

# Counterresponse to Stanton Marlan

By Alan Jones

Dr. Marlan shares with me an awareness of how important it is for Jungian discourse to dialogue with Ricoeur's work. However, we approach this dialogue from different angles. Dr. Marlan contextualizes Jungian hermeneutics and my reflections into a "larger philosophical and cultural framework," whereas my primary interest is in how Ricoeur's ideas fit into a larger Jungian context, for, as I state in my paper, "Jung repeatedly demonstrated that philosophical ideas abstractly represent psychological experience."

This is the perspective that orients my paper. The paper has several aims. One, noted by Dr. Marlan, is to further differentiate the meaning of teleology in Jungian hermeneutics by borrowing the connotations of Ricoeur's idea of "interpreting in front of the text." In my view, it is important to make this differentiation so as to avoid misunderstanding the futural connotations of Jung's idea of teleology as limiting to a single meaning what it means to ask the teleological question "Towards what aim?" In this case, teleology could be seen as only a method of interpreting the purposive and progressive meaning of symptoms and symbols.

Jung's understanding of teleology was broader, implying also the sense that the teleological perspective is a metaphorical representation in consciousness of the phenomenology of the collective unconscious. That is to say, the subject's experience of the collective unconscious is expressed in the act itself of asking the teleological question. Differentiating this metaphorical

aspect explicitly makes the link within the connotations of teleology to Jung's understanding that consciousness itself is a symbolic process.

To make this link, I identify teleology as an interpretive approach that by asking, "Towards what aim?" also implicitly asks, "How does the collective unconscious inform the experience of selfhood, of being the subject of a being?" Ricoeur's idea of interpreting in front of the text helps us to differentiate the second question within the futural connotations of teleology. Ricoeur's idea of interpreting in front of the text aids us to see that in our hermeneutics teleology addresses the problem of identifying aspects of the experiential phenomenology of the collective unconscious in clinical process.

To put this another way, conceptualizing how the future operates to inform the present manifests a Jungian anthropology. Jung's teleological perspective embodies how his understanding of the paradoxical dimensions of psyche answers the question "Who is man?" The teleological orientation, then, expresses the distinguishing supposition of Jungian hermeneutics, that selfhood is an incarnation. In the paper, I link the teleological perspective to the symbolism of incarnation, because this symbolism of incarnation best amplifies the temporal meanings of teleology's futural connotations.

Herein lies the primary aim of my paper: to demonstrate, through interpreting excerpts from analytic texts, a methodological approach that combines Jung's teleological orientation with

Ricoeur's idea of interpreting in front of the text. In this approach, the analytic text is understood as both a purposive- and progressive-oriented method, as well as a metaphorical representation of the union of the immanent and transcendent within the subject.

Dr. Marlan mentions several issues that he feels are potential shadow aspects to the approach I discuss. His concerns arise from his attention to three central elements in Jungian interpretive theory and practice. One is about maintaining the tension between the reductive and the teleological, another deals with process, and a third is a concern that my approach to teleology comes into proximity to the territory of inflation, of ego-self identification. A close review of what I stated in my paper will address these concerns.

The underlying premise of my discussion is that teleology is a direct point of contact between Jungian hermeneutics and Ricoeur's hermeneutic philosophy because teleology's progressive orientation, that is, its towards-which futural perspective, is analogous to Ricoeur's concept of *in front of the text*. Ricoeur's idea of interpreting in front of the text allows us a particular way to conceptualize a not-yet future operating in the present without any connotations of a temporal prior, a before, a behind. In this perspective the present is formed by what pulls it from the not-yet future rather than what pushes it from the cause-and-effect links from the past, which is the reductive-developmental perspective.

This sense of the future operating in the present does not merely ask us to suspend the idea of the chain of cause-and-effect determinism, it actually asks us to suspend the usual sense of the idea of determinism itself. Thinking the

future's operation in the present means thinking of the present as not being determined! By "present" here, I mean the current constellations and configuration of the personality. "Not being determined" references, then, a dimension of the subject that is not constituted by formative events in childhood. It is a dimension of the subject that is not constituted at all, nor determined, nor formed, as these verbs connote causality and thus a link to the past. A link connecting the progressive-intent meaning of teleology to its metaphorical expression of the phenomenology of the collective unconscious is needed here.

From this point of view, the teleological perspective is a metaphorizing of consciousness itself—what Jung means by the symbolic attitude—revealing the experiential sense of the collective unconscious. In addition, teleological interpretations in front of the text construct metaphors of time to represent this experience. From in front of the text, we perceive a second narrative inscribed in the analytic text. Interpreting this text in metaphors of the subject's experience of time, we express a domain of the subject that is not addressed by a reductive-causal perspective. Through these metaphors, we see that this domain of the subject is always whole; and these metaphors portray the subject in images that connote a tension within it between immanence and transcendence.

Interpretations in front of the text are demonstrations of Jung's seminal understanding that extended the sense of the empirical into the realm of what is experientially subjective. Thus, these metaphors of time also extend our empathic gaze to a site within the experiencing subject where the sole concern is the existential concern about being in

time. Following Jung's insights, interpreting in front of the text reveals that here the subject, also to be designated by the personal pronoun "I" and its cognate "myself," is "the being who is time," who articulates its own undergoing of incarnation in the second narrative of the analytic text. Teleology allows us to reference the subject who is "I-and-other-I."

Dr. Marlan's response has given me the opportunity to clarify an important distinction left implied in my paper. This is a distinction between my use of "immanent" and "personal." Both of these terms refer to sites within the experiential field of "I" and "myself." In brief, the personal dimension within the subjective experience of "I" is constituted by life experiences, and is the subject matter of causal-developmental theory. It is the first-person voice of one's personal-history narrative, the subject of the narrative unity of the arcing life span: the one who is linked to the child who was, but also linked to the not-yet that one can become. The personal "I" is the concern of the reductive causal-developmental perspective.

The immanent dimension of the subject, on the other hand, is in the gaze of teleology. This site within the subject is not constituted by life experiences, although it is a site full of suffering and desire in the undergoing of these experiences. It is the site of the "emergent self," a term suggesting an ahistorical and noncausal source of the subject that requires conceiving of and describing the genealogy of the subject with a lineage that does not exceed the present. "Emergent self" designates the horizon of the event of a coming into being, with only the weakest reference to the from-where that the horizon borders. It is a site of an experiential paradox so

profound that the tension of opposites within it requires equally extraordinary images to apprehend it, such as Jung's amplification in his discussion of the Gnostic Basilides's remarkable idea of "the non-existent God" who is also the ground of being (*Aion*).

Here, the fact of being and the need to know the meaning of being are one and the same. The second narrative is a story of the existential meanings, not the facts, of lived-life, narratives of the immanent subject's existential concerns expressed in motifs of temporality. The examples I discuss in my paper, interpreting "bad traffic" and "I guess" as representing the subject of a second narrative inscribed in two brief analytic texts, illustrate that the immanent subject can express itself in limitless variations.

Dr. Marlan is concerned that interpreting in front of the text may overlook that a content can be overdetermined, needing an approach that holds the tension between the reductive and the teleological perspectives, lest "there is the loss of integrated understanding." This tension was, in fact, maintained in the analysis of the middle-aged male patient I refer to in my paper. At one stage he saw and worked through the glass-coffin image as an image of abandonment. (*"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."*) He also saw in the image how he transcended this abandonment in his childhood, its purposive and progressive meaning, as well as an image of his potential and growing autonomy. (*"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!")*

Maintaining the tension between the reductive and the progressive perspectives, however, is not the only objective of interpreting in front of the text. These interpretations also maintain a different tension, between the immanent and transcendent. Teleological interpretations, from in front of the text, are metaphors of that dimension of the subject where lived-life is the tension between the finite and the infinite, between the immanent and the transcendent. When we interpret in front of the text, a union of the immanent and transcendent dimensions of the subject emerges.

This began to occur when my patient's relationship to the glass-coffin vision shifted. He arrived at a position, as it were, in front of the text. From here, the glass-coffin vision took on the dimension of the second narrative within which the subject expressed not an unfolding of a development but an undergoing of an incarnation process. *(He saw the image of the glass coffin in the infinite universe representing... eternal time as the body of the self....As a star himself, he belonged to the composition of a Universal Being....It became a figure of his being...he experienced thoughts of eternity symbolically, as a mode of his own being.)*

In interpreting the finite nested within the infinite as two different levels of actuality, interpretations in front of the text evoke a nonrational experience, a process of coming to know that one always was and will be one's undivided self. A teleological interpretation in front of the text identifies a paradoxical image of the subject revealing itself in the second narrative. It is a subject with a lifetime that is both mortal

(in a glass coffin evoking the feeling of "I will never ever live again") and eternal ("belonging to the composition of a Universal Being"). The interpretations in front of the text anchor the subject on a narrative grid whose temporal dimensions are not limited by the birth-death bracketing of personal history. Rather they anchor the subject in the entirety of time. In other words, they are metaphors in the register of time of the experiential phenomenology of the collective unconscious.

Dr. Marlin rightly points out that there is a potential shadow side to working with the second narrative in the analytic text: the "risk of inflation, a move from ego-Self alienation to ego-Self union in which it is easy to begin to imagine the patient as secure and even cured." There is then, he adds, "danger in fixing the telos as a literal accomplishment, rather than as a moment in an ongoing dialectic and transformative process." From my point of view, inflation, and the more descriptively nuanced "fixing the telos as literal," are also effects of one-sidedly focusing on affect and imagery as expressing only the phenomenology of the collective unconscious in the clinical material. In a sense, the personal is split from the immanent, or the immanent is seen in the personal as a content that can be identified with, rather than as a metaphor of a mode of consciousness and a mode of being in time. Under these conditions, there is no possibility of structural change.

It was very different for the patient I discuss. He underwent an extended process, tracked over many long months, to arrive at the point where he understood the glass-coffin image as a metaphor of a nonconstituted dimension of himself as subject. This was not

a once-and-for-all insight, and it grew from the type of ongoing dialectic process that Dr. Marlan refers to, a movement between alienation and belonging that, in fact, led to what he calls "a complex adult sense of feeling both alienation and relatedness to a larger sense of life."

What occurred out of our work to interpret the vision from in front of the text was not a sense of a fixed or literalized telos. What he embodied from the visions was not a cure, but rather a standpoint for change. The feeling that emerged was the experiential sense of a union of immanence and transcendence. It was this feeling that sustained his resolve to change his old patterns of engaging life. It was this feeling, in the face of a profound sorrow evoked by realizing his time-bound mortality, of being torn from and adrift in eternity, that supported his conviction to "break heimarmene."

This transformation was possible precisely because the patient did not take the teleological sense of his vision literally. He came to a symbolic understanding of the elements of the vision as metaphors of the subject. This was indicated, for example, by his understanding that not only the motif of the infinite universe but even his own terror of the void were personifications in his consciousness of the subjective feeling of identity "that had no other way of expressing the scale of its being."

This way of understanding his vision, the metaphorical sense of being a star himself, did not, in my view, manifest inflation, an identification of the ego with the self. Although in the beginning, as he engaged the underlying abandonment depression behind the highly idealized images of himself and his mother configured in the narra-

tive of his childhood, he did swing between emotional intoxication and despairing alienation, it is nonetheless preferable to characterize the predominant emotional process during this time as one of dismemberment/embodiment, rather than inflation/deflation.

In time, this process shifted from being primarily a reductive analysis to one that integrated more and more a teleological perspective from in front of the text. In this way, maternal absence, desperate loss, and defensive idealizations could at the same time be reconfigured into a second narrative of being in time. The feelings themselves became for him metaphors, mirrored in the vision, revealing the process of the incarnating immanent subject. In other words, he could recognize that seeing the contents of the vision as symbolic was a reflection on consciousness itself, and he could experience consciousness itself as symbolic.

He had, as it were, in his own process an experiential sense of Jung's insight that consciousness is a state of immanence, a mode of embodying the transcendent and transpersonal dimension of being. His experiences suggest an association to Jung's remark in *Memories, Dreams, and Reflections* that "conscious man completes God's creation," and they might also have been amplified by what Jung refers to in *Aion* when he discusses the alchemist Dorn's remark "not who but what."

I choose to designate the feeling of the union of immanence and transcendence in the subject by the expression "I-and-other-I." This term means no more than what Jung represents by describing the individuation process in terms of the center of the personality shifting from the ego to the self. Jung is expressing that the site of the transcen-

dent subject is *experientially* identical with the site of the immanent subject, the site designated by “I” and “myself.” The strongest implications of Jung’s thought here are (1) that depth psychology is the heir to the discourse in myths, rituals, symbols and metaphysics in which the subject has sought to express its concern as a being-in-time, and to reveal its paradoxical immanent/transcendent nature, (2) that by extending the horizons of the empirical into the experientially subjective, Jung brought this discourse to issues of clinical method, and (3) that Jung’s thought provides the potential to move beyond patriarchal identity structures.

The term “I-and-other-I” suggests this potential in Jungian thought to

move to a postpatriarchal understanding of identity. This term differs in an important way from “I-Thou,” a term that is common currency for identifying the dynamic ego-self relationship. “I-Thou,” even with its strong connotation of *agape*, from my point of view still signifies the patriarchal sense of a necessary barrier within the subject against the full union of the immanent and transcendent in the experiential field of subjectivity designated by “I.” “I-and-other-I” envisions with Jung a postpatriarchal identity. It also signifies that Jung’s oeuvre can be read as a witness to this emerging identity, a vast teleological in-front-of-the-text interpretation of the contemporary personality.