The “Black Sun” seen through. Or: Marlan’s proton pseudos

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Stan Marlan’s paper, “The absolute that is not absolute: an alchemical reflection on the caput mortuum, the dark other of logical light” (International Journal of Jungian Studies, DOI: 10.1080/19409052.2016.1237372), contains much that one might take issue with. But I will here start out from only one single statement to be found in it and discuss its wider implications:

My work began with the recognition that the image of the black sun resisted conscious assimilation—that it would not yield or be incorporated, did not dissolve, go away, go under, get lifted up, but rather remained to challenge one’s psychological narcissism to the core, [with] experiences of brokenness, incision, wound, castration, cut [,] negation, and with an ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness.

The discussion that follows is not meant as a response to Marlan (which would be pointless after all that has been said in my previous publications and in previous exchanges with him), but addresses itself to those interested in psychology as the discipline of interiority. It has the purpose of a self-clarification of the psychological standpoint in view of the objections presented by Marlan. Errors and misconstruals can be helpful. One can learn from them.

(1) Psychology based on empirical personal experience and not on generally valid concept. “My work began”: Marlan gives us here not only the temporal beginning, but more importantly also the first principle or axiom from which he starts out, the foundational premise of his work as a psychologist. Two things are noteworthy. First, what he says here has the character of a confessional statement: he reports an experience he had. An experience is an empirical and as such irrational event, a happening in time, not a rational conclusion from hermeneutic endeavors or deductive reasoning. In mathematics, the empirical fact that to date nobody succeeded in “squaring the circle” does not mean that it cannot be squared. The latter idea becomes a mathematical truth only if and when the explicit mathematical (logical) proof has been furnished that this squaring of the circle is indeed on logical grounds impossible. The same applies mutatis mutandis in psychology to the alleged “unassimilable remnant”. In myths and fairy tales, there are often doors or gates that open only if the “right time” or the “right person” has come. So if you come to such a gate and it does not open despite numerous persistent attempts, it does not mean that it cannot come open. And in the empirical practice of psychotherapy performed by us finite mortal minds it is a frequent experience that whole dreams or particular dream details remain a total riddle: to us, to particular analysts at particular times. But this does not warrant us to claim that they are unassimilable, ununderstandable.

Marlan calls this existential experience, which came to him as a finished result, a “recognition”, but it really counts for him as a revelation, in some ways comparable to visionary experiences of mystics or prophets, because it changed and fixed his outlook and function for him as an “absolute that indeed is absolute” (in Marlan’s undialectical sense of the word). And secondly, what this revelation leads to if taken as a basis for his theory is therefore an ideology, a belief system, and ipso facto not psychology. He is not guided by, does not start out from, the question what the concept of psychology requires, if it really is supposed to deserve its name, not with the question what the soul wants, and he does not methodically proceed from there. This also means that Marlan confuses the phenomenal or experiential
level with the *methodological, epistemological, discipline-constituting* level. Contingencies such as empirical subjective experiences cannot be used as bases to build fundamental tenets of a field or discipline on.

His personal experience with which he begins is a kind of “conversion experience” (it “challenge[d] [his] psychological narcissism to the core”!) similar in type (though not in content) to the ones reported by certain Christians. Starting from it as his basis, he now is, at least in his theorizing, totally in the service of this revelation and works as its faithful preacher who turns to philosophers (such as Kant) not to get a deeper philosophical understanding of *their thinking* but to cite them as *witnesses* to confirm his precious belief.

(2) **One single image absolutized.** This revelation is one that is intrinsic only to one particular item, one single phenomenon: the image (and a rather rare, isolated one at that) of the black sun. But Marlan absolutizes it and gives it *fundamental* importance as a universally valid principle not only for all psychological thinking, but even for philosophy (e.g., the question of the thing-in-itself). It thus becomes his “god-term” (Kugler) or at least, as Jung might have said, his dogma (and we remember here Jung’s critiquing Freud for having made, as Jung thought, a dogma out of “sexuality” as something to be “religiously observed”). But there are of course thousands of other images that can be assimilated and relativize this one “recognition” of his. What Marlan does could be compared to a biologist who were to take one single body organ, say the vermiform appendix, and to claim that its function and nature tells us the ultimate truth of the human organism as such. One particular phenomenon must not be given *normative* significance for the whole of phenomenology.

Certainly, we can say that each archetypal image and thus also “the black sun”, when and for as long as it is constellated, is a manifestation of the whole truth of the soul. However, it is this whole truth only as it appears from the one particular angle that the respective specific image represents. It is not the truth of the soul and the principle for psychology as such. Now, because the black sun gives valid expression to the truth of the soul (although its truth only from one particular vantage point), we can even concede that the message or truth of this one particular image may indeed be “an ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness.” But the other side of the same coin is that this ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness is an *image-internal* truth that must not be extracted from this image (and from the experience of the image) and made use of outside of it.¹ We cannot impose it on all phenomena, all psychological images as a, nay, as the general truth. From this it follows that the ultimate No to consciousness and the unassimilability do not even apply to that very image of the black sun *itself* whose *internal* message, after all, this No to consciousness is, let alone to psychological experience at large. The unassimilability does not even apply to the black sun itself. For as a matter of course this image, too, can indeed—despite its *internal* “No to assimilation”—be assimilated to consciousness, just like any other archetypal image, be it that of the bottle imp, the virgin mother, Dionysos, Hermes, the underworld, Kali Durga, the navel of the earth, Apollo, Helios, Christ, the Grail, or what have you. But the contradiction between this insight on the one hand and Marlan’s belief in unassimilability as a fundamental (even philosophical) truth on the other hand leads to our next point, the definition or understanding of “conscious assimilation”.

(3) **“Conscious assimilation” misunderstood as dissolving, going away.** The consciousness with which Marlan from the outset approached his chosen topic of the black sun was obviously informed by and committed to the wish that it should “dissolve, go away, go under, get lifted up”. Only this wish or

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¹ A particular archetypal image or myth can only be said to be relevant for psychology as such if it can be shown that it gives imaginal expression to a truth that corresponds to the concept or definition of psychology.
expectation, ultimately the wish “to get out”, explains his violent experience of brokenness, incision, wound. (Jung, for example, reacted quite differently: “Depression’ means, as a rule, ‘having to go downwards’” [Letter to an anonymous woman, 9 March 1959, my transl.]. Or Jung’s delight at the dream of an analysand in which she was immersed in a hole filled with hot stuff and tried to get out, when Jung came and pushed her deeper into it, saying: “Not out of it, but through it”). I ask: why in heaven’s name should it dissolve? Who expects that in the case of “the black sun” “assimilation to consciousness” amounts to the dissolution and disappearance of the blackness? Indeed, if it were to dissolve, could we then still speak of its “conscious assimilation”?

This wrong criterion for, this naive and egoic understanding of, “assimilation” is Marlan’s proton pseudos, and it is something absolutely astounding and weird to come from a Jungian analyst. The human, all-too-human (namely, the ego’s wish for relief from the darkness) got here the better of the professional, the psychologist. Furthermore, is it not unbelievable to hear an analyst proclaim “an ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness”? At any rate, in Jungian psychology we don’t approach phenomena with the goal of eliminating them, doing them in.

Rather, instead of dissolution and disappearance of the problematic or hard-to-bear image, “assimilation” implies a two-way process: the blackness, to stay with this example, is assimilated to consciousness only to the extent that consciousness is conversely assimilated to the blackness. Making conscious means “saving the phenomena”, means getting deeper into them, seeing and appreciating their innermost truth (in the case of the black sun: seeing its truth as black sun!, as real darkness); it means our allowing ourselves to be initiated into them, be taught by them. Jung (about neurosis): “we do not cure it, it cures us.” Applying the psychological understanding of assimilation to the particular image of the black sun that we are concerned with here, we can say: Once this archetypal image has indeed been constellated (so that we are in it and enveloped by it and it has become the whole world for us), it is truly assimilated to consciousness when the latter becomes fully aware precisely of the “ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness”.

The “unassimilable remainder”, it now appears, is the petrified reflection of the ego’s misguided and illusionary expectation in the mirror of the objective soul. If the ego in Marlan (the “psychological narcissism”, as he calls it) did not insist on something like dissolution, the black sun would not answer in the form of an experience of brokenness, incision, and castration, but simply result in consciousness’s growing awareness of what the utter darkness of the dark sun entails.

It is Marlan’s unpsychological confusion of assimilation to consciousness with overcoming the phenomena and idealizing them (in the sense of whitewashing and lifting them up into lofty heights) that he also imputes both to Hegel and to our psychology. In other words, it is his own original aim, his proton pseudos, that he now, after his conversion through his study of the black sun, projects on, and fights in, Hegel and us!

(4) The I reserves itself. Now, his having originally been committed to the psychologically naive, “pious” desire to get rid of the darkness of the black sun has the unfortunate psychological consequence that he learns the psychologically wrong lesson from his experience: his consciousness did not suffer that very “castration” (Marlan’s term) that, after all, his own experience obviously had in store for him and for his “psychological narcissism”. The two-way process mentioned does not occur. Instead we find a unidirectional object orientation. It, the object, the blackness of the black sun, should but does not dissolve; it, the black sun, is challenging, but the challenge does not transform the mind. The I does not
enter the process. The subject is not from the outset involved, which means that thinking does here not become in itself reflexive, although reflexivity is indispensable and constitutive for psychology. A “subject-object”, it seems, remains outside Marlan’s vision. In his theory the I as observer or consciousness is merely faced with an unyielding remainder as its external object vis-à-vis itself. Certainly, he sees the challenge, but he holds it at bay. The I’s initiation (Lat. in-ire) is avoided, the I reserves itself, keeps itself out. In other words, Marlan (unwittingly) rescued the “psychological narcissism” from that very challenge that he himself felt to be inherent in his own experience of the black sun. And he managed to bring about this rescue in two ways. (a) By means of the defense mechanism of a simple reversal into the opposite, by switching sides, namely from his original wish for an assimilation and overcoming of the blackness to his final stance for which the (originally challenging or threatening) unassimilable blackness is now all of a sudden ego-syntonic, indeed, has become his pet idea. (b) By means of the device of “ideology formation”: what should actually be his consciousness’s “castration” or alchemical mortification and ipso facto its being initiated into a dark seeing is turned into a universalized theoretical doctrine and dogma about an (objectively subsisting) “darkness, unassimilable remnant, ashes, caput mortuum, incision, wound” as objects of consciousness and as theoretical contents of a belief-system. Function or process is turned into entity.

Castration means serious loss. But the encounter with the black sun has for Marlan, on the contrary, the result that he comes out of it with a positive new acquisition: with his now being in possession of a remnant as hard fact that is immune to all attempts at psychologizing or soul-making and whose very nature it is to remain. Ashes, caput mortuum. No transformation anymore! Having seen Marlan’s resistance to the challenge that he felt comes from the black sun, we now realize, that his “unassimilable remainder” is nothing but the reification of the ego’s resistance to its own “castration”, to its own initiation into the blackness of the black sun. What is actually a subjective attitude of his is frozen so that in his theory it appears as objective factual reality, something existing “out there”. In this remainder, consciousness unwittingly has before its mental eyes the monument and stronghold of its own subjective steadfast resistance to the mind’s own going under into the interiority and absolute negativity of the very image that showed itself to him and impressed him so fundamentally.

(5) The black sun: the dark other of “logical light”? That the black sun has to do with blackness and thus may be the “dark other of” something can be granted. But the dark other of what? This is the question. Marlan believes it to be the other of what he calls “logical light”.

This does not make sense. “Logical light” is an unfitting free association brought in from outside. Not only does the image of the black sun itself not contain any (be it affirmative or negative) reference to the sphere of “the logical”? Much more important is the realization that something can only be the other of such a thing or dimension that has already been fully reached and is already a prevailing reality. Highschools are not the other of universities. But bitcoin could rightly be considered “the other of” conventional currency. “The other of” implies a relation of negation, off pushing off from something given. This is apparently also accepted by Marlan since for him it is the very character of the black sun that it amounts to “incision, wound” and challenges one’s psychological narcissism to the core. An event of wounding requires that the thing to be wounded already prevails.

Now this is the point where the idea of the black sun as the dark other of logical light goes wrong. Being itself imaginal, this image antedates “the logical”. The latter is historically as well as logically an

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2 For the moment I address myself only to the first part of Marlan’s phrase “logical light”, i.e., the logical. In a later section, section (8), I will turn to his association of the logical with “light”.

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entirely new dimension of consciousness beyond the level of the imaginal. “The logical” is still unimagined and unimaginable for the black sun. “The logical” presupposes, and comes only into being through, the demise of the entire mythological/imaginal mode of being-in-the-world. It is a new status of consciousness. It logically is, and historically was, the successor of the mythological/imaginal as such. And what Marlan calls “logical light” and identifies above all with Hegel’s thinking and with psychology (as the discipline of interiority) is precisely also for Marlan personally a still unknown, unsuspected new continent, because, although he may indeed have looked through the entrance gate to Hegel’s philosophy as well as through that to psychology from outside, he never ventured himself forth through the entrances. He never actually exposed himself to and started to swim in their waters on his own. With critical reservation he systematically halted from the outset before the threshold. So he has only knowledge “about” them, that is, mere opinions that have the character of prejudgments. His own real horizon is and remains to be partly that of Hillman’s imaginal psychology, partly that of classical Jungian and partly that of personalistic psychology, and, philosophically, it seems to be that of the old world of naive metaphysics (that he tries to justify with the oxymoron of his pre-Kantian3 Kant interpretation).

Since the so-called “logical light” lies outside the horizon of the image of the black sun, it cannot possibly be what this image or experience is the “dark other” of. Something imaginal, an image (and be it the image of the blackest dark sun), is simply not a match for “logical light”. It cannot challenge it. Just like bloodletting is not a match for bacterial infections and hammer, pliers, and screwdrivers are not a match for programming mistakes in computer software. The logical may at times challenge the imaginal, but not vice versa. It is a fundamental error to treat the black sun and the “logical light” as if the image of the black sun were at least a peer of the logical.

If one nevertheless wants to see this image as “the other of”, then one has to say that it is obviously the other of the bright sunlight that shines in the natural world and produces our daylight, as well as of the sun in the mythological, imaginal world as, e.g., Helios, Apollo. It is the natural light and the mythological/imaginal sun (whose mythology-internal real other, by the way, would be the underworld, not Marlan’s black sun) that the black sun negates and intends to push off from to something radically new and previously unheard of. The black sun disappoints and “wounds” our natural expectations of the warm, brightly shining sun in a both literal and imaginal sense.

Having mentioned Apollo, I must dispel the possible misconception that this god represented already what Marlan called the “logical light”. Mythology as a whole and thus also the brightness of the Delphic Apollo are still fundamentally ignorant of “the logical”, untouched by it, still enfolded in the anima alba.4 “The logical” is something wholly other. “The logical”, the conceptual, reflection (i.e., the logical form of reflectedness) belong to a fundamentally different level that comes only into existence through the ruthless wounding, sublation, and overcoming of the mythological/imaginal status of consciousness as such. Mythology and the imaginal in general are precisely defined by their innocence vis-

3 In the depth and syntactically pre-Kantian due to his irreflexive one-sided object orientation (the Kantian revolution of the Denkungsart [!], “mode of thinking”, did not happen in his thinking; Marlan does his best to rescue the immediate focus on the object) and irrespective of his also semantically adopting, in his own way, Heideggerian and Derridean positions.

4 “Anima alba” is a psychological notion. It does not mean that the times during which consciousness was contained in the innocence of the anima alba status was practically, on the level of behavior, innocent and harmless. The anima alba, on the one hand, and behavioral brutality, on the other, can well go together. Just think of sacrificial killings of humans. “The anima,” said Jung (CW 9i § 60), “believes in the khôlê kôryêkhô, the ‘beautiful and the good’, a primitive conception that antedated the discovery of the conflict between aesthetics and morals. ... The paradox of this marriage of ideas troubled the ancients as little as it does the primitives.”
à-vis “the logical”. (By saying this I do not mean to imply that mythology were in itself illogical, unreasonable, or irrational and that mythological man, on the behavioral level of his mental operations, had not been able to think logically. My point is merely that mythology psychologically, as a status and constitution of consciousness, antedates “reflection” and “the logical” as another status of consciousness.—It is, by the way, this confusion between rationality as inner quality of mythology and as the character of people’s mental operations on the one hand and rationality as logical status of consciousness on the other, that hampered the correct understanding of Lévy-Bruhl’s much-disputed thesis of the “prelogical mentality” of the primitives).

(6) If the “black sun” is not the dark other of logical light, what is it the other of? What does show itself in the black sun? The blackness of the black sun, in which nothing can be seen, is nothing other than the extreme and totally abstract image of image stripped of all its concrete imaginal qualities and concrete sensual (naturalistic) content (of color, nuance, shape, object, person or figure, action ...), in other words, it is the image of no-image. The black sun refuses to be image in the full sense and to make sense to the imaginal approach, just as it also refuses to be natural sun and to illumine the natural world for the generality; the confrontation with this image brings the ruthless disappointment, indeed the voiding, of consciousness’s habitual expectation to find something visible and concrete, something image-like. In this sense the black sun is the image of the radical voiding of image-quality as such, or more precisely, the voiding of the status of “imaginal” consciousness as a whole (image-focused, pictorially thinking, representational consciousness). With the image of the black sun a condition of extreme abstraction is reached, still within the imaginal, to be sure, but totally untypically for the imaginal, which corresponds to the fact that it is such a very rare image. That is to say, with its totally “unimaginal” abstractness this image has moved to the very border, the extreme margin, of the imaginal as such. This “unimaginal” abstractness becomes all the more striking when we compare and contrast the “black sun” with the truly imaginal, truly mythological idea of the underworld.

Now we understand what the “ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness” is really about. Marlan got it all wrong. It is by no means the ‘no’ to conscious assimilation, but the ‘no’ to imaginal consciousness, to image and to sensuality, the ‘no’ to the “imaginal” stance.

Inasmuch as with the black sun the imaginal has reached, and takes consciousness to, the imaginal’s own extreme border, it is a veritable boundary image, an image that borders on what is on the other side of image as such (quite in contrast to “the underworld”, which has its sure place in the center and as the ground of the mythological world). The black sun is Janus-faced: in the one direction it is still indebted to the old comfortable imaginal mode and confirms the imaginal (even if its particular quality and content is precisely to deconstruct, with imaginal means, image as such). And in the other direction it is image pointing forward beyond itself, beyond the imaginal. As Janus-faced image at the margin it also can be seen as a threshold. The totally “unimaginal” abstractness of the image of the black sun, that manifests in its voidness (or blackening) of all sensual content, already betrays its closeness, in its own character, to the sphere of the conceptual and logical. The “black sun” is much more an allegorization (pictorial representation) of an abstract concept than a veritable image. More specifically it is really the (pictorial) portrayal of the logic of stark, abstract self-contradiction: the sun, the very source of light, in itself as the opposite of itself (rather than the dark other of something else!): utter darkness. It is a conceptual self-contradiction, self-negation (not an imaginal or mythological union of opposites, such as,

5 This shows that the (“post-imaginal”) level of reflection has been reached by this image: as self-contradiction, the image of the black sun refers within itself to sun as source of light.
e.g., the image of the snake as both healing and poisoning, the Great Mother as nourishing and devouring). And by flatly contradicting the natural sun and the mythological sun (Helios, e.g.) it reveals itself as the soul’s need to push off from them. Inasmuch as it is this negation of image, indeed, the black-hole-like absorption of all imaginality into itself, the blackness of the black sun is nothing else but the first immediacy of absolute negativity and interiority as such.

When it happens that the image of the “black sun” impresses itself on consciousness, then this is that one particular moment, from among all the many diverse archetypal moments in the soul’s logical life and self-display, when the soul feels the need to negate its own imaginality and propel itself forward to a new form of itself, by explicitly revealing itself as absolute negativity (even though in still imaginal and thus in partly misleading form). The black sun image is marginal also in the sense of being very rare, exotic. And so it seems that the soul feels this need to take on this “black sun” guise especially when, in post-mythological times, it is confronted with itself in the form of a consciousness that is still in the status of *anima alba*. It is probably particularly the “white soul” in modern times that tends to get fascinated by the image of the “black sun”. The two of them (black sun on the one hand and white-soul consciousness on the other) form a pair (much like, for example, puer and senex, good and evil, etc.). Together they represent the situation in which the condition of extreme abstraction is reached, an absolutely purified opposition: all black on one side, all light and white on the other. Psychologically seen, the fact that the image of the black sun constellated itself in and for Marlan and that he could get hooked seems to suggest that the anima alba prevails over his consciousness. If, as we heard from Jung, depression means, as a rule, ‘having to go downwards’, that is, being psychologically too high, we can, by the same token, assume that the appearance of the sun as blackness in our time psychologically means, as a rule, consciousness’s being rather ‘white’ and being urged to get ‘darkened’.

What does the appearance of this image psychologically mean and want from the consciousness struck by it? I think it is fair to assume that its threshold character together with the weight that the black sun gained for Marlan personally amounted to the soul’s invitation to him (an invitation coming from within his own process) to leave both the imaginal and the egoic-naturalistic approaches behind, to transcend the exclusive commitment to imaginal and ego-psychology. The black sun’s pointing beyond itself as image is that aspect that gives it the character of an offer to Marlan, whereas its still retaining, as to its form, rooted in the imaginal is accountable for the mere “first immediacy” character of that to which it invites.\(^6\) In the image of the black sun the soul had presented him, as if on a silver platter, with the opened entrance gate to itself as how it appears on a no longer mythological, no longer imaginal, no longer personalistic level of comprehension. All that was needed for the beholder of this

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\(^6\) We could ask: why only “first immediacy”? Why not right away in its fully developed true form? The reason is the difference between movement in empirical space or geography and movement in soul country, from one status of consciousness to another. When I take a plane to America and land there, I find myself not in the first immediacy of America but in the already fully real, fully developed America. But when the soul moves to a new continent, that is, new status, of itself, this new status, other than “America” in our example, does not exist at all. (The same is true for “the other side” “on which” the image of the black sun, as I said, “borders”. The “border” metaphor must not either be taken literally, spatially. It must not be imagined in the sense of picture thinking.) All that exists to begin with is the old status of consciousness. The journey to the new status has to create and establish this new status for the first time if it is supposed to exist at all, and it has to create it on the ground of the old status (since there is nothing or anywhere else to go to: each status of consciousness is “the whole world”, “the whole soul”, “the whole truth” with nothing outside) and with the old status’s means and in its forms. This is why the soul’s journey to its new status can only proceed negatively, self-destructively: by negating, putrefying, decomposing, “deconstructing” and “pushing off from” the old status and by thereby eventually transforming it, the old status, into the new. So this journey is not a movement from here to there, not one from one archetypal image or myth to another, not a conversion from one religion or philosophy to another. It is not either a simple metamorphosis of the old status (like processes of getting old). Rather, it is the dialectical, “digestive” self-transportation on the same spot to a fundamentally deeper (or higher) logical “level” of the original status: absolute-negative interiorization.
image to be really true to it was his going through it.

(7) **Systematic blindness as mistaken loyalty to the blackness of the black sun.** What would “going through it” mean in this context? Of course not a literal movement in space from here to there. Rather, it would mean one’s “seeing through” it, and in the special case of a veritable boundary-image, the case of an image-deconstructing image, “seeing through” in turn would mean, his seeing through the *imaginal form* as such; it would mean the move from the (imaginably apparent) simple negation of “image” (absolute blackness as image of “no-image”) to the negation of the negation of image *as such* and thus the breakthrough to the coldness of logos or “the logical”, as that which is on the other side of the still naturalistically or imaginably perceived blackness of the black sun; or it would mean the move from innocent, passive beholding the blackness as object to *thinking* it and letting it come home to itself (and thus also come home to consciousness), that is, the move from perception and imagination to speculative thought; and, further, it would mean, as far as the discipline of psychology itself is concerned, the move to the corresponding methodological principle of absolute-negative interiorization. Only in this way would the offer be accepted psychologically and the threshold of the entrance gate be really crossed.

Just as the image of the black sun turned out not to be the dark other of “logical light”, so we now have to realize that with Marlan’s theory of the unassimilable remainder, of ashes, and the caput mortuum, etc., the psychologically adequate consequences of the experience of this image have by no means been drawn. To think so would be an illusion. To be loyal to this image requires something else. The soul is always concerned with *itself* and not with (literal) *Other*; it requires the self-application of its images and thus, in our case, also the negation of the negation of “image as such”, if the special experience of blackness or “no-image” is itself to come home to consciousness and thereby become psychological.

But the offer that the appearance of the black sun represented was refused (which could be considered the *psychological* equivalent to the Biblical “sin against the Spirit”. Marlan did not only miss the chance he was given, but deliberately rejected it). Instead of “invitation” or “entrance” and of going through this entrance and, ipso facto, going into *his own* (not the black sun’s!) “going under”, Marlan chose to *literalize* the black-hole-like blackness as absolutely impenetrable, frozen object—as the immutably lasting “remainder”, the *caput mortuum*. Instead of a threshold, opening, or passageway Marlan preferred to see the black sun as an impasse, as a non-plus-ultra wall (cf. his “ultimate ‘no’”) that protects and prevents him from (what he thinks is) “logical light” by forcefully holding him back in the imaginal mindset (the idea of wall reminds us of Jung’s idea, with respect to Kant, of a “wall at which human inquisitiveness turns back”). Marlan does precisely not try actively to “see through” the image of the black sun, all the way through, but merely “stares” in wonder at the black sun, and it is this transfixion of the subject that produces as its counterpart a dead frozen object. He construes the image, so to speak, as an (ordinary) mirror that stops the gaze and merely reflects where he, the I, is standing.

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7 One must not be misled by Marlan’s speaking of “a gateway back to the beyond, at the root of imagination, wonder, and transformation”. It is a gateway *back*, not forward, and a gateway to the *beyond*, i.e., to what psychologically has to be understood as a *projection*, what is by definition out of reach and unassimilable and what ipso facto can only be the distant object of *wonder*, i.e., of the passive admiration/veneration *by him who stays put*, who remains, on the theoretical level, a mere “voyeur”. Truly a gateway that is not a gateway. “Peephole” would be nearer to the mark.

8 With the idea of “wonder” the image as object is frozen and not *seen through*, whereas all movement (and the only movement) happens in the subject on the emotional level (it is struck with wonder). At the same time, the subject is also frozen, inasmuch as the subject’s emotionally being moved and struck with wonder takes the place of the actually required logical movement of seeing all the way *through* the image.

9 *Ordinary* mirror, in contrast to *speculative* mirrors (such as the one in the Snow White fairy tale or in Albertus Magnus’s
anyway. This move of his rescued for him the methodological standpoint of positivity (positive facticity), exteriority, and naive realism (and thus what we are used to call “the ego”).

The dear price to be paid for his literalization of the blackness is, however, consciousness’s blindness: it sees nothing, only black, only ashes, remainder, caput mortuum as so many objectifications of consciousness’s own not seeing. Consciousness has itself become identical with the blackness it sees in the image. Jung spoke of consciousness’s becoming unconscious. This, consciousness’s becoming unconscious, is the inner truth that is, inadvertently and unwittingly to him, expressed in Marlan’s theoretical “ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness” idea and his fundamental “unassimilability to consciousness” dogma. Marlan prefers the blinding of consciousness to the eclipse of the one familiar (namely, the imaginal, passively beholding) mode of being conscious. He even makes a theory, indeed, a dogma or creed of it. Fiat imaginalitas et pereat conscientia.

However, it is possible to see through the image of blackness and to see what is on its other side. “Seeing through” does not only mean to penetrate the initial appearance and to understand more deeply. It also means “seeing through to ...”. This in turn means that consciousness keeps seeing all the way through, as long as its encounter with the black sun lasts. It means that it maintains itself as a consciously seeing one even in cases where it is fundamentally challenged or threatened by what it sees (the image of the black sun as the image of seeing nothing). Marlan took the blackness as ‘seeing nothing’ literally, so that (with a kind of “identification with the aggressor”) it put an end to his seeing, while psychologically it would have required that the mode of seeing would have undergone a radical transformation and he (his consciousness) would have come out of it as seeing differently, having entered a fundamentally new dimension of seeing. Consciousness can indeed continue to see and to stay conscious if it allows itself to die the death of its old imaginal form of consciousness and, instead of merely beholding and imagining and feeling struck with wonder, begins to enter the mode of actively thinking and thus the sphere of “the logical”. Thinking, speculative thinking, is the new mode of ‘darkened’, sublated or sublimated seeing (we speak of “insights”), a seeing that emerges when consciousness has “seen” all the way “through” the blackness of the black sun and come out on its other side; we could also say: when it has “seen through” the object form of the black sun (and ipso facto has come home to itself). As such this darkened seeing is the new form of ‘yes’ to consciousness.

And it is not only a new form, but psychologically also a higher, more complex mode, inasmuch as speculative thinking is that mode in which consciousness is ipso facto conscious of itself, that is to say, it is that mode whose internal structure is such that in its performance “one’s own participation” (CW 14 § 753, transl. modif.), “man’s intervention”, “the collaboration of the psyche—an indispensable factor” (CW 10 § 498; Jung said: “die unerläßliche Mitwirkung der Psyche”) are objectively reflected, in other words, all those characteristics that according to Jung “foolish Parsifal”, e.g., forgot and that in “the natural sciences” (we add: and especially also in imaginal psychology and in mythology) with systematic necessity “remain[-] invisible”. In Marlan’s theory, however, they not only remain invisible, but are deliberately excluded. The psychological function of his insistence on the “unassimilable remainder” and the “thing-in-itself” is nothing else but the passionate defense of the relation of “pure, literal

theory, which always show the true Other).

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10 Here it is worth noting that these comments about blind, unconscious consciousness and “seeing nothing” must not themselves be literalized. “Consciousness that has become unconscious” does not mean that it has ceased being consciousness altogether. No, it is still conscious, it still sees what it sees, but it sees what it sees as ashes, as unassimilable remnant, as positivity. Its mode of seeing is blind, unconscious. It cannot see the soul’s life in what it sees.

11 For Hillman: “seeing through to the Gods”.
object” (object that is fundamentally separate from, vis-à-vis of, and on principle out of reach of the subject, and thus wholly other) on the one hand, and fundamentally immune, innocent subject on the other hand, as the general structure of consciousness. It is a logically (not necessarily empirically) outward-looking, fundamentally “projecting” and precisely not speculatively self-reflexive consciousness. This is beautifully, even if unintentionally, illustrated in Marlan’s own image in his paper of himself lying in bed with his dying literal dog. The logical structure of the relationship between subject and object as two ontologically separate bodies portrayed in this image is the structure of consciousness celebrated by him. His dictum about the “ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness” functions psychologically as the ultimate guarantee of one’s right, in psychology (!), to believe in consciousness’s logical innocence. Marlan’s effort with his “remainder” is to revoke the crucial psychological insight that the subject is, inevitably, always already in the object and finds itself in it and that we are surrounded by soul on all sides. In the last analysis, his deep-seated need seems to be to promote a psychology-prevention program.

(8) The false idea of “logical light”. As promised I will now turn to Marlan’s association of the logical with “light”. By taking the blackness of the black sun literally, letting it put a stop to his seeing and by decreeing an “ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness”, that is, by psychologically identifying with darkness and hailing it as ashes, unassimilable remainder, and caput mortuum, thinking—as the continued (even if fundamentally reformed and ‘blackened’) seeing—appeared to him as exclusively ‘light’. The dimension of “the logical”, that, due to his consciousness’s identification with darkness, for Marlan personally is a still unknown, never trodden territory, turns for him into something that allegedly rises up high above the real darkness into pure light. By speaking of “logical light”, he suggests that the logical means something cleansed of all concreteness and earthly weight and is totally purified, emaciated: the “poisonous state of splendid solar isolation”. He does not show where he got this silly idea from. It is superstitious. And as to his weird interpretation of Hegel, we can say that he seems to see Hegel through Heidegger’s and Derrida’s distorting glasses and with his own unidirectional object fixation, but not in Hegel’s own terms and through an unprejudiced direct access. For him absolute-negative interiorization means dissolution of the reality of the objects.

By the same token one could argue that Leonardo da Vinci, by creating a painting of MonaLisa, dissolved the reality of the real woman MonaLisa, and that Jung’s individuation process, by striving for the Self (a transcendent idea), dissolved the human being as empirical person. If we agreed with Marlan we would have to tell Leonardo that he should not have painted this painting, but that instead he should have concentrated on “the reality of his relationship with” the flesh and blood woman. Mogenson should not have devoted himself to the topic of “the dog that is not a dog”, but to a real dog. Christians should forget the risen and the mystical Christ and instead believe in the historical Jesus, the man, the human preacher.—The alchemist’s answer to Marlan would have been: quod natura relinquit imperfectum, ars perficit. Psychology is an art, an “alchemical” ars. According to Jung it is precisely and only the Self that brings out the real truth of the empirical person. And for any person with an appreciation of art Leonardo’s painting outshines the real woman of whom it is a portrait.

The image of the “black sun” could rightly be called the dark other of the “light” of Helios or the Delphic Apollo.12 Because all these images are commensurable. They belong to the same sphere of imaginal or mythological images. But to identify “the logical” (or the MonaLisa, or the Self) with

12 If we ignore for a moment the above insight that the dark sun is really the depiction of a logical self-contradiction: within itself the opposite of itself (rather than of some other).
“light” and “splendid solar isolation” is a category mistake. The opposition of light and darkness simply does not apply to it. Concepts, algorithms, inferences, computer programs, as well as speculative thought and works of art and “soul made through absolute-negative interiorization” are not “solar”, not “light”, and they are not “darkness”, nor anything in between. And furthermore (a second logical mistake), a particular image or experience like that of the dark sun cannot possibly be “the dark other of logical light” because “the logical” is not likewise a particular experience or content (the way, e.g., “the peaks of spirit” are particulars). It is a whole dimension or general form and status of thinking beyond image as such. Its other would have to be another whole dimension, such as “the imaginal”, “mythological”. But this other dimension could not be its “dark” other, simply because dimensions are neither dark nor light.

This means that Marlan interprets a syntactical difference (between the imaginal [or, in other cases, the empirically real] and the logical) in terms of a semantic opposition (“dark” – “light”). At the same time he revokes the difference between the level of the mystical / transcendental / logical / soul meaning and the level of the empirical-factual, and that between the cooked and the raw, between art and nature, by eliminating the former element in each contrast.

But it is precisely this view of “logical light” that he projects on psychology (psychology comprehended as the discipline of interiority). It is the blindedness of his consciousness that projects its own blank “white soul” character (called by Marlan “psychological narcissism”, a narcissism that he defended against the inherent message of the black sun by paying for it the high price indicated) into its own other, while believing to represent, and in fact standing up for, “the dark other” of “logical light”. What emerges here is that psychology conceived as the discipline of interiority (together with the conception of the soul as logical life) is, in the last analysis, Marlan’s real black sun, however his real black sun the way it would appear if it were seen through and thus in no longer imaginal form. Small wonder that he is driven to attack it while at the same time also being (negatively) fascinated by it.

The soul seen as logical life: this is, far from being the “logical light”, that real “dark seeing” I spoke of earlier. Of course, not “the logical” itself is dark (or light), as pointed out. Rather a consciousness able to see soul as logical life is this “dark” seeing because its seeing is not done with the eyes (neither the literal, physical ones, nor those of the imagination). It has gone through the deconstruction or self-decomposition of the imaginal mode, a self-decomposition which tried to express itself for Marlan, in first immediacy, in his image of the black sun; and a self-decomposition that did not destroy one content in favor of another one, but has left behind the whole level of contents, the soul’s semantics, and dropped (or rose) to the resulting new level of syntactical or logical structure, logical form: this “seeing” is “insight” into, i.e., comprehension of, the inner logic of the matter, the logic that “animates” the matter. Therefore, by comparison with mythology and imaginal psychology, one’s thinking on the level of the logical is “dark” seeing because it has been stripped of the bright colorful and warm contents of the imaginal. But paradoxically this (by comparison) “dark” seeing of speculative thought appears to Marlan as “logical light”—probably because what it comprehends does not have the solid and opaque thing-character of the “unassimilable remnant”.

Marlan’s presenting the black sun as the dark other of logical light has the additional advantage for him that he thereby managed to redirect the dangerous attack (that he experienced as coming from the black sun) away from his own (or the field’s) consciousness as its addressee to something that he was opposed to anyway and all along: to alien others, namely to Hegel, Giegerich, and Mogenson (as repre-
sentatives of this so-called logical light), and ipso facto to change the originally challenging black sun (and “challenge” psychologically always means challenge to oneself, to one’s own constitution of consciousness) into his most precious argumentative weapon against those others—and thus paradoxically, *qua* black sun, into *his* theory’s bright sun. (This is of course another instance of the reversal into the opposite referred to above.)

(9) Regression to literalism. It is worth noting that Marlan’s return to and clinging to the remnant, the *caput mortuum*, and to the thing-in-itself is a betrayal not only of the invitation he received to the insight into the soul’s negativity and its character as logical life, but even of “archetypal psychology’s” imaginal approach itself, of Hillman’s “poetic basis of mind”, his notion of “soul-making”, and his method of “seeing through” (not to mention even Jung’s devotion to the arcane, transcendental level of the soul)—a betrayal of all this in favor of literalism, otherness, and soul-external fact. As his narration about his euthanized dog Curtis shows, initiation, i.e., the transformation of the *structure* or constitution of consciousness, has in him become regressively replaced by his cultivation of ego sentiments, events of his *having* and *indulging in* emotions. These he declares, n.b. *as psychologist* (!), to be for him decisive—vide his second subjective confessional statement in this paper: “This view [namely, what he thinks is Hegel’s view as well as the view of psychology as the discipline of interiority] does not satisfy me, nor account for the reality of my relationship with Curtis.” Marlan’s emphasis on his lying with his dying dog and accompanying it with his sad feelings into its death could be interpreted as his favoring the behaviorally acting out of, and substitute for, the actually demanded psychological “going under”.

His move to ego sentiments is already foreshadowed in his viewing the challenge of the black sun reductively, namely merely personalistically, as a challenge to “one’s psychological narcissism”, in other words, as a psychic one, when it should be seen as a psychological, a theoretical challenge: a challenge to *his* psychology’s methodological stance. Of course, like everybody, Marlan as civil man and private individual has every right to have his emotional needs and to treasure them and to stand up for them. But the moment he speaks as psychologist and theoretician and publishes in a psychological journal, he has to leave his private feelings—and along with them his whole human-all-too-humanness and also his beloved pet Curtis—at home and argue so to speak “officially”, as a professional, a representative-on-duty of the *field* of psychology and its constitutive principle, the *objective soul*. The field or discipline of psychology is transpersonal and has logos-nature (“psycho-logy”). It has no relationship with any dog, no emotional needs. What Marlan, or people in general for that matter, subjectively feel, or what “the reality of their relationship with” their dog (or whatever or whoever) may be, and even their possible psychological narcissism, is totally irrelevant for the basic theoretical questions of psychology, just as irrelevant as the question whether they prefer tennis over football, or the political left over the right, or whether they love or hate their mothers, or are vigorously healthy or plagued by illnesses.

How did Hillman put it? “The proper measure of mankind is man; of psychology, soul.”

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13 *Re-Visioning Psychology*, New York et al. (Harper & Row) 1975, p. 189. We may also think here of the relentless onenessideness that Hillman professed in his *The Dream and the Underworld*: Talking about the general direction of his approach to dreams (and thus to psychological phenomena in general) he stated: “… But because this *via regia* [to the unconscious, as Freud had called the dream], in most psychotherapy since his [Freud’s] time has become a straight one-way street of all morning traffic, moving out of the unconscious towards the ego’s city, I have chosen to face the other way. Hence my title, which is a directional signpost for a different one-way movement, let us say vesperral, into the dark. So at the beginning, I must admit to working this bridge with a certain singleness of intent.” (p. 1) Hillman opts for psychology’s turning, with “singleness of intent”, away from the human-all-too-human. And Hillman’s “vesperal”, underworldly darkness nicely contrasts with Marlan’s *abstract* image-concept of the *absolutely* black sun.
psychological (psychology-constituting) difference.

But Marlan refuses to accept this challenge, this narcissistic insult that the field of psychology inflicts on its students as an indispensable precondition for its, psychology’s, coming into existence. On the contrary, it is, as we have seen, Marlan’s express goal to establish precisely the civil man, the empirical man in his humanness, and his subjective emotional needs and his feeling-relationship to literal reality as the indispensable standard and measure of psychology. But how can he, as a Jungian, expect in the first place that psychology should take note of, let alone be interested in “the reality of his (or any person’s) relationship with his dog”? By thus clinging to the ego, he acts as a psychological reactionary, wanting to undo again Jung’s and Hillman’s revolutionary advances toward a true psychology and to bring the field down from the level and concept of “our” psychology (psychologia nostra) to those of “people’s” psychology (psychologia vulgi).14 Above I suggested that Marlan confuses the phenomenal level with the methodological, epistemological, discipline-constituting level. Now I can specify that he wants the phenomenal (existential-experiential and personalistic) level to be, just like that, of theoretical, methodological relevance for the field of psychology.

Jung had already had to struggle with the same kind of problem reduction, but in the area of theology. Answering a correspondent who had written as a reaction to Answer to Job: “The whole situation would be aired and simplified if we could ... accept the idea that God is Love”, Jung wrote sarcastically: “Mineralogy is just stones, zoology simply animals, technology only how things are made to work, and mythology old fables of no consequence at all. ... To hell with all -logies. Why should anybody fuss with the history of symbols when everything is quite clear and can be summed up in the short formula ‘God is Love’?” (Letters 2, p. 556, 7 May 1960, to Anonymous). Zoology is simply animals, and for Marlan psychology is, at least in this one instance, simply “the reality of my relationship with Curtis.”

The topic of Marlan’s regression to literalism is the appropriate place to substantiate with a few examples my above assertion of his “weird interpretation of Hegel”. Commenting on the topic of the “fear of error” which Hegel says is the error itself and thus a fear of truth”, Marlan states: “Kant’s painstaking philosophical critique is reduced to a psychology of fear and an ad hominem, psychological argument”. Preposterous! This statement is not, as it purports to be, about Hegel, but is much rather an unintended self-display of Marlan’s own personalistic, psychologistic mindset. He reads the word “fear” literally as if it meant in Hegel’s text a human, personal emotion. Marlan’s horizon here is that of ego-psychology, of what people think or feel, which shows that he simply has not entered the sphere of philosophical discourse (of thought proper) and has no inkling of what Hegel is talking about. “Fear of error” is in the Hegel passage a philosophical analysis and description of an aspect of the inner objective logic inherent in the ordinarily prevailing epistemology. It is Marlan who fails to painstakingly try to think Hegel’s thought, he who refuses to meet Hegel on his own philosophical level. Instead, by personally seeing nothing but an ad hominem argument in Hegel’s point it is he himself who reduces this logical analysis and philosophical argument to an ad hominem argument. As if Hegel had needed to resort to the pettiness of such maneuvers and had been unable to meet Kant on the latter’s level of philosophical thought. As if he had not been just as painstaking in his philosophical work as Kant was, and as if Hegel had not, throughout his life, held Kant in highest esteem (even when he criticized certain aspects of his position).

It is quite clear that if you do not get such a simple, very introductory point as the one that Hegel

14 I am alluding, of course, to the alchemical dictum, aurum nostrum non est aurum vulgi.
makes here, the door to his philosophy is shut for you. Marlan, instead of seriously entering Hegel’s thought, approaches him from a decidedly external position with an agenda of his own, with a fixed doctrinal position: with his dogma of mind-independent object. Let me stress again, on a practical everyday level (or, as far as Kant’s philosophy is concerned, merely in the sense of a “boundary concept”) the idea of “mind-independent object” is perfectly in place. I am not objecting to that. And I also believe that it is Marlan’s right to pursue an agenda that is incompatible with Hegel. People have different needs. Not everyone needs psychology (as discipline of interiority). What I object to is that Marlan presents his need of an ideology of “mind-independent object” or his preference for certain modern philosophers as if they were an *argument* capable of refuting psychology’s opus contra naturam as well as Hegel’s work. Going in for football does not refute chess, and going in for Derrida does not refute Hegel. To think that it did would be one’s confusing philosophy (real *thought*) with people’s doctrinal opinions, human sentences. No real philosophy refutes another real philosophy.

When Marlan speaks of the “long path of approximation to absolute knowing” in Hegel, “absolute knowing” is mystified, in a totally un-Hegelian sense, as a distant hard-to-attain if not superhuman *ideal*, just as Marlan’s use of the word “absolute” (e.g., in the title of his article: “The absolute that is not an absolute”) betrays that he has no understanding of what “absolute” in Hegel’s philosophy means. Marlan understands and uses the term in the ordinary commonsensical sense, even when referring to Hegel.

By the same token “Hegel’s and Giegerich’s distillation process” is for Marlan one of sidestepping, banishing and hierarchically surpassing, which is nonsense. Distillation, sublimation, evaporation, in alchemy as well as in my psychology, are form changes, processes of refining. In moving, to give a simple example, from solid ice to water and from water to steam, nothing is “banished” or “hierarchically surpassed”. The same is true also for Hegel’s “sublation”, which, by the way, is no more and no less a “magic” (Marlan’s word; another mystification!) than is the *evaporatio* of water. When Marlan calls this process of sublation a “heroic act” and also uses the word “heroic” with reference to my concept of psychology, we see to what extent his own interpreting consciousness is informed by what we call the (heroic) ego. And when he writes, “Giegerich notes that in the face of impasse, the proper act for the psychologist is to leap into it”, and refers to my (alleged) suggestion of bypassing “limits by leaping headlong into stone walls”, we see the “man in the street” consciousness at work here in Marlan’s mindless out-of-context citation—a consciousness that ridicules the idea of “the leap into the solid stone” because it has not *thought* it and thus has not acquired an understanding of what it means.

Here I am reminded of a passage in a letter by Jung (*Letters* 2, p. 410, 14 January 1958, to L. Kling): “An adequate capacity to understand is essential, for without a considerable degree of subtler intelligence they [the things discussed in this letter] will only be misunderstood. Unfortunately one must abandon from the start any attempt to make such things clear to one’s scientifically minded [here I add: or commonsensically and personalistically minded] colleagues.” Sad, but true. As to this “leap into the stone”, let me add that it is my *description*, by means of a mythological image, of an *objective reality*, of a possible soul event, a possible movement (that happens if it happens, or that does not occur). It is a movement in the soul’s logical life and not a human (intellectual or thinking) behavior on the empirical-

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15 Commonsensical mindset and mystification (of what is beyond the horizon of this mindset) go together.
16 It escapes me how “leaping headlong into stone walls” could be considered a form of *bypassing* limits. The word “limit” in this context would only make sense if what is meant were really an internalized prohibition to move forward, and instead of a “bypassing” there would really be a disobedience to that prohibition.
practical level, on which Marlan seems to stay in his thinking. It is not—ego-psychologically—something WE do nor is it something we “ought” to do. Because we have no say in the matter, just as not in that other matter whether we have the said “considerable degree of subtler intelligence”\textsuperscript{17} and do understand—or not.

The whole idea of Hegel’s and psychology’s side-stepping, banishing, dissolving is obviously due to the fact that Marlan’s standpoint is and remains that of external reflection and of his unidirectional commitment to “object” (or the relation of ego to object). But this only shows that he has not entered psychology, which needs to be in itself reflexive, for, according to Jung, in contrast to the sciences it does not have an outside (i.e., an external object), but is that discipline whose object is the very subject that produces all science in the first place (\textit{CW} 8 § 429, transl. modif.). Psychology does not do anything to the object, neither side-stepping nor banishing or dissolving it: because qua psychology it is not concerned with what is outside. Psychology “distills” only what is already its own or the soul’s property. Similarly Hegel: from the outset he starts out in \textit{philosophy}, in thought, and works with thought’s own material. C’est son métier as a \textit{thinker}, just as working exclusively with its own “prime matters” is psychology’s métier.\textsuperscript{18} The idea of banishing, side-stepping and dissolving when in truth it is a matter of “distilling” is Marlan’s way to surreptitiously establish as \textit{irrenunciable} and \textit{unquestionable} the principle of otherness and externality.

(10) Totalitarian overestimation and anti-mercurial conception of psychology. The positivistic stance has, as strange as it may seem, its kind of equivalent to psychology’s negation of the negation: the \textit{positivization} of the negation. The negation of “man” and the human-all-too-human in favor of “soul” that is required in order for psychology to be what it is meant to be is by this stance literalized as if it amounted to a wholesale practical exclusion of the human-all-too-human from life as such and a general devaluation of or even contempt for the human-all-too-human—when in reality it is a \textit{methodological} step necessary for the constitution of the field of psychology and for its \textit{distinction} both from other fields as well as from the sphere of real life itself. Just as a shoemaker who insists on exclusively making state-of-the-art shoes does not thereby want to get rid of the products of tailors, cabinet-makers, masons, doctors, or cooks, so psychology does not want to eliminate and disparage the realm of, and the interest in, the human-all-too-human or, e.g., people’s political concerns. It is only that all this is simply not part of its own business. Just as geology is not concerned with music and musicology not with rocks and plate tectonics, so psychology does not study “what goes on inside people”, their feelings and opinions, but only the soul’s life. The false intimation that (what I call) true psychology deprives life of central areas and accepted only the smallest, most abstract, most lofty and ivory-tower-like segment of it or “reduces everything to knowledge” reveals an underlying terrible misconception of psychology as a \textit{totalitarian} enterprise: of psychology as competent and responsible for the whole, for the reality of life at large. But psychology’s negation of “man” and “real life” in favor of “soul” serves merely the purpose of establishing itself as one conceptually clearly demarcated \textit{specialty}, and the practice of it therefore precisely as merely one single possible activity of real human life executed by people, who in addi-

\textsuperscript{17} “Subtler intelligence” is not to be confused with \textit{higher} intelligence, as if those without it were unintelligent (in the conventional sense). It is not a question of the IQ.

\textsuperscript{18} Here I need to remind the reader, that it is Marlan (like others before him) who juxtaposed Hegel and Giegerich repeatedly in the same sentences. Quite apart from the incommensurability as to stature between the two authors, the fact that there are certain affinities between Hegel and psychology (as the discipline of intestity) does not mean that psychology is a Hegelian enterprise. Hegel is a philosopher. The psychologist is not. And furthermore, Hegel belongs to another epoch. Between him and us lies the Industrial Revolution, which sets the two world conditions, his and ours, fundamentally and irrevocably apart. We can learn from Hegel, but not become Hegelians.
tion to being psychologists are also human-all-too-human “civil persons” and private individuals with all sorts of additional interests, needs, and activities. By the same token, to have and operate with a rigorous concept of psychology does not imply that the analyst’s consulting room would have to be exclusively and totally devoted to psychology in this sense. In reality it is only a question of one’s clearly knowing when one is doing what: when what one is doing is indeed psychology and when it is something else. What is required is discrimination, conceptual clarity, a rigorous notion of psychology, not a psychological totalitarianism.

The whole issue of “remnant” makes sense only if consciousness thinks in terms of totality. For a psychologist it is a non-issue. A practicing psychologist is used to the fact that not all therapies end successfully or with complete success. Not every one of our interpretations of fairy tales or dreams is capable of making sense of every detail, nor can we ever be sure that our interpretations are correct. We can overlook or misunderstand something or even the whole thing. But all this human, all-too-human imperfection does not affect and should not constrict the concept of psychology, soul-making, and distillation.

Psychology is not a Weltanschauung, not a religion, not a philosophy of life. Being exclusively about “soul-making”, it has life, political concerns, the human-all-too-human, society, subjective emotional needs, all the other scientific or scholarly disciplines, etc., and even its own practical reality outside of itself and fully respects them as others. But: this methodological negation of these other areas does nevertheless not preclude that phenomena stemming from them, also possibly stemming from the sphere of the human-all-too-human, may become prime matters to be studied by it.

However, and this is the crucial point, when studying such phenomena, the field-constituting psychological difference requires that psychology does precisely not take them in terms of what they mean in these other areas and how they appear to consciousness in them or in ordinary consciousness—the consciousness of civil man—, but views them exclusively as instances of the soul’s speaking about itself. As we can say with an alchemical image: everything that becomes the object of study of psychology has first to have been ruthlessly extricated from the immediacy of the practical life context that it at first comes with and from the ordinary, common-sense understanding of it and placed in the retort, which thereafter will have to be sealed with the seal of Hermes-Mercurius, so that from then on our attention will exclusively go to its absolute interiority. This “practical” act of placing the matter to be studied in the retort expresses a fundamental logical shift or cut, a separatio—the radical departure from the original way the phenomena were given in their innocent, natural state which the alchemists call unio naturalis. This separatio is the alchemical equivalent of what on our modern theoretical level is the methodological act suggested by the “psychological difference”. The sealed retort makes all

19 Jung in CW 16 §122, in a still rather early paper, lists, e.g., four possible practical purposes or endeavors in the consulting room (confession, enlightenment [transl. modif.; i.e., interpretation in the psychoanalytical sense], education, and transformation), of which, as is easy to see, only the last one falls into the sphere of psychology or soul-work proper. The first three belong to the merely psychic and human, all-too-human sphere (Jung speaks in this regard of the needs of the Normalmensch, “normal human being”, §161). By referring to these purposes as “stages” rather than as options side by side, Jung himself is aware of the qualitative difference between them and especially of the fundamental difference between the first three on the one hand and the fourth on the other.

20 Marlan even tries to claim that psychology in my sense is an ontology! But this is his problem, not mine. This idea is again a consequence of his unidirectional orientation towards object and the decidedly irreflective nature of his approach.

21 If this extrication and the psychological difference may be what gave rise to Marlan’s faulty idea of “banishing”, then it must be due to the totalitarian conception of psychology I criticized. Leaving something behind that does not belong and is not part of one’s project from the outset, is not an act of banishing or sidestepping, nor one of “reducing something to ...”. It becomes this only in the eyes of him who thinks that psychology has the obligation to include everything.

22 As Jung had said: psychology does not have an outside of itself.
the difference. It amounts to the crucial shift of one’s standpoint from let us say the “physics” (the behavior and interrelations) of things or bodies in space (be it real or imaginal) to “alchemy”, that is, the matter’s own inner “chemical” constitution and the transformation of this constitution, apart from its (previous) external context.

But Marlan does not heed alchemy’s warning: Beware of the physical in the matter. He has not put, for example, his dog, and his relationship to his dog, in the retort and thereby created the psychological difference between the dog outside as immediately given literal fact and the dog inside the retort as psychological topic (would it have been another too painful narcissistic wound?). Rather, he insists on staying married to his immediate feelings, married not only to his dying dog, but also, through him, (on the theoretical level) to the caput mortuum. We see here a concrete example of what early Hegel referred to as the “love for the sake of what is dead” (Liebe um des Toten willen).

Marlan’s insistence on the thing-in-itself is in this sense really symptomatic. Coming from a psychologist and taking place in his theoretical reflections, it signals his decision, on principle, to cling to the state of externality: to phenomena as having their substance and truth fundamentally outside themselves in some utterly mysterious, namely unknowable, other. It is the decision to do on principle without “the retort”, to be and remain—totally unalchemically—committed to immediacy, to the primary “raw” experience of the factual world, to the prime matter precisely in the very form in which it is found “on the street” (cf. the lapis “in via ejectus”) by “the man in the street” consciousness. The psychologist decidedly as empirical human being, civil man, as the ego. It is quite obvious that for his taking his dog Curtis as a reality in and for himself, psychology is not at all needed: because that he, Marlan’s dog, is a reality is the self-evident truth of everyday consciousness.

If Marlan, however, insists as psychologist on this commonsensical reality, then psychology qua psychology has literally “gone to the dogs”. Why still, with Jung, search for the transcendental Self? Why, with the alchemists, for the vinum ardens, for the aurum nostrum, the arcane substance?—When the title of Marlan’s paper claims for his paper the character of its being “alchemical reflections”, we have to note that sure, semantically he does cite or use a few alchemical images. But syntactically, his program and mentality are decidedly anti-hermetic, anti-mercurial. His thinking takes place within, and is bounded by, the horizon of the “physics” of (imaginal or real) entities in space.

Be that as it may, we can make the general statement that psychology has no stake in the theoretical question of the thing-in-itself as mind-independent object, one way or the other, just as “reality as such” / “Being” / “the world at large” are not possible topics for it. Psychology is not a philosophy or world view or doctrine of how to live and how to see the world.23 Epistemology, ontology, the big questions

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23 When Marlan states that Giegerich’s work is “an important contribution to philosophically thinking through ... Jung’s ideas”, this is a fundamental misunderstanding that seems to show that for him philosophy and psychology are undifferentiated from each other, just as real life and psychology are for him. They seem to float in the same primordial soup. He has not acquired a rigorous notion of psychology for himself and apparently does not even feel the need for it. To be sure, he is right: I did attempt to think through Jung’s ideas. But not philosophically! It is a thinking through pure and simple, and, furthermore, a carrying Jung’s ideas forward on their own terms to their logical conclusion, and, thirdly, it is also an immanent critique guided by the needs of the discipline of veritable psychology and Jung’s own deepest thoughts as its standard and measure. By the same token Marlan also gives the utterly false impression as if I had discussed the difference between Kant and Hegel, although I do not at all speak about these philosophers directly and on my own: because I am not a philosopher. I had made it expressly clear that what I discussed was Jung’s Kant (Kant the way Jung saw him) and Jung’s Hegel (and the problem for psychology of Jung’s passionate rejection of Hegel). Fully inexcusable is Marlan’s assertion that Jung’s statement about the barrier that Kant erected across the mental world represents also my understanding of Kant, whereas I am quite critical of Jung’s Kant interpretation. It has been my opinion that Jung was unable to see Kant’s work as philosophy, but reduced it to a mere theory of knowledge. Just as inexcusable is this other allegation of his that with my re-translation I manipulated a relevant Jung quote in order that it “fits with [my] own” view, when in reality what I did was to restore what Jung had actually said and what had got lost or blurred in the official CW translation.
of life, the riddles of the world, the ethics of life, are not its business. It has a different vocation. However, even if the question of the thing-in-itself is no topic for psychology and the latter is therefore neither for nor against it, methodologically and practically the thing-in-itself mode of thinking and all immediacy as well as any toying with the idea of anything behind the phenomena are nevertheless simply out of the question for it, as is already apparent from such a merely passing but crucial remark by early Jung as the following: “It may not be superfluous to remark that there are still people who believe that a psychoanalyst could be misled by lies of his patient. That is quite impossible. Lies are fantasies, and we treat fantasies” (CW 4 § 300 fn., translation modif., my emphasis). Fantasies, and not what they are the fantasies of, not mind independent objects! Objects, phenomena, contents only in so far as they are the soul’s own contents, products, and concerns. This is our business. Psychology is relegated to interiority. It may be concerned with the self-sufficient father imago and the archetypal image of father, but not with the real father “out there”, the father as mind independent reality. Entertaining the idea of the father as “thing-in-itself” would be psychology’s self-undoing. Even if psychology turns to realities, its interest goes nevertheless solely to the fantasy embodied in them, solely to their interiority. “There is nothing without spirit, for spirit seems to be the inside of things” (C.G. Jung, Visions Seminar, vol. 1, Zürich [Spring Publ.] 1976, p. 164). And this “inside of things” is the exclusive concern of psychology.

Marlan’s problem in this whole area seems to be that he has not discriminated, does not want to differentiate, indeed, not to emancipate psychology from philosophy, on the one hand, and from everyday experience and the human, all-too-human, on the other. Also in this sense no alchemical vas. Why would he go into a discussion of views of Kant, Hegel, Heidegger, Derrida, to mention only these, in support of his views or, as the case may be, as counter-example? What is Hecuba, i.e., what are these philosophers and their views to us, apart from their importance for the general training and differentiation of the mind and from their being part of higher cultural education (unless they, perhaps, here or there help us to a clearer understanding of the needs of psychology)? But in Marlan’s text one never senses a concern for the needs of psychology as a discipline in its own right. His concern seems always to be either with much bigger, more general questions that are really of a philosophical nature or with his own emotional and ideological needs (his own personal relationship to reality). He cannot see that psychology is, merely a discipline, a methodological enterprise that, like each of the crafts and trades, has one limited special purpose: the goal of soul-making, and of soul-making only in each given actual, concrete case, concerning each “matter” at hand (be it dream, myth, fairy tale, a particular complex or symptom, a cultural phenomenon, etc.).

(11) The predilection for ashes. Marlan insists that “there always remains a dark remnant in the retort after distillation.” Leaving aside the fact that, for example, in the case of the evaporatio of H₂O as well as in the case of immaterial, i.e., the soul’s or mind’s or the intellect’s prime matters this can

24 It is committed to eachness: to this phenomenon now if and to the extent that it has been placed in the retort.

25 At the same time, this “spirit” that is the inside of things, is something totally different from Hillman’s (and Marlan’s) “peaks of spirit” that require a heroic mountaineering effort. And, secondly, psychology, committed to the Mercurial spirit imprisoned inside of the real as it is, is not operating with any idea of a truth behind the real. “Absolute-negative interiorization”!

26 By contrast, when I discussed Kant and Hegel, then only as figures in Jung’s thinking and with the question in mind of what the consequences for psychology were of how Jung saw them and how he positioned himself towards them.

27 Marlan regressively clings to alchemy’s chemical and thus physical, material aspect and thus to what the alchemists called the unio naturalis, and what philosophically is the ontology of substance, instead of following Jung in seeing it as an endeavor that, to be sure, started out from its chemical base but was on the way to psychology (cf. the relatively late alchemist Dornaus: “The form, which is the intellect, is the beginning, middle and end of the procedure...”). Jung devoted himself to Symbols of Transformation. Transformations don’t leave a remainder behind.
hardly be said to be true, and instead granting Marlan his dogma for argument’s sake—can his claim be a psychological argument? Is the dark remnant of psychological interest and significance? Even if it were true that there always remains a dark remnant, who cares? Well, obviously Marlan for one does. He has a predilection, a soft spot for ashes and “heads of the dead” (capita mortuum) and things in themselves—which are all perfect embodiments of what Hillman would have called “literalism”. No doubt, this love for dark remnants can be a person’s concern.

But for us, for psychology, the point here is that it is not the soul’s concern. The soul’s aspirations go in the opposite direction, and psychology has the task and obligation to follow its, the soul’s, needs and for that reason to disregard the dross (of course precisely not in the sense of repression, which would require effort and active involvement with it, but in the sense of simply not paying attention to it.). No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Our job is soul-making, not dross-making or dedication to dross. As far as C.G. Jung, for one, is concerned, it is clear that his whole effort was to move towards making conscious, towards sublimatio, distillatio, and of course coniunctio, and conversely away from what he called, e.g., the Menschenstall (the human stable) and from any focusing on the “hangover from the past, a caput mortuum” (CW 10 § 367). From early on his psychological thinking went into a definite direction, that of finality and future development, which is why he called his interpretative approach a “final-constructive” one. He viewed the soul’s life in terms of “regeneration”; “rejuvenation”, “rebirth” as his guiding principles. By contrast, he warned of consciousness’s becoming unconscious (CW 12 § 563) and of losing one’s “way among ever more tortuous back-streets of dubious repute” and of the “destruction of the bond between men and the gods” (CW 10 § 367).

Yes, certainly, when we burn wood in order to get a blazing flame and heat, there will be ashes, but: so what?! Nietzsche for example teaches us that psychologically ashes can be left behind without one’s wasting a thought on them: “Yes, I know whence I have sprung! / Insatiable as a flame / I burn and consume myself! / Whatever I seize becomes light, / whatever I leave, ashes: / certainly, flame I am”. Jung, speaking about (the soul’s) “primordial urge”, said: “Nature ... does not believe in shard-heaps and decay, but grass and flowers cover all ruins inasmuch as the rains of heaven reach them”. The rains of heaven! Had not the soul’s goal, and indeed its true home, for millennia been in Heaven or even in a hyperoyranios topos, or in Hades, but at any rate not with the ashes, the mortal remains, the caput mortuum? Marlan, it seems, reverses the one-way movement to which Hillman committed psychology, and Marlan’s insisting on the difference of unity and difference and his devotion, at the cost of any love for the distillation product, to the dark remainder might have been criticized by Jung with the same (certainly all too extreme) words that he used when he criticized (in another context) the general attitude of modern man: “Such people, says Buddha, ‘after their death reach the wrong way, the bad track, down to the depth, into an infernal world’”. Clearly, for Jung, just as for Hillman, there is such a thing as a psychologically wrong way.

Furthermore, does the dedication to the ashes and the dark physical, material remainder in the last analysis not even amount to the wish of an undoing of the fundamental upwards movement of hominization, described by Freud as “upright walking, nose raised from the ground, at the same time a
number of formerly interesting sensations attached to the earth becoming repulsive”\textsuperscript{31}? For is what Marlan wants not that we rub our noses in the ashes, the dross—and in it even find our spiritual delight? When you are in the business of soul-making you cannot have it both ways: interest in the soul and commitment to the dross.

To conclude this section on the penchant for ashes and skulls, just one additional hint: According to 19\textsuperscript{th} century poet and lecturer Edward Dowden\textsuperscript{32}, writing about Romeo and Juliet, “... the theme of tragedy, as conceived by the poet, is not material prosperity or failure: it is spiritual; fulfilment or failure of a destiny higher than that which is related to the art of getting on in life. To die, under certain condition, may be a higher rapture than to live. / Shakspere did not intend that the feeling evoked by the last scene of this tragedy of Romeo and Juliet should be one of hopeless sorrow or despair in presence of failure, ruin, and miserable collapse. Juliet and Romeo, to whom Verona has been a harsh stepmother, have accomplished their lives. They loved perfectly. ...” And then follows the sentence that is the main reason for my quoting Dowden here: “Montague will raise in pure gold the statue of true and faithful Juliet”. What is celebrated is not Juliet’s mortal remains, not the ashes, not the caput mortuum, but her, as we might say, distilled essence, her inner divinity.

\textbf{Materialistic misconception of psychology.} Our topic in the previous section was leanings, preferences, interests, concerns, intellectual commitments that steer our thinking. Now we turn to the concept of psychology. Marlan’s operating with the ideas of a remainder, of ashes and dross reveals that his conception of psychology is stuck in a materialistic fantasy. I already mentioned that we get ashes when we burn wood. Companies mine the earth for ore in order to extract from the latter pure metals or other valuable elements. The extraction process naturally leaves a remainder or waste behind. The same applies to the refinement of crude oil into gasoline and a large number of other consumer products, from plastics to pharmaceuticals. Marlan’s conception of psychological work seems to follow such ideas of processing raw materials as his model as well as of course more directly the idea of the work of literal alchemists in the laboratory. But as psychologists we are not in the business of chemistry, not even of alchemy. Our job is (alchemy-inspired) psychology. We do not mine ore and do not extract the valuable elements from it. We do not take inferior metals and transform them into gold. In radical contrast to such a thing as “mining” and “extraction”, our method is that of absolute-negatively interiorizing a given phenomenon into itself—by our penetrating deeper into it, our learning to see what all it involves inside itself that was hidden to the first glance. We try to perceive the inner logic of it. Nothing is taken out from it. So how could this process produce a dark remainder, ashes, dross?

We are not involved with natural materials, with the physical. Hillman introduced the idea of a Re-Visioning of Psychology. I now add to this concept that psychology is in itself (in what it does) a process of re-visioning, nothing but re-visioning. Psychotherapy is ever since Freud’s “Anna O.” a talking cure. We work only on the mind, on our ways of seeing and experiencing things, on consciousness’s dominant perspectives, on our understanding of ourselves, life events, and reality as a whole. If a patient has learned to see his father, or, e.g., “traumatic” experiences from which he suffered, differently, if he has become able to see through certain prejudices that had made life difficult for him and freed himself from the enthralling power of his complexes, if he has acquired new insights about him-


\textsuperscript{32} Edward Dowden, Shakspere: His Mind and Art, 1887, quoted in Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet, ed. by Oscar J. Campbell, New York (Bantam Classics) 1961, p. 170 f.
self—where are the ashes that result from this development? Psychology did not do anything to his father “out there”, did not change him, did not extract anything from him and leave the rest behind as waste. No, it only changed the patient’s view of his father, changed his consciousness. But this real new view gave this patient really a fundamentally new father, a re-visioned father. It is still the real father, and the whole father—and nevertheless a different one because he is seen with new eyes. A formerly abstract, one-sided view has become refined, more complex, distilled, deepened.

Similarly, when I studied archaic blood-sacrifices and showed them to be a primordial form of soul-making (or rather the primordial making of soul in the first place), I did not thereby produce any dross. I merely opened our eyes for the soul view of the phenomenon of sacrifices, a shift in our seeing which really changes them for us and yet leaves them intact as literal realities. Because all that has changed is consciousness. Or, when I interpreted the slippery-glass-mountain fairytale and interiorized into itself its central motif of the older brothers’ “always slipping down”, how could I thereby have possibly produced a dark remainder in the sense of dross? Nothing was discarded or ignored or repressed. Absolute-negative inwardization means one’s consistently staying with the given phenomenon chosen for one’s study. It means one’s devoting oneself to it and penetrating deeper into its essence, its internal logical life. The movement of “distillation” in the psychology of interiority is one from a prima facie assessment of a phenomenon to a subtle and more informed comprehension, ultimately one that might be capable of transforming the logical constitution of consciousness itself, of raising consciousness to a new logical status. Certainly, the superficial and primitive first opinion or external impression is thereby overcome and left behind, but precisely not left behind like a hard, dark remnant that does not want to go away, but rather like a superficial view or a seen-through error which the moment that it has become seen through (“aha!”) has at once become null and void.

Nothing whatsoever is done to the “real” phenomenon studied. It is not processed and ipso facto fundamentally altered like raw materials in industry, corpses dissected in anatomy, or substances or specimens subjected to test procedures in alchemical or scientific laboratories. Psychology tries to transform only our views and ideas about phenomena. They, the ideas and conceptions about things and our consciousness are psychology’s real prime matter, not the things themselves.

That Marlan obviously interprets “distillation” and interiorization in psychology along the lines of “extracting” and believes in unavoidable “remainders” must be due to the fact that his thinking is logically still staying “out there”, in the (fantasy of the) natural world. It must be due to his mentally clinging to (the fantasy of) hands-on things, objects, or material substances. It is this unconscious prejudice, namely, the materiality implicitly and unwittingly set up by this materialistic fantasy, that produces the unavoidability of dross and ashes as dark remainders and the belief that “logical light” has a “dark other”. It is the abstract reduction of “thought” to nothing but a particular, to a single psychic function among several, or, expressed the other way around, the incapability of comprehending “thought” as all-comprehensive and all-pervasive. Marlan has not come home to (into) psychology: to the preoccupation exclusively with man’s mental views about the real and the logical forms of consciousness and the interiority of soul.

And his clinging to external things is in turn probably due to the suggestive power of and the seduction by the imaginal approach, the picture-thinking mode. This mode (in addition to his deep predilection discussed above) is what makes him take the image of literal laboratory-alchemy33 with its possible

33 In contrast to its “oratory” and hermetic-philosophy aspect.
residue in the retort as his inescapable model for his “psychological” thinking.

(13) **Simply not getting the “unity of the unity and difference” concept.** A while ago I said: “When you are in the business of soul-making you cannot have it both ways: interest in the soul and commitment to the dross.” I could also have said: you cannot have both “unity of the unity and difference” AND “difference of the unity and difference”. But this is precisely what Marlan proposes. In an earlier paper of his, he wrote, speaking about the idea of “the unity of the unity and difference”: “... but even the idea of ‘the unity of the unity and difference’ privileges unity, although at a higher ‘logical level.’ The ‘unity of the unity and difference’ is still a tincture of the syzygy that emphasizes unity as the major trope. The syzygy can also be tinctured to choose difference. This would call out for the complementary idea of ‘the difference of the unity and difference,’ ...”. This plea of his corresponds to the fact that in the paper that we are concerned with here he insists that the former idea needs to be “supplemented” by the latter. Two tinctures. Complementation, supplementation! All this is most revealing.

He obviously thinks that the two phrases parallel each other. They are for him two alternatives of equal significance, but in such a way that each represents only one half of the whole truth, for which reason both need in his opinion to be heeded. In my opinion this is totally wrong. It amounts to a serious misconstrual of the phrase “unity of the unity and difference”. If, as Marlan thinks, this phrase privileges unity and his own phrase difference, it means that the real issue for him is simply a choice, that between “unity” or “difference” (and, of course, the complementation of the one chosen by the other). In contrast to his own acknowledgment that the former phrase does what it does “at a higher ‘logical level’” he regresses to and stays at the lower level so that we are back at square one. Because with the choice idea, there are really only two terms, “unity” and “difference”. We can prioritize either the one or the other of the two. But the third element, namely the first part of each phrase (“the unity of...” and “the difference of...”), is superfluous. It does not add anything, but merely expresses our subjective preference for the one or the other of the two. Its only function is therefore to underline one term in the simple two-term phrase, thus giving it its different “tinctures”: in the one case “unity and difference”, in the other “unity and difference”.

The point is, however, that the phrase “unity of the unity and difference” does not privilege anything. In no way does it mean that “unity” is “the major trope”. And the point, furthermore, is that this phrase indeed operates at a higher logical level, which Marlan verbally admits, but in his own thinking does not live up to and totally ignores. He gives a decidedly one-dimensional, one-level reading to the phrase “unity of the unity and difference”. By claiming that it “privileges” unity, he must believe that the first occurrence of the word unity (“unity of...”) in this phrase merely repeats and underlines that same “unity” from out of the pair “unity and difference” and ipso facto unfairly relegates the second element of this pair, “difference”, to minor importance. In other words, the first occurrence of the word unity (“unity of...”) stays for him at the same level as the part “unity and difference”.

But in the properly understood phrase, the first “unity” is not at the same level. It is definitely not merely a “tincture” of a “syzygy”. It adds something radically new and essential. It speaks on a higher level. One could call this, even if not quite adequately, a meta-level. To optically illustrate this quality we could rewrite the phrase in the following way:

\[
\text{the unity of }
\]
\[
\text{“unity AND difference”},
\]

or “(unity AND difference) as a unity”. The “tincture of the syzygy” idea wants to obliterate this distinction of levels. The “unity of the unity and difference” formula, far from using unity as the major trope and far from prioritizing or underlining the one of the two elements of “unity and difference” at the cost of the other, refers to both at once and thus goes fundamentally beyond the level of the initial two opposites. Rather than choosing or privileging the one of the two elements, we are asked the impossible: to “choose” (to retain here this inadequate idea for the moment) precisely both, and both at once (not each one at a time, nor in two separate acts by way of complementation or supplementation), as well as both uncurtailed with equal emphasis; and this formula then demands of us to comprehend these opposite, mutually exclusive peers as a unity!35 This is a shocking imposition. It is mind-shattering. It forces us to think something unheard of, namely a self-contradiction as a not faulty but valid one! And by forcing us to really think this “impossible” thought and let it come home to us, it expands or “revolutionizes” the entire constitution of consciousness. The “unity of the unity and difference”, if and when consciousness has really managed to think it, amounts to a breakthrough through the sound barrier of “natural consciousness”, through the commonplace mode of experiencing the world. It catapults the mind from the level of positivity to that of absolute negativity: from the standpoint of “ego” to the standpoint of “soul”. The same, by the way, is true for Jung’s notion of the “mysterium coniunctionis” as the “separation and synthesis of psychic opposites”.

But here the problems begin for Marlan. He refuses, or is not able, to think “unity”. As his repeated use of the word “tincture” reveals, he apperceives the whole topic of “unity and difference” only superficially, from outside. He does not want to go into the heart of the matter. Whether you say “unity of” or “difference of” “unity and difference” affects no more than its external coloring. The thought of the “unity of ...” phrase depends precisely on there not being any privileging or choice.36 Marlan’s “major trope” idea thwarts the very point of the unity phrase. It functions as a clear defense because it makes it possible for consciousness to escape the challenge of what this phrase demands of consciousness. His not wanting to think “unity” comes also out in his construing “the unity and difference” as a “syzygy”. The idea of a syzygy refers to the yoking together of two, to a couple, possibly a married couple. From a psychological point of view there are two fundamental mistakes in this view.

The one refers to the definition of unity. What our phrase aims at is in no way a yoking together of two, not a “transcendent unification” (Marlan in his cited Spring-article, p. 12, my emphasis), that is to say, a forcing of two different entities into a unity. In our case, unity and difference are opposites, which would make any unification especially difficult. If you want to join together two opposites without any separating partition they ordinarily cancel each other out (such as fire and water or yes and no) or end up as a compromise formation (such as black and white, which become gray). But the unity that

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35 It is, by the way, interesting that Heidegger, one of Marlan’s authorities (!), said precisely that the “inseparableness [or unity, in German: Zusammengehörigkeit] of identity and difference” is that which “needs to be thought”.  
36 Psychology (as discipline of interiority) is not Hegelian philosophy. But since Marlan seems to see them as more or less the same, it may be interesting to note that for Hegel the “identity of identity and non-identity” implies the “absolute difference of identity and difference” and that the identity sustains itself precisely as identity only in its opposite, the absolute difference. In other words, Hegel’s speculative concept of “identity” has “everything it needs within itself”, even its very opposite and, this must be stressed, it has this opposite, i.e., the absolute difference, within itself precisely as its internal animating and propellent element. Marlan, as it were, extractions this “difference” from the full, living “identity” and sets it up as a cutoff separate entity, which he then wants to offer as fundamentally external “complementation” for that castrated, sterile notion of identity or union that was only produced by his splitting the full identity and depriving it of its heart. Because both “identity” and “difference” in Marlan’s thinking have dwindled to two separate dead abstractions that have their other outside of themselves does the feeling of a need for their mutual (likewise abstract, merely formal) supplementation arise.
we are interested in here is not that of the syzygy, of a couple (which belong to the domain of what Freud called family romance). Rather, it has the strict meaning of becoming one, of oneness, identity. In a union of the syzygy type the two remain separate (cf. husband and wife, anima and animus), retain their own identity, because they are merely yoked together in an external sense; a combination, an agglutination. Oneness is something else. It means a true unity and requires—imaginably speaking—consciousness’s move from the thinking in terms of the “physics” of things (e.g., mixing black and white sand) to “chemistry” or “alchemy” (interpenetration and internal recomposition, reconstitution). And above all, in contrast to alchemical operations it is not produced, made, not a unification. On the contrary, it demands of us to rise to the challenge of comprehending (insighting) the fact that unity and difference have in truth, in the depth, on the level of soul, been identical all along, that they are one and the same to begin with, that unity has difference within itself. The unity existed from the outset, it had merely not been seen; commonplace consciousness (the ego) had not been aware of it; and in ordinary life, in practical reality, in the empirical world, there is also no need for it.

The explosiveness of the insight into this unity lies in the fact that it is not like the insight that Pope John Paul II and Karol Józef Wojtyła were identical, but that what is here said to be identical relate to each other like fire and water, which we know in empirical reality exclude and “negate” one another. If consciousness is capable of maintaining itself in the contradiction that unity and difference, instead of simply cancelling each other out like fire and water in reality, are identical despite their absolutely negating each other, it is initiated into absolute negativity.

The second just as serious mistake lies in the fact that the syzygy idea invites an “ontological” thinking (and psychologically it makes no difference whether literally “ontological” or only metaphorically “ontological”): what a syzygy unites or yokes together are persons, figures, forces, things, entities. But unity and difference are none of these. They are thoughts, thought determinations. They have no body, no shape, no subsisting reality, neither in the physical nor in the imaginal world. They are outside of time and space. They can only be thought and have to be thought. They are “categories”, strictly logical concepts, nothing imaginal. And the unity of the opposites that is meant here is in the same way a strictly logical unity. By operating with the idea of a (differently “tinctured”) syzygy, Marlan shows that, despite his protestations, his thinking remains enclosed within, and limited by, the horizon of picture-thinking, which inevitably reifies and imagines in terms of entities, processes and behaviors. Even if the imagination may entertain completely fanciful images that have no counterpart in the real world, nevertheless the logic of the imagination and of the mode of imaginal thinking holds thought inevitably down in the form of an “ontology” of the natural world and does its imagining in terms of the ordinary reality. It necessarily objectifies.

Imaginal thinking is that thinking whose imperceptible logical form or syntax is such that it within itself resists and disowns itself and ipso facto forces its own thoughts out (away from itself as thinking consciousness or subject), namely into the form of contents or objects of consciousness, that is to say it keeps them in the form of projection. (It is only thought proper that does no longer project, because true

37 In his Spring-article (p. 5f.) he makes a big deal about the difference between image as “optical picture” and a more radical understanding of image as being “not what you see but the way you see”. But this does not invalidate my thesis of the fundamental deficiency of the imaginal mode for doing justice to the deepest concerns of the soul. Regardless of whether optical image or way of seeing, of whether the image is consciousness’s object or informs the subject, regardless also of whether the image is taken literally or seen through, the problem of the imaginal mode remains: that it is inherent in its inner logic that it stays inevitably tied to the logical form of the “natural” world-conception in terms of things, shapes, figures, events and has no access to concepts as concepts. Psychologically speaking, the real contrast to “what you see” is not “the way you see” but would be “what opens the eyes”.
thinking is that mode that has no “about” but is the form of its reflecting itself. Subject and object, form or act and content are the same.)

Picture-thinking is the mode in which Marlan approaches also the phrase “unity of the unity and difference”. He treats “unity” and “difference” as if they were items, entities, positivities in syzygial union. In the Spring-article mentioned (p. 8f.) he explicitly professes his resistance\(^38\) to thought on the ground of his belief in the imagining mode (“... my belief that Jung and Hillman brought about a major advance in consciousness by revisioning image and imagination, both of which have been in the shadow of Western thought and metaphysics since Plato”. To my mind the tendency of this belief is decidedly reactionary). He claims there that “the dominant historical process” “had depotentiated images and reduced soul to rational intellectual spirit”, thereby presenting an interpretation of history which I believe is factually untenable. But this is not our issue here. I merely quote it because it shows his commitment or prejudice. At any rate we see that this prejudice prevents him from approaching thinkingly the thought of the “unity of the unity and difference” and from receiving it on its own level, namely as a thought, as a strictly conceptual, (psycho-)logical issue. Because he refuses to rise to the level of thought he simply does not get the message of that formula; he misses the point of the “unity” expressed in it.

Furthermore, because of his refusal to think, he also has to completely misunderstand even the very concept of “thought”. He apperceives it reductively in his imagining way as the one part of Hillman’s binary opposition of the “valley” of the soul and the “peaks” of spirit,\(^39\) which shows us once more picture-thinking at work and the projective and naturalistic nature of the imagination—and of course also the insufficiency of the imagination to comprehend thought. The latter is beyond its horizon. This viewing thought in terms of the peaks of spirit (or, even worse, of “the poisonous state of splendid solar isolation”) is reminiscent of the naive retrogressive “cargo-cult” logic of primitives confronted with phenomena high above their head: with phenomena of modern technological reality.

As a counterexample to Marlan’s image-fixation let me remind you of the youngster Jung, who, when in confirmation class he came across the paragraph on the Trinity, described his reaction as follows: “Here was something that challenged my interest: a oneness which was simultaneous elementhreensness” (MDR p. 52). We see here the future psychologist emerging; here it was the soul that stirred from within the boy Jung and had captivated his consciousness with its deepest concerns. It was a strictly (psycho-)logical problem that fascinated and troubled Jung: what we have here are just thoughts, logical concepts: oneness, threeness and their unity. No persons, no entities, nothing “real” or figurative, nothing that belongs to the sphere of positivity nor anything imaginal, no metaphor. For the same reason late Jung could interpret alchemy as an implicit psychology, because what alchemy is dealing with, in the tradition of hermetic philosophy, are thoughts proper, although, admittedly, thoughts and logical issues still not seen through as such, but concealed in the (inadequate) form of projection.

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\(^38\) Very strange, coming from a psychoanalyst.

\(^39\) Another issue is that he somewhere says that I prioritize thought. This shows what he thinks about thought: just as for him it is something segregated on the peaks, having no place in the vales, so it is also psychically for him only one function or activity in contrast to others. But for a non-psychic, a not everyday-sense, i.e., for a psychological understanding, there is nothing truly human without thought. To be sure, thought is also in our literal thinking (even if mostly only in an inferior form). But it is just as much in our dreams, our desires, our feelings, in our sexual life, in our illnesses, in language, in crimes, in politics, in pyramids and paintings, in perception and volition, even in our complexes. “The fact that consciousness does not perform acts of thinking does not, however, prove that they do not exist. They merely occur unconsciously and make themselves felt indirectly in dreams, visions, revelations, and ‘instinctive’ changes of consciousness, from whose nature one can see that ... they are the result of unconscious acts of judgment or unconscious conclusions” (CW 11 § 638, transl. modified). So how can one prioritize thought? As humans, we are always already embedded in, surrounded, and overtaken by thought.
onto material substances or processes and garbed in wild imagery. The inner logic of alchemy is once and for all beyond the imaginal. It is conceptual and logically negative, and this conceptual nature is also reflected in the style of its images, which are no longer logically innocent images in the vein of the traditional mythic imagination. Rather, the inherited form of “image” has been repurposed, and the outcome of this is usually surprisingly weird or even self-contradictory, at any rate in itself reflected, more allegorical than imaginal.  

This weirdness is a result of the discrepancy between (still seemingly mythological) form and (already decidedly post-mythological, strictly logical, abstract-conceptual) content.

Now turning our attention to Marlan’s own phrase that he proposes as complementation, the formula “difference of the unity and difference”, we have to characterize it as a mindless phrase, an un-thought: an empty tautology or pleonasm. It is rightly no more than a tincture of the syzygy. His formula does not really say anything, does not introduce anything new or unknown and does not present a challenge (the way the “unity” phrase does). Its message is a simple repetition: for that there is a difference, indeed an incompatibility, between unity and difference is from the outset already inherent in the simple juxtaposition of these two concepts. Even to the everyday consciousness of the man on the street it is self-evident that unity and difference are mutually exclusive opposites. No need to make a big deal about their difference by dressing this ordinary and self-evident truth up in the linguistically fancier, more complicated garment of Marlan’s three-term formula.

But this tautological formula is of course needed for the purpose of mimicking the “unity of the unity and difference” formula (which indeed adds something new and totally unexpected to the two-element phrase) and thus of creating the impression as if the tautological formula were on a par with it. But in reality it can only produce a peerage between them by conversely having castrated, banalized the unity formula and downgraded it to the level of Marlan’s own formula, conceiving both versions as mere “tincturings”! But more than that: the “difference” formula is supposed to create the impression that it were going beyond the concept of the “unity of unity and difference” and truly presenting an answer to the former, a corrective to it, a supplement or complement—while in reality, as we have seen, it has not even sighted it. It falls back behind the challenge that the notion of a union of the opposites represents and merely returns to the commonplace view of things, even if, perhaps, with more élan and an additionally created impression of a higher philosophical aura.

But apart from the fact that Marlan’s formula does not do what it claims to be doing because it simply does not rise to the plane of the idea of the “unity of the unity and difference”—a revolution of consciousness (and, as we have seen, our formula does revolutionize consciousness) does not have “sides”, cannot be said to be one-sided and thus is not in need of supplementation, simply because as revolution it transforms the entire constitution of consciousness and, in the present case, does equal justice to both unity and difference. By the same token, Jung’s “mysterium coniunctionis” as the “separation and synthesis of psychic opposites” is not in need of any supplementation. It also gives both separation and synthesis their due.

With his insistence on the tautological phrase “the difference of the unity and difference” Marlan, instead of complementing the other phrase, digs his heels in and in the last analysis merely firmly establishes his unyielding commitment to the standpoint of positivity and externality, to the fantasy of the
tangible and concretistic: the thing-in-itself, the dross, the ashes, the unassimilable remainder. And thereby rescues commonsensical consciousness’s logical innocence.

A dictum of the alchemists says: Don’t begin any operation before not everything has become water. Another one advises us to dissolve the matter in its own water. We could say similarly: psychology does not really begin before not everything has entered the status of absolute negativity and thereby has come home to the soul from its exile in the state of projection and thinglikeness. Jung declared: “Every other science has a point outside of itself; not so psychology, whose object is the very subject that produces all science” (GW 8 § 429, my transl.).

When imaginal psychology tries to view image as a “metaphor without a referent” (Hillman⁴²), it seems nicely to be doing justice to the referent-lessness of psychology expressed in the first part of Jung’s statement. As such, image is self-contained, and as metaphor it is certainly not unassimilable. The unassimilableness thesis, by contrast, lustfully reinstates the external referent, the rigid object that resists consciousness and thus irrevocably remains vis-à-vis it, just as the idea of a necessary supplementation of the one “tincture” of “the syzygy” (“unity” tincture) by the other (“difference” tincture) amounts, to say it in terms of Marlan’s “syzygy” image, to complementing a successful marriage bond with the couple’s estrangement or divorce. This may produce a fitting portrayal of our social reality. But is devotion to everyday reality the task of psychology?

Be that as it may, we learned from Hillman that in imaginal psychology image qua metaphor is without a referent. However, this is not enough. It refers only to a literal referent. But metaphor has not fully overcome externality; it still harbors within itself, and further transports, the logical form of “referent” or “object”, inasmuch as it has itself become the new object of consciousness instead of any literal object. Whether literal gold or imaginal, metaphorical gold—both the thing-character and the “content of consciousness”—character of the “gold” have not really been overcome. And this is why “metaphor” does not do justice to the second part of Jung’s statement.

Alchemy, by contrast, explicitly negates, cuts into, the very “images” it uses or lets them openly contradict themselves and thus prevents even a possible metaphorical understanding of them: The stone that is not a stone, the aurum non vulgi, the “tail-eater, which is said to beget, kill, and devour itself” (CW 16 § 454) cannot be mistaken as metaphors.⁴³ They all, and even more unambiguously our “the unity of the unity and difference”, leave the orientation towards and form of object behind and aim directly—and thus reflectively—at the (perceiving, experiencing, interpreting, imagining, all-sciences-producing, ...) “subject” alone, at the mind, at the transformation of the constitution or logical form of consciousness, trying to raise it to the standpoint of soul, the standpoint of absolute negativity. The philosopher’s stone, for example, is not an object out there and not an entity, neither literally nor metaphorically. “Transmute yourselves from dead stones into living philosophical stones!”⁴⁴ Of course, “yourselves” could still be personalistically misconstrued in terms of people’s psychic self-development. But Dorneus also preempted such a misunderstanding by saying: “In truth the form, which is the intellect of man, is the beginning, middle and end of the procedure ....”⁴⁵ Let us remember: we are doing psychology.

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⁴³ Metaphors do not come with an explicit “not” or other form of self-negation and self-reflection. They do not deliberately and from the outset cut into their own flesh as an explicit warning against misunderstanding them. They enjoy (and require) their innocence.
⁴⁴ Dorneus, quoted in Jung (CW 9 i § 264, my italics). Soul in general is not an object, a substance, something subsisting.
⁴⁵ The form, the intellect! We would say: the logical constitution of consciousness. (The quote is from CW 12 § 366.)
The black sun’s home in psychology (as discipline of interiority). Now I can at long last offer a very different, namely psychological, non-literalizing interpretation of the image of the black sun. Above I showed that this image is most likely to appear (to happen), as an explicit experience, to a white-soul consciousness and that it then functions as a fundamental challenge and ipso facto as an invitation to this consciousness to go through the entrance gate opened by, and in the form of, the black sun. It is, above all, the invitation to “see through” its imaginal character. Now, however, my question is what this image can mean for psychology, that is, for a consciousness that is not informed by the anima alba, but is logically from the outset already on the other side of the entrance gate and has its standpoint there. Here the black sun does of course not represent a challenge, nor does it produce “experiences of brokenness, incision, wound”. And it does not have the explicit form of object of consciousness (something to be seen and experienced) in the first place, nor does it—literalized instead of seen through—seduce consciousness to mystifications, so that it comes up with the firm (allegedly “psychological”) belief in “mind independent object” and thing in itself. Instead of object and content of consciousness, the black sun in psychology (as the discipline of interiority) is much rather like an “archetypal perspective” (in Hillman’s sense), a way of seeing, one that structurally informs consciousness as if from behind. This means more concretely: the “black sun” is the spiritus rector of psychology’s methodological approach, expressed in concretistic (symbolic or imaginal) form.

How is this to be understood? For psychology (as the discipline of interiority), every phenomenon of psychological interest in its immediacy is at first (i.e., right after having been placed in the retort) Marlan’s “black sun”, as it were, and needs to be seen and appreciated as such: as dark, black, ununderstood, an enigma. It could even be said that our placing it in the retort is the act that ipso facto constitutes it as “black sun”. But persevering devotion to its blackness (often) leads to the experience that the phenomenon in the retort as this “black sun” indeed emits, as Marlan says, “an odd light, what the alchemists called the ‘light of darkness itself’”. This process from darkness to slowly deepening insight describes precisely the method (and experience) of our working with dreams, myths, symptoms (and other material). What Marlan ignores and denies is that this “odd” light of “darkness itself” is truly light and as such the very opposite of an “ultimate ‘no’ to consciousness”; and what he neglects is to keep seeing in this light. He does not seem to be interested in this inseeing and instead to prefer to look out and away (“pro-ject”) and to end up standing in awe in front of the resulting yonder of an obscure, on principle unassimilable a-rational enigma or abstract “wonder”. In reality, however, this light of darkness itself is a light that can dawn on us and illumine the initial darkness of the material at hand for us and allow us, step by step a little more, to see it in its very interiority, its inner logic and truth.

I have to add that it is indispensable for any true psychological work that the light we see in is, precisely and only, the light of the original “darkness itself”, because only then is it the phenomenon’s own light, and is our insight really its self-illumination and in this sense that which allows for our true soulful understanding of it (and the “odd”-ness attributed to this light by Marlan consists in nothing else but the fact that it is the phenomenon’s [qua dark sun] own inner light and not the familiar general day-

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46 This is the fundamental difference of the psychological phenomenon to the scientific objects of study, which are never constituted as “black sun”, but as “what is the case, fact”. No “dark light”, let alone a bright light, shines from out of them. The sciences see the phenomena in the general light that falls from outside on them, in daylight, the light of common sense. Placing phenomena in the retort deprives them of their “fact” or “being the case” character, and forces them to appear in no other than the very special light that is exclusively the respective phenomenon’s own light. It is a light that ipso facto reflects them into themselves, and turns them into the soul’s self-expression, into what Jung in the above quote called “fantasy” and Hillman “image”.

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W.Giegerich, “Marlan’s proton pseudos”, revised

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light shining upon it from all around it). I need to stress this because so often in the practice of psychotherapy analysts try to throw the external, essentially foreign “light” of their preconceived psychological theories or of their personal free associations upon dreams and case material, mechanically identifying patients, as cases, for example with ready-made abstract DSM diagnoses or with theoretical constructs such as the oedipal complex, libidinal stages, infantile trauma, etc., as well as identifying this image with the phallus, that with the Great Mother, “the unconscious”, the shadow, the puer, the anima, or what have you, as their ready-made props. The discipline of interiority conversely requires the black-sun darkness of each real phenomenon at hand as the starting point of its psychological work of absolute-negative interiorization, which includes our leaving behind, as far as is humanly possible, all our theoretical baggage and preconceived ideas as well as our conventional simplistic everyday understanding of the images. And it is a discipline also in the sense that it requires the self-discipline of our patient perseverance in the phenomenon’s original darkness and our strict refusal to let any alien light come in from outside. Now we also understand better why I said that the, let us say, “post-imaginal”, logical approach of psychology as the discipline of interiority has the character of a “dark” seeing.

Far from being the “dark other” of “the logical” and of psychology (as the discipline of interiority), the “black sun” has always already tacitly been at work in it as its own methodological principle that guided it in its understanding of the soul’s logical life. Here, in psychology and as its methodological principle, the black sun is really at home, fully integrated into the structure of its consciousness, fully assimilated—and thus also fully realized, that is to say, here it is true and real, because it has been released into its truth and thereby come home to itself from its exile in objectified imaginal form. Marlan’s not having seen this is due to the blindness that resulted from his consciousness’s having become overly impressed and infected, in its own constitution, by the blackness that it saw in its literalized object or content and by having become its (the blackness’s, the not-inseeing’s) subservient ardent prophet. It is not the black sun that resists conscious assimilation. It is Marlan. He rejects the existing assimilation to be found in psychology. Yes, indeed, as Marlan himself put it in the last three words of his paper: “black light matters”. However not as he meant it: semantically, literally, objectified and externalized as imaginal contents („a dark sky marked by tracing a dark light, stars in a night sky, an Egyptian goddess Nuit...”), but syntactically: psychologically, interiorized into itself.

In psychology, where the black sun is the spirit and form of its methodological procedere, all the mystifications clinging to Marlan’s version of the black sun topic have disappeared. It is no longer the object of external reflection. It has been “vaporized”, distilled, absolute-negatively inwardized into logical form, into the style of seeing. As a method or mode, it is, on the one hand, something concretely real and practical, down to earth, not a yonder, also not an unassimilable wonder, and yet, on the other hand, it is not either concretized or positivized as a be it empirical or imaginal object.

This is a truly psychological (and not a would-be philosophical) interpretation of the image of the black sun, because this interpretation lets the soul speak in this image about itself and its own needs, rather than about an objective reality.

(15) The necessity of distinguishing oneself from one’s truths. As we have seen, “making conscious” or “conscious assimilation”, does not mean “overcoming” or “bleaching” (in the sense of turning everything into “logical light”) and lifting phenomena up into the heroic heights of “peaks of spirit” beyond their concrete reality, which is how Marlan seems to understand Hegel as well as psychology

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47 With an expression Jung used to criticize the abuse of his typology we could say: they stick labels on people.
(as the discipline of interiority). If consciousness is under the domination of the white soul, “making conscious” much rather means seeing it, the black sun (or whatever other soul phenomenon may happen to be in focus), more deeply, seeing through it, getting into it, and letting it lead the way wherever it may lead, which in such an extreme case as that of the black sun may even be into a whole other dimension or other status of consciousness. This, however, can only happen if that consciousness maintains itself as a seeing one all the way through.

But consciousness’s preserving itself as a seeing one and penetrating into the depths of its experience is not all that is implied by “making conscious”. Making conscious also means distinguishing oneself (one’s consciousness, one’s psychology) from the truths of all particular images that one may experience, instead of letting them go to one’s head and simply “buying” their message. Jung stressed the importance of our learning to free ourselves from the suggestive power of unconscious images.

What a difference! Jung opts for the liberation from the suggestive power that the image exerts on consciousness, its hold on us, i.e., for liberation from the image’s possible effect; Marlan opts for the liberation from [“dissolution of”, “going away of”] the inner quality of the image itself: before his about-turn that changed him into the defender of unassimilability he had expected the experienced object (the black sun) to become assimilated and not consciousness [the experiencing subject] to free itself from the black sun’s power while respecting its nature. He wanted the change to happen “out there”. His favoring externality is consistent.

Liberation from the suggestive power of an archetypal image that tends to enthral consciousness does of course not mean to reject it or fight it. As a psychological liberation it is not an act of the will, an ego act, in the first place. It does not have the literal form of an attempt of holding it away or, conversely, of immunizing oneself against it. Through a directly negative relation to a psychic image or reality we stay as much under its spell as through a positive, loving one. Psychologically, the only way to free oneself from the enthralling or inflating influence is, dialectically, through one’s getting closer to it and one’s embracing, “owning” it, in the double sense of our being initiated into it (which is tantamount to its being seen through) and its being distilled, changed from the form of imaginal content or substance to that of perspective of consciousness, style of seeing, logical form. Both aspects are necessary. Because if consciousness has not liberated itself from their suggestive and enthralling power, archetypal contents also become consciousness’s logical form, what Hillman called a “dominating archetypal perspective” that determines one’s seeing and evaluations from behind. But this logical form of consciousness is one that consciousness is totally unaware of. It is taken by consciousness to be absolutely self-evident, unquestionable, the true one—the only one that’s possible. The change from archetypal content to form of consciousness or style of seeing, if it happens totally unconsciously, all by itself as a background process, is precisely the way how the suggestive power that Jung warned of exerts its influence and how consciousness gets inflated. Consciousness’s initiation (its real entrance into the archetypal truth in question) and therefore its seeing through this content is indispensable for the liberation. Only through it the “archetypal perspective” ceases to be an unconsciously dominating one and becomes a human perspective, consciousness’s own property. Consciousness is then self-critically aware of its perspective and in this sense free. And the perspective in turn has then the status of a methodological approach that consciousness can choose to employ or not, as it sees fit.

Since Marlan’s attack on Hegel and on psychology’s absolute-negative interiorization—an attack in the name of the unassimilable remnant and ad maiorem capitis mortuum gloriam—has revealed itself to
us as actually being the unwitting defense of what he calls his “psychological narcissism”, it has an ul-
terior purpose: it has the task of performing a function in or for his personal psychological economy
and for his “highest value”, this belief of his in the remnant and in mind-independent object. Therefore
this attack does not come from Marlan as the professional that he is too; it does not really have the sta-
tus of a theoretical (be it philosophical or psychological) counterposition, as which, however, it tries to
present itself with his citations of numerous philosophical writers as authorities supporting his views. It
is, as I pointed out at the very beginning of this paper, ideological—in fact, a “postmodern” metaphys-
ics of otherness and exteriority.

Or should I not much rather say: a kind of “‘postmodern’ religion”? For one cannot help but get the
impression that he speaks with a deep (even if faint) sense of religious ardor when he comes to such
notions as “gateway back to the beyond, at the root of imagination, wonder, and transformation”, of a
“dark enigma”, and “an erotic presence calling us toward her [i.e., to the Egyptian Goddess Nuit, the
dark night sky48] to an absolute that is not an absolute, seducing us to a wonder beyond the language of
truth”.:45 It is “postmodern” because it is just the empty form and subjective feeling of religion, its zero-
stage, a completely abstract contentless “religion” without God or gods, without heaven or hell, re-
demption and eternal life, without meaning and truth—just a void, pit, or darkness of wonder and
enigma.40 The erotic seduction by the dark Night goddess could also be interpreted as consciousness’s
letting itself be enticed into the situation of the Platonic cave-dwellers who, like passive movie or TV
watchers, look enthralled and in ecstasy at the absolutely irrational, language-transcending marvel of
the truthless shadows projected onto the cave wall.51 Jung said about Freud that he was ein Ergriffener
(“a man touched and taken hold of in his innermost depth”, my transl., cf. MDR p. 153). The same may
be true of Marlan: ein Ergriffener.

48 It is very revealing that the Egyptian Goddess, whose real Name is Nut, generally transcribed as Nut, appears in Marlan’s
text as the Goddess Nuit, a transcription which, according to the relevant Wikipedia entry accessed in May 2017, is “certain-
tly erroneous”, but of course allows itself to be easily associated with French nuit, night, although this Goddess is by no
means exclusively “the dark night sky”.
49 “Beyond the language of truth”: A fitting accompaniment to the Donald Trump era.
50 More than ten years ago Greg Mogenson, at the very end of his review of Stanton Marlan’s The Black Sun, entitled
voyantly detected and highlighted the central problem of Marlan’s approach to the black sun topic by quoting very pertinent
statements George Santayana had made by way of a critique of mysticism: Mysticism “consists in the surrender of a category
of thought on account of the discovery of its relativity.” Mogenson continues: “Eschewing the specific and finite, the mystic
deserts reason and judgment on account of their share in these. The upshot of this is that [now with Santayana’s words again]
‘... instead of developing our minds to greater scope and precision, it would return to the condition of protoplasm—to the
blessed consciousness of an Unutterable Reality.’” In a further comment, Mogenson adds: “As psychologists we must not
leave the black sun a mystical object, or bring a false prestige to our patients’ despair and depression through the strange
grandeur of its name.” Yes, indeed, theoretically the diagnosis “condition of protoplasm—the blessed consciousness of an
Unutterable Reality” and therapeutically the warning against “mystical object” and “bringing false prestige to our patient’s
despair through the strange grandeur of its name” hit the nail on the head concerning the problem and danger of Marlan’s
position! At the same time we understand all the better why concrete, spelled-out elaborations, such as in psychology (as dis-
cipline of interiority) or in Hegel, of the logic at work in phenomena can appear to a “blessed consciousness of an Unutter-
able Reality” as expressive of a “splendid solar isolation” and this splendid solar isolation in turn as a “poisonous state”,
since it represents a serious threat to the blessedness of consciousness (that blessedness that Jung called consciousness’s hav-
ing become unconscious and that philosophy might call an ontology of agnosia, of not-knowing).
51 I discussed the Platonic Cave parable in my “The Occidental Soul’s Self-Immurement in Plato’s Cave”, in: W.G., Technol-
cave situation is not so much to be seen as the starting-point from which Plato’s philosophical thinking pushed off and
which he left behind, but conversely as an unwitting utopia, a first vision of or general blueprint for a future possibility, i.e.,
as a totally unconscious project which only now in modernity is being realized. What Marlan is striving for seems to provide
additional evidence for my thesis about the Cave story.