PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY:

AN INTERPRETIVE ANALYSIS OF

PAUL RICOEUR'S

PHILOSOPHY OF WILL

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by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction................................................3

2. Self-affirmation and Decision..................................12
   2.1. Self-affirmation and Intentionality..........................12
   2.2. Decision....................................................18
       2.2.1. The Voluntary Act of Decision............................18
       2.2.2. The Involuntary Basis for Decision........................24
       2.2.3. Imagination................................................26
   2.3. Structure Set in Motion......................................33
       2.3.1. The Source of Indetermination............................36
       2.3.2. Open Totality.............................................40

3. Action, Consent, and the Self Divided..........................44
   3.1. Action.....................................................44
       3.1.1. Wonder..................................................49
       3.1.2. Emotive Forms............................................51
       3.1.3. Desire..................................................53
   3.2. Consent.....................................................58
       3.2.1. Life....................................................59
       3.2.2. The Unconscious.........................................61
       3.2.3. Character...............................................63
   3.3. The Self Divided.............................................69
       3.3.1. The Individuality of Character............................70
       3.3.2. The Indefiniteness of the Unconscious.....................71
       3.3.3. The Givenness of Life and Freedom’s Refusal.............72

4. Transcendental Reduction and Human Fallibility...............77
   4.1. Theoretic Reflection........................................78
4.1.1. Reception........................................78
4.1.2. Meaning........................................80
4.1.3. The Principle of Unity...........................83
4.2. Practical Reflection................................87
  4.2.1. The Finite Limitation of Character..............88
  4.2.2. The Infinite Aim of Humanity....................90
  4.2.3. The Idea of the Self............................92
4.3. Affectivity........................................99
  4.3.1. The Horizontal Structure of the Gemüt............100
  4.3.2. The Vertical Structure of the Gemüt............102
5. Fallibility and Evil: Riddle and Mystery.............109
  5.1. Self-affirmation and the Fault....................109
  5.2. Philosophical Anthropology and Evil..............117
  5.3. Evil: The Puzzling Riddle.........................122
6. Bibliography.........................................133
1. INTRODUCTION.

With the publication of The Symbolism of Evil, Paul Ricoeur’s stature as a philosopher increased considerably. Today one can hardly find a new theological or philosophical publication without some reference to at least one of Ricoeur’s hundreds of articles, essays and treatises. Without a doubt Ricoeur has become an important figure in the ongoing philosophic enterprise, leading the way in a number of key areas, such as philosophy of religion, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy of language.

This thesis, however, will focus on those works published prior to The Symbolism of Evil, specifically Freedom and Nature and Fallible Man (1), where Ricoeur develops a philosophical picture of the meaning of human existence. These early publications have received little attention in comparison to his later works dealing with hermeneutics. In fact one just has to look through the various indexes listing philosophical and theological articles to realize that on the whole most scholars have

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neglected these works. (2) Yet, for a full and complete understanding of Ricoeur's entire corpus, including his hermeneutics, they are foundational.

In this thesis, the foundational role which Freedom and Nature and Fallible Man assume, will be examined in greater detail. Unfortunately, an investigation of the relationship between Ricoeur's anthropology and all his other works and themes would be far too extensive for this thesis. However, if limited to one particular dimension of Ricoeur's thought, the foundational character of his anthropology can be seen clearly. Therefore, this thesis will describe and explore the basic tenets of Ricoeur's philosophic anthropology. And then, once the fundamental components of his anthropology have been brought to light, we will examine how this anthropology provides the theoretical foundation for one specific theme that Ricoeur deals

In *The Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur gives us a phenomenological analysis of the ways in which evil has been symbolized in Babylonian, Greek and the Judeo-Christian mythologies. The most basic or "primary" forms of symbolic representation, which Ricoeur finds to be present in all three forms of religion, are the symbols of defilement, sin, and guilt. Such symbols, Ricoeur claims, capture the absurd and abnormal affect that evil has on human existence. They show how evil is a deviation from, but not a radical alteration of the essentially good and innocent structure of humanity. Ricoeur explains:

we shall understand that evil is not symmetrical with the good, wickedness is not something that replaces the goodness of man; it is the staining, the darkening, the disfiguring of an innocence, a light and a beauty that remain. However radical evil may be, it cannot be as primordial as goodness. (3)

This description of evil as a "darkening" and "staining" presupposes some concept of what is stained and darkened. Behind the confession of sin lies a model of what goodness and innocence mean. Hence, Ricoeur’s description of evil is founded on an anthropological paradigm that sets the boundaries within which evil is to be understood. For Ricoeur the meaning of human existence thus becomes the hermeneutical key for understanding evil’s disfiguring power.

The connection between Ricoeur’s anthropology and his

understanding of evil is expressed most clearly in *Fallible Man*. Here evil is completely understood in light of a developmental anthropological model that characterizes the essential quality of being human as a mediation between extremes. Contrasted with the unity brought about by this mediation, evil is understood as failed unity: missing "the synthesis of the object, the synthesis of humanity in itself, and...[the] synthesis of finitude and infinitude." (4) Evil results from the fragile interplay of freedom and nature and can only be described in terms of that fragility.

For Ricoeur the power to perform an evil act is in fundamental continuity with the power of human existence. He states that "man can be evil only in a accordance with the lines of force and weakness of his functions and his destination." (5) But these lines of continuity are juxtaposed with Ricoeur's assertion that evil is not necessitated by existence. Evil results from an absurd and free choice, not from an unavoidable consequence of our being. Hence, on the one hand Ricoeur wants to establish the lines of continuity between the essential goodness of humanity and evil acts which stain and break apart the unity of existence. And on the other hand, he insists that ethical fault, the free and uncoerced choice to commit evil, stands in radical discontinuity with the essential ontological


character of human existence.

This, by Ricoeur's own admission, is a mystery. Between the evil act, made possible by the fragile mediation of existence, and the reality of evil "there is a gap, a leap: it is the whole riddle of the fault." (6) This calls into question, however, the possibility of showing such lines of continuity and discontinuity on the basis of the same anthropological model. Therefore, in this thesis, we propose to give a descriptive account of Ricoeur's anthropology. We will also investigate whether or not Ricoeur gives evil a place in the structure of human existence. We will conclude that Ricoeur, by drawing the lines of continuity between his understanding of the essential meaning of human existence and the reality of sin and evil, puts the distinction between primordial goodness and evil in jeopardy. Although his intent is to distinguish guilt and finitude, (7) the structure of his anthropological model is such that finite human nature produces the very same forms of failed unity that characterize evil deeds. Hence, can Ricoeur justify his distinction between the dynamic power of self-transcendence and the reality of evil? And furthermore, is Ricoeur able to honour his conviction of the primordial character of goodness?


In order for the connection between Ricoeur’s anthropology and his concept of evil to be understood with greater clarity, we must first carefully examine the various components of his anthropological model. This procedure is necessitated by the fact that 1) Ricoeur uses the unity of existence as a means to understand disunity, or to state it otherwise, he uses the good and innocent structure of humanity as the yardstick that measures guilt and evil; and 2) Ricoeur himself first develops his anthropological model and then moves on to the problem of evil. Therefore without some description of what Ricoeur means by the essential structure of humanity, his understanding of the character of evil would remain unintelligible.

To uncover the essential goodness and innocence of human existence is by no means an easy task. Our experience is clouded by a dark veil of brokenness that hides the normative structures of being. Therefore, Ricoeur wonders if there is a method or manner of investigation that could uncover the essential qualities of life, or whether humanity fallen so deeply in a mist of ambiguity as to render the vision of innocence forever obscured from our minds? For Ricoeur this problem is overcome by the simple but profound fact that life is experienced as disfigured. Because we can confess that we are a “broken
unity," (8) this implies a vision of normality by which disunity is measured. Although it is out of opaque darkness that such an image of unity and innocence is grasped, it is not impossible to understand and describe what that vision of normal human existence might be. Ricoeur states that "it is always 'through' the fallen that the primordial shines through." (9) He elaborates this elsewhere by explaining that we have access to the primordial only through what is fallen. In return, if the fallen denotes nothing about that from which it has fallen, no philosophy of the primordial is possible, and we cannot even say that man is fallen. For the very idea of downfall involves reference to the loss of a certain innocence that we understand sufficiently to name it and to designate the present condition as a lapse, a loss or a fall." (10)

The essential unity of existence is, for Ricoeur, accessible and understandable, but the question remains, "By what means or method?"

Ricoeur finds transcendental reflection to be best suited for this task, for it is "on the primordial level at the very outset. It does not have to reach it through a depraved condition." Transcendental reflection is thus not subject to the conditions of ambiguity, it reaches outside of the broken unity, outside of the dualism of good and evil and grasps the essential nature of being human. "It is neutral with respect to the

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(9) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p.221.

(10) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p.116-117.
problematic of radical evil," (11) and can therefore catch sight of the true unity of existence.

By use of the term transcendental reflection, Ricoeur has the phenomenological methods of Kant, and Husserl in mind. Central to these methods is "the 'autonomous' study of the manner in which things appear, while suspending temporarily or permanently the question of their being." (12) Transcendental reflection suspends the existential reality of the human condition in order to uncover its essential structures. Ricoeur utilizes a Husserlian method of analysis for the initial phenomenological reduction which uncovers the meanings or essences of existence, and then turns to Kant to give those meanings ontological limits. Ricoeur, in his essay *Kant and Husserl*, puts it this way:

> The merit of phenomenology is to have elevated the investigation of the appearing to the dignity of a science by the "reduction." But the merit of Kantianism is to have been able to coordinate the investigation of the appearing with the limiting function of the in-itself and with the practical determination of the in-itself as freedom and as the totality of persons. Husserl *did* phenomenology, but Kant *limited* and *founded* it. (13)

Thus Ricoeur first spells out the essential structures of

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(11) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p.120.
(12) Spiegelberg, 572.
existence via a Husserlian phenomenological method, (14) which constitutes the substance of *Freedom and Nature*, and then, in *Fallible Man*, gives those structures ontological limits through a Kantian transcendental critique. Now the way has been cleared for us to begin our investigation of Ricoeur's anthropology.

(14) Paul Ricoeur, "Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the Will," in *Husserli*, p. 213.
2. SELF AFFIRMATION AND DECISION.

2.1. Self Affirmation and Intentionality.

The first phase of Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology could be briefly summarized as one that focuses on consciousness, particularly its volitional dimension. Each person is comprised of a variety of levels or modalities which together form the self or Cogito, the total self that I am conscious of. Every mode has its own unique "intentional" structure, but all are directed by the will or voluntary mode of consciousness, in a process Ricoeur calls self-affirmation, the self's most essential task.

Ricoeur's primary method of analysis is phenomenological, in the tradition of Edmund Husserl. It begins with a form of description that attempts to uncover the meanings or "essences" of human existence. By setting aside or "bracketing" ontological assumptions and focusing on the phenomena at hand (in this case the significations of willing), it is hoped that the fundamental eidos of consciousness and its individual modalities might be made intelligible. Building on Husserl's concept of intentionality, Ricoeur explains that essences are the significations of consciousness. Consciousness is always a consciousness of a particular thing. It signifies something. Consciousness consists in the correlation of subject (Noesis) and object (Noema), whereby the Cogito (ego) signifies an intentional object. These significations, which the cogito projects, are the essences of conscious existence: that which is thought is the essence of thinking, the imagined is the essence of imagining, the sensed is the essence of sensing, etc.
Intentionalities or functions of consciousness are distinguished from one another by their differing significations or objects. Each "objective" signification has its own "subjective" functional correlate, whereby the structure of consciousness can be unfolded by simply beginning to "spell out intermingled intentionalities," (15) that is, by reflecting on the objects of consciousness. Ricoeur explains:

In the early stages at least, phenomenology must be structural. More precisely, this technique of distinguishing and spelling out interwoven intentionalities must be guided by what Husserl called "noematic reflection." He meant by this, to be sure, a reflecting on subjective life but also a reflection of the "side" of the subjective process which is not the intending itself but rather its correlate, a reflection on the object of the various conscious intentive processes. By reflection on the willed as such, on the emotionally moving, on the imagined as such, we gain access to the distinction among acts themselves, among the intentive processes of consciousness. Willing and moving, for example, are different because their correlates have a different signification. (16)

Hence "essences," the structures of consciousness, can be elaborated by focusing on the objects or significations of consciousness.

It is important to note that these essential meanings are not to be confused with the Platonic origin of the word which denotes a transcendent reality outside of consciousness. What is "essential" about these intentional objects is

(15) Ricoeur, "Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the Will," p. 213.

the ideal contents capable of fulfilling the many and varied significationals intendings which language employs every time we say 'I wish,' 'I desire,' 'I regret,' or every time that we understand a situation or occasion of conduct as signifying willing, desiring, or regretting. (17)

They simply represent "meanings or principles of intelligibility" (18) that allow one to put the structures of consciousness into speech, that is, into the logos of the phenomena. (19)

Ricoeur applies the intentionality of consciousness to all functions of the person, whether voluntary or involuntary. Every function has both an object and a subjective correlate. For Ricoeur, however, the volitional function of consciousness is paradigmatic of the very meaning of intentionality, so much so that it has provoked J. N. Mohanty, in his book The Concept of Intentionality, to label Ricoeur's phenomenology as a "volitional interpretation of intentionality." Mohanty goes on to explain that,

For...[Ricoeur] volition is intention par excellence, for every intention is attention and every attention "reveals an 'I can' at the heart of the 'I think.'" Every act, whether specifically volitional or not, is an intentional act in so far as it expresses a power in us which we exercise, so much so that "the analysis of volition places us at the very heart of the intentional

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Mohanty's analysis is important, for it reveals the reason for Ricoeur's preoccupation with a phenomenology of the will. The volitional intention is not only paradigmatic of intentionality in general but it is also that mode of the Cogito which gives all other modalities meaning. It is that singular mode of consciousness which makes descriptive analysis of all the others possible. The will causes the person to decide, choose, and act. It commands all other modes of consciousness, and therefore is understood as the voluntary seat of control over the remaining involuntary modes of consciousness. Hence to speak of sensation or thought apart from the will, would be a description of the person apart from the lived reality of the "I" in "I think," and "I feel."

Ricoeur describes this relationship between the single voluntary modality and the involuntary many as "reciprocal," not just a one sided movement from the voluntary to the involuntary. The will gives meaning, making the involuntary intelligible, but the involuntary in return provides the will with a foundational substructure and "reasons" to will. Consequently,

the initial situation revealed by description is the reciprocity of the involuntary and the voluntary. Need, emotion, habit, etc., acquire a complete significance only in relation to a will which they solicit, dispose, and generally affect, and which in turn determines their significance, that is, determines them by its choice, moves them by its effort, and

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adopts them by its consent, the involuntary has no meaning of its own. Only the relation of the voluntary and the involuntary is intelligible. Description is understanding in terms of this relation. \((21)\)

The "initial situation" that description confronts is a fundamental 'unity' of the person, a bond expressed in the reciprocity of the voluntary and involuntary. But since it is the voluntary that gives meaning to the involuntary, phenomenological description must first begin by distinguishing "the most natural articulations of willing." \((22)\) Ricoeur explains that not only does the involuntary have no meaning of its own, but understanding proceeds from the top down, and not from the bottom up. Far from the voluntary being derivable from the involuntary, it is, on the contrary, the understanding of the voluntary which comes first in man. I understand myself in the first place as he who says "I will." The involuntary refers to the will as that which gives it its motives and capacities, its foundation and even its limits...The will is the one which brings order to the many of the involuntary. \((23)\)

Description, therefore starts with the voluntary intention, which then is followed by its involuntary counterpart.

In *Freedom and Nature*, Ricoeur divides the voluntary intention into three stages: decision, action, and consent. "To say 'I will' means first 'I decide,' secondly 'I move my body,' thirdly 'I consent.'" \((24)\) In each of these divisions Ricoeur

\begin{itemize}
  \item \((21)\) Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, p. 4-5.
  \item \((22)\) Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, p. 6.
  \item \((23)\) Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, p. 5.
  \item \((24)\) Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, p. 6.
\end{itemize}
applies the above principles of phenomenological description, beginning with the voluntary, and then moving to the involuntary functions which support the voluntary. Fundamental to each section is "the ideal of the unity of the human person." (25) The reciprocity of the voluntary and involuntary thus serves as the guiding thread through the descriptive analysis of each stage.

Phenomenological description reveals the fundamental unity of the self, but it is only the first phase in the development of Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology. Description only reveals the essential, the unity that we should be, bracketing the present reality of evil. Following the description of innocence and goodness, the brackets are removed in a subsequent stage of transcendental reflection, in which the conditions needed for evil to enter the world are brought to light.

We can now examine the first phase of Ricoeur's anthropology, looking at the meaning of decision, action, and consent, and then move to his second phase with an eye to show the lines of continuity between the unity of the essential structures of existence and the reality of evil.

2.2. DECISION.

2.2.1. The Voluntary Act of Decision.

Ricoeur begins his analysis of the voluntary mode of consciousness with the "pure description" of decision, that is, the complete abstraction of decision from the ongoing character of life. Like all intentional acts, it is understood as the correlation of subject and object. In this case the object is the "project" to be done by the subject. The project, however, is not an object held over against consciousness, the very "I" of subjectivity is present in the object of intention, for it is the subject who intends, who projects himself in that which is to be done. "I am in that which I see, imagine, desire, or will." (26)

One might say that in decision the subject projects herself "outside" of herself by means of a project, in a signification that "designates in general, a future action which depends on me and which is within my power." (27)

Decision is made up of two parts, 1) I have the freedom to decide to act, decision designates categorically, by "Fiat! So be it!" and 2) decision is also a "personal action" of self-imputation in "the action which is to be done." (28) In decision I command myself and I do. The subject is the "agent" of a


decision that opens a possible course of action for fulfilment. The subject "thrusts" himself into the field of action via the project. His decision is always future oriented. It is a form of "anticipation" that unites who I am at this very moment with who I will be as a result of an action yet to take place. Although decision's completion is always in the future, the fiat of decision does not create the future itself but confronts it.

The preposition "in" indicates that if consciousness is future ("to be") for itself and the world is future for it, this future reference is not an act in the sense in which perceiving, imagining, doubting, or willing are acts turned towards a determined object, but rather is a fundamental situation which makes possible the future dimension of the project of expectation of other acts...the future is less a thrust than a condition of thrust. (29)

Not all the courses of action or decisional projects are viable. The concrete possibilities which the future presents limit decision. The possibility that "I project and the possibilities I discover..." (30) only become realities by actions which can be and are carried out. The subject's freedom to will as she chooses is always contextualized by the involuntary character of the concrete realities that the future holds.

The twofold character of decision, fiat and self-imputation, is extremely important for Ricoeur. It represents the core meaning of the voluntary function by which "I make myself

be." (31) Decision initiates the process of existential development. Since "I am my own capacity for being" (32) the subject affirms its being through the self-extension of the willed project. Decision is a self-affirming process of moving forward. It is "a gesture of going out, of showing oneself, of bringing oneself to the fore and confronting oneself," (33) whereby the self receives a degree of completion in the fulfilment of the project. Because it is "I" who decide and whose subjectivity is intentionally present in the project, the thrust of projecting is essential to the very continuation of my being, for "...I have no means of self-affirmation other than my acts themselves." (34) I must affirm my being through the project of decision which thrusts me outside of myself. However, I am not lost in the objectivity of the project since the project contains the subjective mark of self-imputation. My very being lies in the balance of the projected self going out of itself in the form of the project, and the self from which the project arises. This does not mean, however, that "there are...two selves, one projecting and one in the project. I affirm myself as the subject precisely in the object of my willing." (35) The

intentional act of willing affirms my being in its dialectical relationship of projecting activity and projected project.

Rather than a static idea of subjectivity, Ricoeur presents us here with a dynamic picture of consciousness. The self displays a level of autonomy where it behaves "actively in relation to myself. I determine myself." (36) The project opens up a "way of being myself" in front of me, it projects a "potential myself" to be determined or made concrete in action. The subject's own potentiality to affirm itself is made available by the very act of projecting. The project is always "prior" to any ability to fulfill its intention, prior to any involuntary situation, because "what I shall be is not already given but depends on what I shall do." This is the force of the 'I determine myself.' My potentiality is made available in the act of choice, not the other way around. I choose and determine myself first, the actual ability to do so is secondary, this is the essence of my freedom: it is unconditioned. (37) Freedom does not result from one's potentiality to do something, but creates itself in doing and affirms itself to the extent to which it does—it is being which determines itself. Its potential being is not at all a gaping abyss, it is the actual task which freedom is for itself in the moment in which it constitutes itself by


(37) As the anthropological picture develops, the unconditioned nature of freedom, if it is possible to speak of an unconditioned nature, results in the sorrow of finitude, for the involuntary structures of bodily existence limit freedom's infinitude.
the decision it makes. (38)

Freedom is autonomous. Its being is not a by-product of bodily potentiality, but is the capacity for being. This is not to say that freedom is unaffected or unlimited by the possibilities which arise from the fundamental situation of human existence, for they do indeed limit freedom. What Ricoeur is arguing, is simply that the capacity for self-constitution, the continuation of my being, arises in and by the freedom of the intentional thrust of the voluntary mode of consciousness. This is the essence of the will.

This description of the voluntary act of consciousness is only one half of the full picture. The initial situation of the person reveals the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary. Ricoeur couples the voluntary thrust of self projection with involuntary reasons or motives that incline the will to decide without determining it. Motives provide the basis for decision. One doesn’t will in a vacuum but always in a context provided by involuntary motives.

However, due to the priority of the will over the involuntary modes of consciousness, motives receive there meaning only in relation to the will, "every motive is a motive of _____, a motive of a decision." (39) This specific relationship of motive to the act of willing becomes paradigmatic of the


(39) Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 68. The use of the dashed line indicates a general or empty signification, that is, the ideal contents of a intentional signification without reference to a concrete individual thing.
relationship between the will and all other involuntary modalities, or as Ricoeur writes, it becomes "the eidetic norm of all observation." Involuntary functions are related to the voluntary mode of consciousness through their ability to "incline without compelling." (40)

But what does it mean for something to be a motive? Ricoeur states: "A motive represents...values and their relations." (41) Broader and deeper than social values, and not necessarily value judgments, the values present in motives arise from a "more elementary power of valuation"—the involuntary. They arise in a historical "value-context" as a motive for a particular decision. As the will is engaged in the process of self-constitution it receives values, represented in motive forms, that give "reasons" for its decision. They combine to form a unity. Both the reception of inclining motives and the forward thrust of the self, form a "liaison...at the heart of deciding." (42) Projecting and reception are one and the same act, revealing a dialectical reciprocity between the voluntary and the involuntary modes of consciousness.

Thus we say that the essence of the voluntary act of the capacity for being involves at the same time something like a commandment—to the possible, the body, the world—and something like obedience—of

They form an original "naivete of a thrust and basis," that constitutes a decisional unity in the process of self-affirmation. But, as Ricoeur points out, they also can result in unachieved unity, in "unrecognizable fragments," such as the "arbitrary act," and "scruple," (44) if their reciprocity is broken. Evil can arise from the same power by which the self is affirmed.

2.2.2. The Involuntary Basis for Decision.

After describing the voluntary dimension of decision, Ricoeur begins to unfold its involuntary substructure. This is a turn from the descriptively transparent will to the opaque affectivity of bodily existence. The body is "the initial existent, underivable, involuntary," and as such it is always a "body-for-my-willing," (45) a personal body or the body of the Cogito’s apperception. The body enters into the reciprocal relationship of will and motive by being the most elementary source of values. It affects the will’s decisions by providing a basis of motives. More precisely, the body provides "the material of which our motives are made of." (46)

Bodily existence enters the realm of the Cogito through its affectivity, it becomes a mode of thought or a modality of consciousness through the feeling it generates: "Affectivity is

(44) Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 82-83.
still a mode of thought in the widest sense. To feel is still to think, though feeling no longer represents objectivity, but reveals existence." (47) But this type of feeling is structurally below the level of representation, revealing only an awareness of bodily presence. It is an undifferentiated pool of feeling and therefore opaque to consciousness. However, bodily affectivity is not unintelligible, for all feeling is intentional and therefore decipherable through the spelling out of its significations.

Bodily need provides the most basic source of motives by ascribing value to the objects of satisfaction. It is the "first stratum of value with which motivation begins." (48) Need is first brought to consciousness as "a vaguely oriented distress." (49) The need for something spontaneously "affects" the Cogito in two ways: 1) as a lack of ______, and 2) an impulse towards ______. Need inclines the body to move towards that which can fulfill what it lacks. It inclines the will to decide to act, to satisfy its need. The "lack" involved in bodily need is always a spontaneous result of our bodily constitution: I am hungry and therefore need food. But the impulse to satisfy is under the control of the will: "while the impetus can be mastered by the will, the lack always remains uncoercible— I can refrain

(49) Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 95-96.
from eating, but I cannot help being hungry." (50)

The reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary is reflected quite clearly here. Voluntary command controls satisfaction but is receptive of needs affect. Need enters the realm of consciousness as a motive for decision. It becomes one motive among many possible reasons for a particular decision. Needs of all sort incline, but it is the will that decides which motives will become the actual concrete reasons for a project.

For the will to act on the "vaguely oriented distress" of bodily need, the object of need's fulfilment must be raised to a level that is intelligible to will. The affective "matter" of need must be transformed from an opaque undifferentiated affect into a distinct and intelligible motive "form." On its own, need would never have the power of inclination, it would simply alert the will to a visceral disturbance, remaining in an affective state without intelligible form.

2.2.3. Imagination.

The transition from affective matter to represented form is performed by the imagination. Imagination mediates between the affect and the decision to fulfill need's lack. It is the "crossroads of need and willing," the meeting place of "the missing thing and of action aimed towards the thing." (51) Like

Aristotle and Kant, Ricoeur views imagination as that mode of consciousness which transforms the material stuff of sensations into forms appropriate for conceptualization. Imagination changes felt need into an image suitable for the will to consider as a motive for decision. The intentional lack of ____ is given form, it is no longer "blind" to the object of satisfaction. Now the object of need is presented with clarity, in the form of a perceived object, through the representational power of imagination.

The object of fulfilment, as in the case of hunger, is made concrete by an object actually perceived. The sight of bread for a hungry person gives definite form to the impulse to satisfy. The perception of bread gives imagination the image with which it can create the motive for need's pursuit. Ricoeur explains that this is true of all forms of a represented affectivity, because imagination "is the heir of the perceived." Imagination frees the percept from immediate connection with the object of need's fulfilment by representing it in an image form that can be recalled in the absence of the actual object. Perception makes concrete the initial object of fulfilment, but imagination makes it available through a "quasi-representation" without the percept's presence, and can be made available once the affect again enters consciousness or at the will's request. The imaginative image becomes the clear intentional signification of the opaque affect of bodily need.

Thus the imaginary clarifies need as to its signification, shows it its object as other than itself, the itself depicted by a kind of quasi-observation, as J-P. Sartre puts it. Even though it differs from the inexhaustible observation of a present
thing, and though it is limited by prior knowledge, the quasi-observation of the absent object is the light of need just as the actual presence of the object would be. (52)

The will receives need's lack of _____ in perceptual forms via the imagination which transforms affectivity into the appropriate motive images for will's adjudication.

Ricoeur elaborates on this idea of need's transformation by focusing more carefully on imagination. Since imagination is primarily operative in the absence of the perceived object of satisfaction, it is anticipatory. By means of imagination "we anticipate the actual-to-be, as an absent actual at the basis of the world." (53) Through the image the object of satisfaction and its accompanying pleasure can be sought after apart from the actual presence of the object. It is this function of imagination which elevates need to the realm of motive. Now the opaque feeling generated by need becomes "extended by the imagination" to a specific desire for something. Through imagination the need for food becomes the desire for bread, meat, etc.. The object of satisfaction is transformed into a thing marked with the value of "good" by the desire for that which will bring the need cycle to a close. Ricoeur sums it up as follows: "Desire is the present experience of need as lack and as urge, extended by the representation of the absent object and by anticipation of pleasure." (54) Through imagination need enters

the realm of the voluntary.

What becomes clear in the transformation of need, is the hierarchical relationship of one function to the next. The most basic function is need related to sensation, which is superseded by imagination, and in turn surpassed by the will, with the relationship between them one of form and matter. The affective matter received from need is first given form via the perception of objects, this in turn becomes matter for the imaginative image whose form "belongs to the same order of knowing," (55) that is, to the order of judging or deciding. But in this ascending order the imagination plays a pivotal role. It "mediates between need and willing" by separating form from its concrete matter, providing will with abstract motives and value forms necessary for decision.

...in its matter affective imagination clings to the living reality of the pleasure whose image it is and to the living reality of bodily existence; in its form it conceals a latent valuation, at the fringe of judgment, at the point at which prereflexive feeling is a spontaneous belief concerning the good of the body. (56)

Imagination mediates by being the foundation of all abstraction, the separation from the real.

Ricoeur uses this relationship of need to will as model for the reception of all other values. Social values, the value of life, spiritual values, pleasure, pain, etc., affect the will as motives by means of imaginative abstraction. Hence imagination


does not only mediate bodily need and choice, all motives are mediated by imagination. This is the grandeur of imagination, to mediate in the reciprocal process of decision.

It might be helpful if these structures of the decision process were diagramed in order to clarify their relationships.

**VOLUNTARY**

\[
\begin{array}{l}
\text{WILL} \quad S \leftarrow \rightarrow O \quad \text{(PROJECT)} \\
\text{\textarrow{\^} \quad \text{matter}} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{manner}} \\
\text{\textarrow{\text{} \quad \text{form}} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{IMAGINATION} \quad S \leftarrow \rightarrow O} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{voluntary} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{form} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{VALUE} \quad S \leftarrow \rightarrow O} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{voluntary} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{form} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{SENSATION} \quad S \leftarrow \rightarrow O} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{manner} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{form} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{NEED} \quad S \leftarrow \rightarrow O} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{manner} \\
\text{\textarrow{\text{} \quad \text{manner}} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{form} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{matter} \\
\text{\textarrow{\text{} \quad \text{form} \\
\text{\textarrow{} \quad \text{matter} \\
\text{\textarrow{\text{} \quad \text{matter} \\
\end{array}
\]

Here the voluntary and involuntary functions involved in the decision process are arranged in an ascending order, and separated from each other by the double line. Need and sensation compose the functional basis for imagination, which in turn forms the basis for the will. Each mode is related to one another by either form or matter. The form of need becomes part of the matter of sensation, intended objects of perception sensation's remaining matter. This in turn becomes imagination's matter, which once transformed into imaginative forms becomes the matter.
for the will's decisional projects. The vertical arrow projecting upwards indicates the receptivity of involuntary motives and values by the will; whereas the horizontal arrows indicate the intentional subjective and objective correlation of each mode of decisional consciousness. The inward direction from object to subject of the horizontal arrows represents the receptivity of the involuntary modes of decision. Although, for Ricoeur, all intentional modes of consciousness are both active and passive by virtue of the attentive focus of the will, (that is, they are dual directional), the single direction of involuntary modes simply indicates their constant involuntary presentation of motives for decisions. The dual direction of the arrow beside the will, however, symbolizes not only the incoming reception of values and reason for a particular project, but the active projection of the self outside itself in self-affirmation.

The imagination, in this diagram, is clearly in a position of mediation between the lower involuntary modes and the will. Although this is imagination's grandeur, Ricoeur points out that it is also a great weakness. Imagination reveals the possibility of a "fault" in the structure of decision. It makes the abnormal "fascination with the image" and the "magic power of absence" an alternative possibility to the normative power of "showing the object whose appeal is nothing but the echo of our needs echoed
by the world." (57) Imagination's greatest gift can become the source of mankind's ruin. Instead of imagination aiding in the acquisition of ends, imagination opens the door to the destructive attention to means—pleasure in and of itself.

Ricoeur explains this as follows:

The power of imagination to fascinate, to dupe, and to deceive... has to be understood by starting from this function of affective anticipation and of latent valuation. The very imagination which seals the compact of our freedom and our body is also the instrument of our bondage and the occasion for corruption. To the guilty consciousness imagination does not simply show thing and value, but fascinates it by their very absence or rather by the image of absence which thereafter functions as the snare of a false presence. There must be a lie already ingrained at the heart of consciousness. Here we stand at the source of a psychology of temptation: imagination tempts and seduces by the absence it represents and depicts. Through it need in turn not only demands, but also tempts and seduces. Starting with this seduction, imaginary pleasure can be uprooted from need and pursued for itself, endlessly refined in quantity, duration, intensity. (58)

Imagination contains within it a seed for downfall. It is a fragile dialectic of concrete matter and abstract form, which can lead the will to evil fascination with pleasurable means rather than the ends appropriate to the satisfaction of bodily need. If such is to be the fate of humankind "we are faced with a true defeat of the will...," (59) the loss of humanity.

However, such disruption of the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary is not part of the essential structure of

existence. Unity of voluntary thrust and involuntary basis constitutes the original harmony of the person. Actual downfall, the choice to act contrary to the normal pattern of our humanity, lies outside the scope of essential structures of human existence.

2.3. Structure Set in Motion.

Up to this point Ricoeur's description of the act of willing has only covered the structures of decision, a description of an instantaneous moment of willing in the history of choice. The "medium" of unity has been excluded and decision appears flat, one dimensional, without timed process. What Ricoeur has excluded is a description of the dynamic developmental process of self-affirmation in which unity becomes actual.

Ricoeur explains that "the medium of human unity is duration, living motivation, the history of the union of soul and body. This union is a drama, that is, an internal action which takes time." And this drama is always played out against the backdrop of the reciprocity of the voluntary and involuntary: "existence moves forward only by the double movement of corporeal spontaneity and voluntary control. Process has two aspects: it is undergone and carried out." (60) Ricoeur presses the point further by insisting that the living reality of choice, is only intelligible on the basis of the forgoing static picture of the structure of decision.

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Process can only be elucidated in light of a non-temporal structure established by pure description. To be sure, in its existence the surging process remains absolutely underivable by ideas: but a minimal intelligibility of the temporal condition of freedom comes from non-temporal essences at the vanishing point of pure description. Thus the process I am transcends the pure relations of decision to project, to myself, and to motives without transgressing upon them. It is a formed decision which makes the formless from which choice proceeds and even the progress of its formation intelligible. (61)

Thus the "vertical" structure of decision interprets the "horizontal" thrust of the actual process of choosing specific motives to form a specific project that defines the self anew.

Choice makes self-affirmation concrete, it is the fiat of decision, whereby "I" choose categorically because of a specific reason. Choice concludes the decision cycle. This, however, poses a unique problem. Choice, as a fiat, "represents a discontinuity," an affirmation of the self which breaks from the self which was; yet such a fiat "springs from within a certain continuity of voluntary existence." (62) The self is therefore both the self affirmed in the discontinuity of choice and the self from which choice surges. Is the self divided then? made up of two selves? For Ricoeur the answer is obvious, No! Such division would destroy the essential unity of the person.

Ricoeur attempts to describe the unity of process by looking at the way choice orders the multitude of motives into specific reasons, that is, how choice moves from indeterminate being to

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determinate being.

The most striking form of indetermination is manifest in hesitation. Prior to choice, the will is powerless, it cannot affirm itself, for it is in process of considering the various reasons for a project that would affirm its being, and therefore hesitates in affirming "its sphere of responsibility." In hesitation "I do not know which I I should be. Each possible project proposes an indefinite I." (63) The subject is in limbo, not committed to a definite form of itself. This does not mean, however, that the subject is in a state of non-existence. Ricoeur emphatically points out, in deliberate opposition to the position taken by J-P. Sartre, that "...I am not nothing—I am a self in a conditional mode. I am ready to take upon myself an act which would engender me as a declared self." (64) There is something specific, like a Cartesian Cogito, behind my acts, behind my effort to affirm myself, behind the process of choice, which is molded and developed, yet carried through all choice and maintains the continuity of human subjectivity.

I am a militant consciousness, that is, capable of modulation in the diverse modes of the categorical and the conditional. I must hold on to both these aspects of the situation equally firmly. On the one hand, in hesitation I already exist as will in terms of this very call to unity, to categorical affirmation which preserves me as subject of affirmation even in the midst of perplexity and makes me an unhappy consciousness. On the other hand, in hesitation I have no way of existing other than [in] doubt and


(64) Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 140.
inconsistency itself. (65)

The hesitating will is as equally the "self" as is the choosing will, they just represent the self in different modes. What hesitating consciousness shows is simply the indeterminate character of the self in one phase of the decision cycle, and not a vacuous nonbeing as in Sartre's anthropology.

If Ricoeur understands the self to be indeterminate at the same time as displaying continuity with itself, does not this seem to be a logical impossibility or at least an irreconcilable paradox in the light of his assertion that there are not two selves in the process of decision? Ricoeur addresses this question by setting forth two points which do not take away the paradoxical character of the problem, but deepen his anthropological model to make the paradox intelligible: 1) the source of indetermination does not arise from within the will but from the corporeal involuntary, and 2) the "idea of myself as an open totality." (66)

2.3.1. The source of indetermination.

The self, in hesitating, is indeed indeterminate, but the confusion comes from bodily existence and not from the will. Prior to the moment of actual choice, that is, the actual determination of myself, disorder holds sway over order. Ricoeur explains that,

_____________________


it is because corporeal existence is a principle of disorder and of indetermination that I cannot, at the start, be a determined project, self-determination, apperception of determinate reasons. The project is confused and the self unformed because I am encumbered by the obscurity of my reasons, submerged in the essential passivity of existence which proceeds from the body. (67)

The body "imposes" on the process of willing this disorder which in turn must be ordered by the will. This distinction is of extreme importance, because here, in the ordering of the projects and motives, or the control of the will over the source of indetermination, the essential character of freedom and the structure of Ricoeur's anthropology, are understood.

Ricoeur calls this process of control attention, which Mohanty has pointed out is the heart of Ricoeur's understanding of the intentional structure of consciousness. (68) The meaning of attention is derived from the field of perception, where a particular object comes to the foreground or fades into the background at the command of the will. The subject does not just perceive, she attends to the received field of observation by changing "the mode of appearance of objects and their aspects," without changing their meaning. (69) The very act of perception contains a willed intention, I look at the cup and I receive its perceptual image against the backdrop of the table:


(68) See footnote 18.

...the essence of attention is that temporal shift of vision which turns towards or turns away from and thus makes an object appear such as it is in itself, that is, such as it already covertly was in the background. (70)

Attention is, in the field of perception, the voluntary control over the involuntary receptivity of perceptual images.

Attention is thus a mastery over the process, or more exactly the power of making appear, in accord with the rule of succession, objects or aspects of objects, by drawing them from the background or by letting them become effaced in the ground which constitutes the backdrop of inattention for any observation. (71)

This analysis of attention is paradigmatic for all modes of intentionality. The modalities of consciousness are all attentively directed by the will as it receives their intentional forms. The confusion of diverse and at times conflicting motives, arising from involuntary existence, are ordered by the attentive character of the volitional function of the Cogito into specific projects of which the will must finally choose some and exclude others. Volitional attention, therefore, is the heart of the act of willing. It is the aspect of control and order in all involuntary modalities of the cogito, stamping each with the "I" of personal involvement.

Attention is what relates all these intentional acts to me, as luminous rays to the core from which they emanate. Attention is what reveals the "I" in its act and justifies me in adding to the definition of the cogito, "for it is so self-evident that it is I who doubts, who listens, and who desires that there is no need to add anything to explain it." Even in

(70) Ricoeur, *Freedom and Nature*, p. 156.

sensation, the "I" is my vision. (72)

Voluntary control is the priority of the will over the involuntary, and is for Ricoeur, the most essential description of the process of self-affirmation, revealing the essence of human freedom.

As I have explained above, freedom is the capacity for being, for self-constitution which creates itself in the intentional thrust of the project. With the idea of attention, Ricoeur elaborates the meaning of freedom by stating that freedom "occurs whenever I am in command of the succession, when the shifting focus is in my power." (73) Freedom's self-creating character is, therefore, the attentive function of the will's control over the process of self-constitution, over the receptivity of values and motives which arise from the corporeal involuntary. Freedom to be oneself in the creation of our being, is manifest in the ability to consider the field of received intentional forms (i.e., values and motives) for the purpose of choosing the "I" which I want to be. In and through my freedom "I create myself as an actual living unity in my act: in that moment of choice I come to myself, I come out of the internal shadows, I erupt as myself, I ek-sist." (74) This determinate self, wrested free from indetermination, is the result of freedom's attentive control over the involuntary modes of consciousness.

(72) Ricoeur, Freedom and Nature, p. 156.
2.3.2. Open totality.

The process of self-affirmation, as an attentive control over the involuntary modalities, moves from indetermination to determination. This cycle, however, is not closed. Once the self has become determinate, the medium of self-affirmation draws the process forward again. The fixing of the self in the moment of choice is just that, a moment in the history of self-affirmation. Indetermination arises again, new values and motives are received, inclining the will to transcend itself in the reaffirmation of being. The determinate self once again becomes indeterminate and the will must choose again, the cycle constantly repeats itself.

The unity of the self attained in the act of choice is limited to the moment of choice and therefore needs to be continually transcended. The self is not closed but open, in a perpetual process of pursuing a determinate unity. The human subject sets her sights on the complete self, the self as a total unity. This becomes the aim of all willing. But as Ricoeur points out, "the totality is never given, it is only a regulative rather than a constitutive idea in terms of which I conceive the possibility of seeking myself ceaselessly from horizon to horizon." (75) The self can never be fully given. It is an open process, a continuous cycle of determination and indetermination.

which reaches for a complete expression and affirmation of its very being.

These two points help us to understand the paradox of the determinate and indeterminate self. They form two poles of the decision process: hesitation and choice. Unlike the atemporal dialectical relationship of motive and project, hesitation and choice are components of a living process that puts the voluntary and involuntary in motion. Ricoeur distinguishes these further by calling the dialectic of motive and project the "vertical paradox" and the dialectic of the determinate and indeterminate self a "horizontal paradox... in process" that "sums up the vertical paradox of motivation and project, that is, finally of the involuntary and the voluntary." (76) This being the case, diagram "A" must be substantially modified in order to account for the living process of the voluntary and the involuntary.

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Diagram "B"
The above diagram "B" illustrates the complete structure of decision. No longer is the process of project formation represented as a simple ascending order, but as a dynamic process of determination and indetermination which is represented by the progressing spiral. Values and motives still arise from the involuntary structures of decision, as indicated by the vertical arrow pointing upwards, only now the voluntary ordering of motives in the actual choice of self determination is included in the diagram as indicated by the vertical arrow pointing downwards. The key function of imagination is now expressed more emphatically. As in the mode of decisional consciousness which mediates need and will, imagination is that mode to which all other involuntary modes are directed, and from which the will stems. Therefore, the diagram has now been modified to indicate this relationship. The will extends from the imagination because it receives its motives as imaginative forms. The arrow projecting upwards and forwards indicates both the will as modality and its initial thrust in the act of self determination, which is continued by the spiral of choice and hesitation. Whereas the arrow joining need and sensation to imagination represents the involuntary basis and presentation of values and motive to the will through the imagination. These involuntary modalities carry the return flow of the indeterminate self that arises after the will has determined "which I I should be."
3. ACTION, CONSENT, AND THE SELF DIVIDED.

3.1. Action.

The second phase of the voluntary mode of consciousness is that of action. Here, like decision, another moment of unity is brought to light. The anthropological unity expressed in decision is found in the project of self-affirmation, or one might say in the "upward" movement from hesitation to choice. In action, however, anthropological unity is found in the "downward" movement of the cycle of self-affirmation, where the determination of choice is concretized through bodily openness to the world. But unlike decision, action is irreversible, it fulfills the project by making it complete. Self affirmation chosen in decision is carried out in action.

The distinction between decision and action is only one of abstraction, not between differing processes of self-affirmation; for "the will is a power of decision only because it is a power of motion....The distinction between decision and action is thus one of meaning rather than of time: it is one thing to project, another to do." (77) They are companion activities of the same volitional modality even though they have their own meanings. In decision the "project anticipates action," but it is action that "tests the project." Although their meanings are intelligible only in relation to each other, the two are distinct. Decision

implies action and action requires deliberation, they are both part of the same spiralling process of self-affirmation. Therefore Ricoeur states: "The man who does not carry through did not truly will." (78) With action the unity of the self is taken from the realm of consciousness and placed into the world by virtue of the bodily capability to act. (79) Action and decision are distinguished by their significations. Decision's intentional structure is a practical representation and intellectual in character, receiving represented values in motive forms for a cerebral deliberation. Action, however, is a non-representative consciousness, no longer even a practical representation, as a project. It is a consciousness which is an action, a consciousness which presents itself as matter, a change in the world through a change in my body. (80)

One might say that action is the thrust of consciousness which is post deliberative (with respect to meaning, not in the order of function), simply carrying out the will's resolution to affirm itself in a particular project. Will deliberates and chooses, and the body fulfills its choice. Acting consciousness is post theoretic, not represented in any theoretic form. In action the will confronts the reality of the world, consciousness touches the concrete.

The intentionality of acting, as opposed to the

intentionality of deciding, is composed of the subjective doing and the objective thing "being done by me." (81) The subject performs the act and its object is the "pragma," that is, the fulfilment of the project.

Ricoeur points out that the body should never be understood as the object of the action. The body always carries out the pragma and can therefore only be the means of action and not the pragma of action itself. The body only supplies the motion necessary to accomplish the willed project. The corporeal involuntary or "the body is 'passed through.' This means that the body is not the object of action, it is not what I do, but the organ of what I do." (82) Ricoeur qualifies this definition by explaining that the body is not an organ in the sense of an instrument or tool, because such a conception sets the body over against the will as something foreign, as an object for use. He insists to the contrary that body in relation to the willed act is always a personal or subject body, within the realm of consciousness. Action is a response of a will/body unity, not of a dead object-body which the will must command from a state of inertia.

This presents an interesting problem. How can Ricoeur describe the fulfilment of the project in action, without viewing the body as an object over against the will which must be


commanded to fulfill the project? Does action not present a direct challenge, in the form of a dualism between will and body, to the fundamental unity of the person? Ricoeur attempts to overcome this problem by describing the body as already available to be called to action. The will does command, but such a command has already been requested by the body's readiness for the action at hand. Body inclines the will to command action, much in the same way that motives incline the will to decide, but the nature of such inclination takes the form of an emotive desire rather than a value implicit in a represented motive form. In action the "will moves by desire" that has been shaped by the same imagination that had been instrumental in the formation of a decision, only now such movement or inclination takes an affective form that readies the body to carry out the project of the will, rather than a theoretic value form.

For Ricoeur, the reciprocity of will and body brought about by action, depends on the availability of a "docile" body. The involuntary inclination of desire serves this purpose by providing the will with a body infused with a "spontaneity" or a readiness for action. Rather than the will drawing an object-body from a state of inertia, desire is the state of bodily arousal, that has already prepared the body to act. In action, desire, arising from emotion, mediates between will and body, just as imagination mediated between will and body in decision, only now the mediation occurs through a modality of consciousness that functions on the level of affectivity rather than theoretic representation.
Desire is both the apex and conclusion of the emotive process. The modality of emotion, Ricoeur explains, is the mode of consciousness which provides the "power of stimulating action, of moving a being...an incitation to action in accordance with the vivid representations which engender wonder." (83) Emotion receives the affective matter and not the value forms of imagination. Once received emotion generates affective emotive forms. Emotion transforms representational affective matter into emotive forms and feelings which ready the body to respond to the willed project. Emotion inclines or motivates the will a second time except now on an affective level. Although the body is prepared for action by emotion on the basis of a representation of the world, the action commanded by the will is not a representational form of intentionality, for doing touches the concrete.

The reception of imagination's affective matter takes place in the experience of "wonder." Ricoeur understands this to be the foundation of emotion, from which arise emotive forms such as love, hate, joy, sorrow, and desire.

Wonder or awe (Cartesian "admiration") is subsequently elaborated by emotive forms of affective imagination by which we anticipate some good or evil. It reaches its culmination in the awakening of desire, its peak in the emotion of joy and sorrow connected with the possession of a good or an evil. (84)

For us to fully understand what Ricoeur means by emotion and its

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mediation of will and body we will briefly examine both these components of the emotive cycle: wonder, emotive forms.

3.1.1. Wonder.

The most basic characteristic of emotion is wonder. Incoming affective matter instills a sense of awe. The subject is "disturbed" by the affective presence of an other. "In wonder a living being is awed by a new event to which it yields, by an other." (85) This emotional attitude disorders both will and body, "all we think, feel, and will is generally brought to a halt." (86) Emotion disposes the mind "to consider the object and linger over it," (87) as well as set the body in a position of readiness to respond to the "other."

It is this emotional attitude that awakens "the power of judgment," it gives will the reason to act on the motives, values, or reasons that form the project. Wonder mediates between will and body by injecting "into all valuation a visceral, motive element," (88) a full bodied dimension into the consideration of all decisional acts. Once emotion has matured into desire it inclines the will with the totality of bodily presence to fulfill decision in action. The process of choice

holds "the assemblage of muscles pressing for an act," that emotion has aroused, "...at an arm's length while I consider motives." Hence bodily readiness enters the realm of motivation, requesting and making possible the appropriated action to complete the project.

These two forms of motivation, decisional and emotive, share the same modality of origin: imagination. As has been shown above, imagination is anticipatory in its intentionality. It anticipates objects that carry value in the absence of their actual perception. If the object satisfies the appropriate need (bodily, social or otherwise) it receives the value of "good," and evil if it does not. Imagination abstracts the implicit values of objects from perceptual and affective matter and passes them on in their representational form to the deciding will for adjudication. But the affective matter of representational motive forms is also transformed into the various emotive states. Imagination anticipates the object and inclines the will to fulfill the lack of _____. But this anticipation also readies the body to be the organ for action. The matter of the image, that is, the affective "quasi-presence" of the anticipated thing, enters the emotive function of the Cogito, preparing the way for the actual reception of that thing. Emotion is awakened. Awe and wonder disrupt consciousness by giving momentum to the process of inclination. The anticipation, arising from imagination, becomes through the emotive function, a "living
representation of that which is not," (89) instead of a lifeless theoretic form. The subject's whole existence is now taken up in the cycle of the will.

3.1.2. Emotive Forms.

Ricoeur explains that the anticipation of the needed object is amplified and sustained in the body by emotion. This is accomplished through the categorization of imagination's affective matter into emotive states. Of all the possible emotional states for description, Ricoeur focuses on two pairs: love and joy, hate and sorrow. In both pairs the latter emotional form completes the former. When the object of need enters conscious awareness the body responds by readying itself to move towards or away from the object. This movement Ricoeur attributes to the emotions of love and hate. Love seeks to join with the object and hate moves away from it. The imagined value of an object that arises in the process of decision is coupled with the readiness for bodily movement. The imagined good in the object of satisfaction affects the body, through the emotional form of love, by readying it to move towards it. In the case of represented evil, hate readies the body to move away from it. Hence love and hate bring with them the fullness of bodily existence not present in theoretical consciousness. They add to the theoretic forms of value by including the whole person. Ricoeur states,

we might say, to imagine a good or an evil with which I
would like to be united or from which I consider myself
separate is not the same as being moved by love or
aversion. Precisely, the emotion is distinguished from
simple intellectual anticipations by its host of
organic concomitants. I love music or even God with
t all my body. (90)

The affective matter of imagination that engendered wonder and
awe into the cogito has now begun to ready the body for action.

Love and hate, however, are incomplete by themselves, joy
and sorrow fulfill them. With joy and sorrow the directional
thrust of love and hate matures into a full blown emotional
state, becoming ways of being that affect the whole person.

In joy I am with my good, in sorrow I am with the evil:
I have become that good and that evil. The good or the
evil have become my mode of being. I am sad, I am
happy: these expressions have an absolute meaning which
we do not find in expressions like "I am surprised," "I
love," or "I hate." To love and to hate means less
being than being directed towards something lovable or
detestable which is a possible object of desire,
situated in the world and at a distance. (91)

The affect of joy and sorrow is total. They are "sanctions of my
being," that arise from the involuntary character of existence
and mediate between body and will. These emotional forms
intensify the theoretical inclination of need from a simple lack
of _____ and reason for _____ to a bodily posture that is
pressing for the appropriate movement to make the emotional state
of joy complete or avoid the completion of sorrow.

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3.1.3. Desire.

Joy and sorrow extend love and hate but they do not complete the emotive cycle, they give way to desire. The terminal phase of emotion is desire, it concludes the process that moves from wonder to love and hate through joy and sorrow. Emotive desire inclines the will with the totality or bodily existence, "...it is through the mediation of desire that love and hate, joy and sorrow 'rule our ways,' that is, incline our will." (92) Desire is that function of emotion which performs the actual task of inclining the will to act. Ricoeur elaborates this point by explaining that

the emotion desire is at the same time a profound visceral disturbance and an acute alerting of all our senses and all motor regions. This agitation provokes judgment and makes it that original quality of the Cogito by which I am prepared and carried to a pitch nearer to action than in a simple inspection by the mind of the problem proposed for my initiative. (93)

In desire the joyous or sorrowful sanctions of my being are transformed into a "longing" and "nascent movement" of even greater intensity. For Ricoeur, desire is "a strong inclination to act which arises from the whole body."

The movement from wonder to desire is what Ricoeur calls emotion. Each successive differentiation, or further development of the emotive process, brings with it an increased spontaneity of a body primed for action and already awakened from inertia to


be 'passed through' by the intention of the will. Desire ultimately mediates between body and will by a power of inclination similar to imaginative motive forms.

Ricoeur, however, points out that desire is also the pinnacle of the ascending modalities of the structural involuntary. Involuntary emotion gives way to the voluntary. In desire

...we have reached the highest point of the corporeal involuntary: desire is a type of spirit of adventure which rises from the body to willing, and which is the reason why willing would have little efficacy if it were not sharpened first of all by the proding of desire.... (94)

Hence emotive desire, in a similar manner as the imagination, mediates between will and body. But unlike the imagination which mediates between body and will on the representational level, emotion mediates at a more fundamental level that takes the whole of our being into the cycle of the will. Desire adds greater intensity to the theoretical adjudication of value, by giving the will a docile body ready to be traversed by action intended in the project of self determination. Emotion changes the abstract rational consideration of reasons for self-affirmation into a state in which our whole being has been alerted to act. Emotion gives the will a readied substructure as a basis for action.

Our diagram (diagram "B") depicting the dynamic relationship of the various modalities involved in the process of deciding must now be expanded to include the double destination of imaginations affective matter: 1)motive forms, 2) emotive forms.

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HISTORICAL PROCESS OF SELF-AFFIRMATION

Diagram "C"
Here we see that the basic structure of diagram "B" has been maintained. Only now the modality of emotion has been included in the cycle of determination and indetermination. The affective matter arising from need and sensation through imagination to the deciding will characterized Ricoeur's understanding of the process of decision. However, since imagination's matter is not only passed on in motive forms, but also in emotive forms, our new diagram extends an arrow beyond imagination to the modality of emotion. This extension indicates a greater and more comprehensive scope of the emotive function in the process of self-affirmation. Emotive forms are passed on to the acting will (this is indicated by the arrow running parallel with that representing the deciding will), which fulfills the project of self-affirmation. Therefore, emotion plays a pivotal role in the actual affirmation of the self's existence. Without the readying of the body by emotion, the project would simply remain a cerebral deliberation and the self could never be affirmed in a concrete manner. Hence emotion's mediation between body and will includes imagination and the process of decision, one might even say that acting consciousness transcends decisional consciousness. Although emotion and the acting will rise above deliberative consciousness to include the whole person, body and soul, we must be careful to understand that this is not some form of separation from the decision process. Emotion is structurally tied to the involuntary modalities of consciousness and both deliberative and acting forms of the will. This is why emotion is linked to imagination and the acting will in our new diagram "C". Motives still arise, inclining the will to decide.
Indetermination still moves "upward" from the wide variety of bodily demands. Only now determination is made actual through the acting consciousness via the body. Although the decision process moved from hesitation to choice, this is only possible through a subsequent stage of the process of self-affirmation. Through the "downward" movement of self-determination, the project becomes the pragma and is made concrete; and this is why the progressive spiral of self-affirmation now originates from the acting will.
3.2. Consent.

Decision and action by and large describe the voluntary intention of the Cogito, but Ricoeur’s description of the entire cycle of the will is still missing one very important dimension. So far all Ricoeur’s effort has been focused on the structures of deciding and acting without dealing with the limitations that human individuality places on decision and action. For the cycle of the will to be complete, Ricoeur must address the absolute involuntary or the immutable restrictions that existence places on freedom. If reciprocity between the voluntary and involuntary is to reach complete fulfilment, such anthropological unity must also be achieved on the level of those qualities of our individuality, often referred to as our “nature,” which limit our decisions and actions. This final stage of the cycle of the will Ricoeur calls consent.

Character, the unconscious, and organic life are three forms of limitation which directly restrict the process of self-affirmation. For Ricoeur these constitute the most fundamental restrictions placed on the freedom to decide and act. They situate and condition existence by placing involuntary limitations on the involuntary structures themselves. They limit freedom by limiting the process of motivation and the emotive preparation of the body for action. One might say that they confront the will with the "necessities" of existence and of human nature. But does this mean that the necessity implied in the object-body which Ricoeur painstakingly tried to avoid has now reappeared in these three forms? Is the individuality of our
existence ultimately foreign to the will, a nature in opposition to freedom that threatens the essential unity of soul and body? Ricoeur’s response is ‘no!’ The will, by consenting, brings our nature into the reciprocity of the voluntary and involuntary, it says "'yes' to what is already determined. It represents converting, within myself, the hostility of nature into the freedom of necessity." (95) By saying yes to the limitations of our character, our unconscious, and our life, the final phase of the description of anthropological unity is achieved.

In order to understand what Ricoeur means by the consent to necessity we must first explore the meaning of the three limitations that restrict decision and action.

3.2.1. Life.

The first and foremost necessity for our existence is obviously the organic substructure that sustains the entire suprastructure of intentional modalities. Life in this sense is the very foundation of decision and action, holding all the modalities of consciousness together. Life is the essence of bodily existence and can never be allocated to one function, for all functions are founded on a living breathing individual. Although life is associated with the "lower part of my self" it is not a particular part of the person, but the person’s totality of existence.

Life is not only a lower part of my self over which I rule. I am alive as a whole, alive in my very freedom. I have to be alive in order to be responsible for my life. What I control is what makes me exist...I am a living totality. Life is the unity which circulates among the functions. I might well say that I have members, feelings, ideas, but life is never plural. The Cogito lends itself to an enumeration of parts, of functions, and of acts; only freedom and life, that is, willed existence and existence undergone, transcend enumeration. I exist as one. (96)

Life is the whole of our existence and yet ruled by the will, "life is ambiguous...it is the marvel of structure and a pressing appeal to the sovereignty of decision." (97) Therefore life must be viewed as the totality of our involuntary existence, in both its absolute and relative forms, that is, the absolute of the body and functions which I have no control over and those relative to my command. Ricoeur explains:

I have nothing to do with the beating of my heart, and everything with nourishing, caring for, and guiding this body. Thus I constantly experience within myself the mixture of two involuntaries: the absolute involuntary of the life which gives me existence as consciousness—and thus is the preface to my humanity—and the involuntary relative to a life which seeks my decision and effort—and waits upon my humanity. (98)

Hence the unity of the voluntary and involuntary functions of the Cogito is ultimately the integration of two totalities, that of freedom and life. On this level unity is seen as the reciprocity of a received self and a self commanded into existence. Life represents the givenness of the process of self determination,

whereas freedom represents the determination of the self. Life is the fundamental stuff of existence which limits freedom by situating it in the particularity of individual selfhood, a limitation that grounds the forward thrust of self-affirmation and self-determination.

3.2.2. The Unconscious.

The absolute involuntary character of life makes existence possible. It provides the basis for all modalities of consciousness but it also provides the basis for the "indefinite matter" of their intentional forms. Ricoeur calls this "indefinite matter of signification" the unconscious. With this definition he wishes to clearly distinguish himself from those, like Freud, who hold that the unconscious has a mind of its own apart from formed thought. Such "realism of the unconscious" runs counter to Ricoeur's entire project of the Phenomenology of the Mind. The center of control is voluntary freedom. The person can only be understood from the top down, that is, by a will at the heart of all intentional modalities, and not from a subterranean control center that gives meaning to our decisions and actions. Realism of this sort

...represents a real Copernican revolution: the center of human being is displaced from consciousness and freedom as they give themselves to the unconscious and the absolute involuntary of which we are ignorant and which are known by a new natural science. (99)

Formed thought is always conscious thought, there is nothing beneath it that thinks, "it is always *myself*, conscious of myself--which thinks--and never some unconsciousness within me and independent of me...." (100) But this is not to say that consciousness is all that there is to thought. Whatever shape thought may take, it is only *formed* thought that we are conscious of. Beneath thought lies an indefinite pool of affective matter that cannot be manipulated, it is the givenness of consciousness, the received stuff from which thought is formed. Therefore, ...

...consciousness reflects only the form of its actual thoughts. It never perfectly penetrates a certain principally affective matter which presents it with an indefinite possibility of self-questioning and for giving meaning and form to itself. The unconscious certainly does not think, but it is the indefinite matter, revolting against the light which all thought bears with it. That unconscious allows us to name, after the finite manner of personality, another aspect of this absolute passivity inherent in all activity of consciousness, another aspect of that absolute involuntary which cannot be held at a distance, evaluated as a motive, or moved as a docile ability. (101)

The unconscious is, therefore, the indefinite matter of all levels of consciousness, the matter received by perception, imagination, emotion, etc., which each mode uses to construct and project their respective significations. Hence, all modalities are composed of passive indefinite unconscious matter awaiting to be commanded by the will into conscious form.

Like the organic foundation of life, the unconscious cannot

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be understood as a specific involuntary modality, it is a whole, present in every mode. It is a mark of our individuality, a restriction that limits intentional significations to the uniqueness of our experience. Each person receives affective matter peculiar to his situation, historical place, social position, past experiences, etc., and it is this individualized matter which all modalities of the Cogito utilize for their significations. Herein lies freedom’s limitation: all decisions and actions are made on the basis of involuntary motives, but these involuntary functions rely on the givenness of indefinite matter. In the case of decision, representational forms rely on indefinite matter mediated by imagination, and in the case of action indefinite matter is transposed into emotive forms. The freedom and clarity of the voluntary intention is restricted by the limitation of being a finite individual.

3.2.3. Character.

The third form of necessity which Ricoeur discusses is that of character. Founded on the unconscious and life, character is the last form of the ascending order of necessities which limit freedom and is most evidently present in our decisions and actions. It "is the necessity closest to my will." (102) Whereas the unconscious was the indefinite matter of formed consciousness, character is the "finite manner" of all exercises

of consciousness. Our individuality not only gives freedom the indefinite matter of a unique situation but it also gives freedom a specific and limited way in which it can carry out its intentions. I am and have a nature, a way of being, a character that makes all my decisions and actions uniquely mine, not just in the uniqueness of my unconscious matter, but in the very way I decide and act. Character refers not to the content of consciousness as does the unconscious necessity of indefinite matter, rather its reference is to the style of all that we do. "Character is always my own way of thinking, not what I think." (103)

Like the two preceding types of necessity, character is not a modality of consciousness or a recognizable function of the Cogito, it is an absolute involuntary, an indivisible totality present in all my involuntary functions. Yet, more so than life and the unconscious, character is at greater risk of being objectivized into something foreign and external. Indeed, character has an external dimension, that which allows one person to recognize another as melancholic or sanguine in general outlook, but these ways of being are not objectively outside of human self-identity.

My character is not a class, a collective type, but my unique self, inimitable: I am not a general idea, but a singular essence...it is a concrete totality...it is this individual who I am. (104)


Our character is the very essence of our individuality. We are the conglomeration of a vast variety of traits and peculiarities, this defines our individuality and finitude, and to change my character would actually mean becoming someone else, becoming alienated; I cannot become detached from myself. My character situates me, casts me into an individuality. (105)

This dimension of character, Ricoeur likens to fate. Our character is given, and this givenness particularizes the infinite possibilities available to free choice. Character limits the infinite freedom, by making it "yield to myself as a given individual." Through character freedom receives a limited space or unalterable conditionedness for all its choices. Although we are in a continual process of self-determination where "I am only as I make myself," our individuality is a finite inescapable necessity limiting the self which we choose to be. Human self identity is paradoxically chosen and received. We choose ourselves at the same time as we are given. Existence is carried out and undergone. Ricoeur explains this paradoxical reciprocity as follows:

in order to understand the presence of my character I would have to succeed in the hardly conceivable synthesis of the universal and the individual...and the synthesis of freedom and nature, which means that all decision is at the same time an unlimited possibility and a constituted particularity. The idea of an infinite finite, of a situated initiative, situated not only by the lateral character of its motives but by the individuality of its special way of ingression, remains ineffable and inconsistent to the mind. My fate clings

Character limits freedom in the most radical sense, it individualizes the infinite possibilities available to self-determination.

Life, the unconscious, and character constitute the full individuality of the person, an absolute involuntary at the heart of the involuntary modes of consciousness. These aspects of our "nature" must also become part of the unifying process of self-affirmation. Through consent we say 'yes!' to the givenness of existence, our nature becomes part of the cycle of the will. No longer is "nature" in opposition to "freedom," consent makes nature freedom's way of expression. Ricoeur is here looking for "a conception of freedom which is in some respect a nature...an individual mode--neither chosen nor modified by freedom--for freedom itself." (107) Consent completes the cycle of the will, by bringing all that is involuntary under the control and guidance of voluntary freedom.

Now we need to complete the diagramatic representation of Ricoeur's model of self-affirmation.

HISTORICAL PROCESS OF SELF-AFFIRMATION

PRIORITY OF THE VOLUNTARY

HESITATION
INDETERMINATION
NECESSITY

CHOICE
DETERMINATION
FREEDOM

INCLINATION, VALUE.
MOTIVE, LIFE
THE UNCONSCIOUS, CHARACTER

DIAGRAM "D"
Here there is only one small addition. Freedom and necessity, rather than being functional modalities, characterize the directional thrust of the progressive spiral. Freedom is understood as the self's forward (or "downward") thrust of determination; whereas necessity arises from the limitations of bodily finitude. Received matter is given form in the volitional act of free self-affirmation. However, the totalities of life, the unconscious, and character, can not be represented clearly, for they are present throughout the entire process of self-affirmation and in the very anthropological structure of existence. Hence, they can only be understood as the sum total of involuntary movements at the command of a free will. And all this is indicated by the vertical arrows.
3.3. The Self Divided.

The unity of voluntary and involuntary functions of the Cogito, manifest in the process of self-affirmation as project, action, and consent, Ricoeur calls "the fundamental possibility" of human existence, but such unity is only an ideal possibility. The reality of existence presents us with another picture, one of a "broken unity," where disharmony and fragmentation are ever present. The actual fact of existence shows with abundant clarity that the self is not always the result of carefully scrutinized values and motives, nor are projects completed by docile bodies, and neither is necessity readily consented to. So far Ricoeur's descriptive method has only revealed the ideal unity of existence apart from human frailty and brokenness. However, in order to develop an anthropology that will meaningfully interpret human existence, such a "doctrine of man" must also be able to deal adequately with the brokenness and disunity so evident in actual existence. Ricoeur explains that description has only resolved

the problem of reflection, not the problem of existence. In the background of epistemological dualism there is the practical incompatibility of necessity and freedom. Freedom and necessity negate each other mutually. (108)

Description reveals the unity of freedom and nature, the way existence should be. The picture of unity on this level acts as

a limiting idea, the essential norm or eschatological goal of all self-affirmation. Unity is presented as the ideal possibility for existence, but in actual fact existence seems to achieve the opposite, for "who can accept himself without qualification, concretely, daily?" (107)

How is this possible? How can the unifying process of self-affirmation, the essential meaning of existence, also result in disharmony? The resolution of this difficulty has already been implied in the three phases of unity, particularly in the act of consent.

The three limitations of consent Ricoeur also understands to be negations of freedom. Each in its own way negates freedom's unlimited range to choose whatever it projects. The absolute involuntary confronts freedom with the finitude of individuality. It takes away from the infinitude of choice in three different ways.

3.3.1. The Individuality of Character.

Character gives freedom only limited possibilities.

Although character individualizes a person so that it constitutes a primal originality which distinguishes him from all others and which gives him the initial consistency of an incomparable being,

it nevertheless gives rise to a painful negation: character is also the

occasion of the simplest commentary we could give, closest to the human condition, the classical adage "Omnis determinatio negatio." I suffer from being one finite and partial perspective of the world and of values. I am condemned to be the "exception": this and nothing else, this not that. Character makes me a "someone," "Jemeinigkeit"; personality denies man and the singular denies the universal. I suffer from being condemned to a choice which consecrates and intensifies my particularity and destroys all the possibilities through which I am in contact with the totality of human experience. (110)

With this negation of freedom by character, Ricoeur, for the first time in his descriptive analysis of the will openly acknowledges a basic incompatibility between freedom and nature. Within the person there is a fundamental conflict. My individuality, that which makes me me also denies me, denies my freedom to become a new and completely self-determinate being.

3.3.2. The Indefiniteness of the Unconscious.

The suffering of individuality is compounded by the fact that finitude contains a dimension of indefiniteness as well. All intentional forms flow out of the indefinite matter of the unconscious. The determination of the self rises out of and is founded on an indefinite pool of unconscious matter. The clarity of intentional forms stands out from the obscure and the unformed. The forms that freedom brings to light are constituted by the indefinite shadows that our historical situation gives us. "The obscure is non-being....Freedom is light and clarity, it is the 'lumen naturale,' while in terms of the unconscious we are

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shadows. (111) Indefinite matter negates by making only opaque shadows available for freedom’s demand for light and clarity, for the demand of a determinate and open self. Ricoeur puts it this way:

this second mode of the "Ohnmacht der Natur" which clings to freedom [is] the sorrow of formlessness (or the "bad infinite," as Hegel calls it). I am apeiron, the living indefinite which afflicts the "good infinity" of my freedom. (112)

The unconscious negates freedom’s forward thrust of self affirmation by providing an opaque indeterminate substructure of affective matter for its decisions and actions.

3.3.3. The Givenness of Life and Freedom’s Refusal.

Life is the most fundamental form of givenness, the brute fact of our existence, which freedom has absolutely no choice over. Hence, for Ricoeur it is freedom’s most radical negation, for it represents a form of non-being, contingency, pain, aging and death. "Here the sorrow of the negative reaches its culmination. Life sums up all that I have not chosen and all that I cannot change." (113) It sums up all negation of freedom’s infinite choice by posing the ultimate negation: a discontinuous life.

Necessity, once embraced in the act of consent, has now become a form of negation, a dimension of the self that injures.

Within the self a form of disunity or non-coincidence appears, that is, a self that affirms and a self that negates, and this results in suffering. But as Ricoeur points out such negativity is not the last word, freedom counters the annihilating force of the absolute involuntary by moving forward with a negation of its own, a double negation that transcends involuntary negation in self-affirmation.

It is here that suffering acquires its philosophic significance, as the impossibility of coincidence with oneself: it introduces into the self a specific negativity, in the sense that necessity is now lived not only as affecting, but as wounding; I am not at home in my own nature. That is why, in return, freedom remains the possibility of not accepting myself, of saying no to what is negating; consequently, the active denial of freedom arouses the diffuse negativity of my condition. (114)

The negating power of the absolute involuntary brings to light a concealed but active negativity in the heart of freedom. Self-affirmation is not merely a positive thrust forward but also a rejection, that does not present itself at first as a refusal but conceals itself in an affirmation of sovereignty whose implicit negativity it is important to bring to light. The disguised form of refusal is the haughty affirmation of consciousness as absolute, that is, as creative or as self-producing. (115)

Freedom responds to these three forms of negation with an equally absolute declaration—"No!" No to the "constrictions of

(114) Ricoeur The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limiting Idea, p. 17.

character: I want to have the full stature of man"; no the obscenity of the unconscious in the wish for "total transparence"; and no to the "fundamental passivity" of existence. Freedom "refutes its own anxiety of possible non-being by a gesture of power." (116) It pushes forward with a type of negation that is an affirmation. Rather than consenting to a limited and contingent self, freedom attempts to move away from the fixed being of a particular individual manifestation of humanity through a dynamic process of continual self-affirmation and transcendence.

Once freedom is alerted to the total annihilating force of the absolute involuntary, it too demands sovereignty. Rather than attempting to restore a unified projecting, acting, and consenting self, freedom tries to break away from the finitude and individuality that has caused the free and infinite self to suffer. Consequently, freedom's threefold demand reveals a rift or tear within the self. "Suffering introduces an existential fault or rent (faille) into my own incarnation." The demands of freedom pull the infinite self away from the finite self, exposing a break in the very constitution of human existence. Ricoeur explains that "man's threefold wish: to be complete, without finite perspective of character; to be transparent, without the opacity of the unconscious; and finally, to be oneself (être par soi), not born," reveals the 'failure of unity'

as a 'scandal.' "Thus, the offending scandal is built into the
texture of one's condition." (117) The human condition is struck
with the indigent blow of incongruency: a self split in two.

Ricoeur calls this tear or rift "fallibility." This term is
intended to help us understand how anthropological unity and
brokenness can result from the same anthropological model.
Description has revealed the possibility of unity, the way
existence should be, yet now, in light of human fallibility,
unity must be seen as the aim of self-affirmation rather than
something actually achieved. The constitutional tear or
structural fault reveals the instability of human process as the
ever present reality of failure, brokenness, and disunity. For
Ricoeur, the concept of fallibility raises ethical fault and evil
to a "threshold of intelligibility," whereby evil might be
understood in terms of the rift between freedom and nature.

Phenomenological description has been stretched to its
limits, it cannot probe any further. In the face of the "fault"
description can only say 'there it lies' keeping silent with
respect to its ontological status. Description has revealed the
modalities of consciousness, their hierarchical ordering, and
their unity. But these revelations are on the level of
intentionality, they are revealed through the significations of
consciousness and therefore can only describe a unity that is

(117) Ricoeur, "Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the
intended. The ontological structure of the self, and the fault which permits discord, have yet to be explored. Description has exposed its presence, it has revealed a gaping divide which almost threatens to preclude the very unity of the self, but is powerless to probe deeper into the self's ontological structure. If a unified anthropological process is to be maintained, that is, the affirmation of a united rather than a divided self, a deeper exploration of human "fallibility" is in order. Ricoeur explains that phenomenology must be transcended in a metaphysics, (118) the significations revealed in description must be given ontological "limits," Husserlian eidetics must be transcended by a Kantian transcendental reduction. For Ricoeur the analysis of human existence must move from the realm of essential meanings to a fulfledged philosophical anthropology. This is a move from an "eidetics" to an "emperics of the will." (119)

(118) See "Kant and Husserl," "Existential Phenomenology," and "Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the Will," in Husserl, for a more detailed elaboration of the relationship between phenomenology and ontology.

(119) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. xvii.
4. Transcendental Reduction and Human Fallibility.

In order to uncover the structural condition within "man" that allows the self to suffer non-alignment, Ricoeur adopts a new method of analysis. The experience of suffering a disharmonious self must be pushed beyond the existential fact to that structural condition which makes suffering and miserable existence possible. Beneath the experience of fault (120) there lies the structural condition of "fallibility" which not only holds the unifying process of self-affirmation together, but also presents the possibility for anthropological demise. No longer is the emphasis of Ricoeur's investigation on the careful consideration of different individual intentional significations of the Cogito, but rather on the duality of human experience which description has brought to light. Ricoeur explains that it is necessary to start from the whole of man, by which I mean from the global view of his non-coincidence with himself, his disproportion, and the mediation he brings about in existing. (121)

To accomplish this task, Ricoeur adopts a method similar to Kant's transcendental critique. Since Kantian transcendental analysis starts with "the object before me, and from there traces back to its conditions of possibility," (122) Ricoeur believes

(120) The fault is also referred to as "a break, a rift, a tearing." Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. xiii.


that this method can also be used to uncover the conditions of possibility of the disproportion between the two selves.

Ricoeur’s method, like Kant’s, is not a simple one step approach, the "gap between pure reflection and total comprehension" is bridged by three stages, beginning with 1) the "object", 2) proceeding to an analysis of "action", and 3) concluding with "feeling." In each stage the dialectic of freedom and necessity is progressively enlarged in order that the person might be philosophically grasped as a whole.

4.1. Theoretic Reflection.

4.1.1. Reception.

The first level of transcendental reflection is theoretic. Like phenomenological description, transcendental reflection is first of all intentional, it looks for the disproportion on the object or thing signified by consciousness. On this level "the unity of man is only intentional, that is to say, the unity is projected outwards into the structure of objectivity which it makes possible." (123) In this stage of reflection Ricoeur is primarily interested in establishing a theoretic pattern of analysis which can then be expanded in subsequent stages to include the whole person. By beginning with the object, Ricoeur is seeking an avenue to the heart of the person through the

"power of knowing," that is, by means of a theoretical paradigm of the possibility of knowledge Ricoeur wants to unravel the principle of fallibility. In asking the question within Ricoeur's Kantian framework, "How do we come to know?" one would be asking for the conditions of possibility for the synthetic unity of the object. Hence, Ricoeur is looking for a transcendental origin that accounts for the synthetic unity of the epistemological disproportion of understanding and sensation.

The reception of the object, Ricoeur ties to the finitude of bodily perception. The body is "open" to the world, open to receive an infinite number of appearances and impressions of objects that lie within the horizon of perception. Each percept, however, is only a finite "silhouette," a flash or glimpse of the whole object and constitutes the objective pole of an intentional correlation. The subject pole, or transcendental point of origin of perception, unifies this vast array of finite acquisitions of the object, by being "the 'here from where' the thing is seen." (124) Perception does not condemn the object to infinite fragmentation, because

these diverse silhouettes appear to me, that is, to this unity and to this identity of the subject pole which is, as it were, behind the diversity of the flow of silhouettes, behind the flow of positions. (125)

This unity of perception situates the openness of body by giving


(125) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 34.
it concrete individuality and finitude. It expands the single outward direction towards the infinite number of objects, to include the reverse direction of all percepts towards a unifying transcendental center.

4.1.2. Meaning.

If perception is finite, how is it possible that it can be recognized as such? Ricoeur explains that

it is finite man himself who speaks of his own finitude...[and] in order for human finitude to be seen and expressed, a moment which surpasses it must be inherent in the situation, condition or state of being finite. (126)

The person's finite point of view is transgressed not by another point of view, but by "the universal of all point of view." (127)

The presence of the perceived object is by itself empty of meaning. But through the transcendence of the universal above the situated glance, the meaning of the object is grasped and the finitude of perception is recognized as such. The universal fills out the individual appearances of the object. Ricoeur states:

Insofar as this perspectival intention is saturated with presence it is always enmeshed in a more or less complete relationship of fulfillment with respect to another aim which penetrates it through and through, which literally passes right through it, and to which speech is originally linked. (128)

(126) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 38.
(127) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 41.
(128) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 41.
The universal, the sense, or the meaning of the object transcend the reception of the object through language. It is the person's ability to be lingually expressive that Ricoeur ties to the grasp of the object's central core. Through the "name" the meaning content of the object is uncovered and given unity. The name points to the object's meaning identity. But now there appears to be a duality of unity: 1) unity of perspective, the here-from-where the thing is seen, and 2) "the non-perspectival unity of the thing...[or] meaning unity," tied to the name. Consequently, the unity of apprehension and the unity of comprehension must occur in some sort of dialectical relationship if the unity of the object is to upheld. Ricoeur calls this the "dialectic of 'name' and 'perspective,'" or "infinitude and finitude." (129)

Ricoeur points out that the infinite moment of this dialectic is not the speech or the name itself but what is meant by the speech. The "simple statement" composed of verb and noun is open to the infinite. The noun functions simply by expressing the meaning of a concrete thing. The transcendence of the name over the appearance is in the direction of the infinite, but does not capture the infinite's specific intention. The verb, however, has a dual function: 1) referring to a subject, and 2) attributing tense to that subject. This second function captures the infinite dimension, by freely affirming or denying truth or

(129) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 45.
falsehood to the subject apart from the concrete situation; it transforms "my 'here' from an absolute placement into any-place-whatever," (130) by lifting the statement from the situation of reference. The verb opens speech to an infinite possible number of associations which the noun lacks. It gives the freedom to affirm or deny as the subject chooses.

Indeed, the soul of the verb is affirmation, the saying of yes or no. By means of the verb we may affirm or deny something of something. Now, with affirmation and negation appears the transcendence, no longer merely of signification in general over perception, but of speech, taken as verb, over its own signified contents taken as nouns. (131)

The openness of the verb expresses the ability to "have several volitions about the same thing." (132) It points to the volitional dimension in speech, the infinite within man, which transcends the finite dialectic of perception and name. The infinite, however, is not unrelated to this dialectic. The verb is open to the infinite at the same time as referring to the noun.

The verb supra-signifies; that means that it signifies primarily as a noun and is built on the primary intention of signifying. Thereby our freedom of affirming—insofar as it is tied to the verb—is rooted in the soil of noun-meanings. (133)

The picture that emerges from these relationships is one of

(131) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 50-51.
(132) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 53.
(133) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 56.
a double dialectic: 1) the dialectic of appearance and speech and 2) speech and will. Although Ricoeur relates these modalities of consciousness dialectically, the question arises concerning the vast gap between them. What unites presence and meaning, and meaning and will? To resolve these problems Ricoeur returns to the object.

4.1.3. The principle of unity.

A person never experiences the presence of the object apart from its meaning. The unity of meaning and the unity of perspective are experienced simultaneously in a single moment of object awareness: "the thing shows itself and can be expressed." (134) The object is experienced in the "consciousness of synthesis," as the projection of consciousness "into" the objectivity of the object, or "thing's mode of being." (135) Synthetic consciousness is simply the grasp of the objectivity of objects. It apprehends "a certain expressibility adhering to the appearance of anything whatsoever." (136)

This, however, is only half of the picture. All consciousness is intentional, consisting of noesis and noema. The synthetic unity of the object has its counterpart in a subjective synthesis. As a noetic activity, this subjective pole expresses itself intentionally in the mediating synthesis of

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(134) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 58.

(135) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 59.

(136) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 60.
objectivity at the same time as being that unity: "I myself become a synthesis of speech and perspective in this projection." (137)

Ricoeur calls this noetic pole of synthetic consciousness the "transcendental imagination." It is primarily an activity that unifies the dialectic poles of meaning and presence through the constitution of the noematic synthesis of objectivity. The transcendental imagination "does not exist for itself: it completely exhausts itself in the act of constituting objectivity; for itself the imaginative synthesis is obscure." (138) Therefore, rather than being called the transcendental imagination, Ricoeur should have called it transcendental imaginativity, reflecting the fact that it is an active process which projects itself outside of itself as the objectivity of the object. Transcendental imaginativity is the unity of both perspective and meaning, that concretely constitutes itself in objectivity. The synthetic unity takes place in an intentional process initiated by the imagination. Hence, Ricoeur’s transcendental imagination is a dynamic process of activity, only visible as it constitutes itself as the synthesis of the object.

The unifying power of the transcendental imagination solves the problem of the first dialectic of speech (meaning) and

(137) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 61.

(138) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 63-64.
appearance (presence), but what of the second dialectic of speech as noun and speech as verb? How does Ricoeur fit the infinite moment of the will present in the verb into this unifying process of imaginativity? As part of the dialectic of speech and presence, the verb in relation to the noun is indeed part of the meaning given to a particular appearance of an object. But the infinite dimension of the will present in the verb transcends this dialectic altogether. It escapes the unifying force of the transcendental imagination, because it is given to the verb by a will that has an infinite capacity to affirm or deny. The verb is not of itself the infinite, but points to it.

Perhaps by diagramatically representing these relationships, a greater degree of clarity might be attained.

Diagram "E"
The two arrows or bifurcations projecting from the subjective center indicate the projection of the transcendental imaginativity outside of itself in the form of the synthetic unity of objectivity on the object. The upper arrow represents the unity of meaning and the lower the unity of perception. They are joined together in imaginativity because it is their unifying principle, that which makes the simultaneous experience of meaning and presence possible. The arrow projecting downward from the unity of meaning to the objectivity of the object indicates that meaning is given to the object. The arrow projecting downward from the object indicates the reception of the object’s presence. The upper most arrow projecting from the will to speech represents the infinite moment given to the verb by the will. It is outside the unifying force of transcendental imaginativity, yet related to the meaning given the object. On this level of transcendental reflection the relationship of the will and imaginativity is still unclear. Will transcends the dialectic unity of meaning and presence and yet it is related to it through speech. The arrow projecting upward from finitude to the infinite, and the arrow projecting downward from the infinite to finitude, is meant to indicated the ascending degree of freedom which the infinite gives to the finite perspective. The object is freed from the single silhouette and given universal presence. It is no longer a "here-from-where" the object is seen but can made to have "any-place-what-so-ever."

The above diagram "E" helps us to understand the structure of synthetic consciousness. The possibility of objective knowledge is founded on this dialectical unity projected outwards
by transcendent imaginality. But Ricoeur’s interest does not lie in developing an epistemology per se. Rather he wishes to establish a philosophic pattern, based on the initial disproportion of meaning and presence, which can be expanded to grasp the total disproportion of the finite (nature) and infinite (freedom) selves. What this model of knowing consciousness provides is simply the basic paradigm for the subsequent stages of transcendental reflection. Ricoeur points out, that, such consciousness of the objectivity of the object

is not yet the unity of a person in itself and for itself; it is not one person; it is no one. The "I" of I think is merely the form of a world for anyone and everyone. It is consciousness in general, that is, a pure and simple project of the object. (139)

This analysis must now move from this consciousness in general to self-consciousness, "from the ‘I think’ to the ‘I will,’" in order to uncover the full extent and totality of the disproportion known as "fallibility."

4.2. Practical Reflection.

In moving from the disproportion on the object to the total disproportion of the person reflected in the lived reality of misery, Ricoeur uses the "triad" of perspective, meaning, and synthesis as the "melodic germ of all the subsequent developments." (140) In practical reflection the triad expands to become character, happiness, and respect.

(139) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 60.

(140) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 76.
4.2.1. The finite limitation of character.

In order to grasp the total picture of the person, Ricoeur returns to the theme of motivation. Taking motivation "in the strict sense...motivation is a structure of voluntary decision." (141) It nourishes the will in the formation of projects, becoming concrete in action. Motives "incline without necessitating" by making available finite values and reasons for the willed project and ultimately lead to actions that are based on equally finite structures and powers. Without finite reasons and powers the body could not be readied for action. The reception of values and reasons is necessary for the will to carry out its projects in the form of action. "I constitute my actions to the extent that I gather in reasons for them." My being in the world is the synthetic unity of active deliberation and the passive reception of motives and a body readied for action.

Receptivity on this practical level of transcendental reflection, like theoretic reflection, is intentional, consisting of an activity and its objective counterpart. Motivation and desire are on the one hand open to the world, to the objects which give rise to value and fulfill what is lacking. But on the other hand, receptivity is stamped with a "closing," with the here-form-where 'I' seek fulfillment. The clarity of intentional openness finds its intentional counterpart in "the body's dumb

(141) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 79.
and inexpressible presence to itself. The "here" of my body, manifested in the opaque feeling, vibrates its presence. (142) The "closing" of the body is the finite subject pole of receptivity. It is the here-from-where, the perspective present in all involuntary modalities, from which significations are intended and the point from where value and the objects of desire are received. Each of the bodily "powers which serve the will" are marked with an inherent point of closure.

Now these involuntary powers of consciousness (thought, speech, imagination, sensation, nutrition, etc.), together form a "node of powers," (143) or the finite pole of the total picture of the person. Ricoeur calls this finitude character: "Character is the finite openness of my existence taken as a whole." (144) Each power is narrow or finite in reference to itself but open to the world that it mediates. Character constricts the will, it "is a limitation inherent in the mediating function on one's own body, the primal narrowness of my openness." (145) Hence, the finitude of existence makes the world available to the will only through the narrowness of bodily character. In both the 'upward' movement of reasons and the 'downward' push of self-affirmation, the cycle of the will is situated by the finite pole of human character.

(142) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 84.
(143) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 87.
(144) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 89.
(145) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 90-91.
4.2.2. The infinite aim of humanity.

Character is the mark of our individuality, it represents a fixed appropriation of the total meaning of humanity, an individualization of the universal goal of all humankind. Finite character, however, is never accessible in itself. Just like the finite perspective of the object, it can only be grasped through a form of transcendence. On the level of practical reflection one only apprehends character and sees it as such, through the inner expression of the will's intentions as they are channelled through the narrowness of bodily powers. The will is guided in all it does by an inner aim that urges it to transcend its particularizations, to reach forward and grasp more of the meaning and fullness of true humanity. By rising above character, the will can see its condition of finitude. But in transcending individuality the will does not separate from finitude. The thrust of the will always occurs by means of and through its involuntary basis, through the narrow gate of character. The will passes through character as it moves forward in the process of self-affirmation, guided by the aim of true humanity.

Ricoeur's idea of "humanity", which he also calls the true nature of "happiness," encompasses the entire thrust of human action and desire. Although desire and action are always partial in relation to the universal aim of will, that is, they are willed, executed and completed, the total aim of humanity resides in them, albeit in finite form. The finite fulfillment of pleasure experienced in satisfying desire, receives its meaning by "a termination of destiny and not an end of individual
desires." The aim of happiness is individually present in every act, drawing the human subject forward to appropriate the total ideal of humanity. Ricoeur explains the role of happiness as follows:

the project of reason... is that in me which demands the totality. The demand for totality or reason is what allows me to distinguish happiness as the supreme good from happiness as an accumulation of fulfilled desires. For the totality "demanded" by "reason" is also the one that the human act "pursues." (146)

Because the demand for "the completion of morality and the eschatology of freedom,...dwells in the human will," (147) all individual voluntary expressions carry with them the abundance of the infinite. Projects and actions, although individual intentions of the will, always house the universal aim of happiness, or the practical goal of reason. The individual satisfaction of a desire is more than a reflex or conditioned bodily response, it is part of the very thrust towards universality. All voluntary expression passes through the finite limitation of character making it a finite individual momentary flash of the infinite aim of humanity. However, since...

...I am the bearer of the "supreme destination of reason" in accordance with which I can "continue my existence." The idea of a complete volition and the destination of reason hollow an infinite depth in my desire, making it the desire for happiness and not


(147) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 102-103.
merely the desire for pleasure. (148)

The satisfaction of pleasure or the moment of self-determination are filled with meaning that stretches far beyond the confines of the finite. But the infinite is not given in the individual moment of consciousness, rather it is seen in the direction of that individual act.

Character is the zero origin...happiness is its infinite end. This image makes us understand that happiness is not given in any experience; it is adumbrated in a consciousness of direction. (149)

The infinite aim is uncovered as the person transcends the finite, as she breaks free from the individualizations of humanity in the process of moving towards a fuller manifestation of humanity. The very nature of existence is like a progressing cycle: a fragment of humanity is grasped and made concrete through a project and action. The universal is made individual, and the self becomes determinate. Now, however, the process has come full circle, the finite bounds of individual appropriation of the infinite must be transcended anew. The subject grasps only a moment of the infinite, and therefore needs to escape its finite restrictions and pursue the self’s infinite aim.

4.2.3. The idea of the self.

A fundamental disproportion of a new sort has become evident. The person is now not only a disproportion of meaning

(148) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 103.

(149) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 104, emphasis mine.
and presence but also the duality of finite character and infinite happiness. Although the way in which the ideas of character and happiness have been developed seem to suggest their irreconcilability by demanding a concept of a "finite-infinite," Ricoeur explains that they form a synthetic unity in the idea of the person. "The person is the Self which was lacking to the 'I' of the Kantian 'I think,' to consciousness in general, the correlate of the synthesis of the object." (150) The idea of the person unifies our humanity and individuality into a self. Ricoeur now defines the person as a mediation of finite character and the infinite eschatological goal of happiness that is present in the will's quest for totality.

Like the dialectical unity on the level of theoretic reflection, the unity of the person is objective as well, a projection outside of human subjectivity in the form of a "personality." It is "a projected synthesis which seizes itself in the representation of a task, or an ideal of what the person should be." The idea of what the self should be or more appropriately what I should be is an indication that consciousness has now moved from consciousness in general to "self-consciousness." The task set before the person awakens consciousness from the generalities of an indifferent object to a consciousness that moves forward in becoming a self that is

(150) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 106.
"aimed at rather than experienced." (151) Self-consciousness sets existence in motion. It calls for the self to be affirmed in a process that attempts to grasp humanity through the portal of character. It reaches out in the hope of attaining the end and goal to which all the means and calculations of means are subordinate: or in other words, an end in itself...one whose value is not subordinate to any thing else.... (152)

Personality is the synthetic objective unity of the finite and infinite. It is the intentional object corresponding to a "subjective" activity projecting the personality of the person. Just as transcendental imaginativity served as the subjective origin for the synthetic unity of the thing, Ricoeur now looks for some activity of consciousness that generates the objective unity of the person. It must be able to account for both the finitude of desire and the infinite demand of reason, that is, capable of uniting the individual satisfactions of desire and the goal of true humanity in the ideal of the self. For Ricoeur, the feeling of respect as elucidated by Kant accomplishes this task.

Respect arises from our emotions, from the anthropological zone Kant called the Gemüt. Like transcendental imagination's "hidden art" of projection, feeling exhausts itself in its unifying function, making it unintelligible apart from the actual synthesis it projects. It is the feeling of belonging to two

(151) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 106.

(152) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 109.
realities which constitutes the unity of my very self, a unity that escapes my reflective grasp. Ricoeur explains that this feeling upon which the practical synthesis rests cannot be reflected without being destroyed. In respect I am an obeying subject and a commanding sovereign; but I cannot imagine this situation otherwise than as a twofold mode of belonging, "so that the person as belonging to the world of sense is subject to his own personality so far as he belongs to the intelligible world." Into this twofold belonging is written the possibility of discord and what is, as it were, the existential "fault" [Fäule, fault in geological sense (Translator’s note).] which causes man’s fragility. (153)

I belong to the universal and the individual, but I am not two realities, I am their unity, a single being who is guided by the internal law of reason and one who accomplishes its goal through my individuality: my existence is of one piece. Such unity results from the intentional structure of the Gemüt.

Respect is "the consciousness of my existence," and is nothing other than the positive relation that we are looking for of desire to the moral law and which Kant calls elsewhere the "destination," purpose, or assignation (Bestimmung) of man, which "infinitely raises my worth." Such is the root of respect: it flows "from the purposive destination assigned to my existence by this law," (aus der zweckmäßigen Bestimmung meines Daseins durch dieses Gesetz). (154)

The feeling of respect is therefore the transcendental origin of practical unity, it stands behind the ideal which leads the self forward to transcend all particularizations of humanity.

(153) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 114.

Let us now expand diagram "E" which concluded the first phase of the transcendental reduction to include not only the receptivity and meaning of the object but also the whole person as revealed in this second phase of practical reflection.

INFINITE HAPPINESS AND UNIVERSAL HUMANITY

INFINITE INDIVIDUALITY
Here we see that the previous relationship between the giving of meaning and the reception of the presence of the object has been expanded. The pattern, however, remains the same. Meaning is given to the object that is received, one might say that meaning has priority over the reception of presence. This is equally true with reference to objective personality. The infinite is given to the self but the self is expressed or made concrete through finite character, or to put it otherwise, the self is received in terms of a finite expression of the infinite. The infinite goal of humanity has priority over its individual manifestations, and this is indicated by the arrow proceeding downward from the will to the objective unity of the self. The arrow projecting downward from the self to the bodily nodes of power, indicates the reception of the infinite through the finite perspective of character. Now the will is firmly connected to involuntary reception (it will be recalled that the presence of the will in the meaning of the object was there by way of the verb, but its point of connection was left in doubt). The voluntary mode of consciousness is tied to the Gemüt, from which it stems, as do the involuntary modes of consciousness. The Gemüt is the mediating point of origin of both voluntary and involuntary modes of consciousness, the transcendental reference point for the objective unity of the self. Now, however, the infinite goal to which the meaning of the object moves, is characterized by the addition of universal humanity and happiness. The self's thrust forward receives fuller meaning. The abstract concept of the infinite is expanded to include the total drive of human existence, but this is always placed in the
context of finite individuality, the infinite’s paradoxical counterpart.

This pattern of the priority of the will over involuntary structures of consciousness is not new. Ricoeur’s description of the essential structures of consciousness had already revealed the will’s control in the process of self-determination. Now, however, the diagramatic representation of the voluntary cycle of self-affirmation (diagram "D") and the practical synthesis of personality overlap. Although the pattern is the same, transcendental reflection adds a new dimension to the anthropological picture by giving purpose to the process of self-affirmation. Whereas eidetic analysis uncovered the reciprocity and essential unity of the voluntary and involuntary, reflection on the aim of self-affirmation has revealed the end goal of true humanity and happiness to which the reciprocal means are directed.

However, as has been pointed out, Ricoeur’s interest lies in unfolding an anthropology which will not only be able to explain the phenomenal unity, but also the structural condition that gives rise to non-coincidence and evil. If transcendental reflection would stop here, short of uncovering the total disproportion and transcendental origin of the "self," one might conclude that unity alone results from the process of self-affirmation, for how could disunity result from someone who is in essence a synthetic unity right to the very core of his being. Therefore Ricoeur takes the process of reflection a step further to reveal that the transcendental origin of the self is in fact a
unity in dialectical tension, a fragile mediation of the infinite and finite poles of human existence which can account for the missed synthesis or broken unity of existence.

4.3. Affectivity.

In deepening the understanding of fallibility, Ricoeur returns transcendental reflection to the original disproportion that gave rise to its demand. The reality of lived misery experienced in the double negation of freedom and necessity has been lost in the two preceding stages of reflection. Both practical and theoretical reductions reveal the general or universal condition of human existence, but what is missing is its actual affect, the inner reality of the Gemüt and the feeling it generates for "me," in the actual process of self-determination and affirmation. The third and final stage of reflection attempts to reunite the transcendental with the existential, for without this return to the concrete, transcendental reflection would fail to uncover the lines of continuity between Ricoeur’s anthropological model and the existential reality of misery. For Ricoeur,

what is at stake in a philosophy of feeling is the very gap between the purely transcendental exegesis of "disproportion" and the lived experience of "misery." (155)

(155) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 165.
In order to accomplish this task, Ricoeur develops a philosophical understanding of affectivity in two parts: a) the horizontal relationship between the subjective center of the Gemüt and its intentional objects, and b) the vertical relationship to the two poles of the existential disproportion.

4.3.1. The horizontal structure of the Gemüt.

Like all the other modes of consciousness the Gemüt, and the affectivity or feeling it generates, is intentional. It horizontally extends itself through its own significations. Yet unlike the other capacities, the Gemüt receives an affect in return from the object it intends. The "objects or quasi-objects" of feeling are "values," (156) which the noetic activity of the Gemüt projects onto the objectivity of the thing and the person, but this intentionality is a very strange intentionality which on the one hand designates qualities felt on things, on persons, on the world and on the other hand manifests and reveals the way in which the self is inwardly affected. This paradox is quite perplexing: an intention and an affection coincide in the same experience, a transcending aim and the revelation of an inwardness. (157)

Here Ricoeur attempts to bring the self and the thing that stands objectively at a distance, over against the knowing subject, back into a direct relationship with the Cogito. The dualism of subject and object which the first two stages of transcendental reflection have established, is overcome by recapturing objectivity through affective attachment in this third stage.

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(156) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 135.
(157) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 127.
Feeling is understood... 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.... [Indeed] feeling is the privileged mode through which this pre- and hyper-objective relation is revealed. (158)

Objectivity is brought back into the realm of subjectivity through the projection of values or felt qualities that rest on both things and persons. Both value and objectivity are simultaneously projected on the same object forming a dialectical unity of subject and object. The Gemüt extends itself at the same time as receiving the affect of its intended objects. Hence, feeling can be defined only by this very contrast between the movement by means of which we "detach" over against us and "objectify" things and beings, and the movement by means of which we somehow "appropriate" and interiorize them. (159)

Values are therefore projected on "the very things 'towards which' our desires approach, 'far from which' they withdraw, 'against which' they fight...." The values of "the lovable, the hateful, the easy and the difficult," are projected on the very "things and beings" that stand objectively opposite the subject, returning them to the realm of a felt existence. Therefore any question of a new dualism arising between value and objectivity is immediately answered. The transcendental unity of the objectivity of the object and the personality of the person do not stand over against the subject, but now are understood as affecting the subject, so that the dialectic of the finite and infinite become a lived instead of a cognitive reality. This

(158) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 129.
(159) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 134.
unity is so essential to Ricoeur’s entire investigation of the will that he calls it "the corner-stone of our whole reflection." (160) If the subjective involvement in objectivity could not be established, one could never return from the transcendental to the existential and explain the felt reality of misery that results from the double negation of freedom and necessity.

4.3.2. The vertical structure of the Gemüt.

The intentionality of the Gemüt is not merely expressed on a horizontal plane but is also stratified, or vertically expressed to correspond with the disproportion of the infinite and finite poles of the human condition. Similar to the synthetic unity of the person, the Gemüt mediates between finite feelings of vital desire and infinite feelings of happiness which Ricoeur also labels as human spirituality. This relationship can be metaphorically expressed as vertical and always bipolar in character, looking above to the infinite and below to the finite. Ricoeur states that one does not

start...with the simple but with the dual; not with the elementary, but with the polar....Man’s humanity is that discrepancy in levels, the initial polarity, that divergence of affective tension between the extremities of which is placed the "heart." (161)

The "extremities" of finite/infinite dialectic return, in affective form, to the Cogito, to the noetic center of activity responsible for their objective projection. Hence the "strange

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(160) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 130.

(161) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 140.
intentionality" of feeling is not only horizontally extended but vertically stratified to the very finite and infinite limits of human existence.

It is here, in the extreme difference of the poles of existence, that the genesis of the self-affirming process of double negation and the structural condition for brokenness is found. Value is not simply accorded to just the two poles, but is projected in a whole host of qualitative layers, ranging from the absolutely involuntary finitude of existence to the very infinite voluntary quest for true humanity. The higher layers having greater value than the lower. The value projected on the "objects and beings" that enhance the pursuit of true humanity are ascribed greater value than those concurrent with finitude, such as the objects of pleasure and desire in and of themselves. For Ricoeur the higher values hold a unique place, they lead the process of self constitution forward, out of the confines of finitude to greater realizations of true humanity. By casting a glance upwards and forwards in pursuit of our rational aim, humankind transcends the decay of finite existence and passes into the realm of continuing existence. Ricoeur calls this the realm of being, "not the Entirely-Other but the medium or primordial space in which we continue to exist." (162)

Existence is set in motion by spiritual affectivity, by the "fundamental feeling" of belonging, or the "Eros through which we are in being." (163) We are called to transcend our finitude by

(162) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 156.

(163) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 156.
"atmospheric feelings" such as "delight, joy, exultation, serenity," (164) feelings of happiness that arise with our participation in the "primordial space" of universal humanity. They command and guide the entire thrust of self-affirmation to "ek-sist," to live in the light and freedom that such feelings give. With their affect the person is assured that he is in the way of reason, that the self is heading in the direction of true and meaningful humanity.

It is precisely at this point that the principle of fallibility is revealed. All decision and action needed to attain a greater manifestation of humanity is limited by the finitude of character and perspective. The infinite is limited by and expressed through the vitality of desire and bodilyness.

The objective self is the synthesis of universality and individuality, and the affectivity which it generates, reveals a difference between the feeling of belonging to universal being and the feeling of belonging to vital finitude.

Its function of interiorizing, the inverse of that of the objectifying proper to knowing, shows that the same human duality which is projected in the synthesis of the object is reflected in conflict. (165)

The Gemüt is thus torn apart by conflict. Ricoeur explains that the height of the feeling of belonging to being ought to be the feeling in which what is most detached from our vital depth—what is absolute, in the strong sense of the word—becomes the heart of our heart. (166)

The heart must be centered on the infinite aim of happiness.

(164) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 159.

(165) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 161-162.

(166) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 160.
However, due to the fact that it is a composite of finite and
infinite affectivity, tied to both the voluntary and involuntary
modes of consciousness, the heart battles between their demands.
The Gemüt struggles to mediate the dialectical tension that
exists between the infinite that knows no end, and the finite
which is satisfied with the moment. The demand for spiritual
happiness forever transcends the vital demands for pleasure, yet
it is always through finitude that the infinite is attained.
Therefore, the center of affectivity, the very heart of the
person, is torn apart. "Feeling gives rise to a new cleavage, of
the self from the self," or a split between the voluntary and
involuntary. Because the infinite end is never given except
through finite means, the quest for unity is always fallible,
subject to error, brokenness; for how can finitude, which is
satisfied with the moment, express the totality of the infinite
goal of humanity other than in a broken and fragmented way?
Ricoeur sums it up this way:

The disproportion of feeling gives rise to a new
mediation, that of the thumos, of the heart.
In the order of feeling this mediation corresponds to
the silent mediation of the transcendental imagination
in the order of knowledge. But whereas the
transcendental imagination is entirely reduced to the
intentional synthesis, to the project of the object
before us, this mediation is reflected in itself in an
indefinite affective quest wherein is evinced the
fragility of the human being. It seems, then, that
conflict is a function of man’s most primordial
constitution; the object is synthesis; the self is
conflict. The human duality outruns itself
intentionally in the synthesis of the object and
interiorizes itself affectively in the conflict of
subjectivity. Even if it is true that the real
conflicts which stake out affective history are
accidents, in the literal sense of the word, random
encounters between our effort, our power of affirmation
and the forces of nature, or the familial, social and
cultural environment, the fact remains that all these
external conflicts could not be interiorized if a latent conflict within ourselves did not precede them, did not gather them in and bestow upon them the note of inwardness which it has from the outset. No conflict between ourselves and some process susceptible of conferring upon us an assumed personality could be introjected if we were not already this disproportion of \( \text{bios} \) [bios] and \( \text{logos} \) [logos], of living and thinking, of which our "heart suffers the primordial discord. (167)

This is why unity is always aimed at, the structural core of existence is disproportionate, held together in dialectical tension that only aims at unity in the dynamic process of self-affirmation. There is no fixed unity in itself, but only tension between the poles that constitute the flow of existence. Hence the conflict of the heart does not merely present the possibility of failure, of falling short of the intended goal, but evinces a fundamental brokenness of existence itself. Indeed, unity is the fundamental possibility of existence, our essential condition, or the norm for existence, but conflict or the principle of fallibility makes unity achievable only through a fully intergrated reciprocity of the voluntary and involuntary modes of consciousness. Decision founded on carefully scrutinized motives, and the fulfilment of choice by means of a body readied for action, only represent ideal mediations. The reality of existence, however, is one where missing the mark and failing to balance and intergrate spiritual and vital demands is simply the rule. Finitude can never fulfill the demands of the infinite, and therefore unity is always an aim. The self must be continually affirmed, but this can only be done in the moment.

The process of self-affirmation, is thus a broken process that perpetually strives for unity.

We can now modify and complete our diagramatic representation of Ricoeur's anthropology as follows:

DIAGRAM "G"
In the above diagram, there are only two basic differences from that (diagram "F") which concluded the section on practical reflection. The first is the dual direction of the arrows representing the various modes of consciousness. Affectivity is the return flow of the intentional thrust of the Cogito. It turns the objectivity of "things and beings" back to the center of consciousness through the felt qualities projected onto them, and this is indicated with the dual direction of the arrows representing the various modalities of the Cogito, and by the two large horizontal arrows at the top and bottom of the diagram.

The second modification is the separation of the upper and lower bifurcations. Here the mediating point of unity is split apart, not fully realized as indicated by the dashed lines. The poles of existence are held together, however, by the center of conflicting affectivity, which Ricoeur calls the Gemüt. Through the dialectical tension that arises between finitude and infinitude, the person is forced forward in self-affirmation to establish a synthetic unity or mediation between extremes.

What these diagrams have attempted to convey is the continuing or ongoing character of the self. A static model of existence would fail to incorporate the developmental character of Ricoeur's anthropology. The philosophy of the will tries to make clear that the self is a continual process, and any attempt to conclude this description with a definitive statement of the self-in-total lies outside the dialectic of infinite freedom and finite nature. For Ricoeur, the person is engaged in a fragile process from beginning to end, a process where brokenness is an ever present reality.
5. FALLIBILITY AND EVIL: RIDDLE AND MYSTERY.

5.1. Self-affirmation and Fault.

Now that we have examined the major components of Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology, perhaps we would be well served if all the different anthropological dimensions could be drawn together in a concise summary that focuses on the task of self-affirmation.

Ricoeur primarily focuses on the fundamental components of human consciousness and their relationships. Using a phenomenological method of analysis, he uncovers the various modalities of consciousness that are involved in self-affirmation or human self-development. This is a total function of the Cogito, that manifests itself in three stages: decision, action, and consent. In each stage of the cycle of self-affirmation one modality in particular plays a leading role. The will or as Ricoeur likes to call it "the voluntary one," is the primary agent of consciousness. The will controls the process by deciding, acting, and consenting, on the basis of involuntary functions of consciousness that give rise to 1) motives for decision, 2) a body readied for action, 3) and an absolute involuntary that must be consented to. Through a process of involuntary inclination, the voluntary mode of consciousness gives the self definition. I decide, act, and consent by specific choices and actions that are indelibly stamped with my subjectivity. Decisions and actions are not things that I possess but the very definition of who I am. The cycle of self-affirmation means that some motives are passed by and others
chosen, that I act on the basis of a specific body readied for action, and consent to a very specific form of individuality that restricts both decision and action. Self-affirmation forms human self-identity in my decision, action, and consent. It gives the self an outward thrust, a forward momentum of concrete monuments testifying to the self’s progressive development. By going out of itself the self affirms its identity and being, and this initiative is taken by the will.

Each stage of the cycle of self-affirmation progressively reveals a fuller picture of the structure of consciousness. Decision, which Ricoeur believes to be the first phenomenon of volitional consciousness, manifests the most elementary relationship of intentionalities. Voluntary and involuntary modalities of consciousness are reciprocally related through a mediating function. In decision, imagination mediates between the involuntary reception of values that incline the will to decide and the will itself. The construction of images separates the individual reception of sensations from its concrete situation, giving it a universal character appropriate for the will’s evaluation.

This pattern is repeated with respect to action. An involuntary body is made available for the will to command through the modality of emotion. Now, however, the list of modalities is expanded. In decision, only those modes of consciousness that were involved in the theoretic consideration of values came to light. Eidetic analysis of action uncovers a more complete picture of consciousness by disclosing the remaining modes necessary for the self’s outward thrust of self-
determination.

The reciprocal structure of consciousness begins to break down in the final phase of the process of self-affirmation. With consent, the will must accept the concrete realities imposed on it by the absolute involuntary. Here the reciprocity of the voluntary and involuntary begins to disappear from the horizon of phenomenological analysis. The self attempts to affirm itself beyond the strictures of individuality, beyond the sedimentation of a particular character, unconscious, and life. The self negates itself by saying "No!" to the stagnation of process that concrete finitude brings. By transcending involuntary negative affectivity the "self" is affirmed. The analysis of consent reveals a break in the mediatorial process brought about by imagination and emotion. The will affirms the self by refusing to accept the consequences of human individuality, hence a rift becomes evident between the voluntary and involuntary structures of consciousness.

Ricoeur maintains, however, that the fault or rift cannot be identified with some form of anthropological dualism. Although the eidetic analysis of consent does in fact reveal a breach in the reciprocal process of self-affirmation, the will can only carry out the affirmation of self-identity through the involuntary structures of consciousness. Therefore both voluntary and involuntary modes of consciousness are necessary for the self to affirm and continue its being. Imagination and emotion still mediate, linking voluntary and involuntary modalities together, but what they mediate is subject to
acceptance or refusal. Structurally, the will can only carry out its intentions by means of its involuntary foundation. Even though the will attempts to break free from involuntary limitations, it can only do so on the basis of involuntary motivation and a body readied for action. Ricoeur believes that the fault appears not as a dualism between modalities of consciousness but rather as a tension in the cycle of self-determination and indetermination, between the infinite self and its finite counterpart which it negates in its effort to affirm its being above and beyond concrete particularity.

Although Ricoeur laments this state of human existence with exclamations of the "sorrow of finitude," he nevertheless insists that the breach is not an abnormal condition foreign to the essential structure of existence. The fault is the focal point of his entire anthropology, giving the self its forward momentum. The breach is a constitutive component of the self and therefore needs to be incorporated into the philosophic picture of the human existence.

Through the use of transcendental reflection Ricoeur elaborates on the meaning of the breach, detailing how it serves in propelling the self forward in self-affirmation. Again in this analysis imagination and emotion mediate in the theoretic and practical modes of consciousness, except now a fault or breach becomes evident not only in the process of self-affirmation, but in the very function of these unifying modalities.

The first manifestation of the fault appears in the objectivity of intentional objects. All objects are received and
given meaning. The senses receive the concrete appearance of the
object, and speech gives it universal meaning. Speech aims at
the infinite but is limited to a concrete perspective, to the
finite. Hence the objectivity of all intentional objects reveals
a break or fault between an infinite meaning and finite
reception.

For Ricoeur, however, the objectivity of objects is never
received without meaning given. Objectivity is a synthetic
phenomenon of consciousness, a product of the unifying
transcendental imagination. The imagination mediates between the
infinite and finite poles of objectivity, it balances and holds
them together in a dialectical unity that manifests a breach in
the center of its intentionality.

This fault is not limited to the realm of intentional
objects. As in the cycle of self-affirmation where the
consideration of values for decision is fulfilled in action, so
to is the theoretic synthesis completed in a practical synthesis
which also manifests a fault. On this level of transcendental
analysis the synthetic union of finite and infinite poles seen in
the objectivity of objects is transcended. The self that is
aimed at, which is affirmed above involuntary negation, is united
to the concrete self on a practical level of synthesis. Here
again the fault appears in the balance between finite factuality
and infinite possibility, but on a larger scale. The whole
person is involved in this practical synthesis of action. In
action all the modalities of consciousness come into play, and
the characteristic polarity of the infinite and finite receives
new meaning.

The synthesis produced in action is that of the projected "self," mediated through the feeling of respect. The infinite self is a truer and fuller manifestation of happiness and humanity. Since Ricoeur associates happiness with the infinite demand of the self to transcend the finite limitations of its being, the very thrust of self-affirmation is a quest for happiness that can never be captured by any finite realization. The self aims at the infinite, but this can only be carried out through the finite limitation of human character. The self is a synthesis, a fragile unity of an infinite demand and finite appropriation. Hence on this level, the fault appears as a dynamic polarity of happiness and character, and as such is responsible for the forward thrust of the self in continual affirmation above and beyond any limitations that character, historical facticity or the unconscious might impose.

The eidetic analysis of consciousness revealed the "sadness" of finitude, that is, the negating power of the absolute involuntary which the voluntary mode of consciousness negates in an attempt to affirm the self. The analysis of consent exposed a lived tension between the self that I am and the self I want to be. Ricoeur gives philosophical expression to this lived reality in the final stage of transcendental analysis: human affectivity. The fault is most vividly expressed here at the Gemüt or heart of the person. It is here that we see the genesis and power of self-affirmation. The self affirmed in action remains external to the lived reality of human existence, but transcendental analysis of the heart brings the lived reality of conflict
Feeling, the affect of the emotive modality of consciousness, sets the self in motion by producing "atmospheric feelings" of joy and delight when the self is moving in the direction of the infinite, when it affirms itself over and above its finitude. Fundamental feelings of belonging to being give the self the reason and desire to transcend finitude, and this reveals the fault. For it is only by means of human vitality with its contingent and finite pleasures that the self can be affirmed. Thus on the one hand the self is pulled in the direction of the infinite; on the other hand the self is not only pulled towards the finite, but can only fulfill the demand for being by means of the finite limitations imposed on the self by its own human nature. The Gemüt is therefore filled with conflict and tension. It is torn between the feelings of belonging to being and the vital feelings for finite pleasure. Feeling reveals the fault most acutely, as a dialectical tension of infinite and finite demands.

For Ricoeur, both eidetic and transcendental analysis uncover the fault as the central dimension of humanity. The fault, in the process of self-affirmation, has the meaning of "fallibility," and as the title of part two, book one, of the Philosophy of the Will suggests, is the quintessential meaning or definition of human existence. To be human is to be "fallible," not primarily in the moral sense but in the structural sense of the word. Existence means fragility, a delicate balance of an infinite end and finite means, where the person is "always in
process but never completed." (168) This is the conflict of self-affirmation; however, the fallible process of self-affirmation is also the unity of our being. In the cycle of self-affirmation, human self-identity oscillates between determination and indetermination, between an "originating affirmation" and an "existential difference." Human fallibility, therefore, has the meaning of "limitation" or "human mediation" between the originating power that constitutes our being and the involuntary negation that gives humanity its individuality. Since "the originating affirmation becomes man only by going through the existential negation that we called perspective, character, and vital feeling," (169) the person can only be defined as a fragile mediation between an infinite goal and its finite realization. Ricoeur explains:

..."limitation"...is immediately synonymous with human fragility. This limitation is man himself. I do not think man directly, but I think him through composition, as the "mixture" of originating affirmation and existential negation. Man is the Joy of Yes in the sadness of the finite. (170)

The truth of human existence is, for Ricoeur, this dynamic process, "the becoming of an opposition." (171) Unity can, therefore, only be found in the intentional thrust of

(168) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 209.
(169) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 209.
(170) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 215.
(171) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 216.
consciousness, in the process of self-affirmation; for it is in
the intentional synthesis of meaning and perspective, happiness
and character, and spirituality and vitality that the person
lives, moves and has her being. Without this synthetic union to
characterize humanity, freedom would either be boundless or
nature absolutely determinate. For Ricoeur it is only by freely
deciding, acting, and consenting on the basis of our
individuality that humanity can best be understood. Structurally
"in himself and for himself man remains torn
[Déchirement]," (172) but the person is intentionally united if
thought, will, and action function within the limits set out by
transcendental analysis. To be human is to mediate, and to
mediate is to balance the poles of a fragile dialectic, to
continually form synthetic unities as the self affirms its being.

5.2. Philosophical Anthropology and Evil.

This picture of human existence is the backdrop against
which Ricoeur understands abnormality and evil. The unity of
existence, as a dynamic process of continual affirmation, is the
paradigm he uses to uncover the nature and character of the human
capacity to commit evil.

As noted in our introduction, Ricoeur defines evil as a
deviation from an original innocence, but not a radical
alteration of the structure of humanity. He writes:

...evil, however positive, however seductive, however

(172) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 216.
affective and infective it may be, cannot make a man something other than a man; infection cannot be a defection, in the sense that the dispositions and functions that make the humanity of man might be unmade, undone, to the point where a reality other than the human reality would be produced....we shall understand that evil is not symmetrical with the good, wickedness is not something that replaces the goodness of a man; it is the staining, the darkening, the disfiguring of an innocence, a light, and a beauty that remain. However radical evil may be, it cannot be as primordial as goodness. (173)

As a deviation from the good and innocent, evil is defined as missing "the synthesis of the object, the synthesis of humanity in itself and...[the self's] own synthesis of finitude and infinitude." (174) Furthermore, even the place from which evil arises, Ricoeur attributes to this "good" structure. The fault not only propels the self forward in its aim for unity but also presents us with the originating locus of evil itself.

This dual function of the fault gives new meaning to the term fallibility. The fault not only expresses the fragile mediation of human existence, that is, the person’s "essential fallibility...[which is] ultimately sought within this structure of mediation between the pole of his finitude and the pole of his infinitude," (175) but also gives positive ethical content to successful mediations and negative content to those unsuccessful attempts at unity. Hence fallibility carries with it both structural and ethical meaning. The person is fallible, that is,
faulted or split, and because of this structural fault has the potential to commit ethical faults. This distinction is of great importance, the failure to recognize Ricoeur's two uses of the term can lead to a confused interpretation of the meaning of fallibility.

The question remains as to what Ricoeur could mean with this double use of the term "fault"? Does not the structural potential to commit evil imply a causal connection between the essentially innocent and good structure of fallibility and evil acts that arise from that structure? If both the goodness of self-affirmation and the evil of a missed synthesis arise out of man essential structure, does this not therefore mean that goodness is somewhat suspect, that innocence implies guilt? This paradox is compounded by the fact that Ricoeur on the one hand insists that evil is a free but absurd choice not necessitated by any dimension of our humanity, and on the other hand states that fallibility is the structural feature of humanity from which evil arises. For Ricoeur ethical fault presupposes a structural fault; however, structural disproportion does not presuppose ethical negativity, evil is always set into a model of innocence and measured by it, or as Ricoeur puts it "However primordial badness may be, goodness is yet more primordial." (176)

When one pays careful attention to this distinction between structural and ethical fault a subtle qualification comes to

(176) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. 222.
light. Structural fault or fallibility is designated as "the constitutional weakness which makes evil possible." (177) The fault which transcendental reflection uncovered in imagination and emotion (or the Gemüt) is now seen not only as a process of synthetic mediation but as a point of weakness which presents the self with the possibility of failure. The structural fault becomes the "occasion," the "region," "the point of least resistance," "the power to fail," and the "capacity" to commit evil. Failure and evil become the "accomplishment of weakness." (178) The structure of fallibility is no longer "the undifferentiated keyboard upon which the guilty as well as the innocent man might play," (179) but the ontological poverty of existence. "To say that man is fallible is to say that the limitation peculiar to a being who does not coincide with himself is the primordial weakness from which evil arises." (180)

Hence the essentially good and innocent structure of humankind is nevertheless ontologically flawed and weak. "And yet evil arises from the weakness only because it is posited." (181) This is the meaning of the reality of evil. All decision, choice and action result from voluntary freedom.

(177) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. xix.
(179) Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, p. xvi.
Through the mediation of imagination and emotion the will can either be properly guided by infinite ends or lose itself in finite means. Although the self suffers the ontological blow of fallibility, failure is always a free choice, this is the structure of humanity which eidetic analysis has revealed, all action is intentionally chosen. The possibility of evil that fallibility presents, shows the "lines of force and weakness" between human fallibility and ethical fault. (182) Because the person is free and always responsible for the self that it affirms, evil must also be seen as the result of a decision, choice and action. It is only in the light of the lines of continuity extending from the self's affirming thrust forward that evil can be seen as a possibility, a choice among others.

This relationship between freely chosen evil and an innocent although weakened anthropological structure is quite puzzling. On the one hand Ricoeur wants to point to the locus or place of origin in the human constitution where evil arises, yet on the other hand he attempts to place evil completely within the realm of freedom not necessitated by any structural disposition for downfall. He explains that "between this possibility and the reality of evil, there is a gap, a leap: it is the whole riddle of the fault." (183) Ricoeur sets the anthropological structure of fallibility in radical opposition to evil committed at the

(182) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 220.

(183) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 217.
same time as showing the lines of continuity. This is indeed a riddle. Although Ricoeur insists that there is no causal connection between the two, one wonders if the "leap" is commensurate with the anthropological structure of self-affirmation. It seems to me that Ricoeur simply asserts with very little foundation that a gap lies between fallibility and evil, when in fact his picture of the process of self-affirmation can easily lead one to conclude that evil and digression are natural consequences of human existence.

5.3. Evil: The Puzzling Riddle.

If evil is defined as the contrast of unity, or the missing of the finite-infinite synthesis, a rather large problem arises in Ricoeur's picture of normative human existence. As we have already noted, for Ricoeur anthropological unity is found in the cyclical process of determination and indetermination. Through self-affirmation the self becomes determinate, a concrete unity of finite and infinite poles of existence. However, with new motives arising and the escape of the infinite from finite sedimentation, the self becomes indeterminate and in need of reaffirmation. The self is a restless process of reaching forward towards the infinite to escape indetermination, and it is precisely here that difficulty arises. What could Ricoeur possibly mean by unity if every synthesis needs to be transcended? Since by definition the infinite can not be made finite, any form of synthetic unity does not seem to be within the scope of human possibility. The syntheses of self-affirmation fall short of complete realization. They are
incomplete or perhaps broken attempts at anthropological unity, and therefore in need of continual transcendence. If this is the case, the unity of human existence can never be found in the active process of self-affirmation, for all attempts at self-determination miss the mark and fail to form a complete synthesis. Is unity to be found, then, in the self’s transcending aim forward, simply as an idea to sought after? Is this the meaning of Ricoeur’s statement that the self is "always in process but never completed?" (184) This would seem so, but one can hardly comprehend why the essential structure of human existence, which has been given the labels of innocent and good, is understood as aiming for unity that lies outside the realm of possibility. Can such a definition of human existence claim "goodness" and still remain innocent, particularly when evil is defined as missing the very same synthesis that self-affirmation fails to achieve? And if this is so, is not Ricoeur’s claim of a gap existing between fallibility and ethical fault more correctly understood as a logical step rather than a "leap," that is, the consequence of an anthropology that ultimately fails to clearly distinguish evil and the dynamic process of self-affirmation? The answer would seem to be ‘Yes!’ Although Ricoeur’s posits a leap between evil and fallibility, the unfortunate consequence of trying to show the lines of continuity between his anthropological scheme and evil results in the loss of innocence.

(184) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 209.
and makes the human condition truly a state of weakness, forever at a loss to reach a complete synthesis.

Perhaps the root of this problem can be found in the very nature of Ricoeur’s attempt to give philosophical conceptuality to the phenomena of evil. By his own admission evil is absurd, not supposed to be, and hence not part of the normal patterns of human experience,

for fault, we said, is not a feature of fundamental ontology similar to other factors discovered by pure description, e.g., motives, powers, conditions and limits. Fault remains a foreign body in the eidetics of man. (185)

Evil is posited by free choice, there is no reason why a person should deliberately choose and act out that which is counter to the process of self-affirmation. By recognizing evil as absurd, it ultimately becomes unintelligible, foreign to the ontological character of human existence. Evil can be observed, felt, and confessed; but can it be stitched into the fabric of life? Once evil is made intelligible by means of fallibility or any other feature of our humanity it becomes an ordered element in the structure of existence, part of the way humanity is supposed to function. By placing the locus of human evil in the condition of fallibility, Ricoeur gives evil a small but nevertheless rational foothold in the structure of human existence. He gives it a place, which one can point to and say, ‘there lies the cause: the human weakness of fallibility,’ without which humankind would

never have fallen.

Ricoeur, himself, readily admits this: "With the concept of fallibility, the doctrine of man approaches a threshold of intelligibility wherein it is understandable that evil could 'come into the world' through man." (186) Although, for Ricoeur this is "by no means a decision concerning the root origin of evil, but is merely the description of the place where evil appears and from where it can be seen," (187) it nevertheless tends to removes the absurd character of evil by making it somewhat intelligible. Even though Ricoeur insists that evil is the result of a free and absurd choice, his concept of fallibility takes the responsibility for evil out of the hands of human freedom and places it within the person's constitutional makeup.

But does this mean that there are no redeeming features of Ricoeur's anthropology and his approach to the problem of evil? By no means. Ricoeur offers us a picture of human existence that is convincing on numerous points. But, perhaps the greatest strength of his anthropology lies in its overriding concern for unity. The affirmation of the "goodness" of existence can only be made when all the dimensions of humanity are essential to the very task of living. Therefore, by describing humanity as a reciprocal interrelationship of parts or modalities which together, as a dynamic process, constitute the self, Ricoeur does


indeed present us with a model of the essential goodness of being. The meaning of existence is not reduced to one particular feature of our humanity. All modes of consciousness are essential, each play a role of significance, without which the self could not be affirmed. Hence, none of the modalities of existence are of lesser value than any other, all are necessary for the whole.

The strength of this concern for unity is echoed in Ricoeur's understanding of the body's relationship to consciousness. Rather than placing the body over against conscious existence, and thereby making it foreign to the Cogito, Ricoeur understands the body as part of consciousness. To be is to be bodily, this is who I am. I do not possess a body, it is not an object at a distance, nor a tool for use, but the condition for human existence, just as freedom, imagination, emotion, and sensation are conditions of our being. Although the body is distinguishable from thought as sensation is from imagination or any other dimension of existence, these abstractions are simply a shift of focus and not a separation of one modality from another. The various intentionalities of consciousness are distinguished only against the back drop of the totality of existence. Therefore the body is just as integral to the process of self-affirmation as a free will. Because humanity is a reciprocity of interrelated and interdependent centers of activity which together constitute the self, my body, and for that matter any mode of my being, can never be understood as something over against any other anthropological dimension. To
be human it to be a whole.

Such a description of the unity of being is essential for the affirmation of goodness and innocence. Our being is good, there is nothing defective or wrong with being human. To be human is good in and of itself. No feature of humanity suffers ontological indigence. Hence, Ricoeur is absolutely correct that the transition between the description of humankind’s essential goodness and the reality of evil can only be made by means of a "leap." There is no connection between goodness and evil, they are not symmetrical. We confess evil’s reality, but no reason for its origin is intelligible. To be sure, evil happened, it occurred and continues to occur, but here we must share Ricoeur’s assertion that goodness must always be understood as more primordial than evil. Therefore, evil can have no place in our constitutional makeup, it is not co-original with goodness, but "the staining, the darkening, the disfiguring of an innocence, a light, and a beauty that remain." (188) Only a "leap," neither rational nor irrational, can account for evil’s presence.

Between innocence and guilt, there can be no causal lines of continuity, evil simply happened.

But here we must part with Ricoeur’s anthropological formulation. Although, our present experience testifies to human fallibility, we should never understand the vision of innocence to cast a shadow on our essential goodness. By reading our

(188) Ricoeur, Symbolism of Evil, p. 159.
existential ambivalence onto our essential structure, Ricoeur, despite his best intentions to affirm the primordial character of goodness, ties evil, albeit in a limited way, to structure of human existence. By attributing evil, even by way of description, to the conflict of the heart, Ricoeur is forced to understand "goodness" as ontologically impoverished, and therefore the reason for downfall. Because humankind is understood as the fragile mediation of an infinite end and finite means, evil's presence becomes slightly more intelligible. Indeed, such an anthropological construction might be helpful as a heuristic device, or as a rational model to interpret our inability to live out the "good," but does this not ultimately reduce evil's radical character? If evil is truly absurd and has no place within human experience, why does Ricoeur find it even necessary to understand the very essence of life as allowing for its possibility? If evil is a "foreign body," (189) then we can never, by virtue of our confession and experience of evil’s reality, create a condition in the essential structure of humanity for its presence. This would be tantamount to saying humanity had already fallen before it fell. Evil happened, it had a beginning and continues to happen, but it can never be said to have a condition of possibility. This is the mystery of evil, it has no legitimate place in the structure of reality and yet it has invaded the whole of existence. Goodness truly is more

(189) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. xvii.
primordial than evil, and therefore evil cannot be given a condition for its being in the essential structure of "goodness," which by definition has no place for its destructive power.

Is this simply an inconsistency on Ricoeur's part, or is there a more fundamental reason for this conflation of evil and the dynamic structure of existence? For how is it possible that Ricoeur's affirmation of the goodness of life fails him despite his insistence that it is more primordial that evil? Perhaps the answer to this puzzling question can be found in Ricoeur's by now famous dictum, "the symbol gives rise to thought."

Ricoeur explains in the conclusion of The Symbolism of Evil (190) that the surplus of meaning found in symbol and myth, forms an interpretive basis for philosophical thought. Although the relationship between symbol and thought is cyclical, the symbol forms the creative pool of meaning for philosophic conceptualization. It is almost as if symbol and myth set the most elementary patterns for thought, or the central ideas from which philosophical thought is extrapolated.

If this relationship between symbol and thought is the process used by Ricoeur for the development of his own philosophical ideas, perhaps the relationship between anthropological weakness and evil can be understood more clearly by paying careful attention to its originating symbol and myth. Ricoeur, in the first chapter of Fallible Man, writes that

the whole precomprehension of 'misery' is already to be found in the myths of the Symposium, the Phaedrus and the Republic...[where] the soul...is the very movement from the sensible toward the intelligible, the rising towards being...the soul is in development with respect to being...it is...an aim...[a] tendency and tension. (191)

It is remarkable how similar this statement is to Ricoeur's own formulation of the structure of human existence. Even more striking, however, is Ricoeur's specific analysis of Plato's classic myth of the winged horses and the charioteer.

In point of fact, the Phaedrus links a myth of fragility to a myth of downfall; the fragility that precedes every fall is that of those teams of winged horses in the celestial procession which represent human souls. Prior to any fall, those souls are already composed, and their composition conceals a point of discord in the team itself. "The charioteer of the human soul drives a team, and one of the horses is beautiful, good and formed of such elements, whereas the make-up of the other one is quite the opposite." Thus, before the fall into a terrestrial body, there is a primordial incarnation: in this sense the gods themselves have a body, the body of the non-divine souls contains an inherent principle of heaviness and obstinacy. And the myth of fallibility, in the chiascuro and ambiguity, turns into a myth of fall. The teams mutually impede each other and founder in the eddies. The Wing which gave rise to the soaring climb crumples and falls. (192)

Has the appeal in Fallible Man to this myth set the tone of Ricoeur's philosophical anthropology? It would appear so. The dark horse finds its parallel in existential negation, in the limiting power of finitude that holds the self back from true happiness and totality. The good and noble steed continually


(192) Ricoeur, Fallible Man, p. 18-19.
obeys the command of the charioteer, likewise in Ricoeur’s anthropological model, the will follows the self’s quest for being. And the charioteer? He struggles like the Gemüt between the two horses to keep the soul moving, to balance the tension between vitality and spirituality.

Although such lines of continuity between symbol and thought can only be drawn with broad strokes, the similarity between Plato’s vision of human existence in this particular myth, and Ricoeur’s anthropological model is unmistakable. Therefore it should not be surprising to find Ricoeur’s anthropology bristling with problems analogous to those found in Plato. By placing the locus of evil in the desirous part of the soul, Plato’s anthropology cannot escape the tension between a downward pull of finitude away from being and the uplifting flight of eros which seeks being in the world of ideas. Although Plato, contrary to Ricoeur, identifies finitude with evil, this pattern remains the same in Ricoeur’s anthropology regardless of sophistication. The person is in and of itself torn, in process of reaching for being, but never arriving. By giving priority to the will in the pursuit and continual reaffirmation of being, Ricoeur’s anthropological model is subject to the same type of inner tension and conflict found in Plato’s myth of the charioteer. Finitude condemns the self to frustration, perspective limits, character confines, and vitality ties the self to this life, birth and death. The fragile mediation of existence holds the self back from passing through the heavenly vault of being, and is therefore torn apart by the demand for the infinite totality and finite particularity. By building on Plato’s ill-conceived
vision of human existence the anthropological die is already cast. Hence Ricoeur's model of a "good" and "innocent" structure of existence, ends up blurring the distinction between the dynamic process of existence and evil's disfiguring power in a manner similar to Plato. Even though he asserts that goodness is more primordial than evil, the result of the good process of self-affirmation is the same missed synthesis that characterizes evil deeds. By attempting to bring evil to the threshold of intelligibility Ricoeur's anthropological model has the unfortunate consequence of ultimately removing the responsibility for evil from free choice and places it on the essential dimension of human existence: the fragile mediation of self-affirmation.

Yet, despite this failure, Ricoeur's attempt to deal with this extremely difficult problem is most impressive. Few thinkers have displayed such keen insight and sensitivity with respect to the anthropological locus of evil. Although his anthropological model does not satisfy his own intentions, Ricoeur's work certainly merits continual reflection. We too must join with Ricoeur on this arduous journey and struggle to uncover the essential and normative structures of human existence, guided by the simple but profound thought that, "However radical evil may be, it cannot be as primordial as goodness."
A. Primary Sources.


B. Secondary Sources.


