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SUSPICIOUS-DISCLOSURE AND THE
DIALECTIC OF SELF-APPROPRIATION
IN PAUL RICOEUR'S HERMENEUTICS

BY



BLAINE ALLEN BARCLAY

B.A. Wilfrid Laurier University, 1980

THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts degree
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ABSTRACT

The following thesis consists of six chapters which serve as an interpretive key to Ricoeur's hermeneutical thinking. Chapter one consists of a map of the opacity of reflection, elaborates on the relationship of desire to reflection and traces out the different methodological routes that Ricoeur takes toward uncovering the structures of this relationship and the task of becoming a self. Chapter two outlines the problem of the illusions of immediate consciousness. Chapter three is a sketch of a fourfold problem of the symbol and includes some remarks on the role and rule of metaphor in Ricoeur's later thinking. Chapter four delineates some dimensions of the multileveled problem of language. Chapter five seeks to uncover those problems peculiar to the interpretation of written texts. In it I answer the questions: What do we aim at in the act of interpreting? Does it belong to the finding of the meaning of a text to lose oneself, and in this loss to discover both dread, wonder, and an expanded self? Chapter six briefly outlines Ricoeur's poetics of the will and its relationship to what I take to be the central focus of his hermeneutical inquiry, namely, the task of self-appropriation, which is the end of hermeneutics. What holds these chapters together is the development of finding

our way toward the self of self-reflection which is the aim of Ricoeur's hermeneutical inquiry. An initial look at what is being sought shows a reflection internally bound with the opacity that is desire and the lie of immediate consciousness. A detour is called for because neither reflection nor consciousness prove to be what they first appeared to be. The self that is sought for is found elsewhere and is already dissipated in the world of symbols, language, and texts. The will has already poeticized itself before it ever seeks to retrieve itself. My concluding remarks outline briefly my contention that Ricoeur's near equation of text and self is an inadequate model for self-appropriation. Self-appropriation is incomplete until one reaches the praxis of an expanded self received from a given text. But prior to praxis one has to make a judgement about the truth or falsity, the goodness or non-goodness of that way of being in the world that the text makes possible for the reader in a given life situation. This incarnation of meaning is a post-hermeneutical issue. I also suggest that a carefully worked out transcendental method will direct our way beyond a relativism of what counts for truth and value. I also criticize Ricoeur's tyranny of textuality over the other objectifications of the will. Although I accept this paradigmatic use of the text as fruitful, I also think that it raises problems in regard to the

possibility of self-appropriation for the pre-textual
bushman or the mentally handicapped. Self-appropriation is
just as possible for undifferentiated consciousness as it
is for highly differentiated consciousness. Even in Ricoeur
a certain primacy belongs to the pre-critical faith of
naive immersion in the world of symbol, myth, and custom.
Self-appropriation could prove to be an illusion if it
is only for the elite at the expense of the many.

PREFACE

In the following reading of Ricoeur I have taken Ricoeur himself as my guide: "Even when we read a philosophical work, it is always a question of entering into an alien work, of divesting oneself of an earlier "me" in order to receive, as in play, the self conferred by the work itself."/1/ Writing this thesis has been for me none other than dancing playful yieldings to a series of imaginative variations on my self. This means that a variety of ways to be a self or to receive an expanded self were made possible for me by reading and writing about Ricoeur. It is with great affection that I dedicate this work to Helen and Allen Barclay who first gave me a self capable of receiving an expanded self, and to my wife Lilli without whom neither the time nor the energy for the completion of this paper would have been found. I offer this work also for my teachers along the way who opened my world: the hermit, the non-Lonergarian Lonergarian, the hungry nihilist open to the empty fullness, the one who taught me how to be suspicious while being attentive, the one for whom the whole history of metaphysics is present in every moment that is, the one who lives a world of meaning when he speaks a meaningful word, the zen-catholic, the freudian slip who helped me dig what an archeology of the subject might uncover, the Thomists who

refuse modernity because they still hope that wisdom is possible, and for the libidinal upsurge and the spirit who is the freedom of the wind....

INTRODUCTION

Hermeneutics is a multileveled task, a kind of artistic-scientific overlapping of perspectival lookings at what is a multifaced given. It interrogates the various levels or strata found both in the inquirer and the object of inquiry. It does this under the dual mode of "openness to" and "critical distance from" that which is to be uncovered and made clear in hermeneutical inquiry. Both the being of the inquirer and the being of the text are never just simply there, but present themselves as already sedimented into multileveled preconstituted wholes. From the perspective of what can be called diversely, "first naivete" (Ricoeur), "common sense eclecticism" (Lonergan), "the natural attitude" (Husserl), and "immersion in the they-world" (Heidegger), both the inquirer and the text, are naively there and known only pre-reflexively and non-thematically. The task of interpretation then must always begin in a painful iconoclastic moment that smashes the illusion that we know both what we are about and what the text to be interpreted is about. This is the basic moment of suspicion, the birth of philosophy which begins in wonder, which begins in admitting one's ignorance. The man in Plato's cave has that first moment of self doubt: "Could

it be?...do I dare think such a thought?...I wonder?...." This is not just a negation, but a creative leap beyond the assumed given to the not yet. Both self and text are opaque, and so we must begin in the poverty of our non-knowing or we have not yet begun at all. The following paper is my attempt to map out how Paul Ricoeur works through this monumental hermeneutical task and how he balances the suspicion-disclosure/self-appropriation dialectic in hermeneutics.

For Ricoeur the non-transparency of both the inquirer and of the text is the only road on which we can travel towards both the text and ourselves. In Ricoeur "text-understanding" and "self-understanding" ultimately refer to the same task since our "effort to be and our desire to exist" are only accessible to us as already objectified in the cultural creations of our will. 2 The following map of Ricoeur's hermeneutical thinking will consist of six chapters which serve as an interpretive key to his work and offer one possible reading of it. Occasionally interspersed throughout these chapters are more extended elaborations of various themes presented as the need arises for a more detailed discussion of the problem. This paper does not claim to be any kind of definitive

statement in regard to Ricoeur's place within the wider context of modern philosophical hermeneutics nor regarding the ultimate importance of his work. This paper itself can claim to be no more than one interpretation of Ricoeur's hermeneutics, but as such may serve as an aid towards the appropriation of the world opened up by Ricoeur's work and the self-appropriation of the reader: Myself as reader of Ricoeur and you as reader of this paper. If this paper approximates this end for any of its readers my efforts will have been amply rewarded.

~~for~~ Chapter one consists of a map of the opacity of reflection, elaborates on the relationship of desire to reflection and traces out the different methodological routes that Ricoeur takes toward uncovering the structures of this relationship and the task of becoming a self. Chapter two outlines the problematic of the illusion of consciousness. Chapter three is a sketch of the fourfold problem of the symbol and includes some remarks on the role and rule of metaphor in Ricoeur's later thinking. Chapter four delineates some dimensions of the multileveled problem of language. Chapter five seeks to uncover those problems peculiar to the interpretation of written texts. In it I want to answer the questions: What do we aim at in the act

of interpreting? Does it belong to the finding of the meaning of a text to lose oneself, and in this loss to discover both dread and wonder...and wait... an expanded self? 3 Chapter six briefly outlines Ricoeur's poetics of the will and its relationship to what I take to be the central focus of his hermeneutical inquiry, namely, the task of self-appropriation, which is the end of hermeneutics. The final chapter summarises the results of the previous sections. The logic that holds these chapters together is not one of strict progression nor of necessary sequence but it is a progressive method of finding our way toward the self of self-reflection which is the aim of Ricoeur's hermeneutical inquiry. A first look at the self that is sought for shows a reflection internally bound with the opacity that is desire and the lie of immediate consciousness. A detour is called for because neither reflection nor consciousness proves to be what it first appeared to be. The self that is sought is found elsewhere and is already dissipated in the world of symbols, language, and texts. The will has already poeticised itself before it ever seeks to retrieve itself. The route that I choose to travel towards the core of Ricoeur's hermeneutics roughly parallels the development of his own thinking on this

matter. My concluding remarks seek to situate my own position in regard to Ricoeur by offering a brief critique of his work and some suggestions for further development as well as other directions he could have traveled.

CHAPTER ONE

REFLECTION: THE OPAQUE RETRIEVAL OF A PRIOR OPACITY

The opacity of reflection has its roots in the fact that I find myself always already in a world, immersed in its doings and projects, already living in the house of language. Reflection is never some kind of intuitively given self-presence of the subject. This self-presence would be called consciousness and, as we shall see later, even to say this would be highly problematical. Reflection is non-primordial and derivative. It is always at least one step away from immediacy and, try as it may, it can never capture itself and remain as it was before. Reflection is our attempt to recapture our life and the thickness of our cultural and personal presence so as not simply to let it dissipate in its various objectifications. "Reflection is the appropriation of our effort to exist and our desire to be by means of works which testify to this effort and this desire." 4 Reflection cannot find itself somewhere behind these objectifications but must always recover itself as already dissipated. There is no self without a history that is sedimented, and what is sedimented is for the most part hidden from view unless one does some digging.

Understanding is already led by a pre-understanding, a pre-grasp of its object and of itself; it is what I call an always already interpreted given. There is then "a field of meanings anterior to objectivity for a knowing subject. Before objectivity, there is the world; before the subject of the theory of knowledge, there is operative life." 5 This naive primordial lifeworld is the abundance out of which reflection draws its fuel, and without which there could be no reflection. This is why the symbol is always richer than its interpretation: "There is always something more in myths and symbols than in all our philosophy." 6 Ricoeur says:

A symbol cannot be exhaustively treated by conceptual language. . . there is more in a symbol than in any of its conceptual equivalents. . . . There is no need to deny the concept in order to admit that symbols give rise to an endless exegesis. . . . no concept can exhaust the requirement of further thinking borne by symbols. . . . no given categorization can embrace all the semantic possibilities of a symbol. . . it is the work of the concept alone that can testify to this surplus of meaning. 7

Even the most abstract reflection always remains concrete. Reflection takes its lead from this primordially given and takes a step back from this naive immediacy so as to reach for a mature mediated immediacy, "a fully differentiated

compact consciousness." (Lonergan) 8 It is compact even while being differentiated; it has gone through the critical fire that is the fragmentation of modernity and has found its way toward a new unity in its appropriation of this diversity, 9 "no longer in the pre-critical form of immediate belief but as the second immediacy that hermeneutics aims at." 10 The post-critical compactness that emerges has lost both its pretence to immediacy and its naive unity.

The thinking subject can know itself only insofar as it has already objectified itself in the documents of its life. 11 Reflection and self-knowledge are never an immediately given but are always there pre-reflexively, unthematically, and as objectified in our work, art, language, symbol, myth, ritual. 12 To say that self-knowledge is given unthematically is to allude to the fact that although it is given, it is at first not adverted to or reflectively grasped. This task of self reflection, this archeology of the subject which must travel the detour route of the interpretation of its works 13, is further complicated by a faulty epistemology that has dominated Western tradition since Descartes. Ricoeur, following Heidegger calls this "the age of the world as view or

picture", 14 where "Being is placed in front of man as something objective, at his disposal." 15 This subject-object split results in cutting human beings off from their relatedness to being; it proports to give sole priority to reflection rather than to the prior richness of the life world. 16 The truncated subject, poor child of modernity, must first break the hold of this false epistemology before it can do more than just take a look and think it knows by doing so. Ricoeur deals with this theme in his critique of Husserl's perspectivist prejudice where he attacks him for his overly paradigmatic use of the sense of sight in phenomenological description. 17 Philosophy is always a hermeneutics 18 and, as a result, it can be said in a way, with some Thomists, that philosophy did die a death with Descartes and with the technological shift towards the dominance of objectivity. 19 This Cartesian epistemology and the rise of technology are closely related.

In Ricoeur's hermeneutical framework the task of reflection is directly related to a certain primacy of desire. What is meant here is that what is from "below" is always more primordial, comes first, is more original and is prior to what is from "above", namely, consciousness, reflection, and all their derivatives. Although in the order

of description Ricoeur often travels from the higher to the lower and from the derivative to the original, 20 in the order of existence desire is at the centre. 21 To delineate adequately the contours of Ricoeur's description of desire, it is necessary to map out the various methodological routes that he has chosen to travel on his way towards an intricate philosophical anthropology that is adequate to the whole of human experience. 22 The need for conflicting descriptive routes on the way to desire is necessary because of the internal limits of any particular approach, the abstract character of each descriptive framework, and the indirect mode of presence or accessibility to observation that belongs to what is being brought to language, namely, desire itself. These conflicting descriptive routes refer to both the "diagnostic" use that Ricoeur makes of the data of the empirical sciences in regard to the organic and the abstract, yet necessary, preliminary description of the involuntary or the natural body from the point of view of a very strict and formal phenomenology. Another route is the indirect access to desire that is ours in the hermeneutical deciphering of the instinctual representatives available to us via the analytical techniques of psychoanalysis and the reading of human interests such as power and profit as being

internally operative even in the most objective knowledge, which is available to us in a critique of ideology.

Ricoeur^t spent time as a P.O.W. in a German concentration camp during World War Two. I am convinced that his reading of the works of Husserl, Heidegger, and Jaspers during this time, along with this tragic experience was to have a lasting effect upon his philosophizing. Confronted, on the one hand by the philosophical brilliance of German thought, and on the other, by the madness of the Third Reich, Ricoeur must have been led to question the underpinnings of rational thought in the West. In his search for clues Ricoeur must have listened closely to another German (Nietzsche) who years before read the text of willing at the heart of human knowing, who read reason as "the fiction of a world that corresponds to our desires." 23 Ricoeur became convinced that the "I will" is prior to the "I think" 24 and thereby formulated in initial questioning what was to be his lifelong philosophical project of an extensive philosophy of the will. Convinced that given only concrete modes of describing the will as actually lived, we could never find our way through the human maze 25, Ricoeur chose to describe the essential structures of the "I will" (the voluntary) always in relationship to the "I am".

(the involuntary). 26 From below, the "I am" is prior to the "I will" which is prior to the "I think". By this questioning back and burrowing his way under reason's pretence to know itself or its other transparently, Ricoeur implicitly sets the stage for the explicit themes of his later philosophical activity.

The first and most important essential structure of the will that Ricoeur uncovers is the "fundamental reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary." 27 Even though eidetic phenomenology proports to be a direct mode of descriptive access to the will, in this early phase Ricoeur does not claim to be describing the organic as such except in its triadic relation to the will which I shall explain in the next paragraph. 29 "I cannot hypostasize...desire outside the process of interpretation; it always remains a being-interpreted." 30 Even in the diagnostic-descriptive use that he makes of the empirical sciences in regard to the data that they uncover about the organic, Ricoeur is quite aware that the empirical method has validity only within the framework of its own limitations, which it may or may not be aware of. 31 Strictly speaking, there is no direct mode within which freedom could describe nature. I see this as an implicit Kantian phenomenology which was to become more and

more explicit as Ricoeur moved progressively further away from Husserl after writing "Freedom and Nature". A close correlation is possible between the Kantian "thing-in-itself" as a limit concept not accessible to direct description and Ricoeur's treatment of the body as "limit of" or as the "consented to" of the will. 32 This Kantian shift is still a phenomenology in that it describes what appears, but it is a phenomenology struggling to become aware of its own limitations as a method in order to be validated within a wider descriptive framework.

The triadic structure of the will is brought to light by an elaboration of the "fundamental reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary" mentioned above. Willing has three moments to its movement. First, it is to decide in accordance with my ability to act. 33 Secondly, it is to move my body in order to inscribe the project which has been decided upon onto the real. 34 Thirdly, I consent to the necessity within myself and the object which I can neither propose nor change. 35 Thus the body is threefold: motive of, organ of, and terminus of my willing. 36 Of these three the last one, which Ricoeur calls the "absolutely involuntary... the unconscious... of biological life" 37 is the one which is of most interest to us. This absolutely

involuntary is the uncovered structure which lies closest to what could be called "desire-in-itself" or what Ricoeur in "Freedom and Nature" calls "bodily necessity". 38 This is the most opaque aspect of the involuntary, the most inaccessible to a more direct description. At its lower limits the reciprocity of freedom and nature shades into a kind of total obscurity when approached by way of eidetic description. This lower limit of obscurity remains because the eidetic method is tied in with the Husserlian doctrine of intentionality which is itself a reference to consciousness. Because of this obscurity Ricoeur opts for making a diagnostic use of the results of empirical psychology because of the data it uncovers regarding the body as an object. 39 This diagnostic method is possible because the object body and the lived body or subject body are ultimately the same body. It can be fruitful therefore, to make use of the empirical data as a clearer indicator of what can be also known, albeit more obscurely, from another point of view, namely, that of phenomenological description. A critique of empirical psychology from a Ricoeurian point of view would address the question concerning the limits of the validity of its method but would not attack its validity as such.

What has been uncovered so far in our deciphering of desire? Only limited use can be made of empirical data and an eidetic phenomenology has its internal limits since it is only a description of essential structures from the point of view of an intentionality analysis. These two methods offer us, on the one hand, a reading of the organic as an object, and on the other, a reading of the organic as a "necessity consented to" in its relationship to freedom. 40 They give us empirical data and essential structures, neither of which obtains desire as such but only uncovers it from the point of view of a priority and self-transparency of consciousness naively presupposed by both an empirical and an eidetic approach. This priority and self-transparency are put in question when desire is uncovered as a leaven at the heart of existence, a leaven that fills the whole loaf. To dig deeper into desire Ricoeur seeks to decipher it in its instinctual representatives by way of a dialogue with psychoanalysis. While it is true that what can be diversely called desire, instinct, the libidinal, the id, the involuntary, and the unconscious, is never directly accessible to description, it can nonetheless be interpreted insofar as it is decipherable in the symbolic world of our dreams. Desire also leaves its mark on the

whole of our symbolic and cultural world, but dreams are paradigmatic for psychoanalytic interpretation. This interpretation is constituted by the attempt to bring to language the hidden distortions which desire has already worked by tracing out its patterns in the dream account and the patient's associations. Psychoanalysis becomes a model for all works of deciphering; it is one of the royal roads that hermeneutics must travel. It is to be noted here that desire in itself is not accessible except in its instinctual representatives.

Freud's method for deciphering desire brings us closer to the lower limits of its accessibility than either of the previous methods that Ricoeur has made use of. The analyst seeks to decipher the previous cipher that desire has already worked. 41 She or he does this by reading the patient's dream account via the free associations brought forward in the analytical situation. 42 The analyst reads the opaque text of the dreams and associations presented by the patient, and attempts to substitute for this confused text a clearer narrative that will make sense of the patient's history of desire. 43 This process of deciphering is how Ricoeur is able to place psychoanalysis under the rubric of hermeneutics. The psychoanalytic situation is of

its very nature an intersubjective situation. It seeks to bring to language, by a method of deciphering the tricks of desire, what is prior to language. Of this prelinguistic ground of our being-in-language Ricoeur notes: "There is no symbolism prior to man who speaks, even though the power of symbols is rooted more deeply, in the expressiveness of the cosmos, in what desire wants to say, in the varied image contents that men have." 44 The self that reflection seeks to recapture is not yet a self but only a radically poor ego oppressed by its three masters, the id, the superego, and the reality principle. 45 And yet the task of reflection is precisely that of becoming a self, of becoming conscious, the task of recapturing and remembering the remnants of a possible self in the symbolic richness of the cosmos, psyche, and cultural life world. "Reflection is the effort to recapture the Ego of the Ego Cogito in the mirror of its objects, its works, its acts." 46

Just as dreams are the royal road to psychoanalysis, 47 so psychoanalysis is the royal road to an archeology of the subject. This archeology is a finding our way back, through a method of regressive uncovering, the sedimented layers of the history of desire and its distortions. The unconscious or id is an atemporal system

of energy exchanges that shows itself as a history of desire in the development of a particular ego. Id desires the forbidden, reality says no, and the denied object is sublimated into an ego ideal in order to make easier the ascesis that reality calls for. This basic structure of desire's development is what has already happened prior to any questioning about it. This is the cipher that desire has worked prior to any work of decipherment. As found already to have taken place, this developmental pattern is mine as unknown, as sedimented history, as distortion, trick, illusion, lie. I may have what I think to be a basic grasp of what was going forward in my ongoing history, but the libidinal memory traces left in my body may tell a different story. Analysis is the attempt to read the undertext hidden from view and to recapture in its coming to language the voice of reality that was covered over and escaped from in order to hide the hurt of a wounded ego. The implicit teleology of psychoanalytic practice is to extend consciousness and to become a self: "Where id was, ego shall be." 47 Freud's method is implicitly hermeneutical in that it looks for a concealed, latent meaning in a manifest or revealed meaning. It attempts to read the at first unintelligible text of the unconscious in the conscious text

of the dream account and the free associations of the patient, and to substitute for this a more intelligible reading of the particular history of desire. As in Ricoeur's previous methods of uncovering the underside of so-called rational life, in this method there is also a bottom limit, a prior-to-language which can never come to language, an "in itself" that will always overflow any means of access that inquiry might find to it. This overabundance is what makes incarnation a mystery, always more accessible from ever expanding points of view but never exhaustively captured in reason's grasp. The body is always grasped by the given, prior to any consciousness of it. Philosophically Freud pushes us back behind Descartes to an epistemology that lies closer to the Thomistic doctrine of sensibility as a pre-grasp of the given. In different ways both Freud and Aquinas ask us to listen closely to the data of sense before we make a judgement about the real. In my opinion a fruitful dialogue is possible between these two worlds of discourse which at first seem so far apart.

Another privileged road of access to the ever prior that Ricoeur takes up is the critique of ideology. 48 We must take seriously a discernment of power and human interest on the internal of so-called objective knowledge.

All thinking is interlaced with its socio-political-economic milieu and can be read from this perspective. Tradition can be read both as prior richness, gift of disclosure, the dialogue that I am, and as impoverishment, concealing limit, a dialogical closure due to the constitutive elements of human interests at the heart of the tradition. In our present situation tradition needs to be read as both, and in this debate between the priority of enclosure or disclosure Ricoeur gives priority to tradition as a storehouse of possible ways of being-in-the-world for its interlocutor. 49 This optimistic attitude towards the tradition must be taken up with great suspicion however, because of the violence inherent in all disclosure. To bring to language and embody what is thus brought forward in the works which we call tradition is to distill the pre-linguistic given of sensibility and to metamorphize it imaginatively; and this is always at the same time, both a distortion of and the only mode of access that is open to us. We must both be attentive to that which is ever prior because it is the privileged road thought must travel, and we must be careful with regard to the violence inherent in this disclosure. A critique such as Habermas' that seeks to discern the hidden structures of power in the everyday world

is itself a disclosive possibility of this same tradition. The telos of a liberating communication makes sense only in terms of the living memory of a past pregnant with dialogue even in the midst of its violence and its elements of closure. 50

My concern in this section has been to answer such questions as: What is reflection for Ricoeur? What does reflection seek to re-collect? What is desire and what is the relationship of desire to reflection? Reflection is our ongoing attempt to appropriate thematically our "desire to be and our effort to exist", 51 and we find this desire and effort nowhere else but in the works that attest to it. 52 Only a very limited amount of data is accessible to us by the more direct methods of empirical and eidetic description and both of these are accessible only by way of necessary but impoverishing abstractions away from the concrete as it is lived. The objective data of the empirical sciences are the best route we have to the body insofar as it is an object, but insofar as we are seeking knowledge of the body primarily as owned and as lived by a willing subject this objective knowledge gives us only indirect indications of this involuntary that is the limit of my volition. A phenomenological description of the essential structures of

the involuntary discloses it only insofar as it is related to and subsumed under the act of willing. It would seem that a hermeneutics informed by a serious dialogue with psychoanalysis and ideology critique is the privileged road on which we have to travel both to the text and to ourselves. "Reflection is self-appropriation" 53 or it is nothing at all.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LIE OF IMMEDIATE CONSCIOUSNESS

Although consciousness comes both prior to and after reflection in both an ontological and a chronological sense, I have chosen to expound reflection first since the task of becoming conscious is a reflective task. Consciousness is at the same time a first naivete that reflection seeks both to yield to and to surpass, as well as a second naivete that reflection aims at. "I do not at first possess what I am." 54 Consciousness, then, belongs both to the first and second naivete, while reflection is the path that thinking must travel on its way towards "the postcritical equivalent of the precritical hierophany" 55 where I can "believe that being can still speak to me, no longer in the precritical form of immediate belief but as the second immediacy that hermeneutics aims at." 56 The way that consciousness must travel in order to become a mature self is reflection. The task of becoming conscious is the task of reflection, which in order to be concrete must travel the long detour of a hermeneutics of the signs of desire. 57 "The ultimate root of our problem lies in this primitive connection between the act of existing and the signs we

deploy in our works; reflection must become interpretation because I cannot grasp the act of my existing except in signs scattered in the world." 58

An important moment of suspicion is present at the very heart of this movement of becoming conscious. In the first immediacy consciousness naively believes in the transparency both of itself and its content and, because it is encrusted and immersed in the thickness of this belief in, it can get neither a clear view of itself nor of its other. What is needed is an epoche, a suspension of judgement, a bracketing of this belief in the objectivity of the world. This gives me the world not as an objective "out there" over against my subjectivity, but as my being-in-a-world prior to the subject-object split. Phenomenological epoche constitutes a bracketing of the fact of the world so as to bring the meaning of the world into focus. 59—This meaning is not objective, in the sense of being independent of a subject; it is subjective, in the sense of being "for" or "of" a subject, namely, the thickness of my insertion in a world-for-me. The world is not an object over against me but a web of interconnected meanings for me. It is the world in which I live my life, deliberate, decide, and act on my projects. Ricoeur moves

away from Husserl's perceptual prejudice to an approach to phenomenology based on the whole of sensibility, one rooted in a priority of the sense of touch rather than the sense of sight. Touch, more than all the other senses, witnesses to our basic anchorage in a world, and an epistemology built upon this foundation will avoid many of the pitfalls of much of post-Cartesian philosophy. Sight gives us a world out there; touch gives us a world prior to the subject-object split.

The illusion of consciousness is in its thinking that it knows both itself and its other immediately. 60 Not only must we begin with a mediated knowledge of our conscious life and a knowledge of the other by way of the long road of hermeneutics, but we must first of all learn the hard lesson of letting ourselves be grasped by being rather than presuming to hold it in our tiny grasp. Being or the given in its plenitude always escapes our grasp and we find ourselves only in "obedience to the over-powering of being which founds and creates the poet and the thinker." 61 Poetic thinking is, of course, other than the technical, manipulative, quantitative thinking that has dominated modernity. Ricoeur agrees with Habermas that the predominate ideology of our times is technology. 62 The thinking that

Ricoeur calls for is openness to what Heidegger calls being which shows itself as the unconcealing-overwhelming. 63 But an exercise in suspicion must come first; We must relax the grasp which up till now we had presumed to have. We must risk the thought that what up till now we have called truth was only an artistic taming of the horrible plenitude, a necessary error without which we could not live. (Nietzsche) 64

In this task Ricoeur takes his lead from the three great masters of suspicion, Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx, who uncover aspects of the illusory ways that consciousness can objectify itself.

Purify discourse of its excrescences, liquidate the idols, go from drunkenness to sobriety, realize our state of poverty once and for all; ...use the most "nihilistic", destructive, iconoclastic movement so as to let speak what once, what each time, was said, when meaning appeared anew, when meaning was at its fullest. . . . In our time we have not finished doing away with idols and we have barely begun to listen to symbols. . . extreme iconoclasm belongs to the restoration of meaning. }65

These words are Ricoeur's, written about the task of hermeneutics, and yet they ring out with the hammerlike quality of a Nietzsche. Hermeneutics, for one who has appropriated Nietzsche, is the call to the metamorphosis of

the spirit, the call for the camel to become a lion and for the lion to become a child. 66 The first immediacy is the naivete of the camel. Meaning is extrinsic, unquestioned, and taken up like a weight on the back of a beast of burden. At this point the human spirit is sunk in non-understood necessity, and the freedom it thinks it has in taking the weight of extrinsic value upon itself is nothing but an illusion. Thus the human spirit becomes a lion and does battle with extrinsic value; this is the idol-smashing moment of the restoration of meaning, the throwing off of the yoke of non-understood necessity. This is also the moment of a possible freedom in understood necessity, the birth of a new meaning in holding immediacy at a distance. In the next metamorphosis of the human spirit the lion becomes a child, pregnant with intrinsic value. This is the moment of self-appropriation and the restoration of meaning as lived in the second immediacy at which hermeneutics aims. The immediacy of Nietzsche's child is not the immediacy of the camel. The freedom and Yea saying of the pregnant child is post-critical, coming after the iconoclasm of the lion. I see this metaphor of the metamorphosis of the spirit found in the early pages of Nietzsche's Zarathustra as an apt metaphor for Ricoeur's understanding of the hermeneutical

task: "in Nietzsche. . . philosophy itself becomes the interpretation of interpretations" 67 or hermeneutics. What Ricoeur aims for is a playful second immediacy born on the other side of the ascesis of reflection, a possible freedom born on the other side of understood necessity. I call this a possible freedom in order to stress the difficulty of its attainment. The first naivete is fraught with illusion, and non-understood necessity is a way of being in bondage. This illusion-fraught naivete, thick with non-understood necessity is, however, the only starting point I could ever have. It is because I am always faced with an opaque starting point that the appropriation of the world of symbols and myths becomes the road to a possible redemption. Since reflection is not its own beginning, reflection must begin from the pre-reflective.

Whether the lie of immediate consciousness takes the form of cultural superstructural repressions of the libido, the resentment of the will to power objectified in a slave morality, or the structure of alienated labour, ideology and the money fetish, 68 all point towards various aspects of "the unreflected element in the reflected," 69 or what can be called the unconscious. 70 Consciousness, as such, is not a given but a task. 71 The naively apparent meanings

of immediate consciousness conceal true meanings, and thus the need for suspicion. This hidden-manifest structure of the conscious-unconscious systems is what Ricoeur refers to as the palimpsestic nature of consciousness, which is like a text under which another text has been written but which is now half erased, half covered over. 72 Consciousness is not our starting point but a problem and a task toward which we labour; we do this by stripping away the false cogitos which mask it from disclosing itself. 73 Only then can we appropriate little by little for ourselves what Ricoeur calls operative life.

CHAPTER THREE

SYMBOLIC ANTECEDENCE

Since thinking begins from the pre-reflexive lifeworld within which we are already immersed in a web of meanings mediated to us by way of symbolic representation, and since this mediacy renders both consciousness and reflection problematical, calling for suspicion as well as appropriation in the interpretive task, I will now look more closely at the structure of that which mediates, that is, the symbol. This outline of Ricoeur's hermeneutics now moves from the non-transparency that is the inquirer toward the problematic that is the object of inquiry, on a first level the symbol itself. The problematic of the symbol is fourfold: (1) its opacity or non-transparency, (2) its cultural contingency, (3) the problematical nature of the task of interpretation itself and (4) the conflict of interpretations.

First, the opaqueness and non-transparency of the symbol proceed from its dual intentional structure. The symbol itself is "any structure of signification in which a direct, primary, literal meaning designates, in addition, another meaning which is indirect, secondary, and

figurative and which can be apprehended only through the first." 74 This is what Ricoeur elsewhere speaks of as the symbol's "surplus of meaning", 75 the prior richness of the non-linguistic or unconscious world, 76 the unreflected in the reflected, 77 or the antecedence of the symbolic. 78 "There is no symbolism prior to man who speaks, even though the power of symbols is rooted more deeply, in the expressiveness of the cosmos, in what desire wants to say, in the varied image contents that men have." 79 The structure of double intentionality that belongs to the symbolic lends itself to both an archeology and a teleology. It can be read as "expressiveness of" a world of meaning beyond the horizons of my present existence, but it can also be read as a reference back to the symbol's rootedness in desire, an archaic opaque thickness, dense with desire's own history. Each of these readings implicitly contains its counterpart in that an archeological reading is implicitly ordered towards the telos of an expanded conscious life, and a teleological reading contains an implicit archeology in that "at the very heart of self-consciousness life is that obscure density that self-consciousness, in its advance, reveals behind itself as the source of the very first differentiation of the self." 80

The meaning of the symbol is always something in front of or in back of the symbol itself, never at the level of its immediate appearance. The symbol hides itself, so to speak, so as to disclose its referent, whichever way this referent is read. If this relation of distance between the symbol and its meaning ever merged or if their necessary distance ever closed, the symbol as symbol would die. Opacity and non-transparency are of the very nature of the symbolic just as they are also reason for care and suspicion in the interpretation of this prior richness. A suspicious and an optimistic reading of the symbol belong together and yet their tension must be maintained. They must not be dissolved or reduced into each other.

Secondly, of the cultural contingency of the symbol Ricoeur says, "The symbol is a prisoner of the diversity of languages and cultures." 81 The symbol is always concrete, and, though it has a certain tendency toward universality, as symbol it still remains immersed in its linguistic, historical, cultural particularity. The meaning of a symbol in one language never travels unscathed into another, and even within a language meanings change because they have an interpretative history, a history which is ongoing. This history and language constitute a large part of what we

call culture. But that which constitutes the self-understanding of a people is also found in their art, tools, customs, etc. That these works of culture can be read as language or as texts, in an extended sense of both words, is an insight shared by both structuralism and hermeneutics, though at different linguistic levels. We recognize the pluralism of cultures because we understand them empirically rather than with a classical model. A classical model of culture assumes a static, normative concept of truth and value. It operates without regard for the further data uncovered by inquiry; instead, it pre-judges this data with the answers uncovered by past inquiry. Past insights are so statically normative for present inquiry that to go forward is extremely difficult. The danger of going too far in the other direction, however, is that past insight would have no normative role to play in present inquiry. We would be asking questions in a void and there would be no forward nor backward, no up or down, no sun for the earth to revolve around. In an empirical model we recognize to a greater degree how the symbol is determined by its insertion in a particular culture as well as its being constitutive of this culture. This too renders the symbol both problematic as well as rich and diverse.

Thirdly, the process of interpretation is itself problematic. What is sometimes glibly called the hermeneutical circle has many faces, some of which are at first hidden from view. The interpreter never comes naked to the task of interpretation; the to-be-interpreted is already constituted as something-to-be-interpreted or as something worth questioning about. The interpretive process has already begun before it is ever explicitly adverted to. "Within each question, which qua question is a "not-knowing", there is some kind of "knowing"; otherwise the question could not be grasped as pertinent." 82 Pre-understanding always precedes understanding and a question already constitutes a pre-grasp of that which is questioned, even if this is only that it is constituted as something questionable. The notion of pre-grasp is very fruitful for hermeneutical inquiry. This pre-apprehension or non-thematized grasp of the given that grounds inquiry is operative on different strategic levels. These levels can be discerned and sketched out and although Ricoeur nowhere explicitly deals with these, I feel that they can be implicitly drawn out from his thinking and its presuppositions. Ricoeur's Kantian presuppositions offer us the notion of the transcendental structures of the inquirer

as the first indicator of any kind of preapprehension of the real. The essential structures of operative life offer us some idea of the limits of inquiry as well as a way through the human maze. 83 The organic as such, or what can in another philosophical language be called "sensibility", also constitutes a kind of foreknowledge of the to-be-known of inquiry. The history of desire and its coming to language is also a pre-apprehension of the real. Desire's decipherment in the analytical situation seeks to render intelligible in the present what reality had to say in what up till now was desire's unintelligible past. Finally, the history of the ongoing inquiry which we call tradition constitutes a kind of pre-judgmental horizon to the possibilities that can or cannot arise for questioning. 84 All of the above share the finite structure of my bodily insertion in the world and this insertion is the key to this notion of pre-grasp. I am posited in Being via the structure of inquiry itself, via sensibility, via desire, and via my linguistic insertion as tradition dialogue; and all of these prior to any positing of Being on my part. 85

Pre-grasp is one aspect of the hermeneutical circle. Another is what Ricoeur calls the "dialectic of participation and distanciation." 86 Participation is

necessary for "there is a circle because in order to understand the text, it is necessary to believe what the text announces." 87 Distanciation is necessary, because "one appropriates only what has first been held at a distance." 88 In other words: "you must understand in order to believe, but you must believe in order to understand." 89 The kind of belief called for beyond distanciation is not the pre-critical faith of the first naivete but the post-critical belief of the second naivete that hermeneutics aims at. It would be easy to throw up one's arms in frustration and feel trapped in a vicious circle. It is like being stuck on a merry-go-round, one doesn't know how to get off of. But why this circle seems vicious rather than virtuous comes from a lack of patience in our coming to understand. We want to understand all at once and we weary of the slow progress that is the lot of most of us. Ray Hart in his book "Unfinished Man and the Imagination" is helpful when he suggests calling the hermeneutical "circle" the hermeneutical "spiral" instead; this notion of spiral seems more like our slow, prodding, ongoing task of coming to understand and helps me to be more at home in my hermeneutical non-understanding. Hart refers to this as the spiral between being and knowing and sees the

model of hermeneutical circle as loaded down with the psychological preoccupations of the earlier hermeneutical tradition. However, I have chosen to continue to use the term "circle" rather than "spiral" to refer to this phenomena because of the wide usage that this term has in "hermeneutical circles". 90 Another aspect of the circle is that my interpreting the world "changes the world by interpreting it." 91 But since I can never get out of this aspect of the circle and get back to the "thing-itself", this is at best a limit question or a call to map out the transcendental structures of inquiry. Whereas Husserl's cry was "to the things themselves", Ricoeur's is "towards an expanded self". His concern is with working out an adequate philosophical anthropology by way of a mapping out of the many levels of what it means to be human. Since hermeneutics is always self-understanding it is also already an implicit philosophical anthropology; there is a conflict of interpretations because we are beings at variance within ourselves. To be human is to be a state of non-coincidence with oneself, to not yet be that which you are.

Fourthly, the above three characteristics of the symbol call for a multi-layered interpretative process. Each hermeneutic has a method proper to it and a set of questions

that it brings to the text. This in turn loosely determines the data that will be uncovered in the inquiry. Given this, it would only follow that if one was to bring a number of different hermeneutical methods to the interpretive process, and if one was to correlate critically the data that each uncovered, then one would have a greater field of data from which to judge the text, what it means or does not mean, that is, to interpret it. For example, in psychiatric assessment a blood test or the measuring of motor responses would uncover certain negative or positive data useful for the overall task of assessment, namely, the presence or absence of adequate lithium salt levels in the blood, when attempting to ascertain the organic or nonorganic nature of a given illness. The psychiatrist could also make use of various psychoanalytic techniques in order to bring to language the hidden distortions of the patient's history of desire, i.e., desire wounded by the early loss of a father or mother. Moreover, a phenomenological description of the experiential lifeworld of the patient-subject could uncover other useful information in regard to assessing the treatment to be followed, i.e., the clarity of a description of the distress of the patient or her his sense of nausea carried out in the neutralized

attitude of the epoche may help the patient to feel more at home in this same world which was earlier inhabited in the mode of distress.

Although each one can be divided up into subsets, I discern three basic levels of the interpretation of tradition in Ricoeur. (A) The first is a hermeneutics of suspicion which has always been a part of the overall hermeneutical process, but which in our day has been magnified and brought into focus by the work of the three great masters of suspicion, Freud, Nietzsche, and Marx. "All three... begin with suspicions about the illusions of consciousness and operate by the guile of decipherment. All three, finally, far from being detractors of "consciousness", aim at extending it." 92 Since I have already dealt sufficiently, for the purposes of this paper, with the illusion of consciousness, I will not here recover that ground but only say that without an adequate amount of suspicion one has no way of judging of the correctness of one's interpretation, while to be over-suspicious discloses only muddled data. For example, while the "belief-in" of the first naivete is suspended, the "belief-in" of the second naivete is necessary for an accurate description of what is given to awareness. (B) Secondly, once one has mapped out

suspiciously the structure of the inquirer and draws one's attention to the non-transparency of the object of interpretation, one can begin to outline the structure of what can be most unambiguously known about the data and then go on to what can be less known. The first of these methods of interpretation is offered by structuralism. Structuralism sees language as a kind of infrastructure underlying the various super-structural manifestations of culture, i.e., art, religion, customs, etc. 93 It is possible to abstract from the concrete particular manifestations of a language and to discover an underlying code that is static and synchronic. This code or infrastructure constitutes a kind of Kantian "categorical, combinative unconscious... a categorical system without reference to a thinking subject." 94 Although embedded primordially in the deep structure of language, this code works its way up into all the superstructural components of culture and offers a key for uncovering certain data and for understanding certain processes. Language as discourse and as an intersubjective event is built on this foundation. This is the unconscious house of language within which I always already live. Because structuralism has to do with these atemporal, synchronic, more or less static structures, it can be

classified as a science rather than an art. (C) Thirdly, the recovery of meaning proper takes place in hermeneutical comprehension. This is the art of interpretation, a hermeneutics of disclosure, or of appropriation. Its intentionality is not primarily one of suspicion or of uncovering a deep structural code, but of the uncovering of meaning, and of the appropriation of the richness of the tradition. Its attitude is one of openness and of joy before the given; it understands by way of "participation" 95 ; it makes meaning one's own and desires to live out of this abundance, though not in as distorted a form as is possible in the first naivete. It is both the aim of suspicion and the non-thematized will towards comprehension that is part of any structural inquiry. 96 Ultimately its aim is the self-appropriation that comes about only by way of the long detour of the interpretation of texts, using text here in its widest possible sense.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PRISON-HOUSE AND THE CLEARING

This chapter has to do with the problem of language, about which I have already spoken but about which there is yet more to say. "We have to cease to think if we refuse to do it in the prison-house of language; for we cannot reach further than the doubt which asks whether the limit we see is really a limit." (Nietzsche) 97 Not only is there an unknown prior to language, the presence of the non-reflective in the reflective, but at the upper limit of language there is a beyond-which we cannot reach, "the infra and supralinguistic." 98 We can know that it is there, but only as one knows the abyss as one stands at its edge. Language conceals as much of Being as it reveals. Ricoeur calls this "the recollective acceptance and the violence of delimitation. . . both disclosure of Being and enclosure in the finitude of language." 99 By gathering Being into language we do violence to it and delimit what comes to presence. Without enclosure there would be no disclosure, but as well as praising the gift of disclosure that belongs to language, we would do well to take notice of the violence inherent in this gift. "What asks to be brought to language

in symbols, but which never passes over completely into language, is always something powerful, efficacious, forceful... language only captures the foam on the surface of life." 100 As well as the violence of delimitation there is also a fulness and a richness to language that surpasses its being said; the difference between language as something said by me, and language as addressing me, as engulfing me, even as being spoken by me. 101 In this sense we not only gather being into language but are gathered to being's bosom, so to speak, by our linguistic dwelling. There is something more to language than what is meant in its being said and so linguisticity is an ex-static dwelling, a being held out into being, there-being.

Another problematical aspect of language is that of the ever moving semantic field of each word, and related to this, even within a language, this moving happens at different speeds for different words. Language is in constant flux. 102 I illustrate with a diagram: #1


Temporally, both the semantic field (B) and the lived context (C) of the word (A) are constantly shifting so that the above figure #1, as a whole, is an ongoing temporal flux. Again I



A= WORD

B= SEMANTIC FIELD

C= CONTEXT

illustrate: #2  This process is much more compact than either diagram can show and the shift is, for the most part, one of continuity rather than discontinuity. This is so because such change is so slow as to go unnoticed over long periods of time. Now if every single word in a language is going through a similar process, and each in relation to all the other words in a language, it would seem that we have a pretty slippery tool for expressing meaning. It is a miracle that we can understand each other at all.

In his later writings Ricoeur shifts his interpretive focus from the model of the symbol to that of the metaphor as being paradigmatic for the whole of hermeneutical inquiry. This shift is significant and has to do with an overall linguistic turn in his philosophical concerns, namely, his search for an intricate philosophy of language as the key to an adequate philosophical anthropology. This turn to language is explicitly evident in his early choice to read psychoanalysis as an attempt to bring to language that which is prior to language. His thought on symbol and on metaphor are continuous with each other even while remaining a point of departure and a source of new insight in moving towards his projected "Poetics of the Will". In

fact the metaphorical twist becomes a model for every symbolic extension of meaning 104 . Paradigmatically, metaphor is a poetic phenomena and to rule over metaphor is to first of all let metaphor rule over you. And just as one rules over metaphor not by a mastery of the taxonomies and usages of contextless words, but by a creative dwelling in the midst of the playful dialectic between words and their contexts 105 , so also, poetic language is par excellence the language of the emergence of meaning. More than any other type of language poetry "lets be" and allows to come to presence our encounter with Beings's overwhelming plenitude. I speak of the poetic here because "the metaphor is. . . a poem in miniature." 106 But although metaphor is the linguistic surface of the symbol 107 and is thereby rooted by way of the symbol in the expressiveness of the cosmos and in desire, metaphor is also more than the symbol since it is not as bound to the pre-linguistic as is the symbol. "Metaphor occurs in the already purified universe of the logos, while the symbol hesitates on the dividing line between bios and logos. It testifies to the primordial rootedness of discourse in Life. It is born where force and form coincide." 108 Metaphor is thus more free than symbol to fictionally reshape reality 109 and to humanize the

world by its work of imaginative variations on the real. In Ricoeur's theory of metaphor Aristotle's notion of "mimesis" and our modern words "invent" and "image" are restored to their original meaning of both discovery and creation. 110 Ricoeur's Rule of Metaphor, though it is not his projected third volume, Poetics of the Will, does pave the way toward such a threshold. The above treatment of metaphor in Ricoeur is brief but the importance of Ricoeur's work on metaphor for both the task of self appropriation and a poetics of the will is further dealt with near the close of this paper.

CHAPTER FIVE

LOST SITUATIONS AND UNMOORED TEXTS

The problems I have mapped out in the above chapters have all been relevant for this fifth one which deals with the interpretation of written texts proper. The hermeneutical process is of course operative when we interpret the "texts" of reflection, consciousness, symbol, and language, but there are problems specific to the interpretation of written texts. The first of these is the shift that takes place with the metamorphosis from spoken to written language. 111 There are problems of historical distancing or alienation that occur within a written textual tradition. The life situation of the event, the emergence of the speech act, the context, audience, author, tone of voice, etc., have all been lost. Hermeneutical understanding is not a simple matter of reconstructing the original Sitz-im-Leben of the text or of its author; this may help to bring into focus certain dynamics operative within and behind the text, but it will not give us the meaning of the text. "In spoken language what the dialogue ultimately refers to is the situation common to the interlocutors, that is, aspects of reality which can be shown or pointed at; we can say then that the reference is ostensive. In written language

reference is no longer ostensive." 112 In Ricoeur textuality is unmoored from both author and situation and yet the author is not altogether banished; the authorial intention remains like the Kantian thing-in-itself as a sort of limit concept in the search for a valid interpretation.

Romanticist hermeneutics from Schleiermacher to Hirsh tended to be based on a psychological model that found the meaning of the text in the mind of the author. The task of the interpreter was to reconstruct the author's meaning. Ricoeur seeing this model as lacking, finds the meaning of the text in the world that the text opens up, the way of being-in-the-world that the text makes possible for the reader. 113 This is the "reference" of the text rather than its "sense", the "meaning" of the text rather than the "event". 114 The reference and meaning of a text go beyond the horizon of sense and event. The sense of the text and the event that gave rise to it are only partially accessible to me today, while the world opened up by the text, that way of being-in-the-world that the text makes possible, is accessible to me today as it was to the original audience, though as non-ostensive and as unmoored from the ordinary *Sitz-im-Leben*. 115 Nevertheless we must not be too quick to say that the interpretive task is thus made easy since

there are still many ambiguities. One must remember that "interpretation has a history and that this history is a segment of tradition itself." 116 Tradition is a history of sedimented interpretations, alive even now as we decipher a given text. "Every reading of a text always takes place within a community, a tradition, or a living current of thought, all of which display presuppositions and exigencies." 117 These presuppositions and exigencies must be made explicit and thematic if they are not simply to be left operative on an unconscious level, and as such naively interfere with the interpretive process.

Our aim is thus after all "validity in interpretation"; we want to answer the question: What is the meaning of this particular text? After long process, what will emerge is a circle of possible valid interpretations. 118

There is always more than one way of construing a text. . . all interpretations are not equal. The text presents a limited field of possible constructions. . . . It is always possible to argue for or against an interpretation, to confront interpretations, to arbitrate between them and to seek agreement, even if this agreement remains beyond our immediate reach. 119

The extent of this circle and its elasticity will be born

out of paying attention to the various dynamics that I have been writing about: The dialectic between the reflective and the non-reflective, consciousness and the illusion of consciousness, opacity, cultural contingency, the problem of interpretation and of conflicting interpretations as to the symbol, disclosure and enclosure in language, a shifting semantic field, the historicity of the text, the sense and the world of the text and the problem of tradition itself as a history of interpretations. All of these and more go together both to make up and to render problematical the dialogue with tradition that constitutes my reflective life. I aim for valid interpretation because I aim to make my own the world of meaning that the text opens up for me the reader. We aim at self-appropriation, but we must travel the long road of hermeneutics, for one can make one's own only what one understands, and one understands only what one has made one's own.

Where do I begin? Finding myself here now, in the dread and wonder of my non-knowing, seeking to understand the mystery of my own becoming. Feeling lost in the complexity of Ricoeur's thought may be the key to what finding oneself and standing-under what is called thinking in his thought is all about. The opaque water may yet

become clear if we learn to stand still in the explosive dispossession of our narcissistic ego. 120 As its own end, validity in interpretation would be a sterile empty truth, a mere collection of objective data, filling the head with the contents of past texts. But, for what end? The mere quantitative expansion of knowledge, or a qualitative expansion of the knower? And so it seems that the ultimate end of hermeneutical inquiry is not validity in interpretation, because this is always aimed at for the sake of something else. Validity in interpretation is the "means" to the "end" of receiving from the text an expanded self: "It is the text, with its universal power of world disclosure, which gives a self to the ego." 121

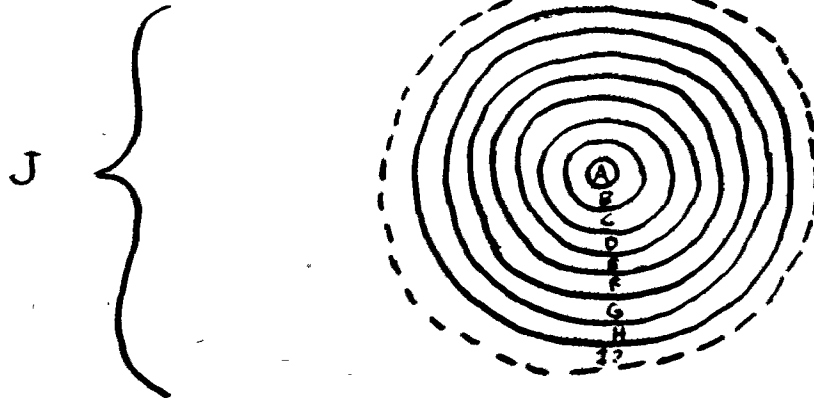
In the concluding chapter of my thesis I will attempt to map out explicitly what up till now has been a, more or less, implicit thread running through the whole of my inquiry into Ricoeur's work, namely, the correlative themes of a poetics of the will and the task of self-appropriation. In my judgement these two themes belong together because a poetic will is a will that appropriates both its past and its future in an interpretive process that is both an archeology of the sedimented remains and distillations of past willing and a self-creative willing towards some future

self not reducible to any sedimented past objectifications of the ego. Freedom is both understood necessity and the prior freedom of knowing this necessity as a limit. In knowing itself as a bound-freedom, freedom is already beyond its own limits, and this is what constitutes it as primordial freedom even in the midst of necessity from within and from without.

CHAPTER SIX

THE POETIC WILL OF SELF-APPROPRIATION

I would like to suggest that Ricoeur's project, as now taking shape, is moving in a spiraling circle of conflicting interpretive routes in regard to an uncovering of the poetic will. I illustrate with a diagram: #3



(A), the will "in itself", is not directly accessible except as a limit concept; it is the realm of the ever prior. (B), the essential structures of the will as accessible to an eidetic description of the fundamental reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary, and by way of an abstraction from the concrete. (C), a diagnostic use is to be made of the data of the empirical sciences since a description of the involuntary is very important in regard to the will (D), an attempt at a description of the symbolic as paradigmatic of the objectification of the concrete will.

(E), a psychoanalytic uncovering of desire is essential since the will always already carries the weight of desire and is codetermined by the structures of desires necessities. (F), a description of the unconscious, atemporal, structural dimensions of language and of how this infrastructure shows its face superstructurally. (G), a description of lived discourse which is paradigmatically metaphorical. (H), a description of the will as objectified in the social realm and as deciphered by the human sciences. (I?), This description has a question mark and a dotted line because it is one which Ricoeur may or may not actually carry out, namely, an aesthetics of the will or an extensive mapping out of a philosophy of the creative imagination in the realm of the fine arts. Such essays as "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality" 122 show Ricoeur to be moving in the possible direction of a mapping out of a Nietzschean "will to create" as being primordially behind the sometimes mask of "the will to truth". Because of the influence of Nietzsche's notion of the "will to power as Art" on his thinking, Ricoeur's next move may very well be a map of the will as accessible via aesthetic phenomena. But because collaborator, fellow P.O.W., and friend, Mikel Dufrenne has already worked extensively in this area, or

because the ageing Ricoeur may himself choose not to take any further "detours", Ricoeur may next choose to finally write his promised Poetics of the Will.

As figure #3 attempts to indicate, I see this Poetics (J) as a description of the will that will critically correlate all the data uncovered by the as yet traveled conflicting interpretive routes. The will is primordially a creative upsurge bound on all sides by the organic, the history of desire, reality, and its historical cultural insertion point. The will is a constituted-constituting power-to-be and can never be hypostasized into a naked thing-in-itself apart from these dynamics.¹²³ The subject is first of all an effort to exist and power to be¹²⁴, and yet this willing is already a knowing since it is a pre-grasp of its to-be-known. The philosophy of the will that emerges is that of a free will in the midst of necessity. The balanced view that is sought is one that avoids both the excess of a view that sees the will as not codetermined on all sides, from within and without, and the defect of a view that sees the will as fundamentally bound and determined to its core by the forces of necessity. This is a freedom aware of its own limitations which in its knowledge of these limits is somehow already beyond them.

This is a self that is the freedom to become a self by untying the knots of its own necessities, to choose the self already received from the other and to create a self out of this raw material. The task of reading, the task of deciphering texts, is nothing ~~apart~~ from the task of self-appropriation.

A poetics of the will and a hermeneutics centered on the theme of self-appropriation belong together because the self of self-appropriation is the poetic will insofar as it has always already poeticized itself in all the various regions open to these possible objectifications. Although they belong together, this hermeneutics and poetics differ in that ~~the~~ first is the road that is followed in order to be able to delineate the latter. Hermeneutics deciphers the poetic will in its various objectifications and a poetics of the will correlates the data that is collectively uncovered by the various interpretive approaches that inquiry travels on in regard to this poetic will. That self-appropriation and text-appropriation are two threads of one cordⁱⁿ Ricoeur's hermeneutics is, I hope, evident from the above chapters, but why this is so may not be so easy to grasp. One could perhaps speak of the immediacy of the newborn infant's field of data, but within days of birth (or even

before birth) the infant begins to receive a world. Now to receive a world is to interpret a world and to begin to set up structures of mediation as to the reception of the given. It is to create as well as to receive, and to shape what is given in order to render it more intelligible. To be a knower and a lover is to be an artist : "Art only abolishes non-metamorphosed reality." 125 Such non-metamorphosed reality is at best a limit concept, or a way of saying, "to be human is to be finite". This adult world has the boundless extension of all that human effort, desire, culture, art, tools, writing, etc., have ever made to be, that is, insofar as they are still given over to accessibility to inquiry. This wide range of human objectifications is given the narrower name of "texts", since textuality is the most extensive mode of access that we have to these past possibilities of what it means to be human. As such, textuality is taken as paradigmatic for the other modes of the will's sedimented objectifications. All of them are willed to be deciphered by inquiry in order to bring them into present comprehension. 126 This is what Ricoeur adverts to when he says so strongly of the cogito that "the cogito can be recovered only by (italics mine) the detour of a decipherment of the documents of its life.

Reflection is the appropriation of our effort to exist and of our desire to be by means of the works which testify to this effort and this desire." 127 And of the act of reading a text in relationship to self-understanding:

To be instructed by the "matter of the text". . . . the subjectivity of the reader is displaced. To understand is not to project oneself into the text but to expose oneself to it; it is to receive a self enlarged by the appropriation of the proposed worlds which interpretation unfolds. In sum, it is the matter of the text which gives the reader his dimension of subjectivity. . . . the subjectivity of the reader is. . . held in suspense. . . potentialized. . . . fiction is a fundamental dimension of the subjectivity of the reader: in reading I unrealize myself. Reading introduces me to imaginative variations of the ego. The metamorphosis of the world in play is also the playful metamorphosis of the ego. 128

In Ricoeur's hermeneutics lies a whole developmental psychology as well as a philosophy of education. He maps out the arduous path toward becoming a mature self, a self that is an ever expansive act of becoming in the midst of and being-with others. This self and these others give possible worlds to incarnate, worlds bound only by the limits of hermeneutical retrieval and the finite structure of questioning man. This is not to say that we are limited to past possibilities, for an infinite number of combinative possibilities makes possible new incarnations of this

collective memory. 129 It seems to me that we can best draw out from our treasures what is new only if we own what is old, say yes to it, accepting it as ours, as yours and mine; only then can we go past it, surpass it, and finally make a judgement about it and live out an authentic response to this overwhelming plenitude.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

My contention is that Ricoeur nowhere adequately deals with the problem of making a judgement about what is given to hermeneutical inquiry. In my judgement, openness to the world opened up by a given text so as to approximate in interpretation the meaning of the text is one thing. To appropriate this meaning for oneself and to live one's life out of it is another task altogether. Self-appropriation is incomplete until one reaches the praxis of an expanded self received from a given text. But prior to praxis one has to make a judgement about the truth or falsity, the goodness or non-goodness of what the text makes possible in a given situation. This incarnation of meaning is a post-hermeneutical issue. I agree with Ricoeur that within the situation of modernity the self of self-appropriation must travel the long road of hermeneutics if it is to find its way to a second naivete. I disagree with Ricoeur, however, and think that something more is needed in order concretely to make a judgement about, and then to be or not to be the self that could be appropriated. To know what this self is is one thing, to choose to be this self, another. For example, to appropriate from the texts of Hegel a pretence to absolute knowledge would bring about a shrinkage

of the self. It would seem to me that there are authentic and inauthentic ways of being in the world made possible by any given text and that as one reads, one must make judgements about what one will accept or reject in a given text in regard to one's own living. How am I to judge a given textual tradition when this same tradition has shaped my judgemental horizons? Is there a cross-cultural basis upon which judgements of truth and value can be made or are we floating in a sea of pure relativism? Ricoeur has no adequate answers for such questions. I would like to suggest that in our present situation something like Lonergan's transcendental method, a map of the structures of inquiry itself, is a possible clue for finding our way through such difficulties. Ricoeur approximates such an outline of the apriori structures of the will, but falls short of doing so for cognitional structures. To answer the question, How are normative judgements possible? One must first ask, What is a judgement?

Although, for the most part, I agree with Ricoeur's use of textuality as paradigmatic for the other objectifications of the will; I do see problems with it. For example, if I treat my relationship to my wife too much as if it were a text to be deciphered, I believe that I would

be comporting myself too reasonably in a situation that calls for the reasons of the heart which reason knows not of. Then there is the problem of drowning in a sea of texts, of living in a world so filled with words that they become empty of meaning. In a world too filled with reading what is appropriated is an ever more fragmented self. A garbage dump for the self-refuse of an overly diverse cultural past. Ricoeur attempts to deal with the possibility of making a negative judgement in regard to the tradition with his dialogue with a hermeneutics of suspicion. Although this dialogue raises the possibility of making a negative or a positive judgement about the given, it offers no ground for normative judgements. Hermeneutics takes up a suspicious attitude because of the distortion present in the text-tradition that shapes us. Should hermeneutics not also interpret suspiciously a tyranny of textuality which it so often tends toward. How is self-appropriation possible for the person not versed in the esoteric realms of hermeneutics? The factory worker with little or no education? The bushman? For Lonergan self-appropriation is just as possible for undifferentiated consciousness as it is for fully differentiated consciousness. Ricoeur doesn't even address the question.

In conclusion I go back to the beginning of this paper, to those who gave a self capable of receiving an expanded self, a life together, teachers and friends along the way who opened my world. To have struggled alongside this great thinker for a season, to have philosophized with him in my own meager way has been an explosive learning experience. Ricoeur's path is destructive because it is constructive, and as Heidegger has taught us, you cannot do the latter without the former. Pre-critical faith is called into question only to be rid of idols and to clear the path for a post-critical faith or the second naivete, and yet a certain primacy belongs to the first naivete, its richness always overflows our post-critical possibilities, even while its poverty calls for thinking, and for the second naivete that hermeneutics aims for. A dispossession of the self has taken place and yet I have received an expanded self. Ricoeur and I are not yet through laughing seriously together, and yet something is ending, something is beginning. "Beyond the desert of criticism we wish to be called again." 130 "Everything has already been said enigmatically." 130 "Man is the Joy of Yes in the sadness of the finite." 131 I wish to be called. To let being speak, come to language in the clearing which I am and which

I have made. I wish also to live out of such attentiveness to experience. I hope that this paper echoes this call for its readers, and that its enigmatic ways receive also a joy of yes even in the midst of its finitude.

END NOTES

1 Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, ed. trans. John B. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) p. 190.

2 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974) p. 329.

3 See Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, p. 94.

4 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 329.

5 Ibid., p. 19.

6 Ibid., p. 332.

7 Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, (Fortworth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976) p. 57.

8 Lonergan Conference, Boston: Boston College, 1981.

9 Robert Doran, Subject and Psyche, (Lanham: University

Press of America, 1980) pp. iii, 1.

10 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 298.

11 See Ibid., pp. 17-18.

12 See Ibid., p. 330.

13 See Paul Ricoeur, Essays on Biblical Interpretation,
(Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980) p. 180.

14 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 228.

15 Ibid., p. 463.

16 See Ibid., p.229 ; and Paul Ricoeur, Essays on Biblical Interpretation, p. 107.

17 See Paul Ricoeur, Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology, trans. E.G. Ballard and L.E. Embree,
(Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967) p.205.

18 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 22.

- 19 See Ibid., p. 229.
- 20 See Paul Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1966) p. 37.
- 21 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 243.
- 22 See D.M. Rasmussen, Mythic-symbolic Language and Philosophical Anthropology, (Hague: Nijhoff, 1971) pp. 26-29.
- 23 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, (New York: Vintage, 1968) p. 317.
- 24 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 244.
- 25 See Paul Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 3.
- 26 See Ibid., p. 4.
- 27 Ibid., p. 4.
- 28 See Ibid., p. 5.

- 29 See Ibid., p. 6.
- 30 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 21.
- 31 See Ibid., pp. 30-31; and Paul Ricoeur, Husserl, p. 219.
- 32 cf, Paul Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, pp. 6-7.
- 33 See Ibid., pp. 37-194.
- 34 See Ibid., pp. 201-337.
- 35 See Ibid., pp. 341-481.
- 36 See Ibid., pp. 7-8.
- 37 See Ibid., pp. 420-421.
- 38 See Ibid., p. 343.
- 39 See Paul Ricoeur, Husserl, pp. 219f.

- 40 See Paul Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, pp. 341-343.
- 41 See Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, trans. D. Savage, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) p. 34.
- 42 See Ibid., pp. 88-92.
- 43 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 442.
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- 44 Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 16.
- 45 See Ibid., p. 182.
- 46 Ibid., p. 43.
- 47 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 120.
- 48 See Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, pp. 110-111.
- 49 See Ibid., p. 139.
- 50 See Ibid., p. 97.

- 51 Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 42-44.
- 52 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 18.
- 53 See Ibid., p. 16.
- 54 Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 45.
- 55 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 298.
- 56 Ibid., p. 300.
- 57 See Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 55-56.
- 58 Ibid., p. 46.
- 59 See Ibid., pp. 28-30.
- 60 See Paul Ricoeur, The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur,
1(Boston: Beacon, 1978) p. 108.; and, Paul Ricoeur,
The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 323-324.

61 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 234-235.

(Quoting Heidegger).

62 for an elaborate study of Ricoeur and Habermas See John B. Thompson, Critical Hermeneutics: A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur and Jurgen Habermas, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

63 Lonergan Conference, Boston: Boston College, 1982.

64 Lonergan Conference, Boston: Boston College, 1982.

65 Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 27.

66 See Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, in The Portable Nietzsche, ed. trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Penguin, 1976) pp. 137-139.

67 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 12.

68 See Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 34.

69 Ibid., pp. 109-110.

70 See Ibid., p. 109.

71 See Ibid., p. 108.

72 Ibid., p. 442.

73 See Ibid., p. 161.

74 Ibid., p. 12.

75 Ibid., p. 28.

76 Ibid., p. 66.

77 Ibid., p. 109.

78 Ibid., p. 113.

79 Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 16.

80 Ibid., p. 469.

- 81 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 317.
- 82 Ray Hart, Unfinished Man and the Imagination,
(New York: Seabury, 1979) p. 54.
- 83 See Paul Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 3.
- 84 See Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, p. 62
- 85 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 21.
- 86 Paul Ricoeur, Essays in Biblical Interpretation, p. 107.
- 87 Paul Ricoeur, The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, p. 222.
- 88 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 30.
- 89 Ibid., p. 298.
- 90 See Ray Hart, Unfinished Man and the Imagination, pp. 60-63
- 91 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 121.

92 Ibid. p. 150.

93 Ibid., p. 38.

94 Ibid., p. 33.

95 See Paul Ricoeur, Essays in Biblical Interpretation, p. 107.

96 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, pp. 56-57.

97 Friedrich Nietzsche, The Will to Power, p. 137.

98 Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 399.

99 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 233.

100 Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 63.

101 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 466.

102 See Ibid., pp. 68-72.

103 See Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, p. 4.

104 See Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 55.

105 See Ibid., p. 52.

106 Ibid., p. 106. (Quoting Munroe Beardsley).

107

See Ibid., p. 68.

108 Ibid., p. 59.

109 See Paul Ricoeur, "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality", Man and World, vol. 12, 1979, pp. 123-141.

110 See Paul Ricoeur, The Rule of Metaphor,
trans. R. Czerny et al, (Toronto: University of
Toronto Press, 1977) pp. 7 and 396.

111 See Paul Ricoeur, The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, pp. 92 and

112 Ibid., p. 143.

- 113 See Paul Ricoeur, Essays in Biblical Interpretation, pp. 108-10
- 114 See Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 25.
- 115 Paul Ricoeur, The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, pp. 144-145.
- 116 Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 27.
- 117 Ibid., p. 3.
- 118 See Paul Ricoeur, The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, p. 143.
- 119 Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 79.
- 120 See Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, p. 192.
- 121 Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory, p. 95.
- 122 See Paul Ricoeur, "The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality", Man and World, vol. 12, 1979, pp. 123-141.
- 123 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 21.

- 124 See Paul Ricoeur, Freud and Philosophy, pp. 42-44.
- 125 Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, p. 187.
- 126 See Paul Ricoeur, The Conflict of Interpretations, p. 4.
- 127 Ibid., p. 18.
- 128 Paul Ricoeur, Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences, pp. 94 and 182-190.
- 129 See Ibid., pp. 52 and 68.
- 130 Paul Ricoeur, The Symbolism of Evil, trans. E. Buchanan, (Boston: Beacon, 1969) p. 349.
- 131 Paul Ricoeur, Fallible Man, trans. C. Kelbley, (Chicago: Regnery Company, 1967) p. 215.

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cf. esp. "From Problematics to Hermeneutics: Lonergan and Ricoeur."
pp. 236-271.

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