



Panel:

The transcendent function in society

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Abstract: The Jungian analysts who participated in the writing of this paper¹ explicitly or implicitly address issues of social and political stasis, retrogression and change via their particular usages of the concept of the transcendent function.

Singer proposes that the transcendent function is a term that is usually applied to individuals in whom symbolic material appears that suggests the reconciling of opposites, leading to psycho-spiritual growth. He also looks at the notion of the transcendent function as it can appear in a similar way in the collective psyche. In addition, he gives attention to the opposite phenomenon—what might be called the descendent function—as it appears in the collective psyche and its leadership, wherein symbolic material can create the division of groups of people into opposites, mobilizing destructive rather than transformative experience.

Meador states that Jung designated the mediating process of assimilating unconscious images and ideas into consciousness as the transcendent function. Just as this synthesizing process can produce insight in the individual, it can also be applied to changes in collective society. Embedded collective assumptions tend to shift when opposites collide, as they did, for example, in the turmoils of the 1960s. Her contribution focuses on the recent revolution in racial and sexual attitudes as the product of a collective struggle between certain ingrained social mores from the past and conflicting new points of view.

Samuels' conclusion is that the concept of the transcendent function has little value with respect to political problems. His contribution focuses on: (i) The limitations of using ideas (such as the transcendent function) derived from analysis with individuals in furtherance of an understanding of social and political phenomena. (ii) The specific problem of a lack of credible psycho-political models for social progress and regress—he argues that the transcendent function is not useful in this regard. (iii) The question of political aggression, violence and conflict in society is explored from the standpoint of the transcendent function so as to investigate its possible role in the management of political conflict. Samuels severely criticizes what he terms 'triangulation' and 'hyper-reflection' on the part of analysts who engage with political debates and issues. (iv) Leadership is examined from the standpoint of the transcendent function which, again, does not seem pertinent. Rather, new discoveries in family psychology about the role of the father have greater possibilities as a basis for new thinking about leadership.

Key words: conflict, cultural complex, leadership, politics, race, sexuality, society, transcendent function, violence

¹ The papers here are published in the chronological order in which they were presented.

Race and sex in a lifetime

Betty De Shong Meador, *San Diego, USA*

Race relations and sex. Can anyone think of two more powerful forces in society that as a child and an adolescent forced a person to confront, explore, conform to, rebel against, hide, lie about, grapple with? In my own situation in north Texas in the '30s and '40s, there was no apparent struggle. Black people were clearly ostracized from white society, and only white men enjoyed sexual freedom. From the way grown-ups talked, only white men experienced sexual arousal at all. There were no questions. The matters were settled.

The contrast between a serene child's world and the costumed expectations of success in Texas white society, whose standards were set by recently rich oil men and their wives, created a difficult chasm to manoeuvre. Until recently, there was scant respect or support for the poor of both sexes, or for white women and girls, to be unique, to follow a pathway that broke with the values set by the wealthy élite. Until recently, there was no room whatsoever in the mainstream for any person of colour. Even in the 1960s a department store in San Antonio, where we were visiting relatives, had two drinking fountains beside the public restrooms, labelled 'White' and 'Coloured'. I told my puzzled children, 'Maybe one has coloured water', so ashamed I was to tell them the truth.

Given the cultural evolution we have experienced since then, it is little wonder that many people rejoice at Barack Obama's election as president of the United States. *New York Times* columnist Frank Rich wrote, 'On the morning after a black man won the White House, American's tears of catharsis gave way to unadulterated joy'. The two legged monster who had defined social reality for such a long time was permanently crippled. I am talking about the unnatural distortion of society's attitudes in the United States towards African-Americans and toward women's sexuality. With Obama's election, at least one of his legs had been gravely injured.

Forgive us Americans who keep bringing up the subject of our new president. We are still a little giddy. In spite of Obama's tongue-in-cheek protests that he was not born in a manger, some of us still don't believe him. The seeming miracle—that a black man could be elected president—evolved within the past forty to fifty years, a period that encompasses the lives of a majority of the country's adults. While the injustices of racial segregation simmered from the time of the end of the Civil War, emotions surrounding this disgrace boiled over during the period of the 1960s, and radical cultural changes finally took place.

The resulting transformation grew out of a clash of opposites, leading to an eventual social evolution. Psychologically, this evolution is an example of the transcendent function operating on a large cultural scale.

The forces that brought about these changes naturally had profound effects on individuals. Many of us who lived through the turmoil of the '60s were torn between recognition of the flagrant injustices of segregation over against the clearly articulated values of the white middle class. My personal story reflects this evolution in consciousness as opposite forces interacted in an individual's psyche, precipitating the integrative process of the transcendent function.

I have lived through changes in the culture that would have been unimaginable to my parents or grandparents. I was born in a mid-sized north Texas town on the Oklahoma border. My father was born in Paris, Texas, the second of four brothers whose parents both died before the boys were full adults. As with many young men at that time, his education ended with eighth grade. My mother lived in Collierville, a small town outside of Memphis, Tennessee. After graduating from what was then called Normal School, she taught in a one-room country schoolhouse.

My grandmother, my mother's mother, wrote this note shortly before she died: 'My name is Lena Gilliland Harrell. I was born the day Abraham Lincoln was shot'. While race relations were set in stone in north Texas, the discrimination against African-Americans in the deep south was even more horrendous, cruel, and dehumanizing.

My father, like all of his brothers, became a successful businessman. When my parents married in 1925, he had a job as a 'window trimmer' in a small department store. I have photos of elaborate window displays he created, designs that won prizes in local contests.

My parents married late for that era—my mother was 30 and my father, 32. I often wondered why, particularly in relation to my mother. Was there a hidden scandal? If there had been, if something had happened in her life, whatever it may have been was vastly overshadowed by her half-sister, my aunt Betty, who deserted her husband and their four children in order to marry the disgracefully divorced town Squire, owner of the Collierville lumber company and half the rest of the town's businesses. Wiley, the distinguished Squire, with his wavy grey hair parted in the middle, was summarily evicted from the Board of Stewards of the Methodist Church and banished from all church functions. Ignorant of this as a child, when we visited their lovely brick home with two breathtaking bathrooms, one with pink fixtures and one with green, I wondered why no one ever came by to see them, no one ever called, nor did Betty and Wiley ever go anywhere in town together.

Willie Mae, a black woman, presided over Aunt Betty's kitchen, and her husband, R.T., kept the garden and drove Wiley and Betty wherever they wanted to go. Willie Mae was a short woman, a bit roly-poly, not unlike my Aunt Betty. She had a fascinating need to shake her head frequently. I realize now this was an

involuntary tic. She was a wonderful cook. She made biscuits every morning, made cakes and cookies to perfection on an elaborate wood-fired stove. She called me 'Miss Betty' or 'Bets'. She was very kind.

A couple of summers ago, my brother and I and our spouses went back to Collierville just to see the place where as little children we had spent so many summers. Almost nothing had changed. All the people we had known had died, but Wiley's filling station at the corner of the square was still the local hang out, run by grand-nieces and nephews. The sign above the station was faded, having hung there since the 1920s. We remembered it well. Young men still sat on three-legged stools in the greasy driveway in front of the office. We expected the gasoline to be pumped by hand, as in the olden days, but it came out automatically when you pressed the nozzle. I swear that was the only improvement the station had undergone. Everyone we met was a relative of ours, by blood or by marriage. Uncle Wiley's descendants ran the lumber yard, the hardware store, the filling station, and one family even lived in the lovely brick house with the pink and the green bathrooms.

I asked one of the relatives what ever happened to Willie Mae and R.T. 'O, they died, Honey. Willie Mae's daughter, Willie, lives a few blocks away in a house Wiley gave her'. I never knew Willie Mae had a daughter. Maybe I was not allowed to play with her as a child because she was a coloured girl. She must be close to my age now.

We immediately followed the directions to Willie's house. I jumped out of the car and knocked on the door. A middle aged or older woman greeted me. We almost fell into each other's arms when we realized our long ago connection. 'So, have you been here all this time', I asked? 'Oh no', Willie said. 'I've been in California'.

So that's it, I thought. And later, 'That's why Obama can be president, because the Willie's of this world went to California, a woman who in the 1930s and '40s was essentially the child of slaves.

About once a year Betty and Wiley, in their large black Buick town car, drove to Texas to visit us. They were driven by R.T. in his black chauffeur's suit and cap with Willie Mae by his side. We never knew their last names. I wonder now where Willie Mae and R.T. slept while Wiley and Betty stayed in our house. Certainly not in a motel. 'Coloured town' – I'm using a euphemism for what it was usually called – was way on the other side of downtown, literally across the tracks of the important east/west railroad that ran through Dallas to Los Angeles. They must have stayed with Erma and Ira, also black, who lived in an apartment above our garage.

Erma and Ira Rice, and Ira's brother, Bill, lived there for as long as I can remember. They had a grown daughter, Hazel. Hazel had gold stars outlined on her two front teeth. She lived in Coloured Town, but often came to visit. As a child, I gazed at Hazel in awe. She was the first noticeably sexy young woman I had ever seen. I thought she was beautiful. Now as my adult self, steeped in the mythology of the outrageous Sumerian deity Inanna, in a jolt of insight I

thought, ‘Hazel worshiped Inanna!’ Of course! Who else would have inspired her to implant golden stars on her two front teeth? Inanna WAS the two bright stars that alternately appear in the morning and the evening. Who else would have guided her to enjoy – yes – revel in the audacious pleasures of woman’s sexuality? Inanna was the goddess of prostitutes. Her earthly devotee, the High Priestess Enheduanna, sweet-talked Inanna out of a bad mood by saying, ‘I have readied your room in the tavern’, the domain of prostitutes.

In fact, Hazel could not have known about Inanna. Most of Inanna’s stories were translated and published only in the latter half of the 20th century. I discovered her in the 1980s when she appeared in a dream in the shape of her most ancient cuneiform sign, a post of tied reeds that curve at the top into a head-like circle.²

One wild night Hazel was stabbed in the back seven times and almost died. Hazel fought her attacker like a wild cat, one of Inanna’s ritual animals. Who else but the warrior Inanna, who led kings into battle, would have said to Hazel, ‘GO GIRL!’ when some dude came at her with a knife? Hazel lived to tell the tale.

Erma, Hazel’s mother, was a large woman. She usually sat at the window looking down over our driveway. She was like the Sphinx – or a large comforting lap watching over me. I loved Erma. I often climbed the dark, narrow stairs to their apartment and visited their mysterious, dark rooms. Bill, Ira’s brother, was the cook. He made brains and eggs, and always filled a plate for me. Brains and eggs were my favourite. My mother never cooked brains and eggs.

The flat concrete driveway below Erma’s window was a perfect place for me to perform for her. Mostly I tap danced, showing off all the elaborate steps I was learning in tap-dancing class. Erma was a large, quiet presence, an introvert like myself, always there. She watched and applauded the shows I would create. In my years of analysis, I often dreamed of Erma, dreams that took place in their apartment above the garage. In the final dream related to Erma, the apartment was starkly empty. I walked toward the window where she always sat. There in her spot was a small table, and on the table was a vase with one perfectly shaped deep blue iris.

In the dream the apartment has been transformed, emptied, cleaned out. A single blue iris occupies the space where Erma sat. The overlapping petals of the iris, its deep interior, suggest the natural beauty of a woman’s vulva. The many dreams of Erma and her apartment recount a struggle to integrate the dark shadow, the outcasts of the dominant, conforming society, while the singular beauty of the iris, its place of prominence before the window, is an iconic tribute to the beauty and import of woman’s sexuality. The integrative process of the

² See Betty D. Meador, *Princess, Priestess Poet – The Sumerian Temple Hymns of Enheduanna* (2009), and *Inanna – Lady of Largest Heart* (2000); also, *Uncursing the Dark* (1992), all containing my translations of Inanna myth and poetry and the work of the first author of record, Enheduanna.

transcendent function allows the constellation of a more authentic self to find meaning and expression.

The election of a black man for president, not just any black man, but this deeply thoughtful, soulful man with the twinkling eyes, his gentle arm in easy embrace around the shoulder of strangers or friends, his quick humour, his clear access to suffering – his own and humanity’s – is a small miracle, a gift from the gods. Is Obama post-racial? I hope not. We have too much to heal merely to sweep the past under the rug. I have to learn to take a silent, conscious step: acknowledge my own cultural complex – white privilege – attempt to set it aside. To say we are all alike mutes a difficult lesson I must learn – to bear the anxiety of our difference. Such is the possibility presented by the transcendent function, that we bear the anxiety of our differences.

So what allows us to dare to hope? What is raising the daring sense of possibility we feel in Obama’s presidency. Tom Singer named it for me. ‘He carries the transcendent function!’ O, yes, O yes, I thought. That is it. Obama embodies in his being the evolving stage of reconciliation that occurs when the warring, irreconcilable, stone-faced opposite forces have long outlived their usefulness, have worn themselves out, have worn down their archaic arguments. Then the great whale of the world psyche flips her tail, turns over her great bulk, enters new fertile waters, swims back up the thousand miles to her feeding grounds, and re-fertilizes the life in her womb.

The transcendent function and cultural complexes: a working hypothesis

Thomas Singer, *San Francisco*

Introduction

For some time, I have been thinking about how insights of analytical psychology can be more useful in understanding social, political, and cultural aspects of our lives in which the collective psyche is the currency of exchange. Complex theory—one of our tradition's most useful clinical concepts in the study of individual psychology—has offered a particularly fruitful way to think about the nature of conflicts between different groups of people. In this panel presentation, I want to consider how one can think about the transcendent function in relationship to the slowly crystallizing theory of cultural complexes.

Cultural complexes can be defined as emotionally charged aggregates of ideas and images that tend to cluster around an archetypal core and are shared by individuals within an identified collective. They accumulate experiences that validate their point of view and create a store house of self-affirming, ancestral memories which are based on historical experiences that have taken root in the collective psyche of a group and in the psyches of the individual members of a group. The complexes of a given culture are built up over time and multi-generational experience, some of which have been traumatic. Deeply embedded tribal memories, patterned behaviours in the form of rituals and strong beliefs based on repetitive experiences are the stuff of cultural complexes. They function in an involuntary, autonomous fashion and tend to affirm a simplistic point of view that replaces more everyday ambiguity and uncertainty with fixed, often self-righteous attitudes to the world. As such, cultural complexes can be thought of as the fundamental building blocks of a truly inner sociology which contain an abundance of information and misinformation about the structures of societies. Perhaps most potent, when cultural complexes are activated, very primitive, destructive affect states of fear, hatred and murderous rage—as well as more positive affect states of joy and sharing—are generated in individuals and groups of people. These affect states are intensified exponentially in the shared emotional life of groups (Singer 2009a, 2009b; Singer & Kaplinsky 2010).

It is challenging enough to describe and understand how cultural complexes express themselves in group and individual behaviour, much less to have any real insight as to what might be palliative for their more destructive effects. But, in a paper I wrote in 2006, I started to get an inkling of how to go about thinking

about a healing process that occasionally seems to occur spontaneously in what otherwise appears to be horrendous and endless strife based on the cultural complexes of race, ethnicity, religion, tribe and gender. I wrote at that time:

Describing deeply entrenched cultural complexes is a bit like trying to diagnose an illness of the collective psyche. And, it seems as though describing the illness leads to an automatic question—what is the cure? The standard Jungian answer to the cure for a complex is that one has to drink it to its dregs; one has to suffer it repeatedly until finally its toxic effects are digested and transformed in some alchemy of the psyche. If that is the case, Muslims, Jews and Christians have been at this digestive process for a long time, with little evidence of a ‘cure’. Blacks and whites have been at it for some three hundred and fifty years in the United States; there has been some progress, but no real cure.

Still, one should try to imagine ways in which heated up cultural complexes might get resolved. Sometimes, it seems as though relief from a cultural complex occurs by the possession simply running its course like a fever—like McCarthyism in the 1950s or perhaps neo-conservatism in the past decade. In that case, the cure—or at least a respite—is simply a matter of time, of waiting for the activated archetypal defenses of the group spirit to fall back into the cultural unconscious as they lose psychic energy. On other rare occasions, however, a charismatic leader emerges on the scene and in his or her personhood carries the transcendent function for the collective psyche that points to a real healing or cure. It is as if there is a perfect fit between the experiences of a ‘chosen’ individual which resonates with the experiences and needs of a group or even conflicting groups, pointing to a previously unimagined way to transcend roadblocks to resolution—the cure. Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu come to mind as being the kind of leaders who have embodied a transcendent spirit for the collective psyche that leads to the vision of a real cure of cultural conflicts. Perhaps Barack Obama has the potential to embody in his being a transcendent function that might point to real reconciliation and healing of the entrenched cultural complexes that divide Black and White communities in America . . .

Some gifted individuals may have the ability to experience consciously the cultural complexes that divide groups into warring factions. They have the capacity to hold these cultural complexes in their psyche in such a way that an authentic experience of the transcendent comes alive in them, pointing to a resolution of otherwise intractable, emotional group conflicts. They actually carry the transcendent function for the group, with its potential for healing at the level of the collective psyche. In the meantime, most of us muddle along with the reality that many of these cultural conflicts are well beyond our individual efforts as individuals to find our way to healing at the collective level of these profound wounds.

(Singer 2006, pp. 26–27)

That’s how I imagined it in 2006 and here are the questions that I would like to frame. What do we mean when we use the term ‘transcendent function’ in the context of the collective psyche? Can we appropriately use the term ‘transcendent function’ in the context of group psychology at all? How can we recognize the appearance of the transcendent function’ in a person or a group movement in society and differentiate it from what I have come to think of as the ‘descendent function’ that masquerades as a transcendent function—as in the obvious case of Hitler.

The experience of the transcendent function in the collective psyche

I imagine the collective psyche as being like the air we breathe or the water we swim in or even like the radioactive background that saturates the earth. The collective psyche subtly and not so subtly permeates for better or worse almost every aspect of our waking and sleeping lives. As Jung says:

As I see it the psyche is a world in which the ego is contained. Maybe there are fishes out there who believe that they contain the sea. We must rid ourselves of this habitual illusion of ours.

(Jung 1929, para. 75)

Even individuated Jungians breathe, swim in and are saturated by the collective psyche. What happens when the transcendent function appears in the collective psyche (if it does in fact appear)?

I will leave the gift of describing the emotional experience of the transcendent function in the broader collective through one's personal life to Betty Meador who can do that better than anyone I know. But, into Betty's mix, I want to add one personal note: the excitement generated by the hope for the transcendent function to appear can literally be equated to the 'yearning for the second coming' and any realization of such hope results in the sensation that a vast dark cloud that has subliminally suffused all life has suddenly lifted and one can actually believe in the potential to realize the 'summum bonum' or 'the greatest good'—as Thomas Aquinas called it—for much of the human community. In short, a collective experience of the transcendent function can rekindle one's faith in humanity.

Think of the following quote from Jung, not in terms of the individual psyche about which he was writing, but in terms of how we might imagine the transcendent function operating at the level of the collective psyche:

If we can successfully develop the function which I have called transcendent, the disharmony ceases and we can then enjoy the favourable side of the unconscious. The unconscious then gives us all the encouragement and help that a bountiful nature can shower upon man. It holds possibilities which are locked away from the conscious mind, for it has at its disposal all subliminal psychic contents, all those things which have been forgotten or overlooked, as well as the wisdom and experience of uncounted centuries which are laid down in its archetypal organs.

(Jung 1928, para. 196)

I would like to suggest that one way to imagine how the transcendent function works in the collective psyche is to think of it as bringing to life from the collective unconscious 'all the encouragement and help that a bountiful nature can shower upon man'. And this 'bountiful nature' includes the possibility that any number of the cultural complexes that divide groups and nations from one another around issues of race, gender, ethnicity, the environment, international armaments, and multiple other issues can be resolved or at least mitigated in their negative impact.

I want to briefly give three examples of the occurrence of this phenomenon. I want to suggest that the transcendent function can appear in the collective psyche at a very specific moment in time and also that this breakthrough moment in history may become a process over time revealing the ongoing activity of the transcendent function. The transcendent function, then, occurs both as a moment in time and as a process over time. It can be carried for the collective by an exceptional individual or it can emerge spontaneously in a group of otherwise ordinary citizens—or both. Each of the following examples of activity of the transcendent function has served to mark a shift in the course of potent cultural complexes with multi-generational histories:

1. The proclamation of the Assumption of the Virgin into the Trinity: the cultural complex of the relationship between men and women

Several years ago, our current Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, Nancy Pelosi came to a small Jungian conference that we held on the theme of ‘The Vision Thing’ in which we explored the relationship between mythology, politics and psychology. Pelosi was a bit out of her element on the stormy day that she spoke to the small assembly of Jungians at the Bolinas Rod and Boat Club (a conference by the way which included Andrew Samuels and Betty Meador)—but she did cite one memorable event in her early life that established common ground with the Jungians. She recalled first hearing about Jung when she was a student at a Catholic high school in Baltimore in the late 1950s. What she remembered was Jung’s widely quoted statements about the psychological importance of the papal declaration on the Assumption of the Virgin. Jung wrote about that breakthrough of the transcendent function:

The dogmatizing of the Assumption[of Mary]... expresses a renewed hope for the fulfilment of that yearning for peace which stirs deep down in the soul, and for a resolution of the threatening tension between the opposites. Everyone shares this tension and everyone experiences it in his individual form of unrest, the more so the less he sees any possibility of getting rid of it by rational means. It is no wonder, therefore, that the hope, indeed the expectation of divine intervention arises in the collective unconscious and at the same time in the masses. The papal declaration has given comforting expression to that yearning.

(Jung 1954, para. 754)

No one would say that the papal declaration of the Assumption of the Virgin was cause for celebration in the streets around the world when it was first announced. And nobody at the time accused it of being the activity of the ‘transcendent function’. But, reading Jung’s description of the importance of the papal declaration inescapably leads one now to think of it in terms of the ‘transcendent function’—especially in the words ‘her position satisfies a renewed hope of the yearning for peace which stirs deep down in the soul, and for a resolution of the threatening tension between opposites’.

In his singling out the dogmatizing of the Assumption of the Virgin as one of the most important moments of the 20th century, we all know now that Jung was talking about a new relation to the feminine and to the anima in the collective psyche. Nancy Pelosi came from a traditional political family where the men ran for office and the women passed out their leaflets, but she related that after reading what Jung had to say about the Assumption, she told herself, 'If Mary can go to Heaven, I can go to Congress'. That same yearning for equality and acceptance has been realized in many ways over the last fifty years of a profoundly shifting relationship to the feminine in the individual psyches of men and women, in the relationships between men and women, and between men and men. One can think of the papal announcement as the *moment* of the appearance in the collective psyche of the transcendent function and the last half century as the *process* of that transcendent function doing its work in the collective psyche. Just as Jung helped usher in an elevated position for the Virgin in the 1950s, it would only be a matter of a few decades before Betty Meador would add a slightly more earthy Inanna to the mix of the godhead pie.

2. Barack Obama's 2008 Speech on Race in Philadelphia: the cultural complex of race in America

Activated cultural complexes have potent, negative affects and stereotypical thinking/imagery embedded in them. They stimulate very old (sometimes centuries if not millennia) memories, fears, hatreds, and traumas. Here is how Obama put it in Philadelphia:

[A] legacy of defeat was passed on to future generations [of blacks] – those young men and increasingly young women who we see standing on street corners or languishing in our prisons, without hope or prospects for the future . . . For the men and women of Reverend Wright's generation, the memories of humiliation and doubt and fear have not gone away; nor has the anger and the bitterness of those years . . . In fact, a similar anger exists within segments of the white community. Most working and middle-class white Americans don't feel that they have been particularly privileged by their race . . . They are anxious about their futures and feel their dreams slipping away. So when they are told to bus their children to a school across town; when they hear that an African American is getting an advantage in landing a good job or a spot in a good college because of an injustice they themselves never committed; when they're told that their fears about crime in urban neighbourhoods are somehow prejudiced, resentment builds over time.

(Obama 2008)

Most politicians pander to the tensions inherent in cultural complexes by playing to one side of the opposites or the other—whether it be around abortion, race, global warming, gay marriage, or most other divisive issues. Obama is the rare politician who seems able to identify the opposites, make them conscious in a clear, direct language and identify with the powerful feelings on both sides of the conflict that allows one to imagine a new way in which to resolve them. This

is the only antidote to the toxic influence of ‘us vs. them’ dynamics that I can see truly working in social and political life. In the Jungian tradition, we call the appearance of this phenomenon in individuals the transcendent function. It is a symbolic attitude, out of which grows a new way in which to hold previously polarized opposites. Listen to Obama’s words from Philadelphia with the idea of the transcendent function in mind:

The Declaration of Independence was stained by this nation’s original sin of slavery, a question that divided the colonies and brought the convention to a stalemate until the founders chose to allow the slave trade to continue for at least twenty more years, and to leave any final resolution to future generations . . . I chose to run for the presidency at this moment in history because I believe deeply that we cannot solve the challenges of our time unless we solve them together – unless we perfect our union by understanding that we may have different stories, but we hold common hopes; that we may not look the same and we may not have come from the same place, but we all want to move in the same direction – towards a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

(Obama 2008, *ibid.*)

The symbolic attitude that we Jungians regard as the expression of the ‘transcendent function’ was most explicitly expressed in Obama’s March 18, 2008 Philadelphia speech on race in which he was able to probe both black and white fears and resentments in a non-polarizing way that pointed to reconciliation rather than fuelling ‘us vs. them’ reactions. That speech is an excellent example of how the splitting dynamics of cultural complexes can be transcended through bringing the opposites of black and white into dialogue rather than manipulating them to further divide people against one another. It was my experience that in the moment of delivering his speech Obama incarnated the transcendent function.

3. Proposition 8 and Milk: the cultural complex of homophobia

If Obama’s Philadelphia speech shows us how the transcendent function can make itself known in a particular historical **moment** in which we are offered a collective glimpse of how a cultural complex might be resolved, I believe the recent surge of events surrounding the issue of gay marriage shows us how the transcendent function can work in the collective psyche as a **process** over time. Note the following synchronistic occurrences in the fall of 2008 in which

- a. Barack Obama’s election signalled a resurgence of liberal values and raised the hopes of all progressives except the gay population which found itself excluded from the celebration and devastated by
- b. the victory of Proposition 8 in California, which made civil marriage for same-sex couples not only illegal in California but also unconstitutional and which occurred almost simultaneously with
- c. the premier of the film *Milk* detailing the rise and then assassination of Harvey Milk as the first elected gay official in America . . .

These three events combined to suggest a destructive and regressive threat to the tremendous advances in both the civil rights and real psychological acceptance for gay people. It looked like the collective psyche was retreating from its relatively rapid, transformative acceptance of homosexuality in the past several decades. In the moment, many feared that we were witnessing a ‘descendent function’ in the collective psyche. But it is my opinion that the activity of the transcendent function as a process in the collective psyche should be thought of as evolutionary and that it cannot follow a straight line, any more than the process of individuation is linear in its unfolding. I believe that the emergence of gay marriage as a socially sanctioned option for same-sex couples suggests that a transcendent function may be at work even in the most apparently dire moments of the virulent cultural complex around homosexuality, which has produced polarized positions most simply characterized as gay vs. anti-gay.

When such opposites have gone to war with each other, we can be sure that there is a battle going on in the collective psyche to find a resolution to the cultural complex that underlies both positions and that this is only possible through a back and forth sequence of defeats and victories in a see-saw political battle. For instance, on the issue of gay marriage—right on the heels of the devastating defeat of gay rights with the victory of Prop 8—recent events in states as diverse as Iowa, Maine, and Vermont would suggest that a new attitude in the collective psyche as an expression of the transcendent function is unfolding rapidly, inexorably, inevitably—and its reconciling symbol is gay marriage itself.

Indeed, I think that the apotheosis of same-sex marriage as a mainstream issue for the 21st century to resolve is equivalent and perhaps even an extension of what Jung saw as the transformative and transcendent possibilities in the proclamation of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in the mid-twentieth century. Acceptance of gay marriage, like the Assumption of the Virgin Mary into the Godhead, may seem almost esoteric in the face of so many other issues facing humanity, but it signals the further unfolding of compassion in the collective Western psyche. It opens us to a vision of deepening tolerance for human relationships that can free all of us from the fetters of being locked in cultural complexes that would restrict what is valid about sexual attraction and love between human beings.

Conclusion

Few would claim to understand how the transcendent function actually works. It is a mystery. But many would claim to have witnessed the effects of the activity of the transcendent function in both the individual psyche and the collective psyche. Walt Whitman—we might call him The American Bard of the Transcendent Function—put his experience of the transcendent function this way (and one needs to remember his ‘I’ is also a ‘We’).

I celebrate my self, and sing myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

....

I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars

(Whitman 1855)

The transcendent function and politics: NO!

Andrew Samuels, *London*

Introduction

No school of psychotherapy is making a greater contribution to the alleviation of the suffering of the world than Jungian analysis and analytical psychology. How wonderful to be able to say such a thing, with hand on heart! Jungian analysts, supposedly the most unworldly, introverted, even mystically-inclined group of therapists on the planet, are getting passionately involved in a huge range of cultural, social and political problems. They have become part of the attempt to recover the political from the swamps into which it has sunk in many countries. This turnaround probably derives its energy from a sense that the change of direction was urgently needed, perhaps as reparation for past misjudgments, mainly in the 1930s. Anyway, the job is well started and is carried out these days by so many of us that I don't think I can produce a list of names. Many have sensed the danger of losing the revolutionary idealism of Jung's pioneering work if we stand still and rest on our laurels. Many of us know that our common interests will collapse if we only pursue our common interests, if we only invest in what advantages us.

I believe we are now in the middle of developing Jung's radical intuition, floated in the 1930s, of the need to create a culturally sensitive psychology. A culturally sensitive psychology does not level out all differences in the psyche that stem from politics, ethnicity, religion, nation, social class, gender and sexual orientation. Jung was against the universal imposition of a single system of psychology. Inevitably, so-called universal psychologies (like Freud's) are in fact context-bound, limited, personal confessions. So Jung was perhaps the first to anticipate the ethical and political disaster of a one-size-fits-all, colonial psychology. Hence he is one of the founding fathers of transcultural and intercultural psychotherapy. He was also one of the first to understand that we cannot insulate clinical practice from contemporary political history, saying that the analyst 'feels the violence of its impact even in the quiet

of his consulting room' (1946, pp. 177–78). And he goes on in the same passage (which is from the Preface to *Essays on Contemporary Events*) to make a suggestive and evocative reference to the analyst's having 'duties as a citizen'.

Politics in many countries is broken and in a mess; we urgently need new ideas and approaches. Jungian analysts, working alongside other psychotherapists, economists, social scientists, religious people, environmentalists and others, can contribute to a general transformation of politics and, step by stumbling step over many years, to an alleviation of the suffering of the world.

The actions of today's mainstream politicians leave many people in agony, with a sense of deep despair and disgust. The politicians themselves seem to lack integrity, imagination and new ideas. Across the globe, and in response to the challenge, a search is on to remodel politics. Jungian analysts can contribute to this search by opening up a two-way street between inner realities and the political world. So we need to balance attempts to understand the secret politics of the inner world of emotional, personal and family experiences with the secret psychology of pressing outer world matters such as leadership, the economy, environmentalism, nationalism and war.

Here are some things I think most of us interested in this work are agreed on. We sense possibilities for deeper understandings of social and political processes, and possible healing of difficult conflicts, on this occasion via the usage of Jung's seminal idea of the transcendent function. We agree that there is a psychological dimension to politics but also that it is very important not to reduce everything in the social world to psychology. We agree that we would not want to foist ideas developed for use in individual analysis and personal growth onto the body politic without testing that out thoroughly. I think we all agree that just bringing depth psychology and politics into one frame does not in itself constellate the transcendent function and, up to now, has generated as much heat as light.

Less certain is whether we agree on the necessary humility of interdisciplinary work when it comes to politics? By all means, let's have an analyst on every committee—but please God not a committee of analysts! If we are to organize more conferences on political themes, let's involve people from the political world, mainstream big names if we can get them, but also activists and political visionaries.

Do we also agree that our track record in the political arena is not that good? I am referring, of course, to Jung's anti-semitism and attitudes in the 1930s and also to a certain kind of casual élitism or aristocratic approach with regard to issues of gender, class and ethnicity. Moreover, the history of psychoanalysis in general with regard to homosexuality has been unedifying. And the professional politics of our field are a notorious mess. So we don't really start from a particularly credible base as political commentators.

An action ethos

To make it worse, I have become increasingly dismayed over two features that are typically seen when analysts engage with the political. I call these ‘triangulation’ and ‘hyper-reflection’. In triangulation, the analyst takes herself outside of the dispute and struggles to see the arguments on both sides from a detached, Olympian standpoint. The analyst is never *in* the dispute, only in the role of a kind of mediator or arbitrator. There is a sort of attempt to personify the transcendent function going on, or maybe an identification with the position of the ‘third element’. Triangulation is usually intended to show the mature wisdom of the analyst, resulting from deep inner work done on herself, when it comes to the hurly burly of the political street. In my view, what this really shows is supercilious detachment, bogus maturity, and a corralling of moral and judgemental power. Middlebrow psychology. It’s like the old joke in the bars of Liverpool where I grew up: ‘Let’s you and him fight’. So what I often see in conferences and on internet discussions is the Jungian analyst stepping up to the plate to mediate (invited or not), to clarify (but exclusively in psychological terms), and to solve (at least on paper) some of the most violent and divisive issues of our times. I *hate* this, in part because it is undermining the much more productive yet less magical efforts to work at the interface of politics and analysis. And I hate it because, sometimes, I slip into it myself and do the triangulation from on high as well. Yet my overall point remains: we should not unquestioningly condemn adversarialism—or unquestioningly praise a politician (Obama) who says he is against it

What drives triangulation is hyper-reflection. Actually, this is more of a phobia with regard to action. All action is taken to be mindless action. Sometimes, action is regarded as masculine and reflection as feminine (which insults both sexes, in my view). But there is a general valorization of sitting still and thinking deeply, as if ‘being’ is deeper than actually *doing* something. It has even been claimed as the key political virtue of the psychotherapy perspective on politics. Not that thinking and reflecting deeply is a pathological thing to do—I have been known to indulge—but if it is always done at the expense of spontaneous and passionate action then it can certainly become very pathological.

A further problem with hyper-reflection is that the opinions it generates are often stated to be ‘realistic’. Let me address this via an anecdote. When I was working in a psychiatric hospital, the medical director always used to issue the most pessimistic prognoses. Once, I asked him why. He explained that if the patient got well, this would be regarded as due to his treatment. But if the patient did not get well, he had displayed his clinical acumen by predicting it all along.

Let me reframe the problems I am depicting in a less adversarial way. The really important and interesting thing is to try and hold that reflective space while also becoming engaged in action. There will be a tension between what

one discovers via reflection and the pragmatic exigencies of action, bearing in mind that when we act there is always an opponent acting too, often against ourselves. When we reflect, we may reflect all we like upon our opponent's existence and opinions, but no one is actually opposed to our reflections (except maybe our noisy household or demanding job).

My proposal is that we think in terms of an 'action ethos'. This would be an explicit recognition of the following: (i) action and reflection are different and neither is better than the other; (ii) action inspired or backed up by reflection is our goal; (iii) we do not invariably condemn action that is not backed up by reflection; (iv) after the action is done, we insist on reflection about it.

The tools for the job

I have been attempting to bring the insights and practices of analysis (what I call 'therapy thinking') into the political world since the early 1980s. One thing that I have learned is that it's necessary to find and choose the right tool for the job. This should be driven by the nature of the problem under consideration as well as by one's preferences and knowledge. What it does not mean is using one huge concept, such as the paranoid-schizoid position or the cultural complex as if this could settle everything. Psychological analysis of political problematics needs to be a bit more detailed and fragmented. It needs to accept that such analysis might be wrong or fail. Saying there is a cultural complex at work or that the paranoid-schizoid position is in the field are statements that will never be wrong. I try not to go for the temptation of a massive single explanation, seeking instead to be a *bricoleur*, promiscuous in owing loyalty to no one specific concept or one particular school of psychology.

Here are some illustrative examples from my work:

- (i) In terms of leadership, I have found (Samuels 2001) Winnicott's notion of 'good-enough' very useful—the good-enough leader for whom the binary divide success/failure is less rigid than is usually considered to be the case. Additionally, thinking derived from contemporary revisions of the father's role has been illuminating as regards leadership (see below).
- (ii) In terms of the economy, I turn to Freud's account of sadism as a backdrop to the state we are in and to relational psychoanalytic ideas as the (admittedly Utopic) way ahead (Samuels 2001).
- (iii) Nationhood and national character may be understood more deeply by Jung's writings in the 1930s on national psychology—the valuable (and overlooked) part of his work on cultural psychology during that period (see Samuels 1993).
- (iv) When we consider foreign policy, all that has been written on empathy and the obstacles to empathy is relevant, plus up to the moment ideas like the notion of the moral third in geopolitics.
- (v) Finally, when it comes to vision in politics, what could be more apt than the Trickster, who models the denial of the realities of time, space and

place just as any revolutionary or social reformer has to defy the social and cultural realities of her or his present moment.

Returning to the action ethos, the trick is to behave as if analysts actually matter! Then we will. Analysts don't matter much in all the obvious ways. In fact, people usually find analytical takes on politics to be too extreme and exaggerated, although Theodore Adorno said the only interesting thing about psychoanalysis were the exaggerations. James Hillman claimed we've had a hundred years of psychotherapy and that the world is getting worse. But, as I've shown, this claim was ahistorical and ill-informed (Samuels 1993). Totton (2000) has also shown that we've had much more than a hundred years of all the schools of psychotherapy trying to change the world—but, sadly perhaps, the world has stayed pretty much the same. The world didn't turn up for its first session with us. As these writings detail, all the pioneers of psychoanalysis (and humanistic psychology as well) were deeply committed to improving the world. *Pace* Hillman, it is by no means a new thing.

Aggression and violence in political transformations

In his 1916 essay on the transcendent function, referring to the relations between the conscious and unconscious minds, Jung states (1946, para. 186) that 'it is exactly as if a dialogue were taking place between two human beings with equal rights, each of whom gives the other credit for a valid argument and considers it worth while to modify the conflicting standpoints by means of thorough comparison and discussion'. This is a beautiful sentiment, but, aside from the political referent—'rights'—what might this have to do with politics as we know it? Is Jung so bewitched by Swiss national pride over its extremely imperfect and partial politics that he can seriously claim that citizens have equal rights in anything other than a strictly formal or legal sense? Rather, don't we know, and maybe to our cost, that when it comes to politics, the warring opposites very rarely engage in political activity possessed of equal rights—or equal power, resources, information, military might and so on. That's what social class is all about, and economically deprived ethnic minorities, and military dictatorships. These all show the problem with utmost clarity. Perhaps Jung realized he had been too anodyne when he added that 'the present day [1916] shows with appalling clarity how little able people are to let the other man's argument count'.

For politics is, quintessentially, a process in which *unequals* dispute and contest control of power resources and information. They do this primarily by means of engaging in conflict and struggle, including armed struggle. Persuasion, polemic and rhetoric serve this struggle. But the struggle does not take place on a level playing field and, as I am arguing in this short piece, most attempts to deploy the transcendent function in political analysis, as a means of reconciling or even establishing dialogue between opposites, forget that.

There is also a spoken and unspoken hope that, via the healing properties of the transcendent function, whatever changes there may be in a society or in the world will be achieved non-violently. I think this involves the most profound dissociation and denial of the valuable role historically played by armed struggle—for example, in wars of national liberation. One might think of both the American War of Independence and the Civil War in this regard.

From the perspective of the political psyche, I think we need to seriously re-value the presence of aggression in the pursuit of social justice. My long study of South African politics suggests that without the forceful military contributions of *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (Spear of the Nation, the military wing of the African National Congress and led for a while by Nelson Mandela), plus the South African Communist Party, and the mainly Black Cuban troops in Angola, the new South Africa would never have come into being: No Mandela, no Truth and Reconciliation Commission, no books on restorative justice. And, to complicate it even more, the entire liberation struggle was financed and supported by the Soviet Union.

Let me widen this, to take in less conventional and broader definitions of politics. From the point of view of gender politics, aggression and especially aggressive fantasy can be an individuation path, especially for women: an imaginal way to be thrusting, penetrative and seminal, to break out of the coils of Eros where the woman is only responsive to the needs of others in a reproduction of mothering. But are women really less aggressive than men?

From the point of view of political morality, there is a critical *telos* (goal, point, aim) for political aggression. How can you develop concern for an Other if there is no reason to do so? Aggression just has to be in the picture or there is no reason why concern for the Other should flower at all.

From the point of view of metapsychology, aggression is part of ego-consciousness—the way we become conscious by breaking wholes into parts. The very etymology of ‘analysis’ is aggressive—Erich Neumann said that symbols of consciousness involved the teeth and biting.

Returning to a more conventional definition of politics, we can also see an immense cultural and ethical relativism with regard to political aggression. I will give a complicated and controversial example. As one who has been deeply immersed in the politics of the Middle East, I have been struck by the way the inter-relation of Jews and aggression seems very problematic for all parties. We can note this as originating in Western and Arab responses to the birth of modern Zionism and the establishment of the pre-Second World War settler communities in Palestine, and subsequently moving on to intense soul-searching about the Holocaust. For example, the debates on alleged Jewish ‘passivity’ on the one hand and the valorous resistance of the Warsaw Ghetto on the other. And then to the policies of the State of Israel. Whatever one’s position on Israel/Palestine, it is possible to agree, I think, that thoughtful discussion is interfered with by ethnically based assumptions and generalizations about political aggression.

I would like now to delve more deeply into my ungrateful argument that the transcendent function is actually a rather poor explanatory tool when it comes to political conflict. Although reference is made to the 'ceaseless' interplay of opposites, and the idea is thereby rescued from being excessively static, there is no doubt in my mind that some sort of harmonious resolution lies behind the idea of the transcendent function. This idealism is part of its importance for individuals but may be the very problem the notion suffers from when it comes to politics.

Let's take as an example, a conflict between a racist and a non-racist, or between a racist group and a non-racist group. What does it mean in such a situation to look for and find the middle position? Are we looking for the establishment of a semi-racist group? A racist-enough group? Surely, in situations like these, it is a question of each side struggling for dominance over the other. For me, and for many reading this, we would hope that the non-racist group will prevail. But it may not. If the conflict is played out along the dialectical lines of the transcendent function, which comes first, racism or non-racism? Then, the other group becomes the antithesis. But, as I say, there just isn't any synthesis here, nor were the two groups equal to start with. No, it doesn't work.

Leadership and the transcendent function

Applying the transcendent function to leadership, I'd like to point out the dangers in seeing the leader and the led as 'opposites' because this would make the leader all conscious (I suppose) and the led all unconscious. The fascist potential in such a perspective is clear. Yet, in some of his remarks in the famous interview with Dr Weiszacker on Radio Berlin in 1938, that is what Jung is close to saying: 'As Hitler said recently, the leader [*Führer*] must be able to be alone and have the courage to go his own way. But if he doesn't know himself, how is he to lead others?' (Jung 1938, pp. 773–9). Here, we find the idea of the leader as a sort of individuated being who can contain all the glorious diversity of the nation.

Sound familiar? I believe that some (not all) of the chorus of praise for President Obama has this kind of danger buried in it. Can a leader who wins a democratically contested election ever create an undivided country? Of course not. But what is so wrong with a divided country, with accepting pluralistic adversarialism as I mentioned earlier? (See Samuels 1989, for an account of the role of aggression in pluralistic discourse.) There are battles to be won and lost and there will be opponents to engage with. This is politics, and leadership involves knowing how far to go before the opposition goes ballistic. Whilst there is assuredly a psychology of leadership, being a leader is not *a priori* about individuation or some version of the 'balance' or absence of one-sided development which may be necessary for an individual in analysis. Churchill, Mandela, and even Blair—they have all known how to fight. Of course, a leader

can work against too great a degree of destructive polarization in the country and can point out how something—say, racism—puts unmanageable stresses on the system as a whole. But there were 47% against Obama at his election so it is just pie-in-the-sky to see him as a unifying figure and even more remote an idea to see him as unifying opposites via his inter-racial background. If whites and blacks in America were or are ‘opposites’, they are not now nor have they ever been in an equal fight; that is my point. Rather, Obama may be for the moment the least polarizing figure in American politics as a result of his victory—but even that is in doubt.

Leaders have to lead struggles—for economic justice, for an empathic foreign policy, and so on. Sadly, we may find that they also struggle for lower taxes, reduced services, military aggression abroad, and the preservation of élite privileges. Then ‘we’ have to fight back. This is politics. It is depressing, I know, but I feel I have to write this to stem the tide of unruly optimism that a wave of transcendent function is sweeping across post-Obama America and that this will reach to the corners of the globe.

We certainly wish for unifying leaders, individuated leaders. This desire is a very important thing. And what some people wish for is, in some Western countries, slowly starting to happen. The internet generation (and others) are less impressed by heroic, macho leaders, recognizing the troubles they have visited on the planet. We are still more infatuated with such leaders than we realize, perhaps. But what we understand by ‘father of the nation’ is changing. Maybe what is understood by ‘nation’ doesn’t change that much, but the father is a personage undergoing rapid and positive change in the West. The interplay between new fathers and new leaders is extremely interesting.

To change our perceptions of what being the father of the nation means, we need a positive account of the father that does not stupidly build him up to an unrealistic degree. An account that makes it much more difficult for our old-style political leaders to masquerade as the only kind of fathers that there could be. An account that does not dwell on the malevolent power of the father but on his affirming warmth. Not on his holding the mother who holds the children but on his holding of the children himself. The stay at home weekend father. The sensitive and affirming father, the playful father, the wounded and unhappy father, not the punitive, stern self-contained father. *Not the commander-in-chief father.* We need a story of the father in which emotional security is as important as physical security. That would be a useful beginning to an equally new and analogous story about political leadership whether conducted by men or by women—for female leaders are also caught up in the hero thing.

Conclusion

To conclude: at this point in the evolution of my ideas, I am more impressed by the healing political power of some simple behavioural changes in the family,

such as the rise of the more nurturing father, than I am by metapsychological abstractions such as the transcendent function, no matter how useful and deep, and tried and tested in the arenas of personal growth and individuation they may be.

TRANSLATIONS OF ABSTRACT

Les analystes jungiens ayant collaboré à cet article traitent de la stagnation politique et sociale, de la régression et du changement, via l'usage singulier qu'ils font du concept de fonction transcendante.

Singer note qu'il est habituellement question de fonction transcendante lorsqu'apparaît dans le matériel symbolique la figure de la réconciliation des opposés comme facteur de croissance psycho-spirituelle. L'auteur examine également la notion de fonction transcendante telle qu'elle se manifeste en des occurrences similaires dans la psyché collective. Il s'intéresse également au phénomène opposé—qui pourrait se nommer fonction descendante—tel qu'il apparaît dans la psyché collective et montre comment sa présence dans le matériel symbolique peut générer la division en groupes de personnes opposées, les incitant à des expériences destructrices plutôt que transformatrices.

Selon Meador, Jung a désigné comme fonction transcendante le processus de médiation à travers lequel images et idées inconscientes sont assimilées à la conscience. Tout comme ce processus de synthétisation peut produire des *insights* chez le sujet, de même est-il susceptible de générer des changements dans un contexte collectif sociétal.

Des croyances collectives bien ancrées tendent à se transformer lorsque les opposés entrent en collision, comme ce fut par exemple le cas au cours de l'effervescence politique et sociale des années soixante. Meador analyse la récente révolution des attitudes raciales et sexuelles comme résultant de la lutte collective, du conflit entre certaines mœurs enracinées du passé et des points de vue nouveaux.

La conclusion de Samuels est que le concept de fonction transcendante est de peu de valeur dans le champ des problèmes politiques. Son article est axé sur:

- 1- Les limites de l'utilisation d'idées—telles que la fonction transcendante—dérivées de l'analyse personnelle pour la compréhension des phénomènes politiques et sociaux.
 - 2- Le problème spécifique de l'absence de modèles psycho politiques aptes à rendre compte du progrès ou de la régression sociale, la fonction transcendante s'avérant à cet égard inutilisable.
 - 3- La question de l'agression politique, de la violence et des conflits sociaux est explorée à partir de la fonction transcendante afin d'évaluer son rôle possible dans la gestion des conflits politiques. Samuels adresse une critique sévère de ce qu'il nomme « triangulation » et « hyper-réflexion », aux analystes qui s'engagent sur le terrain du débat et des questions politiques.
 - 4- Le leadership est examiné du point de vue de la fonction transcendante qui, une fois encore, ne s'avère pas pertinente. Les découvertes récentes de la psychologie familiale sur le rôle du père offrent selon lui de meilleures possibilités pour servir de base à une réflexion renouvelée sur le leadership.
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Die jungianischen Analytiker, die teilhatten an der Abfassung dieses Textes, berühren durch ihren je spezifischen Gebrauch des Konzeptes der Transzendenten Funktion implizit oder explizit Themen des sozialen und politischen Stillstandes, des Rückganges und des Wandels.

Singer nimmt an, daß die Transzendente Funktion ein Begriff ist, der gewöhnlich auf Individuen angewandt wird bei denen symbolisches Material auftaucht, welches an die Vereinigung von Gegensätzen denken läßt, was wiederum zu seelisch-spirituellen Wachstum führt. Auch richtet er seinen Blick auf die Bedeutung der Transzendenten Funktion, wie sie in ähnlicher Weise in der Kollektivpsyche erscheinen kann. Zusätzlich lenkt er die Aufmerksamkeit auf das gegenteilige Phänomen – welches als Deszendente Funktion bezeichnet werden könnte – wie es in der Kollektivpsyche und deren Führung auftaucht, wo symbolisches Material die Spaltung einer Gruppe von Individuen in Opponenten bewirken kann, wobei eher destruktive als transformative Erfahrungen mobilisiert werden.

Meador betont, daß Jung den Vermittlungsprozeß der Assimilierung unbewußter Bilder und Ideen in das Bewußtsein als Transzendente Funktion bezeichnet hat. So wie dieser Synthetisierungsprozeß Einsicht in das Individuum bewerkstelligen kann, so kann er auch auf Änderungsprozesse in der Gesellschaft angewandt werden. Verankerte kollektive Voraussetzungen tendieren dazu ins Rutschen zu geraten, wenn Gegensätze aufeinanderstoßen, wie dies z.B. in den Unruhen der 60-er Jahre geschah. Ihr Beitrag sieht die jüngsten Revolutionen rassische und sexuelle Haltungen betreffend als Produkt eines kollektiven Ringens zwischen bestimmten tiefwurzelnden sozialen Sitten der Vergangenheit und konfligierenden neuen Sichtweisen.

Samuels kommt zu dem Schluß, daß dem Konzept der Transzendenten Funktion bezüglich politischer Probleme wenig Wert zukomme. Sein Beitrag konzentriert sich auf 1. die Begrenztheit des Gebrauchs von Ideen (solche wie die der Transzendenten Funktion), die aus Analysen von Individuen deriviert sind, bei der Förderung des Verständnisses von sozialen und politischen Phänomenen, 2. das spezifische Problem des Mangels an tragfähigen psycho-politischen Modellen für sozialen Fort- und Rückschritt – er argumentiert, daß die Transzendente Funktion diesbezüglich nicht nutzbringend sei, 3. die Frage der politischen Aggression, der Gewalttätigkeit und des Konfliktes, die vom Standpunkt der Transzendenten Funktion aus untersucht wird um so deren mögliche Rolle bei der Lösung politischer Konflikte zu analysieren. Hart kritisiert Samuels, was er 'Triangulierung' und 'Hyper-Reflektion' auf seiten derjenigen Analytiker nennt, die sich auf politische Debatten und Themen einlassen. 4. Führerschaft wird untersucht vom Standpunkt der Transzendenten Funktion aus, die, wiederum, hier nicht sachdienlich zu sein scheint. Dagegen böten neue Erkenntnisse der Familienpsychologie über die Rolle des Vaters größere Möglichkeiten als Basis für ein neues Denken über Führerschaft.

Gli analisti junghiani che hanno contribuito alla scrittura di questo lavoro implicitamente o esplicitamente fanno riferimento, attraverso il loro particolare uso del concetto di funzione trascendente, alle conseguenze della stasi, della regressione, del cambiamento sociale e politico.

Singer considera la funzione trascendente come un termine che di solito si riferisce agli individui quando compare quel materiale simbolico che fa pensare alla riconciliazione degli opposti che porta poi a una crescita psichica e spirituale. Considera inoltre

la nozione di funzione trascendente come può apparire in modo simile nella psiche collettiva. Presta inoltre attenzione al fenomeno opposto —che si potrebbe chiamare funzione discendente—come appare nella psiche collettiva e nella sua leadership, laddove il materiale simbolico può creare la divisione di gruppi in opposti, mobilitando esperienze distruttive piuttosto che trasformative.

Meador afferma che Jung designa come funzione trascendente il processo di mediazione attraverso il quale idee e immagini inconse vengono assimilate dalla coscienza. Proprio come tale processo di sintesi può produrre l'insight nell'individuo, così può essere applicato ai mutamenti nella società collettiva. Convinzioni collettive stabilitesi tendono a scindersi quando gli opposti si scontrano, come accadde, ad esempio, nei tumulti degli anni sessanta. Il suo contributo si focalizza sulla recente rivoluzione degli atteggiamenti razziali e sessuali come prodotto di una battaglia collettiva fra certi costumi socialmente impiantatisi nel passato che entrano in conflitto con nuovi punti di vista.

Samuels giunge alla conclusione che il concetto di funzione trascendente è di poca importanza quando si tratta di problemi politici. Il suo contributo si focalizza su: (i) i limiti dell'utilizzo di idee (come la funzione trascendente) derivate dall'analisi con individui per la comprensione di fenomeni sociali e politici. (ii) Lo specifico problema di una mancanza di modelli psico-sociali credibili per quanto riguarda progressi e regressi sociali — egli sostiene che la funzione trascendente non è a questo riguardo utile. (iii) Il problema del conflitto, della violenza e della aggressività sociale viene esaminato dal punto di vista della funzione trascendente per indagare un suo eventuale ruolo nella gestione del conflitto politico. Samuels critica aspramente ciò che egli chiama 'triangolazione' e 'iper-rispecchiamento' da parte dell'analista che prende parte ai dibattiti e ai problemi politici. (iv) La leadership viene esaminata dal punto di vista della funzione trascendente, e anche questo non sembra pertinente. Piuttosto possono avere maggiori possibilità per una nuova riflessione sulla leadership le scoperte della psicologia della famiglia sul ruolo del padre.

Юнгианские аналитики, принимавшие участие в написании этой статьи, явно или неявно обращаются к темам социального и политического застоя, регресса и изменений, применяя для этого концепцию трансцендентной функции.

Зингер предполагает, что трансцендентная функция — это термин, обычно применяемый к индивидуумам, чей символический материал дает возможность примирить противоположности, приводя к психо-духовному росту. Он также рассматривает возможности схожего проявления трансцендентной функции в коллективной психике. В довершение он обращает внимание на противоположный феномен — на то, что может быть названо десцендентной функцией, — и на то, как она проявляется в коллективной психике и ее лидерах, в тех случаях, когда символический материал создает разделение на оппозиционные группы людей, мобилизуя деструктивный, а не трансформирующий опыт.

Мидор утверждает, что Юнг называл трансцендентной функцией посреднический процесс ассимиляции бессознательных образов и идей сознанием. Точно так же, как этот синтезирующий процесс может привести человека к озарению (инсайту), он может быть применим и к переменам в коллективе,

в обществе. Внедренные в общественное сознание коллективные допущения имеют тенденцию меняться при столкновении противоположностей, как это было, к примеру, во время беспорядков 60-х годов [XX столетия]. Внимание этого автора концентрируется больше на недавнем перевороте в расовых и сексуальных установках как продукте коллективной борьбы между определенными социально укоренившимися нравами прошлого и конфликтующими с ними новыми точками зрения.

Заключение Сэмюэlsa таково: концепция трансцендентной функции не имеет большого значения в отношении политических проблем. Он больше сосредоточен на: 1) ограничениях в использовании извлеченных из индивидуального анализа идей (таких, как трансцендентная функция) в их применении к пониманию социальных и политических феноменов; 2) специфической проблеме отсутствия надежной психо-политической модели социального прогресса и регресса – он доказывает, что в этом отношении трансцендентная функция не является полезной. 3) Вопрос о политической агрессии, насилии и конфликте в обществе исследуется с точки зрения трансцендентной функции – так, чтобы можно было исследовать ее возможную роль в управлении политическими конфликтами. Сэмюэлс сурово критикует то, что он называет «триангуляцией» и «гипер-рефлексией» со стороны аналитиков, участвующих в политических дебатах и проблемах. 4) С точки зрения трансцендентной функции проводится анализ лидерства. И вновь эта функция не кажется здесь подходящей. Скорее, больше возможностей в качестве основы для осмысления лидерства имеют новые открытия семейной психологии о роли отца.

Los analistas Jungianos que tomaron parte en la elaboración de este trabajo se refieren explícitamente o implícitamente a situaciones como el estancamiento político, la regresión y el cambio social, a través de su visión personal del concepto de la función trascendente.

Singer propone que la función trascendente es un término aplicado generalmente a individuos en quienes el material simbólico parece sugerir el reconciliar de contrarios, que conduce al desarrollo psico- espiritual. El observa así mismo que la noción de la función trascendente puede surgir en forma similar en la psique colectiva. Además, él llama la atención sobre el fenómeno opuesto—el cual podría ser llamado la función descendente—tal como aparece en la psique colectiva y su liderazgo, materia en donde su simbólica puede crear la división en grupos de personas, en contrarios, movilizandо energías destructivas antes que experiencias transformativas.

Meador indica que Jung designó a la función trascendente como el proceso mediador para la asimilación de imágenes e ideas inconscientes al consciente. Así como este proceso sintetizador puede producir concientización en el individuo, también puede ser aplicado a cambios en la sociedad colectiva. Las suposiciones colectivas impresas tienden a cambiar cuándo los contrarios chocan, tal como ocurrió, por ejemplo, en los confusos años sesenta. Su contribución se centra en la reciente revolución, en actitudes raciales y sexuales, producto de una lucha colectiva entre ciertas costumbres sociales arraigadas en el pasado y en conflictivos nuevos puntos de vista.

La conclusión de Samuels es que el concepto de la función trascendente tiene poco valor con respecto a problemas políticos. Su contribución se centra en: (I) Las limitaciones

de utilizar tales ideas (como la función trascendente). Ella derivó del análisis de individuos para apoyar la comprensión de fenómenos sociales y políticos. (II) El problema específico de una falta de modelos psico-políticos creíbles para los avances sociales y su retroceso—argumenta que la función trascendente no es útil para esta consideración. (III) En relación a la pregunta sobre agresión política, la violencia y el conflicto en la sociedad explorados desde el punto de vista de la función trascendente para investigar su posible papel en la gestión del conflicto político, Samuels critica severamente lo que él llama “triangulación” e hiper-reflejo por parte de analistas que se comprometen en debates y asuntos políticos. (IV) El liderazgo examinado desde el punto de vista de la función trascendente, no parece pertinente. Más bien, nuevos descubrimientos en la psicología familiar acerca del papel del padre, tienen mayores posibilidades para sentar una base en un nuevo concepto de liderazgo.

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