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The Dispossession of Consciousness and the Positing of
the Person as Presented in Fallible Man

Michel Brière

A Thesis
in
The Department
of Philosophy

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

September 1993

• Michel Brière, 1993



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ISBN 0-315-90897-1

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ABSTRACT

The Dispossession of Consciousness and the Positing of the Person as Presented in Fallible Man

Michel Brière
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My topic is inspired by the problematic of Ricoeur's conscious subject as presented in Fallible Man. I wish to focus on the matter of the dispossession of consciousness. I intend to show that the eidetics of consciousness do not constitute a knowledge of the self. I will discuss how the constitution of the self takes shape within Ricoeur's affective realism.

Ricoeur's arguments suggest that whereas consciousness is intentional, and the positing of instinctual drives implies a relocation of subjective experience, reflection upon the self is "represented by" affects and ideas. Affects and ideas are structured in a symbolic language. Symbolic language serves to generalize human experience and lay out a world in which we can understand ourselves.

This thesis will show that there is no such thing as a positing of the self as a first truth, and that symbolic intentionality becomes essential to the constitution of the person.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Dennis O'Connor for his considerable help and guidance in the completion of this thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

I wish to discuss how Ricoeur's conscious subject is posited in philosophical precomprehension. Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology appears to take phenomenological study one step beyond the inquiry into the givenness of experience. Whereas phenomenology taught us to challenge the alleged evidence of experience, we now find ourselves questioning the alleged evidence of the self. I will examine Ricoeur's denial that the eidetics of consciousness can be equated to an epistemic frontier.

When I speak of "the denial of the eidetics of consciousness" I speak of the denial of any notion that the ego was meant to be equated to a "self" as though "consciousness" and "person" were two aspects of a single unit that could not be reduced to further analysis. The alleged indivisibility of the ego falters as we examine the nature of reflection.

We do not reflect upon a pure "self" inasmuch as philosophical inquiry initially emerges out of a preintellectual awareness. Ricoeur calls this preintellectual awareness "philosophical precomprehension."

This totality, therefore, must first be given in some way prior to philosophy, in a precomprehension which lends itself to reflection. Consequently, philosophy has to proceed as a second order elucidation of a nebula of meaning which at first has a prephilosophical character.¹

Our positing in philosophical precomprehension is interpreted via a complex representation of psychoanalytic forces and energies. These forces and energies are knowable only as they are expressed by established conventions of meaning. In short, reflection cannot be a form of intuition and psychoanalytic constructs need necessarily be expressed in a culturally based symbolic language.

In Part One of this thesis I will review Chapters Two, Three and Four of Fallible Man. The review of these chapters will establish the following; (i) consciousness is intentional, (ii) the "person" is a function within the world, and (iii) man is an intermediary being founded on a non-localized ontological locus. In Part Two I will deal with the matter of the peculiar language man uses to refer to himself as himself. I will refer to four selections, taken from The Conflict of Interpretations and Freud and Philosophy, which discuss the connection between psychoanalytic constructs and the formation of symbolic discourse.

In preparing this thesis, I have found Hermeneutic Phenomenology: The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur by Don Ihde, The Home of Meaning: The Hermeneutics of the Subject of Paul Ricoeur by John W. Van Den Hengel, Studies in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur edited by Charles E. Reagan, and The Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur: An Anthology of his Work edited by Charles E. Reagan and David Stewart, to be good sources of supplemental reading.

Part One commences with a review of ideas found in Chapter Two of Fallible Man. It is here we find the basis for the argument that consciousness is not intuitive. Ricoeur believes that consciousness must be posited, and the intermediacy of man can only be known to us by recourse to the transcendental synthesis of the imagination. He outlines a consciousness which is understood via the object as it appears. Consciousness depends on the unification of an objective manifold: consciousness does not exist either for-itself or in-itself.

A non-intuitive consciousness cannot be regarded as a first truth or a starting point for epistemology. The reduction of consciousness does not yield an intuitive sense of self-identity. This indicates that even though reflection reveals a synthesis, the synthesis has been effected prior to the moment of explicit self-consciousness. In Chapter Two of Fallible Man we therefore find evidence of a distinction between the intellectual apperception of consciousness and self-consciousness. Whereas Chapter Two deals with the revision of reflective consciousness, Chapter Three outlines the problem of the human being as a practical consciousness, and Chapter Four outlines the meaning-horizon underlying subjective, affective consciousness.

In Chapter Three, Ricoeur describes a manner of being-in-the-world as based upon "affective realism." The basis of subjectivity takes shape as feelings make their impression

upon the individual. Affective realism constitutes a manner of being and the human subject becomes a "projected being" intended toward three thematic polarities named "character," "respect," and "happiness." Ricoeur thus presents a phenomenology of the person whereby the subject is conceived within an intentional synthesis without the benefit of an eidetics of consciousness. Intentional polarities form a basis for a representative ideal of the self. The striving towards this ideal is much more fundamental to our sense of identity than the moment of self-consciousness.

In Chapter Four Ricoeur further elaborates upon how "affective realism" constitutes a mode of being. Feeling is conceived in a double intentionality of projecting and receiving. This intentionality forms the basis for a revised understanding of the ontological structure of man. Ricoeur maintains that transcendental analysis does not provide a comprehensive basis upon which to build a theory of the subject. He offers us a theory of "feeling" which precedes any theory of knowing.

Ricoeur's theory of feeling gives birth to new modes of objectivity. We discover that individuality itself is revealed as part of a concrete whole of individuals. The subject finds himself posited within certain modes of being which Ricoeur identifies as "having," "power," and "worth." The uniqueness of human ontology, combined with the dispossession of the self, lead us to conclude that (i) re-

flection does not reveal an intuitive self-identity, (ii) self-consciousness is not to be found purely within the individual, and (iii) the ontological structure of man presupposes the immediacy of thought. Following this section the next task will be to examine how the prereflective apperception of the self finds a language for itself.

In Part Two of this thesis I will discuss how symbolic language serves as the basic structure of understanding, and how language is based on cultural symbols. I will review four reading selections taken from other works by Ricoeur. I will first look at two essays from The Conflict of Interpretations, titled "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology" and "Consciousness and the Unconscious," which serve to deny that the immediacy of consciousness can be equated to a central state of meaning. This will be followed by a review of Chapter One, Book Three of Freud and Philosophy, as well as a review of "Existence and Hermeneutics," an essay which is also found in The Conflict of Interpretations. The general purpose of the latter two selections will be to show how consciousness is structured like a language, and how language is always already replete with symbolic imagery.

In "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology," Ricoeur indicates that self-knowledge cannot be reduced to an eidetics of consciousness. He chooses to describe a reduction of the positing of consciousness. His

reasoning is founded upon two currents of thought: his philosophical understanding of psychoanalysis, and his understanding of structuralism. The philosophical interpretation of psychoanalysis reveals that the conscious subject is fragmented into a series of psychic variables. These variables form a succeeding hierarchy of meaning. The argument stemming from structuralism, on the other hand, maintains that semantic antecedents come into play as language takes over and thematizes matters. Together these two arguments merge into one which says that there is no singular source of meaning which determines and precedes psychic antecedents.

Following an examination of that essay, I will turn my attention to "Consciousness and the Unconscious." This essay redefines both the nature of the unconscious and its relation to consciousness. Ricoeur does not accept the Freudian conception of the unconscious. He believes the unconscious does not reveal the truth of the subject because there is no unified first principle to support such a truth. Ricoeur contends that Freud has led himself into this fallacy by having conceived of the unconscious in terms of empirical realism. Ricoeur maintains that the realization of the unconscious is made possible only through hermeneutics. This leads to the unveiling of a very important characteristic feature of Ricoeur's non-intuitive consciousness; namely, it is determined through representative affects and ideas. We

may then add that the unconscious precedes language and precedes comprehension. The unconscious is forged within philosophical precomprehension.

I will then consider how this new-found conscious existence can arise to the level of reflection by referring to two more reading selections which will indicate that reflection is not linked to a single source of meaning, but rather to an entire field of meaning. This field of meaning is, in turn, bound to a "participation" in the power of symbols.

In Chapter One, Book Three of Freud and Philosophy Ricoeur describes the basis for a teleology of the subject. He asks himself how psychoanalytic constructs can have analytic validity. As a result of that inquiry, Ricoeur finds that the terms of reference to the sought-after teleology of the subject are inseparable from the topographic and economic models by which psychoanalytic theory is organized.

Ricoeur's topographic model interprets the relationship of meaning through a series of succeeding levels. Each respective level is composed of forces which are alien to the previous level. This creates a certain resistance in the translation from one frame of reference to another. The economic model deals with this conflict of force and meaning. This resistance characterizes the distinction between consciousness and self-consciousness. The "what I

am," which we associate with self-consciousness, is a secondary act of reflection upon a nebula of meaning. The nebula of meaning is conceived in prereflective existence in the guise of forces and energies and psychoanalytic constructs. Prereflective existence can only be dealt with through a hermeneutic comprehension. The role of hermeneutic comprehension is clarified in Ricoeur's "Existence and Hermeneutics." In this essay, we gain some understanding as to how hermeneutic comprehension serves as an epistemic grounds for a theory of the subject.

Ricoeur proclaims that the hermeneutic problem is essentially a matter of interpretation. It commences from the interpretation of texts, and subsequently becomes a problem for epistemology. I intend to point out the manner in which Ricoeur's thinking follows the lead of Heidegger's existentialism, as well as the manner in which he differs from Heidegger. Ricoeur replaces the analytic of Dasein with a philosophy of language. The philosophy of language, however, is not restricted solely to "the linguistic field" as characterized in structuralist social-scientific disciplines. Ricoeur believes that the act of expression surpasses linguistics. In effect, Ricoeur attempts to graft the hermeneutic problem onto the phenomenological method. He thus proposes a theory of symbols which characterizes his brand of hermeneutics.

We shall also consider how symbols mediate between

modes of meaning. They are structured like a language, and formed in a culturally-based common understanding. The point of this essay is that the hermeneutic problem creates the basis for an ontology of understanding. Consciousness is modeled after a functional language inasmuch as language is expressed via symbols and symbols express thought. Symbols rely on an established cultural heritage and we can thus say that linguistic expression is essentially linked to a cultural mode of being.

In the conclusion I will consider whether Ricoeur is justified in substituting the eidetics of consciousness with a theory of hermeneutic comprehension. I will refer to an essay by Richard Zaner which challenges Ricoeur's theory of the self. I will also refer to Ricoeur's own reply to this particular essay.

Ricoeur maintains that the entire field of consciousness cannot be reduced to the immediacy of thought. Even the most fundamental structures of consciousness are bound to a field of meaning. The field of meaning links man to his essential state of being. In this sense, the immediacy of conscious experience is not as self-evident as we would think. The alleged immediacy of the self must take recourse to a language which imposes order and presides over paralinguistic variables.

PART I - THE LOSS OF THE SELF

1. THE REVISION OF REFLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

In Chapter Two of Fallible Man Ricoeur commences with an analysis of the act of transcendence. This leads him to conclude that consciousness is dependent on concepts. Concepts are, in turn, subject to a manner of conception that precedes formal ontology. With this in mind, Ricoeur does not speak of the human condition as though it were an ontological reality. Its roots are conceived at the heuristic level. The restructuring of the sense of self begins with a renewed examination of the peculiar ontological structure of man. In the ensuing realignment of the transcendental act Ricoeur replaces the dynamics of the will with the power of affirmation as it is based on language-intentionality. In the new order of things the ontological structure of man becomes dependent upon the intentionality of language as source of affirmation and validity. I hereby wish to draw attention to that aspect of Chapter Two which dwells on the intentional nature of language and I wish to discuss its consequences upon the nature of reflective consciousness.

Ricoeur chooses to commence his study into the ontological structure of man by examining how we comprehend ourselves via the dynamics of "knowing." For Ricoeur, the analysis of "knowing" deals with the question of our being-

in-the-world as it is mediated in language, as well as its integration via the synthetic function of the transcendental imagination. Ricoeur concurs with Kant regarding the importance of the imagination and says, "the understanding without intuition is empty, intuition without concepts is blind. The light of the imagination is their synthesis."² By virtue of this recourse to the power of imagination, Ricoeur is asserting that the synthesis is a transcendental act. The transcendental act is based on an analysis of appearance which reveals a two-step process of objectification. The process of objectification involves a means of "receptivity" and "determination." More will be said of these means of objectification shortly. We shall see that the examination into the power of knowing leads to the outline of a transcendental imagination which resorts to the power of speech in unison with the act of perception. I wish to focus on this aspect of Chapter Two in order to point out how this manner of objectifying consciousness implies a radical new form of reflective consciousness.

Ricoeur is preoccupied with the business of how experience becomes conceptualized and he thus discusses "things" as they precede ontology. Ricoeur commences Fallible Man by denying there is a starting point to ontology and lets his reader know that he cannot proceed with method. He contends that one can only consider the state of being in its entirety. This entirety is conceived within the realm of

what exists prior to reflection. In other words, ontology is presupposed by an existential state of affairs. Ricoeur thus declares the ontological structure of man to be founded on man's state of intermediacy and says, "man is situated between being and nothingness."³ "Man is an object whose place is fixed by his relation to other realities."⁴ Ricoeur means that man is a variable within a conflict of limited finitude and unlimited infinitude. This suggests we are denied knowledge of the infinitude of absolute rationality nor are we destined to experience the fulfillment of our aspirations. We are, in other words, held in confinement by the limits of perspective as well as the limits of our desires. As stated in Ricoeur's words, "man is that which mediates between the finite and the infinite, the limited and the desire for totality."⁵

Ricoeur discerns some merit in the Cartesian paradox of finite-infinite man because it does not equate human reality to a final rationality, or a final totality. Ricoeur states that "the paradox of finite-infinite man maintains that man is infinite, and finitude is a sign which points to the restricted nature of this infinitude; conversely, infinitude is a sign of transcending finitude."⁶ This, however, does not signify an acceptance of Cartesian thought in its entirety. Ricoeur expresses a particular discontent with the notion that the will should have access to ultimate validity. Ricoeur argues,

the will no longer has any privilege of infinity which does not likewise belong to the understanding. That is why it is better to abandon this faculty psychology altogether and substitute for it a theory of signification.⁷

In brief, Ricoeur rejects Descartes' metaphysics. He objects to the fact that Descartes links the sense of self to the reflective aspect of consciousness and fails to properly articulate the constitution of the field of consciousness in its entirety. Due to this lack of distinction Descartes has made the mistake of assuming that reflective consciousness implies a positing of the subject.

Ricoeur uses his attack upon elements of Cartesian thought as a basis from which he denies the notion that reflective consciousness presupposes a distinction between a finite understanding and an infinite will. Ricoeur argues that "reflection is not introspection."⁸ After careful analysis we find that reflection reveals a connection between a given point of view and the movement which transcends such a point. The point of view is lodged in a fixed finitude inasmuch as it is focused on its object of inquiry. Reflection permits us to discern a movement which surpasses this fixed point. Our knowledge of a given object is rendered possible by a resulting synthesis. Reflection, therefore, is not a point of view. It is, instead, that which allows us to become aware of a point of view. We may then say that reflection is not intuitive. It is analytic. It separates and distinguishes elements. We may furthermore say that

reflection is transcendental. It is not a form of psychological introspection. With this in mind Ricoeur chooses to explain the Cartesian problematic in Kantian terms and maintains that the intermediacy of man can only be discovered via the detour of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination.

The transcendental synthesis concerns itself with the range of possibilities which coincide with the apperception of a given "thing." Ricoeur believes the synthesis is constitutive of a certain "receptivity," which acknowledges the appearance of things, as well as a certain "determination" which designates meaning upon that which we encounter. The ensuing synthesis thus becomes the "transcendental" moment of originating affirmation. Up to this point Ricoeur is faithful to Husserl's contention that transcendental reduction examines the meaning of phenomenon rather than pure phenomenon. The moment of affirmation is known to us as the constitutive moment when we grasp the meaning of things.

Our apprehension of the object, as meaning-structure, commences with the acknowledgement of the finitude of limited perspective. Perspectival limitation can be translated as "point of view." Ricoeur says, "perspectival limitation causes every view ... to be a point of view on."⁹ In complementary contrast to this, "determination" gives "receptivity" a meaning. Whereas "receptivity" can be

said to describe the finitude of knowing, "determination" can be said to describe the infinitude of knowing. Our perception of the thing entails transcending the presented side in favour of the whole. The series of perceptions, which become known to us as we look around the thing and note its various features, are welded into a unified form of signification. Ricoeur says, "every description of finitude is abstract, i.e. separated and incomplete, if it neglects to account for the transgression which makes discourse on finitude possible."¹⁰

With this knowledge in hand Ricoeur then draws upon the Kantian theory of "imagination" as a synthetic process. Even though Ricoeur agrees with Kant that the work of imagination is part of the perceptual process, he disagrees with Kant about the imagination's constituting nature. He combines the schematizing imagination to the work of language. Reflection on the point of view thus becomes possible through the transcendence of speaking over perceiving. Ricoeur incorporates "language" into the work of the imagination in a manner Kant never dreamed of saying,

through its signifying function, language conveys not my perception's finite perspective but the sense which intentionality transgresses my perspective. Language transmits the intention, not the perception of what is seen.¹¹

Ricoeur is able to make such statements by virtue of the fact he considers language to be the means by which consciousness "organizes" itself as a meaningful structure.

More will be said of this "organizing" function in Part Two of this thesis. For now we must pursue that line of inquiry which considers how we grasp the intention that is the non-perceived side of an object. The hidden intention becomes visible as we give a "name" to the meaning-unity which constitutes the hidden sides of an object. The discourse of "name" and "perspective" constitutes the unity of both sides. This discourse becomes a constitutive intentionality.

Ricoeur elaborates upon the nature of this meaning-unity by drawing attention to Aristotle's thoughts on the "infinite verb." Nouns only provide us with isolated sketches drawn in a vacuum. The fulfilled sense becomes discernible in the eternal interplay of perspectives. Ricoeur considers the verb to be a kind of noun-meaning which makes reference to something beyond itself. Through this designation of referential meaning to present encounter, a transcendental moment of affirmation is thus created. Having rejected the Cartesian problematic of the infinitude of the will, Ricoeur thus substitutes the power of affirmation in place of a philosophy of the will.

What is of interest to us is how the intentional nature of language leads to a new understanding of reflective consciousness. In order to arrive at that all-important juncture, we must further examine the role of the infinite verb. While the noun is linked to finitude and point of view, the moment of affirmation occurs with the synthesis

between the point of view and the objective moment of the verb. Ricoeur says

the verb is what makes the sentence 'hold together' since it ascribes the attributed signification to the subject of attribution by means of its supplemental signification. By asserting being, it introduces the human sentence into the ambiguous realm of the true and false.¹²

This means that the verb yields the very essential "is" and "is not" which determines being. The transcendence of speech over perspective is made possible by the power to affirm or deny and the power to signify. Language thus designates modes of being and opens up a realm of existential positing. The basis for truth, therefore, is not founded on the schematizing function of the imagination, but on the "being" of things as posited via nouns and verbs. The means of assertion thus becomes the product of the union of language and perception. The result is a productive imagination which relies on semantic creativity.

Once we have grasped how it is language becomes an intentionality we need clarify its implications upon the transcendental synthesis. We cannot be content to simply say that Ricoeur borrows from Kantian theory and adds a linguistic function to it. That is a misleading oversimplification of matters. To repeat what was said earlier, the basis of the transcendental synthesis is in the analysis of appearance. This is a profound aspect of Ricoeur's theory which must be emphasized. If we can grasp the difference between Ricoeur and Kant's respective interpretations of the nature

of the transcendental imagination, we can then comprehend why Ricoeur's theory suggests a fundamental revision of reflective consciousness.

In comparing the Kantian transcendental synthesis to his own Ricoeur says, "I prefer to say that the synthesis is primarily one of meaning and appearance rather than a synthesis of the intelligible and the sensible."¹³ Kant tells us that what we are conscious of are "intelligible objects" which are posited through the schematizing imagination. Ricoeur, on the other hand, believes the intentionality of language creates an ontological reality. The confrontation between Kant's synthesis of "the sensible and the understanding" versus Ricoeur's synthesis of "meaning and presence" comes to a head over the constitution of sense objects. Kant believes the mind conceives of a meaning-structure as it accumulates bits of experience. Ricoeur considers the perceptual object a goal which the imagination strives to overtake. He says, "objectivity is neither in consciousness nor in the principles of science; it is rather the thing's mode of being. It is the ontological mode of those 'beings' which we call things."¹⁴

As a consequence of Kant and Ricoeur's differing interpretations regarding the synthesis of the object, the transcendental act assumes a different status within the framework of consciousness. Kant equates the transcendental synthesis with the formal unity of consciousness; but the

same does not hold for Ricoeur because he believes consciousness is intentional and he does not equate "meaning" with the essential state of consciousness. Ricoeur says, "what interests us in the theory of the transcendental imagination is that this third term does not exist for itself: it completely exhausts itself in the act of constituting objectivity."¹⁵ The sensible and intelligible are not self-contained representations. The imagination intends itself toward the thing's mode of being, and thus exhausts itself in providing a meaning. "Consciousness spends itself in founding the unity of meaning and presence 'in' the object."¹⁶ Meaning is found once consciousness is posited, and not the other way around. To repeat, concepts determine consciousness, not the act of transcendence. The transcendental synthesis is equated only with the force which actualizes a meaning.

There is an important distinction to be made here between the Cartesian position that would have us believe consciousness is an intuition, and Ricoeur's conviction that consciousness is an intention. To Ricoeur, the importance of the ontological object means consciousness must be predicated of something. The innate, a priori cannot be intuitive. Consciousness must thus be intended, and represented in a correlate. The problematic of the intending consciousness and the ontological mode of being implies a cleavage between the centrality of meaning and the essential state of

consciousness. This distinction reinforces the earlier-stated remarks that reflection is not a point of view. This new order of things implies a revised methodology. The subject now becomes an intentional transgression. Another type of mediation is required to pass from consciousness to self-consciousness.

We have discovered a cleavage between the immediacy of consciousness and self-consciousness. We have come to the realization that reflection does not have an immediate access to self-knowledge. This effectively discredits the notion that the immediacy of consciousness is a first truth which implies the positing of the self.

Knowing, or objectifying consciousness, is to be understood via the structure of objectivity it makes possible. The positing of consciousness must be grounded by the terms that lend objectivity. This new outlook upon the positing of consciousness now leads us to consider how it lends itself to the positing of the person. In Chapter Three of Fallible Man we discover that the self is not conceived within intellectual consciousness, but in the synthesis of an enigmatic philosophical precomprehension. We are now prepared to discuss the important reciprocity between the synthesis of the thing and the synthesis of the person.

2. THE DISPOSSESSION OF THE PERSON

Following the revision of reflective consciousness, I wish to consider a revision of the subjectivity of self. I wish to draw attention to some important themes in Chapters Three and Four of Fallible Man, which give insight into a fundamental meaning-ground which precedes any intellectual apperception of our sense of self. In Chapter Three Ricoeur outlines the synthesis of a representative ideal of the self. This synthesis is conceived at the ontic level. In Chapter Four Ricoeur outlines the nature of affective realism. It is a realism which suggests that we are not posited in the world as a singular consciousness. The subject is an affective being posited in a field of being. Just as consciousness is intentional, the subject is a project of intentionality, and he depends on his own self-interpretation in a world represented by affects and ideas.

The most important lessons to be learned from Chapter Three are; (i) the "person" is a function within the world, and not a locus of subjectivity, and (ii) subjectivity is posited within an existential meaning (as the person defines himself as a guided project based on thematic ideals conceived independently of him), and not within a purely private meaning. We come to realize this as we examine how the projected ideal of the self finds itself. It is not a

self-projection as we know of it in the Hegelian sense. It is a "thrown projection" as we know it in the Heideggerian sense. That means the self initially finds itself within certain thematic ideals. It then takes possession of itself as it strives to overtake these ideals. The striving becomes the focal basis for an ontology of the person. What is especially noteworthy about this process is that the projected self becomes one with our very existence and being.

The reciprocity between the synthesis of the thing and the positing of the person commences by reviewing the lesson learned in Chapter Two of Fallible Man. Consciousness is not an intuition and, as a consequence, objects do not simply "present" themselves to consciousness. Consciousness is an intentional striving toward the object. In a similar manner, the subject is not "given" to himself. He is an intentional striving toward the world. According to Ricoeur, the "person" is an interpretation carried through a notion of perspective and point of view. This particular "interpretation" is conceived as a transcendental act. Ricoeur says, "all the forms of human polarity and mediation are a function of the notions of perspective and meaning, notions elaborated on the transcendental level."¹⁷ Ricoeur adds to that, "I myself become a synthesis of speech and perspective in this projection of objectivity."¹⁸ What Ricoeur is asserting is that the subject is an intentional mediation within this world of things and the theory of the subject is

not based on pure subjectivity.

Even though we are in the world, "the world" is an existential project. We are projected into a world of being and our relation to the world is not one of an independent consciousness within a noumenal world. We function as a field of consciousness which interprets the world. Ricoeur says, "perspective and transgression are thus two poles of a single function of openness."¹⁹ The "person" is thus conceived via an existential "openness" onto the world.

In Chapter Three, Ricoeur commences the outline of "person," as a function in the world, by describing the conscious subject as an intention which is aimed at three thematic functions titled "character," "respect," and "happiness." It is noteworthy that "character" is not a collection of traits governed by subjectivity. "Character" is a state of being which has influence over the subject. Subjectivity finds itself dominated by character rather than vice versa. "Respect" and "happiness" are further derivatives of the essential state of being which renders the state of personhood discernible. Ricoeur defines these three themes as follows:

All the aspects of "practical" finitude that can be understood on the basis of the transcendental notion of perspective may be summed up in the notion of CHARACTER. All the aspects of "practical" infinitude that can be understood on the basis of the transcendental notion of meaning may be summed up in the notion of HAPPINESS. The "practical" mediation which extends the mediation of the transcendental imagination, projected into the object, is the constitution of the person by

means of RESPECT.²⁰

Ricoeur interprets "character" as a function which operates within the confines of "perspective" and "point of view." Character commences as an affective perspective (or point of view). It then finds its defining limits in a practical perspective (or closing). Ricoeur interprets our being-in-the-world via an "affective inwardness." This affectivity is a realism which permits us to see how things exist for us. The notion of person-as-function comes into being as we realize we are not driven by a subjectivity of the will but by a constituting affectivity.

Ricoeur takes exception to the idea that the will imposes an absolute order upon lived experience. Ricoeur believes that the affective perspective, as a point of view, is driven by our feelings and inclinations as directed at objects and things as the principle of determination. The lived experience is accountable to the dynamics of feeling. We are not driven by a guiding rationalism, rather, we are inspired by feeling. We may furthermore say that "feeling" is not the product of a central state of consciousness. It is an intentionality directed toward "things" as localized to a point of view. Seeing as affective inwardness is conceived in philosophical precomprehension prior to the immediacy of consciousness, feelings precede and influence subjectivity rather than vice versa.

Ricoeur also attacks the mind-body dualism by localiz-

ing the "point of view," which represents affective inwardness, to the positing of a bodily consciousness. The bodily consciousness results from the positing of the body, not merely as motor functions, but as affective being. Ricoeur tells us, "the body, the flesh of desire, does not manifest itself as a closed figure but as a practical mediation, in other words as a projecting body in the same sense we are able to speak of a perceiving body."²¹ This means that the body rises above the status of a self-contained enclosure. "My body, traversed, so to speak, by this intention, outruns itself. It becomes a mediator."²² The mediating function of the body serves to discredit the idea that the ego is an overriding fixture which monitors things.

The lived body is thus the only stable mainstay of lived existence. The positing of feelings, combined with the problematic of the body-as-mediator, creates another mode of existence which refutes the notion that experience presents itself to us as a body of sense-impressions. On the one hand, we attain consciousness not solely through ideas, but also as we experience feelings. The projecting body comes in contact with the feelings and inclinations which we direct toward objects and promotes a new-found mode of existence. This constitutes a point of view which Ricoeur considers to be the "zero origin," the center of perspective, of our field of consciousness. It is localized to one theme which Ricoeur calls "coenesthesia."

The zero origin is the focus of a paradox between the sense of "self" as unique and the sense of "myself as other than myself." There is no complete independence of the sense of self. We cannot conceive of ourselves in a vacuum without a meaning bestowed upon us from the collective human community. This common-body of meaning is especially articulate if we consider how we project given values upon objects all in the conception of a new realism. The constant interplay between a "pure" self which believes itself independent and innocent, versus a "self" which is determined by feelings and values, forms a focal basis upon which the edifice of affective realism is erected.

Our encounter with the world becomes a double intentionality because the act of receptivity is endowed with a corresponding act of projection. Ricoeur argues that perception cannot conceive its own object because perception is neither of a purely cognitive origin, nor is it of a purely intellectual origin. There is something that is distinct, from perception itself, that lingers. Ricoeur tells us that what lingers is "feeling" itself. He describes it as "a total and undivided experience of our body which is no longer traversed by all its intentions toward the world, but turned back into itself."²³ The projection of affective qualities upon the encounter with the natural world introduces us to a realm of feeling. Ricoeur calls the discovery of this phenomena "coenesthesia." It is the noticeable

residue created out of the intentionality of projecting and receiving.

Our feelings are brought to bear in desire. Feelings are directed to the object of desire. The object places confining boundaries on the affective perspective and creates what Ricoeur calls the "practical perspective" or affective closing. In Chapter Two Ricoeur told us that the thing is the guide. This means that perspective is confined by the limits of our sensuous apprehension of the thing. The restrictive nature of perceptual apprehension indicates the limitation of our opening to the world. Ricoeur calls this limitation "the affective closing." It is bound to the limits of the finitude of lived existence.

In Chapter Two Ricoeur spoke of "finitude" as the defining limits of sensuous apperception. In Chapter Three "finitude" undertakes an existential sense inasmuch as the affective closing places restrictions on our ambitions. This closing causes life to take shape within fixed systems. Ricoeur believes that the agglomeration of our bodily motor skills can be interpreted in the same manner as a psychical body. He believes that through such things as the rules of grammar and arithmetic, and through social sophistication and moral knowledge we learn to form new skills. With this in hand, Ricoeur introduces his notion of "habit" which he defines as that which solidifies our tastes and aptitudes into recognizable molds. This new mode of existence, con-

ceived through the new skills, becomes known as the notion of "character."

Does the term "character" designate a set of attributes which identify us both to ourselves and to others, as if our identity was as unchosen as our facial features? Is it that, or is it the guiding tendency that motivates us to determine ourselves through acts and deeds? The question can be simplified and reduced to a conflict of latent disposition versus willfully-desired tendencies. For Ricoeur, "character" encompasses both ends of this conflict. He describes character as "the finite openness of my existence taken as a whole."²⁴ By this he means "character" links together both the opening of the world and the affective closing. It is the functional trademark by which we recognize ourselves, but at the same time it recognizes the uniqueness of our individuality in the face of preset traditions. Life's habits project us into established patterns. In this manner we recognize the affective closing inasmuch as we are bound to a meaning given us through norms and ideals. On the other hand, to say that character is openness thus means character gives us the medium by which we are an openness before the field horizon of humanity. Ricoeur considers it a referential point of origin superimposed on a vast horizon.

Once he has established that character is a "zero origin," and that the will is inspired by feeling states, Ricoeur introduces the notion of "happiness." Happiness is a

fulfilled contentment. This fulfilled contentment, however, is not just pure pleasure. It is beyond being a singular or particular intention. It is, instead, the aim of human activity. Both themes of happiness and character become united together within the synthesis of the person. This synthesis of the person takes shape through unification with the next theme, "respect."

Ricoeur maintains that respect is an intermediary in the same manner as the transcendental imagination is an intermediary.

The synthesis of the object comes from the transcendental imagination; the two poles of understanding and receptivity meet in the transcendental imagination. Likewise, the synthesis of the person as an ethical object comes out of respect.²⁵

Whereas the intention of the thing is a theoretical intention, the intention of the person is a practical intention. The new mode of intentionality calls for a synthesis of the person that is based on a recognition of the other's value. "Imagination was the condition of the synthesis in the object. Respect is the condition of synthesis in the person."²⁶

The projected "person" thus becomes an intentional concept. Ricoeur adds the following remarks, "the person is still a projected synthesis which seizes itself in the representation of a task, of an ideal of what the person should be. The self is aimed at rather than experienced."²⁷ Ricoeur is in agreement with Hegel that the subject must be

objectified in order to recognize himself. Just as the basis of objectivity is founded upon the thingness of the thing, the project of the person must be based on a guide. "The person is not yet conscious of self for self; it is only conscious of self in the representation of the ideal of the self."²⁸ All this suggests we realize ourselves in this new mode of ontological existence. The representative ideal becomes fused to the fact of our lived existence. "There is no experience of the person in itself and for itself."²⁹

Even though the self enters existence as a self, it must reach beyond that in order to grasp the thought of itself. Ricoeur thus shows an affinity for Hegel's notion that consciousness is not given. It is achieved. Even though Ricoeur's philosophical thought supports the notion of a dispossession of the self from the self, he does not subscribe to the notion of a transcending spirit. The subject finds the justification and explanation for his existence in the symbolic nature of thought which, in turn, evolves from cultural antecedents. The formation of cultural antecedents will be further discussed in the review of Ricoeur's essay "Existence and Hermeneutics" in Part Two of this thesis. My next task is to review Chapter Four of Fallible Man where Ricoeur compensates for the absence of spiritual substance by developing the theory of the ontological locus which serves as a grounding for the human condition.

3. THE ONTOLOGICAL LOCUS

In Chapter Four of Fallible Man we come to a fuller understanding of the affective "realism" which is so important to the ideas found in Chapter Two and Chapter Three. I now wish to draw attention to four themes in Chapter Four which culminate with the notion of man's state of intermediacy. First, I wish to point out why a transcendental analysis cannot provide a comprehensive understanding of the "person." Secondly, I will discuss the relation "feeling" and "knowing" have to each other. Thirdly, I will outline the person's latent disposition for belonging within the human community. Fourthly, I will describe how the reflection of oneself, is dependent upon the perception of others. The positing of the person is conceived in new aspects of objectivity which are mediated through the feelings of "having," "power," and "worth." We shall eventually see why the paradox of an intention and an affection form the essence of an ontological locus.

In Chapter Three we learned that the constitution of the person is based upon a "thrown projection" of the self. This gave added impetus to the argument that the ego is not the ultimate basis for a theory of the subject. In Chapter Four the singularity of the ego comes under further attack as Ricoeur denies the notion of private meaning. Ricoeur suggests introspection is dependent upon a wide variety of

meaning which originates from beyond the cogito. We thus learn that this range of meaning is posited in affective realism and expressed within a cultural understanding.

Ricoeur declares that the understanding of one's self ranges beyond the purely transcendental analysis. A transcendental analysis commences with the analysis of the "thing." The arguments found throughout Fallible Man all suggest, however, that transcendental reflection is not the final word on all matters concerning the understanding. Transcendental reflection lacks the dimension of feeling because feeling "animates" objects. The deferral to a problematic of feeling entails our involvement within a field horizon of meaning. This recourse to a field horizon will be clarified shortly.

In Chapter Four Ricoeur tells us, "we attribute to feelings objects or quasi-objects which we call values."³⁰ This realm of values constitutes the basis to the affective realism that Ricoeur talks about extensively in Chapter Three, because affective realism considers what "things" and "the world" mean for us. It reveals another reality apart from pure facticity. Not only does "feeling" bestow qualities on things, but it also precedes our encounter with things in a kind of anticipation similar to the anticipation Heidegger had ascribed to being. Ricoeur says, "by means of feeling, objects touch me."³¹ We can therefore say that "feeling" adds a new dimension to the merely transcendental

understanding of human reality.

The comparison between the function of feeling and the function of knowing reveals that the two functions are bound to each other, but they oppose one another. Whereas the function of knowing serves to categorize modes of experience, the function of feeling serves to mediate our encounter with the world. Ricoeur says,

knowing, because it exteriorizes and passes its object in being, sets up a fundamental cleavage between the object and the subject. It 'detaches' the object, or 'opposes it' to the I. In short, knowing constitutes the duality of subject and object. Feeling is understood, by contrast, as the manifestation of a relation to the world which constantly restores our complicity with it, our inherence and belonging in it, something more profound than all polarity and duality.³²

The subject-object duality is not self-given, but after-the-fact to the polarity constituted within the act of knowing. As a result of this our first encounter with the world is not through knowing but through feeling and this "interiorized" reality precedes all duality and polarity. It precedes "objective" experience, as it is known in the strictly empirical sense.

The function of knowing, therefore, cannot adequately come to terms with, and describe, the function of feeling. The power of reductive analysis cannot reach the paradox which is the "interiorized reality" of feeling. Ricoeur says, "feeling can only be described paradoxically as the unity of an intention toward the world and an affection of the self."³³ We are delving below the facticity of physics

into a philosophical anthropology. This implies that the notion of "self" is formulated in a different manner from that of other beings. "The person" is conceived via a problematic of the "interiorized reality" of feeling, as well as via the embodiment of an object. These two conflicting problematics converge on one point we may call "the ontological locus" whereby the person finds himself.

Ricoeur thus interprets the human condition via "the problematic of the human schema of being." This schema is divided into three moments which Ricoeur calls "the interpersonal schemata of being-with as well as the supra-personal schemata of being-for and the fundamental intention of being-in."³⁴ Even though affective realism first appears to us as an indivisible unity, these three moments indicate that man's search for himself is conducted within a realm of meaning bestowed upon him by (i) the human community as a whole, (ii) within his role as a being for other people, and (iii) within his efforts to find himself internally. This interhuman schema of being needs to be thematized through the mediation of cultural objects in order to be comprehensible. Ricoeur says, "our attachment to things and to aspects of things are no longer of a natural order but of a cultural one. we must add the economic, political and cultural dimensions of objectivity."³⁵ Ricoeur's interpretation of the human condition thus becomes channelled through the themes of "having," "power," and "worth."

The sphere of "having" is understood through the interpersonal relations that are conceived through "work," as an activity, and those relations centering around the possession of goods. The scenarios which give rise to the feelings of "having" do not stem from the antecedents of organic existence. Those feelings are conceived out of a conflict which is exclusive to human activity. "The sacrifice of having may turn into the austere way of domination."³⁶ This conflict bestows a value upon objects and creates a new realism founded on economics. As Ricoeur puts it, "it creates a whole cycle of feelings relative to acquisition, appropriation, possession, and preservation."³⁷ These feelings of "having" become a factor in our relations with others. "The interiorization of the relation to the economic thing in specific feelings is contemporary with the specific modalities of the relation to another."³⁸

The sphere of "power" is defined through the feelings and forms of alienation it creates. Ricoeur says, "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."³⁹ Through these feelings, conceived in the sphere of "power," a particular social and economic order arises. "By means of his work man enters into relations of subordination."⁴⁰ By entering into the political problematic of power we develop feelings in conjunction to this. The

political problematic therefore inspires certain forms of consciousness. "Ambition, intrigue, submission, and responsibility are examples of appropriate human 'feelings' which are organized around the objective structure we call 'power'." ⁴¹

The sphere of "worth" pertains to the value of being recognized and approved. Our self-constitution is not as private as we may think. Ricoeur says, "there is a desire to exist, not through a vital affirmation of oneself, but through the favour of another's recognition." ⁴² Our sense our "self" is conceived within the presence of others. Feelings such as "love," "hate," "anger," and "jealousy" require the presence of another person. We may add to this that the notion of "I" is dependent upon the notion of "mine."

Seeing as self-consciousness gains an inherent reality through the recognition of others, the relationship of the self to itself is realized in a mode of objectivity which evolves as we traverse the cultural spheres from "having" to "power" to "worth." We discover ourselves through the feeling of belonging to a "we" as well as through the feeling of commitment to a purpose. We attempt to come to terms with society by adapting to the customs of work, law, leisure, and culture. We try to discover a mode of "belonging" that suits us. The quest is tantamount to the very belonging of existence to being. Feeling is wholly itself

only through the consciousness of being "already in." This is quite consistent with the ideas expressed in Chapter Three to the effect that the person is an intentional function. We live within a common bond of existence and "private meaning" is a myth. Meaning is given to us within our surrounding realm of being. We do not exist within society in an atomistic sense.

The thematic spheres of "having," "power," and "worth" serve as objective polarities. Once we have familiarized ourselves with them, the focal point between the "interiorized reality" of feeling, and the thematic ideal of the person, begins to take shape. As this focal point becomes discernible so does the problematic of man as an intermediary and non-localized being. The paradox of "being-with," "being-for," and "being-in" gives rise to a certain cleavage within the self. The paradox is between the problem of "feeling" and the ideal we strive for. This cleavage is not a problem of "me-I" (moi-je): it is a cleavage between a mode of belonging and the detachment of the self.

The desire for unity is in conflict with the notion of exclusion. The exclusion begins with the body. The body is spatially separate and the attachment to the body changes our outlook through the attachment to the "mine." The quest for one's place in society is therefore at odds with the possessive detachment of the body. The problem of the "for-itself" of man is in opposition to the "in-itself" of

things.

Affective realism manifests itself in a particular form of objectivity which characterizes man's peculiar ontological disposition. How can this form of objectivity be discerned? Let us consider the problem of the apprehension of other people and the apprehension of other minds. The ideas that Ricoeur offers us in Chapter Four do not lend themselves to the attitude that we have direct access to other minds nor that we know of others through a process of self-comparison and analogical reasoning. What Ricoeur is suggesting is that both myself and the other draw from the meaning given to us through communal existence. We grasp an idea when we understand the meaning it conveys to everyone. In this manner, our mutual dependence upon the same source of meaning unites us. When we try to understand ourselves, and others, we thus take recourse to affective realism. Affective realism unites a paradox of feeling and meaning. This paradox gives rise to a certain form of objectivity.

The encounter between feeling and meaning is an encounter between the representation of something in-itself, and the representation of what something means for us. This relation constitutes an ontological "locus" between being and nothingness. This latent notion is synonymous with the doctrine of fallibility inasmuch as man is "intermediate." Our sense of self cannot be traced back to the ego. In fact, we are not bound to a localized and singular source of

being. The positing of the person is conceived within the peculiar ontological structure of man. In order to grasp the notion of the self we need to develop an epistemology which recognizes the nature of philosophical precomprehension. This epistemology is expressed in a unique symbolic language. The nature of this symbolic language is the topic of discussion in Part Two of this thesis.

PART II - THE LANGUAGE OF THE SELF

4. DEFINING A THEORY OF SIGNIFICATION

We have seen that we do not apprehend ourselves directly. We strive towards an intentional goal and, in the process, apprehend ourselves by inference. Now, I will proceed to "problematize" how the comprehension of man is a symbolic function. I will commence by further examining the cleavage between the immediacy of consciousness and self-consciousness that was uncovered in Chapter Two of Fallible Man. I will draw attention to Ricoeur's challenge to the idea of a self-positing of the subject as an autonomous act. The question of how the subject can apprehend himself will be directed toward a question of how consciousness posits itself. I will then review "Consciousness and the Unconscious" which refutes the idea that the truth of the subject is localized within the human psyche.

We will see that the subject finds the justification and the explanation for his existence in the symbolic nature of human thought. We will be guided from an archaeology to a teleology of the subject wherein it will become apparent that the imputation of "self" is conceived within symbolic representation. Symbols themselves are founded in the language of allegory and the language of myth. I intend to demonstrate that the positing of consciousness is founded on a specialized discourse founded on cultural symbols and

symbolic being.

In "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology," we are introduced to the new, semiological order. Ricoeur intends to discredit "the philosophy of the subject," and he mounts his attack by presenting two kinds of "realism" which develop out of his interpretation of psychoanalysis and his interpretation of structuralism respectively. The two doctrines come together and outline a notion of a truth independent of a subject. Whereas transcendental idealism is founded upon the return to the self, the return must pass through a network of signs. The positing of the subject is not a purely transcendental act, but a descriptive act as well.

Initially, it would seem there is a lesson to be learned from psychoanalysis which entails a new definition of the cogito. Ricoeur states that "neither consciousness nor the ego is any longer in the position of principle or origin."⁴³ Psychoanalysis has directed the search for self-knowledge into the realm of being, as presented in submerged instinctual desires. Ricoeur says,

before the subject consciously and willingly posits himself, he has been placed in being at the instinctual level. The anteriority of instinct in relation to awareness and volition signifies the anteriority of the ontic plane to the reflective plane, the priority of I AM to I THINK.⁴⁴

The basis of subjective experience thus becomes relocated as Ricoeur establishes a link between "existence," as an activity, and the primacy of desire.

When speaking about "psychoanalysis," as a thematic discipline, Ricoeur makes almost exclusive reference to the Freudian psychoanalytic model. The philosophical interpretation of the Freudian psychoanalytic model filters out the properties of consciousness and holds the cogito in suspension. According to Ricoeur, we are left with "a cogito which posits, but does not possess itself."⁴⁵ The ego has been given a new status. It is no longer the start of things, and consciousness is not the standard by which we discern the nature of existence. Ricoeur wants to show that the positing of the cogito is mediated by the world of signs. He also wants to introduce a profound new theory which incorporates the descriptive function of language into the transcendental act. In order to do this, he must first redefine the workings of the transcendental act. Ricoeur proceeds to do this by expressing his misgivings regarding Husserlian and post-Husserlian phenomenology.

According to Ricoeur,

phenomenology unites three theses: (1) meaning is the most comprehensive category of phenomenological description; (2) the subject is the bearer of meaning; (3) reduction is the philosophical act which permits the birth of a being for meaning.⁴⁶

Ricoeur points to the encounter with psychoanalysis in order to show that transcendental reduction is not the only means of creating a foundation that can support the positing of "meaning."

Freudian theory requires us to reconsider the nature of

subjective experience. Ricoeur points out that apodicticity is not a final epistemic frontier. "The moment of apodicticity tends to be confused with the moment of adequation."⁴⁷ In other words, apodicticity is, in effect, a coming-to-awareness. Ricoeur comments that "'what I am' is just as problematic as 'that I am' is apodictic."⁴⁸ The cogito is a series of progressive stages, and consciousness is only a constructive strategy. In this constituted link, each strategic level interprets the one before it. This line of reasoning lends further support to the argument that reflection is not introspection. It is, rather, a culmination. Due to the arrival-to-consciousness the cogito is required to "describe" to itself its own unfolding stages. The theory of the subject, therefore, takes shape not only as a transcendental act, but as a descriptive act as well.

For Ricoeur, the value of phenomenology is to make sense of existence by use of concepts. Concepts need to be articulated in a particular language. Ricoeur thus offers us a theory of language which serves as a basis for phenomenological description. As we shall soon see, this theory of language creates its own medium of signification, and its own mode of meaning. Ricoeur maintains that language is not based on a "correspondence" to a central source of meaning. It is a mediation through different strategies of meaning.

Ricoeur contends that phenomenology has mistakenly assumed that "logical meaning is lodged at the center of

gravity of linguistic meaning."⁴⁹ Ricoeur not only denies the prominence of logical meaning, he displaces it in favour of his notion of being. The notion of being thus governs the positing of linguistic meaning. This implies a displacement of language-as-correspondence-to-thought in favour of language-as-mediation. Ricoeur does not conceive of "being" as a self-contained source of reference. It is a mediation between modes of existence which are foreign to each other. The integration of "being" into linguistic analysis means his theory of language does not operate as though it were a system of logic. Speech creates a new moment of meaning. Meaning is not just an archival accumulation, and language does not insert concepts into an overriding body of meaning.

Ricoeur says, "it is an entire philosophy of truth which is at issue here: truth as a process of recovering available meanings in new meanings."⁵⁰ The moment of speech is a process whereby the present discourse renews and overrides the past discourse. Speech gives expression to an established tradition. This theory of language dispells the idea that the word directly signifies an object. Ricoeur makes reference to "synchrony" (which refers to the speaking subject) and "diachrony" (which refers to the objective sciences). The synchrony of speech dominates and consumes the diachrony of language. Speech becomes a present animation which brings forth the positing of meaning.

This theory of language raises two important questions.

In the first place, how can a network of signs, which presuppose the conscious subject, function? Secondly, can such a network function outside the realm of verbal speech? Ricoeur addresses these two questions in a roundabout manner by discussing structural linguistics. Structural linguistics not only challenges the philosophy of the subject, it also assumes "the notion of signification is placed in a different field from that of the intentional aimings of the subject."⁵¹ Ricoeur presents three arguments to support this position.

Ricoeur's first argument concerns the dichotomy of language and speech. It is a dichotomy between an established state of affairs and the temporal change it undergoes. Ricoeur maintains that "in language, we retain the established convention in speech we fall back on execution."⁵² "Language" is thus opposed to "speech" inasmuch as language represents a fixed tradition and speech is a working function which compares an infinite number of combinations. This sets up Ricoeur's second argument which gives the act of expression a new-found status as a bearer of meaning.

Ricoeur's second argument is that of "the subordination of the diachronic point of view to the synchronic point of view."⁵³ A system state relies on the meaning conceived in the act of expression. While the comprehension of a system state presupposes its impending alteration, the apprehension

of the given system state is made possible by a referential comparison. The referential comparison takes place between the original system state and the one that succeeds it. The referential comparison becomes consumed in the act of expression. This act of consumation means the act of expression carries the responsibility of the advent of meaning.

Ricoeur's third argument is based on "the reduction of the substantial aspects of language - phonemic substance and semantic substance - to formal aspects."⁵⁴ Ricoeur claims that "language, thus relieved of its fixed contents, becomes a system of signs defined by their differences alone. the system of signs no longer has an outside, it has only an inside."⁵⁵ Such a system relies on an interactive economy of signs for its very own determination. Ricoeur concludes these three arguments by saying that "language is not an object but a mediation through and by which we are directed toward reality."⁵⁶

Language thus has a life of its own and language-as-mediation thus constitutes the essence of the transcendental act. In other words, Ricoeur's transcendental synthesis is inspired by semantic innovation. Signification is not dependent upon, or modelled after, a functional consciousness. Ricoeur says, "the theory of the subject ... arises from the theory of signification to which it is joined at the descriptive level and from a theory of reduction which

founds it on the transcendental level."⁵⁷

Ricoeur further tells us that "language is organized in such a way that it allows each speaker to appropriate the entire language by designating himself as the 'I'."⁵⁸ What Ricoeur means is that the significance of "I" is realized only when the speaker talks about himself to himself. As a consequence of this, the apodicticity of consciousness can only be known through the use of language. As a further consequence, the designation of "I" is lodged in a language which does not belong to the conscious subject.

Despite all this, Ricoeur is not suggesting that the constitution of the field of consciousness is a problem of pure linguistics. Ricoeur puts forth a theory of language which acknowledges the dominance of linguisticity, but this does not mean that linguisticity is absolute. Language is a referential function. The act of reference implies objective standards and a world outside linguisticity. Even though consciousness must be articulated within a language, it must also retain a nonverbal reality of its own. The transcendence of consciousness and the structures of language retain their own respective forms of being. Semantic innovation mediates in between the originating modes of instinctual being.

We can now recognize the assets and shortcomings of both the transcendental theory of signification and the descriptive theory of signification. The theory of the

subject, which is our major preoccupation, becomes conceived at the transcendental level. At the same time, the transcendental theory is dependent upon the descriptive theory in order to articulate a field of meaning.

The theory of discourse presents itself to us as a self-enclosed system of signs and Ricoeur cautions us that the meaning arising from this system is not adequate and not as absolute as it might first appear. Seeing as language is only mediation, signs do no more than designate. Signs are only a means of relating to the real. There is a world outside language which provides standards. The subject is a standard inasmuch as language can only be expressed via the medium of the speaker. Neither the transcendental theory of signification nor the descriptive theory of signification is complete by itself. Ricoeur says, "the subject is what refers to itself when referring to the real."⁵⁹ That means that the subject is a point of reference because it is he who speaks. The use of language entails the eventual return back to the subject who is (at the same time) determined by the act of speaking.

The combined challenges from psychoanalysis and structuralism have displaced the centrality of the ego, and we now have a cogito which is not bound to the ego but rather to a system which incorporates the transcendental synthesis with the mediating function of language. We have learned that consciousness is dependent upon the object of its

intentions. The object is determined by its meaning. Meaning is described in language. We thus have to redefine the object of consciousness because the nature of consciousness is no longer known to us and we have to reconsider its antecedents.

The next essay I wish to look at examines this theme as Ricoeur substitutes a "consciousness of meaning" by a "strategy of meaning." As we shall see, the passage from consciousness to self-consciousness is possible only after consciousness has found a theory of knowledge for itself. The unconscious is thus redefined, as a function, meant to provide an epistemology for consciousness.

5. THE LOSS OF THE HIDDEN TRUTH

I now wish to turn my attention to Ricoeur's essay "Consciousness and the Unconscious." Here Ricoeur presents a theory of the unconscious which further reveals the removal of consciousness from self-certainty. Whereas "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology" denies the notion that consciousness is posited of a singular source of meaning, "Consciousness and the Unconscious" undermines the naive belief regarding the centrality of truth. This time around, Ricoeur proposes a reformulation of the object of consciousness. He rejects the idea that consciousness is predicated of a hidden truth. In Fallible Man we learned that consciousness is intentional and in "Consciousness and the Unconscious" Ricoeur tells us that consciousness relies on the affects and ideas that represent it.

We have learned that self-consciousness is potentially a deceptive consciousness, and Ricoeur expresses a particular admiration for the work of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud insofar as each has declared that consciousness is not what it appears to be. They have sought to define the submerged nature of consciousness. In "Consciousness and the Unconscious" Ricoeur thus commences by driving a wedge between immediate consciousness and reflection. Following that, he proceeds to dispel the idea that the unconscious is synony-

mous with a hidden truth of the subject.

Ricoeur declares that, "immediate consciousness does indeed involve a type of certainty, but this certainty does not constitute true self-knowledge."⁶⁰ Herein we find a fundamental point that needs to be developed. Ricoeur agrees with Descartes when the latter says, "by the term experience I understand everything that takes place within ourselves so that we are aware of it."⁶¹ Ricoeur contends, however, that "all reflection points back to the unreflected"⁶² and what we call "experience" incorporates not only such things as the understanding, the will and imagination, but also sensations themselves. The deceptiveness of sense data, however, indicates we do not have a first-hand knowledge of our sensations. We may therefore conclude that we do not receive a "pure" and uncontested possession of our knowledge. Ricoeur says

we have come to realize that the profoundest depths of the life of intentionality can possess other meanings besides the immediate one. The most distant, general, and, we must admit, the most abstract of possibilities, that of the unconscious, is written into the initial gap between the certainty and the true knowledge of consciousness.⁶³

The encounter with psychoanalysis has brought this cleavage, between certainty and the true knowledge of consciousness out in the open. We are now presented new possibilities as to the philosophical interpretation of our perceived reality. Ricoeur makes reference to both Freudian and Hegelian theory, because both reinforce the idea that

consciousness is not in undisputed possession of itself. Ricoeur thus presents us a picture of the psychic apparatus as a running discourse between intentional polarities, and he proceeds to criticize what he calls the "realist" concepts in Freudian theory.

According to Ricoeur, Freud took for granted a brand of realism that can be traced to Kant. Ricoeur says, "Kant teaches us to join empirical realism with transcendental idealism in the realm of the concepts of physics."⁶⁴ This has led Freud into a representational dualism which is only partly accurate. Ricoeur says, "for Freud, knowledge is not an instinct in its being as instinct; it is rather the representation by which instincts are represented."⁶⁵

In other words, Freud commenced his theoretical venture in the right direction by realizing that instincts cannot be known first-hand. He still made the mistake, however, of assuming that the "internal object" was ultimately knowable. Ricoeur says,

it is because Freud's analytical investigation foregoes any attempt to attain the being of instincts, and remains within the limits of their conscious or unconscious representations, that it does not get trapped in the realism of the unknowable.⁶⁶

This means that despite his own theories, Freud still took recourse to "empirical realism" and failed to properly recognize the nature of the unknowable. This prevented him from uncovering the true nature of the unconscious. Ricoeur promptly remarks, "such is Freud's empirical realism. Its

nature is fundamentally the same as the empirical realism of physics. It designates the internal object as something knowable."⁶⁷

Ricoeur thus directs his attention to the relation between consciousness and the unconscious. Ricoeur has uncovered the dispossession and, by extension, redetermined the nature of reflection. In "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology" Ricoeur has indicated that reflection does not yield the truth of the subject. In "Consciousness and the Unconscious" he has extended that thought further so as to proclaim that the unconscious is not directly accessible. Ricoeur thus presents a new unconscious which is (i) not localized as a referential entity which corresponds to a singular ego, and (ii) not intended to yield the concealed truth of the subject. Ricoeur's unconsciousness is a mode of intentional discourse, and its purpose is to provide consciousness with material for a theory of knowledge.

Ricoeur makes reference to that part of Husserlian phenomenology which introduced the theme of the pre-reflective and unreflected. Ricoeur modifies this theme for his own purposes and says, "the unconscious can be defined only in terms of its relation with the conscious-pre-conscious system."⁶⁸ Ricoeur thus identifies a distinction between the conscious-preconscious model and the conscious-unconscious model within the psychic apparatus. The recipro-

cal determination of these two models imply that "the 'reality' of the unconscious exists only as a reality which has been diagnosed."⁶⁹ Ricoeur believes that Freudian theory should not be construed as an empirical account of things; it implies a whole field of philosophical interpretation. Ricoeur comments that "the unconscious exists and is just as real as physical objects and yet its existence is merely relative to the 'derivatives' which represent it and make it appear in the field of consciousness."⁷⁰

Seeing as psychoanalytic theory is a mode of interpretation, psychic antecedents can intentionally point to other antecedents. The psychic apparatus can thus undertake a metaphorical disposition. Ricoeur says, "the 'consciousness' to which the unconscious is other is not a self-presence or the apperception of some content, but the ability to retravel the journey of the figures of the spirit."⁷¹ The correlation that consciousness and the unconscious have to one another establishes a particular type of discourse.

Generally speaking, consciousness and the unconscious are bound to each other by means of a reciprocal interpretation. "Consciousness is the order of the terminal, and the unconscious that of the primordial."⁷² The unconscious explains the hidden subterranean realm of conception. Consciousness, on the other hand, expresses the culmination. "Consciousness is a movement which continually annihilates

its starting point and can guarantee itself only in the end."⁷³ Ricoeur goes on to say, "the question of consciousness seems to me to be bound to the other question of how a man leaves his childhood behind and becomes an adult."⁷⁴ The theory of the subject assumes both a psychoanalytic and an anthropological perspective. This transition from the primacy of instinctual life to the maturity of reflection is of pivotal value to Freudian theory. The transference is mediated by a unique language forged of a union between hermeneutics and energetics.

In "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology" we learned that even though language relies on a structural foundation it comes to dominate and envelope that foundation. Language creates an innovative evolution beyond its structural antecedents. In so doing it makes transcendence possible. In an analogous manner the transference from instinctual being to reflection relies on language. Due to this new-found emphasis upon semantic innovation the problem of the unconscious thus becomes linked to Ricoeur's doctrine of symbols. The unconscious must delve into the concealed meanings held within language. This is the focal topic of the next reading selection I will discuss.

This review of "Consciousness and the Unconscious" indicates to us that the comprehension of man is a symbolic function. The only way we are going to find the person is to find the threshold, the ontological locus, where the trans-

ference of meaning takes place. In the next reading, taken from Freud and Philosophy, we find a more detailed explanation of this new-found reality of the unconscious. This sets us on the road toward a teleology of the subject.

6. THE LANGUAGE OF TRANSFERENCE

In Chapter One, Book Three, of Freud and Philosophy Ricoeur outlines a philosophical interpretation of the dynamics of transference as found in Freudian theory. In so doing, he explains, in greater depth, three important points that were raised in "Consciousness and the Unconscious." Ricoeur tells us (i) how a "mixed semantics" of hermeneutic discourse can form a basis for a teleology of the subject, (ii) how consciousness is presupposed by topography, and (iii) how the unconscious serves as a medium of transition from one mode of meaning to another.

In order to establish a teleology of the subject Ricoeur must outline the area that presupposes consciousness. He thematizes this realm of philosophical precomprehension by use of psychoanalytic "systems" of interpretation. These particular systems require a certain reformulation of the analytic function. This reformulation leads Ricoeur to conclude that instinctual objects are intentional in nature. The intentionality must be conveyed in a descriptive act, not a psychic act. Ricoeur must then describe the peculiar semantics which serve to thematize the prereflective, conscious subject. It is a language of hermeneutics and energetics which is created out of the convergence of the

phenomenology of language and Freudian thought.

The encounter between phenomenology and psychoanalysis guides us through a very complicated transition which characterizes the "unconscious." Ricoeur reinforces the all-important idea that consciousness is constituted within the act of hermeneutic expression, and the unconscious serves as a realm of convergence from energy to meaning. The formation of the psychic expressiveness becomes the work of the unconscious and this expressiveness is characterized by something Ricoeur identifies as the topographic and economic representations of consciousness. The lesson learned from this exercise is that the theory of the subject emerges out of a strange symbolic language.

Ricoeur has drawn from Freudian theory because he finds favour with the manner in which psychoanalytic antecedents undermine "the philosophy of the subject." In Chapter One, Book Three of Freud and Philosophy. Ricoeur embarks upon the task of replacing the "philosophy of the subject" with an archaeology of the subject. The first issue he deals with is that of whether the archaeology of the subject can subsist without a teleology. Ricoeur thinks not. He says, "an archaeology remains abstract so long as it is not integrated by way of complementary opposition with a teleology."⁷⁵ One must realize the mode of thought, which Ricoeur identifies as a "dialectic," upon which the archaeology of the subject comes into being. Seeing as Ricoeur's archaeology of the

subject is based on psychoanalytic theory, the question arises, can psychoanalysis conform to a given teleology? Ricoeur believes this is possible only if psychoanalysis can be converted to analytic interpretation.

Ricoeur refers to "the critique of the logicians" which says that if psychoanalysis is to be accepted as a viable "theory," it must be able to withstand empirical verification. Ricoeur says "if a theory is to be regarded as valid, its empirical validation must satisfy the requirements of a logic of proof."⁷⁶ Knowledge must pass the test of imposed critical methods. If a theory cannot measure up to such standards, it cannot be considered legitimate. Seeing as psychoanalysis is based on interpretations, its interpretations must therefore feature some form of objectivity. The problem confronting Ricoeur is that Freud's energetic concepts do not easily lend themselves to a mode of objective knowledge. Ricoeur says, "as long as one tries to place psychoanalysis among the observational sciences, the preceding attack against psychoanalysis seems to me unanswerable."⁷⁷

Ricoeur remains undaunted however. Instead of an internal reformulation, he reformulates the field of reference. He aspires to give "interpretation" a new accreditation. Ricoeur declares we have misunderstood the character of analytic discourse and we have also misunderstood the interpretative function. According to Ricoeur, it is a mistake to explain psychoanalytic constructs by means of

scientific statements. Even though a theory must satisfy certain rules of analytic validity, Ricoeur is saying that psychoanalytic theory does not necessarily have to lend itself to empirical verification. It can still lend itself to the work of interpretation and retain a claim to validity.

Ricoeur points out that philosophers have looked upon psychoanalysis as though it were a natural science and we can see the error of their ways if we identify the characteristic difference between psychology and psychoanalysis. According to Ricoeur, "psychoanalysis is not an observational science."⁷⁸

Psychology is an observational science dealing with the facts of behaviour; psychoanalysis is an exegetical science dealing with the relationships of meaning between substitute objects and the primordial (and lost) instinctual objects.⁷⁹

In other words, "psychoanalysis arrives at its energetic concepts solely by way of interpretation."⁸⁰ Ricoeur contends that

the statements of psychoanalysis are located neither within the causal discourse of the natural sciences nor within the motive discourse of phenomenology. Since it deals with a psychical reality, psychoanalysis speaks not of causes but of motives.⁸¹

The analyst is required to look beyond the pure instance of behaviour because behaviour represents an underlying intention. The intentional nature of psychic life undertakes a ruling significance and the discerning of "facts" must yield to the work of interpretation. Ricoeur

states, "there are no 'facts' in psychoanalysis, for the analyst does not observe, he interprets."⁸² It means that psychology and psychoanalysis are at odds over the important distinction between the "fact" itself and the inference to be drawn from facts. The validity of psychoanalytic discourse is based on the inference drawn from facts as opposed to the facts themselves.

Ricoeur has thus answered the earlier-stated question regarding the epistemological status of psychoanalysis by reformulating psychoanalytic theory along another system of reference. Ricoeur agrees that psychoanalysis cannot avoid the problem of justifying the validity of its conclusions. He has furthermore argued that the validity of the conclusions are not based on observed "facts" but on the work of interpretation. The viability of the work of interpretation, however, is dependent on the viability of its descriptive function. The assertability of psychoanalysis is a function of the assertability of its analytic discourse. In order to carry on and develop the theory of the archaeology of the subject Ricoeur is therefore obliged to describe the peculiar semantics associated to the analytic discourse which describes the subject.

In "Consciousness and the Unconscious" Ricoeur told us that Freud had looked for a cause of human behaviour inside the organism and had erroneously assumed that the internal object is something knowable. Ricoeur agrees with Freud that

the subject matter of psychoanalysis is behaviour, but he carefully stipulates that the internal systems and agencies are not merely models but functional systems. Ricoeur supports Freud's theoretical outline of the topographic point of view (unconscious, preconscious, conscious), and the structural point of view (id, ego, superego), but he is quick to emphasize that both structures depend on the work of interpretation. These structures serve as active symbols. These symbols inspire an activity which becomes known to us as the "mixed discourse." Ricoeur declares

the analytic experience unfolds in the field of speech and that, within this field, what comes to light is another language, dissociated from common language, and which presents itself to be deciphered through its meaningful effects - symptoms, dreams, various formations, etc.⁸³

Ricoeur's point is that the internal variables involved in the psychoanalytic inquiry are of another species which is foreign to observational language. These variables can only be discerned by means of interpretation. The theory of the archaeology of the subject obliges us to consider how meaning is given to us via phenomenological inquiry and how it is mediated via hermeneutical processes.

Seeing as psychoanalytic discourse concerns itself with concepts of force and affective variables we discover that the mixed discourse is of a unique nature and the language of the natural sciences is not broad enough to do justice to things. We are dealing with such concepts as "consciousness," "preconsciousness," and the "unconscious." These

concepts represent the reconciliation between "consciousness" and lived experience. According to Freud, this reconciliation ultimately comes down to an encounter between the subject's instinctually-inspired desires and the resistance "reality" puts up. This unique reconciliation can only be captured in another language which transcends naturalism. This language is conceived in symbolism and operates as a "topography." In order to outline the nature of this given "topography" Ricoeur turns to phenomenology for help because phenomenological inquiry establishes a referential meaning-base.

Ricoeur says, "the phenomenological problem of language really begins when the act of speaking is taken on the plane where it establishes a meaning."⁸⁴ The grafting of psychoanalysis and phenomenology onto Ricoeur's theory of symbols will create a particular discourse which can describe the transition from our initial encounter with the world to the archaeology of the subject. Ricoeur refers to the internal variables within the conscious model in terms of "systems" (i.e. the topographic point of view and the economic point of view) and "agencies" (i.e. ego, id, superego). These systems depict the conflict between the subject and lived experience. The particular language we are searching for can only be described as an interrelationship of hermeneutics and energetics. The merging of psychoanalysis and phenomenology comes together on a level of common language where the

instinctual drives are represented by affects and ideas.

We should be careful not to confuse the field of speech with pure linguistics. The concept of "force" separates Ricoeur's philosophy of language from pure semantics. Freudian psychoanalytic constructs are meant to be interpreted through their own distinct formations. For instance, Ricoeur points out that "the entire Oedipus drama is lived and enacted with the triangle of demand, refusal, and wounded desire."⁸⁵ We soon discover that neither the phenomenology of language nor the psychoanalytic theory of the subject can precede each other. They are conceived together within the genesis of affective meaning. Affective meaning draws upon a common symbolic understanding which reaches throughout the human community. Communal understanding indicates the phenomenology of language and psychoanalytic theory are conceived within a mutual effort.

Ricoeur declares that it is a fault of Freudian thought to have defined an unconscious which is not originally conceived in intersubjective relations. He says, "if desire were not located within an interhuman situation, there would be no such thing as repression, censorship, or wish-fulfillment through fantasies."⁸⁶ Desire takes recourse to involvement within interhuman activity and Freudian theory does not adequately acknowledge this. Ricoeur maintains that desire is an intentionality. It intends upon a field horizon. Ricoeur says, "all our relationships with the world

have an intersubjective dimension."⁸⁷ Ricoeur furthermore states

the constitution of the subject in speech and the constitution of desire in intersubjectivity are one and the same phenomenon; desire enters into a meaningful history of mankind only insofar as that history is "constituted by speech and addressed to the other."⁸⁸

Intersubjective relations convey meaning. Meaning is combined with force within the realm of the unconscious to conceive a language.

Once we begin to grasp how the "meaning" of instinctual being is conveyed in an intersubjective designation of affects and ideas we can begin to discern the discourse of hermeneutics and energetics. This discourse takes shape via the unconscious, as a realm of transition. It is important to note that the unconscious precedes comprehension and precedes language as well. Ricoeur proposes an unconscious which arbitrates between elements of force and meaning and organizes things in a manner suitable to intentional description.

This does not mean that Ricoeur abandons the idea that the unconscious is a source of concealment and uncertainty. This haven of concealment and uncertainty comes under the scrutiny of psychoanalytic inquiry. The source of intentional polarities comes under the scrutiny of phenomenological inquiry. It is here, in the realm of the unconscious, that psychoanalysis and phenomenology meet. It is here that the language of hermeneutics and energetics is conceived. It is

here that the language of the subject begins to emerge. Ricoeur says, "into this fissure, into this noncoincidence between the certitude of the I am and the possibility of self-deception, a certain problematic of the unconscious can be introduced."⁸⁹

Ricoeur comments that "the most difficult notion in this new problematic of the unconscious is the idea of an energy that is transformed into meaning."⁹⁰

It cannot be denied that the perceptual model of the unconscious, in phenomenology, points toward the analytic unconscious, so far as the latter is not a receptacle of contents but a center of intentions, or orientations-toward, of meaning.⁹¹

The transformation into meaning entails transcending a barrier between the center of orientations-toward-meaning and the moment of consciousness. The barrier does not stand inbetween consciousness and the preconscious nor does it stand between consciousness and self-deception. The preconscious of phenomenology, and the self-deception of psychoanalysis, are lumped together in the center of orientations-toward-meaning. Traditionally, it has been assumed that the unconscious presupposed both consciousness and the preconscious. What Ricoeur has done is to include the unconscious in the realm of philosophical precomprehension. As a consequence of this, both the unconscious and the preconscious of phenomenology find themselves on an equal footing. They exist as a running dialogue with one another and both presuppose consciousness. This makes the topographic point

of view a reality. Let us not forget that the topographic point of view is a "system" which represents the meeting between the subject and lived experience. This "system" is not only a descriptive model, it is the running dialogue which outlines the archaeology of the subject.

Ricoeur says, "the correlation between hermeneutics and energetics reappears in a decisive manner on the level of praxis, as a correlation between the art of interpretation and the work against the resistances."⁹² He furthermore adds, "the unconscious is inaccessible unless an appropriate technique is used."⁹³ Phenomenology alone does not suffice as the appropriate technique. There is no direct apprehension of existence, it needs to be interpreted. The work of interpretation implies that hermeneutics has merit as a method which outlines being.

Phenomenology allows us to understand the relations of meaning which arise from the intentionality of instinctual being, but the dislocation between concepts and affective states implies phenomenology is not broad enough to recognize and acknowledge the medium of hermeneutics and energetics combined. The representational concepts which are the Freudian id, ego, and superego are set in a structural format. The topographic point of view is an auxiliary format to the structural format because the latter represents the thematized meanings. Topography then becomes the essential medium, and this interpretation of the workings of the

psychic apparatus gives an added importance to psychoanalysis at the expense of phenomenology. The phenomenological point of view must give way to the topographic point of view.

The topographic point of view is a representation of the instinctual drives. Ricoeur introduces us to the economic point of view as well. The latter conveys the conflict of psychic energy.

The topographic point of view is thus compared to the reflex-arc model: the psychic apparatus responds by way of distinct parts. The economic point of view, in turn, is an aspect of the entropy model: from tension to tension-reduction.⁹⁴

The archaeology of the subject, as teleology, presents itself to us as an unconventional discourse which represents the interplay of force and instincts. It is the nature of language which poses a particular difficulty to us. We have learned there exists a frontier language, beneath formal thought, where we first encounter ourselves in the realm of instinctual being. The intentionality of instinctual being can be mediated by hermeneutic systems which express themselves in a symbolic framework. The symbolic framework expresses the conflict between modes of primal being. An emphasis is now placed on the matter of how reflective philosophy and psychoanalytic theory can find compatibility within the work of the symbolic function, and how symbolic language can serve as the basic structure of understanding. The next reading selection I wish to discuss further ex-

plores this emphasis.

7. THE MODE OF DISCOURSE

We have learned that consciousness is an undertaking. Its destined task is to arrive at meaning. Consciousness is initially posited in the philosophical precomprehension of the unconscious. In this enigmatic region there is no centrality of meaning to guide matters. Meaning is a synthesis which unites energetic concepts with linguistic variables. The most contentious point of this scenario is that meaning is found within the act of interpretation. Language serves to outline being and symbols emerge at the cutting edge where language is conceived out of philosophical precomprehension. As a consequence of this, reflective awareness does not start with the cogito, but with the problem of symbols. We are now obliged to consider how language serves as the "structuring" and "arranging" of consciousness. Ricoeur's essay "Existence and Hermeneutics" helps us in this endeavour.

Ricoeur commences "Existence and Hermeneutics" by proposing a new option to reflective inquiry by the graft of the hermeneutic problem onto the phenomenological method. He proceeds to define a process in five stages which I wish to review. The five stages are (i) the origin of hermeneutics, (ii) the grafting of hermeneutics onto phenomenology, (iii) the level of semantics, (iv) the level of reflection, and

(v) the existential level.

(i) The Origin of Hermeneutics - Ricoeur states that "the hermeneutic problem was first raised within the limits of exegesis, that is, within the framework of a discipline which proposes to understand a text."⁹⁵ We may ask ourselves what relevance this may have to philosophy in general, and Ricoeur answers that "exegesis implies an entire theory of signs and signification."⁹⁶

To understand a text is to come to terms with the intention of its content. Ricoeur points out that "every reading of a text always takes place within a community, a tradition, or a living current of thought."⁹⁷ For instance, "the reading of the Greek myths in the Stoic school implies a hermeneutics very different from the rabbinical interpretation of the Torah in the Halakah or the Haggadah."⁹⁸ The text is not to be taken as though it exists in a vacuum. It need be interpreted through its historical and cultural setting. The text is an organized body of meaning and it provides a working problematic upon which the hermeneutic problem basis itself.

Ricoeur believes a "text" is more than a record of written words. The immediacy of lived experience is not directly knowable. It is prescribed in a text. The text posits a situation the subject is required to interpret. In this manner, the text draws upon a wider realm of understanding. The problem of understanding requires we examine

how meaning is given and how language mediates.

(ii) The Grafting of Hermeneutics onto Phenomenology - Ricoeur believes it is necessary to unite hermeneutics and phenomenology in order to conceive of a theory of signification. Ricoeur maintains that, in the first place, hermeneutics is a philosophical problem. He says, "hermeneutics involves the general problem of comprehension."⁹⁹ He remarks, "it is with Schleiermacher and Dilthey that the hermeneutic problem becomes a philosophical problem."¹⁰⁰ Hermeneutics brings into play the work of interpretation. When we interpret we explain to ourselves a given mode of existence. With this in hand, Ricoeur contends that phenomenology is essential because phenomenology is a method of philosophical inquiry which discerns meaning.

This leaves us to consider how the grafting of hermeneutics onto phenomenology is to be done. Ricoeur says, "to assign a method to understanding is to remain entangled in the presuppositions of objective knowledge. One must step outside the enchanted circle of the problematic of the subject and object and question oneself about being."¹⁰¹ The methodology which underlies a mode of understanding cannot be restricted to the confines of structural phenomenology. Ricoeur boldly proclaims, "understanding is thus no longer a mode of knowledge but a mode of being."¹⁰² He then proceeds to outline two methods by which to understand the grafting.

First there is what Ricoeur calls the short route. This is Heidegger's method which commences at the level of ontology. Heidegger interpreted the "understanding" to be a manner of being rather than an expression of knowledge. Ricoeur has certain reservations, however, about the manner in which Heidegger equates his theory of being to ontological understanding. He says, "the analytic of Dasein is precisely the understanding through which and in which this being understands itself as being."¹⁰³ Heidegger equated the situation at hand to a mode of being and a mode of understanding which preceded language. According to Ricoeur, "Heidegger had not wanted to consider any particular problem concerning the understanding of this or that being."¹⁰⁴

Ricoeur goes on to say

he wanted us to subordinate historical knowledge to ontological understanding, as the derived form of the primordial understanding. Is it not better, then, to begin with the derived forms of understanding and to show in them the signs of their derivation? This implies that the point of departure be taken on the same level on which understanding operates, that is, on the level of language.¹⁰⁵

In Ricoeur's philosophical strategy, being can only understand itself via the use of language. Ricoeur says, "it is first of all and always in language that all ontic and ontological understanding arrives at expression."¹⁰⁶

The second method, which Ricoeur favours, replaces the analytic of Dasein with linguistic and semantic considerations. This is not to say, however, that Ricoeur is

hereby expressing support for a purely linguistic philosophy. He contends that the semantic moment must necessarily be linked to self-understanding. Here, once again, Ricoeur shows some affinity for Hegel's philosophical strategy. He advocates the belief that the subject is required to go outside and discover a fundamental identification between what he finds externally and that which resides inside him. Ricoeur wants his philosophy to pass inbetween two established schools of thought and avoid "sinking into either a linguistic philosophy like Wittgenstein's or a reflective philosophy of the neo-Kantian sort."¹⁰⁷ The semantic aspect of things must therefore incorporate a reflective dimension. Ricoeur thus proposes a philosophy of successive interchange between semantics and reflection, and he describes these two phases in stages (iii) and (iv) which follow.

(iii) The Level of Semantics - The transference of meaning, from philosophical precomprehension to reflective consciousness, is of central concern to Ricoeur's philosophical thought. Semantics enable transference to take place. Ricoeur thus supports the theory that language is constitutive of being even if he doesn't believe language completely houses being. Let us look at these two points separately.

Ricoeur says, "it is first of all in language that all ontic or ontological understanding arrives at expression."¹⁰⁸ That means the epistemic basis, which supports a theory of knowledge, is not lodged within a strict sub-

jectivity. Ricoeur is saying it is speech, not transcending thought, which enables the transfer of meaning. Language also creates itself as a mode of being which outlives subjectivity. Ricoeur believes, however, that language does no more than mediate. The distinction between philosophical precomprehension and being enables language to distinguish itself from its original realm of existence. This allows for the recognition of a nexus of prelinguistic experience. Ricoeur says, "language itself, as a signifying milieu, must be referred to existence."¹⁰⁹ He goes on to remark, "a linguistic analysis which would treat signification as a whole closed in on itself would ineluctably set up language as an absolute."¹¹⁰

In "The Question of the Subject: The Challenge of Semiology," we saw Ricoeur set up arguments to show that no system state serves as an absolute. Meaning arises from a transfer between system states, and speech is that which enables the transfer to take place. Language brings the work of interpretation into play due to the referral to another system state. In this manner, language is indirect. It is an intention which expresses something beyond the formal content of what is said. This transfer between system state brings us to Ricoeur's theory of symbols.

Ricoeur considers "symbols" to be entities of meaning having a dualistic content.

I define 'symbol' as 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.¹¹¹

In other words, symbols not only represent meaning, they also generate meaning. Interpretation is the vital medium that allows for the transfer of meaning to take place across strategic levels. The interpretation of the symbol's referential meaning amounts to a transition. This transition is the creative mover which, when objectified, constitutes original meaning. "Interpretation, we will say, is the work of thought which consists in deciphering the hidden meaning in an apparent meaning, in unfolding the levels of meaning implied in literal meaning."¹¹² "Symbol" and "interpretation" thus become reciprocally dependent concepts.

Ricoeur does not believe the symbol to be a representative token which corresponds to a body of meaning. The symbol is conceived in language and produces "meaning" by pointing to fixtures across levels of metalanguage. Ricoeur maintains that the symbol's formal meaning implies a second intended meaning. In other words, signification arises from the confrontation between tradition and intentionality. The interpretative act revises past tradition and reinstates it anew.

Just as apprehension is an act of the productive imagination, and not a return to a fixed idea, the sign itself generates a meaning. It is not merely an unchanging token. Its function is that of a means of exchange between

the formal structure of meaning and the act of interpretation. The interaction of signs constitutes an economy of meaning unto itself, and meaning is in the intention which traverses the constituting parts.

The completed work of the symbol presents itself to us as a linguistic ideality and the completed scenario is one whereby tradition does not survive in complete autonomy. In this manner, its past gives way to the revised present. In order for a given tradition to survive, it must be expressed over and over again.

(iv) The Level of Reflection - Ricoeur says, "by joining these multivocal meanings to self-knowledge we profoundly transform the problematic of the cogito."¹¹³

We have a dismissal of the classic problematic of the subject as consciousness. The phenomenology of language suggests that 'the self' (le moi) must be lost in order to find the 'I' (le je).¹¹⁴

The subject designates himself through the use of language but this does not mean that semantics completely dominate consciousness. Ricoeur has repeatedly stated there is a world outside language. By the same token, consciousness is posited in existence and mediated by language. Ricoeur declares reflection to be an intermediary between semantics and existence. Seeing as reflection reveals a synthesis, the synthesis provides the common ground where these two variables can meet.

In Chapter Two of Fallible Man we learned that thought cannot grasp itself and consciousness must be captured in

its own objects. The object of consciousness is partially posited in the phenomenology of language, as an ontological reality. Ricoeur thus declares the matter of objectification to be conducted in an exchange between existentiality and being. The subject is posited in brute existence but he apprehends himself as an objectified representation. In a roundabout manner this implies that the speaking subject ultimately refers to himself. This self-acknowledgement makes discourse possible. This furthermore implies a vital link between the problematic of self-consciousness and the problematic of representation. These two problematics create a new notion of existence which leads us to the existential level.

(v) The Existential Level - Ricoeur says, "the problematic of reflection can and must surpass itself in a problematic of existence."¹¹⁵ In outlining a problematic of existence, Ricoeur establishes an association between the phenomenology of language and the instinctual impulses of life.

The instinctual impulses of life are discernible through the philosophical interpretation of psychoanalysis. Ricoeur says, "psychoanalysis is, if not a philosophical discipline, at least a discipline for the philosopher."¹¹⁶ Once we realize how psychoanalysis uncovers the dispossession of consciousness, we begin to understand that the subject gains an identity as he is implicated in the work-

ings of language. The philosophical interpretation of psychoanalysis is meaningless without recourse to hermeneutics.

What are we to conclude from this? What does it say about human ontology? Ricoeur states the following, "the ontology proposed here is in no way separable from interpretation; it is caught inside the circle formed by the conjunction of the work of interpretation and the interpreted being."¹¹⁷

It is behind itself that the cogito discovers, through a work of interpretation, something like an archaeology of the subject. Existence is glimpsed in this archaeology, but it remains entangled in the movement of deciphering to which it gives rise.¹¹⁸

In other words, meaning is conceived within the act of interpretation and interpretation becomes thematized as symbols. Symbols precede the hermeneutic effort and, as such, symbols represent the epistemic basis of reflective inquiry. Let us take a moment to reflect upon these two points.

All expressions of cultural being (such as myths, folklore, legends, etc.) are conceptualized and conveyed through symbols. The life experience therefore originates in cultural being, and is compressed into representative symbols. Due to this state of affairs, reflection does not emanate from a point previous to the symbol, but from within the interpretation of symbols. Ricoeur says, "it is the task of this hermeneutics to show that existence arrives at

expression, at meaning, and at reflection only through the continual exegesis of all the significations that come to light in the world of culture."¹⁹ Experience is meaningful only within a social framework that has taken shape in the form of cultural tradition. Cultural tradition amounts to a body of conventions which are essential to an understanding and interpretation of life. The subject is a non-localized and dispossessed "person" who can orient himself only by reference to particular cultural symbols.

CONCLUSION

The central issues of this thesis have been the positing of the self and the nature of reflection. I have sought to show that the immediacy of consciousness is not the essence of the ego, nor is it the essence of the person. I now wish to consider two problems pertaining to this notion of dispossession. In the first place, can we seriously believe that the immediacy of consciousness can be founded upon a network of symbols? Does such a network form a sound epistemic foundation? There is also the problem of Ricoeur's apparent disregard for a strict philosophical method. I wish to discuss these issues.

Is consciousness not dependent on a mysterious inspiration which stands outside hermeneutic theory? In his essay, "The Adventure of Interpretation: The Reflective Wager and the Hazards of the Self," (found in Studies in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, edited by Charles Reagan) Richard Zaner challenges Ricoeur's repudiation of the eidetics of consciousness. Zaner says, "for every objectivity (every thematized or thematizable state of affairs), there is an originating mode of evidence pertaining to it."¹²⁰ He goes on to say that "hermeneutics stands in need of being radically justified, and only a 'transcendental logic' can

accomplish this crucial task."¹²¹ Zaner maintains that hermeneutics cannot be regarded as a foundation for an epistemology of the eidetics of consciousness. Only the phenomenological principle of evidence can serve in that capacity. He takes particular aim at Ricoeur's doctrine of symbols and says, "the claim that 'symbols give rise to thought' is itself a judgement which inherently appeals to some mode of evidence."¹²²

Ricoeur himself wrote the introduction to this collection of essays and appropriately titled it "Response to my Friends and Critics." In replying to Zaner's charges Ricoeur argues that there is no such thing as a self-sufficient evidence, nor is there absolute knowledge. Ricoeur states, "there cannot be anything other than a relation of endless approximations. Moreover, this relation of approximations is itself never known by absolute science."¹²³ This means that reflective expression serves as a mode of evidence and "interpretation" itself becomes a form of objective expression.

Ricoeur also addresses himself to Zaner's insistence that the understanding of the self is necessarily based on the self-evidence of the cogito. Ricoeur responds to this by disputing the alleged "self evidence" of the cogito. He says "hermeneutics does not deny the self-evidence of the cogito. It affirms only the purely formal character of this evidence." ¹²⁴ Clearly, Ricoeur is challenging the notion of

apodicticity by questioning how meaning is laid down. Serious reflection indicates the immediacy of consciousness is not self-given, but preceded by certain conditions. The point is that the immediacy of consciousness is a final moment in a synthesis of meaning. Consciousness itself is no more than an intermediary, and as such, it cannot be a basis for evidence. Ricoeur thus goes on to argue that a transcendental analysis is not the only means of discovering a principle of evidence.

Ricoeur believes that transcendental logic is not as dominant and wide-ranging as Zaner would think. He says, "transcendental reflection cannot extend beyond essential truths such as: consciousness is intentional, perception is presumptive, the understanding of the self is a process of interpretation."¹²⁵ The life experience itself is grounded on interpretation and Ricoeur says, "hermeneutics is without absolute knowledge, it is always in the arena of the conflict of interpretations."¹²⁶

This "conflict of interpretations" takes place in philosophical precomprehension and thus precedes the synthesis of meaning. Reflection is a participation in the interaction between symbols, and the transcendence of consciousness arises out of a theory of interpretation which makes reference to the social sciences. In The Symbolism of Evil, Ricoeur remarks, "life is a symbol, an image, before being experienced and lived."¹²⁷ Consciousness discovers

"meaning" within the resources at hand. It cannot express itself beyond the given symbolic concepts at its disposal. In this sense it cannot be equated to a completely creative, and mystical transcendence.

This leaves us to consider where Ricoeur stands in regards to the question of method. Ricoeur commences his philosophical discussions within the realm of structural phenomenology but he suggests to his readers that analytic philosophy alone is not sufficient for his purposes. He therefore ventures outward. Not only does he revise certain Husserlian and Hegelian ideas, he goes on to draw from various topics common to the social sciences. In this manner, Ricoeur appears to disregard certain attitudes to the effect that one must maintain a strict integrity when applying a philosophical method.

Can Ricoeur be allowed to simply pick and choose and take what is viable from different theories and disregard the rest? Ricoeur believes the question of method is linked to the question of source. All philosophical inquiry is bound to man's existential state of being. The positing of man in philosophical precomprehension precedes the question of method. In Freedom and Nature we find the following relevant remarks,

Let us sum up in a few words the problems entailed by a reflection on the voluntary and the involuntary. The axis of the method is a description of the intentional, practical, and affective structures of the Cogito in a Husserlian manner. But on the other hand understanding of the structures of

the subject constantly refers to empirical and scientific knowledge which serves as a symptom of such intentional structures, while on the other hand fundamental articulations of these structures reveal the unity of man only by reference to a central mystery of incarnate existence. ¹²⁸

The "central mystery" that Ricoeur makes reference to is lodged in preconscious and preconceptualized existence. Seeing as Ricoeur is exploring matters at the heuristic level, he is delving below formal ontology, and the question of method is essentially a question of priority. In Fallible Man Ricoeur says the following, "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." ¹²⁹

This line of reasoning brings us full circle to the central topic of Fallible Man. Ricoeur makes the ontological disproportion, and not the cogito, the focal point of reference to the appropriation of the conscious self. In this thesis I have taken recourse to Ricoeur's ideas to attack the attitude that "consciousness," "ego," and "person," were synonymous terms all originating from the immediacy of consciousness. The only epistemic base Ricoeur acknowledges is the soul. Ricoeur says, "the soul is the very movement from the sensible toward the intelligible the rising toward being."¹³⁰

There is a symmetry between Ricoeur's argument that

interpretation is a mode of evidence, and Ricoeur's notion that man is an intermediary being who cannot be pinned down to a fixed location. He is somewhere between "being" and "nonbeing." The intangible and formless act of interpretation serves as a basis for evidence. In a similar manner, the intangible and formless state of intermediary being serves as a basis for the positing of the person. Interpretation takes place within the conflict of interpretations and the positing of the person coincides with the interplay of existential affirmation (which serves as a source of validity) and existential negation (which represents not-being).

According to Ricoeur, "existence" is subjected to a certain affirmation, which verifies being, and a certain "existential negation" which signifies a lack of being. Here again, Ricoeur reworks Kantian theory and says, "in passing from an axiomatics of physics to a philosophical anthropology, the triad of reality, negation and limitation may be expressed in the following three terms: originating affirmation, existential difference, human mediation."¹³¹ Ricoeur goes on to say, "the originating affirmation becomes man only by going through the existential negation that we called perspective, character and vital feeling."¹³² The problematic of "being" and "nonbeing" is subject to the schematizing functions of "perspective," "character," and "vital feeling." These functions rely on the power of

discourse as a means of designation. The dependence on discourse binds the expression of the "self" to the positing of symbolic language.

There is no intuition of the self, no irreducible essence, the soul is within symbols, and man is between being and nothingness. Self-knowledge cannot be reduced to an eidteics of consciousness. The "person" cannot be grasped from within. The "what I am," which we associate with self-consciousness, is a secondary act of reflection upon the ontological locus. The ontological locus necessitates recourse to a source of meaning. The source of meaning is forged within a field horizon of cultural objects. Cultural objects are condensed into symbolic meaning. Symbols convey a culturally-based language, and as such, they represent the dawn of reflection. We may therefore say that the constitution of the self is not purely inward inasmuch as we rely on symbolic meaning.

ENDNOTES

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41. Ibid., p. 180.
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62. Paul Ricoeur, "Consciousness and the Unconscious," in The Conflict of Interpretations, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974) p. 101.
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75. Paul Ricoeur. Freud and Philosophy. Translated by Denis Savage. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978. p. 342.
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83. Ibid., p. 366-367.
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120. Richard Zaner, "The Adventure of Interpretation: The Reflective Wager and the Hazards of the Self," in Studies in the Philosophy of Paul Ricoeur, ed. Charles E. Reagan (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979), p. 42.
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