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Thesis Review:

*“Repositioning Jung’s Analytical Psychology:
A Paradigm Shift from a Critical Science to an intersubjective Practice in the Education of
the Individual in late Modernity”* by Evangelos Tsempelis

Dear Sir or Madame,

It is my great pleasure to review this long needed, extraordinary, original and comprehensive repositioning of Carl Gustav Jung’s work within the fields of theology, philosophy, psychology and education by Evangelos Tsempelis. My review will have the following structure: I will start with a more general assessment of the approach, goal and need for this thesis. Thereafter I will outline the structure and method, thereby showing its comprehensiveness. And finally, I will make some small suggestions and give a final and overall assessment.

1. Assessment of Approach, Goal and Need

This thesis by Evangelos Tsempelis positions Jung’s work freshly within the history of ideas. It brings his ideas in dialogue with thinkers like Immanuel

Kant, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, etc. At the same time Evangelos Tsempelis poses, in a hermeneutic mode, his own pressing contemporary questions, e.g. regarding technology.

In essence, there has always been a polyvalence in Jung's thinking, which makes the reader wonder if Jung wants to make an epistemological or ontological claim, whether it should be seen as scientific or metaphysical, philosophical or psychological and what it is that Jung calls a 'fact'. Referencing to this known polyvalence in Jung's work, Evangelos Tsempelis engages his ideas in a dialogue across history, i.e. with the voices of thinkers that Jung is often referring to, however, always coming back to Christian theology. Evangelos Tsempelis says: "My sense is that Jung's confrontation with this matter and his subsequent elaboration of his notion of wholeness as quaternity, suggesting, as we have already seen, the incorporation of evil in the Christian god- image, is the Gordian knot that confronts us in our task to gain a deeper insight into his implicit hermeneutic method." (p. 16) Yet, Evangelos Tsempelis does not stop here, but rather attempts a 'philosophical amplification' of Jung's key concepts, such as archetype, individuation, self, person and psyche. He believes that seeing those as an empirical objectivity they might have the status of an a priori within the sphere of religious experience. Or in other words, in a similar way as Immanuel Kant's categories in the 'Critique of Pure Reason', Evangelos Tsempelis claims that Jung posits a trans-subjective status of the psyche. This collective unconscious is the sphere where archetypes are revealed. Evangelos Tsempelis follows Jung's comparative readings of religion, mythology, his dream interpretations and shows how they rest on a method of perceiving the distinct appearance of archetypal motifs, following their genealogy and evolution. For Jung it was important to make clear to his clients, that their own shadow, the dark aspects of their personality, had to be integrated and embraced, rather than projected to others and into the world. Within the Christian vocabulary it meant to transcend and let go of the idea of god being an *Summum Bonum*, and rather to embrace evil as part of the god image. For Jung this meant to transform the Christian Trinity into a more complete image of a Quaternity.

This complex and comprehensive work is motivated by the practical worries of a contemporary Jungian therapist. The goal is to "situate not merely analytical psychology as a psychotherapeutic practice and a "scientific"

discourse about psyche but, in a more personal register, the agony of arriving through this process of exploration, performatively more than merely in a gnosiological manner, at some ground whereby I can individually stand and practice as an analyst with a Jungian training.” (p. 18).

The author’s goal is to understand Jung’s analytical psychology as both, a field of theory and practice that enables individuals from all areas in life to engage in a “process of questioning, reckoning and engaging conducive to individual growth and maturity.” (p. 18) This motivation leads to a passionate, thorough and highly original contemporary interpretation of Jung’s work.

2. Comprehensiveness of Structure and Method

This book starts with a chapter called “*Between Scylla and Charybdis: Religion and Science in the Work of C.G. Jung*”. Here, the author contextualizes Jung’s work and sets up the overall notion of ‘phenomenology’. He explains Jung’s attempt to restore a religious attitude towards the unconscious (in the patient), yet is also talking about the psychological bracketing, which Jung believes to enable him to empirically observe the objective psyche.

The second chapter is “*Confronting the God-Image: A Reading of Jung’s Answer to Job*”. Here, Evangelos Tsempeles follows Jung’s bold claim to have ‘landed a whale’ (p. 33) with this book. Jung rejects the doctrine of *privatio boni* and believes that his insights of the book ‘Answer to Job’ will radically impact both, psychology and theology.

In his third chapter called “*Personality and Education in the Digital Age: Unpacking an Old Problematic*” core notions like integration, wholeness, meaning, individuation are compared with similar narratives: among those are Hans-Georg Gadamer’s rise of aesthetic consciousness and Karl Löwith’s ideas about the religious foundations of the secular ideas of meaning in the history of the West.

The fourth chapter establishes some “*Epistemological Considerations: Unpacking Jung’s Phenomenology of the Psyche in a Comparative Framework*.” By raising central epistemological questions about the nature of the object as well as establishing a bigger frame to unveil Jung’s hermeneutic attitude, the author is trying to unpack Jung’s phenomenological approach. In this chapter the author is also starting to deal with Jung’s Kantian epistemological baggage.

“*Individuation and the Historical Development of the Trinitarian Structure of*

Subjectivity” explores the historicity of the subject by engaging in a dialogue with Hegel’s *Philosophy of History* as well as Plotinus and St. Augustine (among others). The goal is to elucidate how subjectivity is not a meta-historical structure.

His sixth chapter called “*The Problem of Evil in a Comparative Theological and Philosophical Perspective*” offers a wider theological and philosophical framework for the development of a historically informed understanding of the position of evil, nothingness and negativity in Western thought. The goal is to place Jung’s position about evil within that larger framework. Plotinus and St. Augustine are once again explored (see p. 122ff.).

In his last chapter, “*Appraising Jung’s Objections about the Privative Nature of Evil Within a Wider Problematic*” is dealing with Jung’s objections regarding the place of evil in Christianity. Jung’s emphatic attempt regarding the ontology of evil (even if argumentatively highly problematic) is interpreted as a climax in the history of emphasizing the importance of the personal dimension within ethical and religious aspects of life (see p. 128ff.). Here, Jung’s notion of evil seems more closely tied to the Christian tradition than one might have thought at a first glance (see p. 130ff.).

In essence, Evangelos Tsempeles strongly disagrees with Wolfgang Giegerich’s claim that the core ethic of Jung’s project was neither systematic, nor logical in Hegel’s sense. Instead, the thesis repositions analytical psychology as “no more and no less than a field for an inter-subjective askesis in the education of the individual person in late modernity.” (p. 22f)

3. Small Revisions and Final Assessment

This document is very neatly edited and there are only a handful of typos, which I highlighted in the attached version. When there are direct quotes, at times the author leaves some words out. Those should be indicated with [...]. The first time the author mentions a name, please contextualize the thinker with a few words (e.g. the German phenomenologist) and include the first name, thereafter only the family name needs to be mentioned. What is missing is a bit more of a contextualization of the overall streams or directions regarding contemporary readings and interpretations of Jung’s work. What are the main ideas in the existing interpretations and schools and how does this specific thesis respond to a ‘gap’ or ‘desideratum’. Sometimes big statements

about philosophers like Kant or Hegel are made without sufficient referencing (I highlighted those as well).

Overall though, I want to say that among all doctoral theses that I have read in my 20 years in academia, this one is the most exciting, well-written, far-reaching and comprehensive thesis. I was immensely impressed by the precise and beautiful language, the depth of ideas, the profundity of questions, the unique connections made between thinkers and ideas and the very personal, yet transcendental touch. I felt like reading a very, very important work, which will have enormous impact. I have never met Evangelos Tsempelis or heard about him, but after reading his work and witnessing the quality and profundity of his writing and thinking, I would say that he is one of the great minds of our day and age. The extraordinary quality of this work is also a sign of the outstanding support and exceptional ability of Prof. Dr. Dr. Wiercinski to supervise students and make them rise to the highest level of contributions in academia.

Last, but not least, the language was exquisite and although I was pressed in time, I felt compelled to not miss any paragraph or any word of this thesis. I therefore finish this review with heartfelt congratulations to the author and wish that the work will find the highest recognition in academia that it truly deserves.

I therefore, and with great satisfaction, recommend to the Faculty of Education, University of Warsaw, to accept Evangelos Tsempelis's inaugural dissertation, "Repositioning Jung's Analytical Psychology: A Paradigm Shift from a Critical Science to an Intersubjective Practice in the Education of the Individual in late Modernity" as partial fulfillment of the requirements for obtaining a Ph.D. degree in Education and would like to nominate his dissertation for an outstanding dissertation award.

Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'D. B. Weber', written in a cursive, flowing style.

Prof. Dr. Barbara Weber