REQUIEM FOR ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

A reflection on Jung’s (anti)catastrophic psychology

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Abstract: This article is an interpretation of Analytical Psychology in the light of the catastrophic vision and dreams that Jung had in 1913 and 1914. It is shown how the guiding spirit of Jung’s psychological project is to be found in that psychic material. Then it is proposed that the completion of the symbolic catastrophe displayed in Jung’s last vision (1961) points to the end of the psychological foundations upon which Analytical Psychology is built, and thus to its cultural obsolescence, extensive to any psychology grounded in Jung’s notion of ‘soul’.

Keywords: Jung’s visions, psychological catastrophe, Analytical Psychology, end of ‘psychology with soul’

Prolegomenon: Methodological, Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Before starting to interpret psychologically the psychic material that I have chosen to examine, a methodological remark is required. Many different interpretations of these psychic phenomena can be proposed, but I want to work out only one very specific interpretative position, anchored in the viewpoint of psychology as the discipline of interiority, which considers a psychic phenomenon as meaning itself, being its own interpretation, so that interpreting it is an ‘attempt to discover the interpretation
as which the [psychic phenomenon] *is*.’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 180) This statement is identical with Jung’s position concerning the dream being its own interpretation (see Jung 1938/1940, para. 41; see also Jung 1976, p. 294)

What Jung says about the dream can be extended to any psychological phenomenon. This is the methodological stance required by a psychology exclusively and rigorously defined as a discipline of interiority: psychological phenomena are taken purely as expressions or statements of ‘the soul’s speaking to itself about itself’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 176), thus not pointing to anything else but themselves. This does not mean that soul has absolutely no relation to reality. Quite on the contrary: it is seen ‘as intrinsically in touch with the world, as within itself having its own inner connection to, respect for, and appreciation of, the real.’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 246) The point here is methodological: ‘Soul-making cannot focus on the individual and it cannot focus on the world. It has to focus on the soul itself, that is, on the logic that is neither, but is the innermost life of both.’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 249)

It should be emphasized that this methodology is grounded in Jung himself. Its basis is the interpretative principle of any psychological phenomena, established by Jung in these terms: ‘Above all, don’t let anything from outside, that does not belong, get into it, for the fantasy-image has “everything it needs”’. (Jung 1955-1956, para. 749) Giegerich only radicalizes this stance, excluding other principles also admitted by Jung, and thus he creates the methodological profile of a particular psychological approach. This profile is not a personal possession of Giegerich, but an objective and legitimate way of proceeding psychologically. This is the methodological stance adopted in the following reflection.

In using the word ‘soul’, I follow not only Giegerich, but indeed and first of all Jung, who abundantly uses *Seele* in his writings, *not only in the Red Book, but*
throughout his Gesammelte Werke and in his letters as well. The English translator of the *Collected Works* has opted for the less ‘scandalous’ *psyche*, and this option may have many consequences for the understanding of the deep nature of Jung’s thought, inasmuch as it tends to reduce his psychological project to a problematic *scientific* status,¹ whereas Jung himself saw clearly that psychology ‘is doomed to cancel itself out as a science [*muß sich als Wissenschaft selber aufheben*] and therein precisely it reaches its *scientific* goal’ (see Jung 1927/1931, para. 429).

Be as it may, on my part I am not using ‘soul’ with a spiritualist or metaphysical meaning, and firmly stay with Jung’s original word and notion². In the context of my paper, ‘soul’ is used as a synonym for ‘objective psyche’ – which is also a use grounded in Jung himself. *It should not be understood as meaning an existing entity or substance.* ‘Soul’ here means *interiority*, the inner psychological dimension of a given phenomenon, and not a subsisting ‘part’ that human being has. ‘Soul’ may thus be defined as the *contra naturam*³ essence of human being’s entire world-relation, the form of his actually lived life as it is seen from the perspective of psychological interiority. From this perspective, interiorization is the act of considering a given symbolic phenomenon exclusively in its own terms, without letting ‘anything that does not belong

¹ *The use of “psyche” instead of “soul” is a *new* import into scientific language, an artificial and abstract *technical term* and is clearly inspired by the wish that arose during the 19th century to avoid the traditional word and to cleanse psychology from all the (…) metaphysical, religious overtones and feeling associations and implications of this word (…) By defining psychology with the term psyche you also have *a priori* decided that psychology is limited to meaning a “part” or one “aspect” of the human being, in contradistinction to its other parts, such as the body or reason. “Psyche” integrates the soul into the scientific notion of the natural world at large. (…) the notion of psyche is inalienably tied to the notion of man as its ontic substrate.’ (Giegerich 2012a, pp. 16-17)
² On the problem and sense of the use of the concept of ‘soul’ in psychological discourse, see Giegerich 2012a, pp. 5-87.
³ Soul as consciousness or mindedness is not simply a natural phenomenon like a tree, a bird or a thunderstorm. It is a new level of life, which pushes off from the mere natural biological level of life and inaugurates the realm of shared meanings, ideas, fantasies, values, ideals – in a word: culture (see Giegerich 2012a, p. 29-44). As such, it can be envisaged as an *opus contra naturam*. It is in this sense that, in order to distinguish a soul event from a natural phenomenon, I use the word ‘spiritual’ in this paper – and not in the religious, mystic or metaphysical sense. It only designates the non-natural quality of soul activity. The same is valid to the use of ‘otherworldliness’. It should be noted that if you define ‘nature’ along the lines of Romantic *Naturphilosophie*, this distinction does not properly apply.
to it’ come in. ‘Soul-making’ means, accordingly, the act of interiorizing a given phenomenon into its psychological objective meaning, thus reaching its inner symbolic depth, its ‘soul’. As meaning changes with time, place and culture, with structural shifts in humankind’s conscious situation (see Jung 1946, para. 395-396), soul (understood as the essence of the human way of being-in-the-world) is not a static eternal structuring form of human life, but a living historical dynamism. In this intrinsically historical sense one can speak of ‘soul activity’, both on the individual level and on the collective/cultural level. Thus, ‘soul activity’ refers to the effectively real (wirklich) psychological dynamism which produces images, symbols, ideas, thoughts, values, be it individual (such as in a dream or a vision) or cultural (as in a work of art, or in a religious doctrine, for example).

A word about the relation of these two levels – the individual and the cultural – is necessary. The distinction between both levels refers to their different scopes: while a personal dream, for instance, has ordinarily only subjective significance for the individual dreamer, a true work of art, as well as any cultural product, reflects something of the objective state of the collective ethos, and thus has a broader and objective significance. If we use the alchemical locution ‘opus parvum’ to designate the smaller personal-subjective level, we may use its counterpart ‘Opus Magnum’ to designate the broader sphere of culture and historical processes at large (nota bene: both are distinct levels of ‘soul activity’). Despite this core distinction, sometimes there is an extraordinary conjunction of both levels, so that exceptionally a psychic event happening at the level of opus parvum may have also a broader significance, thus displaying something of the psychological dynamism going on at the level of Opus Magnum.
A personalistic psychological approach of any cultural-historical work (such as Freud has adopted in dealing with Leonardo da Vinci’s work) loses the ‘big picture’ expressed in that work, inasmuch as it concentrates exclusively on the biographical particularities and accidents of the subject’s inner life and explains the work through the personality of its creator. This is no doubt a valid approach. But it misses the whole Opus Magnum dimension of the work. For instance: Picasso’s Guernica is certainly a very personal work of art, but it expresses a vision of the objective situation of culture and humankind in the 20th century at large. Guernica is much more than the result of subjective personal psychic mechanisms driving the individual Pablo Picasso. Only an approach focused on the ‘soul’ of the work in its Opus Magnum significance (and not on the personal intricacies of the artist) can reach its objective psychological interiority.

Now, in examining here some of Jung’s visions and dreams, I submit that, due to their extraordinary nature, they have the broader significance above-mentioned. Jung himself envisaged them in this way4. Therefore, I take them as having the same status of a work of art. This means that I am not interested in their personal subjective dimension. The personal possibility of a psychotic breakdown, raised by Jung himself at the time of the first visions and dreams (1913), is of no concern to me here. My reflection is not placed in the historiographically problematic area of Jung’s personal mental state in 1913-14.

However, I do not follow either the second possibility raised by Jung, which came to be the ‘standard’ accepted interpretation for his visions and dreams: their synchronistic, acausal correspondence with external physical events is also of no concern to me in this paper. I am not dealing with the notion of synchronicity and its

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4 The vision in October 1913 was later taken by Jung as ‘a visible sign that would show me that the spirit of the depths in me was at the same time ruler of the depths of world affairs.’ (Jung 2009, p. 230-231)
metaphysical aspects. World War I may be seen merely as a historical-cultural event, and it is not necessary to understand its relations with Jung’s vision in terms of synchronistic coincidence: both – war and vision – can be perfectly and simply envisaged as expressions of the same cultural moment, the same conflictive configuration of modern consciousness, the same dynamism active in soul’s *Opus Magnum*.

Jung’s interpretation of his visions and dreams at the time they happened implicitly anticipates the notion of synchronicity, inasmuch as he took them as being prophetic. I work here from a different interpretative possibility, opened up by the restricted methodological psychological stance presented above. As I have said, I take Jung’s psychic material as having the same status of a work of art, and this choice may be referred to Jung himself: the unconscious ‘simply creates an image that answers to the conscious situation’, and such ‘an image would be better described as an artist’s vision’ (Jung 1928, para. 289). When a work of art has an anticipatory quality, it does not have to be taken as being literally ‘prophetic’, but more simply as ‘self-representations of unconscious developments’ (Jung 1928, para. 216), just like some dreams, with the difference that the developments expressed in a work of art (and, as I claim, in Jung’s catastrophic psychic material) belong to the wider horizon of culture, whereas ordinary dreams stay at the level of *opus parvum*.

As far as I know, this hermeneutic path in interpreting Jung’s visions and dreams has not been trodden before. I propose a strictly psychological interpretation of the psychic material considering it from the perspective of the broader historical dynamism

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5 A consistent reflection on the relations between synchronicity in Analytical Psychology and modern western culture can be found in Main (2004). On synchronicity interpreted as a form of religious experience, see Main (2007). Roderick Main has recently dealt with the secular and religious dimensions of Analytical Psychology in Main 2013. For a masterful disclosure of the roots of Jung’s notion of synchronicity in the intellectual tradition, namely as a form of intellectual intuition, see Bishop, 2000. And Wolfgang Giegerich has discussed the common interpretation of synchronicity in an article published in the Journal of Analytical Psychology (see Giegerich, 2012; see also Warren Colman’s reply to Giegerich in the same issue; Colman 2012).
of modern consciousness, putting its possible synchronistic dimension in brackets, so to speak. Assuming an objective (historical and cultural) significance for Jung’s psychic material, in this paper I only try to corroborate this assumption by following my specific methodological approach.

In focusing my reflection at the level of soul’s historical *Opus Magnum*, I attribute a trans-human quality to the psychological dynamism displayed in Jung’s visions and dreams. This should not be understood as some mysterious or religious dimension of the psychic material. It simply means that the immanent *telos* of soul activity is its own self-actualization, *regardless of the human subject’s interests or concerns*. As Giegerich reminds us, in a true Jungian spirit,

The experienced soul is by no means always ‘soulful’ in the sweet, romantic, beneficial, or harmless sense. Rather, it can even be downright inhuman. At times the soul is a brutal reality. It may ruthlessly pass over our human concerns, our survival and self-protection interests, our needs for stability, comfort and consolation. It frequently forces *its* interests upon us, regardless of what *we* want. It drags us away from what would be natural, ordinary, decent, or reasonable and seduces us or compels us – whether we will or no (cf. ‘*vocatus atque non vocatus…*’) – to do something *contra naturam*, be it exceptionally great or perverse. (Giegerich 2012a, p. 90)

As a ‘dark urge’ or ‘unclear impulse’, a ‘longing and telos’, soul has a fundamental process character, which aims at the completion of its ‘full reality in the empirical world and real life’ (Giegerich 2012a, p. 41 and 43). In this very particular sense, a psychologically creative individual is able to follow soul’s *telos* regardless of his/her own interests, just for the sake of the ‘logos of the soul’. Jung certainly had that capability. This is why it is worth and legitimate to examine his psychic material through the lenses of ‘a psychology with soul’.

As is well known, Jung stated that all his work came from the fantasies and dreams he had during his ‘confrontation with the unconscious’, the *prima materia* which compelled him to work upon it, and which he compares to a ‘stream of lava’. He
saw his Analytical Psychology as ‘a more or less successful endeavor to incorporate this incandescent matter into the contemporary picture of the world’ (Jung 1963, p. 199). We could say, drawing on Jung’s thought about the dream being its own interpretation, that this ‘incandescent matter’ is already a self-interpretation of ‘the contemporary picture of the world’, it is this picture (obviously only to a certain extent), although, as Jung said, ‘at first only in the form of emotions and images.’ (Jung 1963, p. 192)

Within Jung’s ‘stream of lava’, there are some particular images, gushing forth at an early moment of his creative founding experience, which call our attention due to their extremely dark content: the impressive twice repeated catastrophic vision he had at the end of 1913, as well as the thrice repeated dream of a similar nature he had in the first half of 1914. This apocalyptic initial material is akin to the tragic dimension of the XX\textsuperscript{th} century, so that Jung’s catastrophic vision and dreams could be understood as fateful psychological events, arguably having some kinship (regarding their common inner logic) to fateful contemporary historical events. Thus all of them – the psychological as well as the historical events – manifest some relation to soul’s Opus Magnum.

The catastrophic content reappears at the very end of Jung’s life (and work), in 1961, in the context of a strong experience - his imminent death -, again in the form of a vision. We have only an extremely brief allusion to this last vision, made by Marie-Louise von Franz, and this determines the narrow limit within which we can explore it. However, its catastrophic content is beyond any doubt, and one can see that it is significantly different from the psychic material of 1913-1914. My working hypothesis is that this last vision could be considered as the psychological closure of that same soul experience on which Analytical Psychology is grounded, and at the same time the opening - or anticipation - of a radically new situation, to which it is not fitted anymore.
Therefore one could envision Jung’s work as framed and deeply determined by a psychological catastrophe, from its beginning to its end. And I shall argue that this catastrophe is not only Jung’s, but, on the contrary, refers to the psychological configuration of the modern form of consciousness, a configuration which has been fully realized or has completely exteriorized itself in history during the XX\textsuperscript{th} century.

In what follows I will try to think the first apocalyptic vision (as well as the 1914 thrice repeated dream associated with it) in terms of its immanent coherence and meaning, as an expression of the whole soul experience from which Analytical Psychology stemmed, through the work of Jung. Afterwards I will make a brief psychological comment on the final vision, and try to demonstrate my working hypothesis by comparing the last vision to the vision of 1913, showing how my hypothesis is grounded both in the difference between the visions and in the meaning of the ‘final catastrophe’ seen by Jung.

**The Visions and Dreams of 1913-1914**

It may be interesting to note that ‘catastrophe’ comes from the Greek \textit{katastrophé}, which means ‘a sudden end, an overturning’ (\textit{katastrophé} is composed of \textit{kata}, ‘down’, and \textit{strophein}, ‘turn’, so that literally taken a catastrophe is a ‘turning down’). The word had its origins in Ancient Greek tragedy: it designated the moment in which events turned against the main character, in a movement executed by the whole chorus in the theater. It was a fateful turning point. Catastrophe thus, according to Merriam-Webster, is ‘a momentous tragic event ranging from extreme misfortune to utter overthrow or ruin’ (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catastrophe](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catastrophe), accessed 26 June 2013).
Jung’s experience in 1913-1914, having at its center the apocalyptic vision, fulfills the original meaning of *katastrophé*, not only in the personal sphere, but also in the psychological structure of the soul event *falling upon* him, which expresses itself in his feeling of falling down – we must only remember the moment, in the Advent of 1913 (December 12), when Jung finally gives up and lets himself *drop*, and says: ‘Suddenly it was as though the ground literally gave way beneath my feet, and I plunged down in dark depths’ (Jung 1963, p. 179). This is surely the psychic experience of *katastrophé*, ‘turning down’.

Jung describes the whole catastrophe in very dramatic terms. I will follow here step by step the sequence of the narrative presented in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*.6

Toward the autumn of 1913 the pressure which I had felt was in *me* seemed to be moving outward, as though there were something in the air. The atmosphere actually seemed to me darker than it had been. It was as though the sense of oppression no longer sprang exclusively from a psychic situation, but from concrete reality. This feeling grew more and more intense. (Jung 1963, p. 175)

Jung feels a movement from an exclusively inward location (‘in *me*’) to an outward emplacement (‘as though there were something in the air’). He interprets this movement as a convergence of a merely subjective ‘psychic situation’ and positive-factual objective ‘concrete reality’. We may recall here that later he would theorize such convergences with the notion of synchronicity and subsume them under his quasi-metaphysical speculations about *Unus Mundus*.7 Nonetheless, one can also concentrate exclusively on the contents of the whole situation and think it through, taking its two sides (‘psychic situation’ and ‘concrete reality’) *psychologically*, and leave aside the blinding fascination of the possible positive-factual synchronistic coincidence. In this

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6 Jung 1963, pp. 175-176. See also *The Red Book* (Jung 2009, pp. 230-235) [Liber Primus folios i(v) to ii(v)]; and the introductory seminar on Analytical Psychology (Jung 1925, pp. 41-44); In his ‘Killings’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 189-265), Wolfgang Giegerich alludes briefly to Jung’s vision. My approach and interpretation here is fundamentally in tune with his comment there.

7 On this dimension of Jung’s theorizing, see Main 2004, Main 2007 and Main 2013.
way, from the outset ‘concrete reality’ is taken as indicating the activity of the *objective psyche*, a self-presentation of soul’s dynamism, and can thus be interiorized. Let us remember the methodological rule: neither the individual ‘in here’, nor the world ‘out there’, but soul itself. This is the specific condition for reaching (or producing) the psychological dimension, understood as the in-depth interiority of a given phenomenon. From this perspective, the psychic atmosphere indicates an *extra-ordinary* or non-ordinary circumstance. There is a transition going on. Jung is crossing a threshold: from ordinary subjective perspective (‘the pressure which I had felt was in me’) to an uncanny perspective (a darker atmosphere, ‘concrete reality’, ‘as though the sense of oppression no longer sprang exclusively from a psychic situation’). This transition of perspective is also signaled in that fateful moment of his crisis when he feels he is ‘plunging down into dark depths’.

The vision and the three dreams that subsequently follow confirm this transition to an objective, impersonal level.

In October [1913], while I was alone on a journey, I was suddenly seized by an overpowering vision: I saw a monstrous flood covering all the northern and low-lying lands between the North Sea and the Alps. When it came up to Switzerland I saw that the mountains grew higher and higher to protect our country. I realized that a frightful catastrophe was in progress. I saw the mighty yellow waves, the floating rubble of civilization, and the drowned bodies of uncounted thousands. Then the whole sea turned to blood. This vision lasted about one hour. I was perplexed and nauseated, and ashamed of my weakness. (Jung 1963, p. 175)

A brutal upheaval destroys the north European region: civilization is reduced to rubble, a portion of mankind is wiped out. On the semantic level, the catastrophe is imaged as a *monstrous flood* – which means that it is not the result of human activity, or rather that it does not spring from the human realm. Just like the Biblical deluge, it comes from some trans-human source and is oriented to and affects mainly the human realm. Following this analogy, Switzerland protected by the mountains may be
functionally compared, to a certain extent, to Noah’s ark: something is preserved from the catastrophic destruction. There is a remainder of the old order: Switzerland is safely protected (through the rising mountains) from the ‘frightful catastrophe [that] was in progress’ (by the way, what an interesting and suggestive double sense here!). I will return to this detail. For now, it should be noted that both the destructive flood and the protective barrier against it belong equally to the soul activity going on and pictorially represented in the vision.

Two weeks passed; then the vision recurred, under the same conditions, even more vividly than before, and the blood was more emphasized. An inner voice spoke. ‘Look at it well; it is wholly real and it will be so. You cannot doubt it.’ (Jung 1963, p. 175)

The water turns into blood. Still on the semantic level, this is not to be taken as a causal-natural result of the ‘drowned bodies of uncounted thousands’: firstly, because drowning does not imply bleeding; secondly, because even if it did, the blood of uncounted thousands would not suffice to turn the whole sea into blood. No. The vision presents a strange transformation from water to blood, somewhat similar to the transubstantiation of wine into blood in the Eucharist. There is an uncanny transformation taking place, an otherworldly event – a soul event. And the reality of the mysterious transformation as well as of the whole soul process is emphasized, not necessarily as a (possible) synchronistic premonition of the brutal positive-factual war that soon was going to follow externally (this is alien to the image, it comes from outside as an a posteriori conjectural interpretation): sticking firmly to the image, and to the methodological stance of a discipline of interiority, it is the vision itself that is wholly real and will be so. Soul activity reinforces by means of the inner voice its own reality, its objectivity – in the sense of ‘objective psyche’.
That winter someone asked me what I thought were the political prospects of the world in the near future. I replied that I had no thoughts on the matter, but that I saw rivers of blood. I asked myself whether these visions pointed to a revolution, but could not imagine anything of the sort. And so I drew the conclusion that they had to do with me myself, and decided that I was menaced by a psychosis. The idea of war did not occur to me at all. (Jung 1963, pp. 175-176)

Jung at first sees only two possible alternatives: either a personal subjective pathology (psychosis), or an external positive-factual event (revolution, war). And I think one should not simply dismiss these possibilities. It is plausible to think that there was a real risk of a psychotic breakdown. Were the circumstances different, leading to a failure in the elaboration of his dramatic crisis, a psychosis could have ensued – Jung certainly was well acquainted with this possibility as a psychiatrist at the Burghölzli. On the other hand, World War I was indeed a bloody human catastrophe, a real positive-factual revolution, signaling the end of a phase of modern history and the beginning of the catastrophic XX\textsuperscript{th} century. However, a rigorously psychological approach takes the vision \textit{as vision}, that is, as a psychic event on its own, regardless of its possible impact on the subjective psychic equilibrium or its correspondence with an external event. This possibility, also followed extensively by Jung in his writings, is the one adopted exclusively in psychology as a discipline of interiority. Only by following this approach can we try to reflect the soul truth displayed in the vision.

Negation is the primordial act of soul-making, through and in which soul creates itself anew, or creates a new form of consciousness by pushing off from a previous one.\textsuperscript{8} This \textquoteleft pushing off\textquoteright{} is represented as killing, destruction, catastrophe, death. So the monstrous destructive flood could, in these terms, be seen as displaying the negating activity of soul, which is exerted on \textquoteleft civilization\textquoteright{} and \textquoteleft humankind\textquoteright{}. If we accept that civilization and human form of existence are expressions of soul activity, then it

\textsuperscript{8} On this theme, see Giegerich’s seminal reflections in the above mentioned essay \textquoteleft Killings\textquoteright{} (in Giegerich 2008).
becomes clear that in Jung’s vision soul is negating itself, it is destroying an accomplished level of itself. Jung’s vision displays the alchemical process of mortificatio. However, the preservation of Switzerland from the negation/destruction shows that in Jung’s vision the negation is countered by a conservative movement of soul itself. This means that the negation is not absolute, the transformation portrayed is not fully accomplished, since there is a remainder of the ‘old’ configuration, preserved from the transformative drive.

If we move now to the thrice repeated dream, we will find the same catastrophic motif (though with a different symbolization), displaying both the negation going on and the unfolding of the resistance that soul is opposing to itself, disclosing its goal.

Soon afterward, in the spring and early summer of 1914, I had a thrice-repeated dream that in the middle of summer an Arctic cold wave descended and froze the land to ice. I saw, for example, the whole of Lorraine and its canals frozen and the entire region totally deserted by human beings. All living green things were killed by frost. This dream came in April and May, and for the last time in June, 1914. (Jung 1963, p. 176)

Envisaging the dreams as an expression of the same soul process portrayed in the catastrophic vision, we can say that the prime matter suffers a transformation: from the heat of a sea of blood to the frost of an Arctic cold. The change from the blood-heat of recently destroyed life in the vision to the cold of frozen death in the dreams is indicative of a deepening of soul’s ‘deadly’ negating activity. Empirically, the more one moves away from natural life, the colder it gets. Psychologically envisaged, the ‘icy-cold’ character of soul activity only means its dialectical trans-human nature. There is a special active relation of soul and death⁹. We can even say that ‘soul’ is the

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⁹ On this topic, see Herzog (1983).
interiorization of death into life, a movement that creates consciousness (and is consciousness itself) and opens up the specifically human form of existence.\textsuperscript{10}

The transformation of consciousness through the negation of a previous stage of itself is the psychological form of death. But this death that ‘has the power to shock life out of the “innocence of becoming”’ (Nietzsche) and into consciousness could in no way have been that innocent death that merely happens to a living being as a natural life event to be passively endured. No, it must be death in the active sense, as the unnatural, outrageous, deliberate act of killing’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 215). In the vision, this unnaturalness of death is indicated by the transmutation of the deadly sea into blood; in the dreams, by the uncanny detail that frost occurs in the middle of summer. There is clearly something out of the natural order, extra-ordinary.

The frozen death of the dreams kills all living green things, the green life. It reaches beyond the animal/human level (blood organisms), and affects the first stage of life: vegetation. The landscape is totally inhospitable to human beings, thus displaying the exclusion of the human point of view.

In the third dream frightful cold had again descended from out of the cosmos. This dream, however, had an unexpected end. There stood a leaf-bearing tree, but without fruit (my tree of life, I thought), whose leaves had been transformed by the effects of the frost into sweet grapes full of healing juices. I plucked the grapes and gave them to a large, waiting crowd. (Jung 1963, p. 176)

Now, here we have significant changes. First, the catastrophe acquires a cosmic dimension, and this stresses its otherworldly, trans-human nature. This expansion of the frame, so to speak, is signified by the appearance of the leaf-bearing tree: the deepening of the frozen death makes the source of life appear. And it is a strange tree, which endures frost, and thus does not belong to the same level of the previously destroyed

\textsuperscript{10} See Giegerich (2012b).
‘living green things’. It is a supernatural tree, uncanny, the ‘tree of life’, which has a different relation to ‘death’: unlike the individual naturalistic trees, which were simply destroyed, this ‘tree of life’ has a deep logical dialectical relation to ‘frozen death’. If ‘soul’ is ‘death’ interiorized into ‘life’, so that ‘ensouled life’ is plainly consciousness (or logical life), then we can understand the identity of ‘frost’ and ‘tree of life’ as an expression of the dynamism of consciousness.

That the tree of life is dialectically the frost itself becomes patent in its fruits. For these grapes are no ordinary, natural fruits: impossible on the naturalistic dimension, they resulted from a different kind of transformation. Frost turned the green leaves into sweet grapes. And therefore the grapes also are strange: not only are they frost itself in the form of transformed leaves, but they are full of ‘healing juices’ – which means that frost is healing. Just as in the Bible Yahweh formed mankind (homo) from the dust of the ground (humus) by breathing the breath of spiritual life (the divine pneuma, divine life) into the nostrils of Adam (adâm comes from adamá, the soil), thus transmitting Himself to the new human form, frost in the dream transmits itself as healing juices in the new form of grapes.

Whilst it is life-destroying on the naturalistic level, the dream’s frost (soul’s icy-coldness) is life-giving on the spiritual level. This means that the grapes are not fit to nurture or give sensorial pleasure in the biological, bodily sense: they are meant to heal the spirit. They have a psychological (‘spiritual’) meaning. Their healing juices are analogous, on the one hand, to wine - but, of course, to wine taken in its symbolical/psychological signification. On the other hand, as the bread in the Eucharist and in the prayer is a ‘supra-substantial [ἐπιούσιον] bread’, the grapes are not ordinary grapes, but a healing substance. As such, they come from a transformation involving sacrificial death: just like Christ’s body and blood. Consequently, we are faced here
Jung only plucks and gives the grapes: he is not their source, which is the frost. So, in the dream Jung acts in a way similar to the priest in the Catholic Mass: he is only an instrument to the transformation/transubstantiation, whose real cause is soul activity. We can further explore this analogy with the Mass and think the sacrificial (psychological) unity of the many diverse elements in the dream: frost, death, tree of life, grapes and human agents (Jung and the crowd). In the Mass – and in the dream - the ‘terrors of death are an indispensable condition for the transformation’, which is ‘in the first place a bringing to life of substances which are in themselves lifeless, and, in the second, a substantial alteration of them, a spiritualization, in accordance with the ancient conception of pneuma as a subtle material entity’. (Jung 1942/1954, para. 338) And ‘man, too, by his devotion and self-sacrifice as a ministering instrument, is included in the mysterious process’ (Jung 1942/1954, para. 338). The destructive-creative activity of soul, imaged as frost, gives birth to (or presents itself as) a new level of spiritual life (as healing juice to humankind) through killing the naturalistic level of conscious perception (the natural green life). This, I claim, would be the resumed soul truth imagistically presented in the dream – and the core of the entire soul catastrophe also (partly) represented in the vision.

But every analogy has its limits, and by definition harbors a difference between the elements it puts in analogical relation. Consequently, we should stress here the difference between Jung’s soul event and the Christian Mass. There’s no mention of ‘God’, no explicit religious feeling associated with the vision and the dreams. The uncanny aspect of the ‘catastrophe in progress’ does not have a religious content. It only points to the by definition unnatural form of soul activity. And finally, the difference
can be made explicit by our focusing on one element of the dream image: Jung himself. It is not a priest who is *causa ministerialis* in the dream, but a man whose life was (and would continue to be from then on) deeply identified with *psychology*, the very same man who ‘had a real Notion or Concept of “soul”’ (Giegerich 2001, p. 41). This notion seized Jung, imposed itself on him – remember the inner voice in the vision: ‘Look at it well; it is wholly real and it will be so. You cannot doubt it.’ So, the human sacrifice in the vision and the turning down – *catastrophé* - in the vision and dreams is here the way of soul transmitting itself in the new form of *psychology*, and not of *religion*. This is convergent with the understanding of Jung’s psychology as *sublated* religion (see Giegerich 2001, p. 66-72): this perspective is sanctioned by the soul activity expressed in the vision and the dreams. Similarly, Jung’s understanding of his work as ‘a more or less successful endeavor to incorporate this incandescent [and, dialectically, frozen] matter into the contemporary picture of the world’ is perfectly grounded in the third dream: he would indeed pluck the soul’s grapes and offer them to a vast crowd. His life’s work would really be an event rooted in that transformation and in the real objective notion of soul. As such, his was truly a catastrophic psychology.

On the other hand, as pointed out above, the ‘catastrophe in progress’ was not absolute. Soul preserves ‘Switzerland’ from its destructive-negating activity in the vision. Something of its initial status is conserved, a self-conservation takes place. If now we merge ‘Switzerland’ with ‘Jung plucking and giving the grapes’, the result is that his psychology, being an expression of its grounding soul event and *wholly* committed to it, *as this event effectively happened to him, necessarily would present a conservative thrust*. Jung acknowledges his personal conservatism\(^\text{11}\), but the

\(^{11}\) ‘The daimon of creativity has ruthlessly had its way with me. (...) By way of compensation, I think, I am conservative to the bone. I fill my pipe from my grandfather’s tobacco jar and still keep his alpenstock, topped with a chamois horn, which he brought back from Pontresina after having been one of the first guests at that newly opened Kurort.’ (Jung 1963, p. 358) Jay Sherry (2010) explores Jung’s
conservatism we can easily find in the very theoretical structure of his thought should not be attributed merely to his personal inclinations, but to his psychology’s founding soul event itself. Jung explicitly defends his kind of ‘reforming conservatism’ in the broader frame of cultural-historical life:

Later I consciously linked my work to what Faust had passed over: respect for the eternal rights of man, recognition of ‘the ancient’, and the continuity of culture and intellectual history. (...) Reforms by advances, that is, by new methods or gadgets, are of course impressive at first, but in the long run they are dubious and in any case dearly paid for. They by no means increase the contentment or happiness of people on the whole. Mostly, they are deceptive sweetenings of existence, like speedier communications which unpleasantly accelerate the tempo of life and leave us with less time than ever before. (...) Reforms by retrogressions, on the other hand, are as a rule less expensive and in addition more lasting, for they return to the simpler, tried and tested ways of the past and make the sparsest use of newspapers, radio, television, and all supposedly timesaving innovations. (Jung 1963, pp. 235-237, my italics)

In being absolutely true to his catastrophic founding vision and dreams of 1913-1914, Jung has consciously proposed in his psychology a ‘reform by retrogression’. A certain conception of humankind and civilization (in continuity with the classical and Christian traditions) was preserved and spared from negation in that founding soul event. ‘Man’ is the highest value in this conception (this holds even in the case of the Christian perspective, where there is an essential relation uniting ‘God’ – the supreme absolute value - and ‘Man’, a relation expressed in the theological idea of imago Dei. The highest value attributed to the human being in Christianity reaches its apex precisely in God’s choice of incarnating in human form: this is the strong root of the relations to the conflicts and problems of modernity, and relativizes the simple opposition between conservatism and modernity by showing how Jung’s conservative profile can be seen as a form of modern (or ‘avant-garde’) stance. This particular stance is presented in ‘The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man’: ‘the really modern man is often to be found among those who call themselves old-fashioned. They do this firstly in order to make amends for their guilty break with tradition by laying all the more emphasis on the past, and secondly in order to avoid the misfortune of being taken for pseudomoderns.’ (Jung 1928/1931, para. 154) The ‘pseudomoderns’, according to Jung, only affect a consciousness of the present, denying the past ‘for the sake of being conscious only of the present’, which is ‘sheer futility’; the truly modern man outgrows ‘the stages of consciousness belonging to the past’ and, having ‘amply fulfilled the duties appointed for him by his world, can achieve full consciousness of the present.’ This requires seeing the present as ‘a process of transition that forms the link between past and future.’ (see Jung 1928/1931, paras. 152-153) Evidently, Jung’s ‘modern man’ is a description of his own stance.
western idea of ‘human dignity’ and of its extension in the correlate idea of ‘human rights’). Furthermore, human being-in-the-world is dependent and expressive of the respective conception of ‘Man’. Therefore, Jung’s ‘psychology with soul’ is, in a deep sense, anthropo-logically biased (see Barreto 2010) – being thus structurally modern. No wonder he has been always interested in ‘the contentment or happiness of people on the whole’ (see Jung, 1963, p. 237).

In this sense, Jung’s catastrophic psychology is simultaneously anti-catastrophic. And this is also a sign of its modernity – in this case, deeply akin to the Romantic moment of modernity. Being fundamentally soul based, it expresses the (then still) historically unresolved particular opposition of soul to itself. ‘Switzerland’, as a momentary and contemporary ‘Noah’s ark’, was not yet dissolved by the power of the negative.

I think this accounts for the ambiguity we can detect in Jung’s conservative project (and also in a vast portion of his followers, of those who waited for the ‘healing grapes’): as the radical transformation going on is not absolute, the sublation of the old forms also could not be complete. And so ‘psychology’ in Jung could not be radically distinct from ‘anthropology’ and from ‘religion’ (inasmuch as the notions of ‘Man’ and ‘God’, structuring the old level of consciousness, presumably were preserved from the destruction/sublation in the spared region of ‘Switzerland’). Were this different, the question ‘Is Analytical Psychology a Religion?’ (see McGuire and Hull 1993, p. 94-98) would have no meaning at all.

At the end of July 1914 I was invited by the British Medical Association to deliver a lecture, ‘On the Importance of the Unconscious in Psychopathology’, at a congress in Aberdeen. I was prepared for something to happen, for such

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12 ‘Sublation’ translates the German Aufhebung. To ‘sublate’ means to overcome and simultaneously preserve on a higher level. One should note that there is a structural change involved in the dialectical sublation.
visions and dreams are fateful. In my state of mind just then, with the fears that were pursuing me, it seemed fateful to me that I should have to talk on the importance of the unconscious at such a time!

On August 1 the world war broke out. Now my task was clear: I had to try to understand what had happened and to what extent my own experience coincided with that of mankind in general. Therefore my first obligation was to probe the depths of my own psyche. I made a beginning by writing down the fantasies which had come to me during my building game. This work took precedence over everything else. (Jung 1963, p. 176)

Until the irruption of the world war, Jung was living the catastrophe on a subjective level (the one in which he thought there was a risk of psychosis). But then the second possibility considered by Jung (war, revolution) became concrete. Although he does not consider the third alternative explicitly, we can say that it was immersed, buried, implicit in the way he tried to understand the inner and outer events. And the risk of a personalistic reduction of the whole experience (‘my tree of life, I thought’) is countered by his considering that his experience coincided ‘with that of mankind in general’. Jung understood there to be an objective level of the process he was living, and saw that the problem was one of the times - in the same way as he realized that his personal identification with the Faustian issue was a misunderstanding, because ‘Goethe’s strange heroic myth was a collective experience.’ (Jung 1963, p. 234)

This psychological constellation was effective in 1913-1914. But the ‘psychic atmosphere’ would change, and the catastrophe was to have a further development.

The Last Vision, 1961

The experience of world war in the XXth century exerted a traumatic and deep impact on European consciousness. After the Second World War, the widespread pessimism that swallowed a considerable portion of western intelligentsia showed its unequivocal signs in Jung’s state of mind. To Esther Harding he wrote: ‘Switzerland has become an island of dreams amidst ruins and putrefaction. Europe is a rotting
Jung’s engagement with the healing of civilization prevailed in the last decades of his life. True to Analytical Psychology’s founding visions and dreams, he tried to find a way to preserve the continuity of culture. He believed that the cure for modern consciousness’ split was buried in the Christian roots of Western civilization, and so he dedicated all his efforts to ‘the psychological reinvigoration of Christianity’ (Shamdasani 2003, p. 350).

However, to Jung the conscious confrontation of ‘the actual existing man’ with ‘his own demons’ seemed ‘to be a losing fight’, at least for the time being (see Shamdasani 2003, p. 349). To such confrontation Analytical Psychology was devised. No wonder, then, that Jung’s pessimism concerning the fate of the world would be extended to his own work. At the end of his life he experienced a strong feeling of failure and wrote to Eugene Rolfe (November 13, 1960):

> I had to understand, that I was unable to make people see, what I am after. I am practically alone... I have failed in my foremost task, to open people’s eyes to the fact, that man has a soul and there is a buried treasure in the field and that our religion and philosophy are in a lamentable state. Why indeed should I continue to exist? (quoted in Shamdasani 2003, p. 351)

If we leave aside the personal inflated identification of Jung with the projected cultural task of psychology, an inflation envisaged by Michael Fordham as a ‘delusion of being a world savior’ (quoted in Shamdasani 2003, p. 351), the failure felt by Jung is of depth psychology itself as a source of collective compensation for ‘what was lacking in the West’ (Shamdasani 2003, p. 351). Shamdasani comments:

13In a letter to countess Elisabeth Klinckowstroem (2 September 1953), Jung says: ‘Eastern philosophy fills a psychic lacuna in us but without answering the problem posed by Christianity. Since I am neither an Indian nor a Chinese, I shall probably have to rest content with my European presuppositions, otherwise I would be in danger of losing my roots for a second time. This is something I would rather not risk, for I know the price one has to pay to restore a continuity that has got lost. But all culture is continuity.” (Jung 1976, p. 121-122)
Judging by these late letters, in Jung’s own estimation, complex psychology – and psychology as a whole – had failed to make sufficient social impact, and hence failed to provide adequate antidotes to the ‘fathers and mothers of all terrors’. (Shamdasani 2003, p. 352)

Jung believed that these specific ‘antidotes’ should be synthesized and distributed by psychology, so to speak (see the ‘healing grapes’ of the 1914 dream). Arguably the most crystal clear testimonies of his concern with the catastrophic possibilities present in the unfolding of contemporary history are his later essays The Undiscovered Self (Present and Future) (Jung 1957) and Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth (Jung 1958). In them one can find his speculations about the ways of protecting and healing modern humankind from the disintegrating forces that would fatefuly change its cultural form. Countering this change was the inflated (and thus unrealistic) task assigned to psychology by Jung.14

The failure of psychology in this specific projected task of rescuing a lost balance in the wider scale of the world is a historical fact. This cultural project became obsolete in face of the structural and radical changes in the world. Depth psychology was devised for a specific modern form of being-in-the-world, which was superseded by another form, not anymore interested in ‘depth’, ‘interiority’ or ‘soul’ (in Jung’s sense). This new situation was painfully experienced by Jung, and it can be read in the impressive final visions which he had in 1961.

According to the testimony of Marie-Louise von Franz, recorded in the documentary Matter of Heart, when she saw Jung last he had a vision (while she was with him), and said: ‘I see enormous stretches devastated, enormous stretches of the earth, but thank God it’s not the whole planet.’ Here the catastrophe is not portrayed

14 It is interesting to see how a similar salvational/renewal project for the culture as a whole was entertained by other thinkers affected by the same anguished and pessimistic mood. It can be found, for instance, in Mircea Eliade, who believed that History of Religions could promote such a reinvigoration of Western civilization. See, for instance, Eliade 1961. The pessimistic mood is most transparent in Eliade’s Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return (Eliade 1954).
anymore as restricted to a particular region of the Earth: it has become planetary, globalized, so to speak. But, just as in the vision of 1913 Switzerland was protected by the mountains from the monstrous flood, here too some portion of the planet is still preserved. Thus, the moment of the soul process displayed in this penultimate vision has still some inner reservation, it is still not absolute negation. This could further an optimistic hope to an ego-psychologically oriented consciousness, a hope related to its self-preservation.

However, immediately before his death Jung had another catastrophic vision whose content was ‘the last fifty years of humanity’. Notes were taken by one of his daughters, with some remarks about the final catastrophe being ahead.15 There is no mention of a remainder preserved from the destruction. (Von Franz’s distressed consternation confirms this viewpoint.) The final catastrophe ahead seems to be absolute. Therefore, this last vision is more radical: it depicts humanity as on the eve of its total extinction. And this means that the soul truth symbolically articulated in the vision (and, according to my working hypothesis, in Jung’s psychology as such) will finally be absolutely realized. More than just a psychic event announcing the literal death of the individual Carl Gustav Jung, the vision anticipates the coming logical death of his psychology, within ‘fifty years’. The soul experience of which it is the ‘more or less successful’ expression comes to its logical conclusion. In Jung’s final vision, soul in advance sings the requiem for Analytical Psychology, which is its own (soul’s) requiem – for, if ‘soul’ is necessarily humankind’s opus, without humankind there is no soul. To put it another way, psychologically speaking the full realization of soul is equivalent to the full realization of humankind as the necessary agent of soul-making.

15 ‘One of his daughters took notes, and after his death gave me, and there is a drawing with a line going up and down, and underneath is the last fifty years of humanity, and some remarks about the final catastrophe being ahead. But I have only those notes.’ (Marie-Louise von Franz, transcribed from the interview in Matter of Heart)
and this is tantamount to the logical death or obsolescence of both ‘soul’ and ‘humankind’. The psychological difference⁶, the true foundation of psychology as the discipline of interiority, is negated – this is the form of soul’s absolute final self-negation.⁷

To avoid any misunderstanding, I must now make a clear and strong remark: when I use the concept of ‘humankind’ in the interpretation of Jung’s catastrophic psychic material, I have in mind only a very restricted, particular sense of this notion, namely the one embodied in the modern logical form of consciousness. It is to this particular sense of ‘humankind’ that Jung’s psychology is addressed. It is this notion that it partly expresses. So, if the ‘last fifty years of humanity’ in Jung’s final vision on his death-bed imagistically displays the extinction of human presence in the world, its radical de-humanization, from the perspective of psychology as a discipline of interiority this should only be interpreted as the overcoming of a specific notion of humanity, the one for which Analytical Psychology was devised. On the other hand, this particular notion has universalized itself empirically (see the movement of ‘globalization’) and logically (it is more complex than any other previous forms of consciousness, and dialectically sublates them), so that its absolute fulfillment affects the whole of humankind both empirically and logically.

⁶ The difference between the notions of ‘soul’ and ‘man’. As soon as the elaboration of the Red Book Jung had already formulated the psychological difference: ‘From this we learn how the spirit of the depths considers the soul: he sees her as a living and self-existing being, and with this he contradicts the spirit of this time for whom the soul is a thing dependent on man’. (Jung 2009, p. 232) Consequently, ‘man’ is not the ontic substrate of ‘soul’.

⁷ ‘Having become logical in its form, the negation always negates what it finds as already given when it begins. In this way, the cultural situation that resulted from previous negations will itself become the object of a new criticism, especially with respect to those remainders of the archaic position, to any traces of anything sacred, that have not yet been worked off. History thus takes on the character of an alchemical process of ever new negations, distillations, sublimations, performed on the present form that the same original prime matter has at each stage of the work done upon it.’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 260) In the 1913 vision, ‘Switzerland’ is such a remainder not still worked off; this final negation will happen only in the last vision.
Von Franz interprets the vision in a prophetic-apocalyptic perspective, as referring to the literal destruction of humankind. In doing so, she could invoke the precedent of Jung himself, who interpreted the vision of destruction he had in 1913 as an announcement of the coming world war. And, as a matter of fact, this hypothesis is not negligible: the possibility of a drastic collapse of humanity cannot be dismissed anymore as being simply a paranoid delusion. But to the methodological and self-definitional stance of psychology as a discipline of interiority, this hypothesis is neither here nor there, for the sole interest of this specific psychological stance is precisely in the *inner psychological articulation of the image, its logical life.*

Nevertheless, one can indicate an empirical correspondent to the soul truth expressed in Jung’s final vision. Here I will focus on a telling moment of von Franz’s interview:

> [Young people seem today to be] giving up and running away into a fantasy world. When you study science fiction, you see there is always the fantasy of escaping to some other planet and beginning anew again, which means give up the battle on this earth. Consider it hopeless and give up. I think one shouldn’t give up. (Marie-Louise von Franz, transcribed from the interview in *Matter of Heart*)

18 ‘I don’t want to speak much about it. (…) One’s whole feeling revolts against this idea. But since I have those notes in the drawer I don’t allow myself to be too optimistic. I think, well, we have always had wars and enormous catastrophes, and I have no more personal fears much about that (…). But the beauty of all life, and to think of the billions and billions and billions of years that took evolution to build up the plants and the animals, and the whole beauty of nature, and that man would go out of sheer shallow foolishness and destroy it all, I mean that all life might go from the planet. And we don’t know - on Mars and Venus there is no life - we don’t know if there is any life experiment elsewhere in the galaxies. And we go and destroy this. I think it’s so abominable. I try to pray that it may not happen - that a miracle happens. (…) Because if you think of Answer to Job, if man would wrestle with God, if man would tell God that He shouldn't do it, if we would reflect more… That's why reflection comes in. Jung never thought that we might do better than just possibly sneak around the corner, with not too big a catastrophe. (…) I think that if not more people try to reflect and take back their projections, and take the opposites within themselves, there will be a total destruction.’ (Marie-Louise von Franz, transcribed from the interview in *Matter of Heart*)

19 In Jung’s last vision, humanity is *sacrificed.* The sacrificial act requires a *complete* destruction of the gift to be sacrificed. ‘The gift always carries with it a personal intention, for the mere giving of it is not a sacrifice. It only becomes a sacrifice if I give up the implied intention of receiving something in return. If it is to be a true sacrifice, the gift must be given as if it were being destroyed. Only then it is possible for the egoistic claim to be given up. (…) Consequently, all absolute giving, a giving which is a total loss from the start, is a self-sacrifice. Ordinary giving for which no return is received is felt as a loss; but a sacrifice is meant to be like a loss, so that one may be sure that the egoistic claim no longer exists. Therefore the gift should be given as if it were being destroyed.’ (Jung 1942/1954, para. 390) ‘Every
Isn’t this precisely what happens in medial modernity, the new form of living in a virtual space? ‘This earth’, or the quality of realness or givenness of ‘this earth’, is replaced by the technologically fabricated conditions of existence. ‘Fantasy’ has prevailed. The active giving up of ‘this earth’ has posited a new form of world. And the new forms of subjectivity emerging from the radically different techno-environment that moulds our contemporary world do not correspond to the analytical (or psychoanalytical) understanding of human being. More than that: we could say that the radical changes in humankind’s being-in-the-world in our post-industrial medial modernity renders any psychology understood as the *opus* of soul logically obsolete. It is not only the end of Analytical Psychology that is anticipated in Jung’s vision. Soul’s requiem (both *genitivus objectivus* and *genitivus subjectivus*) is intended to any psychology *with* soul – there included psychology as the discipline of interiority.

To corroborate this last statement, let’s reflect for a moment on a passage from Wolfgang Giegerich. In his *The Soul’s Logical Life*, Giegerich draws on the Nordic myth of Thor to establish a distinction between two levels of reality – the ordinary, positive-factual one, represented by the Utgard Serpent, and the uncanny, soulful one, represented by the Midgard Serpent. From this distinction follows the possibility of envisaging certain phenomena through a truly psychological perspective, grasping their inner depth, their soul aspect or internal infinity, so that, just as the alchemist’s stone is...
not a stone, in the myth Thor is confronted by a cat that is not a cat, inasmuch as its soul dimension (‘Midgard Serpent’) makes it be more than a cat. Then Giegerich confronts these structural conditions for a psychological approach with the prevalent configuration of today’s world:

In the World Wide Web the notion of an internal infinity does not make sense any more. The ‘more’ of the cat we have been speaking about can in its context only mean jumping by way of hyperlinks to other cats or other topics. To apperceive the cat in such a way that in reality, even if unwittingly, one is dealing with the Midgard Serpent becomes absolutely impossible under these circumstances. But if this is what the psychologist has to be doing, one comes to the realization that the psychologist is inevitably in this day and age a dinosaur, as much as the Midgard Serpent that he is so interested in, had in all likelihood been. (Giegerich 2001, p. 58-59)

This is tantamount to a confession that the ‘rigorous notion of psychology’ aimed at by Giegerich was already obsolete right from the beginning. Its truth is counterfactual, if we take the World Wide Web as paradigmatic of the new truth of the Age of Technique.20 The very notion of soul here adopted (correlative of ‘internal infinity’) does not make sense anymore ‘in this day and age’. This is why, objectively, a psychology with soul can only have the status of a hobby, no matter how, on the subjective level, it may be an extremely serious existential concern, so much so that the psychologist may feel the need to get some soul nourishment time and again. Without such nourishment, the personal life of a psychologist of interiority becomes miserable indeed! Nevertheless, this most personal and truly vital interest and need of the psychologist is, on the logical objective level of Opus Magnum, irrelevant. Psychology as a discipline of interiority, or psychology with soul, does not embody the truth of the age. It is only that: a hobby that one can choose according to one’s inclinations. And if this hobby, on the personal level, is vital, if one could not conceive of one’s own life

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without such hobby, this only means that, as Günther Anders has seen long ago (see Anders, 1956), humankind has itself become antiquated. This, in the last analysis, is what Jung’s final vision presents: the human age is over. We live in the beginnings of the post-human era.  

To conclude, I will now briefly summarize the basis of my argument here. The nihilistic principle at the root of the modern logical form of consciousness finally achieves its full external concrete and historical realization in contemporary nihilism, which is the deep objective truth of western contemporary society in the Age of Technique. The destruction of humankind in Jung’s last vision means very simply that soul negates the last sacred and highest western value – the idea of human dignity, of ‘man as such’ as the ultimate goal of civilization. This value was preserved from destruction (negation) in the vision of 1913, through the rising mountains that protected Switzerland. Logically, the idea of human dignity (transported to the declaration of human rights) requires, as Wolfgang Giegerich has remarked, the intactness of the person, which includes ‘the necessity to protect the intact physical existence (i.e., life) of each empirical person.’ (Giegerich 2008, p. 424) The imaginal way of representing this final and absolute negation is, thus, the absolute destruction of humankind, without remainders. This is what arguably is implied in ‘the last fifty years of mankind’.

The modern form of consciousness is defined and structured by the so called anthropological turn, which means that ‘Man’ (Anthropos) is its radical and ruling idea. In fact, modern consciousness is created by a logical revolution: to the notion of ‘Man’ is attributed the logical function of the Absolute, and thus the notion of ‘God’ (or ‘Being’) is substituted or rendered logically obsolete. Therefore, the total destruction of mankind in Jung’s last vision may be seen as equivalent to the absolute realization of

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21 See Umberto Gallimberti’s description of the ‘new vices’ that allow us to grasp the essence of the new form of being-in-the-world prevalent in medial modernity (Galimberti 2003).
the modern form of consciousness and also of its end. What is already present in its logical constitution from the very beginning is what will be negated by soul, as its last and absolute act of self-negation possible and thinkable within this form of consciousness. ‘Man’ was the initial and the final absolute remaining to be negated in modern history.

This modernity completely realized on the logical level is what can be designated as the post-modern or, using a newly widespread expression, post-human logical status of consciousness. This form can be grasped through the perception that our world is not really, truly organized having as its goal concrete human benefits, but it is the other way around: concrete human beings serve the goals of the great systems of technique and economics. This is the truth of consumerism, capitalism, industry, technology, a truth cunningly disclosed and disguised by advertising, so that the individuals are led to think that they are intended as the goal of the new world, whereas they in truth are only replaceable parts in the process of those great objective systems. Equivalent - and correspondent, on the logical level, - to Wolfgang Giegerich’s statement concerning the conditions of existence in later modernity, that we are again living in the jungle (see Giegerich 2008, p. 435), is the acknowledgement that, in face of the total logical sublatedness of the human position in this same world, we are again living within the logic of human sacrifice (to soul), with the difference that this time the sacrifice is not performed only on an individual victim, and on a special occasion, but absolutely realized all the time and on all of us. It is the perfect sacrifice. This is the soul meaning of ‘the final catastrophe’ seen by Jung on his death-bed, which is quite different from the (possible) positive-factual destruction of the human species, of Homo sapiens. Correlative of the full accomplishment of the modern logical form of consciousness, the catastrophe implies particularly the end of psychology with soul. For
this psychology soul sings its requiem through Jung’s final vision, as a way of saying of its own *opus: Consummatum est.*

References


Barreto's paper, 'Requiem for analytical psychology' utilized Jung's dreams and visions to argue for the obsolescence of Jungian psychology. Its thesis rested upon the theoretical assumptions of Giegerich's psychology as a Discipline of Interiority, which he and Giegerich claim are themselves based in Jung's psychology. Here I argue that that claim is misplaced because it depends upon a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of Jung's psychological project. I shall further argue that Giegerich's arguments for a Jungian basis to his psychology rely up