

Heidegger and Jung: Dwelling Near the Source

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The unconscious wants both: to divide and to unite.
—Jung

Being presences as distinguishing, unifying in separating.
—Heidegger

[50] My concern is not to propose a “synthesis” of Heidegger and Jung but, rather, to suggest that Heidegger is especially helpful in elucidating some of the fundamental concerns of Jung’s work. The task, then, is simply to let Heidegger illuminate Jung—and, perhaps, Jung, Heidegger. Specifically, I would like to draw a parallel between Jung’s understanding of an autonomous “intelligent” unconscious structure which lets opposites “flow together” and Heidegger’s understanding of Being as the primordial *logos* that lets lie and gathers together beings in their correlative opposition.

I

Already in one of his earliest lectures, entitled “Some Thoughts on Psychology,” which he delivered in 1897 while a medical student at Basel University, Jung maintains that the “soul” “extends far beyond our consciousness,” and further suggests that this unconscious dimension of the soul is an “intelligence” which is irreducible to conscious intelligence.¹

Here cannot be the place to trace the development of his theoretical speculation in Jung’s later works. Even so, it is possible to summarize Jung’s mature position on the nature of the unconscious structure and on the nature of the relation of the unconscious to consciousness in these five positions: (a) The unconscious is an intelligent, transpersonal structure; (b) [51] the intelligent unconscious structure allows opposites to “happen” together and, thus, is irreducible to consciousness, which, according to Jung, chiefly “discriminates”; (c) consciousness (the ego) and the unconscious structure, while not reducible one to the other, are nevertheless mutually dependent; (d) even as consciousness (the ego) and the unconscious structure are cor-related, the unconscious maintains a primacy over consciousness; as he often remarks, the unconscious can “fascinate” and “overpower” the ego; (e) even as the unconscious maintains primacy over

consciousness, consciousness remains, according to Jung, the only “medium” by which the unconscious can “realize” itself as “truth.”²

It is clear that from within Heidegger's perspective, we must prescind from any talk of “structures” or of “the ego” as subsisting subject. Even so, there is a parallel between Jung's position on the mutual dependence of the unconscious structure and the ego and Heidegger's understanding of the cor-relation of Being and Dasein. To begin, Jung's understanding of the unconscious as irreducible structure may be related to Heidegger's notion of Being as the presencing or disclosive process, as *physis*, “the process of a-rising, of emerging from the hidden, whereby the hidden is first made to stand.”³ William Richardson, discussing the notion of the unconscious in another context, has put the matter this way:

[Heidegger's reading of Aristotle's *kinesis*] permits us to think of the Other [the unconscious] in the dimension of Being without hypostasizing it, or ontifying it, or absolutizing it in any way, first and foremost because it suggests a way to consider the unconscious as a disclosive process. If the unconscious “is” at all, it is a disclosure to man,⁴

Discussing the Jungian “ego” within the Heideggerian framework is perhaps an even more problematical affair because of Heidegger's seeming abandonment of the very notion of “consciousness” in speaking of the ontological dimension of Dasein. Yet, I do not think Heidegger ever completely broke with the tradition of a philosophy of consciousness; the ontological dimension of Dasein is, indeed, understandable in terms of consciousness, provided, of course, that consciousness *not* be understood as a substance or a subsisting subject. In other words, to re-work Richardson's comment, Heidegger permits us to think of consciousness in the dimension of Being without hypostasizing it, or ontifying it, or absolutizing it in any way. We might say, then, that he was fundamentally concerned with bringing to light a *non-subjective dimension of consciousness*, which may be called, using his terminology, the *ontological dimension of consciousness*.⁵

II

[52] There is a textual basis in Heidegger's work for this notion of an ontological dimension of consciousness. In *Being and Time*, he seemed chiefly concerned with re-thinking the notion of consciousness, not abandoning it. He emphasizes in section 10, for example, that “our analytic raises the ontological question of the Being of the ‘*sum*,’” and in section 64, he states, “for if the Self belongs to the essential attributes of Dasein, while Dasein's ‘Essence’ lies in *existence*, then ‘I’-hood and Selfhood must be conceived *existentially*.”⁶

Perhaps it must be admitted that in the later works he does tend to discuss the ontological dimension of Dasein in ever more creative—or eccentric—ways. Nevertheless, I do not think that he ever completely abandoned the early line of *Being and Time*. Two related texts which have received little careful attention bear this point out. In the brief reflection “The Statement of Protagoras” (1940), Heidegger remarks:

Protagoras's statement says unequivocally that "all" being is related to the human being as ego (I) and that the human being is the measure of the Being of beings. But what is the nature of the relation of beings to the "I," granted that in our retrospective understanding of the saying we are thinking it *in a Greek way* and are not unwittingly inserting conceptions of the human being as "subject" into it?⁷

He proceeds to discuss the human self as a "lingering" (*das Verweilen*) within the realm of what has been unconcealed in Being. "Here," he maintains, "is where the self of the human being is defined as the respective 'I'; namely, by its restriction to the domain of what has been unconcealed."⁸ And he concludes:

By means of this restriction, the human being becomes an ego but not through delimitation of such a kind that the self-representing ego vaunts itself as the mid-point and measure of all that is representable. "I" is the name for *that* human being who joins *himself* to this restriction and thus is *he* himself by himself.⁹

Here, then, Heidegger is willing to speak of the ontological dimension of Dasein as "I" (ego), so long as this "I" is not understood ontically as a "self-representing" subject which is responsible for the proper assembling or constitution of beings. The reflection on "The Statement of Protagoras" was a slightly later re-working of Appendix 8 of the essay "The Age of the World Picture" (1938). In the Appendix, he marks out two distinct ways in which the Protagorean expression "human being as measure" may be understood. "The human being does not," he insists, "from out of some [53] detached I-ness, set forth the measure to which everything, in its Being, must accommodate itself. The human being who possesses the Greeks' fundamental relationship to that which is and to its unconcealment is *metron* in that such a human being accepts restriction to the horizon of unconcealment *that is limited after the manner of the I.*"¹⁰

In other words, Dasein is the "measure" of what is, insofar as Dasein must correspond to Being and make manifest what has been measured out by Being. Insofar as Dasein is the "measure" of what is (and what is not) *in this ontological sense*, it is in some sense *conscious*, for, as he says, Dasein as measure in the true Greek sense is "limited after the manner of the I." And he adds, "the human being is here [in the Greek view of things], accordingly, a particular human being (I and you and he and she). And this *ego* is not supposed to coincide with the *ego cogito* of Descartes? Never."¹¹ Whatever our evaluation of Heidegger's reading of Protagoras's statement, it remains, nevertheless, that these two related texts provide textual basis for maintaining that Heidegger did not abandon the notion of consciousness in speaking of the ontological dimension of Dasein; his concern was only to bring to light a non-subjective dimension of the *ego* which, in these texts, he describes in his unique way as a "lingering" within the realm of unconcealment or as the "measure" which is itself measured out by Being.

III

Reading Heidegger in this way sheds more light on an interesting distinction

made by Jung. In a somewhat obscure reflection on the nature of consciousness in the text *The Psychology of the Transference*, he struggles to bring to light two different dimensions of consciousness.¹² He attempts to distinguish between consciousness as (1) positing itself and (2) re-cognizing itself as a manifestation of the unconscious structure. As he puts it, with the “death” of the conscious conviction that it is the sole master of the house, a new “personality” or consciousness of the mutual dependence of consciousness and the unconscious structure is attained. His description of this deeper dimension of consciousness—the “I” aware of itself more as constituted than as constituting—may be better elucidated by Heidegger’s understanding of the ontological dimension of Dasein.

Finally, then, keeping these considerations in mind, a parallel may be drawn between Jung’s understanding of the mutual dependence of the unconscious structure and the ego and Heidegger’s fundamental position, articulated, for example, in *An Introduction to Metaphysics (IM)*, that “the essence[-ing] of the human being” must be understood “from out of the essence[-ing] of Being.”¹³ Specifically, in *IM* Heidegger argues that: (1) [54] Being and Dasein, while not reducible one to the other, are nevertheless cor-related: “The separation between Being and being-human comes to light in their belonging-together.”¹⁴ (2) Even as Being and Dasein are cor-relative, Being, the Overpowering (*Überwältigende*), maintains a primacy over its There: “The wise one sails into the very middle of the dominant order, tears it open and violently carries Being into a being; yet the Overpowering can never be mastered.”¹⁵ (3) Even as Being holds sway over its There, Being needs Dasein as the “place” of disclosure: “The human being is forced into such a being-there, hurled into the need of Being, because the Overpowering as such, in order to appear in its power, *requires* a place, a scene of disclosure. The essence of being-human opens up to us only when understood through this need compelled by Being itself.”¹⁶

IV

But now to the central point of this essay. Jung maintains that the unconscious is an “intelligent” structure irreducible to consciousness, and it is my suggestion that Heidegger’s understanding of Being as the primordial *logos* is helpful in elucidating Jung’s position.

From within Heidegger’s perspective, the term “intelligent” suggests *ontic* considerations; “intelligence” refers broadly to every which way the “metaphysical” tradition has discussed the *comportment of knower to known (subject to object)*. Such comportment is, for Heidegger, derived from and founded upon the more fundamental openness of Dasein to Being (first granted by Being to Dasein), whereby Dasein thinks (*noein*) Being as the presencing process by which all beings (including Dasein) emerge-into-presence. It is this ontological or foundational thinking that grounds all ontic “intelligent” comportment of knower to known, including all “acts” of intelligence such as the abstraction of essences and judgment. For Heidegger, then, the originary coming-to-pass of thinking about Being is *pre-intelligent*.

This said, it becomes clear that no easy parallel can be made between Heidegger’s understanding of Being as *logos* and Jung’s understanding of the unconscious as “intelligent.” Yet, by more carefully considering what Jung has in mind by speaking of the unconscious as intelligent, a striking parallel can be worked out. In a section entitled

“Schiller’s Ideas on the Type Problem,” from his 1921 work *Psychological Types*, Jung argues that consciousness is not capable of preserving opposites in their original unity, since the “essence of consciousness is discrimination, distinguishing ego from non-ego, subject from object, positive from negative, and so forth.”¹⁷ “We must,” he argues, “appeal to another authority, where the opposites [55] are not yet clearly separated [by conscious reflection], but still preserve their original unity.” This “authority” is the unconscious: “Where purely unconscious instinctive life prevails, there is no [conscious] reflection, no pro et contra, no disunion, nothing but simple happening, . . . where everything that is divided and antagonistic in consciousness flows together into groupings and configurations.”¹⁸

What precisely he means by “discrimination” is not quite clear. Yet, his intention appears to be that the central cognitive act of consciousness is *judgment*. One might recall that for Aristotle, in judgment distinct essences (unities, quiddities) grasped by understanding are combined or separated (Aquinas’s *compositio vel divisio*) in a statement, and the statement is either affirmed or denied; thus, for example, understanding “evenness” and understanding “oddness,” the statement “the even is not the odd” is formed and judged as true.

But Jung further suggests that the conscious rational act of discrimination (judgment) is derivative. At a deeper level of consciousness, we are aware that the unconscious “happens” as opposites. The unconscious allows what is generally separated or opposed in the judgment to “happen” together, and, moreover, this “happening” is a patterning, for as Jung observes, the unconscious appears to pattern opposites into “groupings and configurations.” It is this patterning of opposites that, at least in part, informs Jung’s position that the unconscious is “intelligent.” Put another way, for Jung, the essential *logos* of rational consciousness (judgment) is derived from and founded upon the *logos of the unconscious which lets opposites happen and maintains them in tension*. It is only because the unconscious “happens” as opposites that opposites can be “discriminated” in consciousness (judgment).

V

Thus, it is *this* understanding of “intelligent” which draws Jung’s understanding of the unconscious closer to Heidegger’s understanding of Being as *logos*. In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Heidegger argues that by *logos* the early Greeks named Being as the “primal gathering principle” or “the original unifying unity of what tends apart.”¹⁹ He adds that as “Heraclitus says in Fragment 8: ‘Opposites move back and forth, the one to the other; from out of themselves, they gather themselves.’ The conflict of the opposites is a gathering, rooted in togetherness, it is *logos*.”²⁰ In another passage he observes, “Therefore Being, the *logos*, as gathering and harmony, . . . is unlike the harmony that is mere compromise, destruction of tension, flattening.”²¹ Further, Being as *logos* “does not let what it holds in its power dissolve into an empty freedom from opposition, [56] but by unifying the opposites maintains the full sharpness of their tension.”²²

Thus, for Heidegger, Being, as the primordial *logos*, simultaneously lets lie and gathers together beings in their correlative opposition. Being lets opposites “happen.” Therefore, a distinctively Heideggerian response to the traditional Aristotelian position

might be articulated in this way: In the “not” of the proposition “the even is not the odd” lies concealed “nothing,” no-thing, Being, the *primordial logos that lets the even and the odd come-to-presence as opposites*. Only because Being presences as opposites can opposites be subsequently separated in judgment. The task of consciousness, then, is to think Being, not principally *ontically* (abstraction and judgment) but *ontologically*, as the *logos*, as No-thing, which lays out opposites and gathers them together. As he remarks somewhat playfully in the essay “Nihilism as Determined by the History of Being”: “Ascent versus decline, waxing versus waning, exaltation versus degradation, construction versus destruction, all play their roles as counter-phenomena in the realm of beings. . . . Being applies to the essence of nihilism, since Being itself has brought it to pass in history that there is nothing to Being itself.”²³

In *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, he also argues in another way that Being presences as opposites. He maintains that the traditional Aristotelian understanding of unity as “self-sameness” is derivative of the more primordial understanding of Being as the *Hen* that lets all beings be: “In speaking of Being, the unity must be understood as Parmenides understood the word *Hen*. We know that this unity is never empty indifference; it is not sameness in the sense of mere equivalence. *Unity is the belonging-together of antagonisms. This is original oneness.*”²⁴ In the essay “*Logos* (Heraclitus, B 50),” he elaborates on this theme. He gives a highly novel interpretation of the Greek expression *Hen-Panta*, the One and the Many. “*Hen-Panta* is not what *Logos* pronounces,” he states; “rather, *Hen-Panta* names the way in which *Logos* essentially unfolds.”²⁵ In other words, *Hen-Panta* names Being as the finite, temporalizing, presencing process: *Hen* names the One as Being as the process itself by which all beings are let be, and *Panta* names the ensemble of beings which are let be by the One as the unifying, gathering process. The crucial point is reached, however, when Heidegger further observes that the *Hen* presences as *Panta*, as *opposites*. He remarks in a particularly incisive—and poetic—way that

we can see in *Logos* how the *Hen* essentially occurs as unifying.... The *Hen-Panta* lets lie together before us in one presencing things which are usually separated from, and opposed to, one another, such as day and night, winter and summer, peace and war, waking and sleeping, Dionysus and Hades. Such opposites, borne along the farthest distance between presence and absence, *diapheromenon*, let the Laying that gathers [57] lie before us in its full bearing. Its laying is itself that which carries things along by bearing them out. The *Hen* is itself a carrying out.²⁶

Thus, central to Heidegger’s thinking is the position that Being as the primordial *logos* lets lie and gathers together beings in their respective opposition. It is this position which is helpful in elucidating Jung’s understanding of the unconscious as an “intelligent” structure irreducible to consciousness. In the essay on the *logos* of Heraclitus, Heidegger notes that to lay is also to *gather* (*lesen*) and adds, “The *lesen* better known to us, namely, the *reading* of something written, remains but one sort of gathering, in the sense of bringing-together-into-lying-before, although it is indeed the predominant sort.”²⁷ It is along these lines that we may best understand Jung’s position that the unconscious is “intelligent.” That is, the Jungian unconscious is understandable in terms of *intelligere* (from the Latin *legere*, to read) as the “reading” that is a laying and gathering of beings in their correlative opposition, and not in terms of the *intelligere* of

the metaphysical tradition which is the “reading” into beings, that is, the penetration to the essence of things and the formation of judgments. This metaphysical understanding of *intelligere* is perhaps best articulated by Aquinas, who states in *De Veritate* that “to understand [*intelligere*] means to read what is inside a thing [*intus legere*]. The intellect alone penetrates to the interior and to the essence of a thing.”²⁸

Finally, then, the significance of the fifth and final Jungian position stated at the outset opens up to us. According to Jung, the unconscious as “truth” “realizes” itself through the “medium” of consciousness. In what way it may be said that the unconscious is “truth” now comes into focus: the unconscious discloses itself to consciousness as the process which lets opposites “happen.” It is this “truth” which is “realized” through consciousness. Even so, at this point Jung can guide us no further, but by turning to Heidegger we are able to draw out the full significance of this Jungian position; that is, we are able to make more sense of Jung’s speaking of the unconscious process which lets opposites happen—the “logos” of the unconscious—as the “truth” of the unconscious. Thus, in the essay on the *logos*, Heidegger reflects that Being as the primordial *logos* is also named *aletheia*: “Because the *Logos* lets lie before us what lies before us as such, it discloses what is present in its presencing. But disclosure is *aletheia*. *Aletheia* and *Logos* are the Same. *Legein* lets *aletheia*, unconcealed as such, lie before us.”²⁹

VI

As a psychologist, Jung was chiefly concerned with healing. Yet, his understanding of the essence of *therapeia* differed fundamentally from [58] Freud’s. In Jung’s view, quite apart from the resolution of unconscious personal conflicts, which was Freud’s concern, healing, that is, radical healing, comes with the ego’s re-cognition of the “overpowering,” “numinous” unconscious structure which is also “truth.” Jung often insisted that there was a religious dimension to therapy, but by this he meant principally that therapy was a matter of religion, *re + ligare*, a *re-binding* of consciousness with the unconscious process, a *re-consideration* by consciousness of the “overpowering,” “numinous” unconscious process.³⁰

Although Heidegger’s concern was not precisely psychological, still, his remarks on “healing” are in remarkable harmony with Jung’s. Jung names the unconscious process the “numinous,” and Heidegger, especially in his commentary on Hölderlin’s poetry, meditates upon Being as the Holy. Being as the Holy is the endless presencing process which is awesome, but also wholesome; and Dasein who dwells in nearness to the Holy is made whole, is healed.³¹ With such healing, Heidegger adds, comes joy, yet the joy that he speaks of is not the joy that is opposed to grief; it is the joy that comes in dwelling in nearness to the awesome presencing of opposites—joy and grief, peace and turmoil, life and death—which is *physis*, *logos*, Being. In Heidegger’s words, words that also capture the very essence of Jung’s understanding of the relation of consciousness to the unconscious, “The original essence of joy is the process of becoming at home in nearness to the Source.”³²

NOTES

1. *The Zofingia Lectures*, published as supplementary volume A of the *Collected Works of C. G. Jung* (hereafter CW), trans. Jan van Heurck (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983). The crucial passages are paras. 95, 96, 117, 118.
2. For a very representative passage, see CW 16, para. 502.
3. Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), pp. 14-15; hereafter IM.
4. William J. Richardson, "Psychoanalysis and the Being-Question," in *Interpreting Lacan*, ed. Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan, Vol. 6 in the series *Psychiatry and the Humanities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 147.
5. In his seminal essay "The Place of the Unconscious in Heidegger," William J. Richardson has offered the notion of an "onto-conscious self" which, finally, bears only a superficial resemblance to my suggestion here. Richardson makes the case that the "onto-conscious self" is "not conscious"; whereas I am proposing that we speak precisely of an ontological dimension of *consciousness*. *Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry*, 5 (Fall 1965), pp. 279-280. Reprinted in Keith Hoeller (Ed.), *Heidegger and Psychology* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1993).
6. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson [59] (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 72 and 365 respectively; Heidegger's emphasis.
7. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. IV, *Nihilism*, trans. Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), p. 93; Heidegger's emphasis. Throughout the text, Capuzzi translates *der Mensch* as "man." I have substituted "human being" for "man" in each instance.
8. *Ibid.*; slightly modified.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 94. The German for the last line is "'Ich' ist der Name für *den* Menschen, der sich in diese Beschränkung fügt and so bei sich selbst *er* selbst ist" (Heidegger's emphasis). The sentence virtually defies translation into gender-neutral language which is also good English.
10. Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), pp. 145-146; my emphasis. Lovitt, too, translates *der Mensch* as "man" throughout, and again I have replaced "man" with "human being" in all instances.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
12. CW 16, para. 474.
13. IM, p. 144; slightly modified; see also p. 140.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 141; slightly modified.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 161; slightly modified.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 163; slightly modified; Heidegger's emphasis.
17. CW 6, para. 179.
18. *Ibid.*, paras. 179, 181.
19. IM, pp. 128 and 131 respectively.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
23. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, Vol. IV, *Nihilism*, p. 222.
24. IM, p. 138; my emphasis.
25. Martin Heidegger, "Logos (Heraclitus, Fragment B 50)," in *Early Greek Thinking*, trans. David Farrell Krell and Frank A. Capuzzi (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 70; slightly modified; Heidegger's emphasis.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
28. Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 12.

29. Heidegger, "Logos," pp. 70-71.
30. See, for instance, *CW* 11, paras. 8 and 982.
31. William J. Richardson first highlighted Heidegger's discussion on this point in the article "Phenomenology and Psychoanalysis," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 11, no. 2 (1980), p. 19.
32. Martin Heidegger, "Remembrance of the Poet," in *Existence and Being*, ed. Werner Brock (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1968), p. 261; slightly modified.