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Book Review: Scott Davidson, ed., *Ricoeur Across the Disciplines*. New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group Inc., 2010, 237 pp., ISBN 978-1-4411-6422-3

Although not a newborn between similar ventures, promising a dewy collection *Ricoeur Across the Disciplines* offers precisely such freshness that rarely stems from ambitious projects similar to this one.¹ Trying even to enumerate and systematize (not to say interpret or critically observe) the lavish and profound oeuvre of Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005), French philosopher, writer and intellectual, would claim significant energy, space, conditions, etc. But, no matter how complex and diverse it is, Ricoeur's work has even deeper contextual capacity (under the Humanities/Social sciences umbrella). The book before us serves, inter alia/among other things, the function of a multidisciplinary network of this branching. Editor Scott Davidson compiles and synthesizes, on the one hand, the various authors' styles and approaches with, on the other hand, overlapping zones between Ricoeur's thought and different knowledge areas. The scope of these includes predominantly social sciences.² Nevertheless, ostensible constriction doesn't mean that strict, bounded discourse has been born. Disciplinary exchange of concepts and terms provide a relatively vivid picture, alive enough to attract bunch of reflexive stands. The reader is sometimes in a challenging position when he is forced to follow multiple streams of assumptional propositions. Although specific in nature, the text style used by writers/distinctive scholars isn't hermetic and distant to coeval readers. This is one of the main virtues of *Ricoeur Across the Disciplines*, along with high informational potency and carefully-processed (hypo)thesis.

Passing through the network of heterogeneous disciplines contained in this edition, one of the first arising questions regards the disciplinary boundaries. Bearing in mind the continuous contest among autonomous and dependent concepts, the literary critic must wage his position, trying to find a mediative stand, comparable to the predominant facet in reicoerian spirit. One way or another, being able to encompass

¹ One is advised to read *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and interpretation* (1991), *A Ricoeur Reader* (1991), *Paul Ricoeur: His Life and his Work* (1996) and *Paul Ricoeur and the Poetic Imperative* (2007).

² These include: philosophy, theology (with hermeneutics), history, law, political theory, rhetoric, women's studies, race studies, education, psychoanalysis and musicology.

the limits and constrains of scientific areas, faculties, discourses etc. in some cases means to open space for fertile inter/meta/multi/sub – disciplinary permeation. All texts of this book rely on such presumption.

Starting with the personal profile of Paul Ricoeur titled *Ricoeur and Philosophy: Ricoeur as Teacher, Reader, Writer*, Adriaan Peperzak explores three main roles in Ricoeur's life, emphasizing his relationship with Emmanuel Levinas. The opening section, not counting an introductory study by Scott Davidson focused on the phenomenon of translation, shows versatility and, at the same time, consistency in its approach to philosophies. In two following parts, the authors deal with, perchance, the most important field when it comes to the realm of the hermeneutics (which originated from the reading of Scriptures). How should we mould post-religious faith? What is theology today? These are some of the questions posed in subsequent chapters. Ricoeur argued for the reconciliation of differences and atheism (returning to “God-after God”) as well. Richard Kearney examined faith/belief questions in regard to critical hermeneutics and the atheistic point of view, simultaneously applying elements of ricoeurian ‘middle road’ that led disputation to the *dieu capable/capable* God. Christian theology in context of contemporary intellectual milieu has been a subject of William Schweiker in chapter 3. The author shows how Ricoeur's philosophical account of narrative and interpretation itself gave aid to theological reflections. Vice versa, we have not been denied considering the knowledge of Christian theological legacy. Finally, both paths find resolution in the specific anthropological concept that Ricoeur deploys in *Oneself as Another*. The human being who can act and affirm is a foundation of mediating theology. This “Gospel of reconciliation” is a result of the battle between thinking and believing.

Historiography is discussed in chapter 4. Taking into account Ricoeur's frequent dialogue with historians, François Dosse had an immense task to reduce the specter of various resonances and discordances involved in complex relationships. Emphasis is placed on methodology and epistemology. The fact that “investigation into the truth must proceed through necessary and rigorous detours” (66) becomes an axiom notwithstanding subjectivity issues and other menaces. Yet again, the generic benefactor exist in narrative, whatever the event and its metamorphoses of sense turn out. The conclusion relies on Ricoeur's book *Memory, History, Forgetting*, where Dosse offers the most fitting utterance between true history and faithful memory. Somewhat brighter seems George Taylor's attempt to show how the law can act as an exemplary form of hermeneutics when dealing with prospects of Ricoeur's theory on the plane of such rigorous fields as law. The old distinction in hermeneutics, one that divides sources of interpretation on an author's intention or the meaning of the text itself, gains significance when examined in legal discourses. The problem of legal interpretation surrounded by the lure of self-understanding of original text come into suspicion and further investigation.

Things become more composite as we enter the matrix of politics. Bernard P. Dauenhauer scrutinizes Ricoeur's impact on theories of social institutional structures

through the liberalism-communitarianism dispute. As many times before, we have come to a reconciling position. “Ricoeur’s conception of personal identity as a narrative identity can account for both the liberal emphasis on the self as a unique individual and the communitarian emphasis on the self as a member of shared community.” (111) The author traces the practical implications of the aforementioned principle of political life, especially the interaction between actions, political fragility, constitutional rights and the act of forgiving. The seemingly forgotten realm of rhetoric comes back to life in a promising article by Andreea Deciu Ritivoi. Based on Jurgen Habermas’s *The Structural Transformations of the Public Sphere*, Ricoeur’s *Political and Social Essays* and Hannah Arendt’s *The Human Condition*, relatively brief consideration of recognition in the public sphere has been made. Ritivoi challenges questions of violence, discrimination, rights, segregation, and the moral grounds of personal and group behavior in public. The battle/encounter of (re)constructed identities is sustainable only by moving toward conceptual recognition as a state of peace, experienced as one, as Ricoeur proposed. Ritivoi argues that rhetorical studies should contribute to political coherence in a public sphere, tolerable to plurality and difference. Political agendas continue to bear weight in the following chapters. It is worth mentioning Sue Anderson’s application of the Ricoeurian act to women’s studies, and Maria and Scott Davidson’s highly interesting text on race theme, rare for Ricoeurian writings.

Education and pedagogy as a topic shed new light in chapter 10, where Peter Kemp adopts several organizational, methodological and cultural ideas developed by Ricoeur during what were the turbulent 1960s for French universities. Among them is the two-way relationship between student and teacher, dual education model, real formation of the individual, three-stage model of ethics, *mimesis* in pedagogical transmission etc. The author valued proposed concepts knowing Ricoeur as an open-minded, well-intentioned and modest professor, capable of transforming theory into fruitful practice.

Ricoeur Across the Disciplines concludes its narrative with two grander topics: psychoanalysis and musicology. Albeit magnificently elaborated on limited terms, Karl Simms study “Ricoeur and Psychoanalysis” requires expansion. We recommend Ricoeur’s *De l’interprétation: Essai sur Freud*, via which the reader can perceive the depths of Ricoeur’s knowledge, criticism and creative ideas concerning psychoanalysis. The validity of hermeneutics, as Simms also fully realized, is nowhere better shown than in examination of consciousness/unconscious in transference in analytic technique. Finally, Roger Savage analyzes relation amid music, hermeneutics and aesthetic experience trying to implement the fewest concepts and propositions into a discourse of musicology. Beginning with Ricoeur’s belief in absolute music, the power of music as a metaphysical/otherworldly character, Simms started the dispute with famous opponents (Joseph Kerman, Hermann Kretzschmar, Charles Seeger, and Lawrence Kramer). Special treatment is dedicated to the notion(theory) of metaphor and resemblances in language created to represent properties of music. The inscrutability

of time, affective modalities of the soul, mimetic refiguration of reality, ecstatic experience, transcendent ineffability, aporia of the Other are phenomenon clearly seen through music, as the author points out.

Neither highly educated scholar or connoisseur, nor novice or student would be left unsatisfied when confronted with these comprehensive yet knowingly-structured collection of papers committed to Ricoeur. The scope of offered subjects and areas, susceptible language, well-organized information, consistency in presenting, elaborating and concluding basic premises and carefully selected contributors endorse *Ricoeur Across the Disciplines* to future reading audiences.