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PAUL RICOEUR'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF EVIL.

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PAUL RICOEUR'S PHENOMENOLOGY OF EVIL

by

JOHN DAVID STEWART

A THESIS SUBMITTED
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Perhaps it is necessary for us
to believe that God, wishing
to be known and loved freely,
Himself ran this risk which is
named Man.

Paul Ricoeur

CHAPTER I

THE DESIGN OF THIS STUDY

Paul Ricoeur's significance for contemporary philosophy may not be readily apparent to the American scholar, since his works are still largely untranslated. While Ricoeur's major books are being readied for publication in English, his importance for contemporary philosophy in France is readily acknowledged by those familiar with current developments on the Continent. Herbert Spiegelberg, in his monumental study of the phenomenological movement, describes Ricoeur as "the best informed French historian of phenomenology."¹ Recognizing that Ricoeur's importance goes beyond his stake in the history of phenomenology, Spiegelberg also states, "the outstanding contribution to phenomenology, both in size and originality, has been made by Paul Ricoeur."² As a phenomenologist, Ricoeur's concern is to discover the limits and validity of phenomenology and to practice philosophy in a manner that is indebted both to transcendental phenomenology and to an existential commitment to personal values. With this in mind, Spiegelberg adds that a principal concern of Ricoeur's philosophy is reconciliation, "a reconciliation of man with himself, his body, and the world. And behind it appears the even

¹Herbert Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), II, 563.

²Ibid.

vaster scheme of a reconciliation in ontology."³

I. RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Although Ricoeur began writing for French philosophical journals soon after the war, his first publication in an American journal was a translation of an article that appeared in 1952 under the title "Christianity and the Meaning of History," The Journal of Religion, 21 (1952), 242-53. Even though Ricoeur continued to write regularly for French publications, his next article in English did not appear until 1955 when he wrote an analysis of "French Protestantism Today" for The Christian Century, 72 (1955), 1236-38. During the same year an English translation of another of Ricoeur's articles appeared in the Catholic journal Cross Currents under the title "'Morality Without Sin' or Sin Without Moralism," 5 (autumn, 1955), 339-52. In 1957, Ricoeur gave the third John Knox Lecture at the John Knox House in Geneva, which was published in English as a monograph entitled State and Violence. During the same year he contributed an article on Jaspers, entitled "The Relation of Jasper's Philosophy to Religion," to the Jaspers volume in the Library of Living Philosophers. Two other articles in English up to 1960 are: "Faith and Culture," The Student World, 50 (1957), 246-51, and "Ye are the Salt of

³Ibid., pp. 568-69. At the time of Spiegelberg's writing, only the first volume of Philosophie de la volonté had appeared, entitled Le volontaire et l'involontaire.

the Earth," The Ecumenical Review, 10 (1958), 264-76.

Although the first volume of Philosophie de la volonté appeared in 1950, Ricoeur's philosophical writings were largely overlooked by American scholars. Not until 1960, when Professor Spiegelberg included a brief analysis of this book in his history of the phenomenological movement, did any English language publication take note of Ricoeur's philosophical writings. Up until that time, as the previous listing of his English articles indicates, American journals had paid attention primarily to his religious and social writings. The year 1960 was notable also because it witnessed the publication of Finitude et Culpabilité, the second volume of Philosophie de la volonté, in two parts: L'homme faillible and La Symbolique du mal. Later in the year a precis of the Introduction and Conclusion to the second part of La Symbolique du mal appeared under the title "The Symbol, Food for Thought," Philosophy Today, (autumn, 1960), 196-207.

The two volumes thus far published of Philosophie de la volonté comprise the major features of Ricoeur's own original contribution to philosophy and are essential for an understanding of his thought. Another important source of material is a collection of seventeen of Ricoeur's essays entitled Histoire et Vérité (Paris: Seuil, 1964). This collection originally appeared in 1955, but had long been out of print until the revised edition, with six additional articles, appeared in 1964. Earlier works by Ricoeur include a translation of and commentary on Husserl's Ideen I entitled

Idées directrices pour une phénoménologie, (Paris: Gallimard, 1950, reprinted 1963), Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, (Paris: Temps Présent, 1947), and an appendix on "quelques figures contemporaines" to the third edition of Bréhier's Histoire de la philosophie allemande, (Paris: Vrin, 1954). In collaboration with Mikel Dufrenne, Ricoeur wrote Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence, (Paris: Seuil, 1947), which was Ricoeur's first book length publication.

American publishers have made arrangements to bring out English translations of several of Ricoeur's major works. The Northwestern University Press has announced plans to include three of Ricoeur's works in its Studies in Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy: Le volontaire et l'involontaire, Histoire et Vérité, and a collection of Ricoeur's articles on Husserl now being edited and translated by Mr. Lester Embree and Professor Edward G. Ballard of Tulane University. The Henry Regnery Company has published a translation of L'homme faillible as a Gateway paperback entitled Fallible Man. Harper & Row will include a translation of La Symbolique du mal in its series on Religious Perspectives, edited by Ruth Nanda Anshen. Two of Ricoeur's American lectureships are also due for publication: The Terry Lectures delivered at Yale University in November, 1961 are to be published by the Yale University Press under the title The Philosopher Before Symbols. The Rockwell Lectures given by Ricoeur at Rice University in the spring of 1963 under the title, "The Problem of Religious Language," are to be pub-

lished by the Louisiana State University Press.

The bibliography at the conclusion of this study contains the major books and articles by Ricoeur both in French and English. A more complete bibliography of Ricoeur's writings through 1962 was compiled by Father Dirk Vansina and appeared under the title "Bibliographie de Paul Ricoeur," Revue philosophique de Louvain, 60 (August, 1962), 394-413. I have also listed as secondary sources some of the major articles about Ricoeur and reviews of his works.

II. THE PROBLEM AND METHOD OF APPROACH

Since 1960 there has been increased interest in Ricoeur's philosophical writings among American and French scholars. In 1961 an article about Ricoeur by Philibert Secretan appeared, "Paradoxe et conciliation dans la philosophie de Paul Ricoeur," Studia Philosophica, XXI, 187-98. One year later, Dirk Vansina submitted to the Catholic University of Louvain a doctoral thesis entitled, "De filozofie van Paul Ricoeur. Problematiek en dialektiek van zijn methode," (The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur. Problematics and Dialectics of His Method). A condensation of this appeared in French as "Esquisse, orientation et signification de l'entreprise philosophique de Paul Ricoeur," Revue de metaphysique et de morale, 69 (1964), 179-208; 305-21. Vansina may publish a book on Ricoeur in English, but so far nothing definite has been announced.

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In 1963, Interprétation du langage mythique et theologie biblique, by Pierre Barthel, contained a chapter devoted to "L'interprétation symbolique des representations d'origine et de structure mythiques par Paul Ricoeur." The only study in English devoted to Ricoeur is a doctoral dissertation by Don Ihde, "Paul Ricoeur's Phenomenological Methodology and Philosophical Anthropology," submitted in 1964 to the Boston University Graduate School. Ihde primarily investigates Ricoeur's phenomenological methodology, with special attention to the limits and "directive notions" of his method.

Thus far, studies about Ricoeur, both in English and in other languages, have concentrated either on his phenomenological method or on a sketch and evaluation of Ricoeur's general philosophy. Although these studies are valuable guides to Ricoeur's thought, none of them, I believe, has pinpointed his major concern. The purpose of my research is by a consecutive examination of his major writings to support and elucidate the claim that the problem of evil is the raison d'être of Ricoeur's philosophy and that the final result of his ambitious Philosophie de la volonté will be to situate this ancient problem in the context of the latest results of psychology and the phenomenology of religion.

I am personally indebted to Ricoeur for discussing this with me. He confirmed my identification of the problem of evil as central to his philosophy and agreed that this problem is one to which he must ultimately return. But he

quickly added that although the problem of evil is his motive for writing, it is not necessarily the reason he has developed his thought in the precise way he has done. What I took him to mean by this is that any serious philosopher must face difficult methodological problems, and many additional questions are related to the guiding concern either as propaedeutic or as corollary. Although there are those who say that a philosopher (or a poet) cannot elucidate accurately what he has written,⁴ it seems reasonable to believe that Ricoeur's approval of such an evaluation of his philosophical enterprise affords adequate justification for proceeding in the way that I have.

Because Ricoeur is not widely known in this country, much of this study must be devoted to an analysis and explanation of his basic position. Although, strictly speaking, it is outside the scope of this work, I shall briefly relate Ricoeur to some of the major sources of his thought. Then through an investigation of Ricoeur's analysis of the voluntary and involuntary aspects of the will, I shall attempt to explicate Ricoeur's claim that the confession of evil is central to a quest for the ontological foundations of the self. In this connection it will be helpful to study the significance the language of this confession has for ontology. The

⁴I do not share this view. Indeed, it is true that no creative mind can express all that is implicit in his creation (this is one aspect of his genius). But who can better reveal his intention than the author himself?

final chapter will summarize some possible consequences of Ricoeur's philosophical enterprise and will suggest some of the future developments we may expect from him.

I should like to express my appreciation to Professor Niels C. Nielsen for giving me extensive assistance in the initial stages of this research, and to Professor J.S. Fulton for guiding my work to completion. A note of appreciation should also be extended to Mrs. Marvine Brand and to the interlibrary loan office of the Fondren Library. Without the generous assistance of these individuals, this research would have been impossible.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES FOR RICŒUR'S THOUGHT

Even the casual reader will be struck by the fact that Ricoeur is acutely aware of his indebtedness to his predecessors and contemporaries, and the resources for tracing out his kinship to other thinkers and to other traditions are almost endless. In the autobiographical section of the Introduction to the first edition of Histoire et Vérité, Ricoeur mentions four interests in his life: university teacher, student of the history of philosophy, member of the Esprit editorial staff, and listener to the Christian message. Yet he insists that these pursuits, which could be classed as "intellectual," have value only insofar as they are also practical.

As an academician I believe in the efficacy of the teaching word. As a teacher of the history of philosophy, I believe in the clarifying power, even for politics, of a word devoted to elaborating our philosophical memory. As a member of the editorial staff of Esprit, I believe in the efficacy of the word which reflexively recaptures the generative themes of a civilization on the move. As a listener to Christian preaching, I believe that the word can change the "heart," that is, the dynamic center of our preferences and of our hardened situation. In a sense, all these essays are to the glory of the word which effectively reflects and thoughtfully acts.¹

¹Paul Ricoeur, "Preface to the First Edition," Histoire et Vérité (second edition; Paris: Seuil, 1964), p. 9. Hereafter cited as "Preface to Histoire et Vérité." "Comme universitaire, je crois à l'efficacité de la parole enseignante; comme enseignant l'histoire de la philosophie, je crois à la puissance éclairante, même pour une politique

In all these interests Ricoeur relates his philosophical concern to the needs of society and politics. Having been influential in the development of the Esprit publication of Emmanuel Mounier's personalistic movement, Ricoeur has taken exception to the philosophy of despair which is the guiding interest of much of French thought. In the conclusion to the first volume of Philosophie de la volonté, Ricoeur states his own objectives.

The philosophical faith which inspires us is the will to restore on a higher plane of lucidity and happiness that unity of being which negation has killed more radically than reflection. For us philosophy is the meditation on the "yes" and by no means the quarrelsome dwelling (renchérissement hargneux) on the "no." Freedom does not want to be a leper but the very accomplishment of nature, as far as that is possible in this world, where we pass through as wayfarers. This is why we meditate on the negation only with the ardent hope of going beyond it (surpasser).²

In evaluating the background and sources of Ricoeur's thought, I will focus attention on three of the principal forces that have influenced him: his Christian commitment, Husserlian phenomenology, and existential philosophy. These

d'une parole consacrée à élaborer notre mémoire philosophique; comme membre de l'équipe Esprit, je crois à l'efficacité de la parole qui reprend réflexivement les thèmes générateurs d'une civilisation en marche; comme auditeur de la prédication chrétienne, je crois que la parole peut changer le "cœur", c'est-à-dire le centre jaillissant de nos préférences et de nos prises de position. En un sens, tous ces essais sont à la gloire de la parole qui réfléchit efficacement et qui agit pensivement.

²Paul Ricoeur, La volontaire et l'involontaire (Paris: Aubier, 1950, reprinted 1963), p. 419. cited and translated by Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960), II, p. 568.

three categories obviously do not coincide with the four interests mentioned by Ricoeur himself; thus a word of explanation is in order. What Ricoeur intended to imply by referring to his role as university teacher is not clear. I suspect what he meant was clarified by a remark made in conversation, that the greatest effect on his development as a philosopher was the teaching of the history of philosophy for ten years.³ Ricoeur has a keen sense for the relation of his ideas to both his predecessors and his contemporaries, so that an attempt to trace out all the precursors of his thought would be a project broad enough to encompass several major studies. He acknowledges indebtedness to Kant and Husserl, and his explicit references to his contemporaries--Nabert, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Eliade, Heidegger, Mounier--provide keys for a comparative analysis that is beyond the scope of this study.

Ricoeur's admitted interest in social action and politics is evident throughout his journal articles. He has written regularly for a journal of social action, entitled Christianisme social, the Protestant equivalent of Esprit. In 1955, he visited mainland China with a group of journalists and returned to France to write several articles on edu-

³Ricoeur made this remark to Don Ihde during a conversation over lunch at the Third Annual Meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Yale University, October 22-24, 1964. Ihde was gathering biographical information from Ricoeur for inclusion in a redraft of his thesis which he hopes to publish.

cation in China: "Questions sur la Chine," Christianisme social, 64 (1956), 319-35; "Ecoles de Chine," Paris-Pékin. La revue des amitiés franco-chinoises, (March, 1956), 11-16; "Enseignement dans la Chine nouvelle," Foi-Education, 26 (January-March, 1956), 25-30. Ricoeur has continually written articles calling attention to political problems in society: "Le paradoxe politique," Esprit, 25 (May, 1957), 721-45; "Eléments de jugement 'constitutionnel'," Christianisme social, 66 (1958), 570-75; "Les formes nouvelles de la Justice Sociale," Christianisme social, 67 (1959), 462-71. During the Algerian war Ricoeur was not content to remain on the sidelines but actively participated in discussions about its legitimacy. So active was he in this dialogue that he was briefly imprisoned because some of his public pronouncements appeared, as he put it, when the word "freedom" was not too popular in Paris.

A concise statement summing up Ricoeur's complex interests appeared in the introduction to his John Knox House Lecture, The State and Coercion.

In his thought and life, Paul Ricoeur has two dominating interests, philosophical on the one hand, political and moral on the other. As a philosopher, he seeks to use the methods of phenomenology and existentialism to construct a metaphysic and to stimulate dialogue and a confrontation between metaphysics and theology. . . . Firmly rooted in the faith of the Reformation, and a zealous supporter of the ecumenical movement, he is above all a man of dialogue.⁴

⁴Paul Ricoeur, The State and Coercion. The Third John Knox House Lecture (Geneva: John Knox House, 1957), p. 4.

This statement is an accurate reflection of the guiding interests that dominate the life and work of Paul Ricoeur, for his political and social concerns are not unrelated to his Christian commitment. This relation is easily seen in his interpretation of the Christian witness in the modern world.

I. RICOEUR'S CHRISTIAN COMMITMENT

Paul Ricoeur was born in 1913 of "Protestant stock," as Spiegelberg puts it. He was confronted by Barthian theology and subsequently repelled by it.⁵ The decisive aspect of Christianity, Ricoeur believes, is the force of its witness in every area of life. He writes:

The first thing I want to say is how glad I am to be alive at a time when Christian preaching has rediscovered all the dimensions of the Christian message; historical, geographical, social and political, a time when Christians feel concerned for everything that happens to men. "Nothing human is foreign to me" has now become a Christian slogan, not merely a Stoic one.⁶

In refusing to make a distinction between thought and action after the manner of the Marxists who distinguish between a merely contemplated thought and a praxis which transforms the world, Ricoeur insists that reflection has meaning only because of the dialectic of work and speech. He adds, "speaking and doing, meaning and acting, are too intermingled for a

⁵Spiegelberg, op. cit., p. 569.

⁶Paul Ricoeur, "Ye are the Salt of the Earth," The Ecumenical Review, 10 (1958), 264.

endurable and profound opposition to be set up between 'theoria' and 'praxis'."⁷

Ricoeur is not unaware of the ambiguity of the Christian witness in the world but confidently affirms, "The first sign of Christian hope is to believe that something can always be done in every situation."⁸ The Christian acts in society aware of the relativity of his action and aware, too, that there is a hiatus between his Christian faith and political necessity.⁹ Ricoeur is very close to Niebuhr when he recognizes that the action of a Christian in society is always at odds with the absolute demands of the Christian ethic. The Christian is caught in the tension between a morality of absolute right and a morality of what is feasible in practice. "The religious conscience says: 'If thou art not perfect in every respect, thou art not perfect at all.' Politics are never subject to this law; their achievements can never be more than relatively good." A corollary is that the Christian politician is faced with a terrible problem, "not the problem of maintaining his innocence, but that of limiting his culpa-

⁷Ricoeur, "Preface to Histoire et Vérité," p. 9. "le dire et le faire, le signifier et l'agir sont trop mêlés pour qu'une opposition durable et profonde puisse être instituée entre 'théoria' et 'praxis'."

⁸Ricoeur, "Ye are the Salt of the Earth," p. 269.

⁹Paul Ricoeur, "Pour un christianisme prophétique," Les chrétiens et la politique (Paris: Temps Présent, 1948), p. 85.

bility."¹⁰

In his lecture, *The State and Coercion*, Ricoeur confronted the crisis between the demands of Christian morality and the demands of the state in light of the function of the state as an organization for punishment. There is an unbridgeable gap between the two demands because of the sharp divergence between love, which renders good for evil, and punishment, which rewards evil for evil for the ultimate good of the evil-doer. Can the Christian give his consent to the taking of the life of another as punishment? And can the Christian serve the state as an agent of punishment during the crisis of a war? These imponderables force upon the Christian two "ethics of distress," as Ricoeur calls them. "The one implies murder, to assure that the State survives and with it the magistrate; the other implies treason by virtue of its need to bear witness."¹¹

Ricoeur argues that the Christian cannot remain idle in the face of social crisis, but accepting his Christian commitment for what it is, he must attempt to infuse into society a spirit of conciliation. "One of the tasks of a Christian," Ricoeur says, "is to orient himself to the trends of his time, to understand as much as he can the great forces that are at work in it, and to discern the forces to which he

¹⁰Ricoeur, "Ye are the Salt of the Earth," p. 274.

¹¹Ricoeur, The State and Coercion, p. 16.

can apply, into which he can insert, his message of reconciliation and peace."¹² In view of this, the term "Christian politician" can only refer to a man who acts as a politician in full awareness of his Christian commitment and also of the conflict between his Christian faith and the demands of political action.

The same holds of a "Christian philosopher." The ideal of a philosophy without presuppositions is an illusion; the philosopher must admit his cultural contingency and seek to clarify his own point of view. To refuse this is to condemn philosophy to silence.¹³ There is no presuppositionless point of view. There is no Archimedian point. "It is a great illusion," Ricoeur says, "to believe that one would be able to act as a pure spectator, without weight, memory, perspective, and to look at everything with an equal compassionate feeling."¹⁴ In his own particular case, Ricoeur acknowledges that his "cultural memory" is tempered by the traditions of both Jerusalem and Athens. But his philosophy is neither an attempt to justify a specifically Christian point of view on philosophic grounds nor an attempt to develop a

¹²Paul Ricoeur, "French Protestantism Today," The Christian Century, 72 (1955), 1238.

¹³Paul Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, Vol. II part 2 of Philosophie de la Volonté (Paris: Aubier, 1960), p. 30.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 285. "C'est une grande illusion de croire que l'on pourrait se faire pur spectateur, sans poids, sans memoire, sans perspective, et tout regarder avec un egale sympathie."

philosophy without presuppositions. Rather, he proceeds in his speculative inquiry in full awareness of his own presuppositions, but with the end in mind of testing them and finally verifying them (if possible) by the proof of their capacity to shed light on the human situation.

II. HUSSERLIAN PHENOMENOLOGY

In denying that there is a point of departure for philosophy that is without presuppositions, Ricoeur is in agreement with Husserl, who recognized that philosophy is not a deductive system based on an apodictically certain first principle. Husserl's insight was that the gateway to philosophical analysis is not to doubt one's presuppositions (as Descartes tried to do), nor to rid oneself of them, but to suspend them--the famous phenomenological epoché.

Although Ricoeur is doubtless the best authority on Husserl in France, and is himself a leading French phenomenologist, 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 uses the term, he replied that he did not want to presume on the authority the word implied; besides, he did not know whether he could be orthodox enough to call his work phenomenological. What I took this to mean was that because of the significant differences between his methodology and the phenomenology of Husserl, to label his method phenomenological could be misleading.

Ricoeur argues that phenomenology is characterized

less by doctrine than by method, a method capable of many more possible variations than Husserl exploited.¹⁵ Ricoeur is well qualified to comment on Husserl, for in addition to extensive work on the Husserl archives at Louvain, he presented a translation of and commentary on Husserl's Ideen I to the Faculty of Letters of the University of Paris in April, 1950, as a complementary thesis for the Doctorat ès Lettres.¹⁶ He has also written many articles on Husserl, including an analysis of the difficult Ideen II.¹⁷

Pointing to Husserl's relation to Kant, Hume, and Descartes, Ricoeur insists, on the one hand, that Husserl's method became too idealistic because of his neo-Kantian reading of Descartes and, on the other hand, that Husserl needs to be corrected in his method by the Kantian sense for limit. Husserl's relation to Hume can be seen in his preoccupation with the "primary" and "given," and his relation to Descartes is evident from his adaptation of Cartesian doubt and the Cartesian cogito as integral to his philosophic method. Since Husserl raised the investigation of phenomena to the level of a science by means of the famous "reduction,"

¹⁵Paul Ricoeur, Appendix to E. Bréhier: Histoire de la philosophie allemande. Third edition (Paris: Vrin, 1954), p. 184. Hereafter cited as "Appendix to Bréhier."

¹⁶Paul Ricoeur. (trans.) E. Husserl: Idées directrices pour une Phénoménologie. (Paris: Gallimard, 1950).

¹⁷Paul Ricoeur, "Analyses et problèmes dans Ideen II de Husserl," Revue de métaphysique et de morale, 56 (1951), 357-94; 57 (1952), 1-16. Hereafter cited as "Analyses et problèmes dans Ideen II."

it is necessary to look to Husserl as the "knot" (noeud) of phenomenology even though he has not exhausted its possibilities.¹⁸ The major shortcoming in Husserl's philosophy, according to Ricoeur, is his failure to recognize the importance of limiting concepts. Ricoeur notes, "the glory of Kantianism is to have known how to coordinate the investigation of the appearance with the limiting function of the in-itself. . .". He then adds, "Husserl does phenomenology. But Kant limits and grounds it."¹⁹

Ricoeur accepts the phenomenological reduction as essential to phenomenology, arguing that to dispense with it would be to transform phenomenology into something totally different. But he rejects the idealistic interpretation of Husserl's method that places phenomenology on the level of the neo-Kantianism of the beginning of the century.²⁰ The proper function of the reduction is to allow a "reconquest of the total rapport of the Ego with its world. Stated positively, the 'reduction' becomes the 'constitution' of the world for and in the lived-experience of consciousness."²¹

¹⁸Ricoeur, "Appendix to Bréhier," pp. 183-84.

¹⁹Paul Ricoeur, "Kant et Husserl," Kant-Studien, 46 (1954-1955), 67. "la gloire du kantianism est d'avoir su coordonner l'investigation de l'apparaître à la fonction limite de l'en soi . . . Husserl fait phénoménologie. Mais Kant la limite et la fonde."

²⁰Ricoeur, "Appendix to Bréhier," p. 185.

²¹Ricoeur, "Kant et Husserl," p. 45. "reconquête du rapport total de l'Ego à son monde. En style positif, la 'réduction' devient la 'constitution' du monde pour et dans le vécu de conscience."

But is it possible to accept the phenomenological reduction while at the same time rejecting the idealism of Husserl's later writings--particularly that of the Cartesian Meditations? Ricoeur thinks it is, providing that a distinction is made between Husserl's method and his own idealistic interpretation of that method. Ricoeur argues that the reduction was Husserl's answer to the crisis of skepticism, which he resolved by distinguishing the "in-itself" of the object from its pure appearance. The phenomenological epoché suspended judgment as to the "in-itself" and reduced the object to its appearance. But does the reduction of the object to its appearance exhaust all that can be said of its being? Ricoeur argues that Husserl never answered this question.²² Furthermore, the tendency in the later Husserl is to shift the emphasis from the appearance of the object to its ontological validity in consciousness. This observation cannot be underestimated for an understanding of Ricoeur's attitude toward Husserl.

The Cartesian Meditations are the most radical expression of this new idealism for which the world is not only "for me," but derives "from me" all its ontological validity. The world becomes world-perceived-in-reflective-life; constitution becomes a gigantic enterprise of the progressive composition of meaning, the world remaining without an ontological ground.²³

²²Ibid., p. 46.

²³Ricoeur, "Appendix to Bréhier," p. 193. Les Méditations cartésiennes sont l'expression la plus radicale de ce nouvel idéalisme pour qui le monde est non seulement "pour moi", mais tire "de moi" toute sa validité ontologique. Le

For this reason, phenomenology must return to Kant. Husserl, unlike Kant, was unconcerned with ontology. Ricoeur notes, "Kant was anxious not to be locked up in the phenomenon; Husserl was anxious not to be led astray by unaccomplished thoughts. His problem is no longer the ontological foundation but the authenticity of lived-experience."²⁴ In rejecting the naive positing of beings in the natural attitude, Husserl also rejected the problem of the ontological ground of these beings. What is missing in Husserl is the intermingling of the two meanings of objectivity found in Kant--"an objectivity constituted in us and an objectivity which is the ground of the phenomenon."²⁵

The epoché also places the cogito in an ambiguous position, for in spite of Husserl's contention that he was only radicalizing Descartes, Ricoeur argues that there is a decisive difference between the Cartesian cogito and Husserl's transcendental Ego. The Cartesian cogito required the existence of God in order to arrive at the objectivity of the

monde devient "monde-perçu-dans-la-vie-réflexive"; la constitution devient une gigantesque entreprise de composition progressive de la signification monde sans reste ontologique.

²⁴Ricoeur, "Kant et Husserl," p. 59. "Kant était soucieux de ne pas se laisser enfermer dans la phénomène; Husserl est soucieux de ne pas se laisser abuser par des pensées non effectuées. Son problème n'est plus de fondation ontologique, mais d'authenticité du vécu."

²⁵Ibid., p. 58. "un objectivité constituée 'en' nous et une objectivité fondatrice 'du' phénomène."

external world; Descartes needed an external absolute to solve his epistemological problems--a ploy that naturally led to Malebranche. Husserl had no need for such an absolute. He wrote in the first part of the Cartesian Meditations:

The epoché can also be said to be the radical and universal method by which I apprehend myself purely: as Ego, and with my own pure conscious life, in and by which the entire Objective world exists for me and is precisely as it is for me. Anything belonging to the world, any spatiotemporal being, exists for me--that is to say, is accepted by me--in that I experience it, perceive it, remember it, think of it somehow, judge about it, value it, desire it, or the like.²⁶

Husserl then added, "Descartes, as we know, indicated all that by the name cogito."²⁷

Ricoeur observes that Husserl was able to read the transcendental subject into the Cartesian cogito only because he did not really understand Descartes. Husserl's interpretation of Descartes ignores the polarity between the cogito, "which reabsorbs in itself all objectivity as its meaning" (such as physics and mathematics) and God "on which all beings depend in virtue of being created."²⁸ This polarity is not inviolate; one can certainly deny this "philosophie à deux foyers," the cogito and God, but to do so is not to radicalize

²⁶Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, translated by Dorian Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 21.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Paul Ricoeur, "Étude sur les 'Méditations cartésiennes' de Husserl," Revue philosophique de Louvain, LII (1954), 76. "qui résorbe en soi toute l'objectivité comme son sens" . . . "dont tout être dépend à titre de créature."

Descartes but to turn Cartesianism into a different kind of philosophy. Ricoeur suggests that the best introduction to the meaning of Husserl's Cartesian Meditations is this destruction of the original meaning of Cartesianism in which the cogito itself is a being situated between Being and nothingness. Since the idea of God is clear and distinct for Descartes, the idea of God has more being than I who think it, thus displacing the center of gravity from subjectivity toward the infinite Being.²⁹

Ricoeur argues that in the face of these difficulties, Husserl is condemned to an egology without an ontology. "An egology, that is, a Cogito without res cogitans, a Cogito without the absolute measure of the idea of the infinite, without this peculiar cogitatum would be the mark of quite a different grounding subjectivity."³⁰ Husserl's avoidance of this question of ontology gives rise to problems in his interpretation of history. If all beings, including that of history and that of other intentional subjects, are based in the cogito, what meaning can history have? And what is the place of the Ego itself in the grand design of a history which includes others?

²⁹ Ibid., p. 77.

³⁰ Ibid. "Une égologie, c'est-à-dire un Cogito sans res cogitans, un Cogito sans la mesure absolue de l'idée d'infini, sans ce cogitatum singulier qui serait la marque sur lui d'une toute autre subjectivité fondatrice."

Every theory of phenomenological constitution--whether it be a question of things, of animated beings, of persons, etc.--places us face to face with this paradox of an immanence which is exploding toward transcendence. This paradox culminates in the apperception of others since, in this case, the intentional object is a subject like me.³¹

When Husserl attempted a phenomenological analysis of body in Ideen II, he was again faced with this difficult problem of intersubjectivity, which he explored further in the fifth Cartesian Meditation. Although Husserl's concern in the latter is to resolve the problem on the plane of idealistic interpretation so as to avoid solipsism, in Ideen II he does not use the knowledge of others to resolve the philosophical problem of their "objectivity" but the much more limited problem of the constitution of the "Psychic."³²

Problems of ontology thus face Husserl in three places: in the constitution of the world, in the arising of the cogito, and in the constitution of others.

Ricoeur avoids this impasse in two ways. The first is by recognizing that the reduction, although applicable to

³¹Paul Ricoeur, "Husserl et le sens de l'histoire," Revue de métaphysique et de morale, 54 (1949), 314. Toute la théorie de la constitution phénoménologique--qu'il s'agisse des choses, des êtres animés, des personnes, etc.--nous met en face de ce paradoxe d'une immanence qui est un éclatement vers une transcendence. Ce paradoxe culmine dans l'apperception d'autrui, puisque cette fois l'objet intentionnel est un sujet comme moi;

³²Ricoeur, "Analyses et problèmes dans Ideen II," p. 39. Ricoeur chooses the term "Psychic" in preference to "soul" because Husserl's concern in the second part of Ideen II is with the soul as a level of reality, not as a metaphysical principle.

"things" so as to allow the world to arise in consciousness, cannot be applied to other selves; other intentional subjects can only be constituted through respect (in the Kantian sense).

Without the positing of the correlative reality of respect, phenomenology fails to pass from the problem of the constitution of the "thing" to that of the constitution of the person. Phenomenology originates in the decision to reduce the in-itself to phenomenon, the absolute positing of something to its appearance. This decision--the phenomenological reduction--is liberating when it is a question of things. The reduction of their being to their appearance is a positive gain which gives rise to the transcendental dimension of the subject. But this decision is stupifying when it is a question of persons. The person is discovered in the inverse movement which places the appearance back within Being.³³

The second way Ricoeur avoids Husserl's egology without ontology is by going beyond the limits of pure (that is, eidetic) description. Husserl's method is significant when applied to representations, but the method must be changed when applied to objects that are not mere representations. For an analysis of the will, which is only a specific aspect of the

³³Paul Ricoeur, "Sympathie et respect. Phénoménologie et éthique de la seconde personne," Revue de métaphysique et de morale, 59 (1954), 396-97. Sans la position de réalité correlative du respect, la phénoménologie échoue à passer du problème de la constitution de la "chose" à celui de la constitution de la personne. La phénoménologie procède de la décision de réduire l'en soi au phénomène, la position absolue de quelque chose à son apparaître; cette décision--la réduction phénoménologique--est libérante lorsqu'il s'agit des choses; la réduction de leur être à leur apparaître est une conquête positive qui fait surgir la dimension transcendente du sujet. Mais cette décision est mortifiante lorsqu'il s'agit des personnes. La personne est reconnue dans la mouvement inverse qui replace l'apparaître dans l'être.

subjective cogito, Ricoeur wants to go beyond Husserl's merely transcendental phenomenology to, as he puts it, an ontological phenomenology.³⁴ It is this concern for the ontological ground of subjectivity that reveals Ricoeur's kinship with existential philosophy.

III. EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

To refer to existentialism as a unique philosophy, or even as a unique current in contemporary philosophy, would be misleading. Ricoeur prefers to speak of existentialisms, for there are many and varied existential systems. Although it is difficult to find the common denominator among such diverse thinkers as Heidegger, Marcel, Jaspers, and Sartre, Ricoeur suggests that "existential" is that way of doing philosophy which engages in a speculative analysis of the meaning of being human.³⁵

Ricoeur prefers the label "existential phenomenology," since--whatever their differences--existentialisms are phenomenological in their methodology. These can be divided into at least three "cycles": (1) The investigations of

³⁴Paul Ricoeur, "Méthodes et tâches d'une phénoménologie de la volonté," Problèmes actuels de la Phénoménologie. ed. H. L. Van Breda. (Bruges-Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), pp. 133-34.

³⁵Paul Ricoeur, "Note sur l'Existentialisme et la Foi Chrétienne," La Revue de l'Evangelisation, 6 (1951), 143-44. Also see his article, "Que signifie 'humanisme'?" Comprendre, Revue de la société européenne de culture, 15 (March, 1956), 84-92.

Husserl who, in his later work, gradually drifted from a purely transcendental philosophy to the investigation of the many aspects of man's insertion in the world; (2) the work of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche (and even of Hegel and of Marx, in whom one finds a "phenomenology of economic existence"); and (3) the later phenomenologists who combine Husserlian methodology with the existential concern derived from post-Hegelian philosophy. It is particularly this third cycle of philosophy that Ricoeur calls "existential phenomenology," noting that it has been developed predominately by French philosophers.³⁶ Ricoeur would doubtless place his own work in this third category.

Existential phenomenology is not so much a doctrine as a method or way of doing philosophy. In its encounter with classical philosophy, and even with Christian philosophy, its principal thrust has been to "renew" philosophy's concern by "rediscovering the cycle of questions by which it inquires and with which it is concerned."³⁷ But if the many existential philosophies share a common concern and method, why are they different? Ricoeur suggests it is because of different religious attitudes;³⁸ some are atheistic, others theistic, and still others, agnostic. Despite tremendous diversity,

³⁶Paul Ricoeur, "Phénoménologie existentielle, "Encyclopédie française, XIX Philosophie et religion (Paris: Larousse: pp. 19.10.8-9.

³⁷Paul Ricoeur, "Le renouvellement du problème de la philosophie chrétienne par les philosophies de l'existence," Le problème de la philosophie chrétienne (Les Problèmes de la

existentialisms in general share at least three other common characteristics: (1) an emphasis on the power of choice as that which distinguishes human reality from the reality of things; (2) an emphasis on the theme of man incarnated in a body and in history, man "in situation"; and (3) the theme of communication with others, the category of the "with" (avec).³⁹

If Ricoeur's published writings are any indication of his indebtedness to existential philosophers, Jaspers and Marcel stand out clearly. Ricoeur's first book length publication was a study, in collaboration with Mikel Dufrenne, of the philosophy of Karl Jaspers. Jaspers' approval of the book is indicated by a preface he wrote to the volume in which he stated, "Messrs. Dufrenne and Ricoeur have encompassed and attained the principles and developments of my philosophy with remarkable exactness."⁴⁰ In 1947, even prior to the appearance of the first volume of Philosophie de la volonté, Ricoeur published a book on Marcel and Jaspers which

Pensée Chrétienne), Vol. 4 (Paris: University of Paris Press, 1949), p. 44. "reinventant le cycle de questions par lesquelles elle s'interroge et se soucie."

³⁸Ibid., p. 51.

³⁹Ricoeur, "Note sur l'Existentialisme et la Foi Chrétienne," pp. 143-48. Also, "Phénoménologie existentielle," 19.10.11-12.

⁴⁰Paul Ricoeur and Mikel Dufrenne, Karl Jaspers et la philosophie de l'existence, (Paris: Seuil, 1947), p. 7. "MM. Dufrenne et Ricoeur ont cerné et atteint avec une exactitude remarquable les principes et les développements de ma philosophie."

bore as subtitle, "Philosophie du mystère et philosophie du paradoxe." Although Ricoeur masterfully traced out the themes common to the two philosophers, with equal emphasis on their differences, he concluded that one cannot properly speak of one "influencing" the other but only of an encounter (rencontre) of the two.⁴¹

Ricoeur's own writings do not reveal whether he is more indebted to Jaspers or to Marcel, and the opinion of commentators is divided. Henry Duméry insists that Jaspers' influence predominates.⁴² Spiegelberg, on the other hand, says that Ricoeur's preference is for Marcel.⁴³ Perhaps it is best to say of Ricoeur what he said of Marcel and Jaspers: he has encountered their thought, agreeing in some points and disagreeing in others.

Ricoeur finds in Jaspers a strange mixture of a rational faith stemming from Kant, a rational mystique originating in neo-Platonism, and a sense for paradox (such as the infinite and finite, eternity and the instant, peace and drama, choice and destiny) reminiscent of Kierkegaard. Although Ricoeur recognizes the considerable differences be-

⁴¹Paul Ricoeur, Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers (Paris: Temps Présent, 1947), p. 436.

⁴²Henry Duméry, "Un philosophe de la volonté: Paul Ricoeur," Regards sur la philosophie contemporaine (Paris-Tournai: Casterman, 1956), p. 150.

⁴³Spiegelberg, op. cit., p. 570.

tween Kant and Jaspers, he sees in the three stages of Jaspers' thought (world, existence, transcendence) a repetition of the three Kantian transcendental ideas (world, soul, God).⁴⁴ Ricoeur notes that Jaspers' manner of philosophizing is resurrected from the death of philosophy pronounced by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, for he does not begin with an inquiry into the nature of Being but with an inquiry into the specific situation in which the subject finds himself in the world.⁴⁵ The primary philosophical task is that of the illumination of the meaning of existence (Existenzerhellung) in a movement toward transcendence. Yet, existence is revealed as real only in freedom: "Freiheit ist immer noch Sein der Existenz. . .".⁴⁶ And yet there being no real sense of reconciliation in Jaspers, he is left with no sense of liberation. The movement from Dasein to Existenz to Transcendence is finally doomed to failure and checkmate in the nothingness of Transcendence. For this reason Ricoeur charges that "Transcendence is less the deliverer than the reality which extinguishes possibility."⁴⁷

⁴⁴Ricoeur, "Appendix to Bréhier," pp. 230 et seqq.

⁴⁵Ricoeur, Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, p. 228.

⁴⁶Karl Jaspers, Philosophie (Berlin-Göttingen-Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1956), II, p. 177.

⁴⁷Paul Ricoeur, "The Relation of Jaspers' Philosophy to Religion," The Philosophy of Karl Jaspers, ed. P. A. Schilpp (New York: Tudor, 1957), pp. 637-38.

This gives rise to the strong sense of paradox in Jaspers. In human existence there are contradictions (antinomies) which cannot be resolved, illustrated by what Jasper calls "the law of the day and the passion of the night." The horizon of all knowledge is the "encompassing" (Umgreifende), which can appear only through "ciphers." The ultimate end of the polarity in existence is shipwreck, the supreme cipher which gives meaning to all other ciphers. The closest analogue to redemption in Jaspers' philosophy is the "reading of the ciphers." This is because there is no inner drama of grace and election, as in Christian theology, but only the discovery of the metaphysical dimension of the world.⁴⁸ Since man is doomed to shipwreck, there can at best be only a dramatic sense of the tragic. Ricoeur observes: "But when the doctrine of ciphers and the theory of inevitable failure are brought together, one may ask whether Jaspers has not simply juxtaposed a philosophy of unreconciled tragedy and a lyric philosophy which tends toward a disquieting aestheticism."⁴⁹

In stressing that existence is inevitably broken beyond reconciliation, Jaspers has confused guilt with finitude. "Thus, in contrast to the whole Christian tradition, which conceives guilt only as fall . . . Jaspers derives guilt from the primitive, unfathomable, unchosen constitution

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 638.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 638.

of existence."⁵⁰ Christian philosophy, on the other hand, does not confuse guilt with the creatureliness of the creature since finitude is an ontological notion, guilt an ethical notion. Ricoeur argues that this confusion of guilt and finitude gives rise to many of the paradoxes and unresolved oppositions in Jaspers' thought.

A considerable number of characteristics of the philosophy of Jaspers are clarified if we notice this substitution of inevitable guilt for Christian sin. From this guilt without forgiveness one can doubtless understand the whole orientation of the philosophy of Jaspers toward fountaining rather than toward "rebirth." It is most striking that the function of the ultimate situation is to make Existenz disappear as a final ground, as a pretension to Being.⁵¹

Jaspers' philosophy culminates in a sense of failure. For this reason Ricoeur accuses Jaspers of espousing a metaphysics without an ontology; that is, his philosophy leads from Dasein to Existence to Transcendence where it is doomed to nothingness.⁵² Jaspers intermingles tragic and lyric to produce a sort of poetic vision of the world. "Lyric vision and tragic tension engender an ultimate antinomy that ultimately prevents metaphysics from being transformed into ontology."⁵³

In spite of his drastic rejection of Jaspers, Ricoeur

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 632.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 633.

⁵²Ricoeur, "Appendix to Bréhier," pp. 231-32.

⁵³Ibid., p. 238. "Vision lyrique et tension tragique engendrent une ultime antinomie qui empêche un dernière fois

accepts his notion of "ciphers." Das Umgreifende, the encompassing, is revealed only in ciphers. It seems to me that Ricoeur is taking a similar position when he states that all symbols are manifestations of the Sacred and "the metaphysical imagination resides in symbols."⁵⁴

Ricoeur turns to Gabriel Marcel in hope of finding an ontological ground for reconciliation. He states that it was Marcel who provided the "decisive philosophical shock" to his own thought.⁵⁵ One direct influence of Marcel upon Ricoeur is the sense of the mystery of bodily existence and the double orientation of incarnation. On the one hand, incarnation provides a "density" and irreducible "opacity" to all objective schemes. On the other hand, it points to the individual's insertion in the Sacred, in Being.⁵⁶ Incarnation forms a focal point of much of Ricoeur's thought, and the concept of the "owned-body" (corps propre) is central to his analysis of will.

Ricoeur's criticism of Marcel is that in his concern for the mystery of Being, Marcel tends to become too critical

la métaphysique de se convertir en ontologie."

⁵⁴Ricoeur, La symbolique du mal, p. 260. "l'imagination métaphysique réside dans les symboles;".

⁵⁵Ricoeur, Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, p. 13.

⁵⁶Paul Ricoeur, "L'homme et son mystère," Le mystère, (Semaine des Intellectuels Catholiques, 1959), (Paris: Horay, 1960), p. 119. Ricoeur is also struck by the fact that man's expressions of his awareness of insertion in the Sacred are always expressed in symbolic language. Ibid., p. 120.

of intellectualism; lurking in the shadows, Ricoeur contends, is the death of speculative thought.⁵⁷ To correct this, Ricoeur wants to combine Husserl's philosophical method with Marcel's concern for the personal and the transcendent. He notes, "Husserl's works can be of great help in enlarging the somewhat narrow conception of intelligence that Marcel forcefully criticizes."⁵⁸ By directing his attention to the subject instead of to the object, by focusing on problems of existence instead of problems of objectivity, Marcel has introduced into his philosophy a depth of thought that much of classical philosophy lacks; but Marcel lacks a rigorous methodology productive of philosophical clarity.⁵⁹ One could say that Ricoeur's intention is to recast the classical problems of philosophy into the modes of thought of existentialism, but for this to be meaningful, existential epistemology must become more rigorous.

An ontological phenomenology is thus faced with two tasks. The first is that of an empirical study of lived-experience by means of an analysis of the will--will being understood as the dynamic aspects of thought. This kind of

⁵⁷Ricoeur, Gabriel Marcel et Karl Jaspers, p. 120.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 369. "Les travaux de Husserl peuvent être d'un grand secours pour élargir la conception un peu étroite de l'intelligence que G. Marcel critique avec force."

⁵⁹Don Ihde, in his doctoral thesis, "Paul Ricoeur's Phenomenological Methodology and Philosophical Anthropology," shows this twofold demand of Ricoeur for rigorous clarity and depth.

analysis must make use of the latest findings of the empirical sciences to "diagnose" (a technical term in Ricoeur) the subjective states of the cogito. The second task is that of taking account of the existential sense of brokenness, Ricoeur calls it the "fault" (la faute), and inquiring as to the possibility of human fallibility. Since man's confession of his brokenness is always couched in symbolic language, phenomenological ontology must face the problem of interpreting the symbols of evil so they can be incorporated into philosophic thought--if this is indeed possible. Hopefully, this analysis will point to a reconciliation in ontology.

In summing up his task, Ricoeur says that he wants to place himself at the intersection of two demands: "that of thought nourished by the mystery of my body, and that of thought concerned with distinctions inherited from Husserl's method of description."⁶⁰ He concludes that the only meaningful criterion of whether this is a legitimate intention is the unfolding of the project itself.

⁶⁰Ricoeur, La volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 18.
 "celle d'une pensée alimentée au mystère de mon corps, celle d'une pensée soucieuse des distinctions héritées de la méthode husserlienne de description."

CHAPTER III

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE WILL

Ricoeur's goal is to achieve what he calls an "ontological phenomenology," and this is possible only by means of an analysis of the affective and volitional aspects of consciousness. But how is such an analysis possible? Ricoeur considers two alternatives. The one is the method of empirical psychology; the other is Husserl's method of intentional analysis. In order to clarify his own approach to the problem, Ricoeur considers both methods, criticizes their imperfections, and from them derives his own approach which incorporates the essential insights of each.

I. QUESTIONS OF METHOD

Ricoeur argues that philosophy should seek the "total reconquest of the cogito." By this he means that an analysis of volition must be concerned with all the complexities of bodily existence. Empirical psychology, far from being concerned with the total significance of incarnate existence, tends to treat the body as an object of scientific observation while disregarding the other aspects of lived-experience. It reduces acts (with their intentionality and their reference to an ego) to facts. In reducing the involuntary to a species of empirical fact, psychology also causes the voluntary aspects of the cogito to disappear: "the 'I will,' as free initiative, is annulled, for it has no empirical significance

except as a certain style of behavior which is only a complication of simple conduct issuing from the empirical objectification of the involuntary."¹ In a similar way, empirical psychology analyzes subjectivity in terms analogous to natural science; there are psychological "sensations" just as there are physical "atoms." But this empirical and introspective investigation of the cogito runs counter to lived-experience. It does not account for the fullness of consciousness, nor does it signify man in his totality.

In contrast to the methods of empirical psychology, Ricoeur insists upon the primacy of the owned body (corps propre) which is "someone's body, the body of a subject, my body and your body."² By observing the acts of others, I am able to diagnose the intentionality of these acts and their subjective origin. In this sense it is correct to say that subjectivity is both external and internal. Through empathy (Einfühlung) I have a rapport with others that can neither be reduced to an empirical event in the world nor to an aspect of my apperception of my own body. This is the discovery of body in the second person, the acknowledgement of the body of the other as an organ and nature of a person. The problems of

¹Paul Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, Vol. I of Philosophie de la Volonté (Paris: Aubier, 1950), p. 12 "le 'je veux', comme initiative libre, est annulé, car il n'a pas signification empirique, sinon comme un certain style de comportement qui n'est qu'une complication des conduites simples issues de l'objectivation empirique de l'involontaire."

²Ibid., p. 14. "Le corps propre est le corps de quelqu'un, le corps d'un sujet, mon corps et ton corps."

intersubjectivity are thus partially overcome by refusing to treat body only as an object, for my own consciousness is transformed through repeated consciousness of others.

Ricoeur notes, "I treat myself as a you which, in its external appearance, is an expression for others. Then, to recognize myself is to anticipate my expression for a you."³

Is this to say that empirical facts of biology and psychology have no significance for the cogito? Not at all, for the involuntary is better known empirically (that is, in its role as natural event) than in any other way. But a dialectic is needed between pure description and empirical description or, in other words, between the owned body and the body-object.

It is easy to fall back into a dualism at this point and consider the body twice, first as subject and then as object. This ploy, however, only substitutes a dualism of points of view for the cartesian dualism of substances. Yet, there must be some relation between the owned body (whether it be mine or yours) and the body as object among other objects of science since it is the same body. This relation is not one of coincidence but one of diagnosis. That is, "every moment of the cogito can be the indication of a moment of the body-object."⁴ The body-object, in turn, serves as an

³Ibid. "je me traite moi-même comme un toi qui dans son apparence externe est expression pour autrui; dès lors, me reconnaître moi-même, c'est anticiper mon expression pour un toi."

⁴Ibid., p. 16. "tout moment du Cogito peut être l'indication d'un moment du corps-objet."

index of subjective states. From bodily acts themselves it is possible to diagnose subjective states with their intentionality and their reflexive reference to an ego. "By this diagnostic relation, phenomenology, in a given epoch, participates in the work of psychological science and elaborates 'essences' of lived-experience in tension with the notions of the sciences of man."⁵

It might seem that a description of this kind could be carried out so as to avoid the sense of the mystery of incarnation that Ricoeur has previously evoked. Such is not the case, Ricoeur argues, for pure description is unable to deal adequately with the actual confusion and brokenness of bodily life. The usual tendency in reflection is for the cogito to become self sufficient, or to use Ricoeur's words, the cogito tends "to make a circle with itself."⁶ To move from the cogito, with its illusions of self-sufficiency, to the owned body requires a different approach: the self must renounce its pretension to self sufficiency and I must "participate actively in my incarnation as mystery. I must

⁵Paul Ricoeur, "Méthodes et tâches d'une phénoménologie de la volonté," Problèmes actuels de la Phénoménologie, ed. H.L. Van Breda (Bruges-Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1952), p. 122. Hereafter cited as "Méthodes et tâches." "Par cette relation de diagnostic, la phénoménologie, à une époque donnée, participe au travail de la science psychologique et élabore ses 'essences' du vécu en tension avec les notions des sciences de l'homme."

⁶Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, p.17.

pass from objectivity to existence."⁷

Ricoeur insists that a total reconquest of the cogito involves more than an analysis of states of consciousness, for the cogito can only be comprehended with reference to its body. On this point Ricoeur freely admits that he has gone beyond Husserl.

The cogito is the very intuition of the soul joined to body, in turn suffering from the fact of the body and ruling over it. Doubtless we are going further than Husserl, at least in his second period which is that of the Ideas. His last philosophy and his notion of the Lebenswelt encourages us to extend intentionality beyond the theoretic representation and even the practical (the project) and to include in consciousness its own relation to body. . . . Phenomenology ought to go beyond an unduly clear eidetic so as to elaborate the "index" of the mystery of incarnation.⁸

Ricoeur's point is that the subjective states of the cogito can be diagnosed from bodily states, but if one remains only on the level of body-as-object in the world, he will fall prey to the naturalistic attitude. One must pass from the natural attitude to the phenomenological attitude since it is only in the latter that the owned body derives its full mean-

⁷Ibid., p. 18. "participe activement à mon incarnation comme mystère. Je dois passer de l'objectivité à l'existence."

⁸Ibid., p. 204. Le Cogito est l'intuition même de l'âme jointe au corps, tour à tour pâtissant du fait du corps et régnant sur lui. Sans doute allons-nous ainsi plus loin que Husserl lui-même, du moins dans sa deuxième période qui est celle des Ideen; sa dernière philosophie et sa notion de Lebenswelt nous encouragent à étendre l'intentionnalité au delà de la représentation théorique et même pratique (celle du projet) et à inclure dans la conscience sa propre liaison au corps. . . . La phénoménologie doit dépasser une eidétique trop claire, jusqu'à élaborer des "index" du mystère de l'incarnation.

ing.

A meaningful analysis of the cogito must be directed toward a twofold goal: (1) An attempt to recapture the depth of thought nourished by reflection on the mystery of bodily existence, and (2) a rigorous clarity achieved by means of the phenomenological method of description. Traditional psychology is incapable of satisfying these demands, for it tends to treat the cogito as a species of empirical fact. Husserlian descriptive analysis, on the other hand, can satisfy the demand for rigorous clarity, but it loses the depth and mystery of bodily existence. Husserl's primary concern was with perception and the constitution of objects of knowledge. Even though he did not extend his method of analysis to the volitional structures of consciousness, he indicated throughout the Ideas that the problem of the will could be renewed by an extension of intentional analysis to questions of volition.⁹ But an extension of Husserl's method is legitimate only if pure description of the will can verify the universality of intentional analysis (in particular the noema/noesis distinction). Furthermore, the applicability of Husserl's method to problems of volition depends on whether the noetic analysis of perception, imagination, judgment, etc. (on the level of "representation," Vorstellung) is applicable to the affective and practical aspects of con-

⁹Ricoeur, "Méthodes et tâches," p. 113.

sciousness.¹⁰

The problem of bodily existence was not acute for Husserl since the affective and volitional aspects of consciousness were based on the representation. Ricoeur notes, "This primacy of objectifying acts reveals, it seems, a logicist prejudice which direct reflection on practical life does not verify."¹¹ The result is a loss of Being, which appears on the side of the object as a loss of presence and on the side of the subject as an "ideal de-incarnation."¹² Ricoeur argues this is the reason Husserl never takes seriously the question of bodily existence--even in the fifth Cartesian Meditation. For Ricoeur, "My body is neither constituted in the sense of objectivity nor constituting in the sense of the transcendental subject. It avoids both contraries. It is I existing."¹³ What is lacking in Husserl is a transformation from thought which only poses notions before the self to thought which participates in the mystery of existence.

This point is capital for a philosophy of the will, for without some intuition of the body I face the prospect of

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid., p. 124. "Ce primat des actes objectivants relève, semble-t-il, d'un préjugé logiciste que ne vérifie pas la réflexion directe sur la vie pratique."

¹²Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 19.

¹³Ibid. "Mon corps n'est ni constitué au sens de l'objectivité, ni constituant au sens du sujet transcendantal; il échappe à ce couple de contraires. Il est moi existant."

losing the existence of the world.

This intuition can be attained in neither of the "attitudes" proposed by Husserl. The transcendental "attitude" instituted by the transcendental reduction and the natural attitude have in common the same evacuation of presence in some sort of self affirmation of my corporeal existence. If I pay more attention to this first presence, which does not arise from and is indistinguishable from my body, at the same stroke the existence of the world, which prolongs that of my body as its horizon, can no longer be suspended without grave injury to the cogito itself which, in losing the existence of the world, loses that of its body and finally its index of the first person.¹⁴

Ricoeur argues that Husserl's transcendental idealism results from his interpretation of the method of intentional analysis, not from the method itself. For this reason Ricoeur wants to distinguish between Husserl's method and Husserl's interpretation of that method, for he believes descriptive phenomenology can be wed to a reflection on the mystery of incarnation. The job of a philosopher is to clarify, and to this end a rigorous method of description must be employed. But at the same time, descriptive phenomenology should be used to lay bare the subjective experience of the cogito in its relation to the owned body. "In short, it is necessary to reintegrate

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 19-20 Cette intuition ne pouvait être atteinte dans aucune des "attitudes" proposées par Husserl. "L'attitude" transcendantale instituée par la réduction transcendantale et l'attitude naturelle ont en commun la même évacuation de la présence en quelque sorte auto-affirmante de mon existence corporelle. Si je prête plus d'attention à cette présence première, ingénérable et incaractérisable de mon corps, du même coup l'existence du monde qui prolonge celle de mon corps comme son horizon ne peut plus être suspendue sans une grave lésion du Cogito lui-même qui, en perdant l'existence du monde, perd celle de son corps et finalement son indice de première personne.

consciousness in the body and the body in consciousness."¹⁵
 The total reconquest of the cogito must be concerned with both the voluntary and the involuntary. This kind of analysis is a way of renewing the old philosophical problem of freedom and nature, but it avoids a dualistic interpretation by focusing attention on the owned body.

Empirical psychology emphasizes the involuntary at the expense of the voluntary; Husserl's phenomenology emphasizes the voluntary at the expense of the involuntary. A phenomenology of the will must not be limited to representations but must concern itself with all the structures of consciousness. Ricoeur says, "Phenomenology is to go to the things themselves, respecting all the very complex aspects of consciousness and not simply working with the small number of notions which have been forged by Aristotelian analysis."¹⁶

The crux of Ricoeur's method is a description, in Husserlian style, of the intentionality of the will (the practical and affective structures of the cogito). These structures, in turn, are to be referred to empirical knowledge which serves to diagnose the correlative subjective states.

¹⁵Paul Ricoeur, "L'unité du volontaire et de l'involontaire comme idée-limite," Bulletin de la Société française de Philosophie 45 (1951), 5. Hereafter cited as "L'unité."
 "Bref, il faut réintégrer la conscience dans le corps et le corps dans la conscience."

¹⁶Ibid., p. 26. "La phénoménologie, c'est aller aux choses mêmes, respecter tous les aspects très complexes de la conscience et ne pas jouer simplement avec le petit nombre de notions qui ont été forgées par l'analyse aristotélicienne."

The articulation of these structures, however, only reveals the unity of the person with reference to the central mystery of incarnation. This effort to maintain a rigorous descriptive method and also to "participate in the mystery of existence" is to adopt the "internal rhythm of a drama."¹⁷ This is because there is no intelligibility proper to the involuntary as such. "Only the living relation of the voluntary and the involuntary is intelligible. It is only by this relation that description is also comprehension."¹⁸

The Abstraction of the Fault

The dialectic between the voluntary and the involuntary, or in more classical terms, between freedom and nature, can be clarified only by a method of abstraction since the volitional structures of the cogito are perverted by such passions as hate, jealousy, ambition. This is not to say that the emotions are perverted; the emotions are neutral and as such are open both to innocence and to passion. Man's existential situation is one in which he appears to be enslaved to his passions, passion here meaning a perverted emotion. This break between man's fundamental possibilities and the actuality of his situation is what Ricoeur calls the "fault" (la faute) in the geological sense of the term. If a

¹⁷Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 20

¹⁸Ricoeur, "Méthodes et tâches," p. 119. "Seul est intelligible le rapport vivant du volontaire et de l'involontaire; c'est par ce rapport que la description est aussi compréhension."

descriptive method is to be successful in attempting to analyze man's fundamental possibilities--in contrast to the actual confusion and brokenness of his existence--it is necessary to disregard the fault, to put parenthesis around moral evil.

This metaphor of "bracketing" recalls the famous Einklammerung of Husserl's transcendental reduction, but it is a fundamental error to confuse what Ricoeur means here with Husserl's transcendental epoché. The epoché is a methodological tool; in the transcendental reduction the natural thesis is "disconnected," "bracketed," or set "out of action." The purpose of this bracketing of the natural thesis of the world is not to disregard the world but to view it from another standpoint--as a bracketed judgment. Husserl is explicit on this point.

We put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint, we place in brackets whatever it includes respecting the nature of Being: this entire natural world therefore which is continually "there for us," "present to our hand," and will ever remain there, is a "fact-world" of which we continue to be conscious, even though it pleases us to put it in brackets.¹⁹

In contrast, Ricoeur's bracketing of moral evil is not for the purpose of viewing it from another standpoint. Rather, by bracketing the fault he intends to disregard it temporarily, to postpone consideration of it until he has completed his intentional analysis of the structures of the will.

¹⁹Edmund Husserl, Ideas, trans. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), pp. 99-100.

For the sake of clarity perhaps Ricoeur should have avoided the term "bracket" since this could lead to confusion. No misunderstanding need result, however, if one recognizes that bracketing the fault has nothing to do with the phenomenological epoché. One of Ricoeur's methodological presuppositions is that the will cannot be understood from the point of view of abnormal or deviant behavior. Rather, the will can be described only through an analysis of its basic structures, through a description of the synthesis of the voluntary and the involuntary. Abnormal or pathological behavior can then be understood as deviation from the will's essential structures. Ricoeur's point is that the fault, because it is an absurd break with the will's fundamental possibilities, can be understood only after the will's intentionality has been fully described.²⁰

It could be argued that such an abstraction is illegitimate because it brackets the most important aspect of human existence. Ricoeur answers that an analysis of the will's essential structures must temporarily disregard the fault since man's slavery to passion has no necessary relation to his fundamental possibilities. The principle of passion resides in a certain slavery of the self to itself, and because this slavery is self inflicted, it does not result from necessity. The slavery to passion opens up an infinite range

²⁰Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 9.

of possibilities which result in unhappiness, sorrow, suffering. This break with man's fundamental possibilities is not homogeneous with the other aspects of the affective and volitional aspects of consciousness. The fault, therefore, can only be conceived as rupture, accident, fall. In other words, "the fault is the absurd."²¹ Consequently, the deciphering of the passions demands a totally different method, a method that turns from an analysis of essential possibilities (pure description) to the actual brokenness of life. Ricoeur observes that

it is not the lost paradise of innocence that we pretend to describe, but structures which are fundamental possibilities offered both to innocence and to the fault, like the common keyboard of human nature on which mythical innocence and empirical guilt play in different ways.²²

Philosophical speculation is thus limited in two respects. First, it is limited by the mystery of incarnation and secondly, by the irrational fault present in the very heart of man. The fault is only possible for a free will, and if the will is totally free, guilty man is totally guilty. If the fault were not total, it would not be serious, for if man were not free to decide, to move, and to consent to necessity, he would cease to be man. This paradoxical cohabita-

²¹Ibid., p. 27. "La faute est l'absurde."

²²Ibid., p. 29. ce n'est pas le paradis perdu de l'innocence que nous prétendons décrire, mais des structures qui sont des possibilités fondamentales offertes à la fois à l'innocence et à la faute, comme le clavier commun d'une nature humaine sur lequel jouent de façon différente l'innocence mythique et la culpabilité empirique.

tion of freedom and the fault raises difficult questions which must eventually be resolved.

The Abstraction of Transcendence

If it is possible to bracket the fault, it is absolutely necessary to bracket Transcendence as well, for the two are inextricably joined. "The integral experience of the fault and its mythical counterpart, the imagination of innocence, are mutually interdependent on an affirmation of Transcendence. . . ."²³ When the fault is experienced in the presence of God, it is experienced as sin. This relation between the fault and Transcendence can be seen especially clearly in those myths of innocence, such as the Adam and Eve narrative, which are related to eschatological doctrines of the end of time when freedom attains its complete deliverance.

Transcendence is also the limit which breaks the self's pretensions to autonomy, for the self is a result of separation from Transcendence. In Ricoeur's words, "The ruse of the fault is to suggest the belief that participation of the will in a Being that is more fundamental will result in alienation . . . whereas the Self, taken in this special sense, is the 'I' uprooted and separated from Being. The

²³Ibid., p. 31. "L'expérience intégrale de la faute et sa contrepartie mythique, l'imagination de l'innocence, sont étroitement solidaires d'une affirmation de Transcendance. . . ."

Self is the alienated 'I'.²⁴ Transcendence is the ontological ground of subjectivity, and as such is closed to the descriptive method of eidetic analysis. What is needed is a sort of "poetic" of the will, since the relation of Transcendence to freedom is paradoxical.

What is accomplished by bracketing both the fault and Transcendence? Ricoeur's answer is that by bracketing both, "I can give all the depth to the experience of responsibility that it is due."²⁵ The abstraction of the fault is necessary to preserve the meaning of freedom understood as dialectic with nature. In an analogous way, it is necessary to bracket Transcendence in order to comprehend the paradox of an "incarnate freedom."

In turn, the comprehension of incarnate freedom, protected by this abstraction, makes ready the re-integration of those aspects put in parenthesis. In fact, by breaking the narrow circle that the self tends to form with itself, and by unveiling at the very heart of freedom a power capable not only of positing but of receiving, a meditation on the incarnation prepares intelligence for a more intimate reception which puts the finishing touches to freedom in its very power of posing acts. Perhaps the body is an infrangible figure of Transcendence, and patience, which is inclined toward the infrangible carnal condition, is a veiled figure of surrender to Transcendence.²⁶

²⁴Ibid., p. 32 "La ruse de la faute est d'insinuer la croyance que la participation de la volonté à un être plus fondamental serait une aliénation . . . alors que le Soi, pris en ce sens spécial, est le moi dépaycé loin de l'être; le Soi est le moi aliéné."

²⁵Ibid., p. 36. "Je peux donner toute son envergure à l'expérience de la responsabilité;"

²⁶Ibid. En retour la compréhension de la liberté

The discovery of Transcendence constitutes what Ricoeur calls a "second Copernican Revolution." It is a second revolution in the sense that it reveals an ontological ground for subjectivity without returning to a tyranny of the object (regne de l'objet). By breaking the pretensions of the self to autonomy, Transcendence not only gives an ontological ground for the self, but perchance points the way to a reconciliation of the voluntary and the involuntary.

The involuntary, however, is revealed only in its reciprocity with the voluntary. In order to clarify this reciprocity, Ricoeur considers three moments of the voluntary: deciding, acting, and consenting to necessity. An analysis of these reveals the corresponding involuntary aspects. "We are then led to decipher the involuntary-for-the-voluntary, that is, in its relation to motivation, to motion, and as incoercible condition."²⁷

incarnée, protégée par cette abstraction, prépare le réintégration des aspects mis entre parenthèses. En effect, en faisant éclater le cercle étroit que le soi tend à former avec lui-même et en dévoilant au coeur de la liberté un pouvoir non seulement de position mais aussi d'accueil, la méditation de l'incarnation prépare l'intelligence d'un plus intime accueil qui achève la liberté dans son pouvoir même de poser des actes. Peut-être le corps est-il une figure infirme de la Transcendance, et la patience qui se penche sur l'infrangible condition charnelle est-elle une figure voilée de l'abandon à la Transcendance.

²⁷Ricoeur, "L'unité," p. 12. "Nous sommes ainsi amenés à déchiffrer l'involontaire-pour-le-volontaire, c'est-à-dire dans ses rapports à la motivation et à la motion, et comme incoercible condition."

II. DECIDING

Older psychologies distinguished different phases in the voluntary processes--deliberation, decision, execution. Ricoeur argues that a distinction between decision and action is not necessarily one of time but of meaning. He says, "The relation of the decision to the execution of it is that of a particular species of idea (the structure of which is yet to be determined) to an action which completes it, somewhat as an intuition fulfills a theoretically void representation."²⁸ Since there are various ways in which the project and its execution can be related, pure description must be concerned with the essential structures of voluntary action.

Pure Description of Deciding

In one type of voluntary action the project and its execution are simultaneous, or the project is so implicit in the action that it is lost in the execution itself (as when I roll a cigaret while speaking). In what sense is this action voluntary? Ricoeur answers, "In the sense that I will be able to project it clearly in the actual situation to which it agrees, or at least with which it is not incompati-

²⁸Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 38. "La rapport de la décision à l'exécution est celui d'une espèce particulière d'idée (dont la structure reste à déterminer) à une action qui la remplit, un peu comme une intuition remplit une représentation théorique vide."

ble."²⁹ The lower limits of voluntary action--indeed, the very borderline between the voluntary and involuntary--are those impulsive and explosive actions which the subject says simply "escaped" him.

Another type of voluntary action is that in which the decision is made but the execution of it is delayed or deferred, the result being that the relation of the project to its execution appears to be negligible. Even in the most extreme cases, however, the decision is never totally indifferent to its execution. Even though a project is separated in time from its execution, it is an authentic decision if it is accompanied by the power or capacity for the action. An action is to be considered voluntary even when the action is delayed, provided that an implicit intention can be recognized after its execution. If the action could have been executed without delay, the decision is authentic.

Pure description is also concerned with the intentionality of deciding, for to decide is to decide something. This something is a project, a type of thought that aims at a future action. In view of these distinctions, Ricoeur offers the following definition of decision: "decision signifies a future action, that is, an intentional possibility that depends on me and is within my power."³⁰ The emphasis here is

²⁹Ibid. "En ce sens que j'aurais pu la projeter clairement dans la situation actuelle à laquelle elle convient ou du moins avec laquelle elle n'est pas incompatible."

³⁰Ibid., p. 42. "la décision signifie, c'est-à-dire

on the future; a decision is not a judgment about something that is, but about something that is to be done in the future. A decision is intentional, but it is an "empty intention" (désigner à vide).

Not only do decisions refer to future actions, they also designate, and are limited by, what is possible. The notion of possibility is essential for a pure description of deciding since the will is limited by the necessities of the real (réel). The possibility of actualizing a project is determined by an order of reality which presents its own prohibitions and obstacles to its execution. Here again is the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary: bodily existence and the fact that projects are actualized in the world limit what is possible. In addition, a project can be actualized only if it is accompanied by the feeling of power which "gives its élan and its force to the pure designation of the empty intention of the action to be performed by me."³¹

Deciding reveals the relation of the self to the world, for in deciding I decide something, and this something is actualized in the world through and by means of the body. But in what sense can I designate the subject of all deci-

désigne à vide, une action future qui dépend de moi et qui est en mon pouvoir." Also see "L'Unité," p. 6.

³¹ Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 53 "donne son élan et sa force à la pure désignation à vide de l'action à faire par moi;"

sions? "In what sense can I designate myself in designating the project and say it is I who will do, does, or can do?"³² Ricoeur replies that the self is constituted principally in relations with others, for the social context gives rise to a consciousness that I am the author of my acts and thoughts "Someone asks the question, 'Who did that?' I stand up and respond: 'It is I.' Response--responsibility. To be responsible is to be ready to respond to such a question."³³ To recognize that I am the cause of my acts reveals a relation between agent and act that is more fundamental than reflection. It is, as Ricoeur puts it, a "pre-reflexive" imputation of self.³⁴

The constant temptation is to posit two selves, one that is in the project and one that projects. Ricoeur argues that to say, "This action is I," (cette action c'est moi) is not to posit two selves but is rather to say, "I affirm myself as a subject in the object of my will."³⁵ Not only

³²Ibid., p. 54. "En quel sens puis-je me désigner moi-même en désignant le projet, et dire: c'est moi qui ferai, fais, sait fait?"

³³Ibid., p. 55. "quelqu'un pose la question: qui a fait cela? Je me lève et je réponds: c'est moi. Réponse: responsabilité. Être responsable, c'est être prêt à répondre à une telle question."

³⁴Ricoeur notes that his three-fold schema of deciding, moving, and consenting can be rephrased in terms of the verb faire. The project is à-faire, power is pouvoir-faire, moving is faire itself, and consent is non-pouvoir-faire. Ibid., p.54.

³⁵Ibid., p. 58. "je m'affirme sujet dans l'objet de mon vouloir."

does the intentionality of deciding lead to a pre-reflexive discovery of self, it also opens possibilities for the self in the world, for my projects are actualized through my body and in the world. Since the intentionality of decision relates the self to possible actualizations of these projects, it reveals the self as free. "What I will be is not already given but depends on what I will do. My power of being is deferred to my power of doing."³⁶

The Body and Motives

In his discussion of motivation, Ricoeur makes an initial distinction between cause and motive. A cause can be understood prior to its effects, for the cause gives its meaning to the effect. A motive, however, has no meaning apart from the decision which invokes it. Inversely, one cannot say that the decision is the cause of a motive, for the relation between motive and decision is reciprocal. "The motive gives a foundation to the decision only if the will is based on it. It only determines insofar as it is determined."³⁷ Motives provide an explanation for a decision, but they do not necessitate the decision since motives are the decision in the making. They can be seen only in retrospect.

To invoke a motive for a decision is not to explain it

³⁶Ibid., p. 62. "ce que je serai n'est pas déjà donné, mais dépend de ce que je ferai. Mon pouvoir-être est suspendu à mon pouvoir-faire."

³⁷Ibid., p. 65. "le motif ne fonde la décision que si la volonté se fonde sur lui. Il ne la détermine qu'autant

but to justify it. A motive "historializes" a value but does not create it. The essence of a possible value is to appear as a possible motive for a decision. Thus, there is a circular relation between motives and decision. "Every motive which 'historializes' a value is a motive of . . . and every decision which 'dedicates' (dévoue) the will to a value is a decision because of" ³⁸ This circular relation between motives and values and between motives and decisions is rooted in the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary. The will is not absolutely free; it is limited by what is possible by virtue of the limitations of the body and the world. The most basic limit of human will is that it is a human will and not the will of a creator.

Bodily existence is the involuntary source for the first level of values which, because of their vital relation to bodily life, are the basis for all other values. The body is only one source of motivation among many other sources, but it is the most fundamental because it reveals those values which are intimately related to vital needs. For example, hunger, thirst, and the fear of pain are related to my will as motives. This relation again reveals the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary, for the body not only supplies motives for decisions, it also is the way in which

qu'elle se détermine."

³⁸Ibid., p. 75. "Tout motif qui 'historialise' une valeur est motif de . . . et toute décision qui 'dévoue' le vouloir à une valeur est décision à cause de"

the will can actualize its projects. "The circular relation of motive to project demands that my body be recognized as body-for-my-will and my will as project-which-is-based (in part) on-my-body. The involuntary is for the will and the will is by reason of the involuntary."³⁹ Because of the intimate relation of the body (and bodily needs) to the will, there is always the temptation to fall prey to a naturalism which treats the body as an object among other objects. Such a naturalism makes it impossible to achieve the total reconquest of the cogito. The relation of the body to the cogito is a diagnostic one, and the various bodily states uncovered by empirical study serve as indices to subjective states. This is philosophy's Copernican Revolution, for "it is no longer consciousness which is the symptom of body-object but the body-object which is the indicator of the owned-body in which the cogito participates as in its very existence."⁴⁰ The venerable mind-body problem is clarified by this revolution, for the problem is no longer one of two realities, but of two points of view of the same body "considered alternately as owned-body inherent in its cogito and

³⁹Ibid., p. 82. "Le rapport circulaire du motif au projet exige que mon corps soit reconnu comme corps-pour mon-vouloir et mon vouloir comme projet-qui-se-fonde (en partie) sur-mon-corps. L'involontaire est pour la volonté et la volonté est en raison de l'involontaire."

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 84. "ce n'est plus la conscience qui est le symptôme du corps-objet, mais le corps-objet qui est l'indicateur du corps-propre auquel le cogito participe comme à son existence même."

as body-object exposed to view among other objects."⁴¹

A bodily need, in the strict sense of the term, is a lack of something and an action toward what can fulfil this deficiency. The intentionality of need reveals need as action. This action, however, is not re-action (as some psychologists have insisted) but pre-action prior to sensation and pleasure. Pleasure serves the function of declaring that the particular need is in the process of being fulfilled, and because of the power of imagination to anticipate pleasure, it too can enter into motivation. Ricoeur states that the anticipation of pleasure gives a value to the experience of need and "reveals to consciousness the object of need as good and facilitates the most elementary of value judgments."⁴²

In view of these distinctions it might seem that those motivations which cause pleasure are good and those which cause pain are bad. This is an oversimplification, Ricoeur argues, for motivation on the vital level is more complex than this.

In the first place, good and bad cannot be equated with pleasure and pain. Although good and bad are contraries,

⁴¹Ibid., p. 85. "considéré alternativement comme corps propre inhérent à son cogito et comme corps-objet, offert parmi les autres objets."

⁴²Ibid., p. 100. "révèle à la conscience l'objet du besoin comme bon et prépare le plus élémentaire des jugements de valeur."

pain is not the contrary of pleasure. Consider: whereas pleasure is preceded by a bodily need which produces pleasure when satisfied, pain is related to the body's defense mechanisms, the function of which is to repel that which is hostile to life. Pleasure also indicates that a bodily need is being satisfied, whereas pain sustains no relation to a lack of anything or to a void that must be filled. Pain only indicates that there is a menace to the organism, an aggression against bodily life.

In the second place, the action which precedes pain cannot be compared with the action which precedes pleasure. Pain results from a reflexive re-action; pleasure results from an impulsive pre-action. Pain and pleasure cannot be viewed as contraries, for they are different levels of experience. The contrary of pleasure is the privation of pleasure. The contrary of pain is the absence of pain. Other motives on the vital level, however, cannot be included among those which aim at the satisfaction of a privation (giving rise to pleasure) or those directed against what is hostile to life (resulting in pain). Some biological functions--respiration, elimination, the need for freedom of movement--can only be momentarily restrained by an act of will.

Ricoeur's point is that motives on the vital level cannot be reduced to a single value. There is no single vital value but a whole complex of them. "At this level the 'historialization' of values forms a sort of ἀνέλεον (indefi-

nite chaos) at the root of the cogito."⁴³ Human life, being complex and at times ambiguous, is an unresolved problem in which the terms are unclear and confused. Consequently, the body, in its relation to will, is implied to some extent in every motive and every value.

This relation between the self and its body can serve as an analogue to the relation between the self and its historical setting. Just as the self is motivated by the demands of bodily life, it is also motivated by its historical situation. It chooses neither its body nor its historical context. These are the given, involuntary, aspects of existence.

Between me and my body is instituted a circular relation, one form of which is motivation. A similar relation exists between me and my history. History "historializes" values in a given moment and solicits my adherence to them in a way analogous to my hunger, thirst and sexuality. History affects me just as my body does.⁴⁴

It is in the social, that is historical, sphere that I am affected by the demands of others. The lower limit of this social pressure is the constraint exercised over me by the demands of the anonymous "they" ("they think that," or "they

⁴³Ibid., p. 115. "A ce niveau, 'l'historialisation' des valeurs figure une sorte d'ἀπειρον (de chaos indéfini), à la racine du cogito."

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 119. Entre mon corps et moi s'institue un rapport circulaire dont une des formes est précisément le rapport de motivation: de même entre mon histoire et moi; l'histoire "historialise" des valeurs à un moment donné et elle sollicite mon adhésion d'une manière analogue à ma faim, ma soif, ma sexualité. L'histoire m'incline comme mon corps.

do that" or "they do not act that way.") This constraint is a perversion of the legitimate demands of society; it is a dehumanization of values and a form of slavery. The upper boundary of social demand is the recognition of the "other" as a willing subject whose needs are as valid as mine and whose opinions have the same dignity as mine.⁴⁵

Hesitation and Choice

Choice is that act of deciding which refers decision to the project (I want to do this), to the self (I determine myself) and to motives (I decide because of . . .). The first moment in the history of choice is hesitation, which is in-decision. The result of hesitation is that my projects are multiple and my decision is as yet unformed. Hesitation is a state of confusion, for I do not clearly grasp my project, and there is a conflict of motives. The reason for this confusion of projects and motives is the ambiguity of the body. "The project is confused, the self unformed because I am embarrassed by the obscurity of my reasons thrust into this essential passivity which proceeds from the body."⁴⁶

The movement from hesitation to choice occurs during a history (Ricoeur calls it the durée). The clarification of the confusion of motives and projects he calls attention. The

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 120-21.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 136. "Le projet est confus, le moi informe, parce que je suis embarrassé par l'obscurité de mes raisons, enfoncé dans cette passivité essentielle de l'existence qui procède du corps;"

durée (a flux of competing motives and projects) is the involuntary aspect of choice. Attention (the clarification of motives) is the voluntary aspect of choice. In the control attention has over motives can again be seen the reciprocal relation between the voluntary and the involuntary. Attention is an act of freedom, yet it is limited to the range of present motives and projects. "Attention is this art of mastering the durée of which the flux itself is radically involuntary. In it the free or voluntary fulfils itself; this is attention itself, that is, not a distinct operation but the free mode of cogitationes."⁴⁷

Choice is the cessation of deliberation, the end of all hesitation. Ricoeur says, "To choose is to shut off debate, to con-clude, ent-schliessen. It is to cut off, to sever the gordian knot of hesitation, to de-cide."⁴⁸ Whereas the project refers to a future action, deliberation derives from a previous history of which choice is the terminus.

Choice has two aspects; it is both a continuity and a discontinuity. It is a continuity to the extent that it is the final point in a temporal process of deliberation. Hesi-

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 145. "L'attention est cet art de maîtriser la durée dont le flux lui-même est radicalement involontaire. En elle s'accomplit le libre ou le volontaire; elle est elle-même l'attentif, c'est-à-dire non une opération distincte mais le mode libre de toutes les cogitationes."

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 156. "Choisir c'est fermer, clore un débat: con-clure, ent-schliessen; c'est aussi couper, trancher le noeud gordien de l'hésitation: dé-cider."

tation results from the confusion and ambiguity of motives; deliberation is an attempt to clarify these motives and to focus attention on a specific project. On the other hand, choice is a discontinuity insofar as choice is a moment of freedom, a free act which gives rise to something new. Its discontinuity can be seen in the three-fold relation of choice to project, to self, and to motives. "Such is the novelty of choice: Suddenly my project is determined, I determine myself, my reasons are determined. This triple determination--or resolution--is the surging up of choice."⁴⁹ When a philosophy overemphasizes the continuity of choice, an intellectualism results. But when a philosophy overemphasizes the discontinuity of choice, a voluntarism results.

The continuity and discontinuity of choice seem to constitute a paradox at the very heart of which is introduced a certain indeterminism. Ricoeur agrees that there is an indeterminism in choice but it is not a complete indeterminism since choice does not spring from nothing.⁵⁰ To acknowledge this kind of indeterminism, however, is to exclude it in the sense of a choice without reason or without motives. Since every choice is motivated, the clarity of choice depends upon the clarity of motives. Therefore, the perfectly free will

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 163. "Telle est la nouveauté du choix: soudain mon projet est déterminé, je me détermine, mes raisons sont déterminées: cette triple détermination--ou résolution--est le surgissement du choix."

⁵⁰Ricoeur, "L'Unité," p.50.

would be the one whose choices were determined by perfectly clear motives. Freedom must not be defined as the absence of all restraint, but as the positive power of self determination. Ricoeur says, "What I decide depends on me."⁵¹

The freedom of the will is paradoxical since it embraces "the paradox of continued motivation and discontinued project, and the paradox of attention which is arrested and choice which springs up."⁵² These paradoxes do not cause grave concern to an analysis of decision since the determinate and indeterminate aspects of decision are not two different moments in choice, but rather are one and the same.

III. ACTING AND MOVING

Although it is possible to distinguish between decision and action by abstraction, there is in fact no way of separating the two, for the will's decisions are meaningful only because of the will's power of motion. Only the displacement of body in the world validates a decision as authentic and signifies the legitimacy of an intention. There is a reciprocal relation between the project and the action to be performed; the project is an anticipation of the action and the action, in turn, authenticates the project.

⁵¹Ricoeur, La volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 175. "Il dépend de moi que je me décide."

⁵²Ibid., p. 176. "le paradoxe de la motivation continue et du projet discontinu, le paradoxe de l'attention qui s'arrête et du choix qui surgit."

Because it implies both the power to act and the subject of the action, the project is the union of the soul and body. The Cartesian circle is broken: I am united with my body by means of its project toward the world. Ricoeur notes, "The union of the soul and body is already displayed in the project. As an incarnate being situated in the world, I feel capable of the action that I intend."⁵³

Pure Description of Moving

A problem arises at this point, for Ricoeur has previously shown the intentionality of deciding and now insists on the intimate union of deciding and acting. If acting is the terminal point of a cognitive process, can it be understood as a "thought" in the broad sense of the term? In other words, can one legitimately speak of the intentionality of acting?

Ricoeur answers in the affirmative, but at the price of enlarging the notions of thought and intentionality. He says, "The integral thought which embraces corporeal existence is not only intelligence but force. The power of producing events in the world is a species of the intentional relation to things and to the world."⁵⁴ If acting is intentional, what is its object? For example, when I hang a pic-

⁵³Ibid., p. 189. "C'est l'union de l'âme et du corps qui se montre déjà dans le projet: je me sens capable, comme être incarné et situé dans le monde, de l'action que je vise à vide."

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 193. "La pensée intégrale, qui enveloppe l'existence corporelle, est non seulement lumière mais force."

ture on the wall, what is the object of this intentional action? The picture? The wall? The hammer? None of these, Ricoeur insists. Rather, the object of this action is I-am-hanging-a-picture-on-the-wall. The object of an action, taken as a unity, is the pragma of the action. The pragma as object of an action is the factum of facere. Correctly speaking, body is not the terminus of thought but only the organ by which the cogito is directed toward the world. "Acting is thus situated between the 'I' as will and the world as field of action. Action is an aspect of the world itself."⁵⁵

This enlargement of the notion of intentionality seems to be an equivocation on the term "act." Ricoeur is saying that the object of my action is myself acting, thus identifying "object" and "action." Ricoeur's meaning can be clarified by comparing the intentionality of acting to the intentionality of deciding. In decision there are not two selves, one who projects and one who is in the project, but one action considered from two points of view. The same is true of acting. It is one action considered alternately as the doing (the acting itself) and the done (the object of the action). "The 'done by me', the 'pragma'--to distinguish it from the project . . . is in the world and not in my body."

Le pouvoir de produire des événements dans le monde est une espèce de relation intentionnelle aux choses et au monde."

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 197. "L'agir est ainsi tendu entre le 'je' comme vouloir et le monde comme champ d'action. L'action est un aspect du monde lui-même."

But the body is not the object of the action; "it is not the object of the action even in the large sense of correlate, but its organ."⁵⁶ The mediational function of body as organ of the will is made evident by encountering resistance to bodily motion. This resistance gives rise to a duality⁵⁷ of the understanding, and this duality is another instance of the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary: the will moves the body, but the body resists the will through its involuntary functions.

The Body and Spontaneity

The involuntary functions of the body have been divided by Ricoeur into three classes: (1) preformed "know-how" (savoir-faire), (2) emotions, and (3) habits. By preformed spontaneity Ricoeur is referring to what often are called instincts, but he avoids this term, reserving it for the level of behavior relating to animality in general. Preformed "know-how" is a more neutral term which can be used in a purely descriptive way so as to avoid the prejudiced connotations invoked by "innate" or "instinctive."⁵⁸

⁵⁶Ricoeur, "Méthodes et tâches," p. 118. "Le 'fait par moi', le 'pragma,' dirai-je, à la différence du projet . . . est dans le monde et non pas dans mon corps . . . il n'est pas l'objet de l'agir, même au sens large de corrélat, mais son organe;"

⁵⁷Ricoeur uses the term "duality" to avoid the implications of the "dualism" he has previously rejected.

⁵⁸Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 218. "Know-how" is used as an English equivalent for savoir-faire by Herbert Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement (The

What is preformed "know-how"? It is difficult to say without first indicating what it is not. It is not reflexive action, although the reflexes may indeed be its lower bound. Involuntary vital functions, such as bodily secretions, contractions and other physiological functions, are completely involuntary and as such are not to be included in the category of preformed spontaneity. Whereas reflexes are relatively stereotyped, easily isolated, and incoercible to the will, preformed "know-how" cannot be understood as a chain of invariable movements. In addition, it contains all the ambiguity implied in the freedom of voluntary control, and is not incoercible to the will.⁵⁹ Reflexes are absolutely involuntary. Preformed "know-how," in contrast, is "a form of the involuntary in the very special sense that the most primitive relations between perception and movement have never been willed or learned."⁶⁰ My access to the world presupposes a certain continuity between the perceiving cogito and bodily movement. This continuity is preformed "know-how," the indissoluble unity between the mental and corporeal self, between thought and action.

Another involuntary function of the body is emotion.

Hague: Nijhoff, 1960) II, 577.

⁵⁹Ricoeur, Le volontaire et l'involontaire, pp. 225 et seqq.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 228. "une figure de l'involontaire en ce sens très spécial que les liaisons les plus primitives entre la perception et le mouvement n'ont jamais été voulues et apprises."

Ricoeur acknowledges that it may seem strange to include emotion in his analysis of bodily spontaneity rather than to consider it a motive. Even the etymological similarity between motive and emotion would suggest that they are similar. Ricoeur argues, however, that there is a basic dissimilarity between the two. The essence of motives is to propose ends, whereas emotion presupposes a prior motivation.

The most fundamental or normative type of emotion is surprise. Although it is the simplest, it implies all the richness of the circular relation between thought and body. In surprise a thought is almost physically imposed on the cogito, or to put it differently, the emotional experience of surprise is not pure thought. Ricoeur notes, "Emotion is rarely cerebral; it generally affects our bodily, social, intellectual, and spiritual interests."⁶¹

The imagination of anticipated goods or evils can also be construed as an emotion since emotion is essentially the interruption of consciousness by some "other." Because desire, in Aristotle's sense, moves toward action, it too can be considered an emotion (notwithstanding the fact that Ricoeur previously classed it as a motive). As a motive desire only reveals an anticipated good; as an emotion desire is a mover (moteur). Here again is the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary: even though desire moves the

⁶¹Ibid., p. 240. "L'émotion est rarement cérébrale: elle affecte généralement nos intérêts corporels, sociaux, intellectuels, spirituels, etc.;"

will, it is also for the will. Only through the will can desire achieve intelligibility.⁶²

Two cases in which the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary is broken is emotional shock (l'émotion-choc) and emotional passion (l'émotion-passion). In the trauma of emotional shock, the function of emotion as mover is destroyed, leaving disorder and chaos. Emotional shock, an excess of surprise, is a threat to man's psychological equilibrium just as extremes in temperature and atmosphere are threats to his physiological balance. Even in its extreme forms, however, emotion is intentional. To experience an emotional shock (such as extreme fear) is to feel the world as a menace, as a terrifying threat.

Passion is likewise a testimony to the way emotions can be perverted at the expense of the voluntary. In passion, the voluntary is enslaved not by an alien world (as in emotional shock) but by itself. "Passion is the consciousness which binds itself. The will is taken prisoner by wicked imaginations, captive of nothing--or even better, of vanity."⁶³

A third involuntary function of body is habit. What is and what is not habitual behavior is difficult to determine, for habit denotes no particular function but only

⁶²Ibid., p. 252.

⁶³Ibid., p. 261. "La passion c'est la conscience qui se lie elle-même, c'est la volonté qui se rend prisonnière de maux imaginaires, captive du Rien ou mieux du Vain."

a more or less stable manner of feeling, perceiving, acting, and thinking. It has great importance for conscious behavior since it affects the intentionality of consciousness without being intentional itself. Habit affects conscious behavior in that it is something I have learned, it is an acquired way of acting, and insofar as it is learned and acquired it is within my power (playing the piano, learning to swim). Although habits originate in conscious behavior, they become such a fixed pattern that it is hardly correct to speak of them any longer as aspects of the voluntary. Instead, habits become a sort of "second nature" entering into the reciprocal relation of the voluntary and the involuntary.

Habits are menaced by the threat of becoming an automatism. Habits become mechanical when patterns of behavior are fixed according to certain structures of action.

Ricoeur is not here referring to those actions which are facilitated by a disengagement from voluntary control.

Athletes, writers, or technicians of various kinds are able to perform complex actions better with a minimum of voluntary control. Ricoeur calls these actions "superintended automatisms" (automatismes surveillés), and these are to be distinguished from genuinely reflexive actions. In the case of reflexes, it is impossible for a person to refrain from doing them.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 285-86.

The constant threat of habitual behavior is the complete defection of consciousness to the inertia inherent in habits. This is the inverse of the threat implied in emotions. Emotional passion disrupts the voluntary by its spontaneity, resulting in disorder and chaos. Habits disrupt the voluntary by a "naturalization" of consciousness.

In fact, it is striking to see that the two functions, emotion and habit, are comprehended the one by the other, by their contrast. The one is a disordering at the beginning stage; the other affects my will by the force of acquisition. Habit is "contracted," emotion "surprises."⁶⁵

Moving and Effort

A consciousness of bodily effort arises only upon encountering resistance to effort. The resistance of the thing, of the body, or of some aspect of myself makes me conscious of effort. This is not to imply that resistance to bodily movement is an impediment to the will. Rather, it is only a limitation imposed on it. "There is no sense in which one can say that things impede my will; only a will already efficaciously deployed encounters limits. External resistance presupposes the docility of the body."⁶⁶ In fact,

⁶⁵Ricoeur, "L'Unité," p. 15. En effet, il est frappant de voir que ces deux fonctions, l'émotion et l'habitude, se comprennent l'une par l'autre, par leur contraste: l'une est un dérèglement à l'état naissant, l'autre affecte mon vouloir par la force de l'acquis. L'habitude est "contractée", l'émotion "surprend";

⁶⁶Ricoeur, Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 293. "Cela n'a pas de sens de dire que les choses empêchent ma volonté; seul un vouloir déjà déployé efficacement rencontre

the mediational function of body is revealed only by its indocility. "It is at this moment that moving, complicated by a resistance, is reflected in effort."⁶⁷ But whereas things are the elements of external resistance to bodily movement, emotions and habits represent a functional resistance. The surprise and shock of emotional distress make voluntary control of the body difficult, and in emotional passion, the slavery of the self to self further impedes voluntary control of the body. In other words, emotions constitute an internal resistance to the will.

This struggle of the emotions against bodily spontaneity is mediated by habits, which diminish the susceptibility of the body to surprise and shock. Here again is the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary. Since habits are learned and acquired by repeated actions under voluntary control, habits, in this sense, can be said to be willed and ultimately under control of the will. Emotions, on the other hand, because they are an almost visceral impingement upon the intentions of the will, are a relatively involuntary source of resistance to bodily motion. The conflict is clear. "In emotion I am on the point of being ravished, possessed. Through habit I possess my body according

des limites; la résistance externe suppose la docilité du corps."

⁶⁷ Ricoeur, "L'Unité," p. 9. "C'est à ce moment que le mouvoir, compliqué par la conscience d'une résistance, se réfléchit dans l'effort."

to the wisdom of the words habere, habitude."⁶⁸

Description of bodily movement also involves "transitive consciousness," that is, a consciousness whose intentionality is expressed through and by means of the body. The intentions actualized through the body are labeled by Ricoeur "motor intentions." Seen from the side of the body, a motor intention can be investigated empirically. But considered from the side of the will, a motor intention is the power of the will, the pouvoir of the vouloir.⁶⁹ In its relation to bodily movement, the will is understood as an initiator of motion through its powers of spontaneity. The power of bodily motion is for the will, but bodily motion is possible because of the will. "This is why we could say, for that matter, that the most general of our powers are a sort of will constituted with reference to the constituting will, or that our will becomes the form of our body."⁷⁰

IV. CONSENT AND NECESSITY

Whereas decision is an act of will which depends on

⁶⁸Ricoeur, Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 297. "Dans l'émotion, je suis sur le point d'être ravi, possède. Par l'habitude je possède mon corps, selon la sagesse même des mots: habere, habitude."

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 309.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 312. "C'est pourquoi on peut dire aussi bien que nos pouvoirs les plus généraux sont une sorte de volonté constituée par rapport à la volonté constituante ou que notre volonté devient la forme de notre corps."

motives, and bodily motion is an act of will which sets powers in motion, consent is an act of will which acquiesces in necessity. The involuntary aspect of decision is motivation; the involuntary aspect of bodily motion is the body itself and the world in which all projects are actualized. Unlike the relatively involuntary facets of deciding and bodily motion, necessity, as Ricoeur uses the term, is an absolute involuntary. The three primary manifestations of this "new reign of the involuntary" are character, the Unconscious, and the biological conditions of bodily existence. Faced with the absolute involuntary, the will can either consent to it or can refuse to consent. Thus, two questions must be kept in mind: What does it mean to consent to necessity? Can a reconciliation of the voluntary and the involuntary be found in consent to necessity?

Pure Description of Consent

In the case of decision and bodily motion, pure description uncovered the intentionality of both these acts of will. Consent, however, is more ambiguous. On the one hand, consent seems to be a kind of action. On the other hand, consent seems to have the characteristic of intellectual knowledge since it acquiesces to a fact the will cannot change. In the free act of consent, the self is directed toward the world, but what is the significance of this movement of the will? Ricoeur answers, "Consent is the movement of freedom toward nature in order to be joined with its necessity and to

transform it in itself."⁷¹ Consent is not intentional in the same sense that decision and bodily motion are intentional, but it has a quasi-intentional structure in the sense that it is an act of will directed toward necessity.

This is not to say that consent is a theoretical judgment about necessity. Rather, it is what Ricoeur calls "a contemplation without distance," an "active adoption of necessity."⁷² Another metaphor Ricoeur uses is that of possession. Through consent I make the world my own--I make it "mine." But this does not mean that consent is a way one possesses nature so much as it is an act of will which affirms nature. Consent is an adoption of nature in the sense that one says "yes" to what is already determined.

Willing is finally completed in the most hidden and secret intention I call consent. For consent the necessity in me and outside me is not simply regarded but actively adopted. It is my situation, my condition of existing as a willing being in the world.⁷³

An analysis of consent proceeds by means of what Ricoeur calls a "kind of dialectic of alienation." By this he means that the three levels of necessity--character, the

⁷¹Ibid., p. 325. "Le consentement est ce mouvement de la liberté vers la nature pour se joindre à sa nécessité et la convertir en soi-même."

⁷²Ibid., p. 322. "une contemplation sans distance;" "une active adoption de la nécessité."

⁷³Ricoeur, "Méthodes et tâches," pp. 118-19. Enfin le vouloir se complète dans une visée plus secrète, plus dissimulée, que j'appelle consentir; pour le consentement la nécessité en moi et hors de moi n'est pas simplement regardée, mais adoptée activement; elle est ma situation, ma condition

Unconscious, and the biological conditions of life--mark a regression toward what is most fundamental. Methodologically, the aim of this threefold analysis of necessity is to discover the subjective indices of necessity in the cogito. From the point of view of Ricoeur's analysis, necessity is significant for the will only insofar as it affects me and becomes a mode of my existence.

The Body and Necessity

The first aspect of lived necessity is character. Character is one's individual manner which is not chosen by him and cannot be modified by his free acts of will. It is what permits me to be recognized by others, to be identified in space and time. My character is my "nature," that aspect of myself that is irrevocable. In short, "I am my character" (mon caractère, c'est moi).⁷⁴ Since my character is what I am, to change it would be to become another person. Character is not what I do but the way I act. It is my manner of thinking, not what I think.

d'exister comme être voulant dans le monde.

⁷⁴Ricoeur, Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 333. Ricoeur criticizes those studies which attempt a "scientific" investigation of character. An empirical study of character--an ethnology--must confine itself to a small number of general properties such as emotivity and activity, and these in turn can only be investigated statistically. The result of this kind of analysis is that the statistical results furnish no index to subjective states and the study terminates with a determinism in which the will is considered only as a complication of ideo-motor functions. Ricoeur argues that one cannot successfully analyze character in terms of a balance sheet on which various quantitative results are

Not included in this analysis of character is a hidden residue--the Unconscious, which has at least two aspects: the slavery of the passions, and the Unconscious itself. Ricoeur has already shown that passions do not constitute an absolute involuntary since they are at least potentially and partially under voluntary control. The "vanity" of the passions is the slavery of the will to itself. The other pole, the "hidden" (caché) aspect of consciousness, is not due to self deception (as are passions) but to the conditions of consciousness itself.

There are two erroneous views of the Unconscious that Ricoeur wants to avoid. The first sees the Unconscious as an independent reality. The second asserts that consciousness is perfectly transparent to itself. Neither position must be rejected entirely, for each corrects the other.

The best representative of the view that consciousness is perfectly transparent to itself is Descartes, who insisted that thoughts are within us in such a way as to be immediately perceived. Descartes affirmed that there is no obscurity in consciousness, for he refused to oppose the phenomena of thoughts to their being. To doubt that a thing exists is ultimately to affirm that it does exist. Ricoeur agrees partially with this view, for his previous analysis has shown that there is not an unconsciousness not-me within the cogito that is the condition of and possibility for thoughts.

tallied. Character, he insists, is not an invention of science but an aspect of self.

Ricoeur agrees with Freud, however, that there is an obscurity and spontaneity of thought not transparent to itself. The Unconscious is an aspect of the involuntary which, like character, can never be viewed from a distance and analyzed theoretically. Freud's error was in reifying the Unconscious and giving it a status homogeneous to consciousness. The enigmas of consciousness can be solved, Freud thought, if one posits an Unconscious which possesses all the functions of consciousness with the one exception that it is not conscious. But this introduces a basic ambiguity in Freudianism, for the only guarantee that the Unconscious is not just a mythical construction is the reintegration of unconsciousness into consciousness. But this is a contradiction in psychoanalytic theory. "If analytic therapy is a question of 'transforming the Unconscious into the Conscious,' consciousness is a great deal more than an added quality which does not change the psychic essence."⁷⁵ There is nothing in psychoanalytic theory that constrains one to believe in a realism of the Unconscious. Analysis only reveals an unthinkable underside of consciousness, an inverse which is outside it and cannot be thought.

How can one reject the Freudian "mythology of unconsciousness" in favor of a "philosophy of the 'hidden'?" And

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 367. "Si la thérapeutique analytique agit 'en transformant l'inconscient en conscient', c'est que la conscience est beaucoup plus qu'une qualité ajoutée qui ne change pas l'essence du psychique."

what form will the latter assume? Ricoeur acknowledges that this is a difficult question since there is no subjective equivalent to the Unconscious. The hidden aspect of consciousness can only be approximated in consciousness with reference to an abstract distinction between the form or conscious intention of a thought and its affective substance. Every thought is to some degree intentional (attentive or inattentive, reflected or unreflected). This is its form. The substance of thought is that aspect which perpetuates the totality of experience. Analogous to this distinction, Ricoeur suggests that the Unconscious is the substance of thought without form.

One could unconsciously call this substance when it is dissociated from the "form" which animates it and would give to it its true sense. But there is no subsistence of the substance as such, for it is "hidden" always in some other "form"--the dream, the neurotic system, etc.--which has an apparent sense.⁷⁶

The result of this analysis is not unlike the conclusion of Ricoeur's analysis of character. Man is not wholly free since will is linked to an involuntary constituent. Man's freedom is paradoxical, a finite-infinite. The same is true of unconsciousness. Each thought is nourished by a hidden and obscure aspect of consciousness which gives rise

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 368. On peut appeler inconsciente cette matière quand elle se dissocie de la "forme" qui l'anime et lui donnerait son vrai sens; mais il n'a pas de subsistance de la matière comme telle, car elle se "cache" toujours en quelqu'autre "forme"--le rêve, le symptôme névrotique, etc.--qui a un sens apparent.

to the paradoxical synthesis of definite form and indefinite substance.

In the face of this necessity I have the choice of consenting to it or not consenting to it. Of what advantage is consent? Ricoeur answers, "I ought to consent to produce every significance on a basis of non-sense, to exercise every power in a context of menaced inefficaciousness and, perhaps in some extreme cases, to seek in a master decipherer the deliverance of my freedom."⁷⁷

The third aspect of lived necessity is life, considered biologically and physiologically. The union of the soul and body in the living organism is also the union of freedom and necessity since life itself is the foundation for all volitional activity. Life, in this biological sense, cannot be observed; it can only be enjoyed (erlebt). Ricoeur notes, "I can observe a thing; I do not observe my life. Ein Erlebnis schattet sich nicht ab, says Husserl. Lived-experience is not given through sketches."⁷⁸

Although life is an indivisible unity of biological functions and is prior to all reflection, it can be viewed from three perspectives: the organization of bodily functions,

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 384. "je dois consentir à produire toute signification sur un fond de non-sens, à exercer tout pouvoir dans un contexte d'inefficacité menaçante et peut-être, en quelques cas extrêmes, à chercher dans un maître déchiffreur l'accoucheur de ma liberté."

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 386. "je peux observer une chose, je n'observe pas ma vie. Ein Erlebnis schattet sich nicht ab, dit Husserl: un vécu ne se donne pas par esquisses."

growth, birth and death. The regulative and adaptive mechanisms of the body, being the most removed from voluntary control, are the most open to empirical investigation. Growth, on the other hand, is best investigated by a descriptive psychology concerned with the structures of growth (childhood, adolescence, old age) and the significance these structures have for subjective states.

At the basis of the subjective notion of bodily life is the recognition of my own birth. My existence had a beginning, and this posited me in being before I was able to will any act. Birth is the ultimate enigma and the ultimate obscurity in life, for "my birth not only signifies the commencement of my life, it expresses my dependence on two other lives. I did not posit myself; I have been posited by others."⁷⁹ The chain of events that enter into my heredity is only one possible combination among a vast number of possible combinations. I am thus faced with the absurdity, "Why is this probable combination me?"⁸⁰ All my decisions are made after my own beginning and before the end of my life. The paradox of freedom and necessity here exhibited is that all my acts of free choice depend upon something I

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 408. "Ma naissance ne signifie pas seulement le commencement de ma vie, elle exprime sa dépendance à l'égard de deux autres vies; je ne me pose pas moi-même, j'ai été posé par d'autres."

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 410. "Pourquoi cette combinaison probable est-elle moi?"

did not choose and I cannot remember. The choice that confronts me is either to consent to the necessity of life, the Unconscious, and character, or to refuse to consent to necessity. Ricoeur's conviction is that if I am able to consent to the necessity of my own body, I will have implicitly consented to every necessity.⁸¹

From Refusal to Consent

Lurking in the background is the unresolved paradox of freedom and necessity. The common dimension of freedom and necessity that has been sought in subjectivity has not resolved the problem of existence. Freedom and necessity are contraries. How can they both affect the same will? For, on the one hand, necessity seems to be an active negation of freedom which constantly reappears in the will. Yet negation is the return of freedom in saying "no" to necessity. Even this quasi-freedom is not Ricoeur's goal, for by meditating on the "no" of refusal, he hopes to transcend necessity in the "yes" of consent.

To refuse the necessity of character results in the "sorrow of finitude." To have a character is to be condemned to a finite perspective on the world. Ricoeur notes, "I am condemned to be the 'exception': this and not everything, this and not that."⁸² The question, Why am I this and not

⁸¹Ricoeur, "L'Unité," p. 27.

⁸²Ricoeur, Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 420.
"je suis condamné à être l'exception: tel et non pas tout,

something else? is akin to Heidegger's question, posed in Vom Wesen des Grundes, Why is there something rather than nothing? Even though this question is not often formally asked, it remains implicit in a negation of my finite perspective in the form of character.

To refuse the necessity of the Unconscious results in "the sorrow of the unformed," or following Hegel, the "unhappy infinite." The Unconscious is the obscure, enigmatic underside of consciousness and as such prevents consciousness from ever being perfectly transparent to itself. It is the source of spontaneity and, in its extreme cases, the source of madness.

To refuse the necessity of life results in the "sorrow of contingency." This is the feeling experienced in the face of suffering and in view of the inevitability of death. This, in a sense, is the most radical negation. "Thus my enigmatic, unproductive, arbitrary presence, this brute existence that I find in me and outside of me, generates the most radical negation: the absence of aseity."⁸³ The fact of death, particularly my own, remains only an idea outside my experience and has no subjective equivalent in the cogito. There is nothing in the internal experience of the cogito

tel et non pas tel."

⁸³Ibid., p. 428. "Ainsi ma présence énigmatique, ingénérable, arbitraire, cette existence brute que je trouve en moi et hors de moi, secrète la plus radicale négation: l'absence d'aséité."

which shows me the necessity of my own death. I become aware of it by the death of others which speaks to me of my own death, not by providing me with an anticipated experience of it, but by reminding me of its necessity.

In the face of the ultimate non-being of necessity, life becomes absurd, a philosophy of existence becomes a philosophy of despair, and suicide is one of the most lofty possibilities--in which case the "no" of refusal is not a word but an act. The refusal of necessity marks the place of the most extreme tension between freedom and necessity, and it is here that consent overcomes this tension not by refuting it, but by transcending it.

The Stoics and Orphics represent two extremes of consent. In Stoicism, consent to necessity was imperfect because of its detachment from and scorn of necessity. The Orphic point of view (even in its modern representatives, Goethe and Rilke) is an exaggerated consent because of the loss of self in necessity. The basic problem in both cases is the relation of the part to the whole. This is, in fact, the most basic of all problems, for philosophy begins here. Philosophy commences with a Copernican Revolution in which the world is centered in the cogito: the object is for the subject, the involuntary for the voluntary, etc. But when subjectivity reaches its limits, it calls for a second Copernican Revolution which displaces the center of reference from subjectivity to Transcendence. This change of perspective can only appear as a paradox. "The relation of part to

whole is here the cipher of a more subtle relation which is the ontological mystery itself, the expression of which in our universe of discourse can only be paradoxical."⁸⁴

If freedom seems paradoxical it is because human freedom is under discussion. Because our freedom is only human, it can be understood only in light of certain limit-ideas, analogous to Kant's regulative ideas. The first limit is the idea of God as a creative will. The freedom of man, in contrast, is a contingent freedom, a freedom motivated by and dependent upon a body. The second limit is that of a freedom motivated by perfectly transparent and rational motives. The previous analysis of indecision, the ambiguity of choice, and the confusion of bodily motives has shown that human freedom is, at best, ambiguous and obscure. The third limit is that of a body which offers no resistance to the will. But even a cursory analysis reveals corporeal necessity. The fourth limit is that of freedom coextensive with man in which there is no partiality of character, completely transparent motives, and in which all contingency is reduced to initiative.

What are the functions of the limit ideas? By pointing to a perfectly free and completely creative will, they illustrate, by way of contrast, the meaning of the reciproc-

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 444. "Le rapport de partie à tout est ici le chiffre d'un rapport plus subtil, qui est 'le mystère ontologique' lui-même, et dont l'expression dans notre univers de discours ne peut être que paradoxal."

ity of the voluntary and the involuntary.⁸⁵ These limit concepts demonstrate that the human will is not divine; to will is not to create. Transcendence, however, is not one of these limit ideas, it is more than that. "It is a presence which . . . introduces a radically new dimension--the poetic dimension."⁸⁶

Consent appears at first to be a capitulation, a surrender to necessity. This is not so, Ricoeur argues, if consent to necessity is rooted in Transcendence. To consent fully to necessity one must go beyond a phenomenological description of the cogito to a metaphysics, from a philosophy of subjectivity to a philosophy of Transcendence.⁸⁷ This is the goal of Ricoeur's philosophy. Whether it can be reached remains to be seen.

In the final analysis, however, the way of consent is blocked by suffering and evil. The scandalous mystery of evil prevents my saying "yes" to character, the Unconscious, and life. It prevents my transforming the sorrow of finitude, the sorrow of the unformed, and the sorrow of contingency into joy.

Here suffering takes on its philosophic sense as the impossibility of coinciding with one's self. It introduces between me and myself a specific negativ-

⁸⁵Ricoeur, "L'Unité," p. 21.

⁸⁶Ricoeur, Le Volontaire et l'involontaire, p. 456. "c'est une présence qui . . . introduit une dimension radicalement nouvelle, le dimension poétique."

⁸⁷Ibid., pp. 439-40.

ity in the sense that necessity is not experienced only as affecting but as wounding. I am not in me in my own nature.⁸⁸

Because the way of consent is blocked by the problem of evil, a philosophy of the will cannot directly proceed toward a conciliation of freedom and necessity in Transcendence. It must first consider the scandalous, irrational and absurd fact of moral evil. Is evil rooted in the voluntary, or is it rooted in the involuntary? Am I responsible for evil? In short, how is moral evil possible?

⁸⁸Ricoeur, "L'Unité," p. 19. C'est ici que la souffrance prend son sens philosophique, comme impossibilité de coïncider avec soi-même; elle introduit entre moi et moi-même une négativité spécifique, en ce sens que la nécessité n'est pas vécue seulement comme affectante, mais comme blessante: je ne suis pas chez en ma propre nature.

CHAPTER IV

FALLIBLE MAN

How is moral evil possible? In what faculties does the possibility of the fault reside? How can philosophic thought incorporate reflection on the absurdity of the fault? These questions form a problematic residue of Ricoeur's phenomenological analysis of the will. It might appear to the reader that these questions were problematic at the very beginning of Ricoeur's Philosophie de la volonté. Why, then, was it necessary to "bracket" the question of moral evil and initiate a long, sometimes prolix, and often tedious analysis of volition before considering these questions? Why not begin at once with the question of moral evil and inquire how it is possible?

This approach would bypass two important notions that Ricoeur has clarified by his analysis of the will. The first is the intentionality of acts of will. Although Ricoeur accepts Husserl's dictum that consciousness is intentional, he has broadened this notion to include not only the intentionality of theoretical consciousness (which was Husserl's primary concern), but the intentionality of acting and even of consenting to necessity. The second notion that has been clarified is the importance of the owned body, the dynamic interplay of freedom and necessity that forms the background of all acts of will. The integral reconquest of the cogito reveals a will that is free but not wholly free, a will that

is both limited and unlimited, in short, a bound-freedom. One's own body is also significant for the will since it is one's access to the world, and it is only through the body that the cogito can actualize its projects in the world. As Ricoeur might state it, the body is for the will, but the will is by means of the body. The intentional acts of the cogito are directed toward the world, but this is possible only because

my body offers to my will a packet of powers, of know-how amplified by the apprenticeship of habit, excited and disrupted by emotion. But these powers render the world practicable for me, they open to me the useability of the world by the hold they give me on the world.¹

The description of the intentionality of will and the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary in cognitive acts constitutes what Ricoeur prefers to call an "eidetic" analysis of the will, eidetic because its concern is with description of essences. Because evil appears as an irrational surd within the basic structure of the will, it is not subject to eidetic analysis (as Ricoeur uses the term eidetic) and therefore must be "bracketed." That is, a consideration of moral evil must be postponed until after pure

¹Paul Ricoeur, "Négativité et affirmation originaire," Aspects de la dialectique (Recherches de philosophie, II) (Bruges-Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1956), p. 103. "mon corps offre à mon vouloir un paquet de pouvoirs, de savoir-faire, amplifiés par l'apprentissage de l'habitude, excités et dérégles par l'émotion: or ces pouvoirs me rendent le monde praticable, m'ouvrent à l'utilité du monde, par les prises qu'ils me donnent sur le monde."

description has revealed the essential structures of the will.

In thus bracketing the domain of fault, we sketched the neutral sphere of man's most fundamental possibilities, or, as it were, the undifferentiated keyboard upon which the guilty as well as the innocent man might play. Straightway that purely descriptive neutrality endowed all the analyses with a deliberately chosen, abstract turn.²

To remove the brackets from the fault, which is Ricoeur's avowed aim, is not to draw out the consequences of pure description, but to proceed by means of a new method based on new hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that this new method cannot be eidetic description because of the opaque and absurd nature of the fault. The second hypothesis is that "the passage from innocence to fault is not accessible to any description, even an empirical one, but needs to pass through a concrete mythics."³

Ricoeur confesses that several problems result from the attempt to relate a purely descriptive phenomenology to the concrete actuality of the human situation. For example, why is it possible to speak of the "passions" which enslave the will only in the language of ciphers and myth? And if an

²Paul Ricoeur, Fallible Man, trans. Charles Kelbley (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1965), p. xvi.

³Ibid., p. xvii. For the French substantives, l'empirique, l'éidétique, la symbolique, la mythique and la poétique, the translator uses empirics, eidetics, symbolics, mythics, poetics. He explains: "These terms are Germanisms and, excepting poetics and symbolics, as new to the English language as to the French. Since empiricism, symbolism and mythology have other meanings and are associated with schools of thought, we have decided to follow the author's own terminology and use empirics, mythics, etc." Ibid., p. x.

analysis of the fault is possible only by recourse to myths, how can these myths be introduced into philosophic reflection and, after having been introduced, how can philosophic discourse be resumed? These are the basic methodological questions Ricoeur seeks to answer in the second part of Philosophie de la volonté, which is entitled Finitude et Culpabilité.

The task of relating mythical language to philosophical discourse demands a hermeneutics, for the myths of the origin and end of evil (which are the proper subject of the history of religions) cannot be incorporated into philosophy in rough form. First they must be situated in their own universe of discourse which, according to Ricoeur, is more fundamental than speculative language. This pre-philosophical, pre-reflective language Ricoeur calls the language of avowal (l'aveu). Being thoroughly symbolic, this language calls for rules of decipherment, that is, a hermeneutics. Thus, the initial project of existential description must be enlarged to include a hermeneutics of symbols of evil, a task to which the second part of Finitude et Culpabilité, entitled La symbolique du Mal, is devoted.

But at the moment meditation on the myths of evil will be deployed in a hermeneutics of symbols, reflection proceeds in another direction. It wants to know the human occasion for evil, the place where evil is "inserted" in human reality. Even before a symbolism of evil is possible, there must first

be a philosophic anthropology. Central to this anthropology is "the intimate disproportion of man with himself, the theme of man extended between a finite pole and an infinite pole."⁴ This disproportion of man with himself, this paradox of man situated between the finite and the infinite, describes his existential situation in which his essential frailty is to be found. By the concept of frailty philosophic anthropology comes to an encounter with the symbolism of evil; as a result of man's fragility, it is comprehensible that by man evil has found its entrance into the world. But, Ricoeur insists, this is only a "threshold of intelligibility." Beyond this begins the enigma of the absurdity of the fault itself, which can only be spoken of initially in indirect and cophered language.

Ricoeur's anthropology is in no case a description of the radical origin of evil but only the description of the locus of evil, the place where it appears and can be seen. It is possible, he says, that evil did not originate with man, that man is not the original sinner. Yet, even if evil were contemporaneous with the origin of things, even if man were not the originator of evil, the existential significance of evil is the only concern for man in his freedom. The enigma confronting human freedom is that of a will both free and

⁴Paul Ricoeur, "L'antinomie de la réalité humaine et la problème de l'anthropologie philosophique," Il Pensiero, 5 (1960), 273. "la disproportion intime de l'homme à lui-même ou de la structure antinomique de l'homme, distendu entre un pôle d'infinitude et un pôle de finitude."

bound, a will that finds itself always limited and enslaved. The theme of bound-freedom, Ricoeur argues, is the ultimate theme of symbols which invites thought.

One gets the feeling that Ricoeur's point of departure is arbitrary, that there is a lack of coerciveness in his insistence upon the irreducibility of symbolic language. Why are symbols only a "threshold" of intelligibility? Why must reflective thought stop short of the fault itself? Why center the problem of evil within the sphere of human freedom? Ricoeur answers:

The decision to approach evil through man and his freedom is not an arbitrary choice but is suitable to the very nature of the problem. For in point of fact, evil's place of manifestation is apparent only if it is recognized, and it is recognized only if it is taken up by deliberate choice. The decision to understand evil by freedom is itself an undertaking of 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. It is this avowal that links evil to man, not merely as its place of manifestation, but as its author. This act of taking-upon-oneself creates the problem; it is not a conclusion but a starting point.⁵

Ricoeur admits, too, that this decision constitutes a philosophic "wager" (enjeu) which could be indicated by the phrase, "the ethical vision of the world." What does this mean? "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. The grandeur of the ethical vision of the world is to

⁵Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. xxv.

take us as far as possible in this direction."⁶

Another problem, one Ricoeur doesn't raise, concerns a question of doctrine rather than method. If the fault appears as an absurdity that can be confronted only in the language of symbol and myth, and if this symbolic language is irreducible, how can symbols be incorporated in any way into philosophic discourse? And if the fault is an irrational surd, an enigmatic mystery of existence, how can a reconciliation with rational thought be possible? Perhaps an analysis of mythical language expressing a "pre-comprehension" of the fault is both necessary and legitimate. But why baptize as philosophy an enterprise that could perhaps be relegated to philology or to the history of religions? Perhaps Ricoeur will address himself to these problems in future volumes of Philosophie de la volonté. Until he answers them, these problems will form a background of concern for the reader who aspires to follow Ricoeur's project through to completion.

I. THE PATHÉTIQUE OF MISERY

Ricoeur's presuppositions are that pure reflection can approach a "threshold of intelligibility" in which the fallibility of man is inscribed in the very structure of his being, and that fallibility is possible because of man's disproportion with himself. The terms, disproportion, intermediary,

⁶Ibid., p. xxiv.

fragility, fallibility, refer to this structure of human reality which makes moral evil possible.⁷ A further question is in order, however: "We are looking for fallibility in disproportion, but where do we look for disproportion."⁸

Although it might appear that this disproportion can be located in the paradox of finite-infinite man as formulated by Descartes, Ricoeur rejects the Cartesian paradox because it is tied to a psychology of faculties--the finite understanding and the infinite will. The error of placing man in the milieu between God and nothingness, as Descartes did at the beginning of the fourth meditation, is that it treats man as an ontological "region" situated between other "regions." Ricoeur argues that man is an intermediary because his very act of existing is an act of mediating between all levels of reality outside himself. The question is not so much that of the finitude of man in the presence of an infinite God as it is of the paradox of finite-infinite man mediating between different levels of reality.

But where does philosophical speculation on this paradox of finite-infinite man begin? What is philosophy's starting point? Ricoeur answers that philosophy must start not with a part of man but with the whole, that is, "the global view of his non-coincidence with himself, his dispro-

⁷Ricoeur, "L'Antinomie," p. 274

⁸Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 4.

portion, and the mediation he brings about in existing."⁹
 Since philosophy's concern is with meditation on the totality, this totality itself must be prior to reflection on it. That is, the totality must first be given in a "precomprehension" of man's disproportion.

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. However, 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.¹⁰

Had Ricoeur not explicitly labeled this a hypothesis, one could argue that there is nothing coercive in such a methodological device. Why must philosophy commence with reflection on a pre-reflective totality? This is certainly just one among a great number of other possible models for philosophical reflection. Also, is it not the case that there is no totality until philosophy abstracts it from lived experience? To reject this hypothesis, however, is to reject Ricoeur's entire philosophical anthropology. To accept it is to wager with Ricoeur that by means of this "precomprehension" one can gain a better understanding of the human situation.

⁹Ibid., p. 8.

¹⁰Ibid., pp. 8-9.

Philosophy first encounters this precomprehension of man's disproportion with himself in the "margins" of philosophy in terms of what Ricoeur calls the pathétique of "misery." "This pathos is, as it were, the matrix of any philosophy which makes disproportion and intermediacy the ontic characteristic of man."¹¹ Two philosophers for whom the pathétique mediation of human existence played a significant role are Plato, for whom the soul was a "mixture," and Pascal, who expressed man's mediational situation in terms of the rhetoric of two infinities.

In the Symposium and the Republic, Plato describes the soul as mediating between the permanent and the transitory, a description that is of necessity couched in myth, allegory, and symbol. In the first part of the Republic the soul is described in the symbolic terms of the three orders of the state. But in the fourth book Plato abandons the political imagery and describes the soul as a field of forces which sustains the double attractions of reason and desire. The third term, the thumos, indicates the enigmatic and fragile position of the soul. The myths of fragility, in turn, are connected to the myth of the fall of the soul in the Phaedrus--a fall preceded by and made possible by the soul's inherent fragility. This precomprehension of the soul's essential fragility is expressed only in mythical and symbolic terms.

¹¹Ibid., p. 9.

For Pascal man is situated between two infinities, the infinitely great and the infinitely small. With regard to the infinitely great, man is nothingness; with regard to nothingness, man is a mediation between nothing and everything. In Pascal the soul's fragility is not expressed in mythical language but in rhetoric.

The task of reflective thought is to incorporate this precomprehension of the mediational quality of human existence into philosophic discourse. What philosophy gains in clarity, however, it loses in depth, for Ricoeur argues that there is a wealth of meaning in Platonic myth and Pascalian rhetoric that reflection cannot equal. This is why pure reflection can only approach the threshold of intelligibility. The residue of meaning in myth and rhetoric must be appropriated by a different means--a method that can learn from symbol and myth and can use this prephilosophic comprehension of man's fragility to recharge speculative thought. But before turning to a hermeneutics of symbols, Ricoeur intends to push pure reflection to its limits. He says, "It is now the task of pure reflection to understand fallibility and, in understanding it, to break down the nebula of 'misery' into distinct forms."¹²

II. KNOWING

The problem of philosophical anthropology, as Ricoeur

¹²Ibid., p. 25.

has outlined it, is how to proceed from the pathos of "misery" to philosophical discourse. The first step is "transcendental" reflection, that is, reflection on the possibility of knowing. The other categories of philosophic anthropology (acting and feeling) would not be true categories if they did not first undergo the test of an examination of the power of knowing. Since transcendental reflection is not introspection, but rather proceeds from the objectivity of the "thing," it avoids becoming lost in the pathétique precomprehension of human disproportion. "This investigation of the conditions of possibility of an object's structure breaks with the pathétique and introduces the problem of disproportion and synthesis into the philosophic dimension."¹³

Finite Pole: Perspective

My opening to the world is by means of my body and its acts. But my opening to the world is also a limitation since every view of something is a finite point of view; my body is the "from here" (ici d'où) of all perceptions, the "zero-origin" of perceptions. This limitation of perspective is not experienced directly but only reflectively in referring the "thing" back to the "here" from which I perceive it.

We see, then, in what sense it is true to say that the finitude of man consists in receiving his objects: in the sense that it belongs to the essence of perception to be inadequate, to the essence of this inadequacy to refer back to the onesided

¹³Ibid., p. 28.

character of perception, and to the essence of the onesidedness of the thing's profiles to refer back to the otherness of the body's initial positions from where the thing appears. . . . To perceive from here is the finitude of perceiving something. The point of view is the ineluctable initial narrowness of my openness to the world.¹⁴

Infinite Pole: The Verb

The very act of speaking of man's finite perspective reveals that man has gone beyond this finitude, for it is finite man who speaks of his own finitude. Ricoeur asks, "All perception is perspectival. But how could I recognize a perspective, in the very act of perceiving, if in some way I did not escape from my perspective?"¹⁵ One escapes from the limitations of finite perspective by expressing this limitation, by expressing the absent or unperceived sides of the thing given to perception. Through language I transcend the limitations of my finite point of view, for language does not transmit the finite perspective but the meaning which goes beyond this perspective in my intention.

By the act of naming I can say that one appearance signifies all the others. For instance, the name "tree" transcends any particular perspective, its greenness, its sappy odor, its rustling, etc. To clarify this transcending power of language, one must continue the distinction between a noun and a verb initiated by Plato and Aristotle. The

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 35-36.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 40.

verb has a double significance, for in addition to naming an action it designates the time of the action and also attributes an additional meaning to the subject. To say that Socrates walks is to say that the walking exists now and it is Socrates who is walking. This double intentionality of the verb allows for false negation, false affirmation, true affirmation, or true negation. Meditation upon this four-fold power of the verb, in the tradition going from Saint Thomas to Descartes and Malebranche, affirms that the free will is also the judging will. By this is assured the mastery of man over his thoughts. Ricoeur notes:

The verb considered as a declaration of being is the reference to present time, and the reference to the subject is the verb as relational. The two dimensions of truth, existential and relational, are thus implied in the verb. Accordingly, if freedom of judgment lies in the act of affirmation, if the intentional correlate of affirmation is the verb, and if the verb aims at the truth, then freedom and truth form the noesis-noema pair which is constitutive of human affirmation.¹⁶

Synthesis: Pure Imagination

Pure reflection reveals the disproportion between the verb, which speaks of being and truth at the risk of error, and observation, which is tied both to the phenomena and to a point of view. Ricoeur says, "This 'disproportion' is at once the duality of the understanding and sensibility, in Kantian terms, and the duality of the will and understanding

¹⁶Ibid., p. 57.

in Cartesian language."¹⁷ The disproportion between finite perspective and the infinite verb gives rise to a synthesis that Ricoeur, in good Kantian fashion, calls "pure imagination." This third term, however, is not susceptible of reflective analysis in the same way as sensibility is reflected in consciousness of perspective or the verb is reflected in consciousness of signification and in the consciousness of affirmation. Rather than being given in itself, this third term is given only in the "thing." What is the "thing"? Ricoeur answers, "It is the unity which is already realized in a correlate¹⁸ of speech and point of view; it is the synthesis as effected outside. That synthesis, inasmuch as it is in a correlate, bears the name of objectivity."¹⁹ In other words, this synthesis is the objectivity of the object, an objectivity not "in" consciousness but in the face of consciousness; it is the mode of being of the thing.

In defending his return to Kant, Ricoeur says that any philosophy which refuses both absolute idealism and radical empiricism must ultimately return to the Kantian problem of the conditions of appearance, or "pure intuition" in the transcendental imagination. The profound discovery of Kant was that this duality between perceiving and thinking, between sensibility and understanding, is synthesized in the

¹⁷Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁸The French here is vis-à-vis.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 58.

unity of the Object, but the transcendental imagination, of which it is the Object (vis-à-vis), remains enigmatic and closed to reflection. The objectival synthesis can be described as consciousness, but not self-consciousness; it is consciousness in the object, not in the person.

"Consciousness" is not yet the unity of a person in itself and for itself; it is not one person; it is no one. The "I" of I think is merely the form of a world for anyone and everyone. It is consciousness in general, that is, a pure and simple project of the object.²⁰

The transcendental synthesis of the finite perspective and the infinite verb reveals man as mediating, as mediating the finite and the infinite in things. But the transcendental synthesis alone does not answer the question how man is an intermediary for himself; for this one must go beyond the transcendental synthesis.²¹ Although the transcendental synthesis is of itself insufficient, it is a necessary first step in a philosophical anthropology. "Whoever would want to commit it to the flames and start right off with a philosophy of the person would leave the pathétique only to fall into a fanciful ontology of being and nothingness."²²

III. ACTING

Although the transcendental synthesis was inadequate to answer the question how man is disproportionate with him-

²⁰Ibid., p. 7-. ²¹Ricoeur, "L'Antinomie," p. 279.

²²Ricoeur, Fallible Man, pp. 70-71.

self, it serves the important function of making totality problematic and, in turn, providing a guideline for method. The transcendental synthesis demonstrates that the total view of man can only be approached by degrees; consequently, the notion of totality must be taken as a "directive idea" in the Kantian sense.

The first stage of a philosophical anthropology was concerned only with the universe of "things," an abstract framework of our life-world. "In order to constitute a world, these things lack all the affective and practical aspects, all the attendant values and counter-values which attract or repel, all the obstacles, the ways and means, tools and instruments which make it practicable or impracticable and, in any event, difficult."²³ The transition from things to persons is the passage from the theoretical to the practical, from a theory of knowledge to a theory of will. All the finite aspects of willing are included under the notion of character; all the infinite aspects of willing are included under the notion of happiness. The mediational third term, which corresponds to the transcendental imagination in the transcendental synthesis, is here the constitution of the person. Whereas the transcendental synthesis is guided by the notion of the "thing," the practical synthesis is guided by the ideal of the "person" who is constituted by the moral notion, "respect."

²³Ibid., p. 73.

Finite Pole: Character

Ricoeur's analysis of willing echoes his analysis of volition in Philosophie de la volonté, only from a slightly different perspective. All the aspects of practical finitude are summed up in the notion of character, and all the aspects of the transgression of this finitude are included in the notion of happiness (bonheur). Since character is a totality of the finite aspects of willing, it can only be approached by degrees. Consequently, Ricoeur demonstrates the nature of character first from the point of view of affective perspective and then from the point of view of practical perspective.

Affective perspective. Whereas in perception the point of view is disinterested and is only a neutral perspective, in willing I am motivated by certain affections and desires. Objects appear to me lovable, attractive, hateful, and so forth. In short, all human actions are motivated. "I posit actions only by letting myself be influenced by motives. I advance toward . . . (toward the 'to be done') only by supporting myself upon . . . (upon the lovable, the hateful, etc.)."²⁴ Ricoeur calls this practical receptivity "inclination," which he uses in the classical sense of incliner sans necessiter.

But where is the finitude in the receptivity of desire? In perception the finitude of sensory perception consists in the narrowness of perspective. In an analogous way,

²⁴Ibid., p. 80.

desires are essentially outside myself; but the source of these exterior motivations is confused and wrapped in obscurity. The opacity of motivation and desire confuses the "clarity of desire," (which Ricoeur identifies with the intentionality of desire) and thus gives notice of the finitude of acts of will. Concerning the confusion of desire, Ricoeur comments:

One might well say that it is the reverse or the underside of the intentionality of desire, therefore that in the aim which does not aim and that in choice which does not choose. It is a way one "feels" or "the mood in which one finds oneself," which actually desire nothing, nothing else and nothing definite, a total and undivided experience of my body which is no longer traversed by all its intentions toward the world but turned back into itself, no longer a mediator but feeling itself. Coenesthesia is precisely this.²⁵

This adherence to self, this "feeling oneself" and "finding oneself" form the background of all acts of will. "Just as one's position cannot be shared with another, so also the affective situation in which I find myself and feel myself cannot be exchanged."²⁶ Adherence to self is particularly expressed in situations of danger as the will to live. Fear of death and desire for life constitute an irreplaceable point of view.

Practical Perspective. The practical aspect of the finitude of character is the tendency to form habits. Habit is the inverse of desire, for whereas desire gives rise to action, habit, by fixing tastes, limits the range of possi-

²⁵Ibid., p. 84.

²⁶Ibid., p. 85.

bilities for action. There is an inertia in habit, for a habit is a tendency to continue rather than to commence.

These two aspects of the finitude of willing--adherence to self and the tendency toward habits--lead to the total view of the finitude of willing in the notion of character. Just as in the transcendental synthesis perspective designated human finitude with respect to the objectivity of things, character is the limited opening of the total range of motivation considered as a whole. What this means is that character is the way I exercise my own freedom. Spread before me is an unlimited range of possibilities; character is the way I appropriate these possibilities. Ricoeur states, "Character is the perspectival orientation of the total field of motivation."²⁷ Just as body is the "zero-origin" of all my perceptions, character is the origin of all my range of motivations. "All values are accessible to all men, but in a way that is peculiar to each one. It is in this sense that 'each' man is 'man'."²⁸

But character is not a true zero-origin, for whereas in perception I can change my perspective by moving my body, there is no way I can change the zero-origin of my total field of motivation. If character is taken to mean the unchangeable point of view of all my motivations, even the most

²⁷Ricoeur, "L'Antinomie," p. 284. "le caractère c'est l'orientation perspectiviste du champ total de motivation."
 . . ."

²⁸Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 93.

radical kind of conversion cannot change it. Ricoeur adds:
 "If I cannot change my character, if I can neither choose nor repudiate its perspective, then character is not only immutable but indistinguishable from the fact of my existence."²⁹
 All my points of view originate from an origin that is closed to my consciousness, namely, my own birth. My character is mine by virtue of my birth. "My birth therefore is nothing other than my character; to say that I was born is merely to point to my character as that which I find."³⁰

Infinite Pole: Happiness

The infinite pole of all my acts of will is happiness (bonheur). This should not be confused with the naive idea of happiness as that which tends toward a terminable result such as the satisfaction of desire or the elimination of pain. Imagination may try to lengthen this kind of pleasure by prolonging the memory of it, but it remains nevertheless a finite end. Happiness, as Ricoeur uses the term, is entirely different. It is the infinite horizon for all acts of will just as the world is the horizon for the object of perception.

Taken in this sense, happiness is not the termination of specific desires but the destiny of humanity itself. The total field of human motivation is directed by character, the zero-origin of this orientation. The total range of motiva-

³⁰Ibid., p. 96.

tion, the "existential project" of man, is the infinite horizon of this orientation. This infinite horizon is happiness. Happiness is not realized, however, in specific acts or individual events; at best, events can only point in the direction of happiness. "The events which bespeak happiness are those which remove obstacles and uncover a vast landscape of existence. The excess of meaning, the overflow, the immense: that is the sign that we are 'directed toward' happiness."³¹

Synthesis: The Person

The synthesis of character and happiness is the idea of the person, an intended synthesis rather than an experienced synthesis. It is the Self which was lacking in the Kantian "I think." The Person is the correlate of the objectival synthesis of perception and the verb. The ideal of the person is the ideal of humanity, humanity being taken to refer not to the collection of all men, but to the essential quality of being human.

Humanity is the person's personality, just as objectivity was the thing's thingness; it is the mode of being on which every empirical appearance of what we call a human being should be patterned. In Heideggerian language it is the ontological constitution of human "beings."³²

Following Kant, Ricoeur argues that the ideal of a person is that of a reasonable being existing as an end in itself, and since the person is the ideal of humanity, the ideal of the

³¹Ibid., p. 105.

³²Ibid., p. 107.

person is a way of treating others and of being treated.

The synthesis of the person is constituted by the moral notion, respect. Respect serves the same function in the practical synthesis as the transcendental imagination serves in the transcendental synthesis.³³ For Kant, the transcendental imagination was the third term belonging both to the understanding and sensibility. In an analogous way, respect is the third term belonging both to sensibility (the faculty of desiring) and to reason (the demand of obligation coming from practical reason).

One could object that the Kantian formulation of respect is a part of a pessimistic anthropology dominated by the theory of radical evil which presupposes a duality of good and evil, and man has already chosen evil. Ricoeur replies that even if this is the case, we can recognize man as fallen only if we have access to the primordial from which he has fallen. The problem, then, is "to rediscover, through the consideration of an ethical dualism and prior to its condemnation of sensibility, the structure of fallibility which has made this dualism possible."³⁴ To accomplish this, pure

³³Ricoeur, "L'Antinomie," p. 285. Ricoeur acknowledges that Kantian respect is for law, and the person is only one instance of this respect. He says, "However, in betraying Kantian orthodoxy I think I bring out the Kantian philosophy of the person which is outlined in the Foundation and stifled in the Critique of Practical Reason, the latter being wholly devoted to the elucidation of the synthesis of will and law in autonomy." Fallible Man, p. 111.

³⁴Ibid., p. 117.

reflection must proceed to another moment of man's disproportion with himself by means of an analysis of feeling.

IV. FEELING

Ricoeur's reflections began with a precomprehension of man's "misery" by means of the pathétique understanding of the mediational quality of human existence. Is it possible, he asks, for philosophy to recapture this pathetic understanding of man? If so, it must be accomplished by means of a philosophy of feeling (sentiment), a philosophy of the heart (coeur) or of Gemüt. But is such a philosophy of the heart possible without a relapse to the prereflective? Can a theory of feeling be brought to the level of reflective thought and in so doing return to the intuition of Plato for whom the thumos was the living transition between bios and logos?

If a philosophy of feeling is possible, it is feeling which should express the fragility of the intermediate being that we are. In other words, what is at stake in a philosophy of feeling is the very gap between the purely transcendental exegesis of "disproportion" and the lived experience of "misery."³⁵

The Intentionality of Feeling

By momentarily disregarding the various "levels" of feeling (that is, its "vertical" aspects), one can discover the intentionality of feeling which appears to pure reflection as a paradox. Through feeling I have a more profound

³⁵Ibid., p. 125.

relation to the world than that of representation which institutes the polarity of the subject and the object, but because our language is built upon the subject-object distinction, the intentionality of feeling appears to be paradoxical. On the one hand, feelings designate qualities felt in persons, things, and in the world. On the other hand, feelings reveal the way in which the self is intimately affected. Feeling appears "as the unity of an intention and an affection: of an intention towards the world and of an affection of myself."³⁶ The paradox of feeling is: how can the same experience designate an aspect of an object and by this very aspect express the intimacy of the self to this object?

The paradox of feeling illustrates the reciprocity between knowing and feeling. Because knowing "exteriorizes" and posits its object in being, it "detaches" the object and opposes it to the self. Feeling, in contrast, exhibits the self's complicity in and connection to the world as being deeper than all duality and polarity.

Consequently feeling 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.³⁷

³⁶Paul Ricoeur, "Le sentiment," Edmund Husserl 1859-1959. Vol. 4 of Phaenomenologica. (La Haye: Nijhoff, 1959), p. 264. "comme l'unité d'une intention et d'une affection, d'une intention vers le monde et d'une affection du moi;"

³⁷Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 134.

This intimate relation to the world sustained by feeling was expressed by the scholastics in the term connaturality. The connaturality between my being and another being is that by which I am "attached" to an object and interiorize it.³⁸

The Disproportion of Feeling

Whereas the "horizontal" analysis of feeling shows its double intentionality, a "vertical" analysis demonstrates the various levels of feeling, illustrating how feeling interiorizes the disproportion.

Ricoeur argues that it can be demonstrated that there are two kinds of terminations of affections: One kind terminates in finite acts or processes; this is pleasure. The other terminates in the perfection of the total work of man; this is happiness (bonheur).³⁹ Pleasure is finite because it terminates in finite acts, yet pleasure is a good because it is perfect (in the sense of whole or complete). But the perfection of pleasure is finite since pleasure takes place in an instant and is precarious and perishable. In addition, pleasure is attached to corporeal life and because of this relation can be realized only in an instant and in a static way.

Happiness can be discovered only if pleasure is sus-

³⁸Ricoeur, "Le Sentiment," p. 263.

³⁹Although Ricoeur also uses bonheur to refer to the infinite pole of the practical synthesis, he means it to be taken here in the fuller sense of beatitude. See Fallible Man, p. 140.

pended for purposes of analysis, for happiness is that which is an end in itself and can be referred to nothing outside itself, not even to pleasure. "That is why," Ricoeur says, "Aristotle does not build the idea of happiness directly on pleasure, not even on the pleasant, but goes back to the very principle of activity and its dynamism."⁴⁰ The classical virtues of the Greek Paideia--temperance, wisdom, justice, piety, and courage--guide men not toward pleasure but toward the final totality of human activity. Yet, happiness is not opposed to pleasure; it appears in a hierarchy of pleasure as the acme of pleasure, the highest good, the greatest of all pleasures. "Pleasure is a finite achievement, perfect in limitation, as Aristotle has admirably demonstrated Happiness is not a sum but a whole."⁴¹

A philosophy of feeling without an accompanying philosophy of reason is incomplete since what distinguishes pleasure from happiness is reason--reason in the Kantian sense as demand for totality. Reason makes apparent the unity of the transcendental, practical, and affective: "In reason I 'demand' what I 'pursue' in action and that to which 'I aspire' in feeling."⁴² Both reason and feeling demand totali-

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 146.

⁴¹Ricoeur, "Le Sentiment," p. 267. "Le plaisir est un achèvement fini, parfait dans la limitation, comme Aristote l'a admirablement montré le Bonheur n'est pas une somme, mais un tout."

⁴²Ricoeur, Fallible Man, pp. 154-55.

ties, and it is reason as access to totality that engenders feeling, which in turn "interiorizes" reason.

Reason without feeling remains in the duality, in the distance. Whatever being may be, feeling attests that we are part of it: it is not the Entirely-Other but the medium or primordial space in which we continue to exist.⁴³

This fundamental feeling, which can be called "ontological" or "spiritual" because it transcends the limits of bodily life, can be schematized in two directions: interhuman relations and suprapersonal relations. Interpersonal feelings are schematized under the heading of the "we" (nous); suprapersonal feelings are schematized under the sign of "ideas." Both the interpersonal and the suprapersonal manifest our intrinsic relation to Being as a whole. Interpersonal feelings are only possible because of a creative theme which gives meaning to society. This, in turn, is the "idea" which bestows a horizon of meaning on the growth of the interpersonal. These ontological feelings manifest the being-with of the interpersonal, the being-for of the suprapersonal, and the being-in of our relation to Being.

The counterpart of these schematized feelings are unformed feelings which can be placed neither under the schema of the interpersonal or the suprapersonal. These unformed feelings, "moods," Stimmungen, are such feelings as delight, joy, serenity. Some unformed feelings are also ontological

⁴³Ibid., p. 156.

feelings, and "Through their formless character they denote the fundamental feeling of which the determined feelings are the schemata, namely, man's openness to being."⁴⁴ Not all unformed feelings have this ontological intention, however, and these are to be found on all levels of existence, particularly on the level of vital functions: feelings of discomfort, good moods, bad moods, levity, vivacity, fatigue, etc.

The two primary ontological feelings are anguish and beatitude or joy. Anguish is a negative feeling and beatitude is a primary feeling. Ricoeur says, "If being is that which beings are not, anguish is the feeling par excellence of ontological difference. But Joy attests that we have a part of us linked to this very lack of being in beings."⁴⁵

Conflict: the Thumos

In the transcendental synthesis the duality of perspective and the verb is synthesis in the object. In the practical synthesis the duality of character and happiness is synthesized in the person. In feeling there is not a finite and an infinite pole but the duality of pleasure, and happiness is interiorized and dramatized in conflict, which is indicative of man's humanity.

This disproportion of feeling sustains a new mediation, that of the θυμός, that of the "heart." This mediation corresponds in the order of feeling to the silent mediation of transcendental

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 159.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 161.

imagination in the order of knowledge. But whereas transcendental imagination is entirely reduced to making possible the objectivity that we could call presently the tranquil point where reason and sensibility rest, this mediation is reflected in itself in an interminable affective request where the fragility of the human being is attested.⁴⁶

In harking back to the thumos of Platonic thought, Ricoeur places the conflict of feeling squarely in the mediation between life and thought. It is in this intermediary region that the self is constituted, a self that is different from natural beings and different from other persons. Because the thumos is constitutive of human nature, any exemplification of it must be found in the interpersonal or interhuman relationships of existence. Ricoeur agrees with Kant that these relationships always appear perverted or "fallen." The problem is how to perceive the primordial through the "fallen," how to understand the fallen as deviation. This is possible, Ricoeur argues, by means of the powers of imagination. I can imagine a realm in which interpersonal relations were not fallen or perverted, and by so doing can discover the essence of these feelings.

But this imagination is not a fanciful dream; it is an "imaginative variation," to use a Husserlian term, which manifests the essence by breaking the prestige of the fact. In imagining another state of affairs or another kingdom, I perceive the pos-

⁴⁶Ricoeur, "Le Sentiment," p. 273. Cette disproportion du sentiment suscite une médiation nouvelle, celle du θυμός, celle du "cœur"; cette médiation correspond, dans l'ordre du sentiment, à la médiation silencieuse de l'imagination transcendante dans l'ordre de la connaissance; mais alors que l'imagination transcendante se réduit tout entière à rendre possible l'objectivité que nous appelons

sible, and in the possible, the essential.⁴⁷

For the purposes of his analysis, Ricoeur follows Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View and considers the interpersonal relations of possession, power, and esteem in their perverted forms of Habsucht, Herrschaft, and Ehrsucht.

Possession. The first way the self is related to the world and to others is through possession (avoir), for the self can constitute itself only with reference to the "mine." The objective correlate which can here serve as a guide is the economic dimension. The economic object is not simply a source of pleasure or an obstacle to be overcome (this is only the level of animal need). Rather, the economic object is an available good. "Insofar as the thing is 'available' it creates the whole cycle of feelings relative to acquisition, appropriation, possession and preservation."⁴⁸

The relation of the self to the economic object is twofold, for not only do I possess the object, I also depend on it so that it, in a sense, possesses me. In addition, the economic relationship is coextensive with my relation to others, for the "mine" and the "yours" are mutually exclusive. This is not to say that innocent relations of posses-

tout à l'heure le point tranquille où se reposent la raison et la sensibilité, cette médiation se réfléchit en elle-même dans une requête affective interminable où s'atteste la fragilité de l'être homme.

⁴⁷Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 170.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 174.

sion are unimaginable, for although every economic relation must be referred to the "mine," I can imagine perfectly innocent relations of possession in which a man would possess only what he himself creates. What is the function of such an imaginative variation?

The imagination of an innocent appropriation does not have the function of revealing a historical origin of evil but of constituting the "bad" significance of Habsucht, in grounding it upon the human quest for having and in designating Habsucht as a "perversion" of this primordial feeling.⁴⁹

Power. The second way in which the self is constituted with reference to the world is through relations of power. These relations are not reducible to those of possession. "Man's presence among things is a phenomenon of domination which makes man a force subjugating other forces. Now the force of man's work also figures among the forces to be mastered."⁵⁰ On the simplest level man's work is organized into those relations of authority determined by the social and economic order.

Regardless of the forms taken by society's social and economic structures, the means of production are recognized and guaranteed by an authority which, in the final analysis, is political. Considered as an instrument of power, political authority embodied in the state is the monopoly of legitimate physical constraint and, ideally, the use of this power will coincide with the moral demands requiring it. In

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 176.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 177.

actual practice, however, political power seems linked with evil; it seems to degenerate into Herrschaft. But "imaginative variation" shows that power is not inherently evil, for it is possible to imagine a difference between power and violence. Feelings of power are inherent in man's humanity, but these feelings are in themselves neutral to good and evil. "In turning away from this meaning, in making himself foreign and alienated from this sense of non-violent power, man becomes alienated from himself."⁵¹

Esteem. The third way the self is related to the world is through feelings of esteem. These feelings do not relate the self to a world of objects (as in possession) or to structures of authority (as in power) but to a world of other persons. Esteem is a demand for the recognition of self by other persons, for this is a way of reaffirming my own existence as a self. The perversion of this desire for esteem is egoism, vanity, solipsism.

The demand for mutual esteem is not satisfied by the relations of possession, which are mutually exclusive, or by relations of power, which are asymmetrical. The self demands interpersonal relations because the self needs to be esteemed, approved, recognized. It is only in mutual esteem that the self is constituted. The formal objectivity of esteem is the other as an end in himself. The "what" I esteem in the

⁵¹Ibid., p. 182.

other, and that I expect for myself, is his "existence-value," a value not only for-me, but in-itself. Kant called the value of the person as an end in itself his "humanity."

If humanity is what I esteem in another and in myself, I esteem myself as a thou for another. I esteem myself in the second person; in that case self-love, in its essential texture, is not distinct from sympathy, which means that reflective feelings do not differ from intentional feelings. . . . Because the relation to self is an interiorized relation to another, opinion and belief are the core of it; worth is neither seen nor known but believed.⁵²

"Fragility" is the name given to man's disproportion as it appears in the affective order. This disproportion was first seen in the transcendental synthesis as the duality of perspective and verb. In the practical sphere it appears as the duality of character and happiness; in the affective sphere it appears as the conflict between pleasure and happiness, and is brought to its highest peak in the fragile relations of man to the world of economic object, politics, and other persons.

V. THE CONCEPT OF FALLIBILITY

To say that man is fallible is to say that the possibility of moral evil is inscribed in his very constitution. To fully understand the concept of fallibility it is necessary to discover in what traits of human constitution the possibility of fallibility resides and to examine the nature

⁵²Ibid., pp. 188-89

of this possibility.

One philosophic tradition maintained that evil is occasioned by human limitation; fallibility is to be identified with finitude. The whole of Ricoeur's anthropological analysis has been a denial of this thesis. He says, "Not just any limitation constitutes the possibility of failing, but that specific limitation which consists, for human reality, in not coinciding with itself."⁵³ Although this disproportion can be seen in the theoretical and practical aspects of existence, it is most clearly revealed in feeling, for in feeling the disproportion is interiorized and revealed as conflict. But in what sense does fallibility make evil possible? Ricoeur answers that fallibility is the occasion, the origin, and the capacity for the fault.⁵⁴

⁵³Ibid., p. 204.

⁵⁴With his concern for methodological exactness, Ricoeur notes that the categories of his anthropology are merely formal, and if they are applied to existential reality they must be "deduced" in the Kantian sense. That is, it must be shown that these categories are the conditions for the possibility of discourse about man. For this purpose Ricoeur chooses the Kantian categories of quality: reality, negation, and limitation. These categories are expressed in anthropology as originating affirmation (through which I affirm my relation to reason and existence); existential difference (a recognition of the non-necessity of existing); and human mediation (which is synonymous with fragility, or the limitation proper to man). Fallible Man, pp. 205-16.

It is difficult to see why Ricoeur insists upon a "deduction" of the categories of his anthropology unless it is for the sake of its architectonic. There is nothing added by the deduction, for originating affirmation includes the infinite poles of the disproportion, existential difference embraces the finite poles of the disproportion, and human limitation is the fragility of the synthesis of the finite and infinite poles. Ricoeur used these categories to restate his

Fallibility is the occasion for the fault in that it is the point of least resistance through which evil is possible. But there is a gap between the formal possibility of evil and its existential actuality, and the leap between the formal and the actual is closed to pure reflection.

The enigma thenceforward is the "leap" itself from fallibility to the already fallen. Our anthropological reflection remained short of this leap, but ethics arrives too late. To catch sight of that leap we must make a fresh start and enter upon a new type of reflection bearing on the avowal that consciousness makes of it and on the symbols of evil in which this avowal is expressed.⁵⁵

One could object that evil is possible only if it is real, in which case fallibility would only mark the appearance of an evil which is already present in the description of human limitation. In a sense this is true, Ricoeur acknowledges, for the primordial condition of man can be seen only "through" his fallen state. In this sense fallibility is the origin of the fault, for "it is through hate and strife that one can perceive the intersubjective structure of the respect which constitutes the difference of consciousness; it is through misunderstanding and lying that the primordial structure of speech reveals the identity and otherness of minds."⁵⁶

anthropology in an article entitled "Négativité et affirmation originaire," Aspects de la dialectique (Recherches de philosophie, II), (Bruges-Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1956), pp. 101-24.

⁵⁵Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 219.

⁵⁶Ibid., pp. 220-21.

The primordial condition of man does not refer to an actual historical condition of human purity, but only to the imaginative variation which reveals the fault as di-gression and de-viation.

The imagination of innocence is nothing but the representation of a human life that would realize all its fundamental possibilities without any discrepancy between its primordial destination and its historical manifestation. Innocence would be fallibility without fault, and this fallibility would be only fragility, only weakness, but by no means downfall.⁵⁷

But not only is fallibility the origin of the fault, it is also the capacity for the fault since man's constitutional frailty makes him capable of failing.

Philosophical anthropology must end here, for the concept of fallibility is as far in the direction of the fault as pure reflection can proceed. Reflection revealed the fault as a possibility but not as a necessary condition of being human. One must confront the fault in its own terms, in the language of symbol and myth, for whenever man has avowed the fault, he has done so in symbolic language. After a detour through a descriptive analysis of symbols of evil will it perhaps be possible to renew philosophy by meditation on the fault.

⁵⁷Ibid., pp. 221-22.

CHAPTER V

FROM FALLIBILITY TO THE FAULT

Ricoeur's thought has progressed from an analysis of the structures of the will to an investigation of the possibility of moral evil. Fallibility was revealed by pure reflection to be a result of man's fragile condition as a being precariously poised between the infinite and the finite, the voluntary and the involuntary, freedom and nature. But pure reflection revealed nothing in man's fundamental possibilities which makes evil a necessary result of this fragility; evil is a possibility but not a necessity of human limitation. The question now raised is where does philosophy encounter the existential fact of evil? How can reflection pass from fallibility to the fault?

It might appear that the locus for philosophy's confrontation of the problem of evil is the doctrine of original sin, for this is the place most classical and even most modern philosophies have begun. Ricoeur argues, however, that to begin here is a mistake, for nothing is more misleading than the facade of rationality presented by the doctrine of original sin. Although this notion is one of the keystones of Christian theology, it presents only one of many possible rationalizations of the problem of evil. And because it was developed during a period of reaction to gnostic tendencies in the church, it is a notion of evil corrupted by the spirit of the age. Even though it was anti-gnostic in

its inception,

it appertained to the age of the gnostic in the sense that it attempted to rationalize the Christian experience of radical evil in the same manner as the gnostic erected in "knowledge" his pseudo-philosophic interpretation of the original dualism, of the fall of Sophia or of every other entity anterior to man.¹

To avoid this false gnosis, philosophy must begin with what is more primitive, less articulated, and more spontaneous, for behind the speculative doctrine of original sin lie myths of evil which, being more primitive, express man's comprehension of his place in the world.

For the modern mind myth is only myth; it is not history in the critical sense because the times and places of myth cannot be correlated with actual times and actual places. For the purposes of reflection myth must be demythologized, that is stripped of its etiological function and raised to the dignity of symbol. The loss of the etiological function of myth reveals the symbol's power of discovery, making it a vehicle of modern thought and enabling it to be incorporated into philosophic discourse.

Perhaps, then, it will be possible for philosophy to begin with these demythologized myths of evil. Not at all, Ricoeur insists, for myth itself is not the most fundamental

¹Paul Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, Vol. II part 2 of Philosophie de la volonté (Paris: Aubier, 1960), p. 12. "Il appartient à l'âge de la gnose en ce sens qu'il tente de rationaliser l'expérience chrétienne du mal radical de la même manière que le gnose érigea en 'connaissance' son interprétation pseudo-philosophique du dualisme originaire de la chute de Sophia ou de toute autre entité antérieure à l'homme."

expression of evil. Behind the myths of evil there is an avowal (aveu) of evil in primary symbols. This dimension can only be regained for the modern mind by a repetition of the experience of the fault that the symbols make explicit.

But is this possible? The answer is "no," if there is no language behind and prior to the myth which articulates this confession. But there is in fact such a language: "there is the language of the avowal of which the language of myth and that of speculation are revivals of the second and third degree."² The experience of the fault itself takes the form of symbols of blindness, ambiguity, and scandal. The language of the avowal of the fault is the counterpart of this experience of fear and anguish, for this experience gives rise to a language containing all the ambiguity of the experience itself. This is why the symbols of evil, being complex, are composed of a series of "levels" of meaning.

One of the most complex symbols of evil is guilt, a highly individualized expression of the fault. More fundamental than this, however, is the symbol of sin, which includes all men and designates the actual situation of man in the presence of God. But even prior to the symbol of sin is the more exteriorized expression of the fault as stain. In this symbol evil is conceived of as a spot which contaminates and infects from the outside. Ricoeur refers to the symbols of

²Ibid., p. 14. "il y a le langage de l'aveu, dont le langage du myth et celui de la spéculation sont des reprises de second et de troisième degré."

stain, sin, and guilt as the "primary" symbols of the fault.³

Criteriology of Symbols

The primary symbols of the fault are found in three forms: The cosmic symbols of the sacred in hierophanies, the oneirotic symbols of dreams, and the symbolic expressions of the poetic imagination. Given this threefold dimension of symbol, how are the primary symbols to be analyzed? One must first begin with an eidetic analysis of symbols; by "eidetic" Ricoeur means a description of the essential structure of symbolic language and particularly of the intentionality of symbols. This kind of analysis will distinguish symbols from what they are not and will clear the way for an explication of the nucleus of meaning common to all dimensions of symbols. Ricoeur's strategy is to show in what ways a symbol differs from a sign, from an allegory, from a symbol of symbolic logic, and from myth.

In a sense, every symbol is a sign, if sign is taken to mean an expression that is a bearer of meaning. But it is saying too much to assert that every sign is a symbol. Although both signs and symbols refer to something beyond themselves and stand for this something, symbols, in contrast to

³Ricoeur does not intend to develop a general theory of myth but to restrict his attention to myths of evil and, even more specifically, to those myths which speak of the origin and end of evil. He hopes that this restriction of his analysis will be rewarded by an increasingly rigorous understanding of the intentionality of myth in relation to man and his bond with the Sacred.

signs, have a double intentionality. Consider, for example, the symbols of the pure and the impure--such words as "stain" or "dirty"--words which point to something beyond themselves but which do not resemble the thing signified. This might be called the symbol's first intentionality.

But upon this first intentionality a second one is built up, which, through the physically dirty, points to a certain condition of man within the sacred. This condition, pointed to by first meaning, is precisely that of the besmirched, dirty-being. The obvious and literal meaning therefore points beyond itself to something that is like a stain. In contrast with completely transparent technical signs that say only what they want to say by indicating the thing signified, symbolic signs are opaque. . . . This opaqueness is the symbol's very profundity, an inexhaustible depth.⁴

The first and second intentions of a symbol are related analogically (that is, through reasoning proceeding by a proportional fourth term: A is to B as C is to D). But this analogical relationship cannot be objectivized in thought. "Unlike a comparison which we look at from the outside, the symbol in fact is the very movement of the primary meaning which makes us share the hidden meaning and thus assimilates us to the thing symbolized, without our being able to get hold of the similarity intellectually."⁵ This is a basic point for Ricoeur's analysis and underlies his attempt to appropriate myth for philosophy.

⁴Paul Ricoeur, "The Symbol: Food for Thought," trans. Francis B. Sullivan, Philosophy Today (Autumn, 1960), 199. I assume that Ricoeur means something akin to Thomas Aquinas' analogy of improper proportionality.

⁵Ibid., p. 200.

A criteriology of symbol must also contrast a symbol with an allegory. Even though an allegory has a double intentionality, the relation between the literal meaning and the symbolic meaning is not that of analogy but that of translation. "Once the translation is made you can let the symbol fall by the way, since it has become useless."⁶ Historically, most allegories, such as the Stoic interpretation of Homer and Hesiod, were really means of understanding myths, in which case allegory becomes a method of hermeneutics. Symbols must be distinguished from allegory because symbols are prior to hermeneutics whereas allegory is itself a method of hermeneutics. The meaning conveyed by symbols is not made transparent by translation but by "suggesting" its meaning.⁷

Although it could hardly be a matter of confusion for a symbolism of evil, Ricoeur also distinguishes between symbol, as he uses the term, and the formal symbols of mathematical logic. The latter are merely formal conventions incorporated into a calculus independently of verbal expressions. To use Leibniz's term, they are characters. Symbols, in contrast, are the exact opposite of characters, for sym-

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ricoeur, like Heidegger, is interested in root meanings and in playing off one word against another. He notes that in the above example he means "suggest" in the sense of the Greek word αἰνέσθαι, from which our word "enigma" is a derivative. Ricoeur also says that he is contrasting the need for translation of an allegory with the transparency of symbolic meanings. See La Symbolique du mal, p. 23.

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 bols "belong to thought that is bound up with content and hence thought that is not formal."⁸ Through its primary content a symbol is tied to its secondary content, and in this sense is the complete inverse of formal symbolism. A symbol points to a "something" which it symbolizes. A character in a formal calculus is a formal convention signifying nothing beyond its own function in the calculus.

Finally, in distinguishing between myth and symbol, it would be a mistake to say that symbols are a non-allegorical way of understanding myth, for then symbols would become a mode of hermeneutics, a view that has already been rejected.

Concerning his definition of symbol Ricoeur says:

I however take symbol in Eliade's more radical meaning of analogical significations spontaneously formed and given, as for instance the meaning of water as threatening in the deluge and purifying in baptism--and so with all the primitive hierophanies. I take myth to be a species of symbol, a symbol developed into narrative form, articulated within a time and space that cannot be coordinated with critical history and geography.⁹

Primary symbols have a primitive and spontaneous meaning, whereas myths and speculative doctrines add a second and third level of meaning.

Philosophic "Repetition" of the Avowal

The problem that arises when philosophy encounters symbols of evil is how these symbolic expressions can be in-

⁸Ricoeur, "The Symbol: Food for Thought," p.201.

⁹Ibid.

corporated into philosophic discourse. Since symbols can only "suggest" their meaning and can never be analyzed, it seems probable that they can never be objects of philosophical thought, except symbolically. Yet there is a sense in which symbolic thought is already philosophical, for the mythos is already a logos. In order to raise symbolic language to the level of speculative thought, a propaedeutic is needed, a preliminary approach that will prepare symbolic expressions for philosophic analysis. This propaedeutic, Ricoeur argues, is a purely descriptive phenomenology of symbols in which the philosopher provisionally adopts a neutral mode of thought and accepts the symbolic expressions "as if" they were true and repeats the avowal itself "in sympathy and imagination."¹⁰ This descriptive phenomenology, however, remains outside philosophic reflection. To speak metaphorically, Ricoeur is suggesting that the philosopher "shut off" his own involvement and accept instead the neutral mode of "as if" in order to describe and clarify the symbols and myths themselves. The problem is how to "start up" (relancer) philosophical reflection after this detour through a symbolism of evil.

In this detour through the language of avowal, the philosopher encounters symbols that are already present (déjà là); he does not invent them but finds them as cultural deposits. But in order to appropriate these symbols in "sympa-

¹⁰Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 25.

thy and imagination" he must acknowledge his own orientation and limitations, his own cultural contingency. The very way philosophical questions are posed is a result of the Greek background of Western philosophy. Ricoeur makes this point not to exclude the philosophical traditions of other cultures but only to acknowledge the relations of "proximity" he sustains to Greek and Jewish cultures and the relation of relative "distance" to other cultures. His "cultural memory" is closer to the Jewish and Greek origins of western thought than to eastern cultures. For this reason Ricoeur's concern is primarily with the symbols of these cultures.

In addition to these relations of proximity and distance are relations of depth and breadth. Certain themes of the religious consciousness reappear in some form in all cultures--the conception of the fault as stain, for example. These "lateral" relations between cultures are modified by our reconstruction of the past. "Thus our hellenism is not exactly that of the Alexandrians, nor that of the church fathers, nor that of the scholastics, nor that of the Renaissance, nor that of the Aufklärung."¹¹ Our "cultural memory" can be aided and developed by the discovery of documents and other sources which help reconstruct the past (the Dead Sea Scrolls are an example) and by the history of religions which

¹¹ Ibid., p. 28. Ainsi notre hellénisme n'est pas exactement celui des Alexandriens, ni celui des Pères de l'Église, ni celui de la Scolastique, ni celui de la Renaissance, ni celui de l'Aufklärung.

reconstructs what at best is a "neo-past." Through these means the distance between us and the cultural origins of symbols can be minimized, but we are nevertheless left with a "cultural contingency" purely our own.

One does not need to be scandalized by the contingency of his cultural memory. Not only for the philosopher interested in a phenomenology of symbols is it an unavoidable aporia, but also for anyone engaged in philosophical endeavor. For this reason no history of religion or philosophy can become the concrete universal capable of embracing all human experience. One is necessarily bound to his own point of view and to his own cultural memory. To refuse these conditions for the possibility of inquiry is to condemn philosophical discourse to silence.

Perhaps one must have experienced the deception that accompanies the idea of a presuppositionless philosophy to enter sympathetically into the problematic we are going to evoke. In contrast to philosophies concerned with starting points, a meditation on symbols starts from the fullness of language and of meaning already there; it begins from within language which has already taken place and in which everything in a certain sense has already been said; it wants to be thought, not presuppositionless, but in and with all its presuppositions. Its first problem is not how to get started, but from the midst of speech, to recollect itself.¹²

¹²Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection," trans. Denis Savage, International Philosophical Quarterly, 2 (1962), 192. Hereafter cited as "Hermeneutics of Symbols."

I. STAIN

The fear of the impure and, corresponding to it, the rites of purification seem to form the most primitive expression of the fault. Consequently, this symbol may seem too primitive for the modern mind to repeat even in sympathy and imagination. But further analysis of the richness of this symbol reveals two aspects of stain: an objective notion of contamination from the outside, and the subjective counterpart which is dread (crainte). For those cultures whose conception of the fault is formed on the symbol of stain, evil is most closely identified with actions in which there is actual physical contact--sexual offenses or an elaborate system of taboo, for example. But this primitive notion of the fault as stain is both too broad and too narrow. It is too broad because it embraces actions we are unwilling to recognize as fault--involuntary or unconscious actions, contamination by animals, or contact with forbidden things. It is also too narrow since ethical codes based on this primitive notion of evil often do not condemn such actions as theft, lying, and even murder. These actions become evil only in a system of reference which views them as a violation of divine holiness, as a denial of respect for interhuman relations, or as a negation of self esteem.

Considered in its objective aspect, the stain symbol is a notion of quasi-material contamination from the outside. In its subjective aspect, stain is experienced as fear. Al-

though it is impossible to repeat this fear even "in sympathy and imagination," because our moral consciousness has largely abolished it, one can see in the fear of stain the germ of a higher ethical awareness. The origin of the fear of pollution in the primitive mind is the relation between stain and vengeance. This relation is so primitive that it is even prior to the concept of a god of vengeance. It is, as Ricoeur puts it, "inscribed in the human world in letters of suffering. Vengeance causes suffering."¹³ The relation between suffering and contamination by the unholy is a first attempt at providing a causal explanation for the course of human events. If a person suffers, is sick, is a failure, or dies, it is because he has been contaminated.

The avowal of suffering as punishment does, however, contain features common to an ethics based on interdict. An interdict is more than a simple prohibition; it is a prohibition deriving its gravity from a threat of punishment: "do not do that . . . or you will die." Taboo is essentially a way of preventing an anticipated punishment. Coupled with this is a certain negative idea of the transcendent. The god of the taboo and the interdict cannot be touched (or seen), for to do so is to die.

What is surprising, Ricoeur observes, is that both the

¹³Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 36. "s'inscrit dans le monde humain en lettres de souffrance. La vengeance fait souffrir."

objective and subjective aspects of the stain symbol are never completely abolished but are transformed and retained on higher levels. This symbol reappears in the Greek tragic poets and especially in the Pythagorean notion of philosophy as catharsis. It can also be seen in the ritual legislation of Israel and even in Isaiah and the Psalms.¹⁴ The stain symbol could survive even in a more developed religious consciousness because it was understood to be a quasi-physical representation pointing to a quasi-moral indignity. In these higher contexts it truly becomes a symbol of evil. Particularly is this true for purification rites in which stain is not understood as a literal defilement but like a defilement.

This development points up the fact that symbolic language contains a vocabulary "educated" by symbols of the pure and the impure, the first level of an avowal of guilt. One sees this especially in the Homeric epics, which although often forming the occasion for philosophical debate, were themselves interpretations or exegeses of beliefs and rites regarding impurity.

Just as the objective aspect of the stain symbol was transposed into a symbolic expression of a higher ethical consciousness, so also can its subjective counterpart, dread, be transformed into a more ethical concept. As an ethical consciousness of the fault, dread is not a physical fear but

¹⁴Isaiah 6:5-7; Psalm 51.

a dread of the loss of personal meaning. Purification is then viewed as a matter of confession of sins through speech, a confession that supplements the ritual of washing and other ceremonial cleansings as their subjective complement.

There are three stages in the development of this ethical conception of dread. The first is that of the demand for retributive justice. If a man is punished because he sins, he ought to be punished as he sins. The second stage is a realization that to be punished is to suffer, but suffering resulting from retributive justice has as its end the preservation of a moral order. The third stage is that of hope, not for the immediate abolition of fear but of its final exhaustion. The conception of an order in which fear is overcome by love remains the horizon of all ethical endeavor, the eschatological future of human morality.¹⁵

II. SIN

The transition from symbols of stain to symbols of sin can be observed in Greek religion where one can trace the shift of emphasis from καθαρός (unstained, pure) to ἄνθος (pure, chaste) to ἅγιος (sacred, holy), designating the majesty of the gods, and to ὅσιος (pious, devout) describing the proper human attitude in view of the divine majesty.¹⁶ Another striking transition from symbols of stain to symbols of

¹⁵Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 50.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 51.

sin is found in the Babylonian confession of sins: "Deliver me from my spell . . . because a wicked spell and an impure malady, transgression, iniquity, and sin are in my body and because a wicked spectre is attached to me."¹⁷ Here the symbol of stain is dominated by the symbol of attachment to which have been added the notions of possession, transgression, and iniquity. This added dimension is the penitent's recognition of standing in the presence of the divine, "before God." Cultures which have gone the furthest in a meditation on sin "before God" have never broken with the concept of the fault as stain. Even when both symbolic representations are retained side by side so that they interact with each other, it is still possible to give an account of the intermingling of the two and to elucidate a typology of symbols of sin. For the purposes of analysis Ricoeur suggests a threefold typology: Sin "before God," the infinite demand and the finite command, and the wrath of God.

Sin "Before God": The Covenant

The principal category of sin is the category of "before God" (devant Dieu). This is not to be taken in the Hegelian sense of being in the presence of the Wholly Other, or the separation of existence from its meaning, or the nothingness of man in the presence of the Being and wholeness

¹⁷Ibid., p. 52. "Délivrez-moi de mon charme . . . parce qu'un mauvais charme et une impure maladie et la transgression et d'iniquité et le péché sont en mon corps, et parce qu'un spectre méchant est attaché à moi."

of God: To interpret the category of "before God" in this way would be misleading, for the initial instance of this awareness is not the Hegelian "unhappy consciousness" but the covenant, the Jewish Berith. On this level sin is not the transgression of an abstract rule, of a value, but the injury of a personal relationship. Although this broken relationship is emphatically reflected in law codes, it is also echoed in other literary forms as well. Among the Jews, as with other Semitic people, the experience of sin is revealed in chronicles, which relate histories of sin and death, in hymns, which chant the distress of the avowal of sin, in oracles, through which the prophets accuse the people of sin, and in proverbs, in which the imperative of the code, the lament of the psalm, and the indictment of the prophets are reflected in wisdom. This language is not speculative or philosophical, for when the prophet speaks he does not reflect on sin, he speaks against it.

The Infinite Demand and Finite Command

Starting first from the problem of the strictly ethical dimension of the sin symbolism, a cursory examination might make it appear that the ethical dimension of prophecy is the conquest of the moral law over the ritual law; but that would be an oversimplification, for prior to the ethical law is a hyper-ethical dimension revealed by the prophet as an infinite demand of God placed upon man. This infinite demand reveals the unfathomable gulf between God and man and

inaugurates the tension characteristic of all Hebrew ethics between an infinite demand and a finite command. This dialectic illuminates the meaning of the prophetic message.

This ethical tension is essential to the covenant, for on the one hand is the unconditioned but unformed demand relating to the "heart," penetrating to the depths of moral evil. On the other hand is a finite law with its determined and explicit demands. The God of the infinite demand tends to withdraw into the distance and the absence of the Wholly Other, whereas the Legislator of commands becomes indistinguishable from the finite moral consciousness. "In this twofold way the paradox of distance and presence constitutive of 'before God' is abolished in the heart of the consciousness of sin."¹⁸ Such is the objective pole of the consciousness of sin: the unlimited demand in tension with the finite command.

The Wrath of God

The subjective pole of the consciousness of sin is the menace and dread that is an integral aspect of the prophetic message, for in the prophets the accusations of God cannot be separated from the wrath of God. The fear and anguish present in the stain symbol reappear in the sin symbolism with only a change in quality--the quality of anguish which con-

¹⁸Ibid., p. 65. "de cette double manière le paradoxe de distance et de présence, constitutif du 'devant Dieu', est aboli au coeur de la conscience de péché."

stitutes the subjective pole of consciousness of sin. This sense of anguish can be better understood by being related to the two aspects of sin mentioned previously: the "before God" and the infinite demand.

The religion of Israel was thoroughly penetrated with the notion of the inviolability of God--man cannot see God and live. This is why Moses on Sinai, Isaiah in the temple, and Ezekiel faced with the glory of God, were struck with terror. The inviolability of God is revealed to men as God's wrath, but this wrath is not the vindictiveness of the taboos but the wrath of his holiness, understood in its Old Testament context as the sorrow produced by love. The unhappiness attached to the "Day of the Lord" is not the event of destruction and defeat itself but the significance attached to the event. "This is why the Day of the Lord is not only in history, it is in an interpretation of history."¹⁹ The wrath of God is not visited upon individuals but upon the community, upon the people of Israel. Through the prophecies of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and the political defeatism of Jeremiah, the wrath of God becomes an element in a theology of history. Jahweh is not only the One who guarantees success to his people, he is also the Lord of history.

Coupled with the menace announced by the prophets is the promise of salvation. The tension between destruction

¹⁹Ibid., p. 70. "C'est pourquoi le Jour de Jahvé n'est pas seulement dans l'histoire, il est dans une interprétation de l'histoire."

and salvation introduces another dialectic into the covenant relation, a dialectic involving an ethical choice on the part of man: "If you seek justice . . . it may be that God will have pity on you," to use the words of Amos. The threat of destruction is inseparable from the "nevertheless" of ethical choice. This "rhythm of distance and presence" is especially evident in the Psalms in which the Psalmist confesses that he has sinned against God. The prophets reveal that the wrath of God is the wrath of his holiness; the Psalmist reveals that the wrath of God is the wrath of his love.²⁰

The Symbolism of Sin

Sin as "Nothingness." Ricoeur's analysis thus far has been concerned to examine the new experiences of the fault which were formulated in the context of Israel's covenant with Jahweh. In the stain symbolism evil was represented as a positive power infecting and contaminating by contact. Since, in the covenant theology of the Old Testament, sin is viewed as the severance of a relationship, how can the symbolism of sin be expressed in terms of stain? Ricoeur says that not only is sin a break in a relationship, it is also a "something," a reality which takes possession of man. But implicit in the recognition of a broken relationship with God is the negativity of sin, for the condition

²⁰Ibid., p. 72.

of sinful man in the presence of God is symbolized by the image of dust or vapor. "Man is like a breath, his days are like a passing shadow."²¹ The idols which are real in man's sight are "vain" and "nothing" in the sight of Jahweh, and this schema of the "nothingness" of idolatry becomes a new symbol for the broken relationship of the covenant.

Coupled with the symbol of sin are the notions of pardon and return, which respectively refer to the initiative of God and the initiative of man. The theme of pardon is a symbol similar to the symbol of the wrath of God, for pardon is a forgetting of the wrath of holiness. The image often given to this in the Old Testament is the "repentance" of God which expresses the divine initiative regarding man's relation to God.

Sin as "Position."

The apparent dichotomy between the symbol of stain as a positive power infecting from the outside and the symbol of sin as nothingness is mediated by the symbolism of sin as "position," as the situation of man in the covenant relation. The continuity between the positivity of stain and the negativity of sin is assured by three traits: (1) The confession of sin is a confession of a real evil. This is why the penitent can repent of sins he has forgotten or those unknown to him. (2) In Hebrew writings sin is not reduced to a subjective individual dimension but is both personal and communal.

²¹Psalms 144:4.

(3) Sin falls under the absolute awareness of God and not just personal consciousness of evil. This is the ontological dimension of sin, its "en soi" aspect.²² The thrust of these three characteristics of sin is to underscore the reality of sin. Although sin is "interior," in contrast to stain which infects from the outside, it cannot be reduced to a subjective state, for "it is interior but objective."²³

A corollary to the continuity of the stain symbol and the sin symbol is redemption, most often symbolized in Hebrew Scriptures in terms of a deliverance. Bondage in Egypt and the subsequent exodus become the most powerful symbols of the human condition.

What becomes then of the initial symbol? On the one hand, evil is no longer a thing, but a broken relationship, hence a nothing; this nothing is expressed in the images of the breathiness, the emptiness, the vaporousness and vanity of the idol. The very Anger of God is like the nothingness of his absence. But at the same time a new positivity of evil arises, no longer an exterior "something," but a real enslaving power. The symbol of captivity, which transforms an historical event (the Egyptian captivity, then the Babylonian captivity) into a schema of existence, represents the highest expression achieved by the penitential experience of Israel. Because of this new positivity of evil, the first symbolism, that of stain, was able to be taken up again: the schema of exteriority is recovered, but at an ethical and no longer at a magical level.²⁴

The major obstacle to a full comprehension of how the symbols

²²Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 85.

²³Ibid., p. 87.

²⁴Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics of Symbols," p. 196.

of stain and sin have been reaffirmed in the symbol of deliverance is the ritual involved with pardon, for in ritual the emphasis is not upon inner and subjective dispositions but upon the ceremonial praxis itself. Seen within the context of "return" and "pardon," however, the expiatory rites are not a foreign body but express the worshipper's desire to be reunited with his God. Expiation and contrition are blended in the rites of the Day of Atonement; there is no conflict between the two ideas in Hebrew thought, for to say that God expiates is to say that he pardons.

III. GUILT

Guilt is the most subjective symbol of the fault; it is the "pour soi" of the fault whereas sin is the "en soi," the ontological dimension.²⁵ Consciousness of guilt is a complete revolution of the experience of evil, for guilt underscores the personal responsibility of the sinner. Whereas in the covenant relationship of the Old Testament the sense of "before God" was interpreted communally by the pre-exilic prophets, guilt is a personal avowal of evil. The feeling of guilt emphasizes that the individual is the author of sin; guilt is an awareness that "It is I who . . .".²⁶

In his analysis of the symbolic expression of guilt, Ricoeur examines the three directions in which the avowal of

²⁵Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 100.

²⁶Ibid., p. 102.

guilt extends: an ethico-juridical reflection on the relation of penalty to responsibility, an ethico-religious reflection on the scrupulous conscience, and a psycho-theological reflection on the condemned conscience. The paradox toward which the symbols of guilt point--and to which all the other symbols of the fault point as well--is the idea of a guilty man, the concept of a man both responsible and captive. The concept of "bound-freedom" (serf-arbitre) is the ultimate expression of man's avowal of guilt.

Penalty and Responsibility

Whereas the Jewish conception of sin was related to the covenant through which the people of Israel were bound to Jahweh, the Greek conception of guilt was related to the city-state, to its organization, legislation, and its right to punish. For this reason impiety and injustice were always with reference to the sanctity of the state. The Greek concept of injustice is the emergence of a purely moral notion of evil unrelated to any idea of impurity or contamination. A corollary to the concept of an injustice done to the city is the right of the city to punish the offender, but the degree of the penalty must conform to the degree of guilt. A contrast to this is the Jewish thought of the post-exilic period, in which the emphasis was not upon the sanctity of the state but upon the scrupulous conscience.

The Scrupulous Conscience

The development of the scrupulous conscience in Israel

was a result of the activity of the post-exilic prophets and the rise of the Pharisees, a period extending from the return of Israel from Babylonian exile to the editing of the Talmud, which was completed by the end of the sixth century A.D. The Pharisees were essentially a lay movement in Judaism made possible by the increasing urbanization of Jewish society. And although the Pharisees were guilty, as often charged, of legalism, it is necessary to distinguish between what the Pharisees conceived their mission to be and what they actually practiced.²⁷

The Torah, for the Pharisees, was not just a written document but was rather the religious and ethical law of the Lord, a law that applied to every activity of man. The concern of the Pharisees was to discover how the will of God applied in each specific situation, the result being the elevation of oral tradition to the rank of the Torah. The oral law came to be referred to as the unwritten law, the halachah. This understanding of law resulted in a reinterpretation of the relation between man and God. The heart of this relation was interpreted to be instruction concerning action; man's duty to God was interpreted to be one of obedience to this instruction. The scrupulous conscience is an advanced point in expressions of guilt, for it emphasizes

²⁷In his analysis of Phariseeism Ricoeur closely follows and refers to Louis Finkelstein, The Pharisees, the Sociological Background of their Faith, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: 1940).

the personal imputation of evil and the polarity of the just and the unjust man. The fundamental distinction between the one who obeys the law and the one who does not is that the former is just, the latter is unjust. ~~The~~ mark of a good will is merit (zachuth), the contrary of which is transgression.

Coextensive with this view of the religious consciousness is an emphasis on ceremonial and religious obedience which resulted in what Ricoeur labels "a ritualization of the moral life or a moralization of rite."²⁸ The danger in this ritualization of the law is a tendency to forget the intention of the command in an overemphasis on the letter of the law. In its demand for exactness, the scrupulous conscience also multiplies the number of commands and obligations. The scrupulous man then becomes the "pure" man by virtue of his obedience to the law and his separation from the impurities of the world. Because of excess ritualization, a tendency toward casuistry, and a desire for separation from the world, the scrupulous conscience becomes grotesque. The exemplification of this "checkmate" of scrupulousness is hypocrisy, which Ricoeur describes as the "grimace of scruple."²⁹ The minutiae of ritual and rite become more important than the weightier matters of justice, mercy, and faith; the intention

²⁸Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 131. "une ritualisation de la vie morale ou une moralisation du rite".

²⁹Ibid., p. 133.

of the command is sacrificed to the exactness of observance.

The Condemned Conscience

The third direction taken by feelings of guilt results in what Ricoeur calls the "impasse of guilt." In contrast to the scrupulous conscience, which holds to the idea of a perfectly responsible will able to meet the demands of the law, the condemned conscience sees the law as a curse. The Pauline writings (and again in Augustine and Luther) emphasize that observance of the law is null and void if it is not total, but the demands of the law are infinite and the commands innumerable. This realization results in despair and torment of guilt. How is it possible that the law, which is good in itself, could become an agency of guilt? Paul's answer is that the pretension to be saved by satisfying the demands of the law is itself sin. Paul calls this pretension the "lust of the flesh," "carnality," "anxiety," or simply, "the flesh." The flesh is not the root of evil but the result of evil. The flesh is "the self alienated from self, opposed to self, and projected in exteriority."³⁰

The despair of the condemned conscience is the extreme limit of guilt, for it includes both the "realism" of sin as offense against God and the "phenomenalism" of the guilty conscience which condemns itself. At the same stroke the scrupulous conscience is also condemned, for the attempt to

³⁰Ibid., p. 138. "la chair c'est le moi aliéné de lui-même, opposé à lui-même et projeté en extériorité:"

reduce sin by observing the law is itself sin. The sense in which Paul speaks of the "curse of the law" is twofold, for it affects not only the structure of the accusation but the accused conscience as well. As interpreted by Paul, the scrupulous conscience becomes an expression of a radical evil which can only result in despair.

Escaping from the despair of the guilty conscience is possible only through justification by an Other, and in this sense justification is "to be 'declared' just, to be 'accounted' as just."³¹ Paul's insight is that justification is something coming to man from the future to the present, from the exterior to the interior, from the transcendent to the immanent. Only when the transcendent, forensic and eschatological dimensions of justification have been recognized can the subjective and immanent significance of justification be understood. This is Paul's break with Judaism, for salvation is not through the law and man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

The concept toward which all the primary symbols of evil (stain, sin, guilt) point is the concept of a bound-freedom. This notion of bound-freedom is clearly explicit in the most primary of the symbols, that of stain, although its richness can be recognized only in the succeeding symbols. There is thus a circular relation among the symbols

³¹Ibid., p. 142. "être 'declared' juste, être 'compté comme' juste."

of evil; the last clarifies the meaning of the preceding but the first imparts to the last all its power of symbolization. This is why Ricoeur can say that he sees in the symbol of stain three intentions which constitute the threefold "schematization" of the concept of bound-freedom. The first scheme of bound-freedom, according to the primary symbol of stain, is the schema of positivity. Evil is not merely nothingness, it is something, a power of darkness. The second schema is that of exteriority. Evil is posited as already present. Man is not the absolute sinner but is seduced from the "outside." The third schema is that of infection. Evil is not only a seduction from without but an infection of self by self, an auto-infection.

The idea of bound-freedom, schematized by the primary symbols of evil, can only be fully understood by an elaboration of the symbols of the second level, that is myths of the origin and end of evil. By incorporating the primary symbols into narratives, the mythical symbols of the second level impart a new dimension to man's precomprehension of evil: "However radical evil is, it could not be as originary as good."³²

³²Ibid., p. 150. "Aussi radical que soit le mal, il ne saurait être aussi originaire que le bonté."

CHAPTER VI

FROM SYMBOL TO MYTH

By repeating the experience of the fault in "sympathy and imagination," Ricoeur has arrived at an abstraction of this experience in the primary symbols of evil (stain, sin, guilt). These symbols, however, are only the first level of man's avowal of the fault. In the form of myths or narratives, they are incorporated in dramas which relate the origin and end of evil. These dramas, although on a higher level than primary symbols, have an irreducible function.

First, they place the whole of mankind and its drama under the sign of an exemplary man, an Anthropos, an Adam, who symbolically stands for the concrete universal of human experience. Secondly, they give to this history an élan, an allure, an orientation, by unfolding it between a beginning and an end; they thus introduce an historical tension into human experience, starting from the double horizon of a genesis and of an apocalypse. Finally, and more fundamentally, they explore the cleavage in human reality represented by the passage or leap from innocence to guilt; they recount how man, originally good, has become what he is in the present. That is why myth can exercise its symbolic function only through the specific means of narrative: what it wants to say is already drama.¹

By the three functions of concrete universality, temporal orientation, and ontological exploration, myth has a revealing power which cannot be reduced to allegory or translated from a cipher language to a clearer language. In Schelling's

¹Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection," trans. Denis Savage, International Philosophical Quarterly, 2 (1962), 197. Hereafter cited as "Hermeneutics of Symbols."

words: "Myth means what it says."²

Yet this second level of meaning, like the primary symbols, is a scandal and embarrassment to modern man, for in recognizing myth as myth, he has reached the point where myth and history are dissociated. The temptation is to a demythisation of history, that is a destruction of myth. In contrast, Ricoeur insists upon preserving myth by means of a demythologization which would strip away the false logos in the form of myth's etiological function. This is an important step for reflection, since philosophy's principal objection to myth is that mythical explanation is incompatible with rationality. The elimination of the pseudo-rational from myth is not fatal to myth but only to gnosis, gnosis being taken here as the opposite of rationality, for it is gnosis that develops the etiological dimension of myth. The temptation to transform myth into gnosis is especially alluring in dealing with symbols of evil, for "the problem of evil

²Paul Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, Vol. II, part 2 of Philosophie de la volonté (Paris: Aubier, 1960), p. 155. "Il signifie ce qu'il dit." Eliade shares the same conviction regarding the ability of myth to express metaphysical insights. He writes: "Obviously the metaphysical concepts of the archaic world were not always formulated in theoretical language; but the symbol, the myth, the rite, express, on different planes and through the means proper to them, a complex system of coherent affirmations about the ultimate reality of things, a system that can be regarded as constituting a metaphysics. . . . If one goes to the trouble of penetrating the authentic meaning of an archaic myth or symbol, one cannot but observe that this meaning shows a recognition of a certain situation in the cosmos and that, consequently, it implies a metaphysical position." Cosmos and History, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), p. 3.

appears to be the occasion par excellence of this passage from myth to gnosis . . . both the most notable provocation to thought and the most cunning stimulus to speak nonsense."³

What is myth when stripped of its etiological pretension? How can a myth uncover a new dimension of experience while at the same time being non-etiological? The answer to these questions is that through narrative myth uncovers a new level of experience and adds to the revealing power of primary symbols. The phenomenology of religion, interpreting the mythical consciousness as being less interested in telling stories than in being related to the totality of things,⁴ traces the narrative back to the pre-narrative root of myth. Here it discovers that the narrative is only a verbal enclosure for a form of life felt and experienced. Both the mythical word and the ritual act express this form of life and, more particularly, designate an archetype beyond themselves which they only imitate and repeat.⁵

Ricoeur doubts whether the phenomenology of religion has contributed to a new understanding of myth by moving

³Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, pp. 156-57. "Bien plus le problème du mal paraît bien être l'occasion par excellence de ce passage du mythe à la gnose . . . à la fois la plus considérable provocation à penser et l'invitation la plus sounoise à déraisonner;"

⁴Eliade states that for the archaic mind, every act in some way participates in the Sacred. Op cit., pp. 27-28.

⁵The repetition of an archetype in myth and rite is one of Eliade's favorite themes. See especially pp. 3-48 of Cosmos and History.

back behind the narrative to the mythical structures and their fundamental categories--participation, relation to the Sacred, etc. What is important, he insists, is the transition from the pre-narrative consciousness to the mythical narrative itself. The man of the myth is already the man of the fault because he is the man who recognizes his separation from the fullness of Being. A reconciliation must be intended (in word or in rite) because it is not given.⁶

Two other characteristics of myth should be noticed: First, man's experience of the fault is in tension with a totality of meaning, and this experience is bound up with symbols which place the fault in an unperceived totality which is not experienced but intended. Because it is intended, it results in a proliferation of myths expressing this lost totality. Second, this totality of meaning, in which the fault is placed, is bound up with a primordial drama expressed in symbols of anguish and struggle. "It is this original drama which opens and discovers the hidden meaning of human experience; in doing so the myth which relates it assumes the irreplaceable function of narrative."⁷

Because the mythical consciousness is condemned to a multiplicity of myths of the beginning and end of evil,

⁶Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, pp. 158-59.

⁷Ibid., p. 161. "C'est ce drame originel qui ouvre et découvre le sens caché de l'expérience humaine; ce faisant le mythe qui le raconte assume la fonction irremplaçable du récit."

Ricoeur proposes a typology of the principal types of myths of evil. He insists that this typology must not be construed as an effort at classification, for the function of this typology is to enable one to pass from an examination of the "static" categories themselves to an analysis of the "dynamic" interaction of their basic themes.

On the one hand, the infinite multiplicity of the myths must be overcome by imposing upon them a typology that permits thought to become oriented within their endless variety, while not doing violence to the specificity of the mythical figures brought to the light of language by diverse civilizations; on the other hand, the difficulty is to move from a static classification of myths to a dynamics of them. For it is the understanding of the oppositions and secret affinities among diverse myths that prepares the philosophic assimilation of myth.⁸

The first type is what Ricoeur calls the Drama of Creation in which the origin of evil is coextensive with the origin of things. The identification of evil with chaos and the identification of salvation with creation are two of the fundamental traits of these myths.

The second type is the Myth of the Fall in a creation already achieved. In myths of this type salvation is understood as the elimination of evil through the divine initiative and through actions performed by the believing community. The salvation which will be consummated on the "Last Day" is distinct from creation which is already accomplished.

The third type is called the "tragic" myth because it is best exemplified in Greek tragedy. The tragic hero is

⁸Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics of Symbols," p. 198.

not guilty of the fault; he is the victim of a god who tempts, blinds, deceives. Even though the tragic figure does not commit the fault, he is guilty, and salvation cannot be remission of sins but only a kind of "esthetic deliverance" in which freedom coincides with understood necessity.

At the periphery is a fourth type, the myth of the "exiled" soul. This is represented principally in Orphic thought in which man is divided into soul and body, the soul having been exiled to a bodily prison from which it will ultimately be delivered. Salvation is understood only in terms of this deliverance from the body and the restoration of the soul to its original source.

I. THE DRAMA OF CREATION

The highest exemplification of the first type is found in the Sumerian-Akkadian theogonic myths which express not only a mythical account of the origin of evil but also the genesis of divinity and the cosmic order. The gods themselves arise from the primordial chaos and participate in the creation of the world. The original chaos is represented by Tiamat, the primordial mother, and Apsu, the primordial father. From this undifferentiated matter sprang the gods who, in turn, shared in the creation of the cosmos and in the creation of man. Marduk, who overcame the primordial chaos in what is described as a terrible and bloody conflict, is characterized in these myths as the wisest and most powerful

of the gods, the personification of life and order.

When stripped of its etiological functions, this type has a negative and a positive meaning. The negative significance of the drama of creation is that man is not the originator of evil; he finds evil and merely continues it. Positively, the myth signifies that evil is as old as the oldest of beings. Since the primordial disorder itself is vanquished by an act of disorder--the violence with which Marduk destroys Tiamat--the principle of evil is not only the chaos prior to the created order but the struggle by which this chaos is overcome. Marduk is the identity of both creation and destruction, and creation itself is a victory over an enemy more ancient than the creator.

Ricoeur argues that in spite of parallels between the Babylonian myth and the biblical account of the "fall" of man, a comparison of the two types is more striking because of their differences than their similarities.⁹ Both cycles of myth contain references to the deluge, but in the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic the deluge occurs in the theogony and its original violence as an act which brings all things back to their primitive chaos. In the biblical account, however, there is a series of narratives designed to illustrate the increasing wickedness of man (Cain and Abel, the

⁹Although the paradise myth of Enki and Ninhursag might appear to be an analogue to the biblical account of the fall, it is rather, Ricoeur points out, an account of the origin of vegetation, not an attempt to explain how evil entered the world. Ibid., p. 175.

tower of Babel), the deluge being interpreted as punishment for man's wickedness. Nothing like this is found in the Babylonian myth. The poem of Atrahasis does ascribe a motive to the gods for bringing the deluge upon the earth. But in contrast to the biblical narrative, man's activity does not violate the holiness of the gods, it only makes it difficult for them to sleep. Because evil is identified with the primordial chaos and creation is identified with the destruction of disorder, there can be no doctrine of the "fall" in this type of myth. For in the creation drama the problem of evil is already resolved in the sense that it has been overcome even before the creation of the world.

The cultus corresponding to the drama of creation is a ritual repetition of the primordial combat, for in this type "there is no history of salvation distinct from the drama of creation."¹⁰ The drama of creation enters history by means of the "cultural-ritual" repetition of the primordial struggle and specifically through the person of the king who rules by divine right. Hammurabi's code states that he was given a mandate by Anu and Marduk "to make justice prevail in the land, to destroy wickedness and evil, and to prevent the strong from crushing the weak . . .".¹¹ By the mediation of

¹⁰Ibid., p. 181. "Il n'y a pas d'histoire du salut distincte du drame de création."

¹¹Ibid., p. 186. "à faire prévaloir la justice dans le pays, à détruire les méchants et le mal, à empêcher le fort d'opprimer le faible. . . ."

the king the drama of creation becomes especially important for human combat since the King-Enemy relation is the political relation par excellence.

The "ritual-cultural" schema of the drama of creation appears in a recessive form in Hebrew literature and is the key to certain Psalms which can be interpreted to imply that Jahweh vanquished his enemy by creating the cosmic order. Psalms of Rule (47, 93, 98, 100) proclaim "God is King," and Psalm 89:10 has been interpreted to refer to Jahweh's victory over a primordial monster. The fundamental difference between the Hebrew narrative and the drama of creation myth is that in the former there is no theogony, no vanquished gods. For this reason any remnant of Babylonian imagery takes on a radically new significance. In the Hebrew narratives creation is good and the cosmos proceeds not from a drama but by the word of God. Evil cannot be identified with an anterior chaos because evil and history are contemporaneous. History possesses a grandeur all its own and is not a mere "repetition" of the cosmic struggle; history, not creation, is drama, and both evil and salvation have a historical significance.¹²

Greek theogonic myths present a mutant form of the creation drama, especially in the myths of Homer and Hesiod. Oceanos and Tethys are the Greek equivalents of Apsu and Tiamat, but the episode which results in the murder of Tiamat

¹²Ibid., pp. 191-92

in the Babylonian myth is reduced to a quarrel between Tethys and Oceanos, the consequences of which result in a discontinuing of procreation. In Hesiod's mythology one finds a counterpart to the bloody combat of Marduk with the primeval monster; Zeus, like Marduk, prevails only after a long and violent struggle.

The Titan theme is of greatest interest for Ricoeur's typology, for it is indeterminate to the extent that it can be reinterpreted in terms of the tragic, Orphic, or biblical types. The struggle of the Titans against the Olympians is a continuation of the creation drama which successfully sets the stage for the anthropogonic drama which follows. The etiological function of the Titan myth is to give an account of the actual condition of man: man has a dual origin, from the gods and from the Titans--a presaging of the Orphic bifurcation of man into soul and body. Prometheus, on the other hand, is interpreted by Aeschylus as a tragic figure, a hero who is a victim of divine wrath. The Titan can be so easily incorporated into these other types because it is indeterminate in structure. Its function is to represent the origin of evil in a region of being intermediary between the divine and the human.¹³

¹³The Titan theme may possibly be represented in the biblical narrative as the Nephilim of Genesis 6:1-4. The Nephilim are the result of the union of the "sons of God" with the "daughters of men" and are cited by the Yahvistic editor in his description of the growing corruption of the race which is punished by the deluge. Ibid., pp. 196-98.

II. TRAGIC MYTHS

Greek drama and mythology are the paradigmatic case for the tragic type of myth since in Greek drama "the tragic vision of the world is tied to a spectacle and not to speculation."¹⁴ An important similarity between the tragic myth and the creation myth is that both refer the fault back to divine initiative. There can be a tragic view of human existence only because there is also a tragic vision of the divine. Both types also teach that the principle of evil is as primary as the principle of good, and both principles antedate human existence.

A major difference between the two types, however, is that in the creation drama the principle of evil is opposed in a polarity with the divine as its enemy, whereas in the tragic vision there is no distinction between the divine and the diabolic. The appearance of both good and evil in the divine nature is an implicit theme of tragic theology. "According to the tragic scheme, man falls into fault as he falls into existence; and the god who tempts and misleads him stands for the primordial lack of distinction between good and evil."¹⁵

In the tragic vision of existence, man does not

¹⁴Ibid., p. 200. "le vision tragique du monde est liée à un spectacle et non point à une spéculation."

¹⁵Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics of Symbols," p. 198.

initiate the fault and is powerless to avoid it. The inevitability of the hero's destiny encounters the resistance of his freedom, tests it, finally crushes it, and in so doing gives rise to anguish. The tragic hero cannot avoid his destiny, but he can act with grandeur. Prometheus of Prometheus Bound exhibits both poles of this tragic theology. In this drama Aeschylus includes both Zeus, who represents a hostile transcendence, and Prometheus, who by his act of stealing fire seals his doom but at the same time exercises his own freedom which retards the accomplishment of his destiny.

In the drama of creation myth, evil was identified with chaos, and salvation from evil was identified with creation itself since creation is the institution of order in the world. In the tragic vision of the world, deliverance from the tragic is possible only if the nature of the divine is changed. This is the case in Aeschylus' trilogy of Orestes which, in its concluding verses, proclaims that God is just and merciful and there is an end to divine vindictiveness. The same "conversion" of the divine takes place in the last of the Titan trilogy, Prometheus Delivered (not extant).¹⁶

¹⁶Ricoeur notes that Sophocles, who never converts the divine into a merciful force, does modify the tragic picture of Oedipus in one of the last works of his life, Oedipus at Colonus. Even though Oedipus remains a tragic figure to the end, he does presage the end of the tragic vision to a degree. Oedipus dies not as a rebellious figure but as a tragic hero purified by his suffering and renouncing his fight against the gods. La Symbolique du mal, pp. 214-15.

Ricoeur argues that the true sense of salvation in the tragic vision does not reside outside the sense of the tragic but in the tragic vision itself. The chorus in Aeschylus' Agamemnon proclaims, "suffer in order to understand." This tragic anguish transcends evil in the esthetic vision of tragedy as spectacle and marks the deliverance from evil in tragedy.¹⁷ Anguish, terror, and pity are the modalities of tragic suffering, and through their esthetic transpositions and by means of the heroic spectacle, the tragic myth becomes poetry.¹⁸

III. THE ADAMIC MYTH

The Adamic drama is the only properly anthropological type, for even though the other myths of the origin of evil contain references to man, only the Adamic type situates the origin of evil in the activities of a primordial, archetypal man. Three traits distinguish the Adamic type as being truly anthropological: (1) It relates the origin of evil to an ancestor of humanity whose condition is homogeneous to ours. (2) It separates the origin of good from the origin of evil; good is primary and evil is the appearance of a

¹⁷Paul Ricoeur, "Culpabilité tragique et culpabilité biblique," Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses, 33 (1953), 288. Hereafter cited as "Culpabilité tragique."

¹⁸Ricoeur states that the highest expressions of Greek religion do not resolve the inner tensions of the tragic vision of the world but offer an end to it by a substitution of other religious schema. La Symbolique du mal, p. 217.

radical absurdity in a perfected creation. (3) It subordinates the other figures in the narrative to the one central figure of the primordial man.¹⁹

As Ricoeur suggested earlier, myth has meaning only if it is separated from history and accepted as myth. But to accept the non-historical character of the Adamic narrative is not to say that it is merely myth, that it has less meaning than true history. Rather, it is to imply that it has more meaning than history. Ricoeur says that the greatness of myth resides in its power "of arousing speculation on freedom's power of defection."²⁰

The Adamic narrative is an outgrowth of the religious experience of the people of Israel. The ethical monotheism of Israel made it impossible for any cosmogony to involve a struggle. The God of creation is not a god who struggles against Titans, giants, or primordial monsters; creation is the result of the word of God, not the consequences of a cosmic battle. Neither can the God of Israel be construed as the god of Greek tragedy, for the "jealousy" of Jahweh is not directed against mortals but is that aspect of his holiness which reveals the vanity and nothingness of false

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 218-20. Ricoeur correctly notes that the biblical terminology does not contain the notion of "fall." This term is more proper to gnostic and Platonic myths. This is why Ricoeur prefers the title "adamic" myth, or myth of deviation (l'ecart).

²⁰Ibid., p. 222. "de susciter une spéculation sur la puissance de defection de la liberté".

gods.²¹

Not only did the ethical monotheism of Israel have the negative function of destroying the bases for the other myths of evil, it served the positive function of providing a foundation for a truly anthropological account of the origin of evil. In the very act of excusing God of evil, the prophets accused man not only for his actions but also for the root of these actions, the wicked heart. But "the wicked 'heart' of each is also the wicked 'heart' of all."²² Through the confession of sins all humanity is bound together in the community of sinners, and the universality of sin is expressed in the figure of Adam, the archetypal man whose humanity is shared by all men.

In addition to universalizing the experience of sin, the Adamic drama also creates a point of tension in penitential experience. The prophetic dialectic between judgment and mercy was projected in a representation of the beginning of evil distinct from the beginning of creation. This expression of the origin of evil maintained the absolute holiness of God on the one hand, and avowed the radical wickedness of man on the other. History takes place within this tension between the origin of evil and the judgment of God upon evil at the "Day of the Lord," a favorite theme of the

²¹Ricoeur, "Culpabilité tragique," pp. 298-99.

²²Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 226. "le 'coeur' mauvais de chacun est aussi le 'coeur' mauvais de tous;"

Hebrew prophets. This partially explains why the symbols of captivity and deliverance (from Egypt) became the perfect expression of the human situation in Hebrew thought.

The third function of the Adamic type is to provide access to the existential enigma of the human situation. The holiness of God reveals the depravity of man; but if the root of sin, the wicked "heart," is in the "nature" of man, to repent of one's "nature" is simultaneously to accuse God of having created a wicked humanity. This paradox creates a point of extreme tension in a religious piety which wants to maintain both the holiness of God and the wickedness of man. The Adamic narrative resolves this tension by positing a beginning of evil distinct from the beginning of creation. Evil appeared in an already perfected and good creation as an irrational surd, and because evil is associated with the actions of the first man, evil's commencement in the world occurred during human history, not during primordial history. Ricoeur observes that the Adam drama sums up the whole penitential experience of Israel.

It is man who is accused by the prophet; it is man who in the confession of sins discovers himself to be the author of evil and who discerns, beyond his evil acts told off in time, an evil constitution more original than any individual decision. The myth recounts the arising of this evil constitution in an irrational event that unexpectedly takes place in a good creation. It compresses the origin of evil into a symbolic instant that is the end of innocence and the beginning of malediction. Through the chronicle of the first man is unveiled the meaning of the history of every man.²³

²³Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics of Symbols," pp. 198-99.

Even though the Adamic narrative situates the origin of evil in an exemplary man, it simultaneously disperses the drama among two other persons, the serpent and the woman. The serpent questions the divine interdict and in so doing raises the question of man's finite-freedom. The limit imposed upon the creature becomes unbearable, and the desire appealed to by the serpent is the desire of the infinite. This infinite is the infinite of desire itself, the infinite desire of having, knowing, willing, doing, and being. Man's finitude, which consists in his being created, is incompatible with this desire of the infinite; thus the serpent becomes the symbol of the unhappy infinite which "simultaneously perverts the meaning of the limit which orients freedom and the very meaning of the finitude of this freedom thus oriented by limit."²⁴ The woman, on the other hand, is the symbol of human fragility, the point of least resistance of freedom to which the "unhappy infinite" makes its appeal. Man's finitude is fragile precisely because the very limit which constitutes it can also pervert it; the structure of human freedom as finite-freedom is the place where evil makes its appearance.

The serpent also represents the quasi-exteriority of evil, the fact that man experiences evil as already present.

²⁴Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 237. "pervertit simultanément le sens de la limite qui orientait la liberté et le sens même de la finitude de cette liberté ainsi orientée par la limite."

The serpent also symbolizes that to sin is to be seduced, although ultimately to be seduced by self. In signifying the exteriority of sin, the serpent signifies that man is not the absolute sinner; each person finds sin present just as he finds language and cultural institutions present. Evil is something that man discovers as an aspect of interpersonal relations, not something that each person begins. "Thus the serpent symbolizes something of man and something of the world . . . the chaos in me, among us, and on the outside."²⁵

One question remains: What corresponds in the biblical type to the "cultural-ritual" repetition of the drama of creation and to the tragic spectacle of Greek drama? Since the origin of evil is placed in a historical context by the Adamic narrative, deliverance in the biblical type is expressed by means of a philosophy of history couched in eschatological symbols. Abraham is such a symbol since his destiny is directed toward the fulfillment of a promise that was gradually transposed into the promise of the Messiah. Other symbols for this eschatological deliverer are the "servant of the Lord" (Ebed Jahweh), the "Son of man" (a Hebrew idiom

²⁵Ibid., p. 242. "Ainsi le serpent symbolise quelque chose de l'homme et quelque chose du monde . . . le chaos en moi, entre nous et au dehors." Ricoeur also observes that the ascription to man of primordial innocence serves as a limiting concept analogous to the role played by the thing-in-itself in Kantianism. This clarifies what Ricoeur means by the "fault" between man's fundamental possibilities (innocence) and his existential situation (sin). Man's lost innocence serves as a limit-concept for reflection on man's experience of this rupture.

meaning "man," hence the man par excellence), and in Pauline thought, the "Second Adam." The symbolic expression of the pardon effected by the Second Adam is the symbol of the law court and the remission of debt. This symbolism of acquittal is also tied to the redemption of the body and of the entire cosmos: "The soul cannot be saved without the body, interiority cannot be saved without exteriority, subjectivity cannot be saved without the totality."²⁶

IV. THE MYTH OF THE EXILED SOUL

The fourth type of myth of the origin and end of evil is an anthropological dualism which divides man into "soul" and "body." This bifurcation of man into two realities distinguishes the myth of the exiled soul from the other three types. This view includes the belief that the soul is of divine origin but has become imprisoned in a body which is foreign to it and from which it strives to be ultimately released.

The origins of this type of myth are lost in obscurity, but it doubtless has its highest expression in Orphic literature.²⁷ Plato's well known reference to the Orphic

²⁶Ibid., p. 259. "l'âme ne peut être sauvée sans le corps, l'interiorité ne peut être sauvée sans l'exteriorité, la subjectivité ne peut être sauvée sans la totalité."

²⁷Ricoeur recognizes at least two forms of this myth: the pre-philosophic form, with which Plato was familiar, and the post-philosophic form, which achieved its highest development in the neo-platonists. Ricoeur argues, however, that both forms provide sufficient continuity with the basic

belief that the body (σῶμα) is the prison (σῆμα) of the soul is significant for a hermeneutics of this type of myth.²⁸

When stripped of its etiological function, the myth becomes a myth of situation. The body is not only a place of exile, it is also a place of punishment and temptation to which the soul is condemned to repetition through reincarnation. The division of man into soul and body provided a profound alternative for Greek philosophy in the face of the Sophists, for if the body is the source of desire and passion, the soul is the principle of order and restraint. The Orphic notion of salvation from infernal punishment was rooted in the mysteries, particularly in initiatory ceremonies and in esoteric rituals of frenzy. The Orphic conception of salvation through ecstatic union with the divine was not taken into Greek philosophy as such but was mediated by the Pythagorean community which effected the passage from "purification as rite" to "purification as philosophy."²⁹ Since the soul was understood to be the principle of order and constraint, the very idea of well-being became intimately connected with the notion of a good soul, and the good soul could come to man

themes of this type that the obscurity in which the origins are hidden and the lack of sufficient documents relating to the earlier forms offer no crucial problem for his typology. Ibid., pp. 263-64.

²⁸Cratylus, 400c.

²⁹Ricoeur observes that the word "philosophy" entered into Greek thought because of the Pythagorean preference for the term over σοφός or σοφιστής. This was probably because the term φιλία stood in contrast to ἔρως, which was responsible for man's break with the divine. Ibid., p. 283.

only when he was possessed with knowledge since knowledge is most like the divine.

The myth of the exiled soul in a sense harks back to the Purifications of Empedocles, who says of himself that he is a fugitive from the gods and a wanderer condemned to be separated from the One by Strife and forced into a world organized by Strife.³⁰ This is perhaps the earliest attempt to invoke Love and Strife as cosmological principles by which to explain the roots of human evil. Ricoeur observes: "With the Strife of Empedocles, the principle of things that human evil manifests, we are on the threshold of a new development: 'myth' is elevated to 'speculation'."³¹

V. THE INTERPLAY OF MYTHS

A basic presupposition of Ricoeur's approach is that myths are able to challenge the modern mind and are able to reveal a depth of man's existence that can be appropriated in no other way. Yet one must have a point of view from which to appropriate the meaning of the myths of evil, for a position of perfect neutrality is an illusion. Admitting his own presuppositions, Ricoeur states that the best perspective from which to view the myths of evil in their totality is the one that proclaims the pre-eminence of the

³⁰Ibid., p. 284., citing Diels, fragment 115.

³¹Ibid. "Avec la Discorde d'Empédocle, principe des choses que le mal humain manifeste, nous sommes au seuil d'une nouvelle péripétie: le 'mythe' se surélève en 'speculation'."

Adamic myth. Three clarifications need to be made: (1) From the point of view of the believing Christian, sin receives its meaning only retrospectively from the side of justification. The creeds do not say, "I believe in sin" but "I believe in the remission of sin." The biblical witness subordinates the doctrine of sin to the proclamation of salvation. (2) The Christian is not forced to choose between myth or revelation, for the myth itself is revealed insofar as it is revealing. Stripped of its etiological functions and historically demythologized, myth is a way of practicing credo ut intelligas. A comprehension of the meaning of myth requires a hermeneutic, a method of interpretation, and the hermeneutic demands that its interpretation be tested by its power to reveal the human situation. (3) By accepting the pre-eminence of the Adam narrative, one does not ipso facto abolish the other myths; rather they are reaffirmed to varying degrees by the Adam myth itself.

In speaking of the comparison of the Adamic type with the other types, Ricoeur refers to the "reaffirmation" of the tragic, the "appropriation" of the myth of chaos, and the "struggle" with the myth of the exiled soul. In viewing all myths from the point of view of a single myth, one is led from a "static" interpretation of a typology to a "dynamic" interpretation of the basic themes and their inter-relations.

The Reaffirmation of the Tragic

The Adamic narrative is antitragic since the affirma-

tion of the holiness of God and the sinfulness of man rules out the possibility that human evil is due to divine misguidance. Nevertheless, there are tragic aspects to the Adamic type which reaffirm something of the tragic man and, to a degree, something of the tragic god.

The Adam figure itself points to a depth of peccability which is presented in the narrative as rising out of the very exercise of freedom. The significance of the figure of Adam is that to become oneself is to fail to realize the fullness of existence. "Because that destiny appertains to freedom as the non-chosen aspect of all our choices, it must be experienced (éprouvé) as fault."³² Another tragic aspect in the Adam drama is the serpent, who signals that evil is already present in the human situation. But the serpent is more than this: he is the adversary, the Other, the "center of iniquity" which is not originated by man but which can enter into the world only through man.

Just as the biblical narrative contains elements of the tragic anthropology, so also does it contain aspects of the tragic theology, particularly in the book of Job. The moral vision of the world--the bond between God and man is the covenant, history is a tribunal, and God is Judge--is incapable of answering the demand for a justification of the suffering of the innocent Job. It is the tragic god that

³²Ibid., p. 291. "Parce que le destin appartient à la liberté comme la part non choisie de tous nos choix, il doit être éprouvé comme faute."

Job discovers. But the denouement of the book of Job is not the "suffer in order to understand" of the Greek chorus; it is rather a new dimension of faith, that of unverifiable faith. Like the tragic hero of Greek drama, nothing has been explained to Job, but he has changed his outlook; he has identified freedom and necessity. He endures unhappiness just as he accepts happiness. Both are gifts from God.

The tragic vision of the world contributes to the biblical point of view a compassion for man and the fear and trembling before the divine abyss. The tragic god must not be forgotten so that biblical theology can be saved from the platitudes of an ethical monotheism which views God as legislator and judge who confronts a perfectly free moral subject.³³ The illusion of a complete understanding evaporates in the presence of suffering, for whenever suffering appears not only unresolved but insoluble, we are on the brink of the tragic vision of the world.

One is not simply left with the single alternative of juxtaposing the Adam narrative with the tragic view of the world, for there are two ways in which the Adamic and tragic points of view interact: (1) Only the man who confesses that he is the author of evil can recognize that evil is always present as the "otherness" of temptation. But only with this kind of confession can one recognize the incomprehensibility of a God who tempts and who appears to man as his enemy.

³³Ibid., p. 299.

(2) The polarity of the two types signifies that the human vision of evil is dichotomous. On the one hand, Adam is the figure of evil freely committed resulting in a justly deserved exile. On the other hand, Job is the figure of evil suffered leading to an unjust deprivation. The first figure demands the second, but the second corrects the first. Both are transcended, however, in the "suffering servant" of Isaiah. This new possibility synthesizes the two former figures and reveals that the gift of suffering offered by the suffering servant incorporates the scandal of suffering and reverses the relationship of guilt to suffering.³⁴ The figure of the suffering servant signifies suffering without retribution, suffering weighted with the sins of the world. In this context "guilt is placed in another horizon, not that of judgment but that of mercy."³⁵

The Appropriation of the Myth of Chaos

In one sense the theogonic myth of chaos is dead, for ethical monotheism affirms that because God is holy, God is also innocent. Although the naïve theogony of Babylon and Greece is dead, theogony has not ceased to reappear in the history of thought in such diverse places as the fragments of Heraclitus, German mysticism of the 14th century, and German

³⁴Isaiah 53:4-5.

³⁵Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 302. "la culpabilité est placée dans un autre horizon: non celui du Jugement, mais celui de la Miséricorde."

idealism of the 19th century in which evil has its roots in Being. In terms of the tragic vision of the world, at least in terms of certain aspects of experience, the tragic viewpoint is invincible. But with reference to God, a tragic theology is unthinkable. The dual nature of tragedy as both invincible and unthinkable gives rise to the attempt to transfer the tragic into the very origin of things. The result of this "ontologization" of evil is a dialectic of Being in which the tragic god becomes a tragic moment in the tragic logic of Being.

Ricoeur argues that only a "Christology" can resolve this hypostasis of evil. By Christology he means "a doctrine capable of including in the life of God himself, in a dialectic of divine 'persons,' the figure of the suffering servant evoked earlier as the supreme possibility of human suffering."³⁶ According to this Christology, suffering is a moment of abasement of divine life in which tragedy is consumed because the suffering and unhappiness are in God. Tragedy is also abolished because it is inverted. In Babylonian theogony Marduk destroyed the power of Tiamat, and in Greek myth Cronos mutilated his father. The inverse of this is found in the gospels in which the Christ is presented as the absolute victim, and his suffering is an absolute

³⁶Ibid., p. 305. "une doctrine capable d'inclure dans la vie même de Dieu, dans une dialectique de 'personnes' divines, la figure du serviteur souffrant évoquée tout à l'heure comme possibilité suprême du souffrir humain."

gift. "That the absolute Destiny is also absolute Gift: there the tragic is accomplished and abolished."³⁷

The suffering servant of the Lord can be either a man or a group of people, a prophet from the past or a teacher yet to come. The importance of this figure is that he illuminates the interior of man because he proceeds from the extreme possibilities of man. Yet the doctrine which speaks of scandalous suffering in God is no part of the symbolism of human suffering, for it no longer reveals an extreme possibility in man. There is thus a sense in which the problem of choosing between the alternatives of a Christology or an ontologization of evil is an unresolved problem. The philosophical anthropology which Ricoeur offers recognizes this problem and confesses that every philosophy of man must take into account the enigma of an inhuman or perhaps pre-human evil which presents itself each time we cause evil to appear among ourselves.

The Struggle with the Myth of the Exiled Soul

Although the Adamic myth and the myth of the exiled soul are typologically distinct, it is significant that the neoplatonic conception of a soul/body dualism has reappeared within Christianity so often that it deserved Nietzsche's charge of being "Platonism for the people." This contamination of Christianity by Platonism is understandable in light

³⁷Ibid. "Que le Destin absolu soit aussi Don absolu, voilà le tragique accompli et supprimé."

of the dual experience of evil as both an interiorized act and an exteriorized seduction. The sense of exteriority--the avowal that evil is already present--appears in the tragic myth as divine misguidance, in the theogonic myths as a resurgence of primordial chaos, in the Adamic myth as the figure of the serpent, and in the Orphic myth as the body understood as the root of the involuntary.³⁸ It is easy to see how Christianity drifted from the theme of the exteriority of evil symbolized by the serpent to the exteriority of evil symbolized by the body, for in the symbol of captivity and deliverance from Egypt can be seen a foreshadowing of the drift toward a more Platonic conception of the exteriority of evil.

One stage on the way toward this reinterpretation of evil is represented by Paul, Augustine, and Luther, for whom the irresistibility of evil is countered by the irresistibility of grace. In Paul, however, the "flesh" cannot be identified with the "body," for the "flesh" is an existential category including not only the substantial reality but also the passions and the will which seeks self-glorification through the law. But the one factor which keeps Paul from lapsing into an Orphic dualism is the doctrine of the incarnation of the Son of God in flesh similar to our own. Because this is connected with the doctrine of the redemption of the body, and because Paul found in the Adam narrative a

³⁸Ibid., p. 307.

parallel to Christ, he is saved from "stumbling into dualism."³⁹ Later Christianity doubtless drifted toward the dualistic understanding of man for the same reasons it adopted other Greek categories. But even more important, the explanation of evil with reference to the body is not an objective statement but an etiological myth; the body becomes a "symbol" of evil, that is, a symbol of the second degree.

Ricoeur acknowledges that his attempt to examine all the mythical types from the viewpoint of a dominant type is not entirely satisfactory, for the universe of discourse of myths is a broken universe, and hermeneutics lacks the power to unify this diverse symbolism. The failure of hermeneutics is a provocation to pursue the more radical problem of the philosophic appropriation of myths of evil. Indeed, this problem is central to Ricoeur's entire project, for symbols are philosophically significant only if they can "invite thought." The book La Symbolique du mal, which is part two of the second volume of Philosophie de la volonté, would be of no philosophic significance unless there were at least the prospect that symbols could be appropriated by reflective thought. Ricoeur's analysis of the primary symbols and his exegesis of myths of the second degree is a significant contribution to the study of the history of religions, yet it can be read independently of the rest of Ricoeur's philosophy

³⁹Ibid., p. 310.

of the will with no loss of meaning.

The question that runs through the mind of one reading La Symbolique du mal is: In what sense is it a philosophical work? It appears to be more like a treatise on comparative religions or the psychology of religious consciousness, and in previous years probably would have received a title reflecting this fact. The obvious answer is that it is not a philosophical work in the usual sense of the term. The question that guides Ricoeur's philosophical project is whether hermeneutics has any philosophical significance, for one of his basic themes is that symbols of evil can be appropriated by philosophy only if they "invite thought." But how do symbols invite thought? And what do they invite thought to think about? These perplexities form the background for Ricoeur's future work, and although the third volume of Finitude et Culpabilité is unfinished--the volume in which Ricoeur presumably will answer these questions--we can glimpse from his recent writings the kind of answer Ricoeur may give. That will be the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER VII

FROM MYTH TO PHILOSOPHY

At the end of this difficult trek through a phenomenology of will, a philosophical anthropology, and a hermeneutics of symbols, is it possible to evaluate critically Ricoeur's monumental work? Since it has been fifteen years since the first volume of his Philosophie de la volonté appeared, one could expect to find incisive objections to at least some of the major tenets of Ricoeur's position in the articles and reviews of his books. But this has not proved to be the case. Ricoeur's commentators and reviewers are hesitant to object to any major aspect of his philosophy. Most offer a precis of the two published parts of Philosophie de la volonté and suggest that since it is incomplete, extensive criticism of it would be premature. This is a defensible position; in some ways it is the safest course. What often passes as a critique is nothing more than a collection of random objections that remain on the periphery of the topic and rarely center on the main points at issue. Ricoeur, however, has not even experienced this kind of "critique."

Any evaluation of Ricoeur must take into consideration that his philosophy is indeed unfinished. A rigorously written objection could easily be made obsolete by the forthcoming third part of Ricoeur's philosophy of the will.

What are we to do? Be content with a mere restatement of Ricoeur's philosophy? Attack him because of his presuppo-

sitions? Pick at isolated inconsistencies and misstatements (even these would be difficult to find) with a view toward casting doubt on the whole? None of these approaches would contribute to any meaningful understanding of Ricoeur. A much more profitable approach is to evaluate the unresolved problems in his philosophy while attempting to grasp the general direction in which his subsequent thought may move.

There is danger in this course too, for it is easy to become dogmatic. Alphonse de Waelhens in his article, "Pensée mythique et philosophie du mal," expresses doubt as to the validity of Ricoeur's guiding theme. He asks, "How do myths aid thought in a philosophy of evil, evil being properly unthinkable for all philosophic traditions?"¹ What is needed to complete Ricoeur's project, he thinks, is a rigorous epistemology of mythical and symbolic thought. Being skeptical about the possibility of achieving this, he adds, "We do not believe that the work yet to come will wholly furnish it."² Is this kind of comment not premature, since Ricoeur's most recent work has been addressed to precisely this problem, so that it remains to be seen whether he fully achieves his aim?

More serious is the charge of eclecticism. Ricoeur

¹Alphonse de Waelhens, "Pensée mythique et philosophie du mal," Revue Philosophique de Louvain, 59 (1961), p. 346. "comment les mythes aident-ils à penser une philosophie du mal, ce mal qui est pour toutes les traditions philosophiques le proprement impensable?"

²Ibid., pp. 346-47. "On ne croit pas que le travail à venir la fournira totalement."

admitted to one of his students that the thought of being an eclectic "torments" him.³ But why is eclecticism to be feared? It can have a pejorative connotation only when it is applied to one who merely juxtaposes many views with little thought to their mutual contradictions or inner inconsistencies. Ricoeur is certainly not an eclectic in this sense. He can be described as eclectic--if this appellation is appropriate at all--only in the sense that he is fully aware of the relation of his own thought sustains to the history of ideas. Dirk Vansina, who is probably the best authority on Ricoeur in Europe, makes the following comment: "Our impression, on the contrary, is that he embraces diverse methods under a personal and superior point of view, that is to say, under a richly differentiated, profoundly elaborated, and conscientiously limited rationality."⁴ Ricoeur's contribution is no less original because of his explicit recognition of indebtedness to his philosophic predecessors. The only meaningful criterion of the charge of eclecticism is whether, by standing on the shoulders of giants, Ricoeur is able to see farther.

This is not to absolve Ricoeur of responsibility to

³Sister Mary Aloysius, who began a research project with Ricoeur under a Fulbright grant, told me of this remark in a letter of May 20 1964.

⁴Dirk Vansina, "Esquisse, orientation et signification de l'entreprise philosophique de Paul Ricoeur," Revue de métaphysique et de morale, 69 (1964), p. 320. "Nous avons par contre, l'impression qu'il comprend les diverses méthodes à partir d'une rationalité largement différenciée, profondément élaborée et consciemment limitée."

clarify his position, for there are questions that remain to be answered. Up to this point in his philosophy, he has yet to show the relation between a rigorous phenomenological analysis of will and a hermeneutics of symbols. Both Le volontaire et l'involontaire and La symbolique du mal are significant works, but what is their relation to one another? Is it to be found in the role that guilt plays in an analysis of will and in a hermeneutics of symbols of evil? Is a philosophy of will a necessary propaedeutic to a hermeneutics of symbols of evil? When I put these questions to Ricoeur he replied that he had not shown their relation since this was a task reserved for the third part of Philosophie de la volonté.

The problem of the relation between hermeneutics and phenomenology is just a smaller aspect of the larger problem of the relation between hermeneutics and any kind of philosophical reflection. How does one pass from a descriptive analysis of symbols to philosophical reflection? The problem is difficult not only because pure reflection fails to consider man's daily experience, but also because the experience and confession of sin, in addition to being a different kind of experience, is couched in symbolic language. The old solutions to the dilemma are no longer tenable. One cannot simply juxtapose reflection and confession, nor can one interrupt philosophical discourse with myth. Philosophy must seek to understand, but it must guard against the temptation to lapse back into an allegorical interpretation of symbols

of evil. In light of these difficulties, Ricoeur suggests a third way.

I should like to try the path of creative interpretation, an interpretation that respects the basic enigma of symbols and is willing to learn from them, but which also, starting out from there, promotes and shapes the meaning, in the full responsibility of autonomous thought. The problem is how thought can be both bound and free, how the immediacy of the symbol can be reconciled with the mediacy of thought.⁵

This is the way of interpretation suggested by the aphorism which Ricoeur acknowledges as the guiding principle of his hermeneutics, "The symbol invites thought."

But how can philosophy begin with symbols? Ricoeur's answer is that philosophy must begin somewhere, and the desire for a point of departure completely free from presuppositions is an illusion. Philosophy must begin with all its presuppositions in an effort to clarify them. At the same time, philosophy must recognize the complexities of language, "for in order to have access to the beginning, it is first necessary that thought dwell in the fullness of language."⁶ But thought cannot remain on the level of sym-

⁵Paul Ricoeur, "The Symbol . . . Food for Thought," Philosophy Today, (Autumn, 1960), p. 202. Ricoeur expressed to me his dissatisfaction with this translation of the phrase, "la symbole donne à penser," since the term "food" carried a culinary connotation. Ricoeur's preference as an English rendering is, "the symbol invites thought." The material in this article overlaps the concluding chapter of La symbolique du mal.

⁶Paul Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal (Vol. II of Finitude et Culpabilité 2 vols.; Paris: Aubier, 1960), p. 324. "car pour accéder au commencement, il faut d'abord que la pensée habite dans le plein du langage."

bol; it must begin with symbol but go beyond symbol. Indeed, the symbol invites, but how does it invite thought? In some of Ricoeur's most recently published papers and unpublished manuscripts addressed to this problem, we can catch a glimpse of his attempt to find a solution to this question. To try to give Ricoeur's definitive conclusion would be premature; but even at this stage we may be able to see the general outline of his solution.

I. A GLIMPSE AHEAD

Ricoeur recognizes three stages in the movement from thought residing in symbols to reflective thought nourished by symbols.

The first stage is that of simple description of the symbols themselves, involving any of four methods of comprehension. (1) A symbol can be understood by relating it to another symbol through what Ricoeur calls the "law of intentional analogy." The sky symbol, for example, can have an affinity with other symbols--the mountain, tower, all high places. (2) A symbol can be understood by drawing out the multiple meanings inherent in it. The sky can symbolize the transcendence of the immense, or point to a cosmological, political, or moral order. (3) A symbol can be comprehended by rite or myth; baptism uses water which symbolizes both destruction (floods) and rebirth (the water that makes fertile). (4) Another kind of comprehension shows how the same symbol unifies a number of different levels of experience.

Symbols of vegetation, for example, have furnished a schema for fertility cults as well as a symbolic representation of a metaphysic of contraries.⁷ In La symbolique du mal, Ricoeur uses all four types of comprehension in his analysis of the primary symbols--stain, guilt, sin--and in his demonstration of how these are incorporated into myths of evil, that is, narratives relating both the origin and the end of evil.

From Description to Hermeneutics

The philosopher cannot remain on this merely comparative level because at this stage the question of truth has not yet been raised. The phenomenologist of religion may equate truth with inner consistency, coherence, systematization, etc. But this, at best, is "truth without credence," or "truth standing off at arm's length." One must ask, "Do I myself believe that? What do I personally make of these symbolic significations, these hierophanies?"⁸ Ricoeur demonstrated this kind of involvement in Chapter V of the second part of La Symbolique du mal by showing how the Adamic type incorporates the major features of the other types in a constant interplay of themes.

But at this level one is confronted with the hermeneutic dilemma: you must understand in order to believe, but you

⁷Ricoeur, "The Symbol . . . Food for Thought," pp. 201-2.

⁸Ibid., p. 203.

must believe in order to understand. Admittedly, this is circular, but it is neither vicious nor deadly. "No interpreter in fact will come close to what his text is saying unless he is living in the aura of the meaning that is sought."⁹ But hermeneutics is not philosophy. How can a hermeneutic of symbols "invite thought?" The only way thought can pass from hermeneutics to reflection is by transforming the hermeneutic circle into a wager that Ricoeur expresses the following way: "I wager that I shall better understand man and the link between man's being and the Being of all beings if I follow the indication of symbolic thought."¹⁰

Myths that are thus to be appropriated by philosophical reflection must be accepted as myth (separated from history) and demythologized of their etiological function (stripped of false logos). But there is no possibility of doing away with symbols, that is, of demything symbols, since they constitute an irreducible language.

Now it is most remarkable that these symbolisms are not superadded to a consciousness of evil; rather they are the primordial language of, constitutive of, the confession of sins. The symbolism here is surely revealing: it is the very logos of a sentiment which otherwise would remain vague, indefinite, noncommunicable. We are face to face with a language that has no substitute. The symbol genuinely opens up and lays bare a

⁹Ibid., p. 204.

¹⁰Ricoeur, La Symbolique du mal, p. 330. "Je parie que je comprendrai mieux l'homme et le lien entre l'être de l'homme et l'être de tous les étants si je suis l'indication de la pensée symbolique."

sphere of experience.¹¹

The task of the philosopher, taking the fullness of language as his point of departure, is not only to learn from the comparative examination of symbols and from an exegesis of symbols, but to move on toward philosophical discourse using symbols as "detectors of reality." With myths as guide, he can inaugurate an empirical study of man that will understand him in light of his confession of evil.

This is what Kant does in his Essay on Radical Evil by using the myth of the fall to lay bare the depths of self-consciousness. To continue using Kantian language, a "transcendental deduction" of symbols would verify them by their capacity to order a whole field of human experience. This, according to Ricoeur, is what Heidegger has done; his existentials are only symbols interpreted philosophically.

Yet this is only one aspect of thought proceeding from symbols. Symbols not only reveal new dimensions of the self, they also reveal man's relation to the Sacred, to Being. Philosophy nourished by symbols should not treat consciousness of the self as merely reflexive, for "In the end symbols speak to us as an index of man's position at the heart of being, where he moves and exists."¹² Symbols invite thought on man and upon man's place within Being.

¹¹Ricoeur, "The Symbol . . . Food for Thought," p. 206.

¹²Ibid., p. 207.

From Hermeneutics to Reflection

At the third stage, philosophy reclaims itself starting from symbols. But symbols can invite thought in a variety of ways, some of which are more rigorous than others. Ricoeur makes it clear that however thought proceeding from symbols may be carried out, philosophical reflection must be rigorous. He does not intend to surrender the Greek ideal of philosophy.

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 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. But at the same time it is a question of transmitting, by means of this rational elaboration, a richness of signification that was already there, that has already preceded rational elaboration.¹³

Lest he be charged with reducing philosophy to a technique of interpretation or to a science of exegesis, Ricoeur emphatically insists that he is seeking a philosophical hermeneutic, an interpretation that respects the profundity of symbols, learns from them, incorporates the results of interpretation "but from that point on elaborates on autonomous reflection or speculation."¹⁴

¹³Paul Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutics of Symbols and Philosophical Reflection," trans. Denis Savage, International Philosophical Quarterly, 2 (1962), p. 200.

¹⁴Paul Ricoeur, "'Symbol' in Contemporary Philosophy," (unpublished manuscript), p. 17.

The modern ideal of language is one purged of all symbol and myth, a discourse "emptied and reduced to a calculus."¹⁵ This is especially the case for "symbolic" logic (a striking misuse of the term "symbol," according to Ricoeur). Because of contemporary disdain for symbol and myth, Ricoeur characterizes ours as the age of forgetfulness . . . "forgetfulness of the signs of the sacred, of the loss of man himself insofar as he belongs to the sacred." But at the same time, through a philosophical hermeneutic, it can also be an age of remembrance and restoration, "for, thanks to philology, exegesis, phenomenology of religion, psychoanalysis, semantics, we propose once again to make full this language that we can from another standpoint empty out by radically formalizing it."¹⁶ The modern form of "reminiscence" is in the best tradition of Greek thought. Plato knew how to invent myths; he also knew how to use them to invite thought. He did not separate reminiscence, fed by myths, from the most rigorous dialectical reasoning.¹⁷

The basic problem of hermeneutics and reflection is whether there is a necessary link between the interpretation of symbols and philosophical reflection. Why must reflection proceed from symbols? What do symbols contribute to reflection? An answer to this must also define what is meant by

¹⁵Ibid., p. 14.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

reflection. Whatever else it is, reflection is certainly centered on the self; but what does "self" mean? The proposition cogito ergo sum is in one sense an empty proposition, for the self does not posit itself. To say, "I think, therefore I am" is both an existential and epistemological proposition, and in Descartes the two are not separated. Neither is the self intuited. The first truth, "I think, I am" is empty unless it is mediated by representations which "objectivize" it. Reflection must be concerned with the act of existing, but this act can only be grasped in signs scattered in the world. Ricoeur believes he has exhibited this in his analysis of will. Will cannot be intuited; it can only be found in the "signs" presented by motives and intentions. "This is why," according to Ricoeur, "a reflective philosophy has to include the results, the methods and the presuppositions of all the sciences which try to decipher and to interpret the signs of man."¹⁸

Reflection is tempted to mistake the part for the whole, to be concerned with only one aspect of the act of existing. It would be a mistake to be led along the blind alley of epistemology solely concerned with a critique of reason in the Kantian manner. Although he does not say so explicitly, we can infer that it would also be a mistake to be solely concerned with a critique of the will in a

¹⁸Paul Ricoeur, "Reflection and Interpretation," (The third lecture of the Terry Lectures delivered at Yale University November, 1961), p. 11.

Ricoeurian style. The proper concern for reflection is to "recapture the act of existing, the position of the Self in the whole breadth of its deeds."¹⁹ With this view of reflection, symbols can invite thought only if they can say something about existence that can be said in no other way.

Challenges to reflection. Movement from the descriptive stage of hermeneutics to the philosophical stage is constantly challenged by two spurious substitutes. The one is a reduction of symbols to allegory. The other is that of a "dogmatic mythology" in the form of a false gnosis.

The tendency to reduce symbolism to allegory is particularly acute for "reflective" thought (as opposed to speculative thought). As Ricoeur puts it, "thought advances between the two chasms of allegory and gnosis. Reflective thought moves along the first chasm, speculative thought along the second."²⁰ Reflective thought on the symbolism of evil reaches its peak in the "ethical vision of evil," an interpretation of evil in the context of freedom. This understanding of evil is to be found in the Augustine of the anti-Manichean controversy, who affirmed that evil is not a substance but a "nothing," a defectus. Kant, in his essay on radical evil, supplies the conceptual framework lacking in Augustine by means of the concepts of will, freedom, and

¹⁹Ibid., p. 6.

²⁰Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics of Symbols," p. 215.

maxims of the will. If Kant's essay is read in light of the second Critique, he can be seen to be elaborating the notion of evil as essentially non-being. "An end is put to the confusion between evil and the affective, the passional . . . but neither can evil reside in the subversion of reason; a completely lawless being would no longer be bad but diabolic. It remains that evil resides in a relation, or the subversion of a relationship."²¹ But reflective thought is tempted to learn from symbols by interpreting them allegorically. Allegory must be avoided because it implies that the patent meaning of the symbols is false; the true meaning is veiled. Ricoeur says, "I am convinced that we must think not behind these symbols, but starting from symbols, according to symbols, that their substance is indestructible, that they constitute the relevant substrate of speech which lives among men."²²

Reflective thought based on the ethical vision of evil loses the depth of symbolic thought which focuses on evil as that which enslaves and distorts human life, an evil that cannot be analyzed into specific, individual faults. When speculative thought attempts to preserve this element of the confession of evil--the very element that the ethical vision of evil tends to eliminate--its specific temptation is an inclination toward a false gnosis, a dogmatic mythology,

²¹Ibid., pp. 207-8.

²²Ibid., p. 203.

which appeared in Augustine as the doctrine of original sin. The remarkable affinity of the problem of evil for a tendency toward a false gnosis is seen in that the conception of evil has almost universally been structured on the theme of the tragic evil or the exteriority of evil; evil is "outside" or is to be identified with "body," "thing," or "world." False gnosis incorporates these images and intermingles them with other levels of discourse. In the controversy with Pelagius, Augustine mingled the juridical concept of sin as deviation with the biological model of heredity.

Although the doctrine of original sin is an example of the transformation of speculative thought into gnosis, Ricoeur does not mean to imply that even as "dogmatic mythology" the concept of original sin is useless. Although Pelagius was right in protesting against the doctrine, he failed to see its dynamic force. It underscores in a radical way that evil precedes my own awareness of it; it is "given" prior to the deviation of an individual will. The doctrine incorporates the notion of deviation, of defectus, with the quasi-nature of evil. This quasi-nature becomes the will itself: "In a stroke, confession is shifted to a deeper level than that of simple repentance for acts; if evil is at the radical level of 'generation'--in a symbolic, not a factual sense--conversion itself is 'regeneration'."²³ Augustine must again be corrected by Kant, who shows that al-

²³Ibid., p. 211.

though evil begins in freedom, it is always present to freedom.

Thus Kant completes Augustine: first by definitively destroying the gnostic wrappings of the concept of original sin, next by attempting a transcendental deduction of the ground of wrong maxims, finally by replunging into non-knowing the search for the ground of the ground Let us say again with Kant: "As to the origin of this inclination to evil, it remains impenetrable to us, because it must be imputed to us."²⁴

Ricoeur's intention is to avoid the pitfalls of both allegory and gnosis by means of another interpretation that would respect the irreducible enigma of symbols, and by proceeding from symbols would bring out their meaning in the context of systematic and autonomous thought.

Grafting of Reflection to Hermeneutics. Even when avoiding the dual temptation to allegory and gnosis, the philosopher cannot readily proceed from a hermeneutics of symbols to philosophical thought. How, in fact, does one go from the second stage to the third stage, the stage that has thus far proved so elusive and chimerical? In a lecture given at the third annual meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Ricoeur read a paper entitled "Existence and Hermeneutics" in which he explored the possibilities of relating hermeneutics to a particular kind of philosophical thought, phenomenology. In facing this

²⁴Ibid., p. 213. See also Ricoeur's article, "Le 'Péché Originel': étude de signification." Eglise et Théologie. Bulletin trimestriel de la Faculté de Théologie Protestante de Paris, 23 (1960) 11-30.

difficult problem he explored various possibilities in terms of "grafting" hermeneutics onto phenomenology. One may object to his metaphor on the grounds that it connotes a certain artificiality, but this seems to be pushing the metaphor too far. All that Ricoeur intended by it was to note that the hermeneutic problem is older than Husserl's phenomenological method. He added, "that is why I talk of grafting and indeed we should perhaps speak of late grafting."²⁵

This "grafting" may be accomplished in a direct way by following Heidegger, who takes understanding not only as a mode of knowledge but as a mode of being. Heidegger's problem is not how to strengthen our knowledge of history using knowledge of nature as a model, "but it is rather how to go through and beyond scientific knowledge, taken in its broadest sense, in order to arrive at a linking of historical being to being as a whole."²⁶ The difficulty is that reducing understanding to a mode of being destroys the distance between the interpreter and his object. Two additional objections can also be made. First, if ontological understanding is prior to historical knowledge, how is the latter de-

²⁵Paul Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics" (paper read at the third annual meeting of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy, Yale University, October 22, 1964), p. 1.

²⁶Ibid., p. 6.

rived from ontology? Secondly, the understanding which results from analysis of Dasein is the same understanding through which this being understands itself as a being.²⁷

Ricoeur avoids the paradoxes of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein by following the longer but more fruitful approach of analysis of language. The first level of language analysis is the semantic level. At this level one must develop a theory of meaning and a criteriology of symbol. One must also be concerned with areas of meaning within language and with an investigation of various symbolic modes--the cosmic symbols of the phenomenology of religion, the verbal symbols of the poet, dream symbols of psychoanalysis, and the various symbols in folklore and legend. In addition to this inventory of the modalities of symbols, the semantic approach must be supplemented by a criteriology whose concern is to investigate the semantic constitution of symbolic forms and to a study of procedures of interpretation. Different procedures give rise to different interpretations, and "It is the task of our criteriology to show that the form of the interpretation is relative to the theoretical structure of the hermeneutic system under consideration."²⁸ Ricoeur finds that the semantic level is the one at which the hermeneutic problem can be "grafted" onto phenomenology. The advantage of the semantic approach is that it does not

²⁷Ibid., p. 10.

²⁸Ibid., p. 15.

separate the concept of truth from that of method and attempts to "graft" hermeneutics to phenomenology at the point where the latter is most secure--at the theory of meaning. Ricoeur admits that the methodology he has outlined is decidedly non-Husserlian.

Husserl, of course, would not have accepted or admitted the idea of irreducibly non-univocal meaning. He even expressly excludes this possibility in the first Logical Investigation. Indeed that is why the phenomenology of the Logical Investigations cannot be hermeneutic. But if we diverge from Husserl, at any rate it is within the framework of his theory of meaningful expressions rather than at the doubtful level of the phenomenology of the Lebenswelt.²⁹

An additional advantage of the semantic approach is that it may prove to be a profitable point of contact between phenomenology and linguistic analysis. This is at least what Ricoeur seemed to mean when he said, "if we bring the debate into the field of language, I have the feeling of meeting the other philosophies which currently share a common area of concern."³⁰

This approach is not without its problems, for without a link between symbolic language and understanding of the self, the semantic approach is vulnerable to the same criticisms Ricoeur levelled against Heidegger's Dasein analysis. For this reason hermeneutics must be grafted onto phenomenology not only at the level of the theory of meaning but also at the level of what Ricoeur calls "cogito theory," as

²⁹Ibid., p. 16.

³⁰Ibid., pp. 16-17.

Husserl developed it from the Ideas to the Cartesian Meditations. Ricoeur admits, too, that the "graft affects the shoot" but judges that its effects are positive. The Cartesian cogito is an indubitable first truth, but it is an empty truth. Not only is it empty, "it is like an empty place which has always been filled by a false cogito; we have learned by means of all the exegetical disciplines and through psychoanalysis in particular, that the so-called immediate consciousness is first of all 'false consciousness'."³¹

The Conflict Between Interpretations. At the semantic level there exist many meanings of symbols that must somehow be united by a logic of equivocal meanings, for the use of equivocal language is open to the charge that such philosophical appropriation of symbols will result in fallacious arguments. What is needed is a logic of meaning that can unite diverse systems of interpretation in ontology.

Ricoeur confronted this problem, as well as the problem of the relation between symbols and self understanding, in his Terry Lectures at Yale University, using what seems at first to be two totally unreconcilable systems of interpretation--phenomenology of religion and Freudian theory of psychoanalysis. The former is concerned with cosmic symbols, the latter with dream symbols. The divergence of the two

³¹Ibid. p. 20.

methods of interpretation is focused in a comparison of three major presuppositions of each: (1) Phenomenology of religion describes; it does not seek to explain. Freudian hermeneutics, on the contrary, insist that the religious phenomenon is defined by its function rather than its intentional object. (2) According to the phenomenology of religion, there is a "truth" of symbols. (In the Logical Investigations, Husserl defined truth as the fulfillment, Erfüllung, of the meaningful intention.) Opposed to this is the trait in psychoanalytic interpretation that Freud called "illusion." (3) Phenomenology of religion views symbols as signs of man's relation to the Sacred. In contrast is the Freudian thesis of the "return of the repressed" which corresponds, in a general sort of way, to the remembrance of the Sacred in religion.³²

How can these two disparate systems be interpreted so as to link symbolic language with an understanding of the self in a unified whole? Ricoeur's answer is that these two hermeneutic systems are not totally irreconcilable since each system is legitimate in its own order. Psychoanalysis denies that consciousness can know the self from the beginning; it can be fully understood only by a regression from the Conscious to the Preconscious and the Unconscious. An alternative to the Freudian hermeneutic is a philosophy of conscious-

³²Paul Ricoeur, "The Philosopher Before Symbols," (The first lecture of the Terry Lectures delivered at Yale University November, 1961), pp. 6-12.

ness related to Hegel's Phenomenology of Mind. Instead of consciousness understanding itself by a regression toward unconsciousness, it can only become fully self-conscious by a progression toward greater unfolding. "An exegesis of consciousness would consist of an inventory of and a progression through all these spheres of meaning which consciousness must encounter and appropriate in order to reflect itself as a Self, as a human, adult, ethical Self."³³ The meaning of consciousness can only be given through one or more "metapsychologies" which displace the center of reference from consciousness toward either the Unconscious of Freudian metapsychology or toward the Absolute Spirit of Hegelian metapsychology. In these two apparently conflicting interpretations there is really no contradiction; the two hermeneutics represent two dimensions of symbols corresponding to two directions, regressive and progressive.

Whereas psychoanalysis draws self-consciousness back to birth, to childhood, to impulses, a phenomenology of mind draws consciousness toward an end, toward an eschaton. It is here that Hegel must be corrected by the symbols of the Sacred.

For my part, I see the articulation between phenomenology of the Mind, with its figures in historical cultures, as the point where Hegel fails; for Hegel, as is known, an end is given to this unfolding of figures, and this end is absolute knowledge.

³³Paul Ricoeur, "The Polarity of Symbols," (The second lecture of the Terry Lectures delivered at Yale University November, 1961), p. 9.

Could we not say that the end is not absolute knowledge, that is, the fulfillment of all mediations in a Whole, in a Totality without rest--but that the end is merely promised--promised through the symbols of the Sacred? For me the Sacred takes the place of the absolute knowledge.³⁴

Is this denial of absolute knowledge purely arbitrary? Ricoeur says it is not. His reason? The problem of evil. Ricoeur insists with considerable force that the problem of evil, the starting point of the problem of hermeneutics itself, is what justified the rejection of Hegel's demand for absolute knowledge. Just as there is more in heaven and earth than in Horatio's philosophy, there is more in myths of evil than there is in rational reflection. "The symbols of evil in which we read the failure of our existence declare at the same time the failure of all systems of thought which would try to swallow up the symbols in an absolute knowledge."³⁵

Toward Ontology. What, then, can be the unifying principle of these divergent systems of interpretation? What is the principle that unites in the same hermeneutic the digression toward the Freudian Unconscious and the progression toward the Sacred? In a word, both systems of interpretation "humiliate consciousness and decenter the origin of meaning, placing it either below or above, behind or ahead."³⁶ The relation between symbols and reflection is that symbols dis-

³⁴Ricoeur, "Reflection and Interpretation," p. 18.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 18-19

³⁶Ibid., p. 13.

close the dependence of the self on an absolute ground of consciousness and upon an eschaton, an ultimate end.

Ricoeur notes,

we should fully understand the hermeneutic problem if we could grasp this twofold dependence of the Self upon the Unconscious and upon the Sacred, since this twofold dependence is disclosed only in a symbolic way. In order to elucidate this twofold dependence reflection must humiliate consciousness and interpret it through symbolic meanings coming from behind and from before, from below and from above. -In short, reflection must involve an archeology and an eschatology.³⁷

Even these two apparently opposed forms of hermeneutics each point, in its own way, toward the ontological ground of understanding. A general theory of hermeneutics can show that both modalities belong to the problem of the ontological foundation of the self.

A truly philosophical interpretation of symbols results when symbols and myths are used as "decipherers" of human reality. The symbols of guilt and sin are crucial for a comprehension of the ontological ground of man's affective nature, for by using these particular symbols "it is possible to explore a whole region of human experience that would remain without language if we did not have this tremendous symbolism of evil."³⁸ Ricoeur seems to be moving toward the view that symbols of evil are not only structures of language and reflection but also structures of existence that

³⁷Ibid., p. 19.

³⁸Ricoeur, "Symbol in Contemporary Philosophy," p. 18.

relate man to the Sacred, or if one prefers, to universal Being.

II. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

A difficulty in writing on a living philosopher is that it forces one to attempt to catch a creative mind in mid-air. I sympathize with Ricoeur's European colleagues who are hesitant to criticize him at this point in his philosophical writings, and I think they are wise in suspending judgment until Ricoeur has explored the implications of the first parts of his philosophy. In this chapter I have tried to catch a glimpse of the direction Ricoeur may follow in the third part of Philosophie de la volonté and if I have read the signs correctly, the implications of his methodology could well affect the direction of continental thought.

Only at the end of this analysis can we see clearly how the problem of evil is central to Ricoeur's philosophy. Guilt reveals the brokenness, the "fault" of man's being; it announces to him the need for reconciliation beyond self and heralds the possibility of his link with the Sacred, with Being. The possibility of moral evil, of the fault, resides in man's disproportion with himself, the ambiguity that Ricoeur calls "affective fragility." But the confession (l'aveu) of the fault is always couched in symbolic language; therefore a method of interpreting this language is essential. In providing a hermeneutic of symbols, Ricoeur has no illusions about being exhaustive. He decries the pursuit of a

completely objective and detached investigation of symbols. One must accept a point of view, one must believe in order to understand.

But how can the philosopher renew thought after this detour through a symbolism of evil? How can he utilize the opacity and irreducible depth of symbols to invite thought? This is the problem considered in the past few pages. If we read Ricoeur's most recent writings correctly, symbols invite thought by leading it toward a greater unfolding of consciousness, or toward the Sacred and the ultimate ontological grounding of the self in Being. At one point Ricoeur describes this ontological reconciliation as the "promised land" for the philosopher who begins with the fulness of language but who, like Moses, "can only get a glimpse of it before he dies."³⁹ How can there be a reconciliation when the necessity of evil is inscribed in the very nature of Being? How can an evil that is ever present be surmounted in ontology? Ricoeur, as far as I know, has attempted an answer to this question in only one article, and I cite his answer in full. Even as he writes, he suggests that this is only a possible direction for subsequent meditation.

Three formulas present themselves to my mind, which express three connections between the experience of evil and the experience of reconciliation. First, 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 mi-

³⁹Ricoeur, "Existence and Hermeneutics," p. 27.

lieu, 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 final contradiction is at the same time hidden teaching: etiam peccata, says St. Augustine as an inscription to Claudel's Satin Slipper, if I may put it that way. "Still the worst is never sure," replies Claudel in a litotes; but there is no absolute knowing, nor any "in spite of," nor any "thanks to." 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 movement that retroactively places evil in the light of being. What in the old theodicy was only the expedient of false-knowing becomes the intelligence of hope. The necessity that we are seeking is the highest rational symbol that this intelligence of hope can engender.⁴⁰

I must confess that I do not know what to make of this difficult and enigmatic passage. If I understand any of it correctly, it appears that Ricoeur is at last abandoning the "tradition of rationality that has animated philosophy since the Greeks" to which he so arduously wants to adhere. This would be a viable alternative for a religious thinker who aspires to soar beyond the limits of purely rational thought. Is Ricoeur on the threshold of abandoning philosophy for poetry? Must thought rise from speculation to mystery? From philosophy to mysticism? Perhaps not. We must wait for Ricoeur to say more.

In his Terry Lectures, when exploring the difficult problem of a rapprochement between phenomenology of religion and Freudian dream interpretation, Ricoeur seems to hint that

⁴⁰Ricoeur, "Hermeneutics of Symbols," p. 218.

his own hermeneutic method will aid in the unfolding of consciousness toward transcendence in the Sacred just as Freudian psychoanalysis takes consciousness backward into preconsciousness and unconsciousness. If this is an aspect of "raising the brackets" placed around Transcendence earlier in his work, it may reveal a revolutionary concept of the function of religious symbolism. Yet, I fail to see how symbols of evil will reveal the transcendence of self in the Sacred. Are symbols irreducible as Ricoeur claims they are? Are they the only vehicle of the confession of man's essential disproportion? If so, how is any interpretation of them possible? Do symbols invite thought only to silence it?

Ricoeur insists with much force that symbols must be "demythologized," that is, stripped of their etiological function and displaced from their claim to historicity. Only then can they invite thought. But if symbols are irreducible, perhaps they can invite thought only by a process of "remythization" whose aim is to replace ancient symbolism with a symbolism that is more contemporary. But surely Ricoeur intends to deny that this is a viable alternative.

We can expect Ricoeur to clarify in his subsequent writings the role played by guilt (the most interiorized avowal of evil) in the deciphering of symbols. If I have read him correctly, guilt is the key that unlocks both Freudian analysis of unconscious life and Ricoeur's quest for the link between the self and Being through the mediation of

symbols and myths. In these terms we can see the centrality of the problem of evil to Ricoeur's entire enterprise.

Through psychoanalysis, consciousness regresses towards unconsciousness. Through a hermeneutics of symbols of evil, consciousness is led forward to its ontological roots in Being. Evil, as it is confessed through symbol and myth, serves as a cipher to a Transcendence both "behind" and "before." Evil is a horrid cipher to which "hope" provides the key that opens out the good. To borrow a phrase from C. S. Lewis, evil "plants the flag of truth within the fortress of a rebel soul."⁴¹

But perhaps a reconciliation in Transcendence of man's brokenness is impossible. Perhaps hope is in vain. If evil is only a necessary result of purely natural life without Transcendence, it would then not be a cipher of Transcendence but only an irreducible fact, although a monstrous one, of human existence. But can human experience be reconciled with this theory? For to dispose of the problem of evil in this way is only to substitute another for it, the problem of good. In a meaningless order--meaningless because it is beyond the possibility of reconciliation--good, not evil, becomes the irrational surd. How to account for man's moral experience, his judgments against wrong doing, his devotion to integrity--these become the problematic ele-

⁴¹C. S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain, (London: Bles, 1940), p. 83.

ment of experience.

But this is not clear. Is ontology only the promised land? Must speculation die of frustration this side of the border? Or must the philosopher here abdicate his position to the theologian? Must reason give way to mystery? Sight to faith? Knowledge to hope? I confess that I cannot anticipate Ricoeur's answer. We must wait and see.

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