

We proposed at the beginning that the unique singularity of Paul Ricoeur's thought is his manner of proceeding by detours, which reveal human freedom as a limited reality always to be located between two poles: voluntary and involuntary, finite and infinite, act and state, origin and telos. He has shown that this "disproportionate" nature of man involves two universes of discourse: objective and subjective; and that some instances of symbolic language exhibit a "mixed" discourse reflecting the character of man as a mélange, reconciled in a "practical mediation," a "reciprocity," or a "dialectic." Freedom as limited emerges from this complementarity of opposites.

In the course of unfolding this monumental philosophical achievement, as yet incomplete, Ricoeur has illuminated his intellectual surroundings, both appreciating and incisively criticizing behaviorism, existentialism and psychoanalysis. We may point out that he has taken little account of sociology, and has not adequately dealt with the limitations placed upon freedom by human communities. Certainly he is more concerned with what limits man from within rather than from without. But it would not be fair to characterize his anthropology as solipsistic, since his whole hermeneutical emphasis stresses

the intersubjectivity of human existence.

Our sub-theme of Ricoeur as "Christian philosopher" raises the question of the relation of his thought to theology. He insists, quite rightly, that he is a philosopher, not appealing to the authority of Scripture or ecclesiastical tradition, and not writing directly in the service of Christian proclamation. But many of his statements concerning grace and hope definitely overlap into the theological sphere. He only glimpses these further dimensions on the "horizon" of his own discipline, and hints at their place in a completed anthropology.

His interest in these themes is, I suggest, part of his concern to limit what he calls the first "Copernican Revolution," which gave subjectivity its due. A "second Copernican Revolution" which displaces man as the center of reality, -- and Ricoeur has already moved decisively in this direction -- sets freedom within the context of consent, adoration, obedience and hope. Will Ricoeur have to pass from philosophy into theology in order to complete such a doctrine of freedom? For our answer, we shall have to await the Poetics.

Bibliographical Note

The following bibliography shows books and articles that were of relevance to the preparation of this thesis. It does not include an exhaustive list of the publications of Paul Ricoeur. For the most recent and complete bibliography, the reader is directed to D. F. Vansina, "Bibliographie de Paul Ricoeur," in Revue Philosophique de Louvain, Vol. LXVI, 1968, pp. 85-101. Note also that articles by Ricoeur contained in collections are not listed separately.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books by Paul Ricoeur

La Philosophie de la volenté

1. Le Volontaire et l'involentaire, Paris, Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1950.

   English translation: Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary, trans. E. V. Kohak, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1966.

2. Finitude et culpabilité, I. L'Homme faillible, Paris, Aubier, Editions Montaigne, 1960.

   English translation: Finitude and Guilt, I. Fallible Man, trans. Charles Kelbley, Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1967.

3. Finitude et culpabilité, II. La Symbolique du mal, Paris, Editions Montaigne, Aubier, 1960.

   English translation: The Symbolism of Evil, trans. Emerson Buchanan, Boston, Beacon Press, 1967.

Other Books

Entretiens Paul Ricoeur, Gabriel Marcel, Paris, Aubier-Montaigne, 1968.

Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, Paris, Temps Présent, 1947.

De l'Interprétation, Essai sur Freud, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1965.

English translation: Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation, trans. Denis Savage, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1970.

(with M. Dufrenne) Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'éxistence, Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1947.

(with A. MacIntyre) The Religious Significance of Atheism, New York, Columbia University Press, 1969.

Articles by Paul Ricoeur

COLLECTIONS OF ARTICLES

Le Conflit des interprétations. Essais d'herméneutique. Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1969.

History and Truth. trans., introd., C. A. Kelbley, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1965.

Husserl: An Analysis of his Phenomenology. Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1967.

OTHER ARTICLES

"The Antinomy of Human Reality and the Problem of Philosophical Anthropology," in Readings in Existential Phenomenology, ed. N. Lawrence, D. O'Connor, Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967, pp. 390-402.

"The Atheism of Freudian Psychoanalysis," in Concilium. Vol. XVI, 2, (1966), pp. 59-72.

"Aux frontières de la philosophie," in Esprit. (Dec. 1955), pp. 1928-1939.

"The Critique of Subjectivity and Cogito in the Philosophy of Heidegger," in Heidegger and the Quest for Truth. (ed.) M. S. Frings, Chicago, Quadrangle Books Inc., 1968, pp. 62-74.

"Culpabilité tragique et culpabilité biblique," in Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Réligieuses. Vol. 33, (4), 1953, pp. 285-307.

"The Father Image: from Phantasy to Symbol," in Criterion. Vol. 8, Autumn-Winter, 1968-69, pp. 1-7.

"From Existentialism to the Philosophy of Language," in Criterion. Vol. X, Spring, 1971, pp. 14-18.

"Guilt, Ethics and Religion," in Talk of God. (Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, Vol. II, 1967-1968), London, Macmillan Co., 1969, pp. 100-117.

"The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection," trans. Denis Savage, International Philosophical Quarterly. Vol. II, 1962, pp. 191-218.

"Husserl and Wittgenstein on Language," in Phenomenology and Existentialism, ed. E. N. Lee, M. Mandelbaum, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1967, pp. 207-217.

"New Developments in Phenomenology in France: The Phenomenology of Language," in Social Research, Vol. 34, 1967, pp. 1-30.

"Philosophie et ontologie," in Esprit, (Aout, 1955,) pp. 1378-1391.

"Philosophy of Will and Action," in Philosophy of Will and Action, ed. E. W. Straus, R. M. Griffith, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1967, pp. 7-33.

"Pierre Thévenaz, Un Philosophe Protestant," préface à Pierre Thévenaz, L'Homme et sa raison, (2 Vols) Neuchatel, Editions de la Baconnière, 1956.

"Le Renouvellement du problème de la philosophie chrétienne par les philosophies de l'éxistence," in Les Problèmes de la Pensée Chrétienne, 4, 1949, pp. 43-67.

"Sartre's Lucifer and the Lord," in Yale French Studies, Vol. XIV, Winter, 1954-1955, pp. 85-93.

"Sur la phénoménologie," in Esprit, Vol. XXI (1953) pp. 821-838.

"Le Symbole donne à penser," in Esprit, Vol. XXVII (1959), pp. 60-76. English translation: "The Symbol... Food for Thought," in Philosophy Today, trans. F. B. Sullivan, Vol. IV, (1960), pp. 196-207.

"Sympathie et respect: phénoménologie et ethique de la deuxième personne," in Revue de Metaphysique et de morale, Vol. XLIX, 1954, pp. 380-397.

"The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limiting Idea," in Readings in Existentialism and Phenomenology, ed. N. Lawrence, D. O'Connor, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall Inc., 1967, pp. 93-112.

"Ye are the salt of the earth," in The Ecumenical Review, Vol. X, Oct. 1957-Sept. 1958, pp. 264-276.

Books by Other Authors

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, and On Interpretation, in The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon, New York, Random House, 1941.

Barth, Karl. Church Dogmatics, Vol. III, 1, (1958), III, 2, (1960), IV, 1, (1956), ed. G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark.

Brand, Myles. (ed.) The Nature of Human Action, Glenview, Ill., Scott, Foresman & Co., 1970.

Brown, J. A. C. Freud and the Post-Freudians, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1961.

Bultmann, Rudolf. Jesus Christ and Mythology, London, S.C.M. Press, 1958.

Calvin, John. Institutes of the Christian Religion, (2 Vols) trans. J. Allen, Philadelphia, Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, 1936.

Campbell, C. A. On Selfhood and Godhood, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1957.

Camus, Albert. The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays, New York, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1969.

The Rebel, New York, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1956.

Cassirer, Ernst. The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, (3 Vols) trans. R. Mannheim, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1957.

Descartes, René. The Philosophical Works of Descartes, Vol. I, Dover Publ. Inc., 1955.

Dodds, E. R. The Greeks and the Irrational, University of California Press, 1951.

Edie, James M. (ed.) An Invitation to Phenomenology, Chicago, Quadrangle Books Inc., 1965.

Eichrodt, W. Theologie des alten Testaments, Band 3, Leipzig, 1939.

Eliade, Mircea. Cosmos and History, trans. W. R. Trask, New York, Harper and Row, 1954.

Patterns in Comparative Religion, trans. Rosemary Sheed, Cleveland, World Publ. Co., 1958.

Farber, Marvin. The Aims of Phenomenology, New York, Harper and Row, 1966.

Farrer, Austin. Finite and Infinite, Glasgow, Robert Maclehose & Co. Ltd., 1943.

The Freedom of the Will, London, Adam and Charles Black, 1958.

Freud, Sigmund. The Origins of Psychoanalysis, trans., ed., E. Mosbacher, J. Strachey, New York, Basic Books, 1954.

The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans., ed., J. Strachey, London, Hogarth Press, 1953-1966.

Grene, David, and Lattimore, Richmond. Greek Tragedies, (3 Vols) University of Chicago Press, 1960.

Gustafson, Donald F. (ed.) Essays in Philosophical Psychology, New York, Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1964.

Hampshire, Stuart. Freedom of Mind, Princeton University Press, 1971.

Freedom of the Individual, New York, Harper & Row, 1965.

Hebb, Donald O. A Textbook of Psychology, Philadelphia, W. B. Saunders Co., 1966.

Hegel, G. W. F. The Phenomenology of Mind, trans. J. B. Baillie, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1949.

Heidel, A. The Babylonian Genesis, University of Chicago Press, 1942.

Heinemann, F. H. Existentialism and the Modern Predicament, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1953.

Henle, Mary. (ed.) Documents of Gestalt Psychology, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1961.

Hoffding, Harald. A History of Modern Philosophy, (2 Vols), trans. B. E. Meyer, Dover Publ. Inc., 1955.

Hook, Sidney. (ed.) Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science, New York University Press, 1958.

Husserl, Edmund. Cartesian Meditations, trans. D. Cairns, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960.

Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology, trans. W. R. B. Gibson, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931.

Paris Lectures, trans. P. Koestenbaum, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967.

Ihde, Don. Hermeneutic Phenomenology, The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1971.

Jones, Ernest. The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud, (3 Vols) New York, Basic Books Inc., 1953.

Jung, Carl. Modern Man in Search of a Soul, New York, Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1936.

Kant, Immanuel. Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals, trans. L. W. Beck, New York, 1959.

Kant: Selections, ed. T. M. Greene, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929.

Kierkegaard, Soren. Sickness unto Death, trans. W. Lowrie, Princeton University Press, 1941.

Koffka, Kurt. Principles of Gestalt Psychology, New York, Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1935.

Langdon, S. (ed.) Babylonian Wisdom, Oxford, Luzac & Co., 1923.

Lauer, Quentin. Phenomenology: Its Genesis and Prospect, New York, Harper & Row, 1958.

Lewis, H. D. The Elusive Mind, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1969.

Luijpen, William A. Existential Phenomenology, Pittsburgh, Duquesne University Press, 1969.

Marcel, Gabriel. The Mystery of Being, (2 Vols), Chicago, Henry Regnery Co., 1950.

Being and Having, An Existentialist Diary, trans. K. Farrer, New York, Harper & Row, 1949.

Marcuse, Herbert. Eros and Civilization, New York, Random House Inc., 1962.

Melden, A. I. Free Actions, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. On the Geneology of Morals, trans. W. Kaufmann, J. Hollingdale, New York, Random House Inc., 1967.

Palmer, Richard E. Hermeneutics, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1969.

Pascal, Blaise. Pensées, trans. H. F. Stewart, New York, Random House, 1965.

Plato. The Dialogues of Plato, (2 Vols), trans. B. Jowett, New York, Macmillan Co., 1892.

Pritchard, J. B. (ed.) Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament, Princeton University Press, 1950.

Rad, Gerhard von. Old Testament Theology, Vol. I, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, New York, Harper & Row, 1962.

Ryle, Gilbert. The Concept of Mind, New York, Barnes and Noble Inc., 1949.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. Being and Nothingness, trans. H. E. Barnes, New York, Citadel Press, 1966.

Existentialism, trans. B. Frechtman, New York, Philosophical Library Inc., 1947.

Skinner, B. F. Beyond Freedom and Dignity, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1971.

Spiegelberg, Herbert. The Phenomenological Movement, (2 Vols) The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1965.

Tillich, Paul. Systematic Theology, Vol. II, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957.

Tolman, Edward C. Purposive Behavior in Animals and Men, New York, Meredith Publ. Co., 1967.

Watson, John B. Behaviorism, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1930.

Articles by Other Authors

Flew, Antony. "Motives and the Unconscious," in The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis, ed. H. Feigl, M. Scriven, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1956, pp. 155-173.

Gurwitsch, Aron. "Husserl's Theory of the Intentionality of Consciousness in Historical Perspective," in Phenomenology and Existentialism, ed. E. N. Lee, M. Mandelbaum, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1967, pp. 25-38.

Hackett, Stuart C. "Philosophical Objectivity and Existential Involvement in the Methodology of Paul Ricoeur," in International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. IX, No. 1, Mar. 1969, pp. 11-39.

Hartmann, Klaus. "Phenomenology, Ontology and Metaphysics," in Review of Metaphysics, Vol. XXII, No. 1, Sept. 1968, pp. 85-112.

Holt, Herbert. "Existential Analysis, Freud and Adler," in Journal of Existentialism, Vol. VIII (30), Winter, 1967-1968, pp. 203-222.

Ihde, Don. "From Phenomenology to Hermeneutic," in Journal of Existentialism, Vol. VIII (30), Winter, 1967-1968, pp. 111-132.

"Some Parallels Between Analysis and Phenomenology," in Esprit, Vol. XXVII, (1967), pp. 577-586.

Kemp, Peter. "Phanomenologie und Hermeneutik in der Philosophie Paul Ricoeurs," in Zeitschrift fur Theologie und Kirche, 67, 1970, pp. 335-347.

Kohler, Wolfgang, "Gestalt Psychology Today," in Documents of Gestalt Psychology, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1961, pp. 1-15.

Lewin, Kurt. "On the Structure of the Mind," in A Dynamic Theory of Personality, Selected Papers, trans. D. K. Adams, K. E. Zenger, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Co. Inc., 1935, pp. 43-65.

Molina, Fernando, "The Husserlian Ideal of a Pure Phenomenology," in Invitation to Phenomenology, ed. J. M. Edie, Chicago, Quadrangle Books Inc., 1965, pp. 161-179.

Nagel, Ernest. "Methodological Issues in Psychoanalytic Theory," in Psychoanalysis, Scientific Method and Philosophy, ed. S. Hook, New York University Press, 1959, pp. 38-56.

"Some Notes on Determinism," in Determinism and Freedom in the Age of Modern Science, ed. S. Hook, New York University Press, 1958, pp. 183-187.

Rasmussen, David M. "Ricoeur: The Anthropological Necessity of a Special Language," in Continuum, Vol. VII, 1969, pp. 120-130.

Reagen, Charles E. "Ricoeur's Diagnostic Relation," in International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. VIII, 1968, pp. 586-592.

Sanborn, Patricia. "Gabriel Marcel's Conception of the Realized Self: A Critical Exploration," Journal of Existentialism, Vol. VIII, (30), Winter, 1967-1968, pp. 133-159.

Scorpen, Erling. "Behavioral Anthropology and the Philosophy of Man," in Main Currents, 27, Nov.-Dec. 1970, pp. 48-54.

Sinyard, Boyd. "Myth and Reflection: Some Comments on Ricoeur's Phenomenological Analysis," in Canadian Journal of Theology, XVI, 1/2, 1970, pp. 33-40.

Skinner, B. F. "Critique of Psychoanalytic Concepts and Theories," in The Foundations of Science and the Concepts of Psychology and Psychoanalysis, ed. H. Feigl, M. Scriven, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1956, pp. 77-87.

Smart, J. J. C. "Sensations and Brain Processes," in Philosophical Review, Vol. 68, 1959, pp. 141-156.

Stewart, David. "In Quest of Hope: Paul Ricoeur and Jurgen Moltmann," in Restoration Quarterly, XIII, pp. 31-52.

"Paul Ricoeur and the Phenomenological Movement," in Philosophy Today, Vol. XII, 1968, pp. 227-235.

"Paul Ricoeur's Phenomenology of Evil," in International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. IX, No. 4, Dec. 1969, pp. 572-589.

Tilliette, X. "Réflexion et symbole: L'Enterprise philosophique de Paul Ricoeur," Archives philosophie, XXIV, 1961, pp. 574-588.

Toulmin, Stephen. "The Logical Status of Psychoanalysis," in Philosophy and Analysis, ed. M. Macdonald, New York, Philosophical Library, 1954, pp. 132-139.

Van Puersen, C. A. "The Concept of Body in Transcendental Phenomenology and Modern Biology," in Analecta Husserliana, Vol. I, 1971, pp. 133-151.

Vansina, D. F. "Bibliographie de Paul Ricoeur," in Revue Philosophique de Louvain, Vol. LX, 1962, pp. 395-413.

"Bibliographie de Paul Ricoeur," in Revue Philosophique de Louvain, Vol. LXVI, 1968, pp. 85-101.

"Esquisse, orientation et signification de l'enterprise philosophique de Paul Ricoeur," in Revue de Metaphysique et de morale, Jan.-Mar. 1964, pp. 179-208, 305-321.

Waelhens, A. de. "Pensée mythique et philosophie du mal," Revue philosophique de Louvain, LIX, 1961, pp. 171-172.