

# **Critique and Conviction**

Paul Ricoeur

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*Criticism and Conviction* offers a rare opportunity to share personally in the intellectual life and journey of the eminent philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Internationally known for his influential works in hermeneutics, theology, psychoanalysis, and aesthetics, until now, Ricoeur has been conspicuously silent on the subject of himself. In this book?a conversation about his life and work with François Azouvi and Marc de Launay?Ricoeur reflects on a variety of philosophical, social, religious, and cultural topics, from the paradoxes of political power to the relationship between life and art, and life and death.

In the first of eight conversations, Ricoeur traces the trajectory of his life, recounting the origins of his convictions and the development of his intellect against the tragic events of the twentieth century. Declaring himself the "son of a victim of the First World War," Ricoeur, an orphan, sketches his early years in the house of stern but loving grandparents, and the molding of his intellect under the tutelage of Roland Dalbiez, Gabriel Marcel, and André Philip. Ricoeur tells the intriguing story of his capture and five-year imprisonment by the Germans during World War II, where he and his compatriots fashioned an intellectual life complete with a library and lectures, and where he, amazingly, was able to continue his dissertation research.

Elegantly interweaving anecdotal with philosophical meditations, Ricoeur recounts his relationships with some of the twentieth century's greatest figures, such as Heidegger, Jaspers, and Eliade. He also shares his views on French philosophers and explains his tumultuous relationship with Jacques Lacan. And while expressing his deepest respect for the works of Claude Lévi-Strauss and Michel Foucault, Ricoeur reserves his greatest admiration for the narratologist Algirdas Julien Greimas.

Ricoeur also explores the relationship between the philosophical and religious domains, attempting to reconcile the two poles in his thought. And readers who have struggled with Ricoeur's work will be grateful for these illuminating discussions that provide an invaluable key to his writings on language and narrative, especially those on metaphor and time. Spontaneous and lively, *Criticism and Conviction* is a passionate confirmation of Ricoeur's eloquence, lucidity, and intellectual rigor, and affirms his position as one of this century's greatest thinkers. It is an essential book for anyone interested in philosophy and literary criticism.



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