

Response to Wolfgang Giegerich's "The End of Meaning and the Birth of Man"

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I am appreciative that Wolfgang Giegerich, with his keen, philosophically trained mind, has offered us such an intelligent critique of Jung's psychology. I feel it to be as important, and as timely, as Jung's critique of psychoanalysis was in 1913. Just as Jungian psychotherapists who elected to go on with their version of psychoanalysis had to take the critique Jung offered of the Freudian school seriously, contemporary Jungian psychotherapists must really try to integrate the insights offered by Giegerich if they are to be conscious of the intellectual and emotional choices they have made in attempting to carry a Jungian depth psychology forward. This is not to say, as a certain reading of Giegerich's sometime polemic might dictate, that the practice of Jungian analysis has lost its *raison d'être* and can only henceforward be an anachronism. Rather, it's to admit that those of us who want to go on being Jungians can no longer hide behind notions of the unconscious and of the eternal verities encoded as archetypes to avoid looking at the conditions under which such theoretical magic boxes became necessary and the problems Jung was attempting to solve by offering such intellectual gambits to us. As I understand Dr. Giegerich's argument, he is saying that the promise of 'meaning' implicit in the Jungian project of embracing and learning from the unconscious conceals the wish to be let off the hook of threatening aspects of the modern condition that in fact are not susceptible to alteration, even by this alchemical stratagem.

I am not certain how much of Jung's thinking Giegerich himself would prefer his readers to retain within the psychology he would find suitable were they to accept their modernity. The Hegelian goal of Giegerich's approach to Jung can be found in a word that recurs throughout the essay: sublation. In his book *The Soul's Logical Life*, Giegerich explains that "'sublation' is the translation of the Hegelian term *Aufhebung* in the threefold sense of (a) negating and canceling, (b) rescuing and retaining, (c) raising to a new level" (Giegerich, 1998, p. 67). I found on the Internet a passage that seems to me to unpack the intent of this term, in a book applying this thinking process to Hegel's own philosophy:

Hegel—definitely one of the greatest teachers of mankind—taught us that if we want to refute a philosophy, we cannot do it

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from "outside" by arbitrary arguments but through unfolding and developing its own immanent and internal contradictions, which it is not yet aware about. (Stojanow, 2001)

Jung, though developing in his essay on the transcendent function something that looks very much like Hegel's dialectic, seems to have adopted the aversion toward Hegel of a quite another philosophical ancestor, Schopenhauer, and to have written Hegel's philosophy off as far too speculative, tendentious in his vocabulary, and ungrounded in the reality of everyday experience. Within this antipathy for the great German philosopher of mind, I sense the clash of psychological attitudes for which Jung gave us a typological vocabulary—the irrational dislike of someone (Jung) accustomed to using intuition in an introverted way (finding the soul within) toward someone (Hegel) who deploys his intuition in an extraverted intuitive way (to find the movement of the world spirit). This dislike of the style of Hegel's vision is coupled with a parallel psychological antagonism toward how rationality is configured in this same historical figure. Toward Hegel, Jung levels the suspicion that someone who prefers what Jung called "extraverted thinking" (and in my view, this was Jung's most natural—and helpful—way of deploying his "thinking function") is all too predictably likely to direct toward someone who develops his ideas in a more "introverted thinking" way (Hegel).

From this same typological perspective, it is only natural to ask whether in siding so decisively with Hegel and against Jung in the matter of what Giegerich calls "the soul's logical life," he has not taken a corollary aim at Jung's introverted intuition and extraverted thinking. I freely confess that I myself am limited in my ability to answer this question because (from the admittedly limited perspective of Jungian typological analysis) I am more like Hegel, and (I think) Giegerich, in preferring to use my intuition in an extraverted manner and my thinking in an introverted way. I have always assumed that my tendency to look at the more dogmatic Jungian formulations with a certain asperity was on the basis of this type difference on my part from Jung. But a closer look at this paper convinces me that Giegerich, to the extent that he is looking critically at how Jung's thought gets stuck in what I, not he, am calling the "introverted thinking function" and "extraverted intuitive function," is actually looking at the *failures* of these functions to "function" for Jung, that is, by recognizing and critiquing the limits of their own approach to soul so that his true psychology can emerge. In other words, it is because Jung is straying beyond his normal type boundaries that a shadow problem is created where there need not have been one.

The method of analysis Jung gave us in psychological types anatomizes thinking into its moments, and from that perspective it is Jung when he is using *introverted* thinking that Giegerich is taking to task here, not Jung the extraverted thinker, cheerfully and generously creating categories by which the psyche can be recognized. It's only the introverted thinking function in Jung that insists, when it takes over in its dogmatic voice, that these categories are "within" us and eternal—when in fact they are only remembered from some former moment of soul living its logical life in the world.

For Giegerich (as for Hillman, who was the first to point out the "senex" character of some of analytical psychology's most insistent formulations), what I

would call Jung's introverted thinking has a distinctly shadowy, Saturnine quality—Saturn, or Kronos, swallowing the psyche and forcing it to remain unborn within rather than able to take up its logical life in the world. This paper is at its most disturbing, and brilliant, when it says, "Only by swallowing could the impression be created that the images emerging from inside are absolutely spontaneous and pure, pristine nature, and our experience of them directly from the source" (see endnote 38 of this paper for the passage in Jung that creates this impression.) As Giegerich puts it, describing Jung's psychological thinking when it takes on this sinister introverted bias, "Kronos as *father* creates a secondary, unnatural womb for his already-born children. The invention of the unconscious is likewise the device through which *modern consciousness as abstract form* can be used for the purpose of serving as a protective womb for traditional knowledge and imitating a sense of in-ness."

"In-ness," Giegerich makes clear, can only be imitated nowadays, because without an overarching mythological perspective accepted by everyone, the way we think about our lives is irrevocably out, in the sense that we are not "in" anything, and nothing is "in" us. We can, however, think—and now I am using Giegerich's terminology, not Jung's. For Giegerich, who explains this more fully in *The Soul's Logical Life*, thinking is not a *function* of consciousness; it is consciousness, the soul's way of being fully out there in the world. For him, the awkward moments come when thought is replaced by one of its attributes—and that is what happens when Jung, having implicitly promised not to do so, gets into one of his Jungianist modes, insisting that life has to *mean* something, and something *particular*, as if it were not enough to engage with life as it is. I think, with Giegerich, this is Jung the senex speaking (he himself called the wise old man "the archetype of meaning"), and I think, also with Giegerich, that we can move Jungian thought, and Jungian thinking, past that moment of itself into something more related to life as it is without any real contradiction of our identity as Jungians.

Within this paper, the most telling passages to speak for the essential vitality of Jungian thought when sublated out of its knowing dogmatism are the interpretations of two late dreams of Jung. The first is about the UFOs with the magic lantern pointing straight at Jung, which Giegerich interprets as the thinking of the present, Aquarian age, coming to train its brilliant, focused, and unfragmented gaze on Jung, bent nostalgically on inwardness, from *outside*, where it draws energy from a soul living its logical life as part of the intelligence of the universe. The second regards Jung's dream of the dreaming yogin who had Jung's face, and whose awakening will cause Jung to cease to be. I have read that dream many times, and it always has an uncanny effect on me: I recognize it somehow, but I don't know what it means. The idea that Giegerich offers here that this dream represents Jung's encounter with the consciousness coming into being, of which Jung (and Jungianism) would be just an historical phase. I like to feel that nothing would have delighted Jung more than to know that his psychology was to be dreamed forward, until the moment when he was not needed, and that awareness had replaced him.

What is utterly enchanting in the thought of this paper is its confidence in the process of thought undoing the moments of itself that would prevent psychological thinking. I believe it has the capacity to get us to look at those moments in

ourselves. This is an original approach to the notion of consciousness, quite different in both its methods and its conclusions from the usual Jungian theory of consciousness as based in psychological types, archetypes, and the Self as concentrating omniscience and parceling out that knowledge to a ego gradually becoming more ready for it. What is Jungian is its belief that the psyche itself can tell us where our consciousness ought to be going. I would hope my colleagues will, in a similar Jungian spirit, recognize in this paper not an argument with the soul, but an argument from the soul, for its emotional passion bespeaks a crucial stage in the overcoming of our field's transference to Jung, and its intellectual integrity models for all us who gather together in Jung's name the duty to go right on thinking lest we squander our psychological birthright.

References

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