

The Meaning of Being Human in Ricoeur's *Philosophy of the Will*[†]



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We continue our attempt at a "creative repetition" of the *Philosophy of the Will* by now unraveling the compact movements of *Fallible Man*.¹ As before, we are animated by the hope that we render a service—no matter how modest—to the English-speaking world in creatively repeating the vaguely known or even deliberately ignored themes of Ricoeur's thought.

Here, our discussion will be focused on three main topics: first, the novelty of Ricoeur's venture—on the level of method and on the level of doctrine—that is represented by the movement from pathos to logos; second, the understanding of the dialectic of the finite and the infinite wherein the key concept of fallibility is gradually grasped by using transcendental reflection as a guideline in the analyses of action and feeling; and the third, the significance of fallible man.

In what way does *Fallible Man* represent a novel phase in the *Philosophy of the Will*? We have to recall that in *Freedom and Nature*, Ricoeur already announced the reintroduction of the fault and Transcendence

[†]Continuation of Part Two which appeared in *Budhi* I, No. 3, 1997, pp. 81-154. Part One appeared in *Budhi* I, No. 2, 1997, pp. 129-182.

¹For Ricoeur's brilliant recapitulation of the problem of man as "disproportion" in *Fallible Man*, see "L'antinomie de la réalité humaine et le problème de l'anthropologie philosophique," *Il Pensiero* 5 (September-December 1960), No. 3, pp. 273-290 (hereafter "L'antinomie" (1960): "The Antinomy of Human Reality and the Problem of Philosophical Anthropology," translated by Daniel O'Connor, in *Readings in Existential Phenomenology*, edited by Nathaniel Lawrence and Daniel O'Connor (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1967), pp. 390-402 (hereafter "The Antinomy," (1967)). See also "L'homme et son mystère" (1960).

that have been bracketed in order to elaborate the *Eidetics* of the will. *Fallible Man*, which inaugurates the *Empirics* of the will, now intends to reintroduce the domain of the fault. This enterprise, however, must not be construed as the mere concrete application of the previous analyses. It is a venture which promises to be more novel and more inventive: "It is to disclose a *new* thematic structure which calls for *new* working hypotheses and a *new* method of approach."²

At the time of *Freedom and Nature*, Ricoeur did not yet fully perceive the novelty of the venture. But he was already aware that the new description had to be an *Empirics* because of the absurd nature of the fault and that the same *Empirics* must pass through the detour of a *concrete Mythics*.³ In *Fallible Man*, Ricoeur now recognizes that this initial project has been further clarified and broadened in three ways: first, the expansion of a *Mythics* of bad will into a *Symbolics* of evil. The comparative study of myths shows us the necessity of reintegrating them to their proper universe of discourse.⁴ With this reintegration, it becomes evident that these myths can only be understood as secondary elaborations of a more fundamental language — "the language of avowal" whose prominent feature is to be thoroughly *symbolic*.⁵ To comprehend it, one must have recourse to "an exegesis of the symbol" which calls for rules of deciphering: a hermeneutics."⁶ Within the *Symbolics* of evil, the most *speculative* symbols (matter, body, original sin) refer back to the *mythical* symbols (the battle between the order and the forces of chaos, the exile of the soul in a foreign body, the blinding of man by

²HF, 9; FM, XVII (emphases mine).

³HF, 9-10; FM, XVII; VI, 27-28; FN, 24-26.

⁴As examples of this preliminary reconstruction, we have the following studies by Ricoeur: "Culpabilité tragique et culpabilité biblique," *Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuses*, 33 (1953), No. 4, pp. 285-307; "Recherches d'anthropologie chrétienne sur le terrain philosophique: I. Les Grecs et le péché, II. Le philosophe en face de la confession des péchés, *Supplement to La Confiance* (Correspondence Fraternelle et Privée des Pasteurs de France) 3 (1957), Nos. 1-2, pp. 17-32; "La vision morale du monde," *Bulletin du Groupe d'Etudes de Philosophie* (1958-1959), No. 10, pp. 1-43.

⁵We adopt Kelbley's translation of "le langage de l'aveu." In SE, Buchanan translates "aveu" as "confession."

⁶This is a historic moment in the *Philosophy of the Will*. To our knowledge, this is the first time Ricoeur uses the word "hermeneutics." See HF, 10; FM, XVIII.

a hostile divinity, Adam's fall) which, in turn, refer to *primary* symbols (stain, sin, guilt). As a hermeneutics of these symbols, the *Symbolics* of evil becomes the first step in bringing myths nearer to philosophical reflection.

In the second direction, we witness the *enlargement of the anthropological perspective* from the reciprocity of the voluntary and the involuntary into "a much vaster dialectic dominated by the ideas of man's disproportion, the polarity within him of the finite and the infinite, and his activity of intermediation or mediation."⁷ This enlargement results from an investigation of the question: What is the human "locus" of evil? *Fallible Man* answers this basic question by a reflection on the concept of *fallibility* or the possibility of evil. But after this reflection, philosophical discourse still faces the task of incorporating the *Symbolics* of evil. This task is only realized "at the price of a revolution in method, represented by the recourse to a hermeneutics, that is, to rules of deciphering applied to a world of symbols."⁸ Ricoeur exercises this *new* method at the end of *The Symbolism of Evil* in the programmatic chapter "Le symbole donne à penser."⁹

In the third direction, we view the *extension of the Symbolics of evil into a wide ranged Empirics* of the will that encounters the human sciences like psychoanalysis, criminology, and political science. Furthermore, this thought starting from symbols must also elaborate the specu-

⁷According to Ricoeur, this problem of the "antinomical structure of man, suspended between a pole of infinitude and a pole of finitude is not only specific but revelatory of the problem confronting philosophical anthropology as such." See "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 273; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 390. The outlines of Ricoeur's broadened philosophical anthropology may be seen in the following articles published before *Fallible Man*: "Sympathie et respect: Phénoménologie et éthique de la seconde personne" (1954); "Négativité et affirmation originaire" (1956), in *HV*; "Negativity and Primary Affirmation" (1965), in *HT*; "Le sentiment," in *Edmund Husserl 1859-1959, Recueil commémoratif, Phaenomenologica*, 4 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959), pp. 260-274.

⁸*HF*, 12; *FM*, XXI.

⁹We prefer to keep this cherished formulation of Ricoeur in French for the simple reason that it has become familiar enough to be identified with his thought. Kelbley translates the phrase as "The symbol gives thought" in *FM* while Buchanan prefers to translate it as "The symbol gives rise to thought" in *SE*. Another translator renders it as "The symbol: food for thought." See "The Symbol: Food for Thought," translated by Francis B. Sullivan, *Philosophy Today* 4 (Fall 1960), No. 3 pp. 196-207).

lative equivalents of the myths of the fall, exile, chaos, and tragic blindness as well as criticize the concepts of original sin, evilness of matter, and nothingness. Finally, this philosophical reflection has to shed light on "the riddle of the slave will," that is to say, a "*free will which is bound and always finds itself already bound*."¹⁰

In alluding to the theme of the slave will, Ricoeur show us how the problems of method are not only intimately connected with problems of doctrine but also with a philosophical stake that may be gleaned from the intended subtitle of *Fallible Man—Grandeur and limitation of an ethical vision of the world*. But what is meant by an "ethical vision of the world"? To quote Ricoeur:

If we take the problem of evil as the touchstone of the definition, we may understand by the ethical vision of the world our continual effort to understand freedom and evil by each other.¹¹

This decision to illuminate evil by freedom does not imply an arbitrary prejudgment on the radical source of evil. By approaching evil through human existence, Ricoeur merely describes the "locus" where evil becomes accessible. Furthermore, it is appropriate to approach evil in this way for it only manifests itself to us if we avow responsibility for it. Thus, the avowal grounds evil in freedom, making the human being not only the place but also the *author* of evil, though not its root origin. Here, we glimpse the *grandeur* of an "ethical vision of the world"—a deepened understanding of evil that brings about a more heightened awareness of freedom.

But is evil as the *unjustifiable* (*unerforschbar*) fully accounted for by the avowal of freedom? Here, we locate the *limitation* of an "ethical vision of the world" which is already prefigured in the broken character of the world of myths. Even if one wagers on the Adamic myth as the central reference point of the other myths, it still remains that the latter are not fully encompassed within the former. An exegesis of the Adamic myth itself reveals its ambiguous structure, seen in the tension between these two significations—evil arises insofar as I *posit* it, but I posit it only because I *surrender* myself to the attack of the Enemy. In

¹⁰HF, 13: FM, XXIII (Ricoeur's emphases).

¹¹HF, 14: FM, XXIV.

sum, the *Symbolics* of evil offers as food for thought both the grandeur and limitation of an ethical vision of the world.

A. From Pathos to Logos

1. THE WORKING HYPOTHESIS

Ricoeur's working hypothesis may be seen in a twofold way. From the viewpoint of *method*, it presupposes that pure reflection—"a way of understanding and being understood which does not come through image, symbol, or myth"—can attain "a certain threshold of intelligibility" of human fallibility.¹² From the viewpoint of *doctrine*, it presupposes that the "ratio" of fallibility lies in our global non-coincidence or "disproportion" with ourselves.¹³ This idea of "disproportion" implies the idea of "intermediacy." One must however understand "intermediacy" properly. For this, the Cartesian paradox of finite-infinite human being promises to be a good starting point. But it should not lead us to the snare of interpreting the human being as an intermediate region between being and nothingness. In what sense then is the human being intermediate?

Man is not intermediate because he is between angel and animal; he is intermediate *within himself, within his selves*. He is intermediate because he is a mixture, and a mixture because he brings about mediations. His ontological characteristic of being-intermediate consists precisely in that his act of existing is the very act of bringing about mediations between all the modalities and all the levels of reality *within him and outside of him*.¹⁴

This does not deny that the Cartesian paradox of finite-infinite human being enables us to replace finitude with the triad finitude-infinity-intermediary as the central concept of philosophical anthropology.¹⁵

¹²HF, 21; FM, 3. "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 274; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 391 (in this translation, "intelligence du seuil" is rendered by O'Connor as "preliminary understanding").

¹³HF, 21; FM, 4. "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 273; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 390.

¹⁴HF, 23; FM, 6 (emphases mine). See also HF, 63; FM, 71.

¹⁵Like Ihde, we see Ricoeur's decision to start from the triad as a polemic directed against the "finitist" interpretations of the human in existential philosophy. See Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology*, p. 62.

For Ricoeur, a philosophical anthropology that begins with human "disproportion" necessarily rules out a reductive approach that goes "from the simple to the complex."¹⁶ If there is progression in the philosophical comprehension of the global meaning of the human, it will only be through "a series of viewpoints or approaches which would in each case be a viewpoint on and approach to the totality."¹⁷ The general presupposition here is that philosophy proceeds as "a second order elucidation of a *nebula of meaning* which at first has a prephilosophical character."¹⁸ No philosophy then exists without presuppositions. Philosophy depends upon its prephilosophical sources. But if philosophy is *dependent* upon its *sources*, it is *independent* with regard to its *method*.¹⁹

Where then is the precomprehension of human disproportion to be found? It awaits us in what Ricoeur calls the "*pathétique of 'misery'*" that serves as "the poetic matrix of the reflection on the non-coincidence of man with himself."²⁰ One must take this "*pathétique of 'misery'*" at its highest point of perfection—in its most profound expressions. At this point, the question of how to begin in philosophy assumes a new aspect. If philosophy is confronted by a prephilosophical comprehension, the task is to recuperate the *depth* of this precomprehension within the *rigor* of reflection. This will be achieved by methodically beginning with an "approximation" of the *pathétique* by means of a "transcendental" reflection, that is to say, "a reflection which does not start with myself but with the object before me, and from there traces back to its conditions of possibility."²¹ This "transcendental" reflection will serve as a guideline to the exploration of all the other modalities of the human being as intermediate. In this way, transcendental reflection becomes the first phase of a philosophical anthropology that strives to equal the richness of the precomprehension of misery. Without a

¹⁶HF, 24; FM, 8. This recalls the contrast in VI between understanding and explanation. See *Budhi* I, No. 3, 1997, pp. 94-95.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.* (emphases mine). See also HF, 24, 29, 30-31, 34; FM, 8, 16, 18-19, 23, 25; SM, 332; SE, 357.

¹⁹See *Budhi* I, No. 2, 1997, p. 154.

²⁰"L'homme et son mystère" (1960), p. 125 (Ricoeur's emphases; translation mine).

²¹HF, 25; FM, 9-10. See also HF, 36, 57; FM, 28, 61.

philosophical anthropology that strives to equal the richness of the precomprehension of misery. Without this transcendental detour, philosophical anthropology deteriorates into "a fanciful ontology of being and nothingness."²² Thus, a philosophical anthropology of fallibility in disproportion has a twofold beginning: the *prephilosophical* in the *pathétique*, and the *philosophical* in the *transcendental* method of reflection.

We should take care to see this transcendental reflection as a kind of necessary detour in the movement of recovering the concrete richness of the *pathétique*. Yet there remains a gap between the *pathétique* and the transcendental reflection—a gap partly filled in by a reflection on human disproportion in the realms of action and feeling. The main thrust then of *Fallible Man* is to gradually *broaden* as well as *deepen* reflection to its utmost limits. Pure reflection, if it attained this, would then become a total comprehension. But such is never the case. For in the precomprehension of oneself, there is a "wealth of meaning" which reflection is unable to recuperate.²³ It is this surplus of meaning that makes Ricoeur turn to a new approach in *The Symbolism of Evil*.

2. THE PATHÉTIQUE OF "MISERY"

To evoke the human being's precomprehension as "miserable," Ricoeur traces for us three of its most exceptional manifestations: the Platonic myth of the soul as *mélange*, the Pascalian rhetoric of two infinities, and the Kierkegaardian reflection of the unstable self.²⁴ As we move down these examples, we will notice that there is a progressive intensification in the precomprehension of "misery" and that we also come closer to reflective discourse.

²²HF, 25; FM, 10. See also HF, 63, 67; FM, 71, 76; "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 281; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 396.

²³HF, 26; FM, 11. See also HF, 30; FM, 18 "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 275; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 391.

²⁴HF, 26-34; FM, 12-25; "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 275-277; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 392-393.

A. THE PLATONIC MYTH OF THE SOUL AS MÉLANGE

The global precomprehension of "misery" is already present in the Platonic myths found in the *Republic*, *Symposium*, and *Phaedrus*. In these myths, we remark a change from the language of *allegory* to the language of *myth*. For instance, Plato takes recourse in the language of allegory to portray the soul as the intermediate being *par excellence*, in the sense that it is neither an incorruptible Idea nor a corruptible thing. The soul is described as composed of three parts in Book IV of the *Republic*, in the same way that the *polis* is made up of three orders (Rulers, Auxiliaries, and Craftsmen). But this *static* representation gives way to a *dynamic* one when Plato views the soul as *anabasis*—a movement towards the level of Being and the Good. The soul then appears as θυμός (*thumos*), "an ambiguous power which undergoes the double attraction of reason and desire."²⁵ While the intermediate is a "mean" in the static representation, it is a *mélange* in the dynamic representation. Consequently, the language of myth is needed to recount the genesis of the *mélange*. In the myths of the *Symposium* and *Phaedrus*, *Eros* which represents the soul is born from the union of *Poros*, a principle of abundance, and *Penia*, a principle of indigence. These myths occupy the forefront of the prephilosophical comprehension of fallibility because they convey the "*pathétique of 'misery'*" in an undifferentiated manner. In other words, they preserve the indivisible unity of "misery" as primordial limitation and original evil. "Misery" is that "undivided disgrace" of finitude and guilt, awaiting elucidation from reflection.²⁶

B. THE PASCALIAN RHETORIC OF TWO INFINITES

With Pascal, the precomprehension of "misery" undergoes a change in *intention* and *tone*. The tone is no longer that of myth but of *rhetoric*. As for the intention, Pascal's eloquence aims at that *persuasion* enabling us "to forego diversion and to pierce the veil of pretense by which we hide from our true situation."²⁷ Take for instance, the celebrated fragments entitled "*Deux infinis, milieu*" ou "*disproportion de*

²⁵HF, 28; FM, 15. See also HF, 98, 123-124, 138; FM, 123-124, 138, 162-164, 185.

²⁶HF, 29; FM, 16.

²⁷HF, 31; FM, 20.

l'homme."²⁸ Here, Pascal imaginatively draws our place in nature, as being intermediate between two infinities—the infinitely great and the infinitely small:

For after all, what is man's nature? A nothing in comparison with the infinite, an all in comparison with nothing, a mean between nothing and all.²⁹

This *spatial* schema of human disproportion gives way to an *existential* schema of the disproportion of the knowledge of things. In the latter, the infinitely great becomes the *end* toward which things tend; the infinitely small the origin or *principle* from which things emerge. Our disproportion lies in that we lack "the 'infinite capacity' to 'understand' or to embrace the principle and the end."³⁰ In this sense, our intermediate situation is in itself dissimulating. Yet we also *deliberately* dissimulate our miserable condition through diversion. It is this paradox of a dissimulating-dissimulated condition that the Pascalian rhetoric attempts to unmask. But like the Platonic myths, the Pascalian precomprehension of "misery" is ambiguous, still preserving the unity of primordial limitation and original evil.

C. THE KIERKEGAARDIAN REFLECTION OF THE UNSTABLE SELF

The Kierkegaardian reflection of the unstable self is regarded by Ricoeur as the most rigorous among the three expressions of the precomprehension of human disproportion.³¹ In *Sickness Unto Death*, Kierkegaard defines consciousness (the self) as "a relation which relates itself to itself (freedom) by relating itself to another [God]."³² However, what constitutes the relation to the Absolute Other (God) is precisely the relation of the self to itself, which is to become "a conscious syn-

²⁸Pascal, *Pensées*, Fragment 72 in Brunschvicq edition.

²⁹*Ibid.*, p. 353 (cited in *HF*, 32; *FM*, 21).

³⁰*HF*, 32; *FM*, 22.

³¹The Kierkegaardian reflection is nearest to the kind of reflection that Ricoeur wants to undertake and this fact may explain its cursory treatment. It is briefly presented in "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 277; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 393. Though mentioned, it is not developed at all in *HF*.

³²"L'antinomie" (1960), p. 277; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 393.

thesis of finitude and infinitude.”³³ For Kierkegaard, the self must continually strive to navigate between an infinitude of unlimited possibilities and a finitude of limited realizations. To confine oneself solely to one pole is to *despair*. Like Pascal, Kierkegaard still remains on the level of rhetoric or the level of an indirect appeal addressed to the unique individual.

After presenting the prephilosophical source of an anthropology of fallibility, it is time to turn to the properly philosophical beginning — the pure reflection on the concept of fallibility. With pure reflection, we break down the nebula of “misery” to articulate it into distinct forms.

B. *The Dialectic of the Finite and the Infinite*

1. THE TRANSCENDENTAL SYNTHESIS

How can we pass from *pathos* to *logos*, from the “*pathétique* of ‘misery’” to philosophical discourse? The necessary but insufficient philosophical transition is the stage of “transcendental” reflection. It has a twofold merit. First, by beginning with the investigation of the power of knowing, the other modalities like action and feeling are placed “in a specific light which is suitable for a reflection on man.”³⁴ These become “anthropological” categories. Second, a “transcendental” reflection, in the Kantian sense, is capable of providing us rigorous objective notions. Why is this so? It is called *reflection* precisely because it “takes the roundabout way via the object; it is reflection *upon* the object”; it is termed *transcendental* because “it brings into view in the object that in the subject which makes the synthesis possible.”³⁵ This investigation of the conditions of possibility of the object breaks with the *pathétique* and inaugurates the philosophical comprehension of disproportion. But a transcendental reflection also has its limitation. The synthesis it reveals is only intentional — in the object. This synthesis considered as “consciousness” is not *for itself*. That is why another type of reflection is needed to continue and pass from consciousness to *self-consciousness*.

³³*Ibid.*, See also “Recherches d’anthropologie chrétienne sur le terrain philosophique” (1957), p. 28; SM, 290; SE, 312.

³⁴HF, 35; FM, 27.

³⁵HF, 36; FM, 28. See also HF, 25, 64; FM, 9-10, 73.

A. FINITE PERSPECTIVE

A transcendental reflection on the human being as intermediate and on the mediating function of imagination begins with the scission traced by reflection between sensibility and understanding:

It is one thing, it says, to *receive* the presence of things, it is another to *determine* the meaning of things. To receive is to give oneself intuitively to their existence; to think is to dominate this presence in a discourse which discriminates by denomination and connects in articulate phrasing.³⁶

The finitude of receiving and the infinitude of determining (which culminates in the verb) are revealed in the thing. Can one begin a philosophical reflection on finitude by a study of the lived body (*corps propre*)? But the finitude which I experience, in the relation to my body, is not what appears first; what appear are things, living beings in the world. My body shows itself first as an openness to the world. It is therefore from the manifestation of the world that I become aware of my body as mediator of the intentional consciousness. Does my finitude consist then in the world manifesting to me *only* through the mediation of the body? To this question, Ricoeur answers affirmatively. He agrees with Kant who identified finitude with receptivity, meaning by a finite being a "rational being which does not create the objects of its representation but receives them."³⁷

Wherein consists the finitude of receptivity? It consists in the perspectival limitation of perception. An aspect of the object — its insurmountable property of presenting itself from a certain angle or profile — makes me reflectively realize the finitude of my point of view. I never perceive more than one side of the object at any given time and the object is never more than the intended unity of all its profiles. The multiplicity of these profiles reflectively discovered in the identity of the object makes me aware of my body, not only as openness onto the world but as point of view — the "*here from where*" (*ici d'où*) the object is seen.³⁸ By a regressive analysis from the perceived object to the

³⁶HF, 37; FM, 29 (Ricoeur's emphases). See also HF, 55; FM, 57.

³⁷HF, 38; FM, 31.

³⁸HF, 39; FM, 33. See also "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 278; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 394.

perceiving object, Ricoeur has elucidated the finitude proper to receptivity. This finitude is found in the notion of perspective or point of view. With Kant, it is true to say then that the finitude of the human being consists in receiving his objects

.... in the sense that it belongs to the *essence* of perception to be inadequate, to the essence of this inadequacy to refer back to the onesided character of perception, and to the essence of the onesidedness of the thing's profiles to refer back to the otherness of the body's initial positions *from where* the thing appears.³⁹

To perceive from a point of view limits the perception of something. The point of view is the insurmountable originary narrowness of my openness to the world.

What have we seen in this first analysis? Primordial finitude is linked to perspective or point of view. It concerns our primary relation to the world — to *receive* objects, not to create them. But this finitude must not be confused with receptivity *as such*, understood as openness to the world. It is rather “a principle of narrowness or, indeed, a closing within the openness.”⁴⁰ This finite openness must not also be confused with the body's mediating function. It should be seen more in the body's role as the original “here” from which there are places in the world. This relation between openness and perspective, which marks the receptivity proper to perception, will guide the analyses of the other modalities of finitude.

B. INFINITE VERB

In speaking about finitude, we reveal its fundamental aspect — that it can only be expressed on the condition there is a transgression of it.⁴¹ The movement of transgression, therefore, must be inherent to the situation of being finite: “The complete discourse on finitude is a discourse

³⁹HF, 41; FM, 35-36 (Ricoeur's emphases).

⁴⁰HF, 42; FM, 37.

⁴¹The term “transgression” is used by Ricoeur in a way akin to the use of “transcendence” in existential phenomenology. See Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology*, p. 68, note 9.

on the finitude *and* the infinitude of man."⁴² In perception, I recognize my perspective as such by relating it to other perspectives which deny mine as the zero origin. Just as I apprehend the finitude of my perspective *upon* the thing itself, so also I transgress my perspective *upon* the thing itself. I can express this one side of the thing only by expressing all the other sides which I do not actually see but *know*. I make a judgment of the entire thing by transgressing its given side into the thing itself:

This transgression is the intention to signify. Through it I bring myself before a sense which will never be perceived anywhere by anyone, which is not a superior point of view, which is not, in fact, a point of view at all but an inversion into the universal of all points of view.⁴³

The transgression is nothing else than speech (*parole*) as the possibility of expressing the point of view itself. Thus, I am not only a situated perception but through speech, an intention of signification. According to Ricoeur, this dialectic of signification and perception is so absolutely essential that a phenomenology of perception which ignores it becomes ultimately untenable.⁴⁴

The transcendence of signification over perception renders a reflection on the point of view possible. I am not bound to the world to such an extent that I am unable to signify the meaning which intentionally transcends all points of view. When I signify, I say more than I see. In what consists this transcendence or infinitude of speech? To answer this question, one must begin with the analysis of the verb in Aristotle's *On Interpretation* 3 (Aristotle presupposes Plato's discovery of the cornerstone of human discourse — the important distinction between noun and verb). Here, the verb is a nominal meaning (*signification*

⁴²HF, 43; FM, 38 (emphasis added). See also *Négativité et affirmation originaires* (1956), in HV, 337; "Negativity and Primary Affirmation" (1965), in HT, 306; "Recherches d'anthropologie chrétienne sur le terrain philosophique" (1957), p. 28.

⁴³HF, 44; FM, 41.

⁴⁴This is borne out not only by the first of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* but also by the first chapters of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Two common features of these analyses are worth noting: the initial disproportion between signification and perception, between truth and certainty; the identification of the transcendence of signification with λόγος (*logos*) or speech (*parole*).

nominale) with a double intentionality. On the one hand, it posits the nominal meaning into present existence. On the other hand, it adds to the nominal meaning the attribution to the subject. Thus, to say that "Socrates is walking" is to posit the present existence of the "walking" and to attribute the "walking" to Socrates. This double intentionality of the verb allows for false negation, false affirmation, true affirmation, and true negation. From Aristotle's admirable analysis, we come to realize that by means of the verb, we may affirm or deny something of something. With this *power* of the verb appears the transcendence no longer merely of signification over perception but of speech taken as verb over speech taken as noun.

C. PURE IMAGINATION

A reflection on the object or thing has uncovered to us the "disproportion" between the *verb* which expresses being and truth, and the *look* (*regard*) which is attached to a perspective. Ricoeur relates this "disproportion" to the Kantian duality of the understanding and sensibility, and to the Cartesian duality of the will and understanding. This "disproportion" gives rise to the problem of the third term called "pure imagination" by Ricoeur. Pure imagination poses a difficulty because it cannot be reflectively analyzed like perception in the consciousness of perspective and like speech in the consciousness of signification. This synthesis is not given in itself but only in the thing.

But what then is the thing? It is the synthesis of speech and point of view but as effected outside. This synthesis is called "objectivity" in the sense that it is "the indivisible unity of an appearance and an ability to express"⁴⁵ This objectivity is not "in" consciousness but in the thing itself; it is the thing's ontological constitution. For a *transcendental* reflection, the thing's ontological constitution serves as a guide to the coming to awareness of the subjective synthesis itself.

At this point, Ricoeur demonstrates the importance of Kant's theory of transcendental imagination for a reflection on the third term. In what way is Kant's theory interesting? For Kant, the duality between sensibility and understanding is synthesized in the third term of transcen-

⁴⁵HF, 55; FM, 58; "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 278; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 394.

dental imagination. Transcendental imagination does not exist *for itself* but expends itself up in the act of constituting the objectivity of the thing. While the objectivity of the thing is *clear*, transcendental imagination is *obscure*. It has no intelligibility of its own. To quote Kant himself, it is "an art concealed in the depths of the human soul whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to have open to our gaze."⁴⁶ The transcendental synthesis is *consciousness* but not yet *self-consciousness*:

"Consciousness" is not yet the unity of a person in itself and for itself; it is not one person; it is no one. The "I" of I think is merely the form of a world for anyone and everyone. It is consciousness in general, that is, a pure and simple project of the object.⁴⁷

The synthesis of finite perspective and infinite verb in pure imagination shows us that we bring about the mediation of the finite and the infinite outside of ourselves — in things. But it does not show us how we bring about the mediation within ourselves. Although transcendental reflection is the necessary first stage of a philosophical anthropology, it remains insufficient due to its formal character. One has to go beyond it.

2. THE PRACTICAL SYNTHESIS

The second stage of an anthropology of "disproportion" is marked by the shift from the theoretical to the practical. To what demand does this new venture respond? It responds to an exigency for totality which transcendental reflection left unfulfilled. We apprehended this totality of human reality in the *pathétique* of misery. It is the richness of this *pathétique* which we must try to reintegrate into reflection. Beside this richness, transcendental reflection appears abstract. It is only a reflection on the *thing*, on the conditions of possibility of its objectivity. Here lies both its force and its weakness: its force because it breaks down the *pathétique*, endowing it with a philosophical status; its weakness because

⁴⁶Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* A 141, trans. by N.K. Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), p. 183. Cited in *HF*, 59; *FM*, 64.

⁴⁷*HF*, 63; *FM*, 70; "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 281; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 396.

the universe of things only presents the bare outline of our lived world.⁴⁸ Thus, transcendental reflection needs to be completed.

Here, Ricoeur's method consists in approaching the totality by gradual steps instead of proceeding straightway to it. This method of *approximation* takes the idea of totality as a task, as a directive idea in the Kantian sense. In order to steer away from the arbitrary and the fanciful, this method will be guided by the previous transcendental reflection. Thus, the triad of "perspective," "meaning," and "synthesis" will serve as the paradigmatic case, not only in the sphere of action but also in the sphere of feeling.

A. CHARACTER

All the aspects of "practical" finitude that can be understood from the transcendental notion of perspective may be summed up in the notion of *character*. To avoid reifying character, one must gradually unfold it as a threefold perspective: *affective, practical, singular*.

1) AFFECTIVE PERSPECTIVE

A first step in unfolding the notion of character is to see its *affective* finitude. Instead of reducing character to a static portrait or an abstract formula (as in ethology), we must understand it as "a generalization of the notion of perspective."⁴⁹ For the notion of perspective is derived from that of character. Perspective, as the point of view on the thing as such, is not a limitation in all respects but only a limitation on perception. How then do we generalize the notion of perspective? Let us recall that every human action is motivated by desire. There is thus a perspective of desire which is linked to its very intentionality. All desire, we have seen, is "an experienced lack of . . . , an impulse oriented toward . . ." ⁵⁰ As an affective aim for this or that particular object, desire is *clear*. But at the same time, desire is *obscure* and confused when taken

⁴⁸For Ricoeur, philosophy only becomes reflective in moving away from the immediacy of the *pathétique*. As pointed out by Ihde, Ricoeur's use of Kant in *Fallible Man* remains in keeping with his understanding of phenomenology as a transcendental philosophy. See Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology*, p. 64.

⁴⁹"L'antinomie" (1960), p. 282; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 397.

⁵⁰HF, 70; FM, 81. See also VI, 86; FN, 89.

as the way one feels, as "the mood in which one finds oneself."⁵¹ In desire, my body is an incommunicable presence turned in on itself. My body is not experienced as pure mediation but as an immediate attachment to oneself. This attachment to oneself—described by the Stoics as a "feeling and dilection of oneself"—provides the *basso continuo* of all affective aims.⁵²

2) PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVE

A second step in unfolding the notion of character is to see it as a *practical* finitude. My body is a bundle of *powers* (*pouvoirs*) whose practical spontaneity is available for the will. This practical spontaneity, however, carries with it a primordial inertia which also makes of every power a powerlessness. This is illustrated in habit. Every habit is ambiguous; it helps me not only to change my self but also to constrict it. I am able to change my self by learning a habit. But once I have learned a habit, I intend to preserve its contracted form. This contracted form affects my self which then becomes constituted. Indeed, habit delimits the range of my possibilities for action by fixing my tastes and aptitudes. More than anyone, Ravaillon discerned the philosophical significance of this dialectic of *available power* and *contracted form* in the heart of Habit.⁵³

3) SINGULAR PERSPECTIVE

A third step in unfolding the notion of character is to see it as a *singular* finitude. In generalizing the notion of perspective, we have seen that the finitude of character consists of these aspects: the immediate self-dilection in desire accounts for the *affective* finitude while the primordial inertia in habit accounts for the *practical* finitude. To these aspects, character now adds the consideration of a *singular* finitude. Character is "the finite totality of my existence."⁵⁴

⁵¹Kelbley's translation of "se trouver bien ou mal" which is Ricoeur's rendition of Heidegger's *Beindlichkeit*, the "way" or "mood" in which we "find" ourselves. See FM, 84 note 5.

⁵²HF, 72; FM, 85; "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 282; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 397.

⁵³HF, 75; FM, 89. See also VI, 309-310; FN, 327-328. On Ravaillon's impact on Ricoeur's thought, see *Budhi* I, No. 3, 1997, p. 136.

⁵⁴HF, 75; FM, 89; "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 283; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 397.

How can I look at my character as the finite totality of my existence, as a primordial limitation of my openness? It is by interpreting the idea of character through that of perspective. Once again, my perspective is a *perceptual* finitude, i.e., my finitude for the *thing*. How can I understand finitude *in all respects*? It is by listening to what Bergson says on *expressive* acts and feelings, "each of which represents the entire soul, in the sense that the whole content of the soul is reflected in each of them." Precisely, character—as a totality which is given only in a single well-chosen act or feeling—is in Bergson's elegant phrase "our personal idea of happiness or honor." To stress its more psychological aspect, Ricoeur calls this totality "*the total field of motivation*."⁵⁵ In this sense, the finitude of character is "*the limited openness of our motivation taken as a whole*"⁵⁶ By my character, I am a fundamental *openness* to the whole range of possibilities of being human. But I am also *limited* because the whole range of possibilities of being human is "accessible to me only according to the existential angle of my character."⁵⁷

Just as the origin of perception is never perceived, "my" character is never looked upon in itself but implied as the zero origin of my field of motivation. Character is not a fate which determines my life from the outside but the inimitable manner in which I assume my existence. Yet in a certain way, character is fate in the twofold sense of being unalterable and factual. I can move my body to change my perspective of perception but I can not move to change the zero origin of my total field of motivation. My character is not only unalterable but also factual. My birth is a *fact*—I did not posit my self. As immutable and received, my character constitutes the given and factual narrowness of my openness to the whole range of possibilities of being human.

B. HAPPINESS

All the aspects of "practical" infinitude that can be understood from the transcendental notion of meaning may be summed up in the notion of *happiness*. The "disproportion" between meaning and perspective serves as the melodic cell of the developments which culminate in

⁵⁵HF, 77; FM, 92 (Ricoeur's emphases).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷"L'antinomie" (1960), p. 283; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 397.

the "disproportion," between happiness and character. The former "disproportion," however, only represents the *theoretical* aspect of human disproportion. Now, we aim to express its *global* aspect. In this effort at totalization, we will still be guided by the method of approximation adopted in the generalization of perspective to form the finitude of character.

What does Ricoeur mean by "happiness" (*bonheur*)? This term does not designate a particular form of transgression but the total aim of all the forms of transgression. It may be likened to Aristotle's supreme Good which is aimed at by *εργον* (*ergon*), taken as an indivisible whole. To disclose the full meaning of happiness, we must *reduce* or set aside a naive idea—that happiness is the satisfaction of human acts taken individually. An inquiry into human activity and its most ultimate aim reveals to us that happiness is not the fulfillment of partial desires but the totality of meaning which fulfills "man's existential project considered as an indivisible whole."⁵⁸

But how are we able to distinguish happiness as a *totality of meaning* from happiness as a *sum of pleasures*? Human activity taken as an indivisible whole would be incomprehensible if we were unable to relate it to the project of reason which is the *exigency for totality*. It is this exigency of reason which helps us distinguish happiness as a *whole* from happiness as a *sum*. The totality demanded by reason is the same one aimed at by human activity. If perspective, self-direction, inertia are rooted in a finite and singular mode of being—character, they can only be thought dialectically in relation to a series of opposite terms which culminate in a certain infinite—happiness as the totality of fulfillment and meaning.

Character and happiness can only be thought conjointly as a constitutive antinomy of human reality. Together, character and happiness account for the "disproportion" on the level of *praxis*. How does this "disproportion" appear? A return to the notion of the total field of motivation used in forming the idea of character will be helpful. This total field of motivation is an *oriented* field. Character is the *zero origin* of this field; happiness is its *infinite end* or *horizon*. I only attain my character by reflective allusion to the narrowness of my total field of

⁵⁸ HF, 83; FM, 101.

motivation. Happiness is not given in any experience. I only receive signs of my destination to happiness through privileged moments. These occur in what Pierre Thévenaz calls "events" (*événements*) when I feel assured that I am in the right direction.⁵⁹ In such moments, the horizon opens up before me; there is a feeling of the "immense." This feeling assures me that I am directed towards the totality demanded by reason. Reason as the exigency for totality coincides with my destination for happiness.

C. RESPECT

Where is the synthesis of happiness and character? It is found in the person. But this synthesis of the person, the correlate of the synthesis of the object, is not given as accomplished but as a *task* to be realized. The person is intended rather than experienced. In the theoretical synthesis, we looked for the conditions of the thingness of the thing; in the practical synthesis, we now look for the conditions of the "personality" of the person.⁶⁰ As before, the procedure is reflective. But we will see that this reflective procedure remains formal, a practical formalism substituting itself for the transcendental formalism. For this reason, this second stage needs to be completed.

But first, we must establish that the person is a project that I represent to myself, a synthesis like the thing but in an entirely irreducible way. Ricoeur refers to this project of the person as "*humanity*"—"not in the collective sense of all men but the human quality of man . . ."⁶¹ If objectivity was the thing's thingness, humanity is the person's personality or ontological constitution. In what does this humanity consist? Strictly speaking, we know already since we were able to elaborate

⁵⁹HF, 85, 120; FM, 105, 158. In other essays, Ricoeur comes back to Thévenaz' notion of "event": "... an event is not simply a break in time, an irruption, but a kind of crystallization of meaning. ... an event is only an event because it gathers up the meaning behind and before it." See "Autonomie et obéissance," *Cashiers d'Orgemont* (Autonomie de la personne et obéissance à un autre) (January-February 1967), No. 59, p. 17 (translation mine). See also "La parole, instauratrice de liberté" (1966), p. 504.

⁶⁰As will appear later on, "personality" here refers to the *ontological* constitution of the person.

⁶¹HF, 87; FM, 107 (Ricoeur's emphasis).

the two antithetical notions of character and happiness only in relation to the *idea* of being human. This idea of being human is a form of the person in which I intend a *new* synthesis—an end in itself which is, at the same time, an existence, “a presence in which one enters into relations of mutual understanding, exchange, work, sociality.”⁶² In positing the person as an existing end in itself, consciousness becomes *self-consciousness*. This self-consciousness, however, is *intentional*. But while the thing is *theoretically* intended, the person is *practically* intended. the person is a “to be” (*à-être*); the only way to attain it is to “make it be” (*faire être*). To speak like Kant, humanity is a way of treating others and oneself. It is the *idea* of the person. It should be possible then to trace back this idea to the lived experience in which it is constituted.

The synthesis of the person is constituted in a moral feeling called “respect” by Kant. Here, Ricoeur follows Kant’s analysis of respect, though not without some reservations.⁶³ Just as the transcendental imagination was the intermediary of sensibility and understanding, respect is the “paradoxical” intermediary of sensibility (the faculty of desiring) and reason (the demand of obligation from practical reason). Respect is a “paradoxical” intermediary because if it is clear in its object—the person’s humanity, it is obscure in the sense that the true unity of its opposed terms cannot be shown. “Respect” is so paradoxically constituted that it cannot be reflected upon without being shattered. In respect, I am at once an obeying subject and a commanding sovereign. I cannot imagine this situation otherwise than as a twofold *participation* in the sensible world and in the intelligible world. In this twofold participation is inscribed the possibility of a discord, the existential “fault” (*faillie*) which underlies our fragility.

Isn’t this analysis, which is derived from a moral philosophy of *radical evil*, unsuitable for an anthropology of fallibility? Indeed, the Kantian

⁶²HF, 88; FM, 109; also HF, 138-139; FM, 186-187; “Sympathie et respect” (1954), pp. 389-390.

⁶³Ricoeur acknowledges his revision of Kantianism. For Kantian respect is respect for law and the person is only one instance of it. By putting respect and person in a direct relation of intentionality, Ricoeur hopes to “bring out the Kantian philosophy of the person which is outlined in the *Foundations* and stifled in the *Critique of Practical Reason* . . .” See HF, 90 note 7; FM, 111 note 24. See also HF, 36, 151-152; FM, 27, 207.

moralist presupposes an ethical vision of the world wherein the duality of good and evil is already constituted, in which the human has *already* chosen evil.⁶⁴ To the objection, Ricoeur replies that our sole access to the originary is through the fallen.⁶⁵ If the fallen does not point to that *from which* it has fallen, one cannot even speak of downfall. For this implies a reference to an innocence that we understand well enough to name it and to designate its loss as a fall. It is through an ethical dualism that we rediscover the structure of fallibility. The reconquest of the primordial disproportion is not only possible but necessary to the intelligibility of the ethical dualism. For how could the laws of reason “subject” sensibility if the latter did not have “access” to the former? Respect is rooted in an affinity of sensibility for rationality. At this point, Ricoeur takes leave of Kantianism.

The only way to pursue a more radical anthropology—the practical foundation of the ethical dualism—is to situate the inner duality of respect as prolonging the duality of perspective and verb. From the outset, transcendental reflection placed itself on the level of the originary. This enabled it to serve as a guide for rediscovering, beyond ethical dualism, the practical disproportion between character and happiness. Just as transcendental imagination was the *hidden* synthesis in which the form of the thing is constituted, respect is the *fragile* synthesis in which the form of the person is constituted. Let us now prolong the “practical” moment of respect by attending to its “affective” moment—*Gemüt*.

3. THE AFFECTIVE FRAGILITY

What does a reflective analysis lack in order to equal the comprehension of being human in the *pathétique* of “misery”? It lacks the *pathos* of “misery”—the dimension of feeling. By taking the thing and the

⁶⁴HF, 92, 158; FM, 115, 217.

⁶⁵This is a characteristic of Ricoeur’s way of thinking. First, the primordial has to be understood, and afterwards, the fallen which is referred to the primordial. One has to begin with the totality first, and only after with the division. As Laplantine remarks, Ricoeur’s effort is spent in establishing that human goodness is more primordial than his wickedness. See François Laplantine, *Le philosophe et la violence*, Collection SUP “Le philosophe,” 122 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1976), p. 152. See also HF, 93, 128; FM, 117, 170.

person for reflective references, transcendental reflection broke down the *pathétique*, endowing it with philosophical rigor. But the gain in rigor entails the loss in richness and depth of the *pathétique*. Is it now possible to recuperate this richness and depth in philosophic discourse? This is the question of *method*. Intertwined with it is another question: If a philosophy of feeling is possible, how is it related to an anthropology of fallibility? This is the question of *doctrine*.

In posing these questions, one goes back to Plato's remarkable idea on the θυμός (*thumos*), the mediating function *par excellence* in the human soul. The *thumos*, zone of transition from βίος (*bios*) to λόγος (*logos*), at once unites and separates επιθυμία (*epithumia*) (vital affectivity or desire) and ερως (*eros*) (spiritual affectivity or reason).⁶⁶ If a return to Plato is possible, then the third stage of an anthropology of fallibility is the "heart" ("coeur"), *Gemüt*, Feeling. Gradually advancing from the theoretical to the practical, and then to the affective, philosophical anthropology would attain the most intimate and fragile point in the human being.

The first moment of fragility was the synthesis of perspective and verb in transcendental imagination which intentionally went beyond itself in the objectivity of the thing. The second moment of fragility was the synthesis of character and happiness in respect which intentionally went beyond itself in the humanity of the person. Like transcendental imagination, respect still remained an *objective* synthesis. The third moment of fragility would be the "heart." All the disproportions which were summed up in character and happiness would be *interiorized* in the restless "heart."

But is a philosophy of the "heart" possible—a philosophy that does not fall back into the *pathétique* but raises it up to the level of reason which demands the total and the concrete? An orientation is already provided by the preceding reflection. There, we saw that the *pathétique* is not alien to the sphere of discourse for it even had its own language—*mythos*. If *pathos* is already *mythos*, it must be possible to reconstitute the *pathétique* in philosophic discourse. *Mythos* recounts the primor-

⁶⁶In the *Republic* (439c), Plato describes the θυμός (*thumos*) as an ambiguous power which undergoes the double attraction of reason and desire. See *HF*, 28, 98, 123; *FM*, 15, 123-124, 162-163.

dial misery of the human as intermediate being. A philosophy of feeling would then express this misery and fragility of being human.

A. INTENTIONALITY AND INWARDNESS OF FEELING

To show the possibility of completing a philosophical anthropology in feeling, it is enough to reflect on the general function of feeling.⁶⁷ One should not be too quick here in accusing Ricoeur of "emotionalism" or "affectivism." For he makes it clear that the significance of feeling is to be found in "the *reciprocal genesis* of knowing and feeling."⁶⁸ This means that *knowing and feeling arise and develop together; they promote each other*:

On the one hand, the power of knowing, by hierarchizing itself, truly engenders the *degrees* of feeling and pulls it out of its essential confusion. On the other hand, feeling indeed generates the *intention* of knowing on all its levels. The unity of *sentir*, of *Fühlen*, of feeling is constituted in this mutual genesis⁶⁹

By means of an intentional analysis, Ricoeur aims to establish this reciprocity of knowing and feeling. In order to bring out the unity of all the modes of feeling, this intentional analysis disregards the difference in *level* of the realities designated by feeling: for instance, love of things, persons, world.⁷⁰ It merely considers the "horizontal" relation set up by feeling between the self and the world—the relation between love and the lovable, between hate and the hateful.

⁶⁷See HF, 99, 147; FM, 125-126; 200-201; "Le sentiment" (1959), p. 263. Ricoeur bases himself principally on the researches of Stern and Strasser. See William Stern, *Allgemeine Psychologie auf personalistischer Grundlage* (Den Haag, 1950); Stephan Strasser, *Das Gemüt* (Utrecht-Freiburg, 1956). This last book has been translated into English, bearing a "Foreword" by Ricoeur. See Stephan Strasser, *Phenomenology of Feeling: An Essay on the Phenomena of the Heart*, translated with an Introduction by Robert E. Wood, Philosophical Series, 34 (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1977), XXIV-412 p.

⁶⁸HF, 99; FM, 126 (emphases added). This is a key phrase which appears no less than five times on the same page. See also HF, 101-102, 104, 107, 118; FM, 129-130, 133, 138, 155; "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 286; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 400.

⁶⁹HF, 99; FM, 126 (Ricoeur's emphases). See also "Le sentiment" (1959), p. 260.

⁷⁰HF, 99-100, 107; FM, 126, 138.

It is striking that this intentional analysis uncovers a paradox. Feeling is indeed intentional; it is a feeling of something—love of the lovable, hate of the hateful. But feeling is a peculiar intentionality: on the one hand, it designates qualities felt *on* things, *on* persons, *on* the world; on the other hand, it reveals the way the self is inwardly affected.⁷¹ In feeling coincide an *intention* toward the world and an *affection* of the self. We must note that we cross out the affective aspect as soon as we neglect the intentional aspect of the self. Yet, we hesitate to call the intentional correlates of feeling *objects*. The lovable and the hateful are *felt* on things but do not possess the proper subsistence of objects. In this sense, Ricoeur calls the intentional correlates “floating qualifiers” because they are neither “in” consciousness nor outside as autonomous objects. For example, a perceived thing or person is needed to manifest the lovable or the hateful. Feeling then presents a paradox in that the same experience designates a quality felt on the thing and through this, reveals the inwardness (*intimité*) of the self.

The reciprocal genesis of knowing and feeling can throw light on this paradox. Knowing may be characterized as a movement of *objectification* which sets up the *duality* of subject and object. Knowing “detaches” us from things. In contrast, feeling may be characterized as a movement of *interiorization* which restores our *complicity* with the world, more fundamental than all duality. Feeling “binds” us to things.⁷² This irreducible belonging (*appartenance*) to the world cannot be recaptured in itself but it can be called “ante-predicative, pre-reflective, pre-objective, or hyper-predicative, hyper-reflective, hyper-objective”⁷³ Feeling, conceived as the counterpart of knowing, is the privileged mode which manifests this pre- and hyper-objective relation to the world. It can only be paradoxically described as the unity of an intention and an affection since our language has been molded by the subject-object duality. This unity of intention and affection may be betrayed in two ways. In calling feeling “subjective” because it lacks the objectivity of the thing, we neglect its intentional dimension. Feeling manifests an intention toward the world only insofar as it

⁷¹HF, 100, 105; FM, 127, 134; “Le sentiment” (1959), p. 264.

⁷²“L’antinomie” (1960), p. 286; “The Antinomy” (1967), p. 399; “L’homme et son mystère” (1960), p. 128; HF, 122-123; FM, 161-162.

⁷³HF, 101; FM, 129.

manifests an affection of the self. The "depth" proper to feeling is not the contrary of intentionality but of the objectification in knowing. In this sense, true objects are *far* and true feelings are *deep*. In attributing to feeling, "objects" called *values* in order to stress its intentionality, we ignore its affective dimension. However, the pleasant and the unpleasant felt on things only become values when they are reduced to essence and confronted with other values in a preferential viewpoint.

B. "HOMO SIMPLEX IN VITALITATE,
DUPLEX IN HUMANITATE"

Feeling adds something novel to the transcendental understanding of human reality. Since its general role is to interiorize the reality objectified in knowing, feeling is necessarily contemporaneous with knowing. A reflection on the mutual genesis of feeling and knowing will now conduct us to the central theme of Ricoeur's meditation on disproportion—that *like* knowing, feeling splits up in two, but *unlike* knowing, in the mode of an *inner conflict*.

The first advantage of a mutual genesis of feeling and knowing is to lead from a "horizontal" analysis which considers only the relation between love and the lovable in general to a "vertical" analysis which considers the degrees of feeling in accordance with their objects. In this way, the full range and inner disproportion of feeling are revealed. The second advantage is that the meditation on disproportion reaches its climax in the experience of feeling.⁷⁴ The inner conflict of being human concentrates itself in the human feeling *par excellence*—the *θυμός* (*thumos*).

In the analysis of feeling, Ricoeur first establishes the range of feeling by attending to the extreme terms *επιθυμία* (*epithumia*) and *eros* (*eros*). Then, he turns to the middle term, *θυμός* (*thumos*), in order to understand the whole of human fragility through feeling. A reflection on the object has shown us that the human is a being torn between a limited perception and an exigency for the whole truth. This primor-

⁷⁴For a highly interesting interpretation of the reciprocal genesis of feeling and knowing, see Part I of Walter James Lowe, *Mystery and the Unconscious: A Study in the Thought of Paul Ricoeur*, esp. pp. 59-76.

dial duality obliges us to elaborate together a philosophy of perception and a philosophy of discourse. In the same manner, the disproportion of feeling invites us to start with the initial polarity of vital desire and intellectual love.⁷⁵ This is Ricoeur's working hypothesis:

Man's humanity is not reached by adding one more stratum to the basic substratum of tendencies (and affective states) which are assumed to be common to animal and man. Man's humanity is that discrepancy in levels, that initial polarity, that divergence of affective tension between the extremities of which is placed the "heart."⁷⁶

To test this working hypothesis, Ricoeur seeks the affections which *terminate* the movement of need, love, and desire. There are two *terminations* of affective movements: one completes isolated, partial, finite acts—pleasure; the other perfects the total activity of the human being—happiness. This happiness is no longer the empty idea of happiness which was earlier opposed to character but the fullness of happiness or *beatitude*.⁷⁷ The polarity of *ἐπιθυμία* (*epithumia*) and *eros* (*eros*) is best illustrated by the inner discord of these two terminations.

Just as finite perspective is recognized as such by the intention of truth which transcends it, so also pleasure is grasped as such by the principle of happiness which transcends it. Guided by Aristotle's analysis of pleasure in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Ricoeur shows that happiness transcends the *perfection* of pleasure. Pleasure is perfect because it perfects. However, its perfection is finite (it is happiness in the instant) and partial (it is tied to bodily life), viewed against the horizon of the human destination for happiness. Pleasure, as the compression of happiness in the instant, threatens to hinder the dynamism of acting and to conceal the horizon of happiness. Here, one should watch out in putting forward a moralistic interpretation of pleasure as evil. The finitude of pleasure does not make it evil. Happiness neither denies nor refuses pleasure but reaffirms it in its proper worth. Happiness, as the transgression of pleasure, is the most perfect pleasure—the *supremely pleasant*.

⁷⁵"Le sentiment" (1959), p. 266.

⁷⁶HF, 109; FM, 140.

⁷⁷HF, 109, 110, 114-115; FM, 140, 142, 149-150.

What in affective confusion distinguishes the intention of happiness from the intention of pleasure is reason in the Kantian sense—a *demand* (*Verlangen*) for totality. Happiness has the same range as reason. We are capable of happiness because reason, following Kant, “demands the absolute totality of conditions for a given conditional thing.”⁷⁸ Kant discovers at the source of this demand, “a view (*Aussicht*) into a higher immutable order of things in which we already are, and in which we may, by definite precepts, continue our existence in accordance with the supreme decree of reason.” This succinct text clarifies the meaning of the reciprocal genesis of reason and feeling. On the one hand, reason as an openness to the totality engenders feeling as an openness to happiness. On the other hand, feeling interiorizes reason and shows it as *my* reason. To use a Kantian term, reason is my *Bestimmung*, my “destination.”

But there is more to feeling than the identity of existence and reason in the person. Through feeling, we become fundamentally aware that we are *already in being—inessé*. Feeling manifests to us that we primordially participate in being. Thus, being is “not for us the Totally Other but the medium (*milieu*) or primordial space in which we continue to exist; that in which we move, will, think, and are.”⁷⁹ This fundamental feeling of *being-in* is particularized in “spiritual feelings” which are its schematization. This schematization goes in two directions: that of participation in the *interpersonal* forms of “We,” and that of participation in *suprapersonal* tasks or “Ideas.” In the first, we have the schema of *friendship* or *being-with*; in the second, the schema of *devotion* or *being-for*.⁸⁰ Together, these make up the *Aussicht* into an order “in which we may . . . continue our existence.”

The idea of the schematization of feeling also allows us to account for essentially formless feelings like delight, joy, exultation, serenity, etc. Through their formless character, these “moods” (*tonalités*), *Stimmungen* express the ontological feeling of our openness to being. Although all “atmospheric” feelings are not ontological, it is understandable that the Unconditioned “which is thought but not known by means

⁷⁸Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, “Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason,” transl. Beck, p. 212. Cited in *HF*, 118; *FM*, 154.

⁷⁹“Le sentiment” (1959), p. 269 (translation mine).

⁸⁰*HF*, 119–121, 137; *FM*, 156–159, 183.

of objective determinations" manifests itself in formless "moods."⁸¹ For "moods" alone can convey the coincidence of the transcendent and the inward.

But does not the opposition of Anguish and Joy argue against the idea of ontological feeling? If being is that which beings are not, anguish is the feeling *par excellence* of ontological difference. But Joy attests that we are only partly linked to this absence of being in beings. That is why Spiritual Joy or Beatitude designates the "mood" that is truly "ontological." Its reverse side of absence is anguish. In and through anguish, the human being is capable of Joy—this is the source of his *affective fragility*.

C. *θυμός* (*THUMOS*): HAVING, POWER, ESTEEM
(*AVOIR, POUVOIR, VALOIR*)

With feeling, the stable synthesis of objectivity gives way to the dramatic duality of subjectivity. Feeling reveals fragility as *conflict*. Pursuing Plato's remarks on the *θυμός* (*thumos*), Ricoeur attends to the dynamics of feeling. According to him, the *θυμός* (*thumos*) provides a third term which no longer gets lost in the object but makes itself present to the heart. For the *θυμός* (*thumos*) is the human heart. In this median zone between *βίος* (*bios*) and *λόγος* (*logos*), human subjectivity constitutes itself as a *self*, different from other things and other selves. It is important to begin with this "difference" of the self which is prior to its perversion in "preference." To do that, we must dig underneath the "passions" which disfigure the innocence of "difference" with the vanity of "preference."

In this regard, Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* is instructive.⁸² At the outset, the Kantian trilogy—avarice (*Habsucht*), tyranny (*Herrschaft*), and vainglory (*Ehrsucht*)—begins with specifically *human* passions. However, a philosophical anthropology must strive to reach the primordial state from which the fallen forms of affectivity are derived. Thus, we must recover the authentic *Suchen* behind the threefold *Sucht* for the passions as fallen can only be under-

⁸¹ HF, 122; FM, 160.

⁸² HF, 127; FM, 168-169. See also HF, 95, 135; FM, 119-120, 182.

stood in reference to the fundamental quests. This *understanding* of the fallen, in and through the primordial, requires a kind of an "imaginative variation" of an innocent possession, domination, and valuation.⁸³ One achieves this by referring these fundamental quests to their corresponding objects which are no longer natural but human—economic, political, cultural.⁸⁴ The study of human affectivity is thus deepened by the new aspects of objectivity which are interiorized in the authentic human quests.

1) THE QUEST FOR HAVING

Let us start by understanding the passions of avarice (*Habsucht*) in relation to the fundamental quest for having. This is a human quest because the "I" constitutes itself in appropriating the "mine." Here, we are guided by the object's new dimension—its being an *economic object* susceptible of being appropriated. It is in work that the human being sets up a new relation to things whereby he treats them as possessions. The novelty of this relation may be brought out by shifting attention from the economic object to its correlative affectivity. While a simple need is only an oriented lack, the desire for the economic object is relative to its *availability for me*. In the feeling proper to having, I experience both my mastery over the "mine" (of which I can avail myself) and my dependence upon it (insofar as it can be lost). Furthermore, this feeling of having establishes a relation of mutual exclusion between the I and the you; what is "mine" is not "yours."⁸⁵

Is there then no innocent having imaginable? Is the abolition of all having the prerequisite for human communion? According to Ricoeur, a complete abolition of having is unimaginable. For even the *possibility* of human goodness demands a kind of just having. Ricoeur tells us:

It should be possible to draw a dividing line which does not cut between being and having, but between unjust having and a just possession which would distinguish among men without mutually excluding them.⁸⁶

⁸³ HF, 128, 161; FM, 170, 222. See *Budhi* I, No. 3, 1997, p. 85.

⁸⁴ This brings to mind the noematic method employed in VI. See *Budhi* I, No. 3, 1997, p. 99.

⁸⁵ HF, 131, 137; FM, 174-175, 184.

⁸⁶ HF, 131; FM, 175.

Here, imaginative variation shows us two things: on the one hand, I cannot imagine the "I" without the "mine"; on the other hand, I can imagine an innocent having "in which man possesses only what he cultivates, has only what he creates . . ." ⁸⁷ The imagination of this innocent having does not aim to reveal to us the historical origin of evil but to make us understand *Habsucht* as a "perversion" of our fundamental quest for having.

2) THE QUEST FOR POWER

Let us now proceed to understand the passions of tyranny (*Herrschaft*) in relation to the fundamental quest for power. This relation of the human being to power is irreducible to his relation to having. But the former is doubly implied in the latter in a technological sense (by the relations of work) and in a socio-economic sense (by the relations of possession). In work, we pursue a rationally organized venture to control the forces of nature. Now, our work is also one of the forces to be mastered in this rationally organized battle against nature. By our work then, we enter into relations of command and obedience required by the socio-economic system which defines the technological task. These relations of socio-economic domination, in turn, continue only because they are guaranteed by political authority. As in the case of having, it is important to differentiate the quest for power from the passions of tyranny. Authority is not evil in itself. The relations of command and obedience are essential to the State. ⁸⁸ In the legitimate State, the physical power of compulsion would coincide with the moral power of exaction.

Here, we are guided by the object—the *political institution* wherein our power over another human being is objectified. A reflection on this political object shows us the essential distinction between the "destination for good" of power and its "inclination toward evil," as Kant puts it in his *Essay on Radical Evil*. ⁸⁹ It would seem that political power is

⁸⁷HF, 132; FM, 176.

⁸⁸In this connection, Ricoeur likes to cite Eric Weil's definition of the State: "The State is the organization of an historical community. Organized as a State, the community is capable of making decisions." See Eric Weil, *Philosophie politique* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1956), p. 131. Cited in HF, 134; FM, 179.

⁸⁹Cited in HF, 135-136; FM, 182. See also "Culpabilité tragique et culpabilité biblique" (1953), p. 301.

linked to evil not only because it counteracts the passions by its corrective violence but also because, as a violent power, it is already fallen. Yet power as evil cannot be understood if an innocent destination of power cannot be imagined. Just as I can imagine a *just* having, I can also imagine a *non-violent* power—an authority which aims to educate the individual to freedom. Through imaginative variation, I discover power as fundamentally inherent to the meaning of being human. If the distinction between power and violence is carried over into the correlative affectivity of the political object, one reveals the feelings from which the passions of tyranny are derived and which found the human being as a political being.

3) THE QUEST FOR ESTEEM

Beneath the third passion of vainglory lies the more fundamental quest for another's esteem. Although it is difficult to distinguish the deranging passion from the constituting feeling, it is necessary to do so in order to unveil the primordial essence of the self. For the self is precisely constituted beyond the realms of having and power—in the realm of mutual esteem. At this point, there is a desire to exist, no longer through a vital affirmation of oneself but through the grace of another's recognition.⁹⁰ In this search for recognition, consciousness becomes self-consciousness. The self is thus constituted by the other's recognition. But this recognition of my self is fragile because it is dependent on another's "opinion" δόξα (*doxa*). This dependence on an unstable opinion as well as the threat of being a mere reflection give rise to the passions of vainglory.

It is not easy to bring out the proper constitution of the quest for esteem. As before, let us be guided by the objectivity correlative to the feeling in question. What is the objectivity here that comes after the *economic goods* in the realm of having and the *political institutions* in the realm of power? In order to exist, I do not only want to possess and to dominate but I also desire to be esteemed by the other. What kind of objectivity does esteem involve then? Esteem involves first a "formal" objectivity which can be supported by a reflection of a Kantian style—the representation of the person as an "end existing in itself." This rep-

⁹⁰HF, 137, 140; FM, 184, 189.

resentation holds a status of objectivity insofar as the person is not a *means for us* but an *end in itself*. I cannot treat the person like a thing. To speak like Kant, the formal object of esteem is the *idea* of humanity in my person and in the person of another. To this "formal" objectivity of the *idea* of humanity, one must add the "material" objectivity of the *works of culture* which express this humanity. If the economic realm is objectified in goods and all forms of having, and the political sphere in institutions and all forms of power, the idea of humanity is expressed in "works" which bear witness to the search for recognition. In particular, "works" of art and literature, and in general, works of the mind, insofar as they not only reflect a time and a place but project human possibilities, are the true "objects" which manifest the abstract universality of the idea of humanity through their concrete universality.

Here, we remark the progress of objectivity from having to power, and from power to esteem. The objectivity of having is still that of things—economic goods. The objectivity of power is already that of a human relation objectified in political institutions but still connected to things through the physical power of compulsion. The objectivity of esteem is the very relation of a human being to another represented in the idea of humanity which is concretely manifested by cultural "works." It is this formal and material objectivity of the idea of humanity which engenders the correlative feeling of esteem.

What then is the moment of self-esteem? If one agrees with the preceding analysis, the self-esteem I look for in others is the same esteem I experience for others. If humanity is what I esteem in another and in myself, I esteem myself as a *thou* for another. The love of self is the same as love of an other; I love myself as an other. This otherness differentiates self-esteem from "vital" egoism. "Vital" egoism is a direct immediate relation from myself to myself. Self-esteem is an indirect relation, mediated from myself to myself by another's esteem. Since the relation to self is an interiorized relation to another, opinion and belief are at its core. Esteem is neither seen nor known but believed. I believe that I am worth the esteem of another. Insofar as I am affected by it, this belief constitutes the feeling of my self-esteem. This appreciative feeling is the summit of self-consciousness in the *θυμός* (*thumos*).

This constitution of feeling which starts from the object can provide a guideline in ordering the feelings of self-esteem which are only glimpsed in and through the aberrant passions. However, an esteem

experienced as a belief is highly susceptible to error. Since it is a belief, the valorization of the self may be feigned; it may also be neglected or disputed, as well as belittled, stifled, or humiliated. When rightly or wrongly neglected, the lack of esteem may be compensated for by an overestimation of oneself or a depreciation of others in such measures as aggressivity, resentment, revenge, etc. The possibility of a pathology of esteem is thus inscribed in the very nature of esteem as belief. Yet the aberrant forms of esteem are *understood* only in relation to its constitutive forms. Self-esteem precedes vainglory. To turn the quest for esteem into the passion of vainglory, one has to be blinded from elsewhere. In sum, it is not the pathological which explains feeling but the primordial feeling which renders the pathological intelligible.

D. AFFECTIVE FRAGILITY

In reflecting on "disproportion" through knowing, acting, and feeling, we become aware that this "disproportion" is an "affective fragility." We accomplished a first approximation of this idea of affective fragility in differentiating pleasure and happiness which terminate vital desire and intellectual love. We must now look for a second approximation in the terminations of the "thymic" quests of having, power, and esteem. Where do these quests terminate?

It is to be noted that the triple quest in which the self engages itself remains unfulfilled. While pleasure is a temporary repose and happiness a lasting peace, the human "heart" or *θυμός* (*thumos*) is ever restless:

When will I have *enough*? When will my authority be *sufficiently* established? When will I be *sufficiently* appreciated? Where do we find in all this that "enough," that "sufficiently"?⁹¹

Between the finitude of pleasure and the infinitude of happiness, the *θυμός* (*thumos*) slips a note of indefiniteness. All human action is stamped with this indefiniteness. No action is any longer terminal. All actions become intermediary.

The novelty of the desires of having, power, and esteem consists in their indeterminate end. The desire of desire has no end. As soon as a

⁹¹"L'antinomie" (1960), p. 288; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 401 (Ricoeur's emphases). See also *HF*, 142; *FM*, 192.

random desire is traversed by this desire of desire, a truly human situation arises where results remain relative to "tasks" which are projected on a background of non-saturated desirability. This residual desirability even transforms pleasure and pain from terminals into detonators for activity, reactive to failure or success. In this way, human action assumed the aspect of *Streben*.

Affective fragility is summed up in the indefiniteness of the *θυμός* (*thumos*). But the *θυμός* (*thumos*) is not only situated between the vital and the spiritual. With regard to them, it is the "mixture." Affective fragility will therefore express itself in the exchanges between the indefinite quests of the self and the desire for pleasure on the one hand, and between the same indefinite quests and the desire for happiness on the other hand.

Let us look first into the relations between the human and the vital. Everything in us that may be called "instinct" is raised to the human level through the triple quest. For instance, sexuality becomes human as soon as it is traversed by the properly human demand. This explains why one can always discern in sexuality the signs of possession, domination, and mutual recognition. All the rich significance of sexuality is found in this complex interplay of the vital and the human. Sexual satisfaction is no longer a mere physical pleasure. Through pleasure, beyond pleasure, we pursue the fulfillment of the quests which transform instinct. A certain indefiniteness enters into instinct which then becomes open instead of being cyclic.

This transformation of the vital into the human has as a counterpart a resurgence of the *θυμός* (*thumos*) within *ἐπιθυμία* (*epithumia*) (Plato suggested this when he remarked that the *θυμός* (*thumos*) fights on the side of desire). According to Ricoeur, the Freudian notion of libido can be reinterpreted in the light of Plato's idea.⁹² The libido is at once *ἐπιθυμία* (*epithumia*) and *θυμός* (*thumos*), desire and heart. What Freud calls the libido is already the *mélange* of the vital and the human, with the vital predominant. In this sense, sexuality plays an exceptional role in anthropology. It is the area of tenderness, at once deeply instinctive and profoundly human. It realizes to the full the desire of the other's desire.

⁹²HF, 144; FM, 195-196. See also "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 289; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 402.

But while the θυμός (*thumos*) undergoes the attraction of the vital, it also undergoes that of the spiritual. A new "mixture" takes shape wherein one can recognize the web of great passions. There are many forms of passivity. Every feeling that affects the self is a passion (*pâtir*). By "passion," Ricoeur means "a class of feelings which cannot be accounted for by a simple derivation from the vital feelings, by a crystallization of emotion, or in general, in any way in the horizon of pleasure."⁹³ In "those great ventures which constitute the dramaturgy of human existence," there dwells a transcending intention which can only come from the infinite desire of happiness.⁹⁴ The "passion" of captivity and of pain would be incomprehensible if passionless alienation did not involve a primordial grandeur. To account for the transcending movement of the great passions, one has to connect them to the desire for happiness and not to the desire to live. Why do we invest all our energy into passion? It is because an object of desire has become our "all":

This "all" is the mark of the desire for happiness: life does not want all; the word "all" has no meaning for life, but only for the mind (*esprit*): the mind wills the "all" and thinks the "all" and will only be at peace in the "all."⁹⁵

Passion is the "mixture" of the unlimited desire called θυμός (*thumos*) and the desire for happiness. If the impassioned human being wants "all," he puts his "all" into one of those objects which become constituted in correlation with the I of possession, domination, and valorization. The infinitude of happiness mixes with the indefiniteness of the θυμός (*thumos*). It is from the affective figuration of happiness in the θυμός (*thumos*) that passion draws all its organizing force. Passion receives its *abandon* from ερος (*eros*) and *restlessness* from θυμός (*thumos*). The moment of *abandon* results from the participation in an Idea or a We wherein we recognized the essence of spiritual desire ερος (*eros*). Now, this *abandon* is linked to the *restlessness* peculiar to the theme of the θυμός (*thumos*). The impassioned human being puts his whole capacity for happiness on the "objects" in which the self consti-

⁹³HF, 145; FM, 197.

⁹⁴*Ibid.*

⁹⁵HF, 146; FM, 198. See also "L'antinomie" (1960), p. 289; "The Antinomy" (1967), p. 402.

tutes itself. This shifting of the totality onto the "objects" of the thymic quests constitute what Ricoeur calls the schematization of happiness in the themes of the θυμός (*thumos*).

This schematization is the primordial fact presupposed by any passion. Only a being who wants the all and who schematizes it in the objects of human desire is capable of committing a mistake. By taking an object for the *Absolute*, by forgetting the symbolic character of the bond between happiness and an object of desire, one makes the object an idol.⁹⁶ At this moment, the impassioned life becomes a passion existence. Here, we see the relation of the aberrant passions to a primordial passion which is the very locus of fallibility.

While knowing "detaches" me from the world, feeling "binds" me to it. But in interiorizing the bond of the self to the world, feeling engenders a new scission *within* the self by distending it between two fundamental affective movements—that of organic life and that of spiritual life. This disproportion leads to the mediation of the θυμός (*thumos*) which is reflected in an indefinite affective quest. Here, we see that *conflict* defines our fundamental constitution. The object is synthesis; the self is conflict. Without this primordial conflict inscribed in the "heart," no external conflict whatsoever can be interiorized.

4. THE CONCEPT OF FALLIBILITY

When we call the human being fallible, we mean that the *possibility* of moral evil is inscribed in his fundamental constitution. But where precisely in his constitution is the possibility of fault to be found? What is the nature of this possibility itself? These are two questions we need to answer now.

A. LIMITATION AND FALLIBILITY

By insisting that the possibility of failing consists in a *specific* limitation, Ricoeur breaks away from the long philosophical tradition represented by Leibniz which holds that the limitation proper to creatures

⁹⁶In a later essay, Ricoeur dwells again on this idea: "Now, passion is precisely nothing else than the elevation to the absolute of a particular moment of human experience." See "Le philosophe et le politique devant la question de la liberté" (1969), p. 51 (translation mine).

is the occasion for moral evil. The specific limitation lies in "disproportion"—the non-coincidence of human reality with itself. Now, the categories proper to human limitation must be directly deduced from the disproportionate relation between finitude and infinitude. In this deduction, Ricoeur adopts as a guideline the Kantian triad of the categories of quality: reality, negation, limitation. Transposed from the domain of physics to that of philosophical anthropology, this triad becomes *originating affirmation, existential difference, human mediation*.⁹⁷ The study of fallible man unfolds the gradual interiorization and concretization of this triad through knowing, acting, and feeling.

How do the directive concepts of this dialectic render a philosophical anthropology possible? The first directive concept of this anthropology is not finitude or negation but originating affirmation. That is why the high points in Ricoeur's analysis are the three moments of originating affirmation: infinite verb, the idea of happiness as a totality of meaning, and *beatitudo* as the full happiness of the heart. As one goes from the first to the third, originating affirmation becomes more interiorized and more concrete. But the originating affirmation becomes human only by passing through the existential *negation* whose three moments are successively called perspective, character, and vital feeling. This negation is only intelligible as a negation of the power of affirmation which constitutes us. In its course from the exterior to the interior, existential negation first shows itself as a difference of myself from myself, and finally interiorizes itself in the "sadness of the finite."⁹⁸

The dialectic of originating affirmation and existential negation shows us how limitation becomes immediately synonymous with human fragility. One can only then think the human being indirectly, through composition, as the *mixture* of originating affirmation and existential negation. To quote one of Ricoeur's charming aphorisms: "Man is the Joy of Yes in the sadness of the finite."⁹⁹

The unity of speech and appearance is the synthesis of the thing. If this synthesis can be called consciousness, it is not yet self-conscious-

⁹⁷Ricoeur already used these categories in elaborating an ontology of being as *act* rather than *form*. See "Négativité et affirmation originaire" (1956), in *HV*, 101-124; "Negativity and Primary Affirmation" (1965), in *HT*, 305-328.

⁹⁸*HF*, 154, 155-156; *FM*, 211, 213-214. Ricoeur borrows the phrase from Spinoza.

⁹⁹*HF*, 156; *FM*, 215.

ness. The unity of character and respect is the synthesis of the person. If this synthesis can be called self-consciousness, it is not yet "for itself." It remains a task. Feeling reveals the non-coincidence of the human being with himself. It shows that, within himself, there is primordial conflict. One only becomes aware, however, of this inner conflict "at the end of a concrete dialectic which discloses the fragile synthesis of the human being as the *becoming of an opposition*: the opposition of originating affirmation and of existential difference."¹⁰⁰

B. FALLIBILITY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF FAULT

If the possibility of failing resides in the fragility of the mediations that the human being effectuates in the object, in the idea of humanity, and in himself, what is the nature of this possibility itself?

Human fragility makes evil possible in three ways: as *occasion*, *origin*, and *capacity*. In a first sense, fallibility designates the occasion, the point of least resistance wherein evil inserts itself into the human being. Here, the possibility of evil and its actual reality remain external to each other. In a second sense, the disproportion of the human being indicates the *origin* of evil. We can think of evil as evil only "starting from" the primordial condition of innocence which shows "through" the fallen and reveals it as fallen. A human being can only be evil in accordance with his fundamental constitution. In a third sense, fallibility locates the *capacity* for evil, the power of the human being to fail. To say then that we are fallible is to mean that our disproportion, our non-coincidence with ourselves, holds the primordial fragility from which evil arises. Yet the paradox is that evil *arises* from this fragility only because it is *posited*. It is this paradox that Ricoeur will grapple with in *The Symbolism of Evil*. ☞

¹⁰⁰ HF, 157; FM, 216 (Ricoeur's emphases).