Is psychology as the discipline of interiority structurally neurotic?

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While I was reading Wolfgang Giegerich’s *Neurosis The Logic of a Metaphysical Illness* for the first time, I stumbled upon a passage in part 3, in which Giegerich uses the two sides of the bewitched princess of Andersen’s fairytale “The traveling companion” (the day-person and the night-person) to explain the feature of immunization in neurotic dissociation, and imagines what each person would say of the other’s position:

The princess as the day-person that she is would simply deny that she indeed believes in the soul’s thesis that the concept of marriage is its own fulfillment and as such self-sufficient. She would of course (not only publicly claim, but also privately) honestly think that this is nonsense. Of course, there is a difference between the mere idea of something and its reality; of course, if you want to marry you need somebody else. How could anyone be so stupid as to claim anything else? Not her, at any rate. Conversely, she as the night-person would adamantly insist on the soul’s view that a real concept is its own reality and absolutely not in need of anything from outside to complement it. Anyone stating anything else just does not understand. The rational criticism that the day-person just expressed is based on ignorance, on not being initiated, on small-mindedness. Such thinking may be good enough for the superficiality of everyday life, but not in higher, essential regards. She, as the soul- or night-person, at any rate could only laugh at it. (*NLMI*, p. 213-214)

A spontaneous superficial association imposed itself to my mind, due to the evident similarity of the dissociation between how the two persons in the princess think and the difference between the two different relations to reality stemming from the two poles constitutive of the psychological difference (ego and soul). This association naturally gave rise to a serious question: “Could it be that psychology as the discipline of interiority is structurally neurotic?” I realized that my immediate negative answer to this question was based on an unreflected belief: I simply assumed that our discipline was exempt from such charge, but I could give no reasons to substantiate this belief. In order to reach a reflected standpoint and thus to be able to answer the question in a rational way, I should from the outset accept the hypothetical possibility of an affirmative answer to it, and then delve into the relevant texts.

I sought inspiration for undertaking this critical reflection in Giegerich himself:
We want to find out whether our psychological theory has taken over neurotic thought patterns and mechanisms into the structure of its own ‘consciousness’ and whether it tries to fight or cure those very same mechanisms in the patient in order to defend itself against becoming aware of its own neurosis. Does psychology ‘act out’ (on the level of theory), instead of ‘remembering’, erinnern? (CEP I, p. 44)

If that spontaneous superficial association which triggered the need for this reflection proved to be rationally justified, psychology as the discipline of interiority would be in no better position than “Jung’s virgin-like deepest psychological conviction” (NLMI, p. 218) with regards to being in the grip of its own neurosis.

A first and immediate way of investigating whether there is a neurotic pattern cocooned in our discipline is to examine its grounding notion: insofar as the psychological difference is the conceptual heart of psychology as the discipline of interiority, if one manages to demonstrate that the difference is in fact a neurotic dissociation, then it would inevitably follow that “our psychological theory has taken over neurotic thought patterns and mechanisms into the structure of its own ‘consciousness’”.

Could the psychological difference be seen as a logical dissociation? Unless one adopts an undialectical standpoint, the answer is unquestionably no. We can talk of a logical dissociation in the strict sense only when the two terms are positivized (see WIS, p. 299), because the positivized difference “excludes the moment of unity between the opposites and reify each” (ibid.). Hence, in order to dismiss the charge of neurotic logical dissociation within the logical constitution of the psychological difference we have to dialectically stress “the moment of unity between the opposites”. This moment is to be found in the oneness of the I (in soul as subjectivity), so that “ego” (I) and “soul” (not-I) are not two reified agents, but two “different styles of knowing and understanding: egoic knowing versus soul knowing” (WIS, p. 299, my italics). Both forms of knowing, though excluding one another, are the expression of the same subject: the one I. If “soul” and “ego” were absolutely unrelated, there would be a logical dissociation; however, we can transpose to their definitional dialectical relation what Giegerich says in another context: instead of being wholly other, absolute stranger to ego, soul is ego’s own other (see WIS, p. 80).
On the other hand, “ego” is an exclusively modern concept, and so only the modern version of the psychological difference is rigorously expressed as the difference between ego and soul. This is not an irrelevant quibble with regards to our topic. Whereas the fundamental avertedness of the I from the soul and the fundamental departedness of the soul for the I “describe the primordial and authentic relation between I and soul, the psychological difference” (WIS, pp. 130-131), even “long before there was what we call the ego” (ibid.), one should pay attention to the fact that “the avertedness of the I from the soul is one thing; the systematic blindness to, and neurotic dissociatedness of the modern positivistic ego from, the soul is wholly another” (WIS, p. 131). This means that in the modern form of consciousness we have a novelty: the inner generic logical difference between I and soul within the psychological difference is given a new form as the specific logical difference between ego and soul. What is the specificity of this modern form of the psychological difference? It stems from the simultaneously logical and historical event of emancipation from soul, or the “birth of man”, which institutes the new form of I as ego. And ego is by definition blind to soul, not simply averted from it. In the relation of avertedness, the I can be conscious of soul; in the relation of blindness, the ego is necessarily, logically unconscious of soul. This logical and historical circumstance is the true origin of the psychology of the unconscious, and also of its critical and dialectical reformulation in psychology as the discipline of interiority.

Now, due to the emancipated status of modern ego, the “systematic blindness to, and neurotic dissociatedness of the modern positivistic ego from, the soul” is irrevocably introduced into the modern form of consciousness. Therefore, the universal logical difference of I and soul cannot avoid being affected by the ego’s neurotic dissociatedness from soul, introduced in the new inner configuration of the modern version of the psychological difference: avertedness seems to be converted into blind dissociatedness (or dissociated blindness). In brief: the psychological difference in modernity harbors the seed of neurosis, planted in the ego’s systematic blindness to soul, which is a condition for the production of neurosis by soul. And as psychology as the discipline of interiority is a modern discipline based on this modern form of the psychological difference, it cannot help being haunted by the spectre of neurosis.
In order to better understand this spectre and at the same time to exorcize it, we can list some of the similarities present in the neurotic position and in the psychological position with regards to the opposites that are involved in both:

(1) In neurosis, “the two persons talk at cross-purposes, thereby changing their possible confrontation into two parallel monologues that theoretically can go on into eternity” (NLMI, p. 214) Now, think of the day-person as the pragmatic I (ego/civil man), and the night-person as the psychological I (psychologist): isn’t that parallel monologic cross-purposed talk (or speech) what happens logically between the pragmatic I and the psychological I? “What this means is that the soul’s self-relation, its discussion with itself is disrupted. (...) The soul’s reflexive logic is ended.” (ibid.) Isn’t that exactly a methodological consequence of the psychological difference taken in itself? The ego world is on principle (logically) left aside, and it will not be touched by the psychological perspective, and vice-versa. The “methodological rejection of ego knowing” is “indispensable for the constitution of soul knowing, the constitution of true psychology” (WIS, p. 299).

(2) In neurosis, “the two small I’s are deaf to each other” (NLMI, p. 215); in psychology, as a logical consequence of the modern notion of psychological difference, the “two small I’s” (the pragmatic and the psychological) must be systematically, logically deaf to each other – otherwise we would have ego-psychology pure and simple. Therefore, the neurotic deafness seems to reappear in the logical level.

(3) The neurotic dissociation means a logical split in truth itself: “Truth is cut apart into two truths, into (1) a value aspect, or abstract truth in the narrower sense, a truth that has the nature of principle; and (2) an efficacy aspect, or abstract reality, one that best might be described as positive-factual reality” (NLMI, p. 220). This split can also be expressed as a split of reality into two realities: “(1) the soul reality of the night and (2) the pragmatic reality of the day” (NLMI, p. 220). However – and this point is decisive -, the split or dissociation in itself, be it in truth or in reality, is not per se neurotic. Only when “the abstract truth of the soul claims for itself the right to, just like that, count in pragmatic reality after all, even rule over reality” (NLMI, p. 220-221) does the split become neurotic – and, nota bene, in this way the split itself is denied and concealed. This split
becomes neurotic when soul itself insists on refusing it through a logical “denial, dis-ownment, repudiation” (NLMI, p. 213), so that soul reality sort of invades pragmatic reality – precisely in the form of neurosis. In this sense, neurosis is the logical denial of “born man’s” emancipation from soul. The truths produced by ego knowing and by soul knowing must be kept apart, if one is to avoid neurosis – which demands the simultaneity of two excluding truths reigning “at the same time and concerning the same” (NLMI, p. 212, my italics). And this keeping apart is precisely the job of the psychological difference: it prevents the simultaneity of the two truths in pragmatic reality.

Psychology and neurosis are twin offspring from the new post-metaphysical status of modern consciousness. Both are indissolubly related to metaphysics: neurosis is a metaphysical illness, whereas psychology is sublated metaphysics (see WIS, p. 307). Both in a certain sense preserve metaphysics in post-metaphysical times. Neurosis is thus the inevitable other of psychology, or rather, it is psychology’s own other, within the psychological sphere. What, then, is the difference between neurosis as soul’s “stubborn” insistence on “an artificial substitute for the lost metaphysics of two or three hundred years ago” (WIS, p. 166), and psychology as soul’s “healthy” preservation of this very same lost metaphysics of two or three hundred years ago in the form of sublated metaphysics?

After absolving the psychological difference from the charge of being structurally neurotic, we have come to the subject of truth, which is essentially related to psychology’s status as sublated metaphysics. Now we have to take a second step in our reflection: we must remember what is meant by this expression – “sublated metaphysics” – and then examine its relation with “truth”.

Regarding its status within the modern world, psychology as the discipline of interiority is an asylum to the ancient metaphysical logic of identity, of the copula, vinculum, ligamentum, or coniunctio, and of the syzygial unity of the unity and difference of the opposites, however asylum only as reduced to the form and status of a mere methodological approach, not as an ontology (…) Psychology is sublated metaphysics, irrevocably sublated metaphysics. But also sublated metaphysics. (WIS, p. 307).
Notice that metaphysics is preserved in psychology in its logic, in the way it thinks, but not necessarily in its contents, and definitely not in its absolute refusal of any ontological claims. Psychology thinks as metaphysics does, but only as a procedure, a methodology, a way of looking at things, without claiming ontological validity, without saying that things are as it sees.

Here it is of the utmost importance to remark that “ontological” in Giegerich is always associated with positivity, entity, substance (cf. WIS, p. 26-29). Consequently, absolute negativity could not be an ontological category. However, this restricted sense of “ontological” does not exhaust all what is implied in an ontological assertion. If we examine Plato’s ontological conception, for instance, which is organized around the idea of being, we see that being is not the ultimate fundament of the real, but is itself the result of two polar principles – the One and the Dyad – which consequently are not being, but beyond being (as substance, or essence), epekeina tes ousias. Thus these principles are absolute negative, and nonetheless they necessarily and implicitly belong to any ontological assertion as the fundament of being and of its intelligibility. Therefore, ontology is not necessarily alien to logical absolute negativity: it presupposes it as its ultimate intelligible foundation, the real foundation of the intelligibility of the real (its “soul”, in our parlance). The distinction between the two levels (logic and ontology) cannot be a dissociation, otherwise any ontic phenomenon would be intrinsically unintelligible and unthinkable; consequently, no ontological assertion would be possible; scientific knowledge also would not be possible, as it presupposes the intelligibility of positive-factual reality (and, by the way, science cannot on principle explain this intelligibility, which thus is the prerogative of ontology); and finally, the dissociation would render the logical dimension of the real either an unreal flatus vocis, or a free floating positivity. (This aside was necessary, because it will allow us to understand the problem with our psychology’s epistemic stance.)

Returning to our definition of psychology as sublated metaphysics, let us stress that metaphysics is preserved in psychology as the discipline of interiority, but reduced to the status of “mere” methodology. But the definition of a discipline in terms of its specific methodology is valid for any form of knowledge. For instance: scientific knowledge (in the contemporary sense of science) is also “a way of looking at things brought to bear on given phenomena or material” – namely, positive-factual reality. This reality is in a certain sense created (or opened, disclosed) by the very specific
methodology of science. And science also does not make any ontological assertions (in the sense of claiming to know the *essence* or *being* of any phenomenon, as this is a metaphysical issue and these are metaphysical categories, excluded on principle from any methodological approach not based on the metaphysical kind of thinking).

The primacy given to methodology as a way of looking at things means that the modern conception of knowledge is *skeptical*. From the epistemic stance of skepticism, any form of knowledge corresponds to a given *perspective*, sanctioned by a specific *methodological approach*. It is the rule of skepticism in knowledge that precludes any ontological assertions. Traditional metaphysics is ruled out because it cannot accept the status of mere perspective: by definition, it claims to be able to know the absolute and real condition of possibility for the *reality* of any object studied through any perspective whatsoever, and thus it cannot be a perspective among others, as it belongs to a supra-ordinate logical level. The so-called “end of Metaphysics” means basically the absolute refusal of this higher level as a valid basis for knowledge, in the contemporary skeptical definition of “knowledge”.

Jung consciously presented his psychology according to the skeptical stance ruling contemporary scientific knowledge. In so doing, he betrayed his truth, according to Giegerich (see *CEP* VI, p. 289-322; see also *CEP* IV, p. 162-163). “It was a psychologically fatal mistake of Jung’s to split psychology off from philosophy, i.e., from its *intrinsic* speculative nature, and to base his psychological approach on an empiricism for which he relied on the findings in some other field” (*CEP* VI, p. 312). In psychology as the discipline of interiority this fatal mistake is corrected, so that psychology becomes the legitimate heir of metaphysics in the modern world (but only as its “asylum”). *Sublated* metaphysics. But then it cannot be aligned epistemologically within the skeptical framework of the sciences. It is a one of a kind discipline. It is the discipline of truth (*SLL*, p. 217), not in the sense of epistemology, or of the history of ideas. Its method is not based on the presupposition of exteriority, of the dichotomy subject-object: it sees any phenomenon as “*noêsis noêseôs*, a self-thinking thought”, and thus it discloses “the thought as whose actual thinking the *prima materia* (whatever it may be in each concrete case) *is*” (*CEP* II, p. 16 and 17). In this too it exhibits its kinship to metaphysics, inasmuch as it belongs to a *sui generis* logical level and aims at the thinking *essence* of reality. Furthermore, notice that the prima materia *is*, and thus even the absolute negativity of the “self-thinking thought” necessarily presupposes and
includes within itself the absolute negative concept of being – otherwise no psychological phenomenon or alchemical matter whatsoever could be dialectically the external manifestation or embodiment of the absolute negative self-thinking thought (cf. CEP II, p. 16), and the methodological approach of interiority would be vain, sheer nonsense. Soul would be mere flatus vocis, “simply nothing, a word to be struck off from our vocabulary” (WIS, p. 22). But, differently from metaphysics, psychology as the discipline of interiority is not foundational, and it does not provide any ontological assertions either as its own presupposition or as the result of psychological knowing: it is only a “mere” way of looking at things. We have to examine this point more carefully.

When psychology loses this humility and forgets about this its sublatedness (for example, by claiming to have an immediate real, ‘official’, and public significance for this age…), it turns into an ideology. (…) when, conversely, psychology forgets about its being ‘metaphysics’, it loses its soul and ‘the soul’, turning into Lange’s ‘psychology without soul’. (WIS, p. 308)

Psychology turning into an ideology is precisely the way through which it inadvertently becomes neurotic. To prevent this “infection” then, it must stick to its sublatedness. As one consequence of this status, it has to give up any claim of “public significance for this age”. In this passage, Giegerich has in mind psychology’s inflated and ridiculous self-presentation as “a salvationist scheme for individuals and the culture at large” (WIS, p. 308). I fully concur with this much needed sober consciousness of psychology’s humble limits. But does this mean that psychology as the discipline of interiority does not have any public significance in this age? Going straight to the point: doesn’t psychological knowledge have an epistemic significance of its own in our times? In other words: what does psychology’s sublatedness imply in terms of the epistemological validity of psychological truth?

On the one hand, due to its one of a kind form of knowing, the epistemological validity of psychology as the discipline of interiority cannot be established by the same epistemic criteria valid for scientific knowledge. In accord with the move from soul as substance (ancient and medieval metaphysics), via soul as subject-as-substance (Descartes), to soul as subjectivity as form (German Idealism), until reaching its present status – soul as form or syntax as such, psychology “turned into method, a method,
moreover, which animates the real process in contrast to a merely subjective method applied from outside to the real process” (WIS, p. 290). It does not have a delimited field (WIS, p. 288; see CW 9i § 112), and consequently it cannot be a science. It is not a doctrine about something (as any science is). It has to be “nothing but a particular methodological procedere, an approach to (potentially all kinds of) possible experience, a mode or style of perceiving, reflecting, interpreting, and reacting, a form of consciousness” (WIS, p. 288), and this method has a name: dialectics, exactly as it was conceived in Hegel’s metaphysics.

But psychology also cannot be a simple continuation of Hegel’s metaphysics, despite “its fundamental structural closeness to the uroboric stance of Hegel’s philosophy” (WIS, p. 288). What is the fundamental difference here? It is in that Hegel’s thought “came with the claim of being or achieving true knowing”, whereas this claim is no longer possible for modern psychology. Psychology is no more than one of the possible methodological approaches to what happens and has given up any claim to being or striving for true knowing. Psychology is merely one of the things one can do if one is so inclined. Although the sense of truth is still vital to it, this sense of truth, or its truth itself, is merely internal to it as a methodological guiding principle and aim. Its validity remains enclosed within itself. It does not extend out beyond itself (WIS, p. 288).

Two remarks on this stance. First: by giving up any claim to true knowing, which precisely would be an ontological assertion, in psychology as the discipline of interiority a tribute is paid to the prevailing nihilistic logic of our world (on the logic of nihilism, see D’AGOSTINI, 2008; see also D’AGOSTINI, 2002, but unfortunately there is no English edition of this latter work). Second: if psychology as the discipline of interiority does not have epistemic significance in our times, meaning that the way how it looks at things (its methodological standpoint) does not disclose an objectively valid truth of the real as self-thinking thought today, then this self-assumed humble epistemic restriction turns it into nothing but a private theoretical hobby, self-enclosed in its own bubble, which is concocted by its methodological stance. In this sense, despite all its sophisticated dialectical form of consciousness, psychology as the discipline of interiority does not truly escape the fate of Jung’s psychology (see CEP VI, p. 312-316): it keeps the idea of a special psychological truth, but only as merely internal to it.
As psychologists, in the truly modern sense of psychology as the discipline of interiority, we accept unconditionally Schopenhauer’s unbridgeable difference, which leads to the (self-defeating, metaphysical) assertion: “There is nothing to see” (WIS, p. 281). This assertion is substantiated psychologically when we acknowledge that there is no inner infinity in contemporary phenomena anymore, so that “the psychologist is inevitably in this day and age a dinosaur” (SLL, p. 59), because “to apperceive [a given contemporary phenomenon, such as the World Wide Web] in such a way that in reality, even if unwittingly, one is dealing with [its internal infinity] becomes absolutely impossible under these circumstances” (SLL, p. 58-59, italics added to emphasize the reference to psychology’s method). At bottom, this means that, concerning the contemporary status of soul, the methodological stance of psychology as the discipline of interiority is actually sterile: in approaching psychologically “what happens”, we find the self-thinking thought as which a given phenomenon is, but this does not tell anything at all of how “what happens” really is, of what this given phenomenon really is – otherwise it would be an ontological assertion. Nominalism: soul (internal infinity) is not truly real anymore. “We do not have to read a sentence like the one about the soul that speaks about itself as a kind of ‘meta-physical’ or ontological assertion. We can, and I think we should, read it as a methodological principle” (CEP II, p. 7). As I see it, this ultimately amounts to a kind of self-castration for the sake of not clashing against the post-metaphysical stance which solely grants the status of modernity, once in our historical time “the soul has already experienced, and definitively knows, that the times of metaphysic (…) are once and for all over” (WIS, p. 331, my italics). Again we have that consequence which I have mentioned before: we adopt the idea of a special psychological truth, but only as merely internal to psychology itself. An epistemic bubble.

Thus, when we think psychologically, either we are engaged in pathetically “playing metaphysics”– our own kind of autistic Disneyland -, when turning our eyes to contemporary “soul-less” phenomena not liable to be really reached by psychology’s metaphysical methodological approach, or we are merely the accredited janitors of a museum of past soul truths, when studying them in bygone “timeless documents of the soul”.

But, on the other hand, at the same time in psychology as the discipline of interiority this alleged and self-imposed epistemic bubble is simply ignored and there is
a claim to a stronger, uncastrated objective epistemic reach to our discipline, “in this day and age”. For we explicitly work and think under the assumption that the logos or syntax as “the soul of and in the Real” is “everywhere, a daily reality” (WIS, p. 152). Thus, the objectivity of the all-pervading logical dimension, which is uroborically psychology itself and its privileged aim, is undisputable for psychology as the discipline of interiority: “while in fact being intently oriented towards all the things and events in the ordinary life, while concentrating on the semantics of reality, people are at the same time ‘averted’ from and blind to soul in those very things and events, the syntax animating ordinary life” (WIS, p. 153). The fact that in our modern post-metaphysical situation there is not an open acknowledgement of the logos eôn (soul’s truth) – “There is nothing to see” - does not hinder us from unmistakably assume as psychologists that, in this very same situation, “the ‘sun’ is there, but the ‘eye’ is lacking” (WIS, p. 153). Consequently, there is an explicit knowing of the real presence of the “sun” (logos eôn) “there” (in ordinary life), even if this presence must be thought of as being absolute negative (like “life” is really present in a living entity, despite not being itself an entity).

Realism: soul (“the syntax animating ordinary life”) is real. And it is this true knowing of the realness of soul which allows and at the same time requires the corollary: “The modern blindness to and dissociation from soul is the prevailing state of affairs, but it is wrong” (WIS, p. 153), for one cannot step out of soul. This statement not only necessarily implies a claim of truly knowing the soul of the real (“the syntax animating ordinary life”) and its inescapable realness, but it also applies this knowing to the modern situation of consciousness (as manifested in its “prevailing state of affairs”) and reaches an encompassing epistemic (not moral) judgment about it.

Let me try to summarize my point here. In psychology as the discipline of interiority, on the one hand, it is assumed that in the modern state of affairs “a veritable reflection, consciousness’s returning to itself the way it had always been possible during the age of metaphysics (…) has now become absolutely out of question” (WIS, p. 281, my italics), so that, in order to truly reach the notion of psychology as the discipline of interiority, it is necessary to bow down to this state of affairs, and to admit that our discipline “has given up any claim to being or striving for true knowing” (WIS, p. 288). But, on the other hand, we assume as psychologists that “the logos eôn, the soul’s truth, is not released into its being true”, because “the modern blindness to and dissociation from soul is the prevailing state of affairs”; then, performing a “veritable reflection”
through our methodological standpoint in psychology, we reach the realness of
the soul’s truth sunken in the ordinary life, releasing it into its being true, and in this way
we truly know that not only modern consciousness is blind to soul, but that this
blindness is wrong. But we are forced to conceal this true knowing from ourselves as a
true knowing.

What do we have here at the level of the structural, definitional requirements of
psychology as the discipline of interiority? Dissociation. One hand does not know what
the other is doing/thinking. Self-contradiction: the simultaneity of two excluding truths
reigning “at the same time and concerning the same” (NLMI, p. 212). Immunization: an
absolute ignoring of the contradiction itself, so that two contradictory standpoints can
“be held at the same time without their clashing with each other” (NLMI, p. 214-215).
Chiasmus: the seeing psychological I discloses everyday reality in its animating syntax;
but as this cannot be an ontological assertion (see my digression on Platonic ontology),
it simulates being blind and states that it does not provide a true knowing; this is
equivalent to agreeing that there is nothing to see, which on its part is a seeing assertion
assumed by the blind ego; hence, there is a mutual exchange of the predicates of
psychological I and ego. “Yes, truly”: “There is nothing to see”; “a veritable reflection
has become absolutely out of question”; to apperceive the internal infinity in a
contemporary phenomenon “becomes absolutely impossible under these circumstances”
– “but still more truly”: “The ‘sun’ is there, but the ‘eye’ is lacking”; “the modern
blindness to and dissociation from soul is wrong”; “inasmuch as every existing reality
exists as and by virtue of the inherent real thought whose embodiment it is, technology,
too, is an existing thought” (CEP II, p. 17). In brief: neurosis.

Wolfgang Giegerich has said that “positivism is, as it were, a metaphysical
thought-style deprived of the metaphysical world dimension belonging to it” (WIS, p.
23). Mutatis mutandis, the same can be applied to psychology as the discipline of
interiority: it is a metaphysical thought-style (“a mode or style of perceiving, reflecting,
interpreting, and reacting”, metaphysics “reduced to the form and status of a mere
methodological approach”) consciously self-deprived of the metaphysical world
dimension belonging to it (through giving up “any claim to being or striving for true
knowing”). As such, psychology as the discipline of interiority is, as it were, the
paradoxical nihilistic form assumed by the metaphysics of absolute negativity under the
post-metaphysical logical conditions of modernity. This strongly resembles a neurotic
compromise formation, with the sole fundamental difference that in psychology we are implicitly conscious of that status. This consciousness reveals itself when we accept the hobby status of psychology as the discipline of interiority. In this case, and in the light of its structurally neurotic epistemic stance, psychology is nothing but the conscious simulation of metaphysics in post-metaphysical times, a harmless pastime with no epistemic relevance, “merely one of the things one can do if one is so inclined”. The conjugation of the nihilistic framework of psychology with its self-definition as a pastime forcefully evokes Nietzsche’s characterization of the Last Man in the prologue of Thus Spake Zarathustra (cf. NIETZSCHE, 1927, p. 12): the choice of a nihilistic pastime as one’s job is a feature of the condition of Last Men. Thus we can say that as psychologists we are logically at the same level of Nietzsche’s Last Man.

Coming to the end of this external reflection based on a philosophical standpoint, whose result is astonishing to myself, I realize that, after all, there was at least some rational plausibility lying dormant in the spontaneous association which challenged my initial unreflected belief. Taken by my own perplexity, I will close this reflection with a final thought. One of the main patients of psychology as the discipline of interiority is Jung’s analytical psychology, which is fueled by the psychological dream of simulating Meaning through symbolic life, through the “confrontation with the unconscious”. This dream is diagnosed by Giegerich as “a structurally neurotic fantasy”, inasmuch as it corresponds to “simulating the princess’s neurosis”; and Giegerich declares: “By saying this, I am, of course, presenting to Jung’s virgin-like deepest psychological conviction, and confronting it with, his demon-lover’s cut-off head” (NLMI, p. 218). I take this statement as meaning that psychology as the discipline of interiority overcomes the neurosis hidden in its privileged patient. From this personal perspective, I see psychology as the discipline of interiority as analytical psychology dialectically cured of its neurosis. But, in the light of what I have seen and said in this article, from a philosophical standpoint, about true psychology’s conflictive epistemic status, unless I have missed something truly important in my argument, it seems that psychology as the discipline of interiority “tries to fight or cure those very same mechanisms in the patient in order to defend itself against becoming aware of its own neurosis” (CEP I, p. 44).
References

A) - Wolfgang Giegerich’s books:


B) – Others:

