

‘The perspective of the Business Model...is
unravelling...new perspectives are urgently needed.’

Ascent from the abyss

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Engaging in Everyday Life Through a Jungian Perspective

The Theory

IN ADVERTISING her address to the Analytical Psychology Club of New York at their Annual Dinner, Heide Kolb, Jungian Analyst wrote:

The Jungian approach is unique. It is not only a method to treat psychological problems, but also a unique way of perceiving and engaging in everyday life.


The everyday life of western society, embedded in consumerism and indoctrinated in the language of the Market, has hit a huge pothole, indeed a veritable abyss. The perspective of the Business Model has infiltrated governments, education, industry, communities and families. Now it is unravelling. Its adherents are shaken, fearful and adrift. New perspectives are urgently needed.

A perspective that encourages a conscious awareness of the psychology of what is going on in the world around us is required. One which meets this requirement is the 'universal' perspective espoused in Jungian and post-Jungian discourse.

This perspective, developed by the post-Jungian Wolfgang Giegerich, does not favour ego-consciousness but instead purposefully includes non-ego thought in the thinking process. Inclusion does not mean appropriation. It means admitting an image, dream or fantasy as something deserving of thought, albeit in a special way. This way allows the non-ego image to be observed as a thing in itself, yet still intimately attached, allowing both ego and non-ego to live comfortably with each other, not as opposites but as dual dwellers.

The Experience

A 54-year old woman had a dream in 1998. *I am driving up a hill. There is a park and an oval on the left hand side and a single shop on the other side. It is called the Virgo shop. I park the car beside a white wooden fence bordering the park. I cross the street and go into the shop. I am surprised how bare the shop is. There are white floorboards and dried tortured willow branches in a large vase.*



“The imperative is that we recognise that it is our

There aren't many books. A couple of other people are talking to the owner. They don't notice me so I leave. Next I am driving through a city. There is a lot of traffic, pedestrians and red traffic lights. I seem to be driving round and round in circles, but then I make a left hand turn and see a familiar church. I drive up a hill onto a curved road which turns into a dirt track. Now I am on top of a ridge. I see what looks like a new sub-division. I drive in. The houses are unusual and people are working on them. Some people are lifting a large slab of wood up above large glass walls. I speak to them but they don't answer. I don't think they can see me. I leave the sub-division and drive out onto another dirt road. I come across a group of children sitting in a semi-circle around an old woman who has her back to me. She is dressed in blue. I stop. The old woman turns to me and says: "Look behind you." I turn around. The most incredibly beautiful scene lies before me. Steep purple mountains on either side slope down to a beautiful blue lake, which continues on to a distant cutting where I know it will join the sea. The trees on the mountains are a riot of colour – autumn tones of reds, oranges and golds even though

it isn't autumn. It takes my breath away with its beauty. I could look at it forever. I turn back. The old woman said "That's not all." I look again and see a similar beautiful scene. But then I become aware that buildings have appeared on my left – the colours have disappeared. Now I see row upon row of high-rise buildings but as I look closer I can see they are deserted, some in ruins. There are people too but they are like wraiths, skeletal, dressed in rags. I say to myself, "They can't see it! They can't see it."

When she first dreamt it, she tried to understand it at a personal level but it all seemed a bit fantastic, as if she had dreamt something of mythic proportion, hardly relevant to someone in the midst of medication and therapy for a nervous breakdown. It was a dream that almost cried out to be given to others to look at. And who was she to even find an audience for it to be shared with?

It is 10 years later – 2008.

She is ready to share the dream after much hard work and after recognition that 'she' is but one avenue through which 'soul' can access itself.

The dream could have been appropriated and presented as 'hers', but in so doing would have lost its

perspective...that needs to change...’

universality and therefore its capacity to inspire. In leaving the dream as a thing in itself – attached to her, but only so it had her as a potential outlet – she had to position herself within a new perspective, a perspective capable of admitting dual occupancy of ego and non-ego. Not two ‘personas’, with which pop psychologists might have a field day erroneously labelling her schizophrenic, but a perspective giving soul its rightful place alongside ego. An occupancy where soul is not an ‘unconscious’ underlay, but exists simultaneously with rational thought. Where soul is capable of being brought into the thinking process on its own terms, thus engendering a wider vision.

The Future

The post-Jungian, Wolfgang Giegerich, wrote:

Jung once wrote that we always dream from within the relationship. We could extend this statement by saying we always dream from within the real psychological context that we are in as well as from the more superficial or deeper psychological reality level that consciousness is open to. But this applies not only to dream thoughts. It applies to all non-ego thinking.

In 1998 the dream was dreamt in the real psychological context that she was in as well as from the more superficial or deeper psychological reality level that consciousness was open to.

In Jungian terms this was a ‘big’ dream, an *opus magnum*. It was more than an ego-based aid to help the woman understand herself better or imbue her own personal circumstances with a mythic quality. It aided in enabling her, eventually, to acknowledge that contradictions could exist side by side, to allow an awareness that she was not outside the world, an outsider choosing to become a part of something else, but that the world was part of her.

The monumental challenges we, as a species, currently face, were no longer ‘out there’ but an integral part of who she was.

The imperative is that we recognise that it is our perspective, or how we see things, that needs to change. Not through the narrow lens of the ego itself, nor an imaginary (yet still ego-related) lens where compassion and solutions are dealt with ‘out there.’ Ego plus soul, conscious thought applied to both. Here are the tools for the future to help us ascend from the abyss.