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The transcendent function in politics: YES!

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Abstract: This paper is a response to Andrew Samuels's 'The transcendent function in politics: NO!' (2010). In that paper he makes a number of criticisms to support his argument that the transcendent function is not appropriate for political and social development. Whilst a number of his criticisms are valid, they are misdirected because they are against one-sidedness or identification with a single position, which are not features of the transcendent function but problems that it overcomes. To make the counter argument, this paper draws on oft-overlooked aspects of Jung's book *Psychological Types*, empirical research, contemporary leadership theory, and practical examples to show that the transcendent function's omission from political debate can maintain and exacerbate social inequity and the political divisions that might otherwise be bridged. The transcendent function is highly relevant to politics and can help achieve deeper and longer-lasting change than a one-sided approach. It is one of the core aspects of analytical psychology that has the potential to make innovative and transformational contributions to political discourse.

Keywords: activism, attitude, function, Jung, politics, Samuels, transcendent

Andrew Samuels (2010) has argued against the use of the transcendent function in politics. He expresses concern about losing the revolutionary idealism of Jung's pioneering work, identifies a number of problems within contemporary politics, and rejects the notion that the transcendent function has a role in solving those problems. On the other hand, Jeffrey Miller (2004) has argued not only that the transcendent function is relevant to society and culture but also that it can help solve some of the problems that Samuels says it cannot. The two writers have some ground in common, such as recognizing the problems of applying psychotherapeutic ideas to politics, and the risk of depth psychologists failing to become active outside the consulting room (e.g. Miller 2004, p. 134). A third writer, the political scientist Lawrence Alschuler – who also trained at the C.G. Jung Institute of Zurich – has related the transcendent function to the political thought of Paulo Freire and Albert Memmi:

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> A careful study of Freire's vocabulary reveals that nearly all key concepts are expressed as pairs of opposites: oppressor and oppressed, dehumanization and humanization … and many more…. It is fundamental to Freire's thinking that liberation results from *transcending* the contradictions of oppressive society…. [Freire's concept of] immersed consciousness cannot discover societal contradictions. [Freire's concept of] emergence expands consciousness of those contradictions, a first step in their transcendence…. Both Memmi and Freire … insist that genuine liberation means that the transformation of political consciousness must accompany the dismantling of oppressive political structures.
>
> (Alschuler 2006, pp. 34-35, 64, original italics)

Alschuler's argument is focused on the relation between oppressor and oppressed, though he acknowledges the potential for applying the concepts to post-industrial and emerging societies (ibid., p. 175 n.3). He positions the transcendent function as an essential aspect of ending oppression, but not as the sole answer because, for example, political structures and policies also need to be transformed. He therefore rejects any suggestion from Jung's writings that individuation is the only driver needed for political transformation (ibid., p. 22). Nevertheless, Alschuler shows from the published personal testimonies of four indigenous people (two women and two men) how holding the tension of opposites can occur naturally within the clash of political opposites, and lead to psychopolitical healing through the transformation of consciousness in both the oppressed and oppressor.

Of these three writers, this paper concentrates primarily on Samuels's arguments, particularly his various objections to the use of the transcendent function in politics. Although some of Samuels's arguments are valid, they are misdirected because he misportrays the nature of the transcendent function and ironically provides support for it in doing so. The paper draws on empirical research, contemporary leadership theory, and practical examples – primarily from the UK because that is most relevant to my personal experience – to show that the transcendent function's omission from politics is highly problematic. The paper also takes account of some important but oft-overlooked aspects of *Psychological Types* (Jung 1921) – 'a cryptic work hiding some of Jung's most radical ideas' (Crellin 2014, loc. 189). This was the first book to be published in which Jung explained his theory of opposites and the transcendent function to the public, though he repeatedly complained that readers missed this aspect of his work because they were focusing on the classification of types (Myers 2019, pp. 1-8).

Relevance to politics

One of Samuels's objections to the transcendent function in politics is the limitations of applying ideas derived from the analysis of individuals to the wider subject of politics. Samuels is not *per se* against the principle of

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drawing on concepts from other fields, for he uses ideas such as Winnicott's good enough mothering or contemporary revisions of the father's role. Samuels is arguing that the transcendent function is not an appropriate solution for social problems. However, Jung suggested it was, and there is some support for his assertion from empirical research.

When Jung realized that readers were missing the main point of *Psychological Types*, he added a foreword pointing them towards chapters II and V, and away from the descriptions of the types (Jung 1934). These two chapters describe a process of psychic development that applies to both the individual and culture. Jung illustrates the process with the important and commonly occurring example of typological functions, but this does not mean it is limited to those opposites, nor to individual development. Jung discusses both personal and social symbols, and he identifies many kinds of opposites, including those that are cultural or societal. Chapter V is based on Carl Spitteler's epic poem *Prometheus and Epimetheus* (1881), which Jung chose because it provides 'general insight into [the individual problem] *and* the way it appears in collective life' (Jung 1921, para. 325, emphasis added). He decided not to use *Faust* or *Zarathustra* because, although they 'are of very great assistance in the *individual* mastery of the problem' (ibid., emphasis added), they do not offer the same societal or cultural insights as Spitteler's work. The process therefore not only describes how intrapersonal splits arise and can be resolved, but it is also relevant to the emergence and reconciliation of collective conflicts.

In later years, Jung illustrated the process of psychic development using the axiom of Maria, which states, 'one becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the one as the fourth'. These stages are reflected in *Psychological Types* in the following form. An initial unconscious state (One). The differentiation of a superior one-sided conscious attitude, with a corresponding repression of its opposite which becomes more inferior (Two). Bringing the repressed opposite to consciousness, engaging with it, and holding the opposites in tension (Three). And, given time, a transformation naturally occurs through a more complex sequence of steps. The transcendent function forms in the unconscious. It emerges into consciousness initially in the form of a reconciling symbol. As the meaning of the symbol unfolds, the transcendent function becomes a new dominant psychological function and a new attitude, which reconciles the opposites and reconciles consciousness and the unconscious (Four).

The axiom of Maria is also reflected in Spitteler's poem. The two brothers initially live together (One). The superior-inferior structure emerges when Epimetheus is appointed king and Prometheus is excluded from society (Two). After a long story, in which Epimetheus and the people fail to recognize the nature of the division and spurn opportunities for reconciliation, they face an enantiodromic disaster in which Messias, the son of God, is going to be killed. To avert this, there is a divine intervention that seeks Prometheus' help,

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and he becomes re-engaged in society (Three). Epimetheus is forced to resign as king, and the two brothers now have equal status. His place is taken by Messias, who Prometheus had saved (Four). The appointment of Messias as king is not in Spitteler's story. He completes his epic with the image of a caterpillar – which is an obvious symbol of a forthcoming transformation – appearing out of a dialogue between Prometheus and Doxa, the wife of God. Jung implies an epilogue in which Messias becomes sovereign (Jung 1921, para. 459).

At the start of his analysis of Spitteler's work, Jung notes that the brothers represent the introverted and extraverted sides of the same individual. In this metaphor of psychic development, extraversion becomes the superior attitude of consciousness (Epimetheus becomes king), and introversion is repressed so it becomes more inferior (Prometheus goes into exile). There are also parallel developments in the relation between the people (who for the most part have a wonderful time) and the divine (God becomes sick). There are therefore two axes of opposites, which can be represented with the image of the cross – a horizontal axis between the opposing attitudes of extraversion and introversion, and a vertical axis between consciousness and the unconscious. At the end of the story, Messias reconciles both of these because he is not only sovereign over the brothers, but he is also a son of God who rules over the people of earth. Messias represents a new psychological function and attitude that transforms the conscious attitude and the whole personality.

To test the relevance of this theory to politics, I started from the premise, informed by earlier research (Myers 2017, p. 259), that the reconciliation of opposites doesn't happen to consciousness as a whole, but only in respect of particular opposites (Myers 2019, pp. 133-35). This means that, although the transcendent function may be constellated or emerge in certain aspects of life, we may remain one-sided or unconscious in many others – until a transcendent function is constellated in those other areas. I then allied the theory of opposites in chapters II and V with another radical idea in *Psychological Types*. In chapter I, Jung introduces *esse in anima*, a philosophy that has been interpreted in many different ways but is best understood as being based on William James's late-developed philosophy of radical empiricism (Kotsch 2000). It is an important part of Jung's theory because '*esse in anima* … is the psychological standpoint' (Jung 1926, para. 624, original italics). It suggests that reality is pluralistic, constructed through the interaction of the external world and our own psyche (Jung 1921, paras. 77-78). It is a theory of psychological relativity that Jung saw as a parallel to Einstein's theory of relativity (Jung 1941, p. 301). James's idea has also been used by other philosophers, such as John Dewey, and W.V.O. Quine who called it 'ontological relativity' (Quine 1969). When *esse in anima* is combined with Jung's theory of opposites, which identifies the superior-inferior structure of attitudes in the psyche, it suggests that the reality of the world we live in is also structured along superior-inferior lines.

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However, the superior-inferior split in the world varies for each individual and for different groups.

When this theory is applied to politics, it suggests that when we differentiate a one-sided political standpoint, then some political realities (with which we identify) have superior qualities, and the opposite realities have inferior qualities. I tested this theory by comparing an individual's internal attitude with external reality, in particular by comparing an individual's political orientation with the ontological properties of external political organizations (Myers 2020). The results suggest that, as we differentiate a one-sided political standpoint, the external political world tends to become increasingly divided between political organizations that have superior qualities and those that have inferior ones, and this division reflects our own political orientation. For example, in the UK's referendum on membership of the European Union, for people who voted Remain, the Leave campaign was dishonest and used scaremongering tactics. But for people who voted Leave, it was the Remain campaign that was dishonest and used scaremongering tactics. Independent research acknowledged wrongdoing on both sides, though this does not imply moral equivalence between them. Another example is that, for people on the political left, parties on the right (Conservatives or Republicans) were more extreme. For people on the right, the external reality was reversed – Labour and Democrats were the extreme ones. That is, external political reality was constructed along a superior-inferior axis that reflected the structure of superior-inferior attitudes within the individual's own psyche. Also, the more political knowledge the study participants had, the more these differences *increased*. This might seem a counter-intuitive result, but it is in line with the theory of opposites in *Psychological Types* – that greater differentiation leads to greater one-sidedness. I then extended this research to examine the effect of *participation mystique* on the relation between an individual's political psyche and the collective psyche (Myers 2021). The results suggest that identification with a political standpoint (in this case, the left or right of the political spectrum) tends to make different people's attitudes towards disparate policies align in the same direction. Again, this effect increases with greater differentiation of the individual's political attitude (as measured by self-reports of political orientation and political knowledge).

Together, the two pieces of research suggest that the more people identify with a political grouping, and the more they differentiate their political standpoint, the more one-sided their personal and collective attitudes become, and the more political realities become constructed along a superior-inferior axis. Shared political identity and the differentiation of a one-sided political standpoint is therefore a driving force for political conflict and polarization. It creates increasingly antagonistic worlds in which it becomes more difficult to understand the position taken by the other, which in turn makes the conflict more difficult to resolve in a reasoned or reasonable way. In Jung's view, this

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is not wholly a bad thing, because the development of a one-sided standpoint is both an advantage and a drawback at the same time (Jung 1916/1957, para. 138). The conflict that arises sets up the potential for a resolution through the transcendent function, which can lead to more advanced political attitudes.

Triangulation and hyper-reflection

Two of Samuels's objections in his 2010 paper are closely linked – *triangulation*, which is driven by *hyper-reflection*. He defines hyper-reflection as a 'phobia with regard to action.... a general valorization of sitting still and thinking deeply [which] if it is always done at the expense of spontaneous and passionate action then it can certainly become very pathological' (Samuels 2010, p. 243). Reflection is a characteristic that is strongly associated with introversion, and spontaneous action with extraversion. Therefore, hyper-reflection, as Samuels defines it, has nothing to do with the transcendent function per se. It is a description of introversion that has been differentiated to an extreme degree of one-sidedness such that extraversion is repressed. In Spitteler's *Prometheus and Epimetheus* the example is reversed – the one-sided differentiation of extraversion has led to the repression of introversion. But it matters not which standpoint has been differentiated in the example. The underlying principle is that any attitude – whether extraversion, introversion, or a political standpoint – can be differentiated to such a degree that it assimilates all the superior qualities to itself and suppresses its opposite in a way that ascribes to it inferior properties. What Samuels is describing, therefore, is not the transcendent function but the problem that the transcendent function tries to solve – a situation where a typological preference has caused a split in the psyche. This is the 'type problem' that forms the basis of Jung's book and appears in 8 of the 11 chapter headings. After describing the problem as he sees it, Samuels outlines his own solution:

> 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.
>
> (Samuels 2010, p. 244)

Samuels's 'action ethos' is a brilliant and practical summary of the transcendent function in action! It is almost exactly what happens at the end of Spitteler's epic, when the attitude represented by Messias transforms the extreme extraversion and repressed introversion, so they are brought back into a more constructive balance. Samuels has recognized the split between the two

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typological attitudes (but without naming them) and produced his own, third attitude that reconciles them in a more balanced and realistic way. Samuels's action ethos also introduces another important aspect of the transcendent function, which is having the flexibility to use whichever attitude is most suited to the circumstances in hand. Jung describes this flexibility in his essay on *Weltanschauung* using the analogy of an army commander:

> If we compare … attitude to military dispositions, then attention, for example, would be represented by … standing to arms…. As soon as the strength and position of the enemy are known, the disposition changes: the army begins to move in the direction of a given objective. In precisely the same way the psychic attitude changes…. The army stands under a simple and unified command…. The ego is the army commander.
>
> (Jung 1928/1931, paras. 690-692)

Flexibility – i.e. the ability to use one side or its opposite as appropriate to the situation – is a key feature of the transcendent function and it addresses Samuels's concern about triangulation. He says, 'the analyst takes herself outside of the dispute…. The analyst is never *in* the dispute, only in the role of a kind of mediator or arbitrator [perhaps involving] an identification with the position of the third element' (Samuels 2010, p. 243). Samuels's criticism of identification with the third is valid. What is being contested here is that the transcendent function does not involve such a rigidity; it does not demand we stay outside the dispute, nor is it an identification with one position. Rather, the transcendent function brings the flexibility to use various attitudes as appropriate, as demonstrated by Samuels's action ethos. Jung expresses this flexibility as being conscious vs involuntary one-sidedness:

> A *conscious* capacity for one-sidedness is a sign of the highest culture, but *involuntary* one-sidedness, i.e., the inability to be anything but one-sided, is a sign of barbarism.
>
> (Jung 1921, para. 346, original italics)

Edward Edinger describes it as the individual carrying the opposites (Edinger 1995, p. 322). Marie-Louise von Franz describes it, in typological terms, as having a new attitude that uses all and none of the functions at the same time (von Franz 1986/2013, pp. 27-28). However, this issue of flexibility has not been sufficiently articulated or explored in Jungian and post-Jungian literature. Samuels's criticism of hyper-reflection and triangulation is valid, because both are one-sided and inflexible. The problem with his argument is the labelling – i.e. his association of hyper-reflection and triangulation with the transcendent function – and his lauding of his action ethos as being something different. Rather, hyper-reflection is a textbook example of the type problem and his action ethos is a textbook example of a transcendent function.

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The proscription of aggression and violence

Another objection raised by Samuels is that the transcendent function implies non-violent solutions. Samuels suggests that politics sometimes necessitates the use of armed struggle, which is contrary to the 'spoken and unspoken hope that … changes … will be achieved non-violently' (Samuels 2010, p. 246). He then cites the example of Nelson Mandela, who set up *Umkhonto we Sizwe* (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress. If there is a widespread belief that violence and aggression have no role to play in political transformation, then Samuels's critique is valid. However, such an attitude should not be associated with the transcendent function. An avoidance of using violence when it is necessary demonstrates a one-sided approach. Nelson Mandela's setting up of the MK is the epitome of the transcendent function in action. This can be illustrated by comparing his approach with that of a near neighbour in similar circumstances, Robert Mugabe of what was Rhodesia and became Zimbabwe.

The backgrounds of Mugabe and Mandela were very similar, and both turned to armed struggle to oppose colonial oppression. But with regard to their attitude towards racial opposites, they were poles apart. Mugabe sought to obtain power and was always hostile to the idea of negotiations with the whites. He wanted 'revolution' (Meredith 2007, p. 2) and his resolve to achieve it was hardened by his years in prison – '[even] when a negotiated settlement was within reach … Mugabe still hankered for military victory, the ultimate joy' (ibid., p. 243). He was forced into negotiations as part of the transfer of power from the colonial rulers, but reconciliation was never a sincerely held view. Once Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, and he was well-established in power with no further reliance on support from other, neighbouring countries, Mugabe violently imposed his revolution – initially on the white farmers in Zimbabwe, but then on people who were not from his particular black ethnicity or did not share his values.

This needs to be contrasted with Mandela's attitude towards racial opposites. His goal, even before he set up the MK, was reconciliation between whites and blacks (and other ethnicities). In the early 1950s, the leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) admired the non-violent approach taken by Gandhi. However, Mandela's view was that Gandhi's non-violence worked only because the British government could be embarrassed into action by it. Non-violence would have no impact on the South African government – 'non-violence was not a moral principle but a strategy; there is no moral goodness in using an ineffective weapon' (Mandela 1994, p. 183). It would be almost a decade before the ANC leadership accepted his argument and allowed him to set up the MK. But even then, when embarking on a programme of violence and aggression, Mandela's use of violence was not to achieve victory, but reconciliation:

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> In planning the direction and form that MK would take, we considered four types of violent activities.... It made sense to start with the form of violence that inflicted the least harm against individuals: sabotage. Because it did not involve the loss of life, it offered the best hope for reconciliation among the races afterwards.
>
> (Mandela 1994, p. 336)

In 1964, Mandela publicly reaffirmed in his trial statement that his use of violence was to achieve equality or parity between the races. He also demonstrated the flexibility of his attitude by saying: 'I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination' (Mandela 1994, p. 438). He stuck to this principle of flexible one-sidedness when he became President of South Africa. He used his personal and positional power to maintain parity between the races, for example opposing the black sports council when they wanted to remove all the hated white symbols of apartheid. He even wore a Springbok cap (one of the hated emblems) when attending the Rugby World Cup in 1995 – though he also encouraged the predominantly white rugby team to sing the black national anthem. And that flexibility and commitment to reconciliation can also be seen in his setting up of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which he pursued against the wishes of many members of the ANC who wanted Nuremburg-style trials for the white persecutors (Meredith 2010, p. 552).

Mugabe's involuntary one-sidedness meant that his campaign and subsequent presidency turned out to be disastrous for many people and it exacerbated the divisions even between black ethnicities. Mandela's flexible one-sidedness meant his campaign and subsequent presidency were successful in overcoming the main racial divisions. Before he set up the MK, he reconciled the racial opposites within himself. Then, over the next four decades, he worked towards that same reconciliation in South African society. Mandela's South Africa is a striking example of what can be achieved through the flexibility furnished by the transcendent function, individually and collectively.

The middle or the third?

Another objection raised by Samuels is that there are circumstances where it is not possible to achieve a middle position. He gives the example of a conflict between a racist and a non-racist, and asks:

> What does it mean [to] 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 would prevail.... There just isn't any synthesis here, nor were the two groups equal to start with. No, it doesn't work.
>
> (Samuels 2010, p. 247)

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This argument may seem compelling, but it is based on some unarticulated premises that are not valid and lead Samuels to an erroneous conclusion. The first premise is that the resolution of any conflict involves a rational compromise that takes some elements of one side (racism) and some of the other (non-racism) to find a middle position that comprises parts of both. However, as Jung points out in *Psychological Types*, the transcendent function is not concerned with rational compromises. If conflicts can be resolved rationally then there is no need for it. Jung's process is concerned with opposites that are *incompatible*; they have no rational compromise – '*tertium non datur*' (Jung 1921, para. 169, original italics). Samuels's example of racism does not demonstrate that the transcendent function is irrelevant to dealing with such conflicts; it demonstrates the conditions under which the transcendent function becomes necessary. This was illustrated in Spitteler's epic by Prometheus and Epimetheus not being able to job-share the position of king. The conundrum was resolved by neither being able to be king and by the appearance of a third person – Messias – who did so instead.

Another premise on which Samuels's example is based is that there is a single definition of what is racism and what is non-racism, so people can be divided into those two camps. However, views of racism tend to differ. For example, those on the political left tend to focus on structural issues that create disadvantages, whilst those on the right tend to focus on treating individuals equally and on merit. These different definitions lead to incompatible solutions because addressing structural issues can disadvantage individuals, and treating everyone on merit can fail to address the structural issues. The subject is not a simple Manichean split, nor even a spectrum between racism and non-racism. The reality of racism is ontologically relative – different but related for each of us – and there is much potential for dialectics between those of different perspectives to produce better and more comprehensive solutions to the problems of racial inequities.

Another premise underlying Samuels's example is that, for the transcendent function to work, it needs the groups to have equal rights *at the start*. He challenges Jung's description of the transcendent function 'as if a dialogue were taking place between two human beings with equal rights' (Samuels 2010, p. 245). However, the transcendent function needs to be seen as part of the overall process, as summarized in the axiom of Maria. It is only in the last part of the process that parity is achieved. In Spitteler's story, parity occurs only in the last ten pages of the 300-page book. The first ten pages describe how Epimetheus acquires all the rights and Prometheus loses his. The next 280 describe (amongst other things) the mistakes they make in dealing with the conflict and the opportunities they miss for a relatively painless reconciliation. It is only in the last ten pages that Epimetheus is forced by circumstances to step down as king, at which point their rights are equalized and the transcendent function starts to furnish society with a *long-term resolution* to that imbalance. We saw a practical illustration of this in

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the example of South Africa, where the rights of the two groups were initially very different. It was only in the late 1980s that parity, the transcendent function, and the new collective attitude towards race started to emerge. The important question is not whether the rights are equal at the start of the process, but whether parity can be achieved towards the end.

The final premise in Samuels's example is that the non-racists need to win the battle to become dominant over the racists. The problem with this is that it conflates the evil (racism) with the people (racists) and overlooks how the transcendent function can result in a transformation of attitudes, which can take place on both sides. Again, this can be seen in the example of South Africa in the 1990s where the encounters with the other side resulted in a transformation of both. White attitudes towards blacks (and other ethnicities) were transformed, and black attitudes towards whites were transformed. One of the key symbolic moments was South Africa winning the 1995 Rugby World Cup:

> The whole of South Africa erupted in celebration, blacks as joyful as whites. Johannesburg became a giant street party. In the northern suburbs, domestic workers rushed out on the streets shouting: 'We've done it! We've done it.' Never before had blacks had cause to show such pride in the efforts of their white countrymen. It was a moment of national fusion that Mandela had done much to inspire.
>
> (Meredith 2010, p. 527)

Also, what we label as racism is not always due to people's attitudes, nor even to immediate structural issues such as poverty, housing etc. This can be illustrated with two examples. The first is the high number of Covid deaths amongst ethnic minorities in 2020, which was often attributed to racism, resulting in calls to change the NHS culture (e.g. Bailey & West 2020). Whilst such racism no doubt exists, and the culture may indeed need to change, there may be other causes that need more urgent attention. For example, home-use pulse oximeters, used to monitor blood oxygen levels in Covid patients, tend to overstate the oxygen levels for people with darker skin (e.g. Lee et al. 1993; Bickler et al. 2005; Feiner et al. 2007). This is likely to have contributed to worse Covid outcomes because ethnic minority patients need to become sicker than their white counterparts before the oximeters flag the need for treatment. A second example, that is more relevant for the future, is that researchers have found that autonomous cars using cameras are more likely to crash into black pedestrians than white, because the colour of their skin makes it harder for the artificial intelligence driving system to distinguish them from the background (Wilson et al. 2019). This will lead to a higher number of black deaths in the future. Such problems are not caused by racist designers who need to be defeated, they are primarily due to the laws of physics and the unintended consequences of new technology. The solution to these examples of ethnic disparity is not to defeat the racists, who in this case

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do not exist, but to introduce more 'discrimination'. Both sets of technologies, or their users when appropriate, need to understand better the differences between black, white, and other ethnicities and then adjust their decisions according to skin colour. For example, for the pulse oximeters, home users may need to alert the emergency services at higher readings for ethnic minorities than for whites (Greenhalgh et al. 2021).

It is undoubtedly the case that racism exists in many forms – overt, unconscious, and structural – but it is not simply a matter of a battle between racists and non-racists. Miller argues that, if the transcendent function is not involved in race relations, then we can fail to see what is really underneath it all, resort to blame and recrimination, and exacerbate division rather than overcome it. Miller describes a dialogue based on the transcendent function as taking place in a metaphoric field in which antithetical, uncompromising positions become 'a doorway to a deeper set of issues' (Miller 2004, p. 135). These deeper issues do not necessarily have to be deep psychological issues, though they can be. They may also be economic, geographic, social, or other issues of which we have not yet become consciously aware, such as the laws of physics which are implicated in the oximeter and autonomous car problems. When those deeper issues are understood, not only are attitudes on both sides transformed, but (in Jung's process) the unconscious can then be allowed to produce creative, imaginative solutions to help solve them.

Leadership

Samuels's final major criticism is that the transcendent function is not pertinent to leadership. His reasons include the dangers in seeing the leaders and led as opposites, the need to accept pluralistic adversarialism, the psychology of leadership not being about individuation, countries always having a split between opponents, and the need for leaders to lead struggles. Samuels points to the potential value in looking at the interplay between fathers and leadership, though he baulks at the idea of a commander-in-chief father. What is missing from Samuels's criticism is any reference to contemporary mainstream theories of leadership, and in particular the theory that has been dominant in leadership theory and practice for the last quarter of a century – transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership emerged from the field of political effectiveness. It was developed initially in the 1970s by James MacGregor Burns, an American biographer and scholar of political leadership. Transformational leadership can be summarized with four 'I's: idealized influence; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio 2006, pp. 6-7). There are

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several parallels between transformational leadership and analytical psychology. For example, in transformational leadership 'leaders must experience personal transformation within themselves before they can truly help to transform other people' (Tucker & Russell 2004, p. 104). This corresponds to Jung's psychological theory in which 'change must begin with one individual' (Jung 1961, para. 599). Burns, like Jung, rejected the idea that power involves one person acting upon another, and he placed more modern conceptions of power – based on motivation and relationship – at the foundation of a transformation process that is interactive and shared. Just as in analytical psychology one 'can exert no influence if you are not susceptible to influence' (Jung 1929, para. 163), Burns viewed leadership power as 'a relationship in which two or more persons tap motivational bases in one another' (Burns 1978, p. 15). This enables a mutual transformation to take place between leader and follower – i.e. '*transforming* … leadership occurs when one or more persons *engage* with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality' (ibid., p. 20, original italics).

There are numerous other similarities between transformational leadership and analytical psychology, such as their attitude towards the hero myth, the need to become more conscious, and both rejecting psychoanalysis because of its emphasis on Oedipal conflicts – and Burns cites Jung's criticisms in doing so (ibid., p. 35). There is also a similarity between transformational leadership and an argument that Thomas Singer made in the same panel as Samuels's paper. Singer introduced the idea of a 'descendent function that masquerades as a transcendent function' (Singer 2010, p. 235). This is similar to the distinction of authentic and pseudo-transformational leadership in which the former leads to morally uplifting outcomes (Bass & Riggio 2006, p. 233). There are also some differences, such as analytical psychology giving much greater emphasis to the role of the unconscious. However, Burns did not assess the suitability of analytical psychology to leadership probably because, it seems, he found Maslow's theory of motivation and self-actualization very appealing. This oversight is regrettable, because Maslow's self-actualization is similar to Jung's self-realization, which is driven in part by the transcendent function. Nevertheless, the relation between transformational leadership and the transcendent function is ripe for much more research and development.

Practical examples

The transcendent function is not a Jungian invention; it is Jung's metaphor to explain a natural phenomenon. Although Jungian analysis may make

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conscious use of it, there are many examples of it occurring in daily – including political – life. We have already seen one major example of it at work, in the early life of Nelson Mandela, his setting up of the MK, negotiations over his release, his early presidency, and in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. But there are many others. One example in the field of economics is the attempt by Mark Carney, the former Governor of the Banks of Canada and of England, to reconcile social justice and economic competence. In his book *Value(s)* (2021), after tracing the history of money and economic theories from the era of bartering, he argues that something has gone wrong with our recent economic systems that has resulted in a one-sided shift of focus away from our shared social values and onto monetary value. He uses the example of the 2007-08 financial crisis to show how economic systems had been differentiated to such a degree that 'value … had become disconnected from reality' (Carney 2021, p. 170). And when Carney uses the word reality, he is usually referring to 'the lived reality of millions of people around the world' (ibid., p. 281). Carney then makes wide-ranging proposals on how these problems can be addressed – some of which he pursued whilst the Governor of the Bank of England and some of which are now shared by other politicians and economists. Carney does not pitch it as an adversarial battle in which socialism must defeat capitalism but as two conflicting principles that need to be reconciled.

Another example is the work of Kate Raworth, whose model of *Doughnut Economics* (Raworth 2017) has become influential at the United Nations (UN). The doughnut is an economic transcendent function that seeks to place economic activity within sustainable boundaries. The goal is to manage the tension between the inner edge of the doughnut, which represents the social foundations of meeting people's needs, and the outer edge, which represents the ecological ceilings or boundaries that humanity must not overshoot. There are twelve social foundations, including things such as food, water, housing, political voice, etc. There are nine ecological ceilings, including things like climate change, biodiversity, air pollution, etc. The doughnut represents the safe and just place for humanity to live. The framework enables the setting of goals and measuring the performance of members of the UN in working towards that doughnut economic area. Figure 1 shows the Doughnut Economics model on the left, and Oxfam's assessment of the UK's performance against that model on the right. The small, earth symbols show where the UK is exceeding its ecological limits and the small, circled people show where it is failing to meet basic social obligations. Raworth's doughnut economics is a transcendent function because it manages the tensions between ecological limits and social needs, and also the tensions between the ecology-social axis and economic activity. It ushers in a new attitude that doesn't see those various tensions as adversarial, but as

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different pieces in the doughnut-shaped jigsaw that can be reconciled, perhaps in ways that are not yet envisaged.[1]

A final example of a transcendent function in politics is The Equiano Project. This is a UK-based, collaborative project between people who are mainly, but not exclusively, from black and other ethnicities and who are seeking to promote a more constructive dialogue about racism. In recent years, discussion of racism, particularly on the political and academic left, has become dominated by critical race theory (CRT) and whiteness studies. However, many people (particularly on the political right) reject these theories as themselves inherently racist and anti-white. For example, Conservative Members of Parliament in the House of Commons have described CRT as 'toxic' (Holden 2021) and a 'dangerous and divisive ideology' (Lewer 2020). A black UK minister for equalities described it as 'pernicious' (Badenoch 2020, col. 1,013) and said that any school that teaches about white privilege, inherited racial guilt, or critical race theory is 'breaking the law' (ibid., col. 1,012). The Equiano Project acknowledge 'there are no easy answers [but they] seek to delve deep into issues to find nuanced and meaningful solutions to complex social ills' (theequianoproject.com 2021). This delving deeply is exactly what Miller says the transcendent function enables (op. cit.).

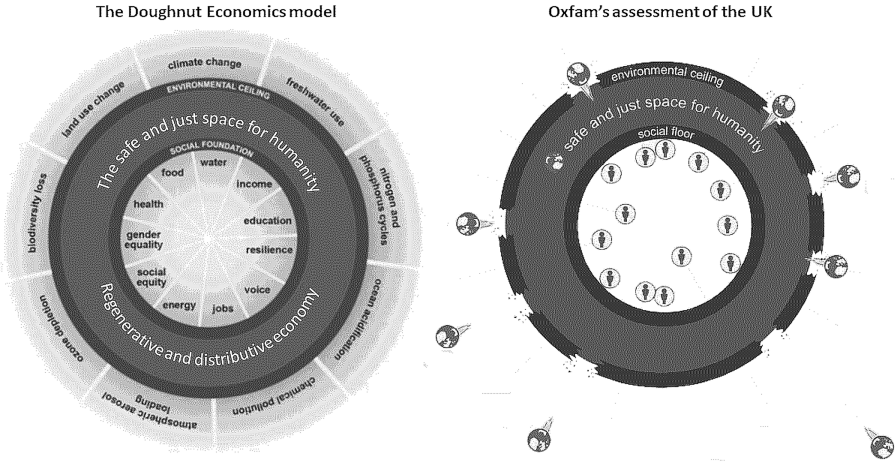

Figure 1. (adapted from Sayers & Trebeck 2015)[1]

[1] The material 'The UK Doughnut – A framework for environmental sustainability and social justice – Sayers, Malcolm; Trebeck, Katherine – 19th February 2015 (adaptation of figures A and B – on pp. 7 & 9)' is adapted with the permission of Oxfam, Oxfam House, John Smith Drive, Cowley, Oxford OX4 2JY, UK, www.oxfam.org.uk. Oxfam does not necessarily endorse any text or activities that accompany the materials, nor has it approved the adapted text.

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Conclusion

Many of Samuels's criticisms are valid – such as hyper-reflection, identification with a neutral position, and proscription of aggression – but they are not criticisms of the transcendent function. At least, not of the transcendent function in Jung's original model described in *Psychological Types*, which eventually became expressed in alchemy and culminated in his final opus *Mysterium Coniunctionis*. On the contrary, some of Samuels's arguments provide support for the transcendent function in politics. In its original form, Jung's process of development leads to much better understanding of political issues, transforms attitudes, and brings greater flexibility of thought, attitude, and behaviour. It also leads to a much better judgment as to the problems that need to be solved and the action we should take. Jung expressed this most directly using his typological example – saying that 'for complete orientation all four functions should contribute equally' (Jung 1923, para. 900). This doesn't mean using each function separately for equal amounts of time, nor even giving them the same priority in every situation. Rather, it means having the flexibility to take account of each perspective as appropriate in each situation. This principle applies to many other kinds of opposite, including politics. If we can take account of the plurality of political perspectives to understand the issues more deeply, we will make much better judgments about what action to take. Whilst there are valid post-Jungian criticisms that can be made of transcendent function theory – such as Singer's descendent function or the concept of pseudo-transformation identified by transformational leadership – these should lead to refinements of the theory. They do not justify jettisoning the transcendent function altogether, because there is much to be gained by using it.

If good is able to integrate evil, the result is a greater good. This is a classically Jungian principle that pervades much of analytical psychology. As Miller puts it, 'the references to the transcendent function implicate just about every core Jungian concept' (Miller 2004, p. 7). If post-Jungian theory has lost sight of the goal of reconciling opposites, or it has rejected the transcendent function, then it has lost something of great value. Rather than standing on the shoulders of giants, in its intense critique of Jung's original work, it has fallen off those shoulders and lost the revolutionary vision that shows us how to progress as a society without having to go through the cycles of extreme and painful revolutions that fail to provide long-term solutions to society's ills. Only an involuntary one-sidedness makes revolution its goal – i.e. changing which of the opposing attitudes or groups is to be dominant. Jung's goal was to supersede such one-sidedness with a transformation that emerges from between the opposites. This moves us away from being in antagonistic worlds that try to destroy each other, to a dialectic world that transforms itself. There are many problems of social justice in the world, but there is a greater problem still – the entrenched political polarization that can prevent those social issues from being solved in the long term. As Miller puts it:

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> Only following an acknowledgement and discussion of the transcendent function … at a cultural level … is there any possibility for the emergence of a paradigm-shifting event in consciousness.… So long as we continue to divide into camps opposing one another instead of opening to the content of the field upon which the battle is being waged, we remain stuck. The transcendent function and its application to cultural issues provides a way around (or underneath) the barriers.
>
> (Miller 2004, pp. 134-36)

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Translations of Abstract

Cet article est une réponse à celui d'Andrew Samuels 'La fonction transcendante en politique: NON!' (2010). Dans cet article il fait un certain nombre de critiques pour

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soutenir son argumentation qui est que la fonction transcendante n'est pas appropriée en ce qui concerne le développement politique et social. Même si certaines de ses critiques sont recevables, elles sont mal orientées parce qu'elles sont contre le caractère unilatéral ou l'identification avec une position unique, qui ne sont pas des qualités propres à la fonction transcendante mais les problèmes qu'elle surmonte. Pour nourrir la contre-argumentation, cet article s'appuie sur des aspects souvent négligés du livre *Les Types Psychologiques* de Jung, des recherches empiriques, la théorie contemporaine du leadership, et des exemples pratiques pour montrer qu'omettre la fonction transcendante du débat politique peut maintenir et exacerber l'inégalité sociale et les divisions politiques qui seraient sinon rapprochées. La fonction transcendante est hautement pertinente en politique et peut aider à accomplir des changements plus profonds et plus durables que ne le ferait une approche unilatérale. C'est un des aspects principaux de la psychologie analytique qui ont le potentiel d'apporter une contribution innovante et transformationnelle au discours politique.

Mots clés: transcendante, fonction, Samuels, politique, Jung, attitude, activism

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Dieser Artikel ist eine Antwort auf Andrew Samuels 'The transcendent function in Politics: NO!' (2010). In diesem Beitrag bringt er eine Reihe von Kritikpunkten vor, um sein Argument zu untermauern, daß die transzendente Funktion der politischen und sozialen Entwicklung nicht angemessen ist. Während eine Reihe seiner Kritiken berechtigt ist, weisen sie in eine falsche Richtung, weil sie gegen Einseitigkeit oder Identifikation mit einer einzigen Position gerichtet sind, was keine Merkmale der transzendenten Funktion sind, sondern Probleme, die sie überwindet. Als Gegenargument stützt sich dieser Beitrag auf oft übersehene Aspekte von Jungs Buch *Psychologische Typen*, empirische Forschung, zeitgenössische Führungstheorie und praktische Beispiele um zu zeigen, daß die Auslassung der transzendenten Funktion aus der politischen Debatte soziale Ungleichheit und politische Spaltungen aufrechterhalten und verschärfen kann, die andernfalls überbrückt werden könnten. Die transzendente Funktion ist für die Politik von hoher Relevanz und kann dazu beitragen, tiefere und länger anhaltende Veränderungen zu erreichen als eine einseitige Herangehensweise. Es ist einer der Kernaspekte der Analytischen Psychologie, der das Potential hat, innovative und transformative Beiträge zum politischen Diskurs zu leisten.

Schlüsselwörter: Schlüsselwörtertranszendent, Funktion, Samuels, Politik, Jung, Haltung, Aktivismus

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Questo articolo è una risposta a "La funzione trascendente in politica: NO!" di Andrew Samuels (2010). In quell'articolo l'Autore fa una serie di critiche in sostegno della sua argomentazione secondo cui la funzione trascendente non è appropriata per lo sviluppo politico e sociale. Sebbene alcune delle sue critiche siano valide, sono male indirizzate poiché sono contrarie all'unilateralità o all'identificazione con una singola posizione, che non sono caratteristiche della funzione trascendente ma problemi che essa supera. Per sostenere una controargomentazione, questo articolo si basa su aspetti spesso trascurati del libro di Jung *Tipi Psicologici*, ricerca empirica, teoria della

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leadership contemporanea, ed esempi pratici per dimostrare che l'omissione della funzione trascendente dal dibattito politico può mantenere ed esacerbare la disuguaglianza sociale e le divisioni politiche che altrimenti potrebbero essere colmate. La funzione trascendente è molto rilevante per la politica e può aiutare ad ottenere un cambiamento più profondo e duraturo rispetto ad un approccio unilaterale. È uno degli aspetti chiave della psicologia analitica che ha il potenziale per apportare contributi innovativi e trasformativi al dibattito politico.

Parole chiave: Parole chiavetrascendente, funzione, Samuels, politica, Jung, attitudine, attivismo

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Данная статья является откликом на статью Эндрю Сэмюэлса «Трансцендентная функция в политике: НЕТ!» (2010). В этой статье он высказывает ряд критических замечаний в поддержку своего мнения о том, что трансцендентная функция неприменима в политических и социальных вопросах. Хотя некоторые из его замечаний обоснованны, ориентированность их ошибочна, так как они направлены против односторонности или идентификации с одной из позиций, что является не свойствами трансцендентной функции, а проблемами, которые она преодолевает. В целях контраргументации данная статья опирается на часто упускаемые из виду аспекты книги Юнга «Психологические типы», эмпирические исследования, современную теорию лидерства и практические примеры, таким образом показывая, что игнорирование трансцендентной функции в политических дебатах может поддерживать и усугублять социальное неравенство и политические разногласия, которые в противном случае можно было бы преодолеть. Трансцендентная функция очень важна в политике; она может способствовать достижению более глубоких и долгосрочных изменений, чем при одностороннем подходе. Она представляет собой один из основных аспектов аналитической психологии, который способен внести инновационный и трансформирующий вклад в политический дискурс.

Ключевые слова: Ключевые словатрансцендентное, функция, Сэмюэлс, политика, Юнг, отношение, активизм

El presente trabajo es una respuesta a 'La función trascendente en política: ¡NO!' de Andrew Samuels (2010). En dicho trabajo el autor realiza algunas críticas para fundamentar su argumento de que la función trascendente no es apropiada para el desarrollo político y social. Mientras que un número de sus críticas son válidas, las mismas están mal encaminadas porque están en contra de una posición unilateral o de la identificación con una posición singular, las cuales no son rasgos de la función trascendente sino de problemas que la misma puede superar. Para contra argumentar, el presente trabajo se basa en aspectos a menudo omitidos del libro *Tipos Psicológicos* de Jung, investigaciones empíricas, teoría contemporánea del liderazgo, y ejemplos prácticos para mostrar que la omisión de la función trascendente en el debate político puede mantener y exacerbar la inequidad social y la división política que de otro modo podría subsanarse. La función trascendente es altamente relevante a la política y

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puede ayudar a lograr cambios más profundos y duraderos que un abordaje unilateral. Es uno de los aspectos centrales de la psicología analítica que posee el potencial de realizar contribuciones innovadoras y transformadoras al discurso político.

Palabras clave: trascendente, función, Samuels, política, Jung, actitud, activismo

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政治中的超越功能:是的!

本文是对Andrew Samuels在2010年所写的论文"政治中的超越功能:不!"的回应。在那篇论文中，他提出了一些批评以支持他的论点，即超越性功能不适合政治和社会发展。虽然他的一些批评是有道理的，但这些批评的方向是错误的，因为这些批评反对片面性或对单一立场的认同，而这不是超越功能的特点，而是它所克服的问题。为了进行反驳，本文借鉴了荣格《心理类型》一书中经常被忽视的方面、实证研究、当代领导力理论和实际案例，以表明超越功能在政治辩论中的遗漏会维持并加剧社会不平等和本来可以弥合的政治分歧。超越性功能与政治高度相关，与片面的方法相比，它可以帮助实现更深入、更持久的变革。它是分析心理学的核心内容之一，有可能对政治话语做出创新和变革的贡献。

关键词: 关键词超越，功能，Samuels，政治，荣格，态度，行动主义

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