

Teleology and the Hermeneutics of Hope: Jungian Interpretation in Light of the Work of Paul Ricoeur¹

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Abstract

This paper uses concepts from the hermeneutic philosophy of Paul Ricoeur to extend the meaning of “teleology” and explore it as a figure of the subject constituted by the phenomenology of the collective unconscious. Two futural meanings of teleology are differentiated by borrowing temporal connotations of “incarnation.” Employing Ricoeur’s idea of “interpreting in front of the text,” the teleological approach is extended to discern in the analytic text the analyst’s concerns about the meaning of being in time. This teleological orientation recognizes a second narrative inscribed in the analytic text and in the personal story. This second narrative represents the dynamic relationship within the subject between the immanent/personal and the transcendent/transpersonal dimensions.

Keywords: analytic text, teleology, hermeneutic philosophy, subject, heimarmene, hope, incarnation.

*The poet is the one who saves the words
and even expands the meaning of the words*
—Paul Ricoeur

Paul Ricoeur is one of the foremost philosophers of our time. His work deals with the major themes of contemporary philosophy, but especially hermeneutics, or the philosophy of interpretation. Among his major works are *Time and Narrative*, and a study of the hermeneutics of the self entitled *Oneself as Another*. He is best known

to our profession for his work *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, and for *The Symbolism of Evil*, and *The Rule of Metaphor*. References to Jung are rare in Ricoeur’s writings, and not very substantive. However, his analysis of interpretation is rich in what it offers for understanding the very difficult idea of *teleology*. Hermeneutic philosophy can help us differentiate our own hermeneutic theory.

Jung repeatedly demonstrated that philosophical ideas abstractly represent psychological experience. Conversely, I believe the following clinical material, a piece of analytic text, embodies the entire theoretical dimension of this paper. Its imagery will be the thread I follow through the discussion of philosophical ideas.

Clinical Example: The “Glass Coffin” Vision

A middle-aged man reported the following recurring childhood vision. It is from a period of night terrors when he was around four years old. He remembered it during his analysis when a failed relationship exposed a deep narcissistic injury. In the recurring vision, he saw himself in a glass coffin, floating in the infinite expanse of outer space. He felt the terror of an absolute and eternal aloneness. He recognized the infinite extension of time beyond his own life, and would think, “When I

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die, I will never ever live again.” Remembering this childhood vision of infinite time and eternal aloneness helped him understand and begin to work through the quality of an underlying abandonment depression. He found he could move from the imagery to affects to memories and thus reconfigure the narrative of his childhood and, with this, map the lifelong reenactments of the early wounding.

At a point during the analysis his reflections on this glass coffin vision changed. Now, instead of linking his childhood terror and the depression, the image of the infinite universe began to evoke a deep feeling of inner security. Instead of picturing the experience of maternal absence—his mother suffered from a depression following the loss of her first child shortly before my patient was born—he now began to experience the image of the star-filled infinite universe as a representation of the ground of his own autonomous individuality.² He was now reminded of the lyrics of a song John Lennon composed following his experiences in Primal Scream therapy: “Mother, you had me, but I never had you; I wanted you, but you didn’t want me; now I just want to tell you, good-bye.” “As a child,” my patient said, “I felt that I never had my mother. She was never really all there, always distracted and distant. I was left to drift away into eternity. But now I also see that because she wasn’t able to be there for me, that in the image of drifting away, I had also decided to leave her. I said ‘good-bye’ to her. I didn’t know it then, but I had gone looking for another mother, and the image of the universe was holding me!”

Teleology in Jungian Hermeneutics

My paper is in essence a commentary on this analytic text. Here are the main points. *Teleology* is used to refer to psyche’s purposiveness, the end or *telos* towards which a process in the present is aimed. It orients interpretations away from causal formulations, away from the meaning of the present found only in the events of early life and the contingencies of personal history. Instead, teleology looks towards what lies ahead of, in front of, the present. Thus, teleology also signifies what distinguishes us from the so-called reductive schools of depth psychology. It is usually contrasted with *causality*, the determination of the past on the present, and the tendency is to oppose these two perspectives. An interpretation is either reductive or teleological.

However, by designating what is distinctive about Jungian hermeneutics, teleology also designates the noncausal factor of the collective unconscious that contributes to constituting identity (Jung, 1946, para. 529). Teleology designates something of how the phenomenology of the collective unconscious informs the experience of being the subject of a being. Stored within the meaning of teleology are two implied connotations of “collective unconscious.” First, there is a dimension of identity not acquired by personal experience; and second, at some “level” there is a single psyche and a single subject. Teleology implies that being the subject of an individual life is at the same time participating in the subject of the being who is designated by “collective” of “collective unconscious.” The “unconscious” of “collective unconscious” refers to the non-transparent nature of this dimension of self-

hood. To refer to it, not to mention to experience it, requires metaphors and well-crafted conceptual descriptions. Thankfully, Jung was a master of both these hermeneutic operations.

Finally, teleology is implicated in the idea of “breaking *heimarmene*.” *Heimarmene* was the idea in antiquity that one lived out an irrevocable fate constellated by divine providence. Commenting on *heimarmene*, Jung (1963) remarks, “[D]emoralization sets in in many neuroses when the patient takes the psychic factors producing the symptoms as though they were unalterable facts which it is useless to resist” (para. 308). But dormant in the purposive or progressive orientation of teleology is the connotation of a hermeneutics of hope. What lies ahead of the present is the possibility of being different, of really changing.

Extending the Meaning of Teleology

To explore these dimensions of teleology, I propose first that teleology is a word about time, specifically, about the *futural* sense of time. Teleology is difficult to conceptualize. It is a non-causal perspective that expresses a future dimension of the subject that operates in the present. This idea of the future operating in the present is the key to the meaning of teleology. Of time’s three dimensions, past, present, and future, only the future has no substantial connection to the actual. The present is actual, and the past retains elements of actuality through memory, artifacts, archives, and the like. But the future exists only in an act of imagining possibilities.³ In this sense, the future is *of* time but not yet *in* time. When we conceive of or imagine the not-yet of the future, a primary phenomenon of

the collective unconscious is represented in consciousness. Our imaginings manifest the noncausal dimension of being a self. This is not necessarily found directly in the contents of our imaginings, which can obviously be influenced by our experiences. It is the ability to experience the sense of time as futural that gives us the experience of the collective unconscious. Here is an analogy. When I hear my voice on a recording I viscerally experience a phenomenon of the unconscious. I experience an unknown part of myself, the way my voice actually sounds to others, which I can never directly hear.⁴ In a similar fashion, the futural sense of time carries the imprint of the collective unconscious, but in a way that we cannot directly experience. But unlike the immediacy of hearing the recorded voice, we experience the collective unconscious through interpretation.

Through teleology, time’s future becomes a symbol. It symbolizes a dimension of identity not constituted by personal lived-life, through the temporal links of cause and effect from infancy until now. This dimension of “I,” of “myself,” is not a direct presence in consciousness. It is only a representation—a representation—in consciousness; but it is always there. It enters our awareness disguised within our anticipations about what is not yet, about what is possible. In the glass coffin vision, my patient could experience the transpersonal nature of selfhood indirectly through the motif of the star-filled universe and the companion thought of time’s futural extension into eternity. But every act of experiencing time’s futural sense is symbolic of this same transpersonal subject.

My second proposal is that teleology is about the relationship of being and

time, about being in time, the time of one's being; but also about the being who is time. My patient's central experience working with his childhood vision was the transformation of a lifelong sense of dread. As a child, the vision of being adrift in eternal time terrified him. It represented the absence of maternal containment experienced as an abandonment wound. As with all abandonment wounds, this was, simultaneously, a rupture within the intrapsychic enclosure of the subject, a traumatic split of the subject's mysterious unity of personal and transpersonal. Within the subject, transcendence negated immanence, imaged by the infinite universe. But during analysis, the vision itself became the figure of the transpersonal within his feeling of self. The infinite and starry universe, and more significantly, his own terror of the void, now personified an entity "that had no other way of expressing the scale of its being." Transcendence was still "other," but beneficent, not negating.

Finally, a deep healing began. He saw the image of the glass coffin in the infinite universe representing not just time's eternal extension into the future, not just the thought that he would "never, ever live again." It symbolized eternal time as the body of the self. He realized that the image of the child in the glass coffin no longer portrayed eternal isolation in a vast nothingness. Now he saw this image as a human form of one of the innumerable scintillae of light comprising the star-studded background of outer space. As a star himself, he belonged to the composition of a Universal Being represented as the infinite Universe. In other words, "eternity" was no longer a reference to an order of time that negated his finite sense of being. It became a figure of his

being. Thoughts of eternal time that had always terrified him had been disguised with symptoms. Or when the dread pressed into consciousness, he defended against it with omnipotent fantasies. Now, he experienced thoughts of eternity symbolically, as a mode of his own being. He found in his own story a living symbol of the subject's mysterious unity of personal and transpersonal within himself.

In the face of undertaking the ordeal to assimilate the experience of eternity as both a scale of time and a dimension of identity, it can be consoling to limit our gaze to the dynamics and narratives of individual development in childhood. We start the story at the personal margin of birth. Then, the fact of being in an infinitely vast scale of time at every moment can be overlooked as also having a constituting influence on one's identity, whether this is conscious or not. Rethinking time through teleology removes birth and death as the margins of the life narrative, and exposes the subject's experience of being in the entirety of time.

Through teleology, we see how the collective unconscious contributes to experiencing the time of selfhood. It bestows a sense of participating in the unified subject of a single being with an anatomy of archetypes and a biography that is human history, evolution, and beyond. (cf. Neumann, 1976, p. 12) Teleology perceives the subject's suffering and hope in mediating the time of a lifetime with the time of history and the time of eternity (Jones, 2000; Jung, 1968, p. 136). As my patient encountered in his glass coffin vision, participating in this being has two sides; transcendence both negates and attests to the subject's unique identity. When transcendence dominates within the subject,

there is dissociation, abandonment depression, self-hatred, a false self, a fragmented self, character pathology—all the afflictions of self-esteem. And there is despair. As a four-year-old, my patient felt he would “never, ever live again.” However, this was not only an existential despair; it was also a psychological despair. Despair can lead to a stoic-like attitude of resignation; but it leads also to the conviction that real psychological change is impossible, that it can “never, ever” happen. This is the attitude of *heimarmene*.

The Temporality of Incarnation

What happens, however, when transcendence within the subject attests to a unique identity? I want to explore this via my third proposal about the meaning of teleology, which places teleology in a hermeneutics of hope. Jungian hermeneutics is distinguished by the supposition that *selfhood is an incarnation*. Teleology is one bridge over which we bring this mythological thought into psychological language. *Incarnation* is a source for conceptualizing the future’s operating in the present. To see this we need first to borrow from incarnation the meaning it takes from the idea of *filiation*.

Filiation is the theological idea that the “Son” proceeds from the “Father,” that the “Father” incarnates in the “Son,” the divine in the human. A particular connotation of filiation can be redeployed in teleology. In filiation, the Father is prior to the Son but not in a temporal way; for, as in the Fourth Gospel, they are cotemporal, as they are in the figures of Osiris and Horus in Egyptian myth. Although cotemporal, the time of the Son is *nested in* the time of the Father, as the day is nested in the

month in the year in the decade in the century and so on. The nested levels of filiation represent that the relationship of the individual subject to the transcendent subject within the self is a relationship of two different levels of *actuality*—not a potential and an actual, but two levels of actuality (cf. Jung, 1951, para. 271). That is the paradox of the self’s personal and transpersonal lifetime.

Two Futural Connotations of Teleology

At this point, we can advance a more differentiated understanding of teleology. Teleology, in fact, has *two* futural connotations. Until now, the primary connotation has been what we can call the *future-towards-which*. This “toward-which” of the present is, so to speak, the future *of* the present. An example is an idea implied by von Franz that paranoia is purposive in its aim to bring about a further degree of separation. In brief, the paranoid person, so fearful of others, becomes progressively more isolated, that is, separate. Thus, a teleology of purposive intent understands paranoia as a distorted, hence symptomatic, expression of an irrepressible design for separation and differentiation of identity (von Franz, 1978, p. 16).

But the idea of a design, of an a priori psychic ground plan, shares with words like “potential” and “latent” the temporal connotation of “prior” that is linked to the sense of the past. Interpreting psyche’s purposive intent remains, in fact, an orientation bound as much to the past as to the future. But this future’s “not yet” is an “already there,” a kind of “laying in wait,” of a preexisting design or potential. In the von Franz example of paranoia, by

interpreting psyche's purposive design what we see is the subject attempting to come towards itself, but from an already-there potential, rather than a not-yet future. A teleology of purposive intent, then, is not, strictly speaking, futural. It cannot carry the connotation of the noncausal factor of the collective unconscious that constitutes identity.

Where "towards which" designates the future *of* the present, the second temporal dimension of teleology is the future *in* the present. Here, teleology refers to a future that has a different *not yet*. We can link two metaphors to help us understand this futural "not yet" meaning of teleology. First, the future is an envoy to the present pulling a process from in front. This expresses the irrational idea that the future is somehow prior to the present. Second, the metaphor "nested in," borrowed from "incarnation" and "filiation," connotes a before that is not earlier. A future that is prior, and a before that is not earlier, come together in teleology. These metaphors of the "future as envoy" and "nested in" help us to think of the subject *coming towards itself from the future* from its own "not yet."⁵

Here, then, is teleology's role in our hermeneutic theory: it exposes a dimension of the subject that is not constituted solely by the conditions and circumstances of personal history. The envoy from the future is none other than the noncausal self-constituting phenomena of the collective unconscious. This means that what we borrow from "incarnation" is a conception that the experiencing subject is not anchored only to the narrative grid of personal history. The personal life-narrative is nested in a second narrative.

The Second Narrative in the Analytic Text

This second narrative is always inscribed in the analytic text, but it must be interpreted. This second narrative of the subject is cotemporal in the analytic text with the narrative of personal history. We compose the second narrative initially by interpreting archetypal or universal meanings—such as hero, scapegoat, puer—within an individual's life-experiences. Amplification transforms analytic text into mythic text and links the meaning of myth to the meaning of an individual life. The subject who speaks through myth is reconfigured into the figure "personality No. 2," whose self-expression is inscribed in the text. At the deepest level, myth is a narrative representation of the meaning of being, or to put this another way, it represents the life of the being whose concern is meaning. Archetypal meanings are the episodes in the life-narrative of this being within which we all participate, a being also represented in symbols we gather under the sign of the Anthropos.

However, the major theme of this second narrative is the subject's story of time. The second narrative is a mediation of personal time to cosmic time, a mediation of the finite time of a lifetime to eternal time. This kind of mediation goes beyond archetypal amplifications; it goes beyond linking personal to universal patterns of experience. It is only in the register of time that we engage the transpersonal and undertake the ordeal that leads to its union with the personal.

Interpreting "In Front of the Text"

Before giving a specific clinical application of this line of thought, an excursion needs to be made into

Ricoeur's hermeneutic theories. Interpreting requires a "critical moment." This is a moment of critical judgment when the literal reference of the text is suspended, when the text's ostensive meaning is held in abeyance (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 40). Ricoeur distinguishes two options at this point: interpreting "behind the text," or interpreting "in front of the text." In brief, to go behind the text presumes the text in some fashion conceals its meaning. Meaning is encrypted in the text and interpretation decodes what the text hides. On the other hand, interpreting in front of the text suspends the text's literal reference, and releases a metaphorical reference from the surplus of meanings contained in the words and grammar of the text. To go behind the text is an act of suspicion; to interpret in front of the text is to be dispossessed of one's self by the text, to become exposed to the trajectory of its possibilities, and finally to appropriate a new self (Ricoeur, 1992, p. 148). Ricoeur states, "To understand oneself in front of a text is [not]...projecting oneself and one's beliefs and prejudices; it is to let the work and its world enlarge the horizon of the understanding which I have of myself" (1981, p. 178). And "understanding the text is not an end in itself; it mediates the relation to himself of a subject who, in the short circuit of immediate reflection, does not find the meaning of his own life" (1991, pp. 118-119). As I will show, what we can specifically borrow from Ricoeur's idea of interpreting in front of the text is that although the key to teleology is still the futural sense of time, teleological interpretations are not necessarily about the future per se—they are metaphors of time.

A patient arrives late for a session. She says, "I'm sorry I am late. Traffic

was bad." Going behind the text we could observe that the reference to time-being late—and to the obstruction of the will-bad traffic—conceals ambivalence to the therapy. What is revealed from in front of this text? First, we note the apology. Its literal reference assumes an injury to the analyst. Again, a view from behind the text could see in the apology, for example, a fantasy about early-life object relations.

There is, in fact, no need for the patient to apologize. Her lateness is not an injury to the analyst. The analytic frame gives her discretionary use of the time, and it implies that the language gestures we make in everyday life to lubricate social interactions with others are not applicable here. There is neither obligation nor reciprocity of the kind that would require the patient to make such an apology. These considerations divest the text of its literal reference, and release its metaphoric, i.e., symbolic, reference. Metaphor, according to Ricoeur (1978), "is that strategy of discourse by which *language divests itself* of its functions of direct description [i.e., literal reference] in order to reach the mythic level where its function of discovery is set free" (p. 247, my italics).

Note that Ricoeur says, "language divests itself." He personifies "language" as a self-reflexive impersonal agent with a strategy. In this locution, he is reaching to describe the agency of the transpersonal but nontransparent subject of the collective unconscious. The strategy of this subject is to inscribe in the analytic text references to its own life-narrative that it has also inscribed in myth. Here is the subject as seen from in front of the text. It is the subject represented by the "I am" of the first sentence, but also represented by the "bad traffic" of the second sentence.

Discussing the narrative structure of identity, Ricoeur (1992) states, "There is nothing in real life that serves as a narrative beginning....my birth and, with greater reason, the act through which I was conceived belong more to the history of others—in this case, to my parents—than to me" (p. 160). We can begin here to see the metaphorical meaning set free by interpreting "bad traffic" from in front of the text. It refers to a multileveled disorder of identity. At the literal level, traffic is bad when the intention of others obstructs my way to a destination. "Traffic" thus represents what Ricoeur calls "[the] entanglement of the history of each person in the histories of numerous others" (ibid., p. 161). "Bad traffic," then, is when being entangled in the histories of numerous others displaces one as the main character on the world's stage. "Bad traffic" is the loss of the other as a selfobject. At another level, "bad traffic" connotes the loss of the unconscious ecstasy of an unreflective and unexamined life, the disruption of the traffic pattern of the herd in which there is no individual prerogative or initiative.

"Traffic" also represents the flow of time into which one enters at birth and leaves at death. "Traffic" metaphorizes the fact that a personal lifetime is nested in the time of the subject's transpersonal dimension. It portrays the subject's experience of time without personal margins. The patient was reaching a new juncture in her life. Instead of the "going with the flow" attitude by which she rejected adult responsibilities and by which she espoused her desire for magical solutions to her problems, she was just beginning to have the capacity to undergo and endure psychological reflection. This had previously been paralyzed by

omnipotence fantasies. Only by recognizing the time of her life as a finite process, now being marked by her biological clock, did she come to appreciate that her life had a final destination.

"Bad traffic" expressed, then, the existential issue that being nested in the time of the transpersonal subject was intolerable. At the surface of "I'm sorry I am late. Traffic was bad," the word "late" has the sense of a mild discomfort. But as an expression of a delayed recognition of time-limited opportunities, "late" carried the stamp of a painful remorse. Remorse is the confrontation with mortality (Jones, 2000). Thus, "bad traffic" informs the sense of injury that was implied by the patient's apology. From in front of the text, the reference here is to the subject's own existential suffering. The trajectory of this very brief text was aimed in the direction of an image that is now very familiar to us. "Bad traffic" connotes the same concern as the image of the infinite universe in the young boy's experience of the glass coffin vision. "Bad traffic" symbolizes a polarized opposition of the personal and transpersonal within the subject. Being nested in a time that transcended her life evoked the feeling of the abysmal void. She had not yet found in it a living symbol of the ground of her individuality.

The Subject as I-and-the-Other-I

The natural tendency is to conceptualize the transcendent as "other" even though it is a dimension of the subject and, hence, also designated by the first person pronoun "I" and its reflexive form "myself." Within the subject it is the core and ground of individuality. It feels like "other," but it is very much "I." There is this profound tension

within the experiential field of the subject between “I” as the personal subject and the transpersonal subject as “I.” Nevertheless, the relationship of these dimensions within the subject is often expressed as, “I and Thou,” or “I and the Not-I.” But these formulas do not hold the tension within subject. They subtly split the subject. They do not come close on the linguistic level to what the myth and rituals of the ancient mystery cults attempted: the weaving together of these two dimensions of the “I.” Even Christ’s remark “I and the Father are One” is problematic in this regard. Psychologically, the math is right, but semantically, pronoun and noun don’t completely blend together. “I” and “Father” still carry here some of the sense of the one as other to the other. If you recall, during the first centuries of the church, theologians wrestled with this same dilemma in the vernacular of the different “persons” and “natures” of God, seeking a formula preserving simultaneously a distinction and a unity of the Father and the Son (see Jung, 1951, para. 171).

We have inherited this same issue because of our analytic concern about the phenomenology of the collective unconscious. Thus, “bad traffic” refers to the central identity-problem for Jungian hermeneutics. This problem is an inescapable implication of the collective unconscious. It is that that the personal pronoun “I” means the subject of one’s unique self and also the dimension of this unique self that is the transcendent/transpersonal subject of every human being: the I-and-the-other-I.

Breaking Heimarmene

I would like to place my final discussion under the sign of “breaking

heimarmene.” During a session, a male patient made the following remark in response to an episode of a popular TV series. The series features the life of a Mafia godfather. He also happens to be in analysis. In this particular episode, during a session his female analyst, with visible injuries from being raped, struggles with her countertransference. She wants desperately to tell her gangster patient the name of the person who did this to her so he would avenge her, but she holds to her convictions not to reveal this information. She is also depicted in the episode arguing bitterly with her husband, who is also an analyst. About this episode my patient said, “I guess analysts struggle throughout their lives with their problems like the rest of us.”

This remark expressed transference references behind the text to the patient’s recently perceived evidence of imperfections of mine that had activated his father complex. However, this little piece of text is also a narrative of the ordeal within the subject about time and incarnation. From in front of the text, we see first that the subject is again semantically dispersed, here across the pronoun “I,” then “analysts,” and finally “the rest of us.” Within this array, “analysts” and “the rest of us” represent the relationship of transcendence and immanence within the subject “I.” But it had been a relationship in which transcendence negated immanence. Though he had idealized me, I was, as the text shows, a single embodiment of a larger totality, “analysts.” The metaphorical trajectory of this projection was the figure of the *Anthropos*, that is to say, the activated individuation process within him. But he had always projected his capacity to change onto others, especially authority fig-

ures, personified here by “analysts.” In this state, his individuation press was experienced as castrating criticism and intrusiveness. As a result he was chronically belligerent.

“I guess analysts struggle throughout their lives with their problems like the rest of us.” Now, however, the polarized conflict in the interior enclosure of the subject was abating. Within the subject was an incarnation process. The transference projection had brought the transcendent and transpersonal “nested within” of infinite proportion into proximity to the birth-and-death margins of the personal. These two dimensions, symbolized by “analysts” and “the rest of us,” approached each other in the register of time that the text metaphorized as the “struggle throughout their lives with their problems.” In this internal struggle, “analysts” and “the rest of us” were approximating the theological formula of the unity of “the Father” and “the Son,” the “I” and the “other-I.”

The key to this little text, however, is the expression “I guess.” “I guess” is not here an act of uninformed choice that leaves an outcome to chance. Rather, from in front of the text, “I guess” expresses the ordeal of uniting the personal and transpersonal through the act of attesting to a new self. For Ricoeur, the essence of self-attesting is identical to that of keeping one’s word: both acts maintain the constancy of identity in time. By keeping my word, I am the same person today as I was yesterday when I gave my word. In this way I maintain the constancy of identity. But unlike the constancy of identity that Ricoeur (1992) calls “acquired dispositions and sedimentations of identification-with,” (p. 122) and we call *heimarmene*, self-attesting is an ongoing

self-creation. By keeping my word, I renew my identity with each affirmation. I re-create myself through maintaining my trustworthiness to others each day (*ibid.*, pp. 124, 168). In our text, “I guess” is to “break *heimarmene*,” to overcome the repetition compulsion through the ongoing conscious choice to change.

The word “guess” implies a state of uncertainty. From in front of the text, the uncertainty of “I guess” refers to the *nonliteral real* of the imagination. Here, to guess is to imagine. It is to play at imagining the possibilities of a new being.⁶ The uncertainty of guess is also the access point by which the envoy from the future enters the present. The not-yet of the patient is simultaneously invited *and* received in this declaration. What arrives from this act of self-attesting is the hoped for capacity to change. The uncertainty of “I guess” is, to borrow a phrase from Ricoeur, “credence without guarantee, but trust greater than any suspicion” (1992, pp. 22-23). “I guess” expresses this trust that is at the heart of attesting and is the ground of hope.

Conclusion

To conclude, teleology is a futural orientation akin to Ricoeur’s interpretation in front of the text. With it, we perceive a second analytic text, a narrative about life-meaning expressed in figures of time, like “bad traffic” and “I guess,” one a metaphor of despair, the other of hope. Extending the meaning of teleology in this way we endeavor, as did the artist Matisse in designing the Rosarie Chapel in Provence, to discover, and forge, the union of personal and transpersonal within the subject. Matisse said, “What I have done in this

chapel is to create a religious space...in an enclosed area of very reduced proportions and to give it, solely by the play of colors and light, the dimensions of infinity” (Porter and Prince, 1999, p. 651). I have shown to you, I hope, that extending the meaning of teleology beyond perceiving psyche’s purposiveness enables us to bear witness daily, even in the small segments of analytic text, to this same project of the self’s incarnation, our individuation.

Notes

- 1) This paper was originally delivered at the 2001 IAAP Conference in Cambridge, England.
- 2) Discussing the child archetype, Jung (1940) remarks, “Higher consciousness, or knowledge going beyond our present-day consciousness, is equivalent to being *all alone in the world*. This loneliness expresses the conflict between the bearer or symbol of higher consciousness and his surroundings” (para. 288).
- 3) For a concise view of Ricoeur’s discussion of the imagination and the possible, see K.Vanhoozer (1990, pp. 62ff).
- 4) I am indebted to Dr. Yoram Kaufmann for this simple but effective experiential illustration of the reality of the unconscious.
- 5) See Ricoeur (1988, p. 3) for a discussion of futural sense of the subject in Heidegger’s philosophy.
- 6) One of Ricoeur’s signature ideas about fiction is that it allows the reader to opportunity for “imaginative variations” of identity. For example, “What is to be interpreted in the text is a proposed world which I could inhabit and in which I could project my own-

most possibilities....Reality is, in this way, metamorphosed by means of what I shall call ‘imaginative variations’ that literature carries out on the real” (Ricoeur, 1991, p. 36).

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