CONSENT AND CHARACTER

In

Paul Ricoeur's

Philosophy of the Will

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

FM ..... Fallible Man

FN ..... Freedom and Nature

FR ..... Freud

HT ..... History and Truth

MT ..... Methods and Tasks of a Phenomenology of the Will

PA ..... The Antinomy of Human Reality and the Problem of Philosophical Anthropology

PWA ..... Philosophy of Will and Action

SE ..... The Symbolism of Evil

UVI ..... The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limit-Idea

ABSTRACT

This study explores the concept of "consent" in the eidetic framework of Paul Ricoeur's philosophy of the will. Consent, the third 'moment' in the act of willing, emerges as the epitome of the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary in its patient acceptance of the triple involuntary: character, the unconscious and biological life. We shall concentrate on consent to character.

Chapter I examines Ricoeur's phenomenological method, accenting the notion of intentionality and the double bracketing imposed by the Husserlian method of pure description. Phenomenological bracketing eliminates the "natural standpoint" which tends to reduce the phenomena to their causal factors while eidetic bracketing removes the existential 'accidents' of the Fault and Transcendence, permitting access to the fundamental structures of the act of willing.

Chapter II shows how 'consent' differs from the theoretical stance of 'assent' in that it is an active adoption of the ineluctable 'situation' confronting us in deciding and acting. This adoption necessitates a return to the subject experiencing necessity, although it does not prohibit the use of objective indices provided by science since these serve diagnostically in the understanding of the 'corps propre'. In Chapter III, "caractère" is described as the finite mode of freedom, the perspective from which values are viewed. Consent to one's limited perspective enables

character to be assumed as one's own. Yet, consent is always on the verge of collapse. The synthesis of freedom and nature seems to elude phenomenological grasp and, in Chapter IV, we show Ricoeur's move from pure description towards active participation in existence and the invocation of a second Copernican Revolution, replacing subjectivity by Transcendence and hope.

Chapter V attempts to translate Ricoeur's eidetic adumbrations into an embryonic hermeneutic of the pegagogical process.

CHAPTER I

RICOEUR'S PHENOMENOLOGY

A. Eidetic Analysis and the Double Brackets

The goal of this study is to explore the concept of "consent" --- and, more particularly, consent to "character" --- as it is elaborated in Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy of the Will, a still-incomplete, three-volume enterprise. The first volume, Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire, published in 1950 --- which will serve as the main focus of our own analyses --- proceeds within what is called an "eidetic" framework, wherein the Husserlian method of pure description requires that one abstract from the factual in order to reach the fundamental "eidos" or meaning. Thus, to articulate the fundamental structures of willing, one takes the practical life of consciousness "as it is given" (MT, 216) by going, in the Husserlian tradition, "zu den Sachen selbst" --- "to the things themselves" --- beyond any presuppositions or philosophical theories.

By abstracting from whatever is empirical --- as studied in an empirical psychology, for instance --- and from the symbolic --- as studied by ways of myths --- Ricoeur hopes to uncover the most basic, the "eidetic", dimension of man's act of willing. What is abstracted, precisely, is the ethical reality implied in man's servitude (what Ricoeur calls "la faute",

the existential rift or crack in man,[1] analagous to a geological fault[2]) and the metaphysical reality implied in man's vision of deliverance from this servitude (what Ricoeur calls "Transcendence"). Such a double abstraction is, as far as Ricoeur is concerned, "indispensable" (FN, 3), for,

> The method of abstraction, in spite of the danger of premature conclusion, is the sole means of posing the problem correctly and of showing that servitude and deliverance are things that happen to freedom. (FN, 33)

Thus, Ricoeur's philosophy of the will begins with a "bracketing" of both of these dimensions of everyday willing, by setting the two-fold accident aside for the moment, by parenthesizing the two aspects of the concrete volitive life which may be regarded as the twin root of human morality: man's awareness of sin and guilt, on the one hand, and, on the other, the tendency towards innocence expressed in an act of hope. The bracketing, the use of the Husserlian "epoche", is thus imposed on "the fault which profoundly alters man's intelligibility and ... Transcendence which hides within it the ultimate origin of subjectivity." (FN, 3)

It is, perhaps, unfortunate, that Ricoeur does not examine the nature of the fault more thoroughly than he does in his first volume. While it is true that the fault is one of those forms of consciousness which is to be

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[1] cf. Karl Jaspers, Reason and Existenz, translated by William Earle, Noonday, 1966, p. 91, wherein Jaspers speaks of "the crack in Being".

[2] cf. Charles Kelbley, "Translator's Introduction", FM, xiii, and translator's note, FM, 215; cf. also John David Stewart, "Paul Ricoeur's Phenomenology of Evil", in International Philosophical Quarterly, 9 (1969), p. 572, and Herbert Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1960, vol. II, p. 569.

bracketed, it is somewhat disconcerting to find continual intrusions of this phenomenon which, at least in Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire, is taken for granted. It must be especially frustrating for philosophers of an analytic persuasion, like Mary Warnock, who are averse to "unexamined assumption(s)" and complain that it is "tiresome to come across perpetual references to this unexplained phenomenon, which, in the end, one suspects may be a kind of theological assumption, an explanatory device, rather like the Fall."[3]

That this last suspicion is less than justified may be seen from an examination of Finitude et Culpabilité. However, it does nothing to bridge whatever gaps there are between the phenomenological and analytic schools to plunge into an already suspect methodology without attempting to specify the precise nature of one's assumptions. In any event, the double bracketing in Ricoeur's first volume is, precisely, "for the moment". It will permit the pure phenomenological description of these key functions (the essential "notes") of the will (decision and project, action and pragma, consent and situation), the formal structures of which are not directly dependent, according to Ricoeur, on either the fault or the relation to Transcendence. Indeed, in the second volume, wherein the brackets placed around the fault are lifted, a transition is effected from an "eidetics" of the will to what Ricoeur calls an "empirics", a study of willing "a posteriori". The first part of this tripartite volume, L'Homme Faillible, is concerned with

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[3] Mary Warnock, Review of "Freedom and Nature", in Philosophical Quarterly, 17 (1967), p. 279.

fallibility, the conditions of possibility (in a Kantian sense) of the fault, rather than with the fault directly; however, in the second part, La Symbolique du Mal, Ricoeur accomplishes the movement from fallibility to fault by means of a hermeneutics of various symbols and myths, primarily those of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, wherein man makes an "avowal" (FM, xviii) of his empirical, fallen (one would rather say, faulted) condition. The third part, not yet published, proposes an empirical study of human willing, the creation of a genuine philosophical anthropology,[4] which will, one gather, marshall the resources of the human sciences --- psychoanalysis, political science, educational psychology, etc. --- in the creation of a "philosophy of man". The anthropology with which Ricoeur is concerned is, it must be noted, a study of man qua man, 'man' in the widest sense, and is not to be confused with empirical --- 'cultural' and 'physical' --- anthropology, as we normally understand it, although findings from these sciences will, as we have intimated, be of service in the elaboration of the more total anthropology. Herbert Spiegelberg suggests that Ricoeur's work is "perhaps the greatest promise for (the) fulfillment" of such an anthropology.[5] Ricoeur proposes to start his anthropology from the evocative power

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[4] cf. PA, which is devoted to "the problem of philosophical anthropology". Many existentialists use the term in this way; cf. Martin Heidegger, Sein und Zeit, H 17 /Being and Time, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, London, SCM Press, 1962, p. 38/.

[5] Alexander Pfänder, Phenomenology of Willing and Motivation, translated by Herbert Spiegelberg, /Evanston, Illinois/, Northwestern University Press, 1967, p. 35.

of the symbol, epitomized in the celebrated aphorism, "Le symbole donne a penser". (SE, 325).[6]

In the final volume of his trilogy, Ricoeur intends to engage in a "poetics" of the will, revolving around the notion of poetry as "the art of conjuring up the world as created". (FN, 30). Here, it may be assumed, the lifting of the second "epoche", that suspending Transcendence, will permit a new dimension of the Cogito to emerge and will, as Vansina puts it, "orient the will towards a creative Salvation".[7] Ricoeur speaks of "the assurance of a unique Creation beyond the rent of freedom and nature" which accompanies, as hope, our search for "a conciliation between the voluntary and the involuntary." (FN, 34).

B. Eidetic Description

Throughout this essay, we will be concerned with the "eidetics" of the will, a consideration of the most fundamental structures of the act of willing,

> the structures which are the fundamental possibilities offered equally to innocence and to the fault as a common keyboard of human nature on which mythical innocence and empirical guilt play in different ways. (FN, 26).

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[6] While most commentators seem to assume that this phrase is originative with Ricoeur, the author himself refers to it, on at least one occasion, as a Kantian "beau mot" --- cf. "Le Conflit des Hermeneutiques: Epistemologie des Interpretations", in Cahiers Internationaux de Symbolisme, 1 (1963), p. 163. I have not been able to locate the Kantian source to this date.

[7] Dirk F. Vansina, "Esquisse, Orientation et Signification de l'entreprise philosophique de Paul Ricoeur", in Revue de Metaphysique et de Morale, 69 (1964), p. 181.

The main purpose of Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire is to engage in a pure description of the voluntary and involuntary aspects of human existence and to understand these two elements. The voluntary aspect refers to man's own total activity of willing inasmuch as he is the agent of the willing process and includes deciding, acting voluntarily and consenting. The involuntary aspect has reference to the nature which willing confronts, especially man's own nature, his motives, his habits, his character, his unconscious and his biological existence in space and time.

Ricoeur's guiding methodological principle for his analyses is that the two elements can be understood only as reciprocal. We are inclined, he suggests, and the very formulation of our last paragraph confirms it, to think of freedom and nature as two by reason of the "double movement" by which thought, on the one hand, tends to relegate the life of the bodily and the entire involuntary to the realm of things while, on the other hand, "recoiling from its objects, (thought) tends to identify its own life ... with self-consciousness." (UVI, 94). To understand the voluntary and the involuntary as reciprocal is to battle against this posture of dualism which consciousness, especially post-Cartesian consciousness, tends to assume. "The involuntary is for the will and the will is by reason of the involuntary." (FN, 86). That is to say that ultimately one can be understood only by means of the other.

Ricoeur is at some pains to insist on the importance of description, as opposed to explanation, the latter understood in a naturalistic, reductionistic sense. Description he defines as "understanding in terms of (the) relation" of the voluntary and the involuntary. (FN, 5). To understand

("comprendre") is to take hold of a phenomenon in its totality, as it affects the experiencing Cogito, while to explain is to reduce the phenomenon to the causal factors which, in some manner, determine it. "Expliquer", for Ricoeur, is to explain away, to simplify and reduce the complex, rather than to understand it in all its complexity. This is the approach of empirical psychology which "led to building up man like a house, first laying down a foundation of a psychology of the involuntary, then topping these initial functional levels with a supplementary level called 'will'" (FN, 4). It is this 'natural standpoint' which must be bracketed by the phenomenological 'epoche', that standpoint which sees the world as a mass of things the behaviour of which can be reduced to the totality of causes influencing the behaviour in a given situation. (cf. FN, 222 ff.). What survives the bracketing (i.e. the phenomenological, as different from the eidetic, bracketing) is the experiencing Cogito in the first person, confronting radically and immediately the particular experience "as it is given". Thus, the Cogito seeks to grasp the experienced ("vécu") reality in the context of the structure of meaning which allows the experiencing consciousness to "understand" it. (FN, 296 ff.).

An instructive example of the contrast between description and explanation is given by Kohak, the translator of Ricoeur's first volume, in a recent article, wherein he cites the instance of the Biblical story of Ezekiel and his vision of a wheel within a wheel.[8] There have been many

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[8] Erazim V. Kohak, "Existence and the Phenomenological Epokhe" in Journal of Existentialism, 8 (1967), 26-7.

attempts to explain this vision --- as an early UFO, as a meteorological phenomenon, or as a psychological projection. But all such attempts go outside the phenomenon itself and fail to understand Ezekiel's experience, to grasp the meaning of the experience as it actually occurred to Ezekiel himself or to his listeners in hearing it related to them. Kohak reminds us that bracketing the explanations does not preclude their significance but they are irrelevant insofar as the experience in the first person is concerned.

This example helps to clarify the direction of Ricoeur's enterprise. What he is about, in short, is a description of man's freedom as it is experienced by man in his existential context, even though this context is not complete, --- the ethical and metaphysical implications have been suspended. Now, man wills (he exercizes his "freedom") in and through his body (his "nature"). Thus, while the fault may be bracketed to the advantage of a fundamental ontology, the fact of man's incarnation cannot be. Ricoeur sees the fact of incarnate existence as presenting a "paradox" and a "mystery" which is understandable, if at all, only in and through a description of the neutral sphere of the most fundamental possibilities of man, prior to any consideration of what he regards as the existential accidents of that incarnate existence, namely, sin and guilt, on the one hand, and the hope of transcending one's limitations, on the other. Here, Ricoeur is in the tradition of Gabriel Marcel; indeed, "meditation on Gabriel Marcel's work lies at the basis of the analyses" in Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire. (FN, 15).

It is obvious that Ricoeur does not wish to bracket 'existence' in the sense that Husserl proposed in his transcendental reduction in his Meditations,[9] any more than Heidegger does, for whom phenomenology is conceived as "an analytic of existence".[10] In fact, for Ricoeur, every consideration drives him further away from "the famous and obscure transcendental reduction which, we believe, is an obstacle to genuine understanding of personal body." (FN, 4).

C. Intentionality

The method of attack is phenomenological and thus, by its very nature, is intentional, so that one reflects not so much on the act itself as on its correlate --- in our particular case, on "the willed" --- with the accent on the "noema" (the object-pole) rather than on the "noesis" (the subject-pole) of the intentional act of willing. It is "the centrifugal movement of thought turned toward the object" (FN, 42-3) that we are attempting to describe. It is the "visée", the aimed-at. This "noematic reflection" is a reflection on the object of the several intentional processes of practical consciousness, for every act of consciousness constitutes itself by the type of object to which it projects itself. What Ricoeur calls "the golden rule of Husserlian phenomenology" (FN, 6) is the

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[9] Edmund Husserl, Cartesian Meditations, translated by Dorion Cairns, Nijhoff, The Hague, 1960.

[10] Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, op. cit., p. 62.

dictum that "all consciousness is a consciousness of ...". What directs the pure description of the volitive life, then, is the search for "the willed", the correlate of willing.

The practice of the "noematic reflection", in the manner of Husserl, reveals three stages in the total act of willing --- deciding a project, performing a pragma and consenting to a situation. Ricoeur works out these three stages or "moments" in the one total act of the will by means of a phenomenological description. However, it seems that he is indebted to Descartes for the notion of the three "moments", as opposed to the traditional two, those of decision and action. Toward the end of the first volume, Ricoeur cites the Letter to Princess Elizabeth of August 4, 1645, in which Descartes transposes his three precepts in Discourse on Method into three maxims: deciding what to do and what not to do, executing one's decisions, without being waylaid by passion, and accustoming oneself to be content with what one has. There is, of course, a danger in seeing the three stages of willing in this abstract way. The will is not a series of acts. "In reality each moment of freedom ... unites action and passion, initiative and receptivity, according to a different intentional mode." (FN, 483; emphasis mine).

D. The Three 'Moments' of Willing

Noematic reflection reveals, in the first place, the fact that I decide. Whenever I will something, I form a project, an "empty" project, it is true, but a future projection, nonetheless, of a certain state of

affairs. I project myself towards an action which is to be done by me (and thus a decision is intentionally different from a command) and an action, moreover, which is within my power (and thus different, in intentionality, from a simple wish.) The intentional correlate --- the "noema" --- of the act of decision is the project which I propose. (cf. FN, 40 ff.). The project is the "action in the gerundive, the future pragma in which I am implicated (in the accusative) as the one who will do and who (in the nominative) is the one who can do it." (MT, 216). Thus, the project implies not only a reflexivity (Je me decide) but also an intentionality (Je me decide de ...).

One of the few lucid definitions of project which this writer has come upon is that given by Alexander Pfänder, a little-known phenomenologist, but one whom Ricoeur quotes on a number of occasions in Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire and whom, Spiegelberg says, he mentioned frequently at the Second Conference for Phenomenology at Lexington, Kentucky, in 1964.[11] Pfänder writes:

> In performing an act of willing the ego proposes to itself a certain way of behaving of its own, namely, to do something or not to do something. The proposed behavior is to be called the project. Thus a first part of the performance of the act of will is the intent of the will (Willensmeinung) or the consciousness of the project (Projektsbewusstein) which aims at a certain future behavior of one's own ego ... /the decisive element/ is the characteristic practical proposing. This proposing issues from the ego-center, not as an occurence but

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[11] cf. Herbert Spiegelberg in Alexander Pfänder, op. cit., p. xvi. I have, however, found only one direct reference to Pfänder in Ricoeur's published paper from that Conference. cf. PWA, p. 20.

> as a peculiar doing in which the ego-center, centrifugally, from inside itself, performs a mental stroke. This stroke does more than merely approve. By it the meant behavior of the self is proposed but not yet actually executed.[12]

The project is, precisely, "not yet actually executed". It is "empty", as we have said, inasmuch as it is an unreal thing which awaits its fulfillment, in the actual pragma, the correlate of the voluntary action.[13] The project becomes the pragma; the "to be done" becomes the "being done"; the project inserts itself into the world through my relatively docile body which responds to my "imperative".

Now, it would seem that these two practical acts exhaust the possibilities of willing. What else can there be in addition to deciding and acting? Ricoeur points out that there is a certain "residuum" from the analyses of deciding and acting, and it consists of an acquiescence, within the very deciding and acting itself, to that necessity "which /the Cogito/ can neither propose nor change." (FN, 7). It is Ricoeur's claim (and herein lies some of the boldness and novelty of his approach to the will) that, in order to make a free decision and execute a voluntary action, there is further required, in every instance, a consent to the triple inevitability

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[12] Alexander Pfänder, "Motives and Motivation" cited in Pfänder, op. cit., p. 22.

[13] In this essay we will, as a matter of convenience, use the word 'act' to refer both to the totality of the willing process and also to one or other of the three particular 'moments' we are describing. The term 'action' will be reserved to designate the second moment only --- i.e. the voluntary movement which accomplishes the pragma. Ricoeur does not make this distinction clearly.

presented by one's own humanity --- one's "charactère",[14] one's unconscious and one's circumscribed life. Our concern is with the first of these inevitabilities, with exploring what it means to consent to "character", understood as an unchangeable datum of being myself, without the moral overtones we normally associate with the word in English.

The "residuum" which points to the structure of consent can be seen in the overflow from Ricoeur's analyses of decision and action, particularly in terms of the involuntary dimensions thereof. The methodological option for considering the stages of willing in the particular order Ricoeur has chosen --- decision, action and consent --- is, we should point out, no mere arbitrary whim, for one proceeds thereby from that which is least voluntary to that which is the most --- from the relative to the absolute. The "rationale" for this ordering of topics is, as Hartmann indicates, "one of increasing strength of the involuntary, or, of increasing negativity over against the will."[15]

Now, although decision partakes least of the involuntary dimension, that dimension (i.e. the natural element --- the restriction) is never far removed; there are no decisions without motives. A pure description of the act of decision reveals that it is not just a question of deciding to but also of deciding because ... There is an evident reciprocity between the

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[14] This complicated French term will be explained in Chapter Three.

[15] Klaus Hartmann, "Phenomenology, Ontology and Metaphysics", in Review of Metaphysics, 22 (1968), p. 91.

voluntary (I freely decide to ...) and the involuntary (I decide, however, by reasons of certain motives which incline me to decide this rather than that). Motives --- such as needs, pleasure, pain, the easy, the difficult --- make a will actual; the will makes motives meaningful. This approach to the understanding of motivation is one aspect of Ricoeur's "Copernican Revolution" with respect to traditional psychology, which assumes that "need, habit, etc., have a meaning of their own to which the meaning of the will can be added if, that is, it is not derived from them" (FN, 4). For Ricoeur, motives "acquire a complete significance only in relation to a will which they solicit, dispose and generally affect, and which in turn determines their significance ... The involuntary has no meaning of its own." (FN, 4-5). Ricoeur "undertakes to start out from the will or from willing to make the involuntary understandable, instead of first describing the forms of the involuntary which would cover will as well."[16]

Ricoeur's monograph on motivation would make an interesting study by itself. It would, for instance, be revealing to compare it with a similar enterprise by R. S. Peters,[17] particularly since both insist so strongly against confusing motives with causes. They are both in the tradition of Pfander, who insists that "motives do not cause anything; they supply grounds."[18] In Ricoeur's terms, motives "incline without compelling". (FN, 71).

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[16] L. B. Geiger, "La Philosophe de la Volonte", in Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques, 38 (1954), p. 296.

[17] R. S. Peters, The Concept of Motivation, New York, Humanities Press, 1967.

[18] Pfander, op. cit., p. 38.

We cannot, in any event, succumb to the temptation to pursue this study here. Our main interest in motives, at this point, is to see how they are set over against decision as the involuntary to the voluntary, as making decisions legitimate, and to indicate how an analysis of decision and its motives provides an introduction to the notion of that residuum we call "consent".

Motivation appears as a legitimatization of decision. It is, at the same time, a limit to decision, and this in three ways. Firstly, motives present a particularity, the particularity of perspective, insofar as motivation is "the angle from which values will appear to a particular consciousness." (FN, 342). This perspective, analagous to that which is, perhaps, better known and more obvious in the case of perception, is what we (after Ricoeur) are labelling character. Secondly, motives suggest a certain incompleteness which, like particularity, is "irremediable". (ibid.). Every decision is a more-or-less arbitrary cessation of a chain of unclear possible projects. Thus, it is "never more than an islet of clarity in an obscure moving sea of unknown potentialities". (ibid.). They are unknown because they are unconscious and hidden. The unconscious prevents a total motivation; it "functions as a horizon of any system of motives." (ibid.).[19] Thirdly, motives point to a certain dependency with respect to biological life, to structure, growth and even death, that life which is the "given

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[19]The study of the unconscious in Ricoeur's first volume is considerably amplified in one of his latest works, a study on Freud; cf. FR, wherein he relates psychoanalysis to his own kind of symbolic hermeneutics.

which makes it possible that there can be values for me" (ibid.) in my own particular place in history.

Similarly, the second 'moment' of willing, the action (l'agir), the voluntary movement which is exercized in and through the body in order that the project may be transformed from emptiness into realization, encounters the involuntary precisely in the body itself, in the organs of action, which are the abilities for performance: preformed skills, emotions, habits, etc. And just as motivation is limiting to my decisions, so these abilities, while they provide the will with whatever efficaciousness it has, also are limiting to my actions, according to the same triple pattern: (a) the incoercible mode of being of my abilities, which is my character; (b) my unconscious potentialities which have a certain spontaneity of their own, a "nature" beyond all control of freedom, it would seem, and (c) my life itself which is the source and well-spring of all my powers and all my effort.

In the case, then, of the inevitabilities we have mentioned, (character, the unconscious and life itself) --- the "bodily involuntary" --- one is stuck, as it were, with the peculiarities of one's condition, one's existential "situation". The question at issue, therefore, is whether there can be any voluntary stance in the face of these invincible "necessities".

In our second chapter, we shall try to probe more deeply into the nature of the act of consent, to ask ourselves whether it can legitimately be called an act of the will and how, if at all, we can be said to experience necessity in the first person. The question we have ignored in this

chapter --- what justification there is for assuming that what we have called "inevitabilities" are, indeed, inevitable --- we shall leave for our third chapter, which will concern itself specifically with the notion of "character" as Ricoeur uses and discusses it. In Chapter Four, we shall examine what phenomenology is able to provide, and how far it can go in so providing, as an escape from the traditional duality which, as we have said earlier, understanding seems to provoke in attempting to come to terms with freedom, on the one hand, and nature, on the other. We shall see that any possible unity can be achieved only by going "beyond phenomenology" into a metaphysics and we shall indicate, briefly, Ricoeur's preparation for his metaphysics in subsequent works.

We had originally intended to offer a fifth chapter which would try to present some suggestions as to how the insights gained from a study of consent and of character might be applied to the educational process. Such a project turns out to be infinitely more massive than originally anticipated, for the question of unity which consent may be said to mirror is still very much unsolved at the end of Ricoeur's first volume and to attempt to build an educational fabric from incomplete cloth is, to say nothing more, presumptuous. Nonetheless, given that any philosophical thesis should have its applicability to education, it is unfortunate that there has not yet been forthcoming a serious attempt to relate the phenomenological and existential movements to the educational process.[20]

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[20] This writer has come upon only one work in this area which might be considered somewhat "serious": cf. Van Cleve Morris, Existentialism in Education, New York, Harper & Row, 1966.

CHAPTER II

CONSENT AS AN ACT OF THE WILL

A. Consent and Assent

To say that consent to necessity is an act of the will would seem, at first glance, to be a misunderstanding of the theoretical attitude implied by 'assent'. Even 'consent' would seem to be a matter of intellectual acceptance, of saying, "This is how it is. Let it be so." It seems it can be nothing more than an attitude of compelled acceptance, akin to an acceptance of that invincible truth which emerges from, say, Plato's "Line", wherein, if one follows the Platonic instruction, one becomes ineluctably aware that the two middle parts of the line are equal, in length.[21] A closer analysis, however, reveals that the act of consent to the inevitable, in the particular order, is much more than a consideration of the fact, in some theoretical way. When one consents, one is no longer a spectator bemused by one's inefficability, but more a participant, directly involved, in an ineffable way, in all one's subjectivity, with that which he cannot affect in itself. Ricoeur speaks of consent as an "active adoption" of, a participation in, necessity. (FN, 344). To consent is to adopt the "situation", to declare

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[21] The writer is indebted, for this interpretation of Plato's "Line" (in the Republic) to Professor J. G. Dawson of Memorial University of Newfoundland.

it as one's own. To will the pure fact (i.e. what already "is") --- for example, one's unchangeable way of being oneself --- which, at first sight, appears vacuous and somewhat inane, becomes a matter of actually changing the unchangeable: not that the fact is changed in itself but I who will it change it for myself; I change its "being-for-me". Implied here is the celebrated Sartrean distinction between being "en-soi" and being "pour soi".

To consent, therefore, appears not so much as an enuntiation of a necessity from a theoretical perspective as a practical adoption of the necessity, investing it with my personal "Fiat" so that it "becomes" now "for-me". In this way, consent is restored to its rightful place among the practical modes of the Cogito, modes such as wishing, commanding, deciding and the like. Assent remains as a theoretical mode of the same Cogito, as the counterpart to 'consent'.

B. Intentionality of Consent

Pure description of the act of consent requires us to discover its intentionality, in line with the ever-present Husserlian invocation, "All consciousness is a consciousness of ...". The correlate of consent within the noema-noesis polarity is, however, much more difficult to locate than its correspondent in decision or in action. The essence of deciding is the practical intentionality towards a project; the essence of action is the fulfillment of the project, through the body, in a pragma. What is the correlate, the noema, of the act of consent?

If we compare consent with decision, an analogy can be found in that both can be expressed, albeit inadequately, as imperatives. Decision can

be seen as a command which I address to myself inasmuch as I can consider my body as autonomous, having its own spontaneity, as when I speak of controlling myself. (cf. FN, 47). Indeed, medieval philosophers spoke of decision as a command, an "imperium". Similarly, consent can be understood as the imperative "Fiat", as a way of saying "Amen". That is certainly a "strange imperative" (FN, 344) for it does not, as the command in an effective decision, terminate in a project; it does not anticipate a change in the order of the world. Unlike a decision, consent anticipates nothing; it commands in the present and what it commands is already "there". And what is already "there" is also already complete so that even in the midst of my decision --- turned towards the project --- I find myself already involved in the "there", in what has been called, among the existentialists, the "situation", the Heideggerian "Dasein".

Ultimately, then, even decision cannot be regarded as a command. My body is <u>my</u> body; it is "le corps propre"; it is not another thing amidst a cluster of things; it is not even another person to whom I could give directives. "I who decide am the one who will do." (FN, 48). In like manner, there is no viable dichotomy, in consent, between the I who consent and that to which I consent (the necessity) when that necessity is the triad which we shall call the "bodily involuntary", and about which we have been speaking, in general terms, hitherto --- character, the unconscious and life. In other words, to paraphrase Ricoeur, "I who consent am the one who is consented to."

We must insist that the <u>situation</u> with which we are concerned in this enterprise is not so much that of the total world, even less of the world

outside ourselves, but rather that of the situation presented by the limitations of the body itself. The total framework of the invincible involuntary ("nature" in toto) certainly includes the course of history as well as other wills in conjunction with or in opposition to our own, but we are here abstracting from this total context to concern ourselves exclusively with the "bodily involuntary" and, in particular, with one aspect of that corporeality, namely, character. In any event, there is a case to be made for saying that the entire world, as the terminus of our consent, is but a vast extension of the body, understood as the object body or as pure fact. Ricoeur broaches this point in suggesting that the body is the paradigm instance of objects of consent. (FN, 343). It is the bodily involuntary which "mediates and comes in some manner to crystallize at the frontier of my freedom all the diffuse involuntary of the world." (UVI, 111).

The noema of consent, therefore, is not the body as an object-body, the body revealed by the microscope or the stethescope. I cannot really consent to my character simply as being "there", as that which I acknowledge and, to some extent, respect and care for, especially when it is in a state of disrepair. Just as I decide by reason of motives which are mine and are not causes external to me, so I consent to a necessity which is my necessity, to a body which, although subject to the laws of biology and chemistry, is nonetheless uniquely mine.

The same kind of understanding of my body emerges if we now compare consent with the second 'moment' of willing, voluntary movement (action). Just as, through effort, that enigma which seems ever to escape the "explanations" of the naturalist, I convert a recalcitrant body into an agency

for fulfilling my projected decision, so consent can be read as a kind of "powerless effort ... which converts its powerlessness into a new grandeur." (FN, 345). It is I, myself, who convert the situation from neutrality into mine-ness, into a situation which I not only acknowledge but also accept and incorporate into my way of life, in my own service and the service of others. It is my body which, in the first instance, allows or prevents action. It is my body which "presents lacunae favorable to action and confronts it with unbreachable limits." (FN, 345). Not only action, but consent, in its way, involves a confrontation with the possible. Action is an achievement, through effort, of the possible projected by decision. Consent, on the other hand, is a patient acceptance of reality where there is no other possible in the reality itself, although my relationship with the reality conjures up other possible attitudes. That is to say, I need not, in fact, make the situation my own. I need not consent. There is at least the alternative of refusal and thus, even consent is an act of choice, an act of freedom.

As we proceed in our analyses of "separate" acts of the will, it is necessary to remind ourselves that any separation is an abstraction, divorced from the temporal process. It is the same will which we are considering --- indeed the same act of the will --- from several points of view, in a methodic order: the will as legitimatized in its motives, the will as rendered efficacious in its confrontation with relatively docile powers, and the will as patience in the face of the inevitable.

C. Consent as Patience

When we speak of patience with respect to the inevitable, when we say that we make necessity our own, we must be careful to clarify the notion of "patience" so as not to confuse it with a kind of possession. Possession invariably implies a certain potential for manipulation --- for the exercize of power --- and it does not guarantee permanence. We can be dispossessed of our possessions. Necessity, on the other hand, I have always with me, as long as I live. Making it "mine" sounds somehow peculiar, since it is mine already, but it is mine already, and necessarily, only as a kind of permanent possession which I cannot rid myself of. To make it truly "mine" involves a certain receptivity, a "powerless effort" to convert a hostile nature into my nature, the freedom of nature. This, again, is a veering away from seeing my body as an alien "thing" which I own, which I possess as in the manner of some unwanted, excess baggage. To consent to the body which is fully mine is to inaugurate "the ultimate reconciliation of freedom and nature" for it is this reconciliation which is really "at stake" in consent. (FN, 346).

But my "powerless effort" may not ever be ultimately successful. Indeed, who can consent in each and every case, for who is not sometimes overcome with his own limitations, his own suffering? The unity, of which consent is an index, is not likely to be ever reached. Ricoeur implies this notion of unity as unreachable when he presents the movement of freedom towards necessity as "asymptotic" (FN, 346) and when he elaborates the unity of freedom and nature in terms of its being a Kantian "limit-idea" in his article, The Unity of the Voluntary and the Involuntary as a Limit-Idea. (UVI).

Again, he suggests that "perhaps the conflicts of the voluntary and the involuntary ... can be reconciled only in hope and in another age." (FN, 19). In any case, the act of consent is an attempt to extend the realm of freedom into that zone --- that situation --- where nature no longer confronts our will with more-or-less docile powers, as is the case where voluntary action is effected through the employment of preformed skills and habits. Consent, then, "comes to take the place which the incomplete attempt has in the order of voluntary motion" (FN, 347) when that motion is stymied.

D. Overcoming the "Natural Attitude"

Any extension of the realm of freedom into the zone of nature, a propos of reconciling and uniting the two areas, gives rise to a cluster of difficulties. We are so inclined, as we have suggested earlier,[22] to understand freedom and nature as two by setting up a subjective-objective dichotomy between the body and the ego that we are tempted to treat necessity always "objectively" --- I exist and the situation exists; what common standard can one find between the "subject" and the "object" if one wishes to overcome this persistent temptation? For Ricoeur, as for phenomenologists in general, the "natural attitude" which sees the involuntary (motives, abilities, character, etc.) as an objective reality must be overcome by striving to discover the involuntary "at the very heart of the Cogito's integral experience" (FN, 348), so that the quest becomes one of finding "necessity in the first person." (FN, 9).

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[22] cf. page 3.

Certainly, the human situation, insofar as it reflects the total inevitability of the world, would seem to be infinitely more knowable by means of the appropriate scientific techniques. We are inclined, indeed, to examine necessity from a distance, to objectify man as totally as possible, to see oneself as but "an encounter among a considerable number of possible genetic combinations", the product of "blind and absurd chance". (FN, 348). Thus, the possibility of consenting to necessity and the possibility of reconciliation evaporate and we are catapulted into a total determinism. How is it possible to escape this tendency and introduce a subject consciousness, especially when it is so patent that, in many respects, our bodies are like tools which need to be cared for and treated as "things", even if "things" of some consequence?

Moreover, the more we objectify man, the more we escape ourselves --- and we do sometimes yearn to escape responsibility. When the terror of being free --- and of having to answer for one's acts, of being 'response-able' --- becomes insupportable, one can always resort to the tenets of determinism to provide one with alibis for actions which one sees as undesirable or with pretexts for inaction when action is the desirable. What Ricoeur calls "the spell of objectivity" (FN, 347 ff.) serves to abolish me more and more in a "dialectic of alienation". (FN, 349). This clear-cut psycho-physical dualism tries to relate inner freedom to outer nature in terms of causality --- the kind of "mental physics" which sees motives as causes. Psychology sometimes seeks to avoid a total determinism by trying to establish a "link" between the psychical and the physiological through a partial causality, seeing the situation as a negative kind of causality,

a conditio sine qua non. Such a relationship, however --- a relationship between objective necessity and subjective freedom --- remains, for Ricoeur, still "a deceptive and untenable form of causality applicable only between object and object." (FN, 351). It does not provide us with the homogeneity of terms, that proportion which is required in order that necessity be converted into freedom.

Ricoeur reminds us on several occasions that there can be no partial determinism --- it is a case of all or nothing. We must give up any attempt "to lodge fundamental structures of willing ... in the interstices of determinism" for there are no gaps in determinism; "its supremacy is in principle coextensive with empirical objectivity." (FN, 68). Thus, in considering motives as the correlate of decision, Ricoeur insists that it is meaningless to ask whether motivation is an aspect or a limitation of empirical causality because such a question assumes a prior naturalization of the Cogito. Whenever we conceive necessity (even necessity within motivation) objectively, we are left with determinism and it is no longer possible to reintroduce a subject consciousness for such consciousness would be nothing but an element or a product of a character type, a product of unconscious forces or an effect of the genetic structure of the original embryo. Once determinism is invoked, it exercizes its "spell" and is inescapable.

E. Necessity in the First Person

Any attempt to reconcile the voluntary and the involuntary requires, then, a return to the subject --- to find necessity in the Cogito, congruent with the motives of decision and the abilities through which one acts. Pure

description of consent involves us in articulating "what it means /for me, or for thee/ to undergo, to experience the incoercible, the inevitable." (FN, 351). The only way in which consent can be seen as an act of freedom is by "linking" it with necessity experienced within ourselves, not with necessity conceived, in any wise, objectively.

This return to the subject suggests that we might have to forego the indisputable benefits available from scientific research on the bodily involuntary --- characterology, Freudian analysis and other later forms of psychoanalysis, and the like. It might suggest we have to depend exclusively on the testimony of our own private experience. But subjectivity does not bespeak some manner of private, incommunicable introspection. It means, for Ricoeur, "the subject function of an intentional consciousness such that I understand it as applying to me and to others." (UVI, 100; emphasis mine). It permits the elaboration of concepts of subjectivity valid for all men (cf. FN, 11), so that the phenomenology of the lived body is "a phenomenology of intersubjectivity" (UVI, 100). The subject is always "myself and yourself". (FN, 10).

F. Diagnostic Use of Empirical Science

The return to the subject --- whether to "me" or to "thee" --- suggests, it must be confessed, a predominance over what one feels over what one knows (and often incomparably better and more surely) from empirical sciences. However, Ricoeur is at pains to insist that "there is no intention of dismissing empirical knowledge." (UVI, 100). We need, in fact, to set up a "dialectic between the body as a personal body /corps propre/ and the object

body." (FN, 12). Information gleaned from biology and psychology is often the most normal route for reaching the subjective equivalent we are searching for. Sometimes, a phenomenological concept will be nothing more than the subjectivization of a concept much better known in an empirical framework. The relationship between empirical concepts (referring to the object body) and their phenomenological counterparts is termed, by Ricoeur, a diagnostic relation. A diagnostic use of empirical concepts is a matter of describing the ways in which the Cogito becomes actual in the world (its "symptoms", in other words) and then applying this description to the uncovering of the underlying intentional structures which are made manifest through the symptoms. "Each moment of the object body is an indication of the body belonging to a subject, whether of its overall affectivity or of some particular function." (FN, 13).

The term "diagnostics" is derived from medical science. The doctor uses symptom analysis (symptomatology) in the service of empirical knowledge, the symptom indicating a functioning (or, more usually, a malfunctioning) of the object body. The phenomenologist uses the "facts" gathered by psychology, for instance, as a springboard for getting to the real meaning to which the facts symptomatically point. Ricoeur's analysis of "need", for example, suggests that psycho-physiological accounts of need are incomplete, even misleading. "I do not know need from the outside, as a natural event, but from within, as a lived need and, when needed, through empathy, as yours." (FN, 87). The objective descriptions made available to us by physiology --- deterioration of tissues, glandular reactions, etc. --- are useful only insofar as they serve as positive indicators of the

prescence of a lack and to help us understand what I experience when I am in need. This approach to the bodily phenomena is still another aspect of the Copernican Revolution "which restores to subjectivity its due" (FN, 31). No longer, then, do we talk of consciousness as a symptom of the object body; rather we will speak of the object body as a symptom of the "corps propre" in which the Cogito shares and through which it exercizes itself. The diagnostic, then, is a procedure in the realm of discourse --- it does not seek to describe the union of soul and body, thereby resurrecting a new kind of dualism and undoing the Copernican Revolution, but rather it is a way of talking about the one reality, the body which is mine, from two points of view. As Ricœur points out, whatever opposition there is between "subject body" and "object body" is not the opposition of one point of view towards myself, my own unique body, on the one hand, and another point of view towards bodies other than mine. Rather it is an opposition of two points of view towards the same body, whether mine or yours. (FN, 10). "The diagnostic relation expresses this encounter of two universes of discourse." (FN, 88).

In this respect, diagnostics is akin to hermeneutics, with which Ricoeur is involved in Symbolique du Mal and in his recent massive work on Freud. (FR). While diagnostics expresses the encounter of objective, empirical description with accounts of underlying intentional structures or meaning, hermeneutics expresses the encounter between symbolic and mystical expressions of human experience and the latent underlying meanings which these forms of expression articulate. In our treatment of character, we shall have occasion to make diagnostic use of (we shall, that is, engage

in a kind of hermeneutics of) the findings of ethology to uncover the subjective elements to which these discoveries point and of which they are the indicators. Sometimes, it is difficult (if not impossible) to find any subjective indicators. As Reagan says, in summarizing Ricoeur, "(while) in general, it is possible to discover an empirical correlation between mentalistic discourse and physical discourse ... these two languages are not parallel since there are some things describable in one of them which have no correlate in the other."[23] Particularly is this true in the area of the bodily involuntary, of which the particular instance of birth is most trenchant. Physiology can give us very precise details of my birth event but how do I describe my birth subjectively since my birth is always "for others" and never "for myself". (cf. FN, 433-43). Similarly and conversely, Ricoeur sees the experience of effort in the overcoming of bodily resistance as describable only in subjective terms with no correlate on the physiological plane. (cf. FN, 308 ff.).

We can sum up the implications of this long detour through the realm of diagnostics by saying that the return to the subject, the transcendence of the object, does not require us to ignore the data of empirical investigation. Rather, we retain that data, enuntiated in the language of causality and statistics, as an index of the subjective relation between freedom and an experienced necessity. Thus, we speak of the human condition, referring to that necessity which is the very necessity of my being at all --- my

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[23] Charles E. Reagan, "Ricoeur's 'Diagnostic' Relation", in International Philosophical Quarterly, 8 (1968), p. 589.

particular mode of existence (in this place, at this time, from these forebears) which I did not choose, is the necessary condition in order that I may henceforth choose. Consequently, conditio sine qua non is one of the indices of necessity which diagnostically point to freedom. It (the condition as an index) implies the union of internal necessity (which is partial and reciprocal with freedom) and causal necessity (which is total and without reciprocity). Language like "situation" and "condition" is useful, therefore, "to indicate and announce a fleeting experienced necessity which freedom in principle confronts, refuses or adopts." (FN, 352).

However, the index of symptom function which causality presents does not cover all relations of freedom and necessity --- the relation of the infinite of choice, for instance, to the finite perspective of my character is difficult to express as a relation of condition, i.e. by saying that character is a condition of choice. Description would require (if we wish to faithfully express the subjectivity of my character) that it be seen rather as an actual mode of choice; it is only in such a formulation that a reciprocity of freedom and nature is saved.[24] Thus, we need to go beyond the language of causality which serves its purpose in denoting an empirical reality which we may use in this diagnostic fashion, to get back to "finitude in the first person", to paraphrase Ricoeur.

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[24] The French psychologist, Burloud, who has himself written a treatise on "character" /A. Burloud, Le Caractère, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1942/ finds Ricoeur's account of character as a mode of freedom "rather reckless"; it "sounds strange to a psychologist's ear"; cf. A. Burloud, Book Review of Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire in Revue Philosophique, 144 (1954), p. 284.

G. Necessity as Negation

The fact remains, nonetheless, that understanding tends, inevitably, to see character (as well as the unconscious and life) as a negation, rather than as a mode, of freedom. The birth of reflection is always the rupture of an initial harmony --- the pre-reflexive unity --- of consciousness and the body. It is, of course, this possibility that what appears to be a basic, ontological unity may be restored that gives grounds for hope in a conciliation of the paradox of freedom-nature. But, at the same time, any attempt to establish such a restoration is constantly bound down by the tendency of understanding to see necessity always as a condition, a limit, even a destruction, as a negation of freedom. To the extent that freedom and nature are seen to be incompatible, the only possibilities for the will in the face of nature are defiance or capitulation. Thus, consent will either be impossible (for there would always be a 'no' and never a 'yes') or it will be a surrender. To consent requires some kind of transcendence of the initial refusal, without which there would be only the fact of the continuum of nature. The possibility of refusal opens the way for an acceptance, a "making my own", for "the yes of consent is always won from the no". (FN, 354).

This negation of a negation, bringing us back to what Jean Nabert calls "affirmation originaire"[25] will be discussed in our fourth chapter.

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[25] Jean Nabert, Elements pour une Ethique, Paris, Aubier, 1943, passim, especially Le 2e Livre. /cf. Elements for an Ethic, translated by William J. Petrek, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1969/.

CHAPTER III

CHARACTER AS MODE OF FREEDOM

A. The Meaning of "Caractère"

The translation of the French term "caractère" as "character" presents a number of difficulties. In English, the term usually has a great many moral overtones. Unlike its derivative word, "characteristic", which remains relatively neutral, the root-form has, as Allport puts it, "gathered ... much ethical moss."[26] One speaks of a splendid character, an evil character or of having no character at all; employers look for character references regarding their prospective employees; educators sometimes speak of themselves as character-moulders. For this reason, it might be preferable to translate the French term as "temperament", an English term which expresses somewhat more accurately the sense of "caractère" as the individual's "style of consciousness", his "particularity" (FN, 341), for "caractère" does not belong in some hierarchical scale of values but is rather "the angle from which values will appear to a particular consciousness". (FN, 342). The content of "caractère" is irrelevant --- it does not determine whether I shall choose this possibility or that: it is rather a form which marks the choice I make with a certain stamp ---

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[26] Gordon W. Allport, Personality: A Psychological Interpretation, New York, Holt, 1937, p. 53.

of nervousness, placidity, sanguinity or other "temperament". However, since the translators of Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire and L'Homme Faillible have chosen to submit to "the fatal lure of a cognate",[27] we shall continue to speak of "character", understood in the peculiar non-moral sense just enuntiated.

My character, then, is understood as my perspective, my way of being myself. We see it as part of the absolute involuntary and we discover it as a "residuum" of the analyses of the relative involuntary in the areas of decision and action. Thus, it stands both for the particularity of my motivation which "inclines but does not compel" me in my decision-making (cf. FN, 71) and for the incoercible mode of being of my abilities and effort through which I move my relatively docile body in all my voluntary acts. It is, in short, the finite mode of my practical being. Just as my particular perspective of the object is the finite mode of my perception, so my character may be understood, analagously, as the affective and practical perspective of my existence. In L'Homme Faillible Ricoeur succintly defines "character" as "a totalization of all the aspects of finitude" and tries to effect a "practical mediation" between finite character and infinite happiness. (cf. FM, 77 ff.).

B. "Character" in the First Person

How do I reach an understanding of character as my character, as one of the correlates of the act of consent? To discover "character in the

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[27] FN, "Translator's Introduction", p. xxxiv.

first person" and thereby maintain the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary, which is the guiding thread through all the Ricoeurian analyses, is a very difficult task. One's inner, subjective experience of character is, unlike the inner experience of, say, need or desire, extremely fleeting and ephemeral. One senses the impossibility of conceiving of my character akin to the impossibility of conceiving of my birth, which is "for others" and never "for me". And yet it is only to the extent that I can see my character subjectively --- at the limits of the objective knowledge which purveyors of characterology and personality inventories present to me --- that I can speak of consent to character as an act of the will. Only to the extent that I can see character as "experienced necessity" will I be able to personally recognize it as a "given" that is "there" to be made my own and used in my service and that of others.

But to see character subjectively is rather out of the question without first having recourse to the findings of empirical science. To reach subjectivity in this area we will have to detour through the maze of ethological data, examining these findings and using them in a diagnostic manner, to assist us in reaching "experienced necessity", of which the ethological information is an indicator. This philosophical analysis of character is especially imperative in this age when educators tend to place so much reliance on aptitude tests and IQ tests as "character portraits" in which students are diligently categorized in the field of vocational guidance.

Without such a philosophical analysis, any effort to understand statistical profiles encounters the hesitation of a common-sense approach to character which finds itself unable to find a "link" between one's natural

endowments, on the one hand, and man's apparent freedom, on the other. The non- (or pre-) philosophical attitude vacillates within an either-or position. Either man is totally free, unsituated and unconditioned, unlimited; or man is totally unfree, determined and conditioned by his environment and his heredity, so that freedom is a myth or a fiction. One's anthropological view, in this context, is either that of "an indefinitely plastic human nature ... in which even character would be chosen and could be changed through effort" (FN, 355) or of an inflexible human nature in which each man's lot and destiny is already inscribed and wherein man is reduced to an object. Such an attitude implies that there is no way in which freedom can be seen as <u>also</u> a nature, no way to elaborate a conception of character which is no longer an objectified "condition" but the individual's <u>mode</u> of being free. Character, in this latter sense, would have a "meaning" only in the context of a voluntary act wherein --- and only wherein --- it is actualized. We would not then see a confrontation between willing (consent), on the one hand, and necessity (character), on the other. Rather than a "tug-of-war" between freedom and nature, we would see character as an omnipresent aspect of my total self, an invincible aspect of my motives which I can control freely, an incoercible aspect of my abilities which I can bring under my domination and as a non-willed aspect of my decision and my action. "Like my freedom, it is always present". (FN, 369). Character, as Ricoeur quite unequivocally puts it, is "this individual who I am". (FN, 368).

Now, while an objective detour through characterology is necessary as a preliminary to an understanding of character as <u>my</u> (or <u>your</u>) character,

it is, nonetheless, incapable of leading us directly to such an understanding. Ricoeur's use of the science of character is strictly "diagnostic" --- ethology serves as an index of that part of nature which is experienced in the first person as my mode of being free. The subjective counterpart of that "nature" will, as Ricoeur confesses, be even more obscure, in the final analysis; however, discovering it is the only way in which we may pave the way for any meaningful appreciation of that act of the will which is consent, and on the possibility of which we are taking a gamble. (cf. FN, 358).

C. Character Study --- Capsule History

The ethological data which Ricoeur uses is that of the Dutch school of Groningue, Heymans and Wiersma, supported by LeSenne's French version of the Dutch classifications. There are numerous other classifications which one might adopt. Indeed, the science of character, known by divers names, is as old as Aristotle's "character portrait" of the liberal man, or the more elaborate description of the magnanimous man, in Book Four of his Nichomachean Ethics.

Aristotle's pupil and successor, Theophrastus, is especially famous for his thirty "characters" which have taken their place in literary classics. The seventeenth-century French writer, Jean de la Bruyere, produced a number of oft-imitated character sketches, wherein a certain peculiar life-style permeates every activity of the individual characterized.

Even more ancient than character-writing and closer in spirit to the modern science of character is the doctrine of the humours and their corresponding temperaments, based on Empedocles' cosmic elements of air,

earth, fire and water. While the specific "humours" advanced by the ancients, such as Hippocrates, have been abandoned, the principle of psycho-physical correlation remains even today. Witness the importance given to chemical substances like hormones in any consideration of the nervous system. Other forms which characterology have taken include physiogomy, phrenology and the more recent experimental ethology, a far cry from the ivory-tower ethology of John Stuart Mill. One of the most attractive of these classifications is that of Adolphe Ferriere, who describes twelve "types" of personalities: four pre-rational (impulsive, primitive, heroic-imaginative and conventional-traditional types), four rational (individualistic, logical, sociable and 'uneasy' types), and four trans-rational (intuitive, ascetic, mystic and perfected types).

We are not, however, concerned with an elaboration of these particular categorizations. What we are interested in is to show that, by its method, characterology presents the kind of anthropology which would forever reduce man to the status of an object and which prevents us from relating this kind of character construct to the freedom of the subject whose character it is.

D. Characterology versus Subjectivity

The method in character science is the search for character "portraits" combining the distinctive features of an individual insofar as these can be incorporated into a minimum number of categories, or "types". Two distinct methods are employed in pursuit of these portraits --- the biographic method and the questionnaire method. Now, this approach which aims at a kind of psychometrics presupposes, as Ricoeur is quick to point out, a total

objectification of the individual. It presents us with an individual as he appears to another and blocks us off from reaching the actual movement of inner life which is symptomatically expressed in the "signs" which the ethologist must read in order to paint his portrait. There is "no discernable relation between the 'I will' and a psychograph which is only the portrait of the other." (FN, 358). Besides, the objectification of 'character' must forego --- such is the rigorous demand of science --- all those revealing metaphors which ordinary language employs in its effort to reach through to the individual 'I' --- metaphors like 'deep' and 'superficial', 'outgoing' and 'withdrawn', 'moody' and 'even-tempered', metaphors which give some inkling of subjective 'character'. Science requires a far greater economy than ordinary language permits itself to have. Ethology tries to reach the individual by means of a scientifically limited number of very general properties. For example, the 'nervous' type, in the Dutch system, is characterized by a combination of emotivity, non-activity and primarity; the 'phlegmatic' type is arrived at by uniting non-emotivity, activity and secondarity. Such systematization makes of ethology "a tributary of mental physics to which ... free willing succumbs." (FN, 359). It prevents us from relating a character type directly to the freedom of the individual. It behooves us then --- in our ambitious drive towards subjectivity --- to see if we can overcome the duality of the two points of view, for the method of ethology necessarily forces that science into a totally deterministic mould, even to the extent that the ethological formula must somehow include freedom itself. Even if the ethologist himself qua man believes otherwise, qua scientist, "everything occurs as if the

individual could be reduced to his own portrait and his portrait to his ethological formula", (FN, 363), which is not, at this stage of the science, nearly complete, but which is susceptible to total elaboration, the scientist thinks, as more and more discoveries are made. Again, as has been stressed before, Ricoeur's contention is that "determinism is either all or not at all." (cf. ibid.); thus, the relation between the character-type, on the one hand --- the ethologist's "ens rationis" --- and my existential freedom, on the other, must be re-examined if ethology is to serve as a diagnostic of "experienced character", that admittedly fleeting experience wherein the nexus between my character and my freedom may be located. It certainly cannot be located within the "interstices of determinism" for these are, as has been indicated, the abstract inventions of psychologists. We can find this nexus only within a context of subjectivity.

Description reveals my character to me not as a class or collective "type", statistically established by an ethology, but as my unique and inimitable self. Although the "spell of objectivity" inveigles me into making a game out of ethological portraits and inserting myself into one of its slots, I can, on reflection, become aware that I am not a combination of isolated, abstract traits rendering me as a nervous, phlegmatic or other "type" but that my character is nothing more or less than "this individual who I am" (FN, 368) and so irreducible.

A paradox immediately emerges when one sees character from this perspective. My character is, in a sense, also my fate --- it is my very nature (or, part of it, at any rate) which I cannot change without becoming an "other", and yet I do make myself, as it were, though within my own

limits. The Sartrean mot, "Existence precedes essence" has some truth within it. While my character situates me and individualizes me, I sense that I can use or abuse it, as I choose. My character serves as the background against which I do whatever I do. In phenomenological terms, while my character determines the style of my actions, it does not determine their intention. The style --- the permanent "modus operandi" --- which is "mine" (or "thine") says nothing about which motives I will value most highly or which habits I will form. There are important implications for ethics and education in this understanding of the bond between the absolute involuntary, which is my character and the relative involuntary of desires and other motives and that of capabilities and habits. Ricoeur says:

> Ideally (that is, apart from passions which are truly contractions of the soul) and within the limits of the normal, there are no desires or habits which could not give way to discipline; but the very plasticity of desires and habits and this discipline can only be produced in agreement with the formula of development. The finite and the infinite do not limit each other but are present to each other and in each other. (FN, 369).

By itself, as Alain says, character entails "neither good nor evil, neither virtue nor vice, but rather an inimitable and unique way of being frank or devious, cruel or kind, greedy or generous."[28] Thus, although my character as a changeless "given" is a kind of fate, it is not a determining fate with respect to my voluntary actions. I cannot, as it were, blame it for my foolishness or credit it with my wisdom. While it is true that "each

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[28] Alain /pseudonym for Emile Chartier/, Propos sur l'Education, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1948, p. 25.

individual is born, lives and dies according to his own nature, as the crocodile is a crocodile, and that he changes not at all,"[29] it is equally true that "in any human body all passions are possible, all errors are possible ... (and while) there are as many ways of being bad and unhappy as there are men on the earth ... for every man there is also a salvation peculiar to him, of the same color, of the same texture as he."[30] We must believe, Ricoeur says, that all values are somehow accessible to all character types. "We must believe that there are no minds excluded from morality; nor are there character types which possess morality as a natural right." (FN, 370).

Aristotle, long ago, made this point in contending against those who would argue that immorality is not a matter of one's own choosing. They claim that "we must be born with an eye for a moral issue which will enable us to form a correct judgment and choose what is truly good. A man who has this natural gift is one of Nature's favourites ... It is something which cannot be acquired or learned."[31] This "natural gift" of which they speak is that "character" with which we are dealing here. Aristotle maintains that a man is free to use his native dispositions for vice or virtue.

It is true, however, one must admit, that certain character types are more favourable to the development of particular virtues or more susceptible

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[29] Ibid., p. 24

[30] Ibid., pp. 97-8.

[31] Aristotle, Ethics, translated by J.A.K. Thomson, Penguin Edition, 1955, Book Three, p. 92.

to development of vices than are other character types. Statistics may indicate, for instance, that a "nervous" type has a great propensity to lying. However, the frequency of performance indicated by a group of individuals within a certain class cannot be equated with the tendency or disposition of one individual in that class with respect to lying. That individual may just as well be one of the less-than-half who is normally truthful, although he will be truthful "nervously". In any case, as LeSeene points out, "the lying of the nervous, favored by emotivity, inactivity and initiativity, represents a poor use of a system of dispositions whose good use is, for instance, a work of art."[32]

My character, in short, does not determine me. Rather it is the way in which I determine myself. It is my way of thinking and not what I think; it is my way of doing and not what I do. It is "a way of choosing and of choosing myself which I do not choose." (FN, 368; emphasis mine). My choosing is basically unlimited --- I can "reach for the stars" --- but my way of choosing provides the limit. My body, at least, may cause me to "strike a picket fence." It is my "nature" which is limited and finite, and makes my infinite freedom finite.

We have said, at the beginning of this chapter, that ethological data served as the necessary propadeutic to the discovery of the necessity of character as experienced in the first person. Its real value lies in allowing us to come to terms with my "fate", to respect and even to love

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[32]Rennée LeSenne, Le Mensonge et le Caractère, Paris, Aubier, 1930, p. 186.

the immutable nature within me, to work with it for my glory. Unfortunately, passions intervene to objectify my character and use it as a scapegoat for my shortcomings. While knowledge (of character types, for instance) can be power (a potential for deliverance from the bond of character), it always is in danger from the "spell of objectivity". Especially is this so when ethological statistics are handled badly by educators spell-bound by graphs and charts. The educator's "knowledge" must be tempered by what Ricoeur calls "sensitivity" and what is nowadays often referred to as "empathy". (cf. FN, 372). LeSenne stresses that this knowledge must not only be used for grand psycho-metric designs, but for the providing of "a method of spiritual life in which knowledge would be based on sympathy, in order to permit the individual not to find a job but to develop and extend himself."[33]

E. Conclusion

We have tried, in this chapter, to enuntiate the meaning of "caractère" as Ricoeur uses it. We have followed him in his attempt to employ the findings of a science of character in the manner of a "diagnostics" to reach that inner experience of character, as mine, in the hope that the knowledge of my limits would bring me to recognize them as the medium of my freedom, as the backdrop to my free agency in the world. A synthesis of freedom and nature was the limit-idea guiding the whole philosophical analysis, a synthesis which would be effected in the act of consent, for it

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[33] R. LeSenne, op. cit., p. 325.

is in the act of consent that I acknowledge that "I can only use my freedom in accord with a finite, immutable mode". (FN, 369). Only by an act of consent to my limits can I begin to make character --- and all necessity --- my own, so that my situated freedom --- situated by that fate which my character is and to which I may consent --- may be transformed into "a destiny, a vocation". (FN, 373). Yet, as we have seen, consent is always on the verge of being spellbound and any synthesis is, perforce, a very precarious one. Unity eludes phenomenological grasp, it would seem, and we are obliged to marshall other resources in our continuing search.

CHAPTER IV

BEYOND PHENOMENOLOGY

A. Dualism Reborn

Throughout these pages, we have talked of an apparently invincible dualism which understanding presents in any reflection on the relationship between freedom and nature. We have seen that the "spell of objectivity" exercizes itself in a breaking up of the initial, pre-reflexive harmony which, we suspect, lies beneath the epistemic rupture, and we have referred several times to the requirement of going beyond psychological dualism to find a "common standard" of freedom and nature in subjectivity. It is this requirement which we see as reflected in or fulfilled by the phenomenological "epoche", inherited from Husserl, which constantly transcends the "natural standpoint" wherein the body is expelled into the objective realm. It is the requirement of recovering the Cogito in the first person. The nexus of the voluntary and the involuntary is not to be found, we have said, at the boundary of two universes of discourse --- one objective, the other subjective --- but rather must be located "in the intuition of a body conjoined to a willing which submits to it and governs it" (FN, 10; emphasis mine).

However, even in reaching this "intuition" --- through a phenomenological description which takes practical life simply "as it is given",

while using the clues provided by empirical science to reach through to that experience of unity which a true understanding of my character would permit --- we seem to be unable to overcome the duality we sought, methodically, to evade. In trying to overcome one form of dualism, we have landed in another, more invincible, form. Description itself now appears to have been the midwife of a new dichotomy. Description, it turns out, is more "a triumph of ... distinction rather than a reuniting leap" (FN, 34) for nature --- the invincible character which is my mode of freedom --- ever remains other than the will which consents to it.

Description, then, retains the posture of the spectator. In order to reach the "bond which in fact joins willing to its body" (FN, 14) we shall have to go beyond description, since description remains an intellectual analysis of structures to be understood. What is required, Ricoeur thinks, for a full appreciation of the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary is "a conversion of thought which, turning its back on holding clear and distinct ideas at a distance from itself, attempts to identify with the definite experience of existence which is myself in a corporal situation." (FN, 15). This is a conversion which "leads from the thought which posits concepts before itself to a thought which participates in existence." (FN, 16).

B. A Second 'Copernican Revolution'

This conversion, furthermore, leads us beyond the first Copernican Revolution which "restores to subjectivity its due" (FN, 31) and which Ricoeur regards as "the beginning of philosophy" (FN, 471) and its "first

achievement" (FN, 5). It calls for a second Copernican Revolution which would "displace the center of reference from subjectivity to Transcendence". (FN, 472). Now, such a displacement --- such a recourse to Transcendence --- seems to require a lifting of the "epoche" which has been imposed from the beginning of Ricoeur's philosophical enterprise which undertakes to perform a phenomenology of willing within phenomenological brackets (placed around naturalism, objectivity and the 'natural standpoint') and eidetic brackets (enclosing the existential 'accidents' of the fault and of transcendental yearning). Indeed, Ricoeur's own plan is clearly enuntiated; it is to leave Transcendence aside until his "poetics" (cf. FN, 32) is presented in a projected third volume of his trilogy, just as he has, in fact, left the fault aside until its appearance in his second volume. Yet, the last pages of Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire are concerned very much with Transcendence, and his justification for invoking it is not especially clear. He does articulate the problem (FN, 467) but leaves it unsolved. One could also complain that it, too, like the fault, remains quite unexplained --- i.e., one is at a loss to know quite what the author understands by the term. One might forgive him for this disregard for the reader, since the 'reality' is to be bracketed for the time being; however, the most abrasive difficulty is that, if we are to remain within the realm of a fundamental ontology, as Ricoeur understands it --- an examination of the key notes of willing, its fundamental structures --- and not enter the arena of metaphysics, wherein the fault and Transcendence, sin and hope, may legitimately enter, how can we insert one of these dimensions now? To what degree is it

permissible to introduce these notions into an allegedly circumscribed psychology?

Whatever the answer to this methodological difficulty, Ricoeur insists that if we are ever to understand "the unity of man with himself and his world ... phenomenology (must be) transcended by a metaphysics." (FN, 467), even though there is some suggestion that, for Ricoeur, the two bracketed phenomena may be said to be already included in a psychology that seeks to conciliate freedom and nature.

C. From Description to Active Participation

We shall leave the problem of methodology for the moment to pursue, with Ricoeur, the effort to discover unity by some active participation in "my incarnation as a mystery" (FN, 14). This, again, is the language of Marcel whose reflections on "le corps propre" provided the springboard for Ricoeur's own analyses (FN, 15) although Ricoeur's intention is to "problem-ize" the Marcellian "mystery", if that is possible, using Husserlian techniques, adapted to his own existential purposes. This active participation, however, does not, either, succeed in overcoming the omnipresent duality of understanding. Beneath the dichotomy which emerges in and seems to be provoked by reflection, a dichotomy which classical philosophy would consider as final, there is, for Ricoeur, an ultimate "lesion in being itself", which one must seek to heal, in some manner. (cf. FN, 444).

While it is true that this "lesion" first manifests itself in the act of thinking --- reflection seems to produce that dualism which, for that reason, may be called "methodic dualism" --- it is also the case that

the act of thinking is the most fundamental act of human consciousness and it would appear, then, that the act of thinking which seems to shatter man is but a reflection (as in a mirror) of an ultimately ontological division in man. In other words, behind the difficulty of understanding, there is, perhaps, an irreconcilable practical hostility between "experienced necessity" and freedom's desire. (cf. FN, 347). The common proportion between freedom and nature which we have tried to find in a certain subjectivity --- finding necessity in the first person, as my character, for instance, possessing that Jemeinigheit, that quality of mine-ness, of which Heidegger makes a great deal,[34] --- may be nothing more than a detour around that dichotomy which, on the level of existence, still remains, though somewhat camoflauged. On the existential level, there seems no way of uniting freedom and nature, for they seem totally incompatible, as mutually negating each other. Necessity appears, when one tries to grasp it, as a negation of freedom; and whatever freedom I seem to have emerges as a struggle against, a negation of, the necessity which is within me and outside me. An understanding of negation is thus essential for an appreciation of what incarnate freedom really is.

D. Freedom and Nature --- Mutual Negations

On the one hand, necessity always appears as an active negation, the nemesis, of freedom. Whatever makes me "particular" limits me and presents

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[34] Martin Heidegger, Being and Time, op. cit., p. 68.

the possibility of my non-being. While I accept my uniqueness and my irreplaceability, I look, in dread, to my impending death, when I will no longer "count", when I will be as if I had never been. Whatever particular decision I make implies its own "because-of" or "in-order-to" and it is the predominance of one motive over the other that precipitates this choice, rather than that; every choice, i.e. every culmination of a deciding process which occurs in space and time, implies some motive which has been considered and discarded. Every movement I make is governed, to a greater or lesser extent, by the degree of resistance of my body.

On the other hand, freedom always appears as a patient negation of necessity. I refuse necessity. I announce a definitive "no" to that which is undeniable. I will not let myself be bound down by its limitations. Every choice is an implicit "No" to what could be other alternatives; it commits me to a certain particular way-of-being in the world which precludes other ways. Every effort, in voluntary action, is a forthright refusal to be the victim of my body's inertias and emotions --- this sometimes stubborn refusal is, indeed, the very heart of effort.

Negation is, thus, bipolar. It is negation undergone and negation overcome --- it is non-being suffered by freedom and the refusal of non-being posited by freedom. Once freedom is born to itself, it appears as an active negation and as having already been negated. The Cogito is both action and passion.[35]

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[35] cf. Jacques Sarano, "La Réciprocité du Pâtir et de l'Agir", in Etudes Philosophiques, 10 (1955), 726-9.

To see this double negation in terms of the necessity which is my character, we will inquire in what sense we may say that having a character is a negation of freedom. We have described character as one of freedom's modes of being, as one of the ways whereby I am finite in the exercize of my freedom. Now, it is the infinite, rather than the finite, which first suggests negation to us, at least in ordinary language. By my character, I am something, I am determinate --- I am a positive someone incomparably distinct from all other someones. Nonetheless, it is this very fact of being a someone that bespeaks a negativity, for it announces that I am not the other. Having a character is a negation of all otherness. Every choice I make intensifies this particularity and makes me more and more not-other. Of all the possibilities that are open, as it were, to the totality of human experience, only a very few are open to me. One particular choice closes off countless other possible choices. In the final analysis, I can be no other than myself --- I cannot be thee, or him. Each of my choices, in the very disruption and closing-off of decision, is an exclusion.

"On the road from the possible to the actual lie only ruined hopes and atrophied powers. How much latent humanity I must reject in order to be someone!" (FN, 447). For the adolescent, there is so much that he wants to become, in his desire to "be somebody", but which he will never be. For the old man, there is so much that he wanted to do but has not accomplished. The familiar vices of jealousy and resentment suggest all too clearly the inevitable law that I am only "me" when I would want to be "other-than-me". "It is sometimes unbearable to be unique, inimitable and condemned to resemble only myself." (FN, 448). The vices that develop out of this

terror --- resentment, hatred and jealousy --- are instances of freedom's initial "no" of refusal. They are ciphers (to use a Jasperian term) of a denial of the limitations of character as well as of the "hidden" motives of the unconscious (if one may label unconscious drives as motives) and the contingencies of one's particular life. They point to one's intolerance of limitations and, at first glance, appear as a kind of affirmation of sovereignity over ..., rather than as refusals of .... "The disguised form of refusal is the haughty affirmation of consciousness as absolute, that is, as creative or as self-producing." (FN, 463). It is the wish for totality transformed into a deceptive choice which would ignore the individual's individuality and the limitations which make him a man. "Freedom thinks itself Promethean, and thus becomes it." (FN, 464). It is akin to the wish for total transparence which would ignore the deep recesses of man's unconscious being. These forms of refusal mark off the moment of most extreme tension between the voluntary and the involuntary and it is from this adamant refusal that consent must be wrested, if consent is to be at all.

E. From Refusal to Consent

There are, then, two possibilities open to one in the face of necessity --- refusal and consent. But the act of consent --- this saying of a "yes" to the inevitable and overcoming the initial "no" --- seems to betoken a capitulation. The other option seems to reduce freedom to a word. Refusal, rejection, scorn and defiance offer attractive avenues for

what would seem to be the highest expression of freedom: I will not let myself be hide-bound by any necessity. Ultimately, the most total act of freedom would be evidenced, one feels, in the act of suicide which emerges as "the highest consecration of that act of rupture introduced by consciousness". (FN, 466). It is a carrying of the "no" to its most sublime pitch --- the freely-performed destruction of, and mastery over, the situation, over life itself. For that life can appear as totally absurd, vile and base, freezing the duality into permanence. But I can cease being a slave to my body, the master, by destroying the master and exercizing a mastery of my own Cogito. I can also, with less finality and less drama, seek surcease from another form of slavery, that to my paradox-ridden reasoning powers --- I can commit what Camus calls "philosophical suicide", by escaping into the divinity which faith presents.[36] But both of these stances are, as far as Ricoeur is concerned, not victories, but evasions, escapes. There is another posture possible --- a posture of patient courage in the face of the absurd, a courage which refuses both forms of suicide --- both evasions --- in order to continue to face the responsibility of freedom, to affirm a different kind of "no", a "no" to the non-being of necessity, which is but to say "yes" to necessity itself as being "there" and binding me.

In short, just as every choice is an implicit "no" to other possibilities and every effort is a refusal to be hemmed in by a recalcitrant

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[36] cf. Albert Camus, The Myth of Sisyphus, translated by Justin O'Brien, New York, 1955.

body, so every consent is born of the initial refusal of the limiting conditions of the human situation --- the sorrow of a finitude which is imposed on me by my character, the sorrow of formlessness which one suffers in virtue of the unconscious and the sorrow of contingence and dread --- and ultimately of death --- which is the lot of humanity born in a particular time and place and circumscribed thereby. (cf. FN, 447-66).

However, the event of choice is more than a termination or a resolution of a debate; it also "genuinely inaugurates the project as a simple intention of pure action." (FN, 164). That event is simultaneously a "no" to the resolution of a process and a "yes" to the bursting forth of a novelty --- it is the practical reconciliation of the horizontal paradox of continuity and discontinuity in the decision-making process as well as of the vertical paradox of the involuntary motive and the voluntary project (cf. FN, 168). Similarly, the effort to overcome bodily inertias in acting and the Cogito's need to conquer the body, at least sufficiently to make thought possible, is only one side of voluntary movement; there is also the spontaneity and disponibility[37] of the pre-formed skills, like the instinctive co-ordination of sight and touch, and of habits, which free the will from preoccupation with means and allow it to concentrate on ends. Even emotions --- such as wonder and shock --- are seen, by Ricoeur, as organs available to the voluntary, rather than as masters over it. As effort is a negative index, so the organs of effort speak a "yes" that positively overcomes.

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[37] The French term "disponibilité" suggests so adequately the notion of a complete availability and openness that I have decided to use a transliterate neologism to render it into English, which does not have a corresponding term.

The question that arises, then, is this: Is a "yes" possible in the face of the Heideggerian Geworfenheit,[38] that particularity to which freedom's primary response is a resounding "no"? What, in any case, would it mean to say "yes" and does the affirmative pronouncement succeed in restoring a unity between the man who is consenting and the man possessing the character to which he consents? Does it restore the broken-up unity between man and himself and his world?

F. From Phenomenology to Metaphysics

For Ricoeur, a philosophical psychology will never succeed in reaching that unity of which we speak and for which we search. Admittedly, this unity is another of Ricoeur's assumptions, made in virtue of the suggestiveness of the myths of innocence which will provide fodder for his Symbolique du Mal. As we have said earlier, phenomenological eidetics must be transcended by a metaphysics which would come to grips with the fault and with Transcendence, which must be bracketed in the search for a fundamental ontology, the necessary prelude to a total anthropology. What Ricoeur seems to be doing in the final pages of Le Volontaire et L'Involontaire is paving the way for a consideration of the fault in his second volume, Finitude et Culpabilite, and Transcendence in an as yet unpublished "poetics" of hope. Ricoeur does not, then, really abandon his guiding principle, the "primacy of conciliation over paradox", (FN, 341) --- the traditional assumption of the dualism of the voluntary and the

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[38] Heidegger, op. cit., p. 174.

involuntary is not, he would aver, the final word, but the overcoming of this dualism cannot be achieved without invoking the ontological dimensions of the fault and of Transcendence.

The choice of the "yes" in the act of consent --- and it is a choice over refusal --- is a choice involving both of these dimensions. It is a choice, first of all, Ricoeur claims, with respect to the fault. What he seems to mean is that this choice implies the destruction of the wish for totality and is thereby a confession that the faulted human condition is to be taken into account, since it is that condition which contradicts the wish for totality. At the same time, the choice of the "yes" tends to strip consent of all its voluntary overtones and reduce it to an assent to a fact. Consent oscillates, as it were, between the desire for total freedom and the desire to give up, to lay down arms, to capitulate, to return to slavery (cf. FN, 466). The intrusion of the fault drags one away from one extreme, that of voluntarism, to the other, that of determinism. Ricoeur's ambition is to transcend both.[39]

The choice in consent also involves Transcendence. In order to justify the "yes" of consent, one has to discover whether the universe itself, which is the terminus of consent, is the sort of place where freedom is not but a mirage. If the world is a stage where freedom may play, if the world is somehow <u>for me</u>, then to consent does not imply giving up one's freedom; all the world becomes my stage. I can then say that this world

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[39] cf. Fanny Epstein, "Beyond Determinism and Irrationalism", in <u>Philosophy Today</u>, 11 (1967), 38-46.

is a world designed, in some sense, for me. It is, as it were, at my disposal. Thus, I do not deny the world, I adopt it. I do not give in to it; I acquiesce in it. I make use of it in my service and in the service of others.

Ricoeur concludes that a philosophy of the subject, engaged in as a first Copernican Revolution, can be completed only to the extent that one performs a philosophy of Transcendence. All that has gone before is a prelude to a "poetics". And he readily admits that this involves a real "leap", somewhat in the manner of the Cartesian methodic progression from defiant doubt to self-affirmation and from self-affirmation to the affirmation of God which will allow him, ultimately, to reaffirm the world and the body, which he had hitherto "bracketed". Ricoeur does not propose to perform this exercize in the first volume but simply wishes to show, by taking what he regards as two inadequate philosophies of Transcendence, how such a philosophy provides the germ for a reconciliation of freedom and nature.

Consent, we have said, oscillates between two poles --- the desire for total freedom, which would rise grandly above the mundanities of existence, and a total capitulation to necessity. The first is reflected in the Stoic attitude of total detachment which professes scorn of any restriction; the second may be seen in the Orphic tendency to lose oneself by immersion into the Other. An analysis of these approaches to the invincible is employed to articulate the point that any conciliation can be found only in a "consideration of the totality of the world, not, to be sure, as knowledge, but as a cipher of Transcendence." (FN, 469).

Stoic detachment is best epitomized in Epictetus' dictum that "of all things, some are in our power, others are not" and among the "others" is my body. Ricoeur quotes Marcus Aurelius as well as Epictetus to illustrate the "Stoic strategy" (ibid.) which sees the body as inert, as a thing, and sees effort exclusively as negative, as a struggle against resistance. On the other hand, the Stoics restore to the body --- and to all necessity --- a value that is positive, for necessity taken as a whole can be loved and adored. As Ricoeur indicates, "the change which rends each object and my insignificant body is surmounted and preserved in the substance of the whole." (FN, 470). This, of course, is, in no way, the union of man that we seek. It is rather the withdrawing of the soul into itself, detaching itself from particular passing "things", including the body, in order to contemplate, in adoration, that divinity which may be found in the total order. Thus, while the Stoic consent that loses itself in a pan-theism is not quite the scorn of the "black existentialism" of a Nietszche, it is still a non-involvement with the corporeal. It manages to save itself from its suicidal tendencies only by a reverent admiration for the ineffable Whole.

The value of the Stoic concept of the Whole lies, for Ricoeur, in evoking strongly the notion of Transcendence, in suggesting that I am not the center of being, in heralding the second Copernican Revolution, which is a leap from existence (i.e. from subjectivity) to Transcendence. Once I discover this Transcendence, I will no longer "consent" for I will no longer be "free". There is some suggestion in Jaspers' writings that if Transcendence were revealed to us directly, we should not be able to be

be free for Transcendence would dominate us completely.[40] A discovery of Transcendence would lead us, Ricoeur thinks, to admiration, not only for the Whole, but, in the Whole, the little peculiarities as well. Stoicism is doomed to remain "on the threshold of the poetry of adoration", (FN, 473), to be forever an "imperfect consent". (FN, 469).

Orphism, on the other hand --- especially that lyric Orphism of Goethe, Rilke and Nietzsche --- is a form of consent at the other end of the spectrum. This latter-day Orphism is the "hyperbolic consent" (FN, 473) which submerges the Cogito in the intoxication of the command, "Die and become!" Death, and with it all necessity, can be overcome in the "song which conjures up and celebrates". (FN, 474). The great Orphic poetry --- Rilke's Sonnets to Orepheus, in particular --- "sings of the pact of freedom and necessity, of myself as fervor and of nature as a miracle." (FN, 476, n. 26). The temptation of Orphism, indeed, is to lose oneself as subjectivity altogether, to tend towards a "nature worship in which the unique status of the Cogito evaporates in the cycle of the mineral and the animal." (FN, 476), in the manner of the psychology of behaviouristic orientation. Orphism tends to metamorphize admiration into alienation. To resist this temptation, there is a need to re-examine the dialectic between the Cogito in the first person and Transcendence of which the Whole --- the Universe --- is an index. Ultimate consent must retain both the Cogito and the Whole. The Cogito must appropriate both Stoic consent --- which gives

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[40] cf. Karl Jaspers, Philosophy, translated by E. B. Ashton, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1969.

it an assurance of sovereignty --- and Orphic consent -- which gives it the impetus to recognize (and thereby to "adore") the limits of that sovereignty.

The value of the Orphic approach -- we cannot say "concept", for Orphism is poetry and is veiled in myth -- lies in its evocation of both the fault and Transcendence. Consent, we have said, must be wrested from refusal --- it is a negation of a negation and thus a "primary affirmation", to use Nabert's phrase again. Now, refusal is a defiance and defiance speaks of fault. Consent implies a patient acceptance of my faulted condition. Refusal is, also, a rejection of the Other and consent implies an act of humility before Divinity, expressed in the "avowal" of sin, which, in L'Homme Faillible, will be no longer on the periphery, and in a continuing act of hope in a future reconciliation. It is this hope which can convert all hostility, all refusal, into what Ricoeur thinks of as a "fraternal tension within the unity of creation." (FN, 481).

CHAPTER V

TOWARDS A HERMENEUTIC OF EDUCATION

A. Philosophy and Pedagogy

In this final chapter we will suggest how Ricoeur's eidetic description of a freedom within limits and of a proper appreciation of "necessity in the first person" may be applied in the working out of a hermeneutic of education. We take "education" to refer to any structured process or system which proposes to provide students with the necessary wherewithal to enable them to make discriminating judgments with respect to the life situations they will encounter. Education is, thus, a human endeavour which takes as its aim the making of men, the building of the human community. Every emerging generation takes on the challenging role of building society anew and it is with this direction in mind that an educator must make available to children the necessary complex of information and the appropriate network of experiences to assist them in becoming responsible adults. As Canadian educator, Donald Vandenburg, puts it, "although the actual purposes of pedagogy may be very specific within daily lessons, its real aim is the development of a person who no longer needs pedagogic assistance."[41] A hermeneutic of education would attempt to

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[41] Donald Vandenburg, "Existential Educating and Pedagogic Authority", in Philosophy of Education: Proceedings, 1966, p. 109.

interpret the underlying meaning ("eidos") of this pedagogic process by working out a viable anthropology and by examining the various practical approaches to education in the specific contexts in which it intends to achieve its objectives. Such a hermeneutic would take account of whatever scientific evidence is available, using it in a diagnostic fashion to help us come to grips with the nature of man and with what is fundamentally involved in the making of men.

We take it as axiomatic that any philosophy which is a philosophy in what we may regard as the full and traditional meaning of the term must, perforce, have within it a philosophy of education.[42] Particularly pertinent to education will be any philosophy which purports to be an anthropology, or at least, the "grundlegung" for such an anthropology. The well-known historian of phenomenology, Herbert Spiegelberg, has said that Ricoeur's work is perhaps the greatest promise for the fulfillment of an anthropology[43] and it is our contention that Ricoeur's entire philosophical pilgrimage is a search for an understanding of man. This is particularly evident in his attempt to restore that unity which is so patently broken and which is at best elusive and at worst beyond recall, but which he sees as being partially available to our vision in a pre-philosophical experience,

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[42]We are using the word "philosophy" here to refer to a search for first principles and for wisdom, rather than in the more restricted, non-normative sense in which it is used by most Anglo-American philosophers of the analytic persuasion.

[43]in Pfänder, op. cit., p. 35.

articulated in so many symbols and myths.

It is beyond the scope of this present study --- and would, perhaps, be impossible, in any event --- to proceed directly from Ricoeur's philosophy of the will to a total educational philosophy. But if we cannot nail down any direct linkages between a philosophical idea and a pedagogical practice, we can settle for something less formal --- let us call it an inclination, a presumed direction in education being pointed out to us by Ricoeur's philosophical orientation. Thus, we can look at the eidetic adumbrations in Freedom and Nature to pinpoint a number of indications which should be accented in educational theory and practice. It is also beyond our scope to take account, in any more than a peripheral way, of Ricoeur's later work in which he sets about to effect the transition from the eidetic and empiric stages to the more genuinely anthropological stage to be reached in a projected poetics. In any case, it must be remembered that Ricoeur's pilgrimage, of which we spoke, is still incomplete. Our own task, therefore, is not to present any kind of blueprint for educational pursuits but rather to suggest how one approach to an understanding of man may be examined for the insights it provides for those involved in the business of understanding the man that the child is to become.

B. Educational Theory and Praxis

A study of Ricoeur's variegated writings of the past thirty years reveals that for him the fundamental and most trenchant philosophical experience is the consciousness of man as a broken unity, "l'homme

faillible". Nowhere is this more evident than in his major enterprise, a philosophy of human freedom, wherein Ricoeur's motivation is a search for a conciliation, a healing, of this fracture. This pursuit does, indeed, turn out to be a "task" --- it can never be completed except "in hope and in an eschatological age" (FN, 21) --- but Ricoeur feels that the attempt must be carried on. Thus, in terms of the two aspects of the voluntary and the involuntary on which we have focused in this essay --- consent and character --- unity can never be perfect but may be legitimately pursued as a guiding "limit-idea". With respect to that character which epitomizes the totality of the nature which free man must confront, consent as the will's act can never be total. There can never be absolute and permanent consent to the constraints of one's tempermament, for there is a continuous oscillation between the "no" of refusal and the tentative "yes" of patient consent. Locating the impossibility of perfect consent in the persistent evil and suffering in the world as we know it, Ricoeur suggests that while one can "consent as much as possible" one continues to "hope to be delivered of the terrible and at the end of time to enjoy a new body and a new nature granted to freedom". (FN, 480).

Congruent with the experience of an ontological divisiveness in man (dealt with through L'Homme Faillible in a methodological frameword and in Symbolique du Mal in terms of a hermeneutics of symbols), there is the experience of another dialectic at the level of existence, evidenced in a number of forms: seeing and saying, perspective and signification, individuality and universality, subjectivity and objectivity; in short, all the numerous indications of the finite and the infinite. One of the

manifestations of this existential dialectic which concerns us here is the apparent dramatic opposition between theoria and praxis, telescoped in the familiar lament, "That's all very well in theory, but . . .".

We have introduced the problem of the theoria-praxis tension for two reasons: methodologically, as an apologia for our attempt to translate Ricoeur's eidetic analyses into the realm of pedagogical theory and, hermeneutically, to pinpoint the essential place of understanding in educational practice --- the responsibility of educators to understand why they do that which, in practice, they are about. The difficult project of uniting thought and action --- word and work[44] --- in a common storming of the fortress of the future requires of the educator the will to understand the man the child is becoming. The attempt to restore the unity of man operates, on a first level, as a kind of propadeutic to the actual educational process and will take the form of a continuous effort to buttress action by theory, on the one hand, and to translate theory into effective praxis, on the other. Thus, educational theory will not operate in a vacuum, remote from history and culture, and educational practice will be established on foundations which will not collapse with the next passing storm.

The man of our time is precariously balanced on the tight-rope of contemporary fallibility: on the one side, the abyss of absolute determinism; on the other, the quicksand of unmitigated freedom. "Unable to reconcile

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[44] cf. Ricoeur's essay, Work and the Word in HT, 197-219.

freedom of choice and the inexorable limitations of nature", contemporary man vacillates between "a false unlimited and unsituated freedom, and a false determination of man by nature which reduces him to an object." (FN, 355). It is Ricoeur's thesis that man is neither "determined" nor "free"; he tries to formulate a conception of freedom "which is in some respect a nature" and a conception of nature "which is an individual mode - neither chosen nor modifiable by freedom - of freedom itself." (ibid.). Man is thus profoundly divided within and, often, against, himself --- he is fallible and conscious of his fallibility; he can make the wrong decision because he does not fully understand his motives; he is able to sin by omission as well as by action and he can refuse to consent to what he is by vainly trying to become an "other" or submerging himself in a cocoon in which all that happens comes about because of some "other".

The pedagogue must come to know through the painful effort that is characteristic of all knowing what it means to be a man who is free and effective but yet un-free because he can be effective only within the certain and well-defined limits which are his. He must be able to translate his understanding into the "becoming" of a person, a process which he, as teacher, is presuming to abet. The ancient philosopher, Heraclitus, refers to the eternal struggle to understand "how that which is torn in different directions comes into accord with itself --- harmony in contrariety."[45]

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[45]Heraclitus, Fragment 51, in Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker (5th ed.), translated by Charles M. Bakewell, Source Book in Ancient Philosophy, New York, Scribner's, 1907, p. 81.

Victory in this struggle can be glimpsed ephemerally in such disparate cases as the occasional grace of a superior skater or in the fleeting harmony of human love.

Ricoeur points up this eternal struggle --- the interplay between saying and doing, freedom and temperament, theory and practice --- in a tribute to Emmanuel Mounier, founder of the Esprit movement in France in 1932 and a pedagogue "par excellence". Ricoeur's essay, "Emmanuel Mounier: a Personalist Philosopher" (HT, 133-161), portrays a man of vision whose preoccupation with the crises of his time led him to abandon what he regarded as arid academic philosophy (theory without practice), didactic in style and geared to an intellectual elite, to pursue what he was eventually to describe as a "philosophy of existence" which essayed an interpenetration of reflection and action --- a philosophy of and for the market-place.

Ricoeur's own philosophical bias is evidenced by his own dedication to the Esprit movement, particularly by his collaboration with Mounier in the publication of a still-extant left-wing journal, Esprit, to which he has contributed some of its best articles. Ricoeur certainly believes in the efficacy of reflection --- reflection on the existential man, the social and political man of his time; indeed, the tenor of the seventeen essays collected in History and Truth, all written at different times and in different circumstances, is that of a panegyric of the "word". But it is a word which "reflects efficaciously and acts thoughtfully". (HT, 5). For Ricoeur, it is "impossible to set up a lasting and deep opposition between theoria and praxis". (ibid.). We may apply to Ricoeur himself

what he has said of Mounier, that he has "dared to envisage, over and above all academic philosophy, a new civilization in its totality." (HT, 134).

Ricoeur's philosophy, then is a contribution to the eternal struggle of which Heraclitus spoke. It is an effort towards the achieving of a unity of man, in terms of the freedom-nature dichotomy which emerges immediately one reflects on the human condition. It is an examination of this tension, especially within the dimensions of consent to character, that the second level of our consideration lies. Having suggested that practice without theory is doomed and having suggested that educators need to build their educational structures on foundations which embody an understanding of man, we must now see what emerges from Ricoeur's descriptive phenomenological analyses of human freedom. Our effort, thus limited, is consequently a most modest one in the framework of any total philosophy of education. Perhaps the continuing evolution from a descriptive --- more-or-less intuitive phenomenology to a more historically-oriented one --- an evolution which has its genesis in Heideggers's Sein und Zeit --- may provide the inspiration for a more thorough-going hermeneutic of education, but it is a project fraught with dangers, inasmuch as a proper pursuit of such a hermeneutic would require expertise in a staggering number of disciplines.

C. The Uniqueness of the Free Man

Freedom, for Ricoeur, is not the celebrated freedom of indifference

of the scholastics or of Descartes, which "omits the basic relation of project to motive" (FN, 81) and "which is no more than an impossible indetermination of contents of choice in relation to the contents of motives" (FN, 187). Rather, our freedom is what Ricoeur, in his final chapter of Freedom and Nature calls "an only human freedom" (FN, 482ff.) wherein "to will is not to create". (FN, 486). It is a motivated freedom, receptive to conflicting values; it is an incarnate freedom, subject to the resistances of a racalcitrant body; and it is a contingent freedom, confronted by the particularity of a character, the non-transparence of an unconscious and the givens of life and death. While this freedom can be seen as an image of absolute, creative, freedom, in its power of self-determination, it is other than absolute in its receptivity.

A man is free, then, in this context, within the limits of his human finitude. But these limits are personal, his own, unique. Spiegelberg, in a recent essay on the practical uses to which phenomenology may be put, reminds us that the discovery of the "Lebenswelt" leads to "a new sense of the wonder and dignity of the microcosm which is man".[46] While the "natural standpoint" tempts us to see man as nothing more than a self-enclosed bio-physical system, the attempt to describe man "as he is given" transforms this system into a "lebenswelt" (cf. FN, 219) wherein each human organism becomes the center of his own special world, without which

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[46]Herbert Spiegelberg, "On Some Human Uses of Phenomenology," in Phenomenology in Perspective, ed. by F. J. Smith, The Hague, Nijhoff, 1970, p. 22.

he would cease to be human. And this special world --- this situation --- includes the world of the "thou" which in turn encompasses the worlds of other "thou's". Spiegelberg wonders: "How much could a live awareness of this situation add to our respect, if not reverence, for man?"[47]

Like Spiegelberg, Ricoeur is conscious of the importance of seeing man in his singularity and uniqueness --- in short, that to see "man" at all is to see "a man". Perhaps the most significant overflow from a Ricoeurian anthropology-in-via, in terms of the educator's role as a civilizing force, is the importance of seeing the student as being "sui generis", encountering his own particular "Lebenswelt", and the necessity of encouraging him to see and respect himself thus, as well as the necessity of providing the educational milieu in which he may work out his individuality in the context of his potential.

Let us take a number of examples in the area of educational practice. The teacher of literature, for instance, must be aware that the individual student will <u>understand</u> the poem, the essay or the play according to his own perspective just, indeed, as the author himself has interpreted his "lebenswelt" through his own particular mode of seeing, and from his own stance. The reader can try to evoke an empathy with the author but he can be successful only to the point that his own experiences and his own interpretation of these experiences coincide and such coincidence can never be total. This is perhaps more traditionally accepted in the area of drama wherein one producer's "interpretation" is expected to differ,

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[47]Ibid., p. 23.

even radically, from that of another. We may note that the French, even in the area of popular songs, introduce a song as being "interprété" by a particular vocalist rather than as being "sung". Certainly, in the pedagogical realm, the teacher may --- and should --- assist the child towards a greater "readiness" for his confrontation with the poet's vision, the essayist's thesis, or the playwright's message, by helping him uncover possible deeper layers of meaning, but in the final analysis the student's encounter with the work is enhanced or limited by his greater or lesser ability to communicate with the author and stand in his place. To impose the teacher's own interpretation as if it were ultimate is as shortsighted as it is wasteful.

To pursue the teaching of literature, we can take our analysis through a more creative path in the case of the production of poetry or composition by the student. One can certainly give the student the necessary techniques for the manipulation of words and phrases according to certain established rules and every poet, for instance, is limited by vocabulary restrictions --- the "best" word may be impossible to find --- but the student will write good or bad poetry according to his own peculiar "style" and it is the teacher's privilege to encourage the student to perfect his technique to its finest polish within the framework of that style and not to discourage the student's efforts because they do not fit a preconceived mould. The same observations could be made, mutatis mutandis, with respect to other areas of creative performance by students --- art, drama, music, sculpture, painting, manual arts, even cooking.

In the area of religious education, the teacher must needs be

particularly aware of imposing his own perspective and his own value system. A happy medium must be worked out between inspiration, on the one hand, and indoctrination, on the other. While younger children, in what Piaget calls the concrete operational stage of development, are unable, psychologically, to make comparisons between alternate religious answers, it remains true that their particular religious orientation must be respected. Their understanding of matters religious is circumscribed not only by the intellectual, emotional and cultural limitations common to all children but is determined as well by their own individual experiences such as parental love, teacher behaviour, sense of wonder and the like. In the adolescent years, a foisting of pre-set standards in the area of belief is not only a violation of what a religious pedagogue would, in theory, regard as a God-given freedom, but is also self-defeating since belief cannot be imposed.

The mark of one's character is imprinted even on the manner in which a student engages in the study of mathematics and science, reflected in the varying degrees of perseverance he brings to a challenging problem or of methodic care with which he moves from step to step towards a solution. Character is omnipresent. One's bearing, the inflection of one's voice, even one's handwriting, all point in the direction of a uniqueness as pronounced as the physical uniqueness of a fingerprint.

To see a man in this light, as unique, is to see him as a person, which is immensely more than seeing him as an individual, in the sense that an individual is a particular instance of the universal --- a character "type", for instance, implying a certain inescapable "destiny". The

individual is but a caricature of the person. To become a person is to become part of the community of men who respect one another --- a world of honesty and love, a Kantian "Kingdom of Ends". That is a world which is close to the vision of Christianity for which "the theological virtue of charity is the paradigm for the person's generosity, and the 'Communion of Saints' confessed in the Christian Credo, is that of the mutuality of persons." (HT, 141). While one can see the concrete case as an individual sample, as the ethologist tends to do, it is the pedagogue's privilege and obligation to transcend this myopic view in order to bring all his energies to bear on the living, pulsating reality which is this child, who will become this man among other unique men. If it is patently impossible to operate in this manner in the typical public school classroom with its thirty, forty or more students, it is but an instance of the failure of theory and practice to wed, for while the notion of individual attention is very fashionable, those who accept the theory are not always inclined to provide the resources to make it possible.

An appreciation of the uniqueness and the "mystery" of man, achieved in spite of the seductions of technology and the graphs and charts of would-be guidance counsellors, brings us back full philosophical circle --- with the Mouniers and the Ricoeurs --- to the first anthropologist, Socrates, for whom the call to "know thyself" was the first categorical imperative. What is called for is, in Ricoeur's terms, a Copernican revolution", which restores to subjectivity its due". (FN, 31).

D. Subjectivity

The Socratic philosophy is the first anthropocentric philosophy. But anthropocentrism, as Plato readily saw, has its limitations, for psychological introspection presents us with such a morass of contradictory data that we lose our bearings in the labyrinth. Man must be studied and can be properly understood, Plato suggests, not in his individual life, but in his political life wherein the text of humanity is "writ large", sufficiently large that an appropriate hermeneutic may be applied to the characters in order that the web of confusion, evident at the individual level, may be disentangled. Thus, Plato creates his "Republic" before he creates his "man" --- a social philosophy precedes, even provides, an anthropology. The man has given way, as center, to "man". The universal is, for Plato, more real than the individual. It is against this Platonic emphasis as it has been passed down to much subsequent philosophy that contemporary existential philosophy is engaged in combat. Philosophers like Kierkegaard --- and even Nietzsche, in his way --- have led the way, in contemporary philosophy, in trying to reverse the Platonic hierarchy, to establish the individual's precedence over the universal, culminating in the Sartrean aphorism, "Existence precedes essence".

After Plato, Aristotle crystallized the tendency to categorization. Man, since Aristotle, has been enclosed within a formula, a definition. The classic definition --- Aristotle's own --- presents him as "animal rationale" and this definition retains much of its force, in spite of the encroachments of modern irrationalism. Indeed, it is patent that

rationality is an inherent characteristic of all human activity. However, the great productions of myth, religion, poetry and art --- even language itself --- are overlaid with countless strata of non-rational elements. It is, perhaps, as William Barrett suggests, time to "question whether (Aristotle's) definition is really the ultimate statement about man".[48]

If we examine myth, for instance, we find that while it is certainly not chaotic and does possess some conceptual shape --- as Ricoeur shows in Symbolique du Mal and in his attachment to the Kantian dictum, "Le Symbole donne à penser" --- it can scarcely be characterized in its structure as totally rational. Religion, too, presents itself as being, at times, immensely rational, and can sometimes be painfully systematized; yet, as Cassirer points out, a Kantian religion "within the limits of pure reason" fails to convey more than "the shadow of what a genuine and concrete religious life is."[49] Language, again, is man's greatest claim to uniqueness among all living things, but there is an emotional language as well as a conceptual one; there is poetry as well as logic, as when the poet sings of an irresistible force meeting an immovable object. The non-rational elements in modern art and in modern literature, beginning with Joyce's Ulysses and all the way to Bach's Johnathon Livingston Seagull are too patent to need elaboration, although they clearly call for a hermeneutic. "Reason", as Cassirer notes, "is a very inadequate term with

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[48]William Barrett, Irrational Man, London, Heinemann, 1961, foreword.

[49]Ernst Cassirer, An Essay on Man, New York, Yale University Press, 1962, p. 25.

which to comprehend the forms of man's cultural life in all their richness and variety".[50]

The anthropologist of the new persuasion --- in the era of the Copernican Revolution --- shuns starting with abstract definitions. Just as the personalist Mounier "takes his bearings from a certain sense of the concrete in the midst of the forms of civilization", (HT, 138) so Ricoeur, inspired by another of his compatriots, Gabriel Marcel, insists from the beginning on coming to terms with "the definite experience of existence which is myself in a corporal situation". (FN, 15). In any structured system of considering man, the existent individual is somehow lost, much as Kafka's hero finds himself lost in the Castle. The individual man --- the person --- is more than Aristotle's rational animal or Dewey's psycho-biological problem-solving organism or the behaviourist's conditionable entity, although he is, in a sense, all of these. He is even more than Cassirer's "animal symbolicum"[51] although that phrase is closer to description than most "definitions".

In any event, all such systems and definitions within systems relate themselves to the question, "What is man?", as if man were another thing among things, a specific instance of the general, to be labeled and objectivized according to the properties men have in common. Man is thus seen as a definite object with a fixed nature, an "essence". Even

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[50] Ibid., p. 26.

[51] Ibid.

Cassirer's claim that his 'definition' does not regard man as an object cannot escape the inevitable problem that it suffers from the objectivization that any definition conjures up. We may say, then, that while all attempts to define 'man' have a place in the philosophical enterprise, inasmuch as they provide us with clues to the understanding of a man, yet the far greater question which we would formulate, in the spirit of Augustine's Confessions as "Who is man?" does not get asked in any objectivistic, reductionistic context. The objectivization of man --- the answer to the "what?" --- is valid only as a necessary propadeutic to the understanding of the person --- the answer to the "who?".

Aristotle was quick to insist, early in the Nichomachean Ethics (chapter three of book one), that the nature of the subject being examined determines, in large measure, the degree of precision possible and the methodology to be employed. Politics is not an exact science; anthropology is not geometry. Pascal, the great French geometer-philosopher, was fond of distinguishing "l'esprit geometrique" from "l'esprit de finesse".[52] The former can never be applied to man, for what characterizes man is the diversity, the heterogeneity and the versatility of his nature. Thus, a Spinozistic ethics "more geometrico demonstrata" would be, in Pascal's view, an absurdity. Similarly, traditional logic and metaphysics, the first law of which is the law of contradiction, can never provide an anthropology, for man is neither homogeneous nor consistent. The philosopher is obliged to describe a real man, not construct an artificial

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[52]Pascal, Pensees, ed. by Charles Louandre, Paris, 1858, p. 231.

"rational animal" or "symbolic animal", at least if he pretends to understand, rather than explain, that of which he speaks. Man cannot be understood in terms of a mental physics but only on the basis of our experience of his life and conduct. There can be no single, simple formula in which man may be encapsulated --- man's place is, somewhat paradoxically, a no-man's land, a no-place, between being and non-being, between the infinite and the finite; he oscillates, as it were, between two opposite poles. To speak like G. E. Moore, defining man is committing a kind of 'naturalistic fallacy'.

And yet all this is not to deny that man is, in fact, an object. Just as man is free and yet, in another respect, unfree, just as his act of signifying transcends his act of perception, just as his word escapes all the bounds that work would imply, and just as his consent transforms his necessity into freedom, so it is that although he cannot be totally interpreted as an object, he is, nonetheless, an object which can be objectively investigated by the biologist and the physiologist, as well as by the ethologist. Ricoeur does not, as we have seen, dismiss the findings of any human endeavour which would serve to provide us with information about man, the object. Man is, indeed, matter for the chemist, the sociologist, the cultural anthropologist and the ethologist.

But that he is an object remains a very one-sided truth. The same body which can be objectively studied by the technician is the body which is my "corps propre" and, as such, unavailable to any microscope. Information about the object-body is useful, even necessary --- biological, psychological, culturo-logical, information --- provided one remembers

that such data serves in the capacity of a diagnostic to the uncovering of the unique subject. Just as a doctor deciphers the patient's symptoms to arrive at a diagnosis of the ailment, so the philosopher may read the signs which the several sciences make available to him in order that he may reach to the profundity of the subjective being, which the scientist would either dismiss as fiction, because it is unavailable to his techniques and so unverifiable, or would ignore altogether.

Indeed, the very suffic "-logical" serves well to emphasize that in the domains of biology, psychology and cultural anthropology, as well as in the area of ethology, one talks about man as if he were somehow an object, man in terms of and in relation to something else, man to be charter and graphed and made the play-thing of statisticians.[53] Inevitably, in this kind of presentation of the case, one is absorbed in explanation, the attempt to give an account of, to produce the causes and conditions, to analyze and dissect, to "explain away". When we "talk about" man in this manner --- when we try to subsume all his activities under the umbrella of some "explanation", we are being unfaithful to the total reality which we want to articulate, the lived (vécu) experience. That experience is certainly susceptible to explanation; to attempt to "explain"

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[53]Even the term "anthropology" as we are using it in this context is susceptible to the same kind of criticism. For this reason, and to be consistent, we have toyed with the idea of abandoning the term and replacing it by "philosophy of man" but such a usage creates more problems than it solves, including the grammatical problem of adjectival usage. In any case, the term has become sanctified by usage and we have decided to retain it, while remaining aware of its inadequacy.

why a man suffers pain or feels joy, what visceral transformations occur at these times, for instance, is a legitimate enterprise. Yet the explanation always remains one step removed from the experience itself and the only escape from that impasse is a serious, painstaking description which presents the phenomena "as they are given" with their many, polychromatic facets. Man, ultimately, cannot be explained, as a machine can be explained. Efforts to explain man thus, engaged in by psychologists like B. F. Skinner, succeed, if at all, only because it is assumed a priori that man is as any animal, a very complex one, it is true, but as one of them, nonetheless. It is not this writer's intention to dismiss Skinner so crudely --- we mention him merely to illustrate, by a paradigm instance, the method of explanation which we are opposing to the method of description. We merely wish to suggest that causal explanation and reductionism give only a distorted segment of the whole picture, although this kind of procedure has its place, if properly located, in the total framework of a hermeneutic of human culture and civilization.

E. Proper Use of Ethological Data

Explanations of man --- "talking about" man --- in a contemporary context are more likely to be in the areas of psychology or biology or a kind of historical and archaeological anthropology, and not so much in the realm of character-science, especially the kind of ethology elaborated by Ricoeur, the ethology of the Dutch school of Heymans and Wiersma. Indeed, empirical ethology of any sort is somewhat foreign to any Anglo-Saxon

philosophical discussion. Nonetheless, in North America, we do place a great deal of emphasis and reliance on all manner of tests --- IQ tests, aptitude tests and personality inventories --- which serve, in our high schools and our counseling centers, as character portraits, just as much as the combinations of emotivity, primarity and secondarity serve, among some European researchers, as means to the assignation of character types to individuals. These objective indices to the character of a human being present him with a fate, a destiny, at least implicitly. One is determined, it is assumed, by the "type" into which one can be most appropriately slotted. In a parallel manner, it is becoming increasingly widespread that one's moral behaviour is not to be condemned or blamed but is to be seen more as the result of one's conditioning or even of one's genes, conjuring up the nightmare of genetic engineering as the saving force of a future civilization.

Ricoeur contends that natural, temperamental characteristics are, in themselves, ethically neutral. For instance, a man is not destined to be forever untrustworthy because some ethologist's tests reflect a propensity to untrustworthiness. He will be trustworthy or reliable according to a certain style, it is true --- a style which is as uniquely his as his particular combination of genes --- but whether he turns out to be vicious or virtuous does not depend on his character. As we have indicated earlier, Aristotle, in his Ethics contends against those who would claim that we must be born with a natural gift for correct moral judgments.[55]

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[55] cf. our page 42.

Ricoeur argues that "there are no minds excluded from all morality; nor are there character types which possess morality as a natural right." (FN, 370). If this is the case, then all values are available, at least in some respect, to every character type. For educators, the warning of Alain is pertinent: "We must not be too hasty in judging character", he says, "as though decreeing that one man is a sot and the other lazy forever."[56]

The student's future is an open-ended one. He is "destined" only to live and behave individualistically, but he can use his individuality either in a kind of hermetic existence, sealed off as an "individual", or as a member of a society of men who propose to work in harmony, precisely as "persons". In the latter perspective, the educator's role is to "socialize" the student not in the sense that he is to assume unto himself all those characteristics and manners which are typical of an objectified, abstract society, thereby sacrificing his uniqueness for the falseness of a theatrical ego, but rather as a unique and free being who along with other equally unique and equally free persons will work to create a new "society". It is that ambition which must challenge each emerging generation and it is the pedagogue's responsibility to assist in the realization of that goal. A teacher must assist the student to understand himself, to define himself, in the sense that definition implies a limitation, a circumscription. The adolescent, the one who is <u>becoming</u> an adult, often sees the need for change, sometimes radical change, but he

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[56]Alain, op. cit., p. 24.

must work within the limitations of his character. To these limitations he must consent, proceeding apace to do what he can do best. But these limitations are methodological, rather than constitutive. It is the totality of his personality which he must accept and not the specific aspects of the involuntary such as particular habits and desires. Ideally (that is, abstracting from the pathological), it is possible to change any habit or control any desire, if the proper self-discipline is applied, for self-discipline is an interplay between the finite and the infinite. We accept what Alain says that ". . . each individual is born, lives and dies according to his own nature, as the crocodile is a crocodile and . . . he changes not at all."[57] But his natural propensities are, as we have said, ethically neutral; they are, of themselves, non-directional in terms of his ultimate decision and action.

Thus, although my character may be understood as a fate or a destiny, for it is omnipresent and invincible, yet it does not determine what I shall become. My freedom is also present throughout and "imprints its stamp even on my constitution". (FN, 368). My character is only my freedom's manner of being; my freedom is that kind of non-creative freedom which works within the context of a complex of givens. A freedom thus situated by the "fate" of a character to which it consents becomes, then, not so much a destiny which is determined for me, but rather a vocation. A science of character is always in danger of abuse, but it is equally

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[57] op. cit., p. 24.

available to a work of deliverance and every teacher has the double power to use ethological data for good or for ill. (cf. FN, 373).

A pedagogy which labels children too readily or which categorizes them too definitively is a dangerous discipline if it assumes too much, if it permits itself to become spellbound and thereby victimized by statistical profiles. Knowledge never absolves the educator from the need for what Ricoeur calls "sensitivity" and what is often referred to nowadays as "empathy". (FN, 372). To use ethology only in a psychotechnical fashion is a degradation, as LeSenne stresses.[58] The "I" is irreducible --- this is one of the merits of the Gestaltists, that they have emphasized that the aggregate is greater than the sum of its parts. To respect the mystery of the 'thou' of the other is the first plank in the platform of the good pedagogue --- in his own performance, as well as in his attempt to encourage a like attitude on the part of one student toward another. One of the major difficulties with students in this last third of our century is to bring them to see that their demand for freedom is not unilateral, that freedom in a society brings with it, ipso facto, its own limitations, and that freedom can legitimately be seen not merely as an absence of restraint (for that is a chimera) but as an availability for service. Total, unbridled freedom is always a caricature, but more especially among the young who are as yet only slowly coming to awareness of themselves, for that kind of freedom is a freedom without understanding, without empathy and without love. Understood properly, freedom accepts the limitations of

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[58] Op. cit., p. 325.

nature, and that ethological information which seems initially to comdemn one to a cipher on a chart of ethological formulae can lead one "to respect, to love, and finally, . . . to set free the immutable nature in each man." (FN, 372).

F. Conclusion

We have tried in this chapter to pinpoint several aspects of Ricoeur's descriptive phenomenology of the will which can provide a springboard for a particular hermeneutic of education, which would be ultimately concerned with the interplay of theory and practice in the educational process. Such a hermeneutic involves at least two dimensions.

In the first place, there is required a well-developed anthropology to provide a framework within which one can come to understand the human person which the educator proposes to "co-create". Of particular interest in this context is the eternal question of the meaning of human freedom and we have indicated that it is Ricoeur's ambition to effect a synthesis through the counterbalancing of freedom and nature, a synthesis which produces a motivated, incarnate and contingent freedom. This synthesis leads ultimately to an understanding of freedom as a love of fate, one's own and that of the "other", and implicit within the act of consent is the acknowledgment of transcendence, for the first limitation that demands acceptance is the fact that the ego did not create itself. Without transcendence, our consent would be a capitulation, an absurdity. But as long as transcendence is but a hope and perfect consent unavailable, our

freedom remains ever a precarious freedom, situated within a recalcitrant temperament and human fallibility. The Narcissus which lingers in every fallible man would have us ignore what Ricoeur calls the "weight of situations" and would delude us into a fictional, total freedom, autonomous and God-less, if only we had more answers and a better technology. But as Mounier puts it, "we are free only to the extent that we are not entirely free." (HT, 85). It is a vital, free consent to the unfree in each of us which makes sanity possible and lifts us out of the drift towards absurdity.

In the second place, we have indicated the use one may legitimately make of the findings of any of the human or physical sciences which must, of necessity, treat the body as object. It is not a matter of refusing the evidence of science but rather of finding an acceptable interpretation of the implications of these findings, so that one can use the calculations of science as guides in establishing the student's potential, within the limits of his finitude.

The implications for pedagogy may be summarized in terms of respect and empathy. Respect involves an appreciation for the uniqueness of the other and an acceptance of the particular perspective from and within which the student views his world. It involves, as well, an effort to help the student understand himself and his particular limitations so that he may make intelligent choices about which career to follow, for example. Thus, the student may develop a healthy respect for his own capacities and will not attempt to become that to which he has little orientation. He will be able to devote all his energies to working out his temporal destiny in the realm of what he can do best. Empathy involves a relationship to the

student which will understand that differences are invincible and have to be loved.

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