ROBERT S. STEELE, PH.D.

PAUL RICOEUR: REPORTING, READING, AND INTERPRETING

BEYOND FREUD

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Table of Contents

THE REPORT

THE READING

REFERENCES

About the Author

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ROBERT S. STEELE, PH.D.

Hermeneutics is the reflective practice of interpretation. Although its primary concern is with textual exegesis, its domain extends throughout the humanities, from the social sciences to the arts. In his work, the eminent continental philosopher Paul Ricoeur has covered this territory. He has done close textual analyses and enlightening readings of what he called *The Symbolism of Evil* (Ricoeur, 1967), of religious faith and atheism, of the phenomenologies of Husserl and Jaspers, of psychoanalysis (1966, 1970, 1974), and of metaphor.

As a theory about the practice of interpretation, hermeneutic prescriptions can be made rather explicit (see, for example, Radnitzky, 1973 and Steele, 1979). However, these many guidelines about the text and reader relationship can be reduced to two conflicting demands that arise from the fact that books are both closed and open. A text, or any being or thing that is interpreted, is enclosed. It has its own boundaries, be they covers, the imaginary space inhabited by the "I," or the symbolic and real limits of our bodies. That closure or completeness must be respected, and a reading must be in part a reporting that presents the text on its own terms; one must be faithful to the letter. But, one must also help the spirit speak. When one opens a book, one enters a new place and, if the reading is

engaging, the reader is changed by her or his immersion in the pages of another's thought. One owes it to the text and to the telos of modem consciousness to give back to the work the freedom it has given one. Interpretive readings open enclosures by bringing out what is latent, hidden, shy, or self-effacing in them.

Truth is opening. By reading Freud closely and sympathetically, Ricouer brings out of psychoanalysis new ways of seeing it that have been buried by the sediment of too many debates about the epistemological or, more specifically, scientific status of Freud's research. In my report on Ricoeur's work I will review these findings, discoveries that, when I first read Ricouer, revolutionized my thought about psychoanalysis.

In returning to Ricouer's *Freud and Philosophy* (1970) after nearly a decade, I have found not only that I have changed, but that the meaning of this book is also different. Of course, the words on the page are the same and my underlinings and marginal comments are still there to remind me of the joyous insights shared by author and reader, but what was once a manifestly brilliant work seems now to have a latent content, which casts a darker light on the surface text.

In my reading of Ricouer, the second part of this essay, I will bring to light what *Freud and Philosophy* does not say, and yet means. This reading will do violence to the text, because it breaks open its enclosed discourse by identifying the text's way of speaking as a symptomatic expression of androcentrism. I hope

by naming this rather common textual constriction I will help others see it and thereby aid them in creating what Ricoeur many years ago helped me find: freedom.

The movement of the spirit is like a spiraling uroboros. In growing, consciousness continually consumes its previous insights. A book, a way of thinking, or a certain style of performance creates a new way of being in the world. Initially, perhaps, a book's message is resisted as unpalatable, but one comes to live its insights more and more, until one tires of the same fare day after day. Something new comes along, which is initially quite foreign, but in opening to it, in tasting it, one comes to like it and live it. The new way dates the old, in fact makes it old. One now has perspective on one's previous taste and can reflect upon it, criticize it, and perhaps preserve what is left of it by combining it in a new recipe for being.

Both the letter and the spirit of a work help us grow. The letter, the overt treatment of the issues, does this when we accommodate ourselves to it by letting it help us see in a different way; the spirit, what is manifestly unseen, does this by always promising new ways to be, even though within our present enclosure we feel complete.

THE REPORT

The son of Jules Ricoeur and Florentine Favre, Paul Ricoeur was born in

Valence, France, in 1913. He married Simone Lejas in 1935, and they have five children.

Ricoeur's early work shows the influence of his mentor, Gabriel Marcel, but his intellectual scope has greatly expanded in the nearly half a century he has been writing philosophy. His many books and countless articles have made him a modem master. He holds appointments at the University of Paris and the University of Chicago.

RICOEUR'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF PSYCHOANALYSIS

Ricoeur's essays on Freud in *The Conflict of Interpretations* (1974) and *Freud and Philosophy* (1970) are part of the "return to Freud" movement which began in France in the late 1950s, flourished throughout the sixties, and was imported to America in the late seventies. Whereas Lacan was the charismatic, *enfant terrible*, psychoanalytic spokesriddler for "Freud's French Revolution" (Turkle, 1978), Ricoeur was the academic philosopher and scion of the rich phenomenological tradition.

"French Freud," as this genre has been called, stresses textual meditations on Freud's writings (Mehlman, 1976). These close, rich, and complex readings explore the ambiguities of psychoanalysis. The scope of these enquiries is broad ranging from Laplanche and Pontalis' (1973) marvelous essays on Freudian terms, to Derrida's (1976) at times baffling treatment of the meaning of inscription in

Freud's writings, to Lacan's (1976) poetic and playful oedipal interpretation of Poe's "Purloined Letter," to the beautifully evocative prose of Irigaray (1980) on female sexuality.

For the French, American ego psychology is, if not anathema, at least in the dialectical position of antithesis to their synthesis. Where the Americans have stressed assimilation to the rigors of science, testing Freud's thought empirically, clarifying it by simplifying its ambiguities, and establishing sounder relations with biology, the French have abhorred the medical, scientific, and normative use of Freud by ego psychologists. If Hartmann's aspiration was to be a scientist, Lacan's was to be a poet.

As part of the French engagement with Freud, Ricoeur's work shares these prejudices. His reading reflects his tradition, which is phenomelogical and structural, but unlike Lacan's ricocheting potshots across the Atlantic, Ricoeur's treatment of Anglo-Saxon Freudian research is careful, concerned, and masterful. Like the Lacanian excavations of psychoanalysis, Ricoeur takes us into Freud. *Freud and Philosophy* is a textual, experiential exploration of the depths of psychoanalysis. Where the Americans point beyond Freud to a general psychology, the French, and Ricoeur in particular, return to Freud and teach us how to read him.

THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL HERMENEUTIC TRADITION

Although, as noted, hermeneutics has traditionally been associated with textual exigesis, over the last century we have become conscious of ourselves as the ones who are interpreting. We have realized that humans are “hermeneutic animals” in that we read signs—be they tracks, traces, cries, auguries, data or texts. In our natural science we follow Newton in “reading the book of nature,” and in our cultural sciences we find meaning in the artifacts of our being. Hermeneutics is interpretation; it is the practice of interpretation, the study of this practice, and reflection on such study. It is an articulation of the movement of consciousness from the inarticulate through to the well said.

Wilhelm Dilthey’s vision of the province of hermeneutics was modest when, late in the nineteenth century, he declared that it was the methodological foundation of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. Trying to save the humanities from the progressive encroachment of the natural sciences, Dilthey asserted that the cultural interpreter had special access to his or her subject because, unlike the natural scientist who must observe nature objectively from the outside, the hermeneut is a participant within the historical field. Participant observation is at the heart of social analysis, because an understanding of the culture that constitutes us is only gained in and through our participation in civilization.

Unlike the scientist, who, through various cultural ritual, tries to separate him- or herself from phenomena classified as natural and is therefore necessarily removed from participation with the object of study, the interpreter is enmeshed

in her or his humanity and thereby participates within the phenomenon being analyzed. Whereas the orthodox natural scientist must be freed from co-participation in nature and must block empathetic responses, the interpreter must begin with empathy and use it as the source from which to articulate her or his work.

Unlike natural science, which, in trying to universalize its findings, resists attempts to relativize its objective results by submitting them to sociohistorical critiques, hermeneutics is firmly rooted in its history and constantly submits its seminal ideas and texts to reinterpretation. Whereas science orients itself in the replication and extension of observations, hermeneutics locates itself within language and our textual heritage.

Ricoeur's lineage goes back to Descartes, and his work traces the evolution and descent of the *cogito* and consciousness through the master works of phenomenology—the writings of Hegel, Nietzsche, Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. His reading of Freud is a confrontation of his tradition—the hermeneutic phenomenology of consciousness—with the science of the unconscious—psychoanalysis. Ricoeur (1950) writes: "I should say at the start that reading works on psychoanalysis has convinced me of the existence of facts and processes which remain incomprehensible as long as I remain prisoner of a narrow conception of consciousness" (pp. 375-376). In exemplary hermeneutic fashion, Ricoeur is intent on submitting the prejudices of his training, which he

recognizes as restricting, to the challenge of Freud's attacks on the narcissism of consciousness. All good readings are, however, dialectical: Not only was Ricoeur changed by reading Freud, but Freud, too, was altered. This is because the product of Ricoeur's years of Freudian study, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (1970), is a book that has created a new understanding of psychoanalysis, not as some misfit science, but as a hermeneutic endeavor.

A SUMMARY OF RICOEUR'S READING OF FREUD

Freud and Philosophy is a master text. Its tone is one of reconciliation, restoration, and exploration. Its arguments are complex and demand an understanding of both the phenomenological and logico-empirical traditions. In reading it, it helps to have read Freud closely, because one then understands more deeply how Ricoeur's revisions are based both on the letter of Freud and the spirit of his project, which is to make the latent manifest.

This review will summarize four major interrelated themes that organize *Freud and Philosophy*: saving Freud from science, the place of consciousness after Freud, the semantics of desire, and Ricoeur's study of symbolism.

Saving Freud from Science. Although Freud located psychoanalysis within the domain of the natural sciences and insisted on its scientific status, his work has long been exiled from that land to which he was never granted a passport. His one prize, the Goethe, was in letters; he is studied in the humanities, not in biology or

scientific psychology.

Ricoeur provides Freud a haven from his scientific critics by granting them their criticism. Ricoeur (1970) agrees that “psychoanalysis is not an observational science” (p. 358), but he uses this admission to counter behaviorist, experimental, and logico-empiricist attacks on psychoanalysis. Drawing the line clearly between psychology as a behavioral science and psychoanalysis, Ricoeur declares that the difference between them “comes at the beginning or never.” He continues: “Psychology is an observational science dealing with the facts of behavior; psychoanalysis is an exegetical science dealing with the relationships of meaning between substitute objects and the primordial (and lost) instinctual objects” (p. 359). Whereas a fact in behaviorism is a datum that is verifiable by multiple independent observers, there are no facts, as science understands them, in psychoanalysis, “for the analyst does not observe, he interprets” (p. 365). Behaviors are significant in psychoanalysis because they are “signifiers for the history of desire” and not because they are “observables” (p. 364). For Freud, the focus of study is the meaning of symptoms, dreams, delusions, and faulty actions in a life story that is being unfolded. The analysand’s speech and behaviors present these, and the analyst and analysand articulate their significance through interpretation.

If significant behaviors are operationally defined and recorded in settings that do not allow the ambivalence of human action to be shown or the ambiguities

of speech to be expressed, then there is no need for psychoanalysis. This is because what is manifest in the observational situation is defined as the datum; it need not be read, but only recorded. Any such situation is neither entirely human nor psychoanalytic. Any capitulation on this point is to Ricoeur an abandonment of what he sees as Freud's central project: the explication of meaning through discourse. It is in the illusions and disillusionments of exchange between analyst and analysand, reader and text, ourselves and others as well as between us and our artifacts—paintings, music, machines, and dreams—that hermeneutics locates itself and in which Ricoeur places Freud's work.

The Place of Consciousness after Freud. Freeing epistemology from the dictates of scientific rationalism, liberating language from the demands of rational discourse, and saving the person from the rationalizations of false consciousness are three variations on one historical theme: "the dispossession of the ego" (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 55).

For Descartes the *cogito*, "I think, therefore I am," is a transparent certainty in a world of things and beings that are opaque and resistant to immediate understanding. However, if consciousness is not pellucid, if it "is not what it thinks it is, a new relation must be instituted between the patent and the latent" (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 33). Ricoeur continues: "After the [Cartesian] doubt about things, we have started to doubt consciousness" and those "masters of suspicion"—Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud—have fostered our distrust of the purity

of consciousness, which is a given for empiricism and phenomenology. “All three [men] clear the horizon for a more authentic word, for a new reign of Truth, not only by means of a ‘destructive’ critique, but by the invention of an art of *interpreting*” (p. 33). To be suspicious means to doubt the given—be that the evidence of our senses, our instruments, our consciousness, or the text before us—and to create via interpretation from the latent, the unseen, the unconscious, and the unsaid a context that illuminates the ambiguities of the obvious.

Ricoeur began his reading of Freud in order to challenge the epistemologies of consciousness in which he was schooled, and so he is very careful in locating the position of consciousness in Freud’s work. Freud displaces consciousness in two ways: He makes its position relative to other psychic processes in the mind, and he discounts the veracity of its testimony.

Freud not only removes consciousness from the center of mental being, he keeps changing its location and redefining its relations to the ego as he creates new representations of the psyche. Ricoeur painstakingly records and comments on these moves in Freud’s texts, because with these models Freud is not only trying to locate consciousness, he is also redefining its relationship to knowing.

The first representation that Ricoeur considers (he does not examine Freud’s psychic model in *Studies on Hysteria*), is the neuronal ego of *The Project for a Scientific Psychology* and the ω system with which Freud (1895) unsuccessfully

tries to represent consciousness. Ricoeur calls Freud's neuropsychological model "a nonhermeneutic state of the system." This biophysics machine did not run, because within it Freud could not represent meaning; it did not explain consciousness. It was replaced by the mental apparatus of chapter 7 of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), which is a topographical spatialization of the psyche with three regions—unconscious, preconscious, and conscious—and boundaries of censorship between them.

This topography improves on that of the Project because it not only pictures intrapsychic relations, it also helps to explain how we come to know. In it Freud combines the energetics of the Project with the hermeneutics of dream interpretation to describe the process of making the unconscious conscious. The dream work at the behest of the censorship between the unconscious and the preconscious distorts, by the mechanisms of condensation and displacement, unacceptable wishes in order to preserve the repose of the sleeping ego, which would be shocked by such desires. This dream work is undone by a countereffort of interpretation, as consciousness comes to know of these impulses retrospectively through interpreting their disguised expression in dreams. Freud has linked his energetics to his hermeneutics because the mechanisms of condensation and displacement not only signify transformations of energy, but they also provide interpretive concepts for understanding the distortion in dreams. Any picture or text will be garbled if its scenes are compacted and confused and its emphasis is misplaced. One brings out what is latent in it by

unpacking and sorting out its images and relocating its emphasis. Knowing, within this model, means making evident to ego consciousness, through interpretation or undoing of the dream work, what it has been denied by its own censorship.

The next significant “dispossession of the ego” from its reign as all-knowing consciousness comes in Freud’s papers on metapsychology. Working with the topography of the dream book, Freud (1914) further displaces the omnipotent ego by showing first that its esteem comes from its self-cathexis. Therefore the ego is, in part, narcissistic, self-absorbed, and infantile. He next explored the complexities of the relations between the conscious and the unconscious and linked these to concepts of instinctual representation and verbal inscription (Freud, 1915). He thereby cast more doubt on whether ego consciousness has unmediated access to its desires, its past, or the world, since what it knows directly is censored transcriptions of experience. Finally, in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917), Freud forever violates the integrity of the ego by showing how it is structured by its identifications with significant others and altered by its incorporations of lost love objects.

In his papers on technique (circa 1911-15), Freud explored the implications for analysis of dealing with a consciousness that is an agent of the ego’s defenses. No longer is the analysand’s knowing simply dependent on an insightful interpretation that enlightens an anxious ego; insight now depends on working through in the analytic session all those traumas that have distorted one’s

relations with reality. Thus, the increasing complexity of Freud's representations of the energetics and topography of the psyche is mirrored by a corresponding complexity in what it means to make an interpretation that creates insight. Interpretation now comes to be imbedded in the transference relationship as the analysand relives via projection onto the analyst the scenes of a life which have worked to make consciousness resistant not only to the unconscious but to knowledge about itself (Freud, 1912).

These insights, along with Freud's work on the ontogeny and phylogeny of the Oedipus complex, are incorporated into Freud's last and most radical revisioning of the psyche in the structural model of *The Ego and the Id* (1923). In this work the solipsistic energy system of the Project is gone. The psyche is now a scene inhabited by near mythological personifications of nature (the "it"), culture (the superego), and identity (the "I"), which take their roles and masks from those that the "it" and the "I" have loved and lost. Consciousness in this model has been moved very far from center stage; it is now just a facet of the ego, which in itself incorporates nearly the entire psyche of the first topography. The "I" has its own unconscious, preconscious, and conscious regions.

The implications for epistemology of this last model are profound, because there is no grounding for positive knowledge in an ego consciousness free of the conflicts of life. The "I" has as its heritage, and built into its structure, an individual and cultural history of defense, censorship, and distortion. To undo this dream

work of a lifetime, these oneiric deposits of civilization, becomes an interminable task of interpretation guided by the principles of psychoanalytic exegesis. The analytic setting still has its locus in the consulting room, but the analysand is now not only the individual patient with his or her fantasies and symptoms, but civilization with its religious delusions, sexual repression, and artifacts, which, like the ego, are the sediment of unfulfilled desire.

The Semantics of Desire. The French psychoanalytic project is to articulate a semantics of desire, about which Ricoeur (1970) writes: "The semantics of desire…is bound up with [the] postponement of satisfaction, with the endless mediating of pleasure" (p. 322). In addition, it is tied to the never-ending postponement of meaning and the mediation of being through language. Freud's coupled discourses, the energies of pleasure and the hermeneutics of meaning, are dialectically interwoven in his attempts to represent the vicissitudes of longing. The energy metaphors—and they became metaphors when the psychic apparatus replaced the neuronal machine—are used to give an accounting of the disjunction between one meaning and another. The hermeneutics of desire involves the replacement of one meaning (the manifest) with another, more fundamental and authentic articulation of the wish (the latent). The energetics or economics of desire uses a system of interrelated concepts like cathexis, displacement, and condensation to account for the movement of forces from one place to another, movements that displace and disguise meaning. Force, place, and meaning, then, are the terms of Freud's thought, and every concept is determined by its

coordinates in his topographical energic system of reading signs.

Desire arises from a lack, a void. In its generation it is already a substitute, which covers over with longing what cannot be said: the place of nothing, of mute death. Displacement and replacement are the two terms that are joined in the semantics of desire and in the homeopathic treatment of psychoanalysis. If neurosis arises from the displacement of psychic conflict into symptoms, and the symptoms replace the conflict with a symbiotic representation in the speech of the body or behavior, then analysis replaces the original conflict, restores the latent, by displacing the manifest symptoms via interpretation. This restoration, however, does not occur in the original context, the traumatic scene, but in its reproduction in the transference relationship. The analyst takes the place of significant others, as scenes of frustration are restaged in a situation where insight —intellectual pleasure—takes the place of desire. The desire to know, to have a life history without lacunae in its narration, is the substitute satisfaction offered by psychoanalytic interpretation for those carnal pleasures that can never be realized. The articulation of desire through interpretation is a sublimation of an unnameable longing.

The Study of Symbolism. This longing is, perhaps, to become an "I," to be an identity that is not haunted by imagoes from long ago and is not a fabric of fantasies that serve as a gloss for the past. However, this very task remains the unnamed project in Freud's work, and "the empty concept of sublimation is the

final symbol of this unspoken factor" (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 492). Freud could never give a satisfactory economic or energic account of sublimation, for it arises not from defense but from reflection. It is a transmutation of the natural into the cultural, of the carnal into the spiritual. Sublimation is a hermeneutic term which stands for a transcendental movement of the spirit toward the realization of consciousness. Freud, who did not speak of the self or things transcendental, could not, of course, say this. Ricoeur in his writing on symbolism, tries to name what is missing in Freud, to say what Freud cannot.

Symbols are products of desire; in fact, Ricoeur (1970) asserts, "If man could be satisfied…he would be deprived of symbolization" (p. 322). The symbol stands for desire, but unlike the symptom, which is but a disguised signifier for the repetitive insistence of desire to be signified, the symbol captures, contains, and transforms desire into a living sign in which signifier and signified are held together in a sublime icon.

Religion is a collective neurosis because its expression is a symptomatic repetition of the longing for the father. Its iconography requires belief, thereby blocking the process of individual participation and reflection essential to sublimation. Art does not repetitively recapitulate a man's or mens' past, because the work of art is not simply a projection of the artist's or the culture's conflicts; it is "the sketch of their solution." Dreams, symptoms, and religion "look backward toward infancy, the past; the work of art goes ahead of the artist; it is a

prospective symbol of his personal synthesis and of man's future, rather than a regressive symbol of his unresolved conflicts" (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 175).

That "progression and regression are carried by the same symbols" is the Ricoeurian insight which mediates his hermeneutic phenomenology with Freud's psychoanalysis. The symbol arises from unfilled desire, and, therefore, points to the past; but it also takes one forward into the future, providing a guide for the movement of reflection. That Freud only reads symbols backward to their ontogenetic and phylogentic origins was pointed out long ago by Jung (1913) and has been elaborately critiqued by him (1916), by Ricoeur (1970), and by Steele (1982). The past Freud thereby creates, however, is itself symbolic, because Freud uses all his primal events and primary processes to delimit the boundaries of the imaginary and to provide narrative guidelines by which to organize his analyses of the present (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1968).

Ricoeur (1970) insists, as did Jung, that symbols must also be read progressively, because "the emergence of the self is inseparable from its production through a progressive synthesis." This is because "the truth of a given moment lies in the subsequent moment" (p. 464) and the significance of a symbol always lies in the future developments of its meanings, in the trajectory of interpretations and in the realization of the spirit. However, reflection on all of this always proceeds retrogressively. The past—the archaeology of the subject—and the future—the teleology of the spirit—meet in symbols whose interpretation

engenders the development of self-consciousness, which arises by making the past present through retrospective analysis and the future imminent in the present through imagining the meanings of the symbols.

It is in this temporal duality of the symbol that Ricoeur finds hope not only for the synthesis of the self through the development of self-consciousness, but for a joining of the two styles of hermeneutics that have been at odds for years: the hermeneutics of suspicion and of restoration. The two come together in what serves as Ricoeur's epigram for *Freud and Philosophy* (1970): "Thus the idols must die—so that symbols may live" (p. 531).

Why psychoanalysis is necessary to phenomenology is that analytic suspicion is needed to break the thrall that makes us the slave of the idols of the past, be they parental imagoes, castration anxieties, or simple narcissistic egocentrism. Why psychoanalysis needs a hermeneutics of the spirit is to free it from its bondage to the past and to aid it in reconstructing a past, which serves as a ground for the present on which to build a future—a future that is not an illusion, because it comes from a less-distorted past.

THE READING

Consciousness grows by cannibalistic criticism of its grounds, its prejudices, and its embedded, unseen ways of being. For anyone with a history who grows, that which was once liberating becomes constricting, and that which was once a

criticism of orthodoxies becomes an orthodoxy to be criticized. *Freud and Philosophy* helped free me from the prohibitions against thought that are fostered by an American scientific education and that make it hard to appreciate what is truly revolutionary in Freud's science: its pursuit of knowledge through dialogue, its concern with meanings over observables, and its devotion to the development of critical self-consciousness. However, in returning to Ricoeur after writing my own "conflicts of interpretation" (Steele, 1982), after teaching many brilliant and radical students, and after becoming a feminist, I feel that *Freud and Philosophy* promulgates many of the same oppressive values that are dear to both science and psychoanalysis. The common perspective of these becomes visible when one steps outside of it and sees that psychoanalysis, science, and hermeneutics share a masculinist world view, a Weltanschauung, in which most of us were reared. One of the joys of feminist hermeneutics is standing apart from this very old tradition and showing how this embedded way of doing things is restrictive, antilibertarian, and often just plain wrong.

The masculine voice, which is shared by Ricoeur, Freud, and most scientists and academics, is rigorous, objective, concerned with authority, determined to debate the issues, mute or opinionated on the subject of women, and utterly positive about what is natural. In what follows I will show how Ricoeur's immersion in this way of speaking creates several interrelated problems in *Freud and Philosophy* and is responsible for various errors in it. None of the four topics I will consider are manifestly central to Ricoeur's text. Their position is latent, so

their importance will only be established through an interpretive reading in which I shall show that Ricouer's dismissal of Jung, his overweening concern with authority, his disregard for women, and his reductive, demeaning conceptualization of nature are all aspects of the androcentric bias that dominates his book.

THE REJECTION OF JUNG

To anyone who has read Jung, Ricoeur's modifications of the psychoanalytic theory of symbolism will be repetitive, not innovative. Jung's *Symbols of Transformation* (1911-12), which helped speed the break with Freud, was about the regressive and progressive function of symbols and about their function of transforming carnal into spiritual fantasies. In his "On the Psychology of Unconscious" (1943), Jung does both analytic-reductive (Freudian) and synthetic-prospective (Jungian) interpretations of the same case; and his studies of the interrelations of transference, sublimation and symbolism (Jung, 1946) would have aided Ricoeur in his discussion of these.

There are no citations to Jung's works in *Freud and Philosophy*. Ricoeur dismisses Jung because he is confusing and not a rigorous thinker like Freud. Ricoeur (1970) says: "With Freud I know where I am going; with Jung everything risks being confused: the psychism, the soul, the arthetypes, the sacred" (p. 176). For Ricoeur, Freud is a strong, sure leader, whereas with Jung he fears being lost.

This craving to always know where one is is typical of thinkers who are concerned with mastery and with following a master. It doesn't hurt to be lost or confused; one might just find something new. Jung explored the female symbolism of the unconscious and the importance of goddesses. This is something neither Ricoeur nor Freud, both of whom were unwilling to risk being lost in fantasy, in the "realm of the mothers," could find.

Although Jung's writing is associative, symbolic, suggestive, and often mythopoeic, it is usually only confusing to those who expect causal, argumentative prose and are uncomfortable with loose thinking. For the confused, however, Jung even provides a dictionary (1921).

I doubt if Ricouer ever really tried to read Jung. If he had, he would have soon discovered that his ideas on symbols were thoroughly Jungian. There has been, ever since Freud exiled Jung, a compulsive quality to psychoanalysis' dismissal of Jung's work. Ricoeur merely repeats Freud's actions, but he seems to have read even less Jung than did Freud.

This dividing into camps, schools, teams, and disciplines who worship a totemic founder is so obviously a primitive male bonding ritual that one would think that men of reason, like Ricoeur and Freud, would have renounced its practice. In modern times, however, the rite has merely been transformed through the cunning of reason into a proper and reasonable respect for authority.

ISSUES OF AUTHORITY

Freud makes rules and leads. This makes him an authority to Ricoeur. Citing another great authority in order to justify his own feelings on what legitimates psychoanalysis, Ricoeur adopts Kant's view that a system is limited by what justifies it. Freud's determination to explain the most complex phenomena from the topographic-economic point of view is, according to Ricoeur (1970), a restriction "which gives psychoanalysis its rights" (p. 153). Such limits serve to facilitate Ricoeur's project, which is to conduct "a rigorous debate with the true founder of psychoanalysis" (p. xi).

If the boundary lines of knowledge claims are not clearly drawn, then debate about ideas, which are an intellectual's property, cannot be judiciously conducted, and the lineage of a thought cannot be unambiguously traced back to the father. In a short space it is difficult to critique the notion that ideas are discovered, owned, claimed, and adjudicated, except to suggest that if the outlines of such a critique are not obvious, then the reader is not aware of how much his or her thought is dominated by the tropes and practices of capitalism. That ideas come from a founder and are passed on to his followers is so obviously totemic, and so germane to both Freud's and Ricoeur's work, that I will take time to develop its connections with the biases of the masculinist perspective.

Much of *Freud and Philosophy* is about the significance of the Oedipus complex and the symbolism of the father. The father, for Ricoeur (1970), is "the

name-giver and the lawgiver," with the institution of the father—patriarchy—serving the son by directing his education in the culture. Freud serves these purposes for Ricoeur: He named psychoanalysis and established the rules of its practice. More than this, however, psychoanalysis is an education in culture. Ricoeur (1970) says Freud's work is "a monument of our culture" and a place "in which our culture is expressed and understood" (p. xi).

To acquire culture then, one must be educated by Freud, and Ricoeur (1970) opens his work with the simple declaration that, "This work is a discussion or debate with Freud" (p. 3). This single line is a clear expression of the symbolism of the father in modern academic totemism. For "Freud," here, is a trope, the name "Freud" being a metonymy for the master's work. Debates with dead men are only possible in societies that revere their elders and have a set of cultural practices that preserve their deeds after their deaths. Our reverence for the immortal works of genius is just such a mechanism, and the idea that we can debate with these men is an obvious illusion. While Sigmund Freud was alive, few people held successful debates with him. Jung, with ideas very similar to Ricoeur's, tried and failed. But Ricoeur's metonymic Freud is much more the ideal or totemic father. He is not the primal tyrant that Wittels (1924) describes, but the embodiment of rigor, suspicion, and closely reasoned debate.

It is not some anomaly in Ricoeur's character that makes *Freud and Philosophy* an extended intellectual oedipal drama. It is that authority in our

culture is paternal, and a man, to be a scholar, must make his place among the fathers. Ricoeur's scholarship is impeccable in this regard; he cites, critiques, modifies, and expands on the ideas of one master after another (Hegel, Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, etc.) in exemplary academic fashion, thereby displaying his expertise and ensuring that his work will be commented on by future generations. Indeed, *Freud and Philosophy* has become a master text upon which an ambitious son, displaying all his scholarly expertise, is commenting. This must stop, because identification with the masters means an acceptance of their discourse and their rules of debate.

THE OMISSION OF WOMEN

There are almost no references to women in Ricoeur's work; in fact, the few places they are present in the text they are identified with the absent or the lost. Whereas the father is a strong presence throughout, and Ricoeur has much to say about him, he accepts Freud's portrait of the mother as an "archaic object…who bore us, nursed us and cared for us" (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 445). That is all he says, and he is speaking Freud's words.

The only other significant reference to women is in a discussion of Freud's (1910) analysis of Leonardo da Vinci's relationship with his mother. In this instance, Ricoeur's contact with females is mediated not by one man, but by two, and Ricoeur's theme is that symbols signify absence born of desire. The "unreal

smile” of Mona Lisa is a symbol for “the smile of the lost mother” of Leonardo (Ricoeur, 1970, p. 177). If women are archaic, lost, and symbols of absence, this is not so much a description of them as it is a comment on their place in Ricoeur’s discourse. They are simply absent from his text, and he seems to know about them only through their representation in the works of other men.

This omission of women, however, is no simple oversight; it is a near blindness born of masculine myopia. Ricoeur returns to Freud’s analysis of Leonardo when he takes up the topics of religion and the Oedipus complex. Following Freud, Ricoeur (1970) writes,

> If religious illusion stems from the father complex, the “dissolution” of the Oedipus complex is attained only with the notion of an order stripped of any paternal coefficient, an order that is anonymous and impersonal. Ananke is therefore the symbol of disillusion…Ananke is the name of a nameless reality, for those who have “renounced their father.” It is chance, the absence of relationship between the laws of nature and our desires or illusions.…Ananke, it seems to me, is a symbol of a world view...in it is summed up a wisdom that dares to face the harshness of life [pp. 327-328].

In this passage the omission of women is oppressive. First, “an order of things stripped of any paternal coefficient” is not anonymous and impersonal. Women exist. As mothers they provide one of the most complex and personal relationships we will ever have. They lay down the law, and they are usually the person who gives us our first name and who we name first. As lesbians, feminist separatists, and as people whose identities come neither from their fathers nor

husbands, women also exist.

Women are made invisible, anonymous, and impersonal by denying their existence or transforming them into things, into “its.” Ananke is a female goddess, a she, not an it. But Ricoeur, twice calls her “it,” thus ensuring her anonymity.

DENATURED NATURE

Ricoeur, like most other hermeneuts, has accepted science’s grossly unnatural representation of nature. He speaks of “the laws of nature” and refers to “the conditions of objectivity of nature” (1970, p. 48). He characterizes Freud’s energic tropes as nonhermeneutic, because such language describes the transformations of the natural order. Ricoeur nowhere sees that science interprets nature in some odd ways. Science has turned nature into a thing in order to investigate and exploit her (Griffin, 1978). There are no laws of nature, only laws of men, which are used to tame nature’s unruly ways. Science uses nature as a stage on which to strut its prowess, but feminist critics have shown what is being done. A subset of existence has been set apart by us as an other, a mother, a “she” and an “it” and designated as natural (Dinnerstein, 1977). The “objectivity of nature” is pure projection onto this other, and science sees reflected back from this mirror its own projections onto her. Finally, nature is no more a system of energic transformations than it is God’s creation or a giant turtle. The representation of the natural as energic is of recent origin and is the animism of a

materialist, mechanistic culture (Merchant, 1980).

I think Ricoeur accepts the natural scientists' representation of nature because of the general acquiescence of authorities in one field to experts in another. The deal struck by Dilthey with science, "You take nature, we'll take culture," is still honored by his descendant, Ricoeur. Ricoeur follows other twentieth century covenants of rationality: He is respectful of genius and wary of mystics, and he believes what other men say about women.

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