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Notes on the phenomenology of interiority and the foundations of psychology

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Interiority and any reference to an inner life have been radically deconstructed by the philosophical anthropologists, who find in the psychological constructions of the self and the theories of mental life the legacy of Descartes and Galileo. This critique is argued in some detail. However, the language of interiority is not merely an epistemological error on the part of the speaker. Psychoanalysis and psychopathology have documented the developmental significance of interiority and its absence. A phenomenological analysis of interiority, based in part on a clinical example, reveals several interrelated themes: temporal continuity; imagination; responsibility and ownership; privacy; self-reflection. Each of these themes is interpreted existentially in terms of being in the world. A critical discussion of interiority in Giegerich's work concludes the paper. It is argued paradoxically that the dialectical tension between interiority and exteriority – psyche and its grounding in events and relations to others – is a dimension within interiority itself.

Keywords: phenomenology; interiority

Introduction

We intuitively know what it means to have a self and an inner life. For those of us who take interiority for granted – who have a felt sense of what these terms mean – it is difficult to imagine that some people have almost no sense of interiority at all: no inner realm in which thinking, imagination, primary process fantasies and symbolic conflict resolution can take place. Some without interiority have severe constitutional or developmental disabilities; others are brain damaged. In addition to such neurological conditions, in adulthood, some people have obliterated the psychic space in which interiority can occur and, in severe forms, they tend towards psychotic (Bion, 1962) or severe psychosomatic (McDougal, 1989) presentations. Interiority has to do with boundary and space. It is fundamental to psychic health and depth (Brooke, 1994). Much of Winnicott's work documents in careful detail the environmental provisions and psychic processes in which this developmental accomplishment occurs. Clearly, interiority is foundational in any psychoanalysis in both theoretical and clinical terms. It should be foundational in any phenomenological anthropology, that is, any fundamental conceptualization of the structure of being human. Yet there remains something conceptually enigmatic about interiority and the notion of an inner life and it is questioned whether the term has any meaning at all.

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The phenomenological critique

In the phenomenological tradition in psychology and psychiatry, interiority is radically problematized. For my old Professor, Dreyer Kruger (1979), any derivative of the word 'inner' was like a red flag to a bull. As soon as one begins to examine the phenomenology of interiority carefully, its location and meaning crumble. Where is this 'inside'? Inside what? Once 'inside'— wherever that is — how do we ever get 'outside'? Are we embalmed in a solipsistic realm of 'mental representations' and 'ideas'? With special philosophical astuteness, the pioneers in existential phenomenology vigorously rejected any notion of interiority at all. Following Heidegger's (1927) understanding of human being as *Dasein* ('Being-there'), they argue that there never is an 'in here', but always only an 'out there', to which we are oriented, even in our fantasies and dreams.

The notion of interiority needs to be thoroughly rethought. It is clear that interiority is a psychologically meaningful occurrence and it is equally clear that the term is smothered by a philosophical history that obscures its phenomenology more than helps us understand what we are talking about. Interiority cannot be conceptually taken for granted or intellectually glossed over. This leads us to phenomenology's gift: to investigate phenomena that are hidden by being taken for granted, hidden because they are too close to us and not because they are hidden behind a veil or too far from view. This need to comment again on interiority is also brought into focus with the increasing influence of the work of Giegerich, whose work moves us in a direction of a 'radical interiority' that is at once existentially 'out there' as a quality of our being-in-the-world (*Dasein*) and, as I understand it, as a sublated dialectic within the soul itself, freed from 'exterior' references and material ties (see Giegerich, 2005; Mogenson, 2007).

Phenomenology is primarily descriptive, but description requires an archeology of the term that our description intends. Otherwise, what we think is merely descriptive — such as describing interiority as an inner mental realm inside us — is obscured more than revealed by the historical baggage brought along by the terms we use. Such an archeology helps us see through, at least to some extent, what Wittgenstein (1953/2001) calls the 'language games', which organize our experience. Although some readers will know this intellectual history well, it may be helpful to review the phenomenological critique of interiority in psychoanalysis (depth psychology).

Psychoanalysis and the Cartesian tradition

Psychoanalysis can be read in various ways. Here is one way (see Boss, 1963; van den Berg, 1972). Psychoanalysis in its various shadings and its cousin, humanistic psychology, are founded on an anthropology of the human being as having a mind and a body. Anatomy and physiology are disciplines that study the body; psychoanalysis studies the mind. Psychoanalysis is a field of theories about the structure and dynamics of mental life and their relationship with the outside world. The mind is the location in which experience takes place and where we find body image, mental representations of instincts, mental elaborations and representations of affective states and self- and object- representations. This is foundational in psychology and not only psychoanalysis. Almost any introductory text in psychology has a chapter on perception, which will include a diagram of an eye receiving light waves and an ear receiving pressure waves. The organization of the ontological and epistemological

foundations of psychology is fairly consistent. The outer world belongs to physics and other natural sciences, whereas psychological life is located behind the eyes and ears as an internal world of mental representations and cognitive processes. The link between this internal world and brain processes is assumed but remains, in these texts, a mystery (Ellis and Newton, 2010).

It is true that psychoanalysis is thick with bodily imagery and reminds us always that we are incarnated beings. As Freud famously says: 'The ego is first and foremost a bodily-ego' (Freud, 1923, p. 26). However, Freud then equally famously offers us greater conceptual precision by saying that he means the 'projection', or mental representation, of this body's body/mind surface. The id (*das Es*) is not a model of our instinctual life but of the mental representations of that life, reaching from within the mental realm through into body.

Mental life is largely about the relationships between the mental representations of instincts and the mental representations of self and 'objects'. This is still the case even though much of psychoanalysis has evolved from a one-person psychology into a two-person psychology in recent decades. Both object relations theory, originating in Britain, and the interpersonal developments in the United States have shown that one's sense of self and one's internal world are interpersonally structured and conceptually inconceivable without otherness and cultural history. Nevertheless, most attempts at making the radical theoretical move that would adequately account for these insights are still tied in their conceptual straitjackets. Others and cultural history are 'internalized' into mental representations once again and one's 'inner' needs, feelings, fantasies and conflicts are 'projected' outwards onto others. The primary problem here is not at the level of developmental or clinical insight. The problem is that psychological life is ultimately located theoretically in a place within us, separate from the world in which psychological life actually takes place. We are left with a theory still rooted in an anthropology that locates all meaning in an interior place called mind and thinks of the world as pure material realm, accessible only to the assumptions and methods of natural science – ultimately physics and mathematics.

If this seems rather fanciful and abstract, it is worth noting that Jung could not untangle himself from this muddle either. He writes:

It is my mind, with its store of images, that gives the world color and sound; and that supremely real and rational certainty which I call 'experience' is, in its most simple form, an exceedingly complicated structure of mental images. Thus there is in a certain sense nothing that is directly experienced except the mind itself. So thick and deceptive is this fog about us that we had to invent the exact sciences in order to catch at least a glimmer of the so-called 'real' nature of things. (Jung, 1926, p. 327)

Note the scare quotes around the terms 'experience' and 'real'. Jung knows that experience and reality have become epistemologically disengaged and incompatible. The epistemological position here is contradicted at every moment of our experience, because in the everyday conduct of our lives, and even in our scientific laboratories, we continue to trust the veracity of our experience in the lifeworld. The radiologist studying an MRI trusts her eyesight and is attuned to the lifeworld meaning and consequences in what she sees. We cannot actually uncouple experience from reality without manifest self-contradiction at almost every moment. Nevertheless, to the philosophically uninitiated, it is easy to take this organization of knowledge for granted as simply a description of the way things are, not appreciating its philosophical

roots and conceptual implications. I suspect that many of us have read those words of Jung's without any cognitive dissonance. Whatever we have come to understand as the development of interiority in psychological life has been contaminated by this muddle.

Husserl (1954) showed us that, to understand the genesis of this confusion, we need to return to the philosophy of Descartes and, a generation earlier, the science of Galileo. It was Galileo who, in the early seventeenth century, established mathematics as the epistemological ground for our knowledge of the world, even though, as mathematics, it was more truly an *abstraction* of the real. Galileo's scientific project might be summarized as follows (see Edwards, 1967, pp. 262–266):

- (1) Empirical observation forms the primary criterion for truth.
- (2) Only scientific method and discourse are appropriate to the world of things.
- (3) Only the mathematical properties of things are 'primary', i.e. present in the things themselves; all other qualities, meanings and values are 'secondary' or 'subjective'.
- (4) The experience we receive from the senses is 'illusory'.

Galileo's scientific project is a way of organizing the foundations of knowledge – an epistemology – but it inaugurates an ontological crisis about the nature of reality and being human. The abstractions of mathematics are now defined as 'reality' and the evidence of experience is now 'illusory'. The sentient human body is effectively abandoned as the existential foundation of human being and as the experiential measure for what is real (Romanyshyn, 1989).

As an ontological crisis, Galilean epistemology was taken up by the French philosopher, René Descartes (1641/1931), whose solution was to divide all being into two realms: the *res extensa* and the *res cogitans*. The former is the realm of mathematics and refers to all material substances, including the body. The latter is an internal realm of ideas and mental representations, which does not, however, take up real space ('extension') and is not subject to natural scientific law. The body is now to be understood only through the language of the natural sciences and the mind is an internal realm *within which* experience takes place. After Descartes, mind and body are no longer terms that describe human modes of engagement with the world. Mind is not that way of engaging another intellectually; body is not the human incarnation of our spiritual life, as in athletics or dance or shaking hands. Body and mind describe fundamentally different and mutually incompatible types of being. Body belongs to natural science and not to 'me'. Mind is disincarnate and *incommunicado*, except indirectly. Over time, what began as a scientific project and then a philosophical position became a cultural habit of thought, taken for granted as descriptions of the real, or of being.

It is within this ontology that psychology has been established. As Romanyshyn astutely argued, after Galileo and Descartes:

a new science is needed to explain why what we experience is not real and what is real is not what we experience. Modern psychology is that science. It originates in order to save the hypothesis of the scientific world. And it saves that hypothesis by making the experience of the world an event inside the subject (Romanyshyn, 1982, p. 30).

In this form, psychology is effectively reduced to being a servant of physics because it sustains the physicist's imagination. The dualisms that organize

psychology are thoroughly Galilean/Cartesian and thus supportive of that enterprise: inner–outer, meaningful–measurable, rational–material, subjective–objective, experiential–behavioral, fantasy–reality, image–thing, value–fact, poetry–science, etc. In this tradition, interiority is associated with the first of each of these dualisms. Psychological insights into interiority as an existentially meaningful phenomenon have become conceptually mired. It is against this tradition that the phenomenologists set themselves.

From *cogitans* to existence

For the existential phenomenologists the human being does not begin on the hither side of an open engagement with the world. This is more radical than to say that the human being is engaged with the world. Human and world are not two pre-existent poles, which might or might not come into a relationship with each other. Their relationship is not optional and contingent; it is mutually constitutive and dialectical. There is no human being prior to that relationship. The human being is not so much ‘in’ relationship but *as* relationship with the world. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is that open clearing in time and cultural history out of which both the human being and the intelligible world are constituted in the way they are. The human body in this perspective is the embodiment of a situation and, as such, is already human and psychological, even before it is truly and fully personalized as one’s own – and certainly before it is abstracted as a possible object of scientific study.

The ‘clearing’ that Heidegger describes is too often, I think, imagined as kind of emptiness, the open air space that lies between the person and his or her world. However, this is to imagine the clearing too much through the fantasy of the homogenous, mathematical space of the *res extensa*. We should rather think of the clearing as that which surrounds us, as a gathering, in time and language, of the myths, institutions, geography, architecture, narratives, images and mythology of cultural history. Material stuff – buildings, rivers and weather – are gathered in that clearing as much as narratives and cultural images. The clearing is that gathering of reciprocal and mutually reflective relationships we know as ‘world’. Being-in-the-world is the psychic sea in which we swim, repeatedly discovering and finding ourselves and out of which we are constituted, always and irreducibly ‘there’ first. The ‘there’ (*Da*) is ontologically prior to, and the ground of, that coming into presence (*Sein*: Be-ing) we think of as a person. Subjectivity does not possess itself as an origin. Subjectivity and personhood are constituted and emergent.

A phenomenology of interiority that begins in existence itself, situated and incarnate, is clearly not to be linked to the preceding categories of subjectivity or mental life. We cannot move to a phenomenology of interiority by an act of ‘synthesis’ with regard to Cartesian categories either. If we do use terms such as subjectivity and meaning, it is important not to slide conceptually backwards. If psychological life is situated within our being-in-the-world, then interiority must be a phenomenon within existence itself.

Phenomenology is ‘obsessed by the concrete’, says the Dutch phenomenologist, J. H. van den Berg (1972, p. 76). If our concern is to enter more deeply into description, then an example is called for.

An example from psychotherapy

A widow in her sixties was depressed, agoraphobic, withdrawn and suffering from panic attacks. There was deep, painful ambivalence towards her late husband, who had died many years earlier, and talking about her history with him and her ambivalence immediately started to lift her mood. In an early session her therapist told her that he thought of panic attacks as something that might be calling for attention, but that she may be so afraid of what is calling her that she can only feel the panic. He added that in his experience what is calling within panic attacks is usually something that is part of our ordinary humanity, but we are so afraid of what calls us that it often seems worse than it is. So he wondered aloud what might be calling her. In the following session she brought him an essay she had written over 40 years earlier, when she was an undergraduate art (sculpture) student. In that essay she had written that the artist who responds to the call of art is often terrified of the descent into Hades that it might require. She then said that she had become a born again Christian a year or two after college and had never followed up her early love of sculpture, especially wood carving. She had been persuaded that there was something ‘unChristian’ about the Celtic mythology and form she revealed within wood. Yet, she added, she had always felt deep inside her a calling to work with wood. She felt that her work had something to say. Even as she was speaking with trembling excitement, she was afraid of her inflation. Nevertheless, within weeks she had turned a room into a studio and begun carving again. The symptoms began to subside and her quality of life improved (although a generalized anxiety remained for a number of years). She felt increasingly alive, true to herself and at home in the world. This was an encouraging beginning to what was a long, intensive psychotherapy. She later came to realize that her early essay had prescribed and anticipated the grueling journey she was to embark upon these 40 years later. She had lived in dread of her inner life, where she found a deep identification with a semi-psychotic mother. Entering the realm of that identification, discovering that it could be both experienced and survived and discovering a sense of herself as differentiated from that identification were much of the work of therapy. We have enough here to think about the phenomenon of interiority.

It is easy to appreciate why Jung would argue that the symptoms – depression, agoraphobia and panic attacks – announce the emergence of the self into consciousness, that they contain the ‘true gold we should never have found elsewhere’ (Jung, 1934, p. 170). The patient’s depression is her psyche’s insistence that she is not living her life and that she cannot feel well carrying on as before: inhibited, afraid of her anger and her imagination – callings of the self. Her agoraphobia reveals both the narrow confines of her life and the wider world that calls to her but from which she recoils. Her panic attacks reveal both her limited sense of herself (as ego) and that there is something larger (the self) that is needing to be realized in her life. Depending on how we interpret the terms ego, self and psyche (Brooke, 2009), this sketch of a formulation is helpful in positioning the psychotherapist in an invitational, hospitable stance towards that which she fears (Brooke, 1993). This facilitates the dismantling of the ego’s maladaptive defenses and her life-denying identifications, and facilitates the emergence of the self. ‘We do not cure it [the neurosis]’, says Jung, ‘– it cures us’ (Jung, 1934, p. 170).

The patient felt that for decades she had refused to acknowledge and take up the calling that she felt deep within her. Her life began to improve as her inner life

expanded. This example highlights rather dramatically the compelling power of our Jungian perspective on the nature of subjectivity, the self, and interiority. Yet, if we look phenomenologically at what happened in this story, we are taken, not out of her life into an inner mental realm, nor into an inner self that is spatially behind the skin. Nor do we find her 'withdraw projections' from a meaningful world, so that meaning was relocated into an imaginary place within her. Her therapy is not a process, in Hillman's (1973) colorful terms, of 'stuffing the person with subjective soulfulness' (p. 27). In terms of spatial directions, it would be truer to say that her therapist's invitational stance towards the *telos* in her symptoms encouraged her to go out of doors, in the direction of her 'projections', towards her mother, her ambivalence towards her husband, and the supposedly unChristian world of wood, feeling, and imagination that called her (Giegerich, 1979/2005).

She had felt called to be an artist in wood. To be true to her self she had to respond to this call. Alright, but there is no sculptor or wood or 'something to say' through art without a world of wood and chisels and Celtic mythology, and in which sculptors have their cultural place and social role. The calling that we say comes from the self comes as much from the 'there' of her situation as from the 'here' of her bodily tensions and feelings or of her genetically given talents. The calling she feels within comes from within existence as the 'there' out of which she as a potential artist is an emergent possibility. The self, which we are inclined to think of as potential only and needing to be realized in consciousness, is already alive as that gathered world in which vocations can be intelligibly felt. In relation to her late husband, the simple therapeutic injunction, 'tell me more' takes her further and deeper into that relationship and its history. In relation to her mother, 'tell me more' takes her out through the front door, away from the house of her adult life to her childhood home and its terrors. She slowly brought that world to life in memory (and in the transference). As she entered her memories, complete with their geography, architecture, furniture, lighting and textures, she also entered and opened her imagination, discovering there both trauma and resourcefulness, as well as the possibility of re-evaluating less self-destructively what had happened there.

Feelings, imagination and subjectivity

The patient's feelings – depression, anxiety, anger, dread, excitement – are not subjective feeling states either. That is, they are fundamentally misunderstood if they are conceptualized as though they were somehow merely personal, private and in need of reason, language and interpretation to attain 'consciousness'. Feelings are not deaf and dumb. As Gendlin (1978–79) argued, following Heidegger, feelings are modes of attunement to a world that is intelligible and already understood in terms of those feelings. Feelings are a primary mode of intelligibility and disclosure in which our patient finds herself in her world. We understand with our feelings even if our acts of reflection cannot think clearly what it is that our feelings know. That is why psychotherapists are so interested in people's feelings. Whatever our awkward theories tell us, we know that feelings are first. They are incarnate, embedded in situations and intelligent, already in language (for the most part) and on the way to speech. If feelings are felt to be inside us, they are existentially embedded in situations, which is where we find ourselves too. If they are felt in the body, that is because the body is equally situated and responsive, world-disclosive in its materiality and its feelings.

When we speak of imagination, it is typically understood to be a personal attribute and faculty within us as persons and subjects. Once again, however, not so fast. Concretely, we can return to the phenomenon of interiority in relation to imagination and our patient's story. It is true that she was afraid of her imagination, since it was contaminated with Evangelical values and, long before that, with an identification with her severely disturbed mother. With the image of a mad woman 'inside her' when she closed her eyes, how could it be otherwise? However, if we approach her imagination on its own terms, we once again are taken out of her subjectivity (wherever that is) and back into the world. When the patient 'looks inside herself' and finds the mad face of her mother, she finds in imaginal form the mad foundations of her world. Her relationship with her mother, as her primary identification, was foundational in the aesthetic texture of her being-in-the-world. It was, at the same time, foundational in the imaginal constitution of her own developing body as the incarnation of that dreadful and unstable world. The mad face continues to beckon her out of her four walls back to her childhood home, complete with its furniture, lighting and smells. Despite leaving home as early as she could, and despite building a life in another city, the walls of her new home were not enough to keep that world out – at least not the world of her childhood. If we say that that world had been 'internalized', what we mean is that it had continued to be foundational for her, carried in her imagination and language as the place she must not visit and the story that cannot be told. Her mad mother in her childhood home could penetrate the walls of her new home if she let down her guard. Certain lights, smells, tastes and sounds sometimes made her shudder. In her new home, despite her efforts and the establishment of a new family, her walls failed to function in differentiating outside and inside and there was little opportunity for reverie (Bachelard, 1964) or what we might call an inner life.

When our patient fears her 'unChristian' imagination and the traumatic memories of her childhood, she fears that world in which she has been embedded all her life. The 'unChristian' world of wood carving, pagan imagery and symbolic resonance called her. Jung is right to see in this imagination both the longing and the defensive anxiety of Christian moralism (Jung, 1952, p. 440). Over several months, in which she found herself enjoying carving again for the first time in over 40 years, she felt excited about life again. (The maternal darkness that was in the background, entered only much later.) She realized that she had lived her life in such fear that she had never been much of a Christian either and that, only now, did she know what Jesus meant when he said you shall have life more abundantly (John, 10:10). We need to notice where this exercise of entering and following the patient's imagination has taken us. We are way out beyond her subjectivity, or her so-called mind, and into a world that carries thousands of years of significance and conflict, a world of myth, human endeavor, passion, and meaning. It is out here that we find the patient's imagination and her 'inner life'.

Imagination is not primarily a personal attribute, like a personal talent for creative, elaborative representations that can be added to the facts. According to Murray (1986), imagination is an unarticulated but fundamental theme – an '*existentiale*' – in Heidegger's *Being and time*. It is coterminous with temporality, since there can be no temporal or historical horizon beyond the immediate environment without the work of imagination. Existence can only be historical because it is also imaginative. Without imagination our world would not be a world but merely an environmental *umwelt*, like the concrete and tightly circumscribed 'worlds' of our animal cousins. Our imaginations do not belong to us any more than do language and cultural history. When I speak of 'my' imagination, it is not my

possession any more than is my language, English. Imagination, language and temporality, each inconceivable without the others, are what constitute that psychic gathering we call the world.

It is hopefully clear by now that interiority refers not to subjectivity but to existence itself as a unified structure of being-in-the-world. Right now, my world includes material things, such as my home, my porch, a sunny summer day and my computer, each of which refers in turn to other people, events and things that together constitute my world. The world also includes you, my potential readers and patient editor, my clinical training, supervisors and experience, my old professor, the late Dreyer Kruger, a former patient and her family and mother (whom I never met), our Western and Judeo-Christian heritage, the landscapes of England and Pittsburgh, and on and on. This world – yes, *there!* – is, if you like, my ‘internal world’, especially with regard to those aspects that are not visible as I sit here, but this reflection can make us wonder whether the term interiority has any meaning left at all.

The short answer is, yes it does. Interiority invites us deeper into the world. Interiority is spacious and bounded. It gives us room to think and to drop into reverie without undue anxiety or obsessional self-criticism. This spaciousness is a real, existentially lived spaciousness too, even though it cannot be mathematically measured. As Bachelard discusses, this spaciousness is maintained and supported, in part, by the walls of my comfortable little home. As psychologists – as opposed to political scientists or economists, for instance – that deepening world is what we call the psyche, or the soul. We call it the psyche not to point to an entity within existence, or even a quality within existence, but to affirm our perspective, which is psychological and to recognize, therefore, that *Dasein's* gathering is psychological (as well as, but distinct from, political, economic, etc.).

Interiority and being-in-the-world

If we think back to what we know about interiority in terms of psychological development and psychic health, it seems that there are several interrelated themes to note.

First, interiority means that there is relative continuity in the structure of one's being-in-the-world. The significance of this is enormous and is discussed in developmental psychology in terms of object constancy. With object constancy, the child has a sense of continuity that no longer depends on environmental contingencies or the actual presence of the mother for the world to carry on being. Readers might have their own developmental theories and empirical evidence to draw upon here. I am partial in this regard to the Kleinian concept of the depressive position. With a growing neurological capacity for continuity, the child becomes aware that the loving and beloved mother is the same as the ‘object’ that has been attacked and hated. This growing awareness of object continuity moves the child from pre-ambivalence to the experience of ambivalence. In the depressive position, our aggression is now a moral burden since it is directed towards someone lovable and good. The depressive position leads one into the experience of psychic conflict and, at the same time, an experience of the other as situated in a world that is independent of one's transitory affective and fantasy states. Interiority is being constituted as a quality of temporal continuity that lifts the child into an imaginative life of self and others, of symbolic formation and conflict resolution. As a precursor

to the Oedipus complex, the depressive position also marks the awakening of an ethical imagination about the lives and perspectives of others.¹

This brief discussion of temporal continuity takes us once again into the realm of imagination. Here we need to note that the constitution of one's world as carried imaginatively, rather than merely contingently and environmentally, is both an ontological structure of being human and also, we see now, a developmental achievement. Imagination gathers a world as *world* (rather than as merely gratifying – or not – environmental *umwelt*). It also steadies the world through time, weaving the events of our lives into narrative histories. Interiority binds our identities and relationships with the glue of memory and imaginal, narrative history. I might be a doddering old fellow but I still see myself as my wife's hero and protector! – and wouldn't our lives be poorer if such were not the case?

Now a paradox: as a dimension of interiority, imagination also sustains the dialectical tension between interiority and exteriority, that creative tension of inside and outside, whether that is located between one's house and the world outside (Bachelard) or between private thoughts and public face, or one's fantasies and the dense subjectivities of others. *Exteriority is a dimension of the dialectic of interiority itself*. In its ethical capacity, imagination is a continual reminder that the other's face is an ethical appeal that reaches beyond the totalizing effects of my knowledge, wishes, impulses and fantasies (Levinas, 1969, pp. 297ff.).² More of this later.

A third theme of interiority is born of the recognition that one's world is one's own. For Heidegger, *Dasein* as a world is also *eigenwelt*, my own world, for which I am responsible. It is true that we find ourselves in a world factually, a world that precedes us and determines us in fundamental ways, but it is also true that we are participants in the constitution of our world as an intelligible world. This philosophical point is, of course, familiar to us practically in the analytic tradition. Even traumatic histories are being defensively (imaginatively) organized and narrated. The events that we have spun into imaginative memories and narratives continue to form and deform our lives, and we shall not get much long term relief from our suffering until we take ownership of our worlds. At that point we become no longer merely victims, suffering with self-loathing, perhaps, but without genuine interiority. A young woman had suffered dreadfully as the only child of a single mother, who was a holocaust survivor. One day, after years of suffering and reviewing what were real deprivations, she looked peaceful and said that she had realized she would not want it any different now. She had realized that if her history had been different then she would not have been who she is and she did not know what that would mean. She liked herself and was proud of her history – all of it – and it had given her gifts of understanding she might not have found otherwise. This is an elegant description of what it means to own one's world, to affirm its constitution as one's own responsibility. This can have the feeling of destiny, which is not to suggest that it was pre-ordained. The sense of destiny is an affirmation that this is one's life and that to live with dignity in future, its truth needs to be taken up as destiny.

A fourth theme is privacy. To say that world is historical, imaginal and one's own world (*eigenwelt*) is to affirm that it is not reducible to one's visible environment. It has many dimensions that are not simply what people mean by the 'outer world'. Interiority is a psychic space that is not fully accessible to others. This is particularly clear with the development of literacy, of course, where reading opens worlds of knowledge that might not be communally shared. The world that becomes present to us in thinking is private and not completely communicable either. The dialectical

tension between interiority and exteriority is partly, therefore, a tension between privacy and one's public face. This affirmation of privacy, however, is not absolute. The lines of one's inner life – even one's primary process – are etched on one's face and carried in the gestures and even the somatic conditions of one's body as degrees of hiddenness, but they are still expressive (Boss, 1963, p. 168). Although it would take the discussion too far afield to argue the case here, we might note that what we call the unconscious – the realm of supposed deep privacy – is often out in front of us, alarmingly more visible to others than to one's self.

A fifth theme in the emergence of interiority is the capacity for self-reflection. Self-reflection is not a process of leaving the world and thinking about one's isolated subjectivity. Self-reflection is a process in which we reflect on the whole structure of our engagements. The self that is discovered in self-reflection is not a *cogito* but an embedded self. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) puts it: 'Reflection does not withdraw from the world towards a unity of consciousness as the world's basis...; it slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice' (p. xv).

One implication of this position is that it undercuts the simplistic notion that self-reflection is a process of introversion. Interiority as self-reflection is the privilege of neither introverts nor extraverts. There has been a rather odd tenor in Jungian thought, which is that individuation, especially in the 'second half of life', is a process of turning from the outer world of material adaptations to the inner world of the self (see Jacobi, 1965). This is because introversion supposedly puts one in touch with the self and the archetypes as the sources of meaning. However, this suggests that extraverts are shallow but 'every narcissistic navel gazer who walks into our office must be deep' (J. White, 2011, personal communication³). Extraverted Jungian analysts often seem rather self-conscious about this, and develop a charming sense of humor to cope. In any event, psychic deepening, formulated as a process of interiorization, is neither introverted nor extraverted since such terms are radically undercut.⁴

A note on the meaning of interiority in Giegerich

Finally, this commentary on the phenomenology of interiority cannot omit some discussion of Giegerich's discussion of 'radical interiority' as (analytical) psychology's proper domain. This clearly needs to be a paper on its own. I have not read all of his work and fear that I may be misunderstanding him in some ways. My engagement with his writing is still evolving. Perhaps the following comments might be useful anyway, since, if there is misunderstanding, then it is likely that it is shared with others and might still be a useful part of the conversation.

Giegerich⁵ submits any topic he discusses to a rigorous and thorough dialectical thinking that has the effect of fundamentally redefining our terms of reference. He systematically loosens our empiricist questions and the whole re-presentational structure of epistemological assumptions – that is, assumptions that there is an empirical reality 'out there' and our theories are more or less accurate ideas – 'representations' – of that original presence. After reading Giegerich (and much of Hillman's work too) our thinking is no longer fixed in the logic of epistemology at all, but lifted into a consistently circular, hermeneutic sensibility.⁶ In Giegerich's hands, theory is no longer representational but radically and self-referentially engaged in whatever it speaks about, so that theory and psychic stuff are mutually constituted. Interiority, then, is psychology's discipline if it relentlessly goes further into the phenomena of its engagements, on its own psychological terms, without reference to

any external theoretical ground, such as neuroscience, object-relations or a theory of hypothetical entities called archetypes. We enter into psyche psychologically, into its own logic and movements.

If one reads Giegerich with a Heideggerian sensibility, then it would seem that the soul, for Giegerich, is not something like a spirit, or a vapor moving through history. It would be situated as that psychic clearing out of which we as persons and our worlds have been constituted. For both Heidegger and Giegerich, what we refer to as 'world' is also always a sublated world, that is, a world that is never merely a series of empirical events or relations, and is never merely an array of objects set out for us as subjects to view. There is no world that is not gathered as soul in some sense, as long as we allow, says Giegerich, that world to be entered psychologically as thought. The interiority that Giegerich develops is the discipline of entering the soul without external frames of reference. In analysis and psychotherapy it means deepening and going further into the phenomena that address us. None of this is incompatible with what has been said here so far.⁷

Giegerich focuses on sublated reality, on the interior logic and movements of psyche, which I am wanting to interpret as existence sublated into thought. However, this attempt to interpret Giegerich in existentially grounded terms might be a 'creative misinterpretation' on my part, for it does seem that Giegerich sets psychological life loose from its moorings. For Giegerich, sublation is a logical, or structural, moment of transformation in which our sense of being meaningfully engaged with a real world, or with a real psychological image, is 'reduced to a moment in our consciousness' (Giegerich, 2005, p. 225). Meaningful ('semantic') engagements are dialectically lifted into structural moments in thought, in which, therefore, there is no longer a meaningful relationship between pre-given poles of experience (e.g. waking ego and dream image) but a structural ('syntactical') moment in which both poles, as psychic contents, are seen as mutually and reciprocally constituted. The effect of this structural, or formal, reciprocity is to dissolve psychic contents into purely logical and dynamic forms. Psychic contents do not 'semantically' 'mean' what they appear to mean – sexual imagery is not about sex; the philosopher's stone is not a stone; the Devil is not the Devil, and the ego in relation to each of these is constituted as a different ego identity as well. For Giegerich, sublation is thus a movement of pure interiority, founded only within its own inner logic and emergent only as thought. Psychological life is no longer embedded within, or even linked to, meaningful relationships, or even a world of images as described by Hillman. There is no grounding in the natural world, or in the flesh of our materiality and communality with other living beings, since matter has been ontologically 'annihilated' by physics (Giegerich, 2005, p. 227). Even the lifeworld (*lebenswelt*) of Husserl is regarded as merely 'subjective', without ontological claim. Ontology itself – the thought of being as presence – must give way to the soul's inner logic, which is contentless and purely formal.

With this fundamental rejection of any reference to materiality, embodiment, or even otherness, Giegerich (2009) has contempt for Romanyshyn's (2008) phenomenological analysis of the meaning of our ecological crisis as 'incompatible with psychology proper' (p. 194) and 'pop psychology' (p. 217). Jung's insight into the materiality of things as psyche's materiality no longer has any place in Giegerich's thinking, except, it seems, as part of an inner dialectic within thought itself. Hillman's (1981) phenomenological pointing to interiority as the vertical direction and 'capacity within all things' (p. 29) is rejected by Giegerich, for all images are dissolved in dialectical negation and sublated into 'thought'. Not only is Giegerich's

notion of interiority explicitly ‘baseless’, (Giegerich, 2005, p. 153–170) – in the creative sense of being psychology’s discipline, without external hermeneutic foundation – it is also absolute and referentless in any sense at all outside of the dialectics of ‘thought’. Giegerich does not seem merely to draw from Hegel; his approach sometimes reads like Hegelian philosophy in action. Is he still talking about the soul, or psyche, in any sense we can recognize?

In contrast with Giegerich (or at least ‘my’ Giegerich?), it seems, we need to affirm that sublation does not leave that which has been sublated behind, like a miner’s slag heap from which all the gold has been extracted. Perhaps Giegerich would not disagree with Heidegger’s nuanced sense of the dialectical relation *maintained* in the relation between world as sublated and its material earth,⁸ but his terminology moves only in one direction – upward and outward into world as ‘thought’. In contrast, Heidegger invites us to remain intimately close to that which ultimately sustains and shelters us:

Upon the earth and in it, historical man grounds his dwelling in the world . . . World and earth are essentially different from one another and yet are never separated. The world grounds itself on the earth, and the earth juts through world. But the relation between world and earth does not wither away into an empty unity of opposites unconcerned with one another. The world, in resting upon the earth, strives to surmount it. As self-opening it cannot endure anything closed. The earth, however, as sheltering and concealing, tends always to draw the world into itself and keep it there. (Heidegger, 1935/36, pp.171–2)

Giegerich’s flight from materiality seems evident in his flight from the body. We can certainly agree with Giegerich that the human body is inscribed (sublated) with the narratives and images of our cultural history and the contributions of our own thought, defenses and all, but it is not thereby left behind. We might have conceptually separated sex and gender, for instance, in a way that opens up sex as psychic reality, but our gender identities are never indifferent to our male or female sex. The dialectic of the psychological and the material remains, and in my view, that dialectic *is* a dimension of what we mean by psyche. If Giegerich moves only in the direction of ‘thought’, leaving behind any reference to the body as gendered *sex*, with real anatomy and hormones, he loses an essential tension and dialectic that defines and founds psychological life. Maintaining that dialectical tension within the psychic ‘and’ the material is part of what it means, especially for Jungians, to be psychological.⁹ In my view, interiority lies not within one pole only – not within the dynamics and dissolving mirrors of gender identity only – but within that dialectical tension between sex and gender. If Giegerich’s view is only sublating and ‘negating’, it seems to become weightless and emptied of meaning. Well, yes, because Giegerich intends an interiority that is pure syntax, without semantic reference.

Another, more serious example, of the importance of recognizing existential density is with regard to a person’s history and trauma. When we psychotherapists take a history, we are listening to a narrative in which the events of history have been taken up imaginatively – in ‘thought’. It is true that memories are reconstructions. On the other hand, developmental and clinical histories are not *only* narrative constructions. The events of one’s history are not merely a Rorschach for our ‘thought’, although Giegerich (2005, pp. 168–169) writes as though they are. Historical events set parameters to the possible stories that might be told. We do not make ourselves up as complete fictions – or, if we do, then the work of analysis will be to return us to those

embedded truths – the soul’s truths, if you like – that can no longer be denied. Giegerich has to recognize this as an analyst, but he seems not to want to.

Sometimes, when Giegerich argues for a psychological interiority that has no references at all, not even to an embedded existence, he seems like an historian arguing the case for a discipline of history without events. In a way that is oddly ironic, Giegerich argues for an autonomous discipline of psychology as the discipline of the soul’s interiority, but his language – thought, the pursuit of syntax rather than semantics (referential, meaningful statements), *logos*, ‘Truth’ found in ‘logical forms’ – and his insistence on the need for a psychologist’s unemotional, disinterested detachment from all things and events, even persons – all suggest the clarity and purity of spiritual heights rather than the imaginal, embedded, dark valleys of the soul (Hillman, 1979). In a penetrating critical analysis of Giegerich’s work, Slater (2010) argues that ‘the soul cannot extract itself from the animal basis of being or the awareness of being embedded in the natural world’ (p. 199). He then continues:

So depth psychology has always hosted what lies between the upper and lower reaches of existence, particularly between the world of thought and the world of instinctual impulses. Every patient walking into the therapy room straddles these two realms; every form of psychopathology expresses their split. The turn to myth, symbol, and imagination are modes of perception that allow navigation between these realms, preserving the sensation and sensibility of a middle space. A psychology that is all *logos* and no *mythos* has abandoned these field-defining characteristics and removed itself from the fabric of existence. As such it is an approach that is unrecognizable as depth psychology (*ibid.*).

This is not only a theoretical issue; it is an ethical one. Giegerich’s (2009) explicit obligation to refuse ethical or aesthetic considerations does not, in my view, protect psychic interiority but drains it. The events of trauma cannot be endlessly sublated in our approach to understanding trauma or our traumatized patients without our approach becoming ethically violent – and, in being indifferent to concrete persons and events, unpsychological. A veteran recently told me that he was trained to ‘take out’ targets. In Iraq he had kicked down doors and taken out targets many times. He said he was a good soldier, then, quivering with feeling, he said: ‘But, Doc, I’ve been having nightmares, and in my dreams I am going through houses just as I did in Iraq, but the targets have faces’. After we spoke a bit more, I told him that if he could bear to stay with the dream he would find that it is a healing dream. The following morning he said to the group that he had stayed in the dream, and he had realized that it was about becoming human again. In that group, we helped him and other veterans begin the process of taking responsibility for the souls of the dead, including the enemy dead, following the ritual path of traditional warrior societies (Tick, 2005). Psyche’s movement here, taking him deeper into the truth of his experience, also takes him deeper into real, moral horror. The face of the other has an ethical appeal that refuses to be sublated; its exteriority is not irrelevant to the interiority of this young soldier’s soul. For me as a psychotherapist, the soldier’s tormented face, its exteriority, is certainly taken up by me in the horizons of my own understanding, but it is, I hope, never abandoned, either theoretically or through my indifference.

Notes

1. In Klein’s words: ‘Side by side with the destructive impulses in the unconscious mind . . . there exists a profound urge to make sacrifices, in order to help and put right loved people

who in fantasy have been harmed or destroyed. In the depths of the mind, the urge to make people happy is linked up with a strong feeling of responsibility and concern for them, which manifests itself in genuine sympathy with other people and in the ability to understand them, as they are and feel' (Klein, 1964, pp. 65–66). For a Jungian discussion of the relation between Oedipal ambivalence and the awakening of the ethical imagination, see Stein, 1984).

2. In these pages Levinas does not discuss imagination directly, but it is impossible to read them without thematizing imagination accordingly.
3. John White, PhD, is a Candidate in the Inter-Regional Society of Jungian Analysts, Pittsburgh.
4. A rigorous phenomenology of introversion would require a study on its own. For a solid start, see Shapiro and Alexander (1975).
5. An especially clear introductory paper, systematically setting out his terms of reference is Giegerich (2007). My own caution is influenced by Marlan (2012), whose reading of Giegerich is painstakingly nuanced and careful.
6. This distinction is discussed by Madison (1988).
7. For a nuanced discussion of these issues, including the links to Heidegger, see Mogenson (2007).
8. Another, more sustained discussion of the place and significance of materiality in psychological life is presented by Romanyshyn (2008). However, Giegerich (2009) rejects any notion of an ecological sensibility in psychology, as though a psychology of the soul can have no ethical sensibility or share in the experience of suffering. Romanyshyn's (2010) reply offers a sustained defense of psychology's use of Merleau-Ponty's term, flesh.
9. See Merleau-Ponty (1963) for a sustained discussion of this dialectical relation between the human (psychological) and vital (animal) orders of human embodiment. For Merleau-Ponty, the human is not the addition of psychological life onto an animal body left intact but the internal transformation of the body into the human order. If this is sublation, it remains embodied and grounded, not emptied into 'thought'.

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