

POETICOTHERAPY: FREUD, HEIDEGGER AND LAOTZU

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We are too late for the gods
and too early for Being.
Being's poem, just begun, is man.¹

Martin Heidegger

I Introduction

This paper focuses on one topic, one idea, creative imagination as the primordial structure for poeticotherapy, which addresses the dialectic of Creativity and Reality. Our study begins with Sigmund Freud's metapsychological structure of the human *hsin* (heart-mind). These conceptions are put into dialogue with Martin Heidegger's view, especially on the poetic as truth-revealing and Truth as Revelation of Being. Discussions of poetic imagination include its impact through the work of art as well as looking at the metapsychological structure of the poet as creative artist. Despite their apparent variances in position there is noticeably a sort of uniting bond that exists between Freud and Heidegger: the poetic kind of imagination for the one and the spontaneous, creative kind of poets for the other. The Unknown for Freud and the Open for Heidegger are, nevertheless, merged through the dialectic of Creativity and Reality as Tao in the making. Paradoxically, in Laotzu's work we find a bridge for both Freud and Heidegger, a meeting ground, that provides a kind of proto-structure of thought for this comparative study.

II Freud and the Artist

Turning first to Freud we find that poetic imagination and creativity are usually presented in terms of phantasy, day-dreams and nocturnal dreaming. These phenomena are related to the pleasure-principle. Freud says that poetic imagination is a form of substitution and can be seen in the play of childhood. Phantasy is playfulness. Phantasy is the adult's potential for play. It involves a flight from reality. Freud's distinction of the play of a child and the play of the day-dreaming adult shows that each comes from a different motivational context. Child's play is determined by one wish: to be grown up. By contrast, the adult already knows what is expected of adults and is therefore bound by the reality-principle. Adults must keep some wishes secret.² Adults are often ashamed of many of their wishes and day-dreams. Freud says that these secret wishes stem from the adult's dissatisfaction with the way things really are:

...happy people never make phantasies, only unsatisfied ones. Unsatisfied wishes are the driving power behind phantasies; every separate phantasy contains the fulfilment of a wish, and improves on unsatisfactory reality.

Primary wish fulfillment, says Freud, undergirds psychical activity whether it be play, day-dreaming or nocturnal dreaming. Dissatisfaction with the way things are emanates from the fertile unconscious. Pleasure-oriented imaginings escape from the unconscious. With an analogous method Freud uses poetic works to illustrate this process. Freud relies upon unfolding the poet's insights in terms of psychological complexes to amplify primary connections with the poet, the work of art and the reader. Freud uses a double method by describing an emotional/unconscious identification which happens with poets and the reader's experience of the work. These complexes are revealed in the work of art. Expression of these universally experienced psychological complexes is the work of poetic imagination. One unconscious wish touches another's. The poet reveals to others configurations of deeply dark secret wishes in the work. These contacts of unconscious wishes provide the release of energetic emotional investments on the part of the reader. As this happens, the reader becomes attracted to the poet's sensitive and softened treatment of personally experienced moments of truth. In the work of art the poet becomes the agent for expression of this truth and self-reveals these truths to others in the process of emotional identification. A bond develops and a "release of tensions in our minds"⁴ ensues. According to Freud this happens in one of two ways: First, a poet softens egotistical characteristics in the work of art through some form of disguise, presenting materials in such a manner that they are experienced as aesthetic. Second, a poet presents material in such a way that the audience is able to enjoy personal day-dreams without shame or guilt.

The underlying assumption is that we all resist revealing contents of the unconscious. Secretly one day-dreams. Secretly one wishes for the unthinkable. Through the works of a poet others are helped to participate in personal day-dreaming. Through the process of unconscious wish fulfillment in tragedy or heroics the poet's skill comes to be measured by an ability to slide past repulsion by the unconscious. This allows others to day-dream shameful wishes and think unthinkable thoughts. These processes are universal psychological complexes worked out by the poet. Readers participate in poetic images and are allowed to do, in phantasy, what is secretly wished. Phantasy in the work of art gives respite from the harsh edge of the reality-principle. Flights of fancy often make available to the person the release of tension which holds one fast to what should or must be. The condition known as neurosis awaits any who choose not to return to reality. The poet, in the work of art, provides a compromise by choosing to favor one over the other and to be able to make it work, to create something new through this tension. The neurotic person is unable to utilize this tension

creatively. The poet is saved from neurosis by an ability to give expression to this tension in the work of art. By turning away from reality the poet is also turning toward an unknown, mediating the two. Quite often, a poet's artistic temperament displays possible neurotic tendencies. A poet may be the genius who lives in another world, one which seems too solitary, yet beyond where others dare not enter. Freud's thought leads to alternatives of turning toward as well as turning away but only pursues the one side, turning away from reality in the sense of petty realities. Reality must contain unpleasant or undesirable elements, things which one feels one must face. Through neurotic patterns one keeps trying to escape these facets of reality. According to Freud:

The artist is originally a man who turns from reality because he cannot come to terms with the demand for the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction as it is first made, and who then in fantasy-life allows full play to his erotic and ambitious wishes.

As artists, poets bring back from the world of phantasy new aspects of possible realities, symbolic in nature. Audiences provide justification for that particular creation through personal agreement that the work reflects actual life possibilities. Through the poet's works, says Freud, people feel permitted to become heroes, kings, queens and creators while remaining free from responsibility for altering everyday reality:

But this he can only attain because other men feel the same dissatisfaction as he with the renunciation demanded by reality, and because this dissatisfaction, resulting from the displacement of the pleasure-principle by the reality-principle, is itself a part of reality.

Following out a turning away from reality the poet escapes from yet returns to it with revelations of other possibilities. Freud points out that these possibilities contain very little of the egocentric qualities of personalized day-dreams or unconscious wishes. Many of these images are said to shed light on common structures in psychological conflicts experienced by humankind. Through a poet's flight from reality comes visible structures of other human possibilities. The poet's skill is measured by the ability to catch others unaware.

Freud's statements about human development, vicissitudes of instincts, childhood memories and fixations as certain developmental stages show the importance of time upon the unique development of creative people. For Freud, an experience happens in the present, stirring up childhood memories of the past. This experience takes on the form of wish fulfillment in expression of the poet's work. Freud says that the recent event and the old memorable aspects are discernible. But as this experience

happens latent meaning becomes conscious to that person. Past meanings link up with the meaning of the present and are pursued into one's future. Freud's formulations emphasize the meaning and power of the past to guide, direct and control the present. Our pasts seem to create the personal future of each of us through repetition, funding out of our life experience as matrix.

The poet's work of art stands for the satisfaction of instinctual wish fulfillment. Remaining unfulfilled these wishes, desires and repressed childhood dreamings may become for some a psychological prison of neurosis. Fixations become walls over which the person cannot move and develop. One must transcend from the uniquely personal or particular to the relatively universal. These are the tendencies of each person which the poet must slide by in the work to be successful. According to Freud, "poetic treatment is impossible without softening and disguise." In poetics, personal presence of the poet is absent as structural forms in human conflict stand out focally. Articulating these universal structures is the work of the poet.

Freud distinguishes two different ways of being a poet. First, there is the poet who takes over materials ready made for the work to be created. Second, there is the poet who creates material for the work spontaneously. Although there are exceptions where the poet can be no less creative even working on materials taken over from the already made, like Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Faust* and William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, the generality of Freud's observation would not be invalidated. This distinction is important in our discussion as it points to two different forms of creative work in process. The first poet uses phantasy materials which have come down through time as fairy tale, legend, story and myth. This poet maintains a certain form of independence from the eventual work by utilizing materials already in existence and shaping the work's completion by choice of material.

The second poet who creates material spontaneously is involved in another kind of creative activity. Freud indicates here that something quite different is happening. The process involved in this creative work is distinguished by the uniqueness of the work in expression. Something new is revealed by these poets who venture into the dark unknown of the unconscious, bringing light to shine upon some universal experience of human conflict. In the poet's skillful way of softening and disguise, images are embellished and matured until they have grown into thematic constructs in the work of art. The poet's work reaches others through these *common* unknowns. In the spontaneous creation of work there is by the poet remembrance of a deep and unfathomable space devoid of personalized form. This is imaged by the work of the poet. In Freud's eyes to be humanized implies foregoance of the id and its instinctual satisfaction. The individual ego mediates between the instinct (animal) and abstract (morality) and undergoes the trauma of these transformations. Poets are able to revivify

dynamic structures involved in human development and fixation of potentialities. They do this in their work. From this view, the past is known, the future unknown and the present a possibility for both. Although poets may often lack integration of the known and unknown in personal life, they are able, through their work, to provide this link for the audience. Audiences respond to this work as “I am what the poet sees.” Here in the “I” we find the unity by fusion of Creativity and Reality.

III Freud and Heidegger in Dialogue

A brief summary of Heidegger’s formulations regarding the poet as artist will provide a framework within which to see the dialogue clearly. Heidegger understands the poet and the work of art to be a co-constituted structure of Being. The poet and the work of art are one expression. Heidegger presents two forms of creativity by distinguishing poetic imagination from imagination. Poetic imagination expresses horizons of the unknown revealed as new dimensions of Being. The poetic image is dynamic and expands consciousness by revealing something new. In this revealing there is a conserving. Heidegger’s way of looking at the work of the poet is revelation. Truth is revealed by the poet in the work of art. The work of art is alive in its symbol. Poetic images are charged with power, gathering meaning through time. In expression, comes a stepping down of its moment of origin. Imagination is simply poesy, the words and language of the poet. There is in the creative process this stepping down of the creative urge in expression. Imagination which is contained in the work of art as poesy is not the alive, dynamic poetic work of the image which founded a possibility by lighting up Being:

...“poetizing” designates poetry in the broad sense and “poesy” in the narrow sense...whereas “poetry” should be considered as prescinding from (hence encompassing) both.

Poetic imagination is dynamic. The poetic image that works in the work of art evokes a sense of truth for those who read it. Other people are caught by the image’s effectiveness in lighting up new aspects of living.

For Heidegger poetic imagination is a great downpouring of light. It channels this light. The poet is one who stands in the clearing which is lit by Being. For Heidegger the poet stands facing this Open, this unknown, waiting for that which is to be revealed as Being. Heidegger says that this process of revelation demands a self-sacrifice by the poet. This means that the poet must sacrifice the smallness of the personal self by standing open for truth. This self-abandonment provides an opening up, “In a work of art, (then), comes-to-pass this opening-up, sc. the revealing, sc. the truth, of beings.”

We are now looking at creativity from Heidegger's existential view on human consciousness rather than Freud's conceptualization of being conscious with its attendant metapsychological constructs of the conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious. Heidegger speaks of nothing other than consciousness, nothing above, below or beyond. Freud's conceptual framework including phantasy, wish fulfillment and the unconscious as a major factor in determining experience describes the conflict in becoming conscious. The driving forces to become conscious meets with and conflicts with the forces resisting movement toward becoming conscious. From the standpoint of time, Freud's emphasis is upon the unknown of the past, childhood, primary instinctual dissatisfaction. By contrast, Heidegger's emphasis is upon facing the unknown of a future yet to be given expression. For Freud the unconscious is unknown and uncanny as is the Open for Heidegger. Again the thought parallels, especially, when we ask, from where does the poetic image emerge? Freud differs from Heidegger by looking at the turning away from reality, an escape and flight from the reality-principle. Heidegger moves to the other side by looking at turning toward that unknown in self-abandonment waiting revelation of Being. It should be remembered that we are speaking about the contrast of poetic action. In other dimensions of Freud and Heidegger's thought it appears that these structures would also be similar. For Heidegger, the poetic, the unknown, is a timeless dimension. That timeless dimension is not a structure of human existence. Turning toward the Open means that the poet is also open, receptive, to that which is revealed in the poetic moment further opening up the prospect of new vistas virtually impossible otherwise. Hovering above both Freud and Heidegger, as one perceives, is the spirit of Laotzu the "Old Boy."

While Jose Ortega y Gasset argues for the de-humanization of art,¹⁰ both Freud and Heidegger see creative work as free from personal qualities of the poet. For Freud, the poet disguises the conflict of unconscious forces and gives expression to universal, primary wish fulfillment; eluding and evading the natural repulsion by unconscious forces. For Heidegger, the poet waits patiently, empty of self. The poet becomes a vessel for the light of Being. In this way of thinking₁₁ the poet sacrifices the self to be filled anew, dwelling in the *Inbetweenness*,¹¹ different worlds, the worlds of mortals and the worlds of gods. Although the two theories give different ways of understanding, the thought of Freud and Heidegger share some common characteristics, beginning with the unknown. For Freud the unknown is the unconscious; for Heidegger it is the Open. Both distinguish two forms of creativity each saying that one is dynamic. Each sees that truth is revealed whether something escapes from the unconscious as Freud says or whether it is revealed in the clearing lit by Being as Heidegger describes. Truth is revealed in the work by the poet's moment of facing an unknown. The work of art is not as important as the work of the poetic image it expresses. The poet flees from becoming conscious (Freud) or moves toward expanding

consciousness (Heidegger) through turning away from the known. This way of thinking shows that in these moments something new emerges. For Thomas Langan, “Being comes to be when an existing Da-sein within its transcendental horizon illumines the things that are.”¹²

A poetic image in the work of art expands horizons of the known (conscious) by inclusion of the alien in the familiar. This is, says Heidegger, the work of the poetic image:

This is why poetic images are imaginings in a distinctive sense: not mere fancies and illusions but imaginings that are visible inclusions of the alien in the sight of the familiar.

This means that the truly poetic image is a founding, an originaive kind of work in the language of the poet. Poetic images are primordial structures of human experience. Images which are poetic bring things to awareness. For Heidegger, the poet languages the truth of Being in the work of art. “Only image formed keeps the vision. Yet image formed rests in the poem.”¹⁴ Recalling the previous discussion on Heidegger and Freud, we see that both present distinctions of the poetic work. Freud points out that not all phantasy is qualified to be a work of art. Usually a person is repulsed by another person’s freely described day-dreams. Often this is experienced as objectionable or presents information suggesting that which must remain repressed in the darkness of the unconscious. But the true artfulness of a work done by the poets is measured by the ability to circumvent and disguise this repulsion. Freud distinguishes two kinds of poets, those who take over materials from myth, story and fairytale and those who spontaneously create their own materials. Similarly, Heidegger distinguishes two kinds of imagination. In both Freud’s and Heidegger’s thought the poetic is not mere fancy but describes the process of bringing into light something new. For Freud the poetic image escapes from the unconscious. For Heidegger it is a revelation of Being. Yet in both instances for whichever reason, poetic works light up a void in awareness, they reveal something new. What is revealed for both Freud and Heidegger is truth. As this truth is revealed, horizons of the known retire even further into the beyond of an unknown. In this connection G. Flaubert’s famous dictum on “style [as] by itself an absolute way of perceiving things” (*Correspondences*, II, 86) is found to be all the more true of what we call “the poetic.” For it is precisely “the poetic” that constitutes the metapsychological structure of perception and makes any “style” possible in the proper sense of the term.

Heidegger points out that in a poetic work truth is not only revealed but is at the same time conserved. It is, to be further enriched, appealing mutely to the creative, imaginative leap on the part of the audience. It is conserved in the work of art that appears to be closed; it is enriched in the world of *hsin* that stands open. As Goethe says of his *Faust*, the reader, “will

even find there more than I could give.”¹⁵ Being is gathering up in the poet’s work. The impact of the work of art upon others shows to them the meaning of standing in truth or standing open for truth, letting-things-be-as-they-are. For Heidegger, this is *Dasein’s* essence, revealing things as they are. In Freud’s eyes the work of art is the outcome of a process of necessary human conflict. It is expression of repressed wish fulfillment by the poet. The impact of the poetic work depends upon its ability to light up truth in others, to catch them unaware. The poet’s work must touch the unconscious of others without being repulsed. In Freud’s way of thinking the unconscious finds a means of expression and connection with the unconscious of the audience who reads the word. It is the poet, as artist, who turns away from the harsh edge of the reality-principle and flees from demands to renunciate instinctual desires. By so turning away, the poet opens doors to primary wish fulfillment. Freud points out that it is most often the day-dreaming adult who admires the honesty and playfulness in the child’s world of imagination. The poet is forced to disguise and soften innermost wish fulfillment. Poets day-dream possibilities. Heidegger speaks to this dimension of the not-yet-fulfilled as an advancing truth to which the poet responds, “in his word boldly presents what he has glimpsed, so as to tell in advance of the not-yet-fulfilled.”¹⁶

It is the temporal human aspect of poetic images which provide structures for the layering of universal possibilities in their expression. While from Freud’s view, the work of art comes through the poet as an expression of turning away from reality. This is understood to be the working out of primary instinctual wish fulfillment. Without this expression the person would not be recognized as a poet but would probably be imprisoned by the conflicts in conditions of neurosis. According to Freud, poets are saved from neurosis through expression of themselves in the work of art. Their works reflect universal human conflict. The work of the poetic image reveals secrets long held by humanity, shedding new light upon the darkness of the unknown. According to Heidegger, “The world’s darkening never reaches to the light of Being.”¹⁷

IV Laotzu as a Link for Freud and Heidegger

We now attempt, in this concluding section, to consummate the above “Freud and Heidegger in Dialogue” by reference to Laotzu as a synthesis, a uniting bond, for both. It is William Barrett who is responsible for the spread of Heidegger’s remark on the works by D. T. Suzuki, “If I understand this man correctly, this is what I have been trying to say in all my writings.”¹⁸ But how far this undocumented statement, as it stands, is true is hard to ascertain. On the other hand, Heidegger’s acquaintance with Laotzu’s thought is a case so clear that it can be safely established beyond doubt on the strength of the firsthand witness as available, though apparently less so in the case of Freud. Paul Hsiao (Shih-yi), knew Heidegger for over thirty

years. They collaborated in 1946 on a new translation of the works of Laotzu into the German to the effect that eight chapters had turned up as the end-results. Heidegger was said to be particularly impressed with the opening paragraph of Chapter One, "The Tao that can be verbalized is not the eternal Tao," which led him to the view that the six traditional ways to prove the existence of God in the West are all erroneous. Next, he was very much fascinated by Chapter Fifteen, two lines of which at his request were calligraphed in the archaic-styled Chinese characters to be hung on his study wall as a motto!¹⁹ This whole chapter reads as follows:

Those of Old, well cultivated in Tao,
 Are subtle, mysterious, profound, penetrative-
 integrative, Unfathomable too deep to comprehend. Too deep to
 comprehend, perforce must they be described roughly thus:

cautious as one crossing wintry torrents;
 watchful as one sensitive to dangers all around;
 courteous and gracious as a guest at a reception;
 de-egocentric and self-abandoning as an ice-berg melt;
 natural and genuine as an uncarved block;
 receptive and open as great valleys;
 fused and blended as the muddy mud;
 profound and boundless as oceans;
 spontaneous and flexible as winds and clouds.

How to deal with the Dark properly?
 by light;
 How to clear the Muddled properly?
 by Tranquillity;
 How to restore the Lifeless properly?
 by Activity.
 By Tao the Invisible and Nameless,
 Yet nonetheless the generous hand that lends to all
 The needy and completes them wholly!²⁰

The whole system of Laotzu, as Thomé H. Fang sees it, can be differentiated into four dimensions:²¹ ontological, cosmogenetical, phenomenological and characteriological. The above cited text may well be considered as one of the world's earliest attempts at a phenomenological description of the Taoist Personality, with Tao as concretely exemplified by humankind in the ontic, actual world of existence. Tao, in the words of Karl Jaspers, "remains the Encompassing."²² It is simply that which accounts for the primordial unity of Substance and Function. What impressed Heidegger most, as we noted above, are the two lines adopted as his motto, which suggest ample insight and import for modern psychotherapy:

How to clear the Muddled properly?
 by tranquillity;
 How to restore the Lifeless properly?
 by activity.

This epigraph is epitomized in the dialectical unity of tranquillity and activity, static and dynamic modes in the modulation of life, summed up in the duet²³ of rest and motion, generating thereby the human practical wisdom. We are further delighted to find that, in our foregoing discussion of Freud and Heidegger in dialogue, the key terms of value-orientation, such as “sensitive, subtle, deep, unfathomable, softening” have already been echoed and vividly amplified, by Laotzu’s own words, “cautious and watchful, courteous and gracious, de-egocentric and self-abandoning, natural and genuine, receptive and open, fused and blended, profound and boundless, spontaneous and flexible.” Such utterances of Laotzu may be interpreted as suggesting some guidelines for what our modern psychologists and psychotherapists tend to call “the program of self-actualization” in the process of personality development. It suggests a working pattern for the cultivation of the mature, healthy and wholesome kind of persons for our present day’s society. To put it in a Jaspersian phrase, it represents a Taoist version of “the paradigmatic individuals.”²⁴ They are the persons Taoicized, as well as the Tao personified.

Nevertheless, we are here more concerned with the opening paragraph of the same chapter as it contains a proto-structure in the form of a threefold unity that may best serve to bridge the positions of both Freud and Heidegger. For Laotzu, the truly Taoist person is one who is identified with Tao in the fullest sense of the term: with “subtle” and “mysterious” as referring to *Reality* Itself; “profound” and “penetrative-integrative” to *Creativity* Itself; “Unfathomable, too deep to comprehend” to the *Unknown* Itself. On the basis of such a correlation grounded in the principle of primordial unity, we are enabled to see the “Unknown” for Freud and the “Open” for Heidegger in a new light as interpenetrative, interfusing, mutually implicative and ultimately transcended through the dialectics of Creativity and Reality as Tao in the making. In Tao the Encompassing, they are merged by the primary fusion, the dissolution of the polarity and tension that often exists between the reality-dimension on the one hand and the creativity-dimension on the other, as treated above.

Of philosophers in the modern West, Bertrand Russell may be regarded as one of the pioneers who perceived the psychological and psychotherapeutic imports of the Taoist philosophy. He distinguishes two kinds of impulse in human nature: the creative and the possessive. The former is adopted as the master principle that runs throughout all his writings on social and political problems.²⁵ Similarly, he has cited Laotzu’s powerful expression for an epigraph on the front page of *Roads to Freedom*:

Creation without possession;
 Action without self-assertion;
 Development without domination.²⁶

With these few words, simple and sublime, Laotzu has formulated in epitome a phenomenological description of Tao and its operations to be suggested as an orientation for the wise ways of human life. Russell says:

That one could derive from these words a conception of the ends of life as reflective Chinese see them, and it must be admitted that they are very different from the ends which most white men set before them. Possession, self-assertion, and domination²⁷ are eagerly sought, both nationally and individually.

Even with Carl Rogers, what is of crucial importance in psychotherapy depends on the release of “what is the most basic in the individual,” one’s creativity, manifesting itself in the form of primary consciousness, as Wang Yangming calls it, *liang-chih*:

Basic human nature is to be trusted. ...It’s been very much my experience in therapy that one does not need to supply motivation toward the positive or toward the constructive. That exists in the individual. ...If we can release²⁸ what is most basic in the individual, ...it will be constructive.

How to release “what is most basic” the creative, the constructive, in the person is central to psychotherapy that can be further corroborated by what we choose to term *poeticotherapy*. For it is chiefly with the will to expression, to creation, to meaning and to fulfillment that any form of therapy is concerned. Aristotle in *Poetica* was the first to develop the theme of tragic *catharsis*. In modern time Cassirer reinterpreted it as the “relief of material, emotional burdens,” covering both the tragic and comic poetry;²⁹ as we see it, the “cathartic” can be said of all forms of creation as artistic process, both from creation and appreciation. For example, Lafcadio Hearn, the great exponent of English literature in Japan, told his disciples:

The lover of literature has a medicine for grief that no doctor can furnish; he can always transmute his pain into something precious and lasting. ...Better than any advice about methods or models is, I think, the simple counsel: Whenever you are in trouble and do not know exactly what to do, sit down and write something.³⁰

Anything one writes has something poetical in quality. To poetize is, with Freud, an adventure into the Unknown; while with Heidegger, an

opening onto the Open. In either case it is a pathway that leads to discovery. The poetical is truth-revealing. Truth, for Heidegger, is the self-revealing of Being. Even Cassirer, though diametrically opposed to Heidegger in temperament and position, especially concerning Kant and the problem of metaphysics, would subscribe to the Heideggerian view of poetry and of art in general as revelation, a form of knowledge in itself as well. Cassirer observes:

While he seeks merely to express himself, every great lyricist gives us knowledge of a new feeling for the world. He shows us life and reality in a form in which we feel we have never known it before. A song by Sappho, an ode by Pindar, Dante's *Vita Nuova*, Petrarch's sonnets, Goethe's *Sesenheimer Lieder* and *West-östlicher Divan*, Hölderlin's or Leopardi's poems—they give us more than a series of flitting emotions, which unfold before us only to vanish again and lose themselves in nothingness. All this 'is' and 'endures'; it discloses to us a *knowledge* which cannot be grasped in abstract concepts, which stands before us, nevertheless, as the *revelation* of something new, something never before known or familiar. As its great achievement, we owe to art the fact that in its particulars it allows us to feel and to know what is objective; that it places all its objective criteria before us with a concreteness and individuality which floods them with a life of strength and intensity.

Poetry and art in general, serves as a link that connects the subjective with the objective, the particular with the universal, the part with the whole and enable us:

To see a World in a grain of sand
And a Heaven in a wild flower.

William Blake

The Heideggerian Open and the Freudian Unknown seen as one are to be verbalized by the unverbalizable Tao. A person who is not healthy or happy enough is one who is not whole enough, not poetic, creative, Taoistic enough. In a word, to be is to be poetic! Poeticotherapy provides a certain Holistic or Totalistic view; but it takes the insight of an Abraham Maslow to recognize the rephrase it as the "Taoistic Attitude."³²

Great poetry, we are convinced, remains such an inexhaustible source of inspiration for great philosophers that it sparks and quickens what is "the poetic" within themselves: Wordsworth for Whitehead; Goethe for Cassirer; Hölderlin for Heidegger, to mention just a few. The reason is not far to

seek. “It is typical of the West,” testifies Hermann Keyserling, “that its poets are more profounder than its philosophers.”³³ But it is no less true of the East, too. In China, great philosophers are, as a rule, great poets in disguise; they “are artists before they become thinkers”³⁴ from Fu Hsi and King Wen to Confucius, Laotzu, Chuangtzu and Thomé Fang. In India, great philosophico-religious masterpieces are all enshrouded in great poetry, from the *Vedas* to the *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad-Gita* in Hinduism and from the *Buddhacarita-Kavya-Sutra* to the *Maha-Prajna-Paramita-Sutra* and the *Avatamsaka-Sutra* in Buddhism; there is a poet in the unknown authors of the Hindu classics as well as in the Buddha, Asvaghosa, Nagarjuna and even their Chinese spiritual comrades like Tu Shun and Huei Neng. In Japan, to be sure, there is more philosophy to be found in poets than in conscientious philosophical-workers, such as the lyric-epic poet Murasaki Shikibu, the Haiku poet Boshu and the great poetic Zen exponent D.T. Suzuki. In the West, for Santayana, great religion is “a whole world of poetry descending among men”; for Whitehead, “philosophy is akin to poetry”; for Cassirer, “history as well as poetry is an organon of our self-knowledge [and] art can embrace and pervade the whole sphere of human experience”; for Heidegger, “the thinker [is also] a poet.”³⁵ The uniting bond in all these cases, East and West, is “the poetic,” *par excellence*, at work.

To conclude, may we provide a few lines from Su Tung-po (1036-1101), an eminent poet of 12th century China and a rare combination of three types of philosophical wisdom, Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist:

Oh, my great mountain Lu!
Thy true face still remains unknown to me.
T's simply because, it is true,
Here I am, right within thee!

The Mountain Itself echoes:

Oh, my great poet Su!
My true face still remains unknown to thee.
T's simply because, it is true,
Here I am, right within thee!

Notes

- 1) *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper and Row Publishing Inc., 1977), p. 37.
- 2) Sigmund Freud (1908), “The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming”, *Character and Culture*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1972), pp. 34-43.

- 3) *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 4) *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- 5) Sigmund Freud (1911), "Formulations Regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning", *A General Selection from the Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. John Rickman (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 44.
- 6) *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- 7) Sigmund Freud (1928), "Dostoevsky and Parricide", *Character and Culture*, ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 286.
- 8) William Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought*, second edition (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), p. 410, fn., 24.
- 9) *Ibid.*, p. 405.
- 10) Cf. Jose Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948).
- 11) Sunnie D. Kidd and James W. Kidd, *Inbetweenness: An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Unpublished manuscript, 1980).
- 12) Thomas Langan, *The Meaning of Heidegger: A Critical Study of an Existentialist Phenomenology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 117.
- 13) Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row Publishing Inc., 1971), p. 226.
- 14) *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings, op. cit.*, p. 143.
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- 19) Cf. Paul Shih-Yi Hsiao, "Meeting with Heidegger", *Universitas: Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture*, III, no. 9 (September 1976), pp. 4-8.
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- 21) Cf. Thomé H. Fang, *Creativity in Man and Nature, A Collection of Philosophical Essays* (Taipei: The Linking Publishing Co., Ltd., 1980), pp. 40-43.
- 22) Cf. Karl Jaspers, *Anaximander, Heraclitus, Parmenides, Plotinus, Laotzu, Nagarjuna, The Great Philosophers*, II, trans. Ralph Manheim, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: A Harvest Book, 1966), p. 90.
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