

The Mixed Texture of Symbolic Thought: A Response to and Elaboration of Some Points in Alan Jones's Paper "Teleology and the Hermeneutics of Hope: Jungian Interpretation in the Light of the Work of Paul Ricoeur"

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I am pleased to have the opportunity to comment on Alan Jones's interesting paper and to see the work of Paul Ricoeur brought into relationship with Jungian thought. I have often felt that, in spite of Ricoeur's marginalizing of Jung and his preference for Freud's work, his own formulations resonate more with Jung's ideas than with Freud's. Ricoeur has indicated that he prefers Freud's thought to Jung's because of its firmness and rigor, and that it was far easier for him to make his own contribution with Freud as his interlocutor. He noted that working with Jungian ideas would have been more difficult and unclear.¹ I believe this is in part true because Ricoeur's hermeneutics of suspicion (thinking behind the text) and his hermeneutics of belief (thinking in front of the text) so closely parallel Jung's regressive and progressive modes of interpretation. It is harder to make differentia-

tions between that which is similar and that which is different.

To Ricoeur's credit, he has shown that even in Freud's hermeneutics there is an "implicit" teleology, which he masterfully draws out in his book *Freud and Philosophy* (1970). While Ricoeur made an important if not uncontroversial contribution to Freudian scholarship, his critique of Freud closely resembles Jung's critique—albeit in a more sophisticated philosophical way.

Ricoeur's caveats about why he ignored Jung aside, it is hard to understand why a scholar of Ricoeur's caliber would bypass a thinker who resonated with his own contribution. Perhaps he feared being caught in the long-term convention common in French intellectual circles that one should ignore Jung if one is to be taken seriously. Perhaps it is equally problematic that Jung and Jungians have in general also given short shrift to the philosophical traditions of phenomenology and hermeneutics.

Given the above situation, Dr. Jones's paper is a welcome contribution to a developing genre of interfacing Jung's psychology with these traditions,² and his paper contributes to the recognition of the value of this interface. Specifically, Dr. Jones uses Ricoeur's philosophical hermeneutics as an oppor-

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tunity to articulate and further differentiate Jung's interpretive strategies, particularly his concern with teleology. To this end, his own approach is to use small analytic vignettes that he notes embody the entire theoretical discussion of his paper. What Dr. Jones particularly borrows from Ricoeur is the idea of "interpretation in front of the text," an idea positing teleology as not simply about a literal future *per se* but about "metaphors of time." One of his clinical examples centers around an analysis of his patient's recurring childhood vision in which he saw himself "in a glass coffin floating in the infinite expanse of outer space." The patient reports feeling terror and absolute aloneness. The infinite extension of time brought to mind anxiety over the finality of death.

Dr. Jones's work with this patient helped him to identify the patient's feeling of maternal abandonment and early wounds that were reenacted throughout his life. Without reiterating all the details, what is important for my purpose here is to note that the patient's work with Dr. Jones led to a transformation in which his affect in regard to the image changed dramatically. Rather than experiences of terror and depression, he was able to experience feelings of "inner security" and the "ground of his own autonomous individuality." He was able to see his own agency and thereby to recognize a larger sense of himself as not simply abandoned. To put it another way, perhaps one could imagine his felt abandonment (in front of the text) as an aspect of the emerging possibility for connection with the Archetypal Mother and the constellation of a Self that found itself at home in eternal time. This structural move allowed a new experience of inner security and a feeling of being "held by the universe."

Now, one might ask how to understand this transition. While Dr. Jones mentions some traditional psychodynamic processes and a movement from imagery to affect—to memories and the reconfiguration of the childhood narrative—he primarily is interested in the question: "What is the process aiming at?" In other words, how can we understand the "reconfiguration" not by simply looking at past dynamics but by more fully understanding teleology and the role and meaning of the collective unconscious and the archetypal world.

Reading Dr. Jones's analysis as a Jungian colleague, I found it difficult at first to see how his interpretation differs from a classical Jungian position. He does a so-called regressive analysis and then follows the telos of the vision in what appear to be Jung's subjective and archetypal levels of interpretation. His unique contribution is that he, à la Ricoeur, underlines an aspect of the teleological process that is concerned with an analysis of the structure of temporality itself.

Dr. Jones notes that teleology is about the relation of Being and Time. This recognition follows not only Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative*, but also Heidegger's *Being and Time* and *Time and Being*. For Heidegger, we are not simply "beings in time" but "temporal beings" or, as Dr. Jones' puts it, the "being who is time." These existential/phenomenological/hermeneutic/structural considerations also bring with them the possibility of a shift in psychological experience. Put simply, to experience one's self as a "temporal being" is, for Dr. Jones, already to break *heimarmene* and to feel oneself to be grounded in the universe and not just subject to it.

The importance of and potential danger in this shift are the focus of some questions it may be of value to raise. The questions are not directly aimed at Dr. Jones's contributions but apply to our considerations of Jungian analysis in general.

The value of this transformational shift is evident in terms of opening up possibility and hope and unfolding a second narrative revealing a mythical and meaningful dimension of life. These potentialities are well documented in Dr. Jones's clinical vignettes. The dangers of inflation and enantiadromia, on the other hand, may be in the shadow of these very virtues, dangers that lurk in every advance in consciousness. As we move from insecurity to security, from looking for an absent mother to finding one in the stars, we encounter the risk of inflation, a move from ego-Self alienation to ego-Self union (Edinger, 1972), in which it is easy to begin to imagine the patient as secure and even cured. But there is danger in fixing the telos as a literal accomplishment, rather than as a moment in an ongoing dialectic and transformative process. When unions occur, disunity is not far away; when one feels secure, insecurity is likewise not so far away. As analysts, we are all too familiar with these scenarios, but perhaps it is worth recalling them as we open up new ways to imagine our analytic work. Where we start to see ourselves not simply as "beings in time" but as "temporal beings," it is easy to slide into an inflated feeling that our patients are "stars themselves" and that "birth and death" are no longer the margins of life, etc. Insofar as Dr. Jones and/or his patient's poetic metaphors move in this direction, I think these concerns are important to raise.

In fairness to Dr. Jones, I believe there is in his ideas and his work a legitimate and original expression of teleology, with genuine overtones of religious and spiritual meaning in the best Jungian sense. A close reading of his text reveals that in many places he qualifies his poetic expressions in ways that give one confidence that he is aware of the dangers described above. Still, while careful to acknowledge the personal dimension, he follows the intention of his article—to bring to light a new understanding of teleology. In so doing, his work attests to "hope," "the future," "the Self," "myth," "healing," purpose, and the meaning of Being.

On the whole, this leaves me both stimulated and concerned about the shadows accompanying these ideas. Dr. Jones notes a tendency to see interpretation as either reductive or teleological, and at moments I felt he was on the verge of dissolving the tension within the vision that he analyzed. Is it not possible to keep the tension and to imagine the coffin vision as overdetermined, being a site of both feelings of abandonment and of belonging? This kind of belonging would never be a complete sense of security nor a panicked alienation, but rather a complex adult sense of feeling both alienation and relatedness to a larger sense of life. Aren't these both sides of our relation to the Great Mother? I think it is important to hold this tension within interpretive hermeneutics and in the life of an individual subject. When this tension is broken, there is a loss of integrated understanding. This is the case where the interpretation overly favors either dimension in personal or transpersonal understanding. This tension was important to Jung, who struggled with the problem, and though he identified the

reductive point of view with Freud and the synthetic and teleological one as his own contribution, he also felt it was important to synthesize his point of view with Freud's. He believed that only an amalgamation of both points of view could give us a more complete understanding.

As noted, Jung's struggle to amalgamate opposing hermeneutics of causal and teleological perspectives was also a key concern for Ricoeur and others. For Ricoeur, as for Jung, the symbol has a prospective as well as a retrospective meaning; while it reveals and repeats our childhood's earliest experiences, it can also be used to explore our adult personality and to open the future.³ Ricoeur moves toward a unification of these opposing hermeneutics, seeing that the retrospective and prospective dimensions of the symbol form two ends of a *single* symbolic scale. For Ricoeur, as for Jung, the retrospective approach is like an archeology of man, and, like Jung, he doubts its adequacy to account for language and culture. Archeology can only provide a caricature of man, and the prospective dimension is *also* an essential dimension of man's symbolic experience. These two perspectives initially constitute conflicting hermeneutic styles, a hermeneutic field at variance with itself. There is no universal canon of interpretation, and so we oscillate for the most part between them. Some have characterized this situation as a crisis in language peculiar to our age (Doran, 1980, p. 141), and it might be said that it was this crisis which underlay Jung's struggle with symbolic language, and which continues to pervade analysis.

For Ricoeur himself, the conflict is not definitive but is provisional, and

the standpoint beyond the conflict is achieved through *dialectic*, a dialectic between the differing moments of symbolic reality. Such a dialectic shows the symbol in its true *concrete, mixed texture*. It is in the concrete symbol where we can find the fundamental unity between the opposing hermeneutics. Ricoeur shows how the dialectic moves in his reading of Freud. He suggests that a long-term dialectical view of the radical doubt of immediate consciousness could lead to a displacement of the subject and an upsurge of the possible, of newness and creativity. This amalgamation begins an attempt to describe a new paradigm. For Ricoeur (1970), the iconoclastic form of interpretation is taken up into the task of the recovery of meaning: he inquires whether destroying idols and listening to symbols are not the same enterprise, and whether "the profound unity of the demystifying and the demythicizing of discourse can be seen only at the end of an asceticism of reflection," in which "the dispossession of consciousness to the profit of another home of meaning" is "the first gesture of reappropriation. (Ricoeur, 1970, pp. 54-55; also from Doran, 1980, p. 151). This other home of meaning leads Ricoeur to a "genuine sphere of Being" Doran (1980) calls the *imaginal* (p. 152). For Ricoeur, this home of meaning is seen as a return, not to silence but to the spoken word, in which he finds the possibility of a healing of language and a return to living speech, a return to an attitude of listening and authentic speaking from the ground of the symbol.

Ricoeur's description could well contribute to a new philosophical expression grounding Jungian dialectics, insofar as Jungian theory does not wish to impose psychodynamic inter-

pretation onto symbols but rather wishes to be instructed by them or, as Ricoeur states, to think in accord with them. Thus, thinking and speaking must become the possibility of carrying and engendering opposed interpretations, of hearing the horizons and echoes and paradoxes of multidimensional images, animated by an unknown.

While Dr. Jones's work shares an appreciation for Ricoeur's potential contribution to Jungian psychology and capitalizes on it, I think it is also useful to complement his appreciation of Ricoeur by also noting the concerns of some of Ricoeur's critics and some of the hermeneutic issues raised by them. His critics suggest that he, in the end, draws back from the most extreme consequences of his theory of tension and of the multiplicity of meaning, which was seen as an advance in thought and as a possible ground for a shifting of paradigm underlying the traditional problematics of symbolic language described above.

Lacapra (1980), a literary critic clearly influenced by Derrida, notes that Ricoeur's argument undergoes a curious reversal, as tension, interaction, and interpretation itself assume a supplementary position with reference to realms of discourse. He points out that Ricoeur passes lightly over the notion of split reference in an attempt to establish the "unity," "autonomy," and "purity" of philosophical discourse proper (Lacapra, 1980, p. 18). This critique has its parallel in analytic theory when the analyst moves away from the complexity of an image to an "interpretation." There has been considerable literature on interpretation, separating appropriate, timely, adequate interventions from those that are not so attuned. However, the critique here is not aimed at adequa-

cy on the basis of the above standards, but rather stresses the question of interpretation in a larger sense. The critique suggests that there is a significant reduction when the interpreter—philosophic or psychoanalytic—moves away from giving equal validity to both sides of metaphoric copula.

In any case, priority is usually given to the nonpoetic "groundings," and the "new home of Being" (Ricoeur) is led back from the "Imaginal" to the "Philosophical." Ricoeur assumes that philosophic modes of discourse should define at least the dominant structure and world of the text (Lacapra, 1980, p. 20). On the other hand, Lacapra states that this is only true when one deals with texts in a summary way; and this eliminates rather than poses the problems of the text. The archetypalist critique of traditional Jungian interpretation follows a similar line. Both for Lacapra and Hillman, when interpretation is seen as somehow autonomous and discontinuous in relation to the poetic or imagistic (Hillman), then we only allow for a securely marginal and mastered interaction with metaphors (see Lacapra, p. 21), or as Hillman (1979) suggests, a one-way traffic from the unconscious to consciousness and thus to heroic ego mastery. Speculative discourse is for Ricoeur a meta-language fully in control of its linguistic repertory (Lacapra 1980). It is in part this notion that led Lacapra and others (Derrida, 1972; Doran, 1980) to see Ricoeur's work as logocentric. According to Lacapra, Ricoeur's attempt to separate our philosophical discourse is a flat assertion, and his text is markedly metaphoric. The same might be said of any analytic discourse that removes itself from its imagistic ground and removes priority from it.

With Ricoeur as with traditional analysis, metaphor is reduced to an instrumental level, and so Lacapra asks: "How then can metaphor be alive?" This question echoes both the archetypalist and deconstructionist critiques. The problem Ricoeur and the traditional analyst face is whether interpretation can appear autonomous only to the extent that it breaks away from the spirit of language and deals only in domesticated or even dead metaphor. On the one hand, we can take the position that this break is essential to our human existence and at the very heart of language itself. This more traditional position has roots in the whole history of Western thought and in the priority of Logos and Mythos. On the other hand are those thinkers who would challenge this supposition and, with it, the tradition from which it comes. Representatives of these positions are seen in Ricoeur and traditional analysis on the one hand, and in Derrida and Hillman on the other.

The debate between the above positions has evolved in a couple of exchanges between Ricoeur and Derrida and can be traced in Derrida's piece entitled "White Mythology" (1972), a comment on this position in Ricoeur's work *The Rule of Metaphor* (1977), and a rejoinder in Derrida's "Retrait of Metaphor" (1978). It is not my intention here to rehearse the debate in these works, but only to open up some of the issues so as to see the dialogue within this philosophical context.

Concern with dead metaphor is shared by both archetypalists and deconstructionists. Derrida (1972) in "White Mythology" critically poses the problem of the losses and gains in the relationship between metaphor and concept. Derrida argues that when we move

to philosophical expression, metaphor dies. He concludes there that no systematic reflection on metaphor is really possible since, despite our best intentions, we must always speak in metaphors about metaphors. Archetypalist thought follows a similar line, suggesting that only image can ground image. Ricoeur challenges Derrida's notion of speculative discourse. For him, philosophical thinking can be an expression of living metaphor. The classical analyst would make the same point with regard to "interpretation." For Ricoeur, it is not only possible but essential, in that it is speculative discourse that allows us to see that understanding is something other than just finding images. Ricoeur states that if no metaphor is privileged, then neither is any forbidden. In this sense, the philosopher would be a kind of poetic interpreter and the poet a kind of philosophical interpreter. This position, if seen as a whole, might in principle not be far from the archetypalist's position; but in Ricoeur's case, the latter position does not seem to have the legitimacy of the former, nor metaphor the legitimacy of other modes of thought.

For Ricoeur, "it remains the categories of philosophical discourse and human reason and not the images, metaphors, and figures of language which allow the philosopher's metaphors to disclose being" (O'Hara, 1980, p. 339). For Ricoeur, when the philosopher thinks, it does not involve, as Derrida suggests, some other interplay of activities occurring behind the scene. From the analytic point of view, this statement suggests that there is a point at which the philosopher is free from any unconscious activity and has, as Jung might say, no shadow. The same might be suggested of the analyst's interpretation: once freed from

transference and personal complexes, there is objective intervention, as if interpretations can totally break away from the images in which they are rooted. So we have an image of philosophers and analysts no longer vulnerable to the unconscious, practicing a discrete and refined activity.

For Derrida, the above attitude reflects a drift toward idealism resulting from the "dissimulation of metaphorical origins." To move in the above way is to create a metaphysical edifice, which is based on a "trembling ground of double entendre." For Derrida, metaphysical statements need to be deconstructed, and in so doing, one exposes the "hollow traces and white spaces of dead metaphor" (Derrida, 1972; quoted by O'Hara, 1980, p. 324). Derrida's deconstruction opens up a trembling ground of poetic undecidables. Hillman too would have us move back from the positivistic constructions toward that unknown expressed in the poetics of image. For Derrida, metaphysics effaces in itself "that fabulous scene which brought it into being, and which yet remains active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, and invisible drawing covered over by Western metaphysics" (O'Hara, 1980, p. 324).

For Hillman as well, traditionalist thought loses touch with what is a fabulous scene, which he sees in terms of the archetypal image. The relationship between "image" and "trace" remains to be clarified; they are not necessarily similar, though both thinkers share an appreciation for that "underworld" (Hillman, 1979) which is not a world in the positivist sense, but a world of shades moving and stirring the soul.

The tension between traditionalist thought and its critics might be seen in

terms of Derrida's description of this tension in and through our Western philosophical heritage. Derrida says there is a recurrent interplay between a desire for firm conceptual mastery and the letting be of language, in which the hope of "presence" is continually in a living process of remaking its elusiveness, in a non-linear story (Lacpra, 1980, pp. 25-26).

Classical analytic theory and neo-traditionalist philosophers continue to lean toward conceptual mastery, while the deconstructionists and archetypalists move away from the positivism of presence and lean toward what Derrida calls the "trembling ground," following the trace of what has been constructed there. The archetypalist returns consistently to the image; the archetypalist slogan "stick to the image" does not refer to image as a positive ontology of soul, but to a poetic undecidable.

Lacpra (1980) suggests that Ricoeur's work lends credence to the metaphysical tradition, while the originality of Derrida (and Hillman) is to stress the marginal in tradition, that is, to rethink the border or threshold and to enter into more open contest with the dominant principle. Yet, to place the archetypalist or the deconstructionist in this position is not quite right. Neither of the above are in simple counterpoint to the classical vision. For the archetypalist, a "seeing through" the tension between itself and classical tradition is itself an archetypal story; and for Derrida, deconstructing classical thought is to live in a "difference" with it. For Derrida, this tension has been a tension that lies at the origin of Western logos, that is to say, a history that has produced in its entirety the philosophical difference between Mythos and Logos. To decon-

struct (Derrida) that history is also to see through it (Hillman).

For Derrida and for Hillman, no single metaphor grounds all others, no positive knowledge dominates, and only a continuing deconstruction or seeing through constitutes the work of philosophy or analysis. Both Derrida and Hillman suggest a continuity between metaphor and concept, man and animal, knowledge and instinct which is inadmissible in classical tradition (Derrida, quoted by Lacapra, 1980, p. 27). For both, something must be substituted for the classical notion of opposition, and the opposition of metaphor and concept. The traditionalist direction has led toward the kind of neotraditionalism richly developed in Ricoeur's position, or to a structuralism on the scientific end with its concept of binary sign as a guide to objectivity and a science of presence. The alternative position of both Derrida and Hillman suggests a grammatology and archetypal analysis, respectively, which forever transform the desire present in the objectivist question "what is." For Derrida, the "what is" as Arche gets erased, but not before letting itself be felt. The concepts of archetrace (Derrida) and archetype (Hillman) comply with both the necessity of being felt and that of erasure; both are necessary.

The analyst might profitably reevaluate the meaning of sign, symbol, and image in the light of the above debate, as well as take into consideration not only the history of Western philosophical thought with regard to the relationship between Mythos and Logos but also those issues that emerge within that context. It would be fruitful to investigate the relationship of Derrida to Hillman as "critics" of tradition, and to dialogue the relationship

between trace and image, archetrace and archetype, and the challenge this presents to both traditionalist and neotraditionalist thought. For Derrida, the "trace" is not only a disappearance of origin; within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow, the origin did not even disappear, that is, was never constituted except reciprocally by a non-origin.

Hillman also confirms that there are no longer absolutes. Rather, for a time, we stand in a certain archetypal constellation, and the grounding of any position is not through an objective reality but through another image. It is image that grounds image, which is felt as real and changes according to the archetypal constellation. Hillman (1977) states, for instance, that we make the dream "matter" by analogy, through another notion of matter extension: "By spreading the dream out, disclosing connections all over the place, an image takes on weight and can make me feel that I am walking on its ground, that I am everywhere in the dream rather than it is in me" (pp. 86-87). For Hillman, even the "ego" is a metaphor, which can ground or be grounded. Reason and structure is itself an image that can ground metaphor, but as metaphor, it can itself be grounded in the particularity of another image. Perhaps one has an option of moving with the tradition or to its margin? Or is it now the case that we have here a perennial issue which continues to deconstruct our philosophical and analytic ideas and complexifies our attempts at mastery?

I believe it is important when considering Ricoeur's contribution to Jungian analysis that we open our reflections to the many shades of both Jungian theory and hermeneutics, and this places Dr. Jones's contributions

into a larger philosophical and cultural framework and helps to situate his important contribution.

Notes

- 1) These sentiments were expressed to me in personal conversation.
- 2). The interest in this interface is expressed in Roger Brooke's work *Jung and Phenomenology* and more recently in his edited volume *Pathways into the Jungian World*, a book of essays whose central theme is the commonality and difference in phenomenology and analytic psychology.
- 3) This portion of my reflections is a partial and modified reprint of an article "Archetypal Psychology, Post Modernism and the Symbolic Function" (in *Methods: A Journal for Human Science*, Dallas: 1996).

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