

## On the Subject of *Da-sein's* Psyche

As a preliminary comment it is worth noting that this title, as it stands, “On the Subject of *Da-sein's* Psyche” would make little sense for a Heideggerian, initially because the title suggests that *Da-sein* has a psyche, in the sense that one would be going along with the division between psyche and soma, or some version of mental functioning in distinction to bodily functioning. *Dasein* is neither. And secondly because the title suggests that *Da-sein's* psyche can be the subject of some statement, concern or investigation, in the sense that we have a subject and predicate relation. Each of these would constitute an errancy derived from the legacy of our modernity in the Cartesian cogito. And yet, I would contend that the title is not so odd for a Lacanian who has traced Lacan's occasional references to Heidegger, and his supposed stated fidelity to what Heidegger has spoken. My aim in this paper is to engage with this relation between Heidegger and Lacan and attempt to think some implications for how psychoanalysis is understood. But first some caveats.

No-one less than Alain Badiou has provided the warning:

It is always perilous to approach Lacan from a philosophical point of view. For he is an anti-philosopher, and no-one is entitled to take this designation lightly. Considering him in relation to the Pre-Socratics is a still more risky undertaking. References to these thinkers in Lacan's work are rare, scattered, and above all mediated by something other than themselves. There is, moreover, the risk of losing one's thought in a latent confrontation between Lacan and Heidegger, which has all the attraction of a rhetorical impasse.

Needless to say, this warning from Badiou serves as an introduction to his text “Lacan and the Pre-Socratics” in which he does approach Lacan from the perils of a philosophical view-point and does run up that cul-de-sac of Heidegger *avec* Lacan. I am mentioning Badiou here as a reminder that my aim is not to see how badly Lacan read Heidegger, nor how closed off Heidegger was to psychoanalysis, nor to discover that at the end of the day they were both talking about the same things. Rather, I want to explore what I see to be most decisive for each thinker, and this will have a pivotal focus on their understanding of logos, language as it is thought through in Heidegger's 1951 text on Heraclitus, the one Lacan translated in 1956. It is interesting that Badiou characterised Lacan as an anti-philosopher, a designation not to be taken lightly. But what would this designation, “anti-philosopher,” mean? How would we come to understand it? Even without clearly knowing what philosophy is, or a philosopher, we would already have a sense that an anti-philosopher, as in an anti-X would be entirely designated by philosophy or by X, would be within the orbit or frameworks of philosophy or X such that a designation of opposition would already be defined by the border regions of whatever was being opposed. Is this what Badiou was intimating with respect to Lacan, that there is something oppositional in Lacan's thinking that does not allow him to break from philosophy?

And how goes it with Heidegger on the question of philosophy and being a philosopher? We understand that for Heidegger the pre-Socratics thought *Philia* and *Sophia* in a glimpse of the openness to being, to the being of beings, and hence never

thought them in the belonging together that was subsequently thought by Plato and Aristotle, for whom *Philia* and *Sophia* were already closed to the question of being, while philosophy asked the question of the truth of beings as beings, truth as correctness, truth as adequation, found in representation of an object for a subject. With the inauguration of metaphysics and the long errancy of philosophy, Heidegger will come to question the designation “philosopher” for himself and adopt the designation “thinker” for the task of thinking. Perhaps we would not call him an anti-philosopher, though his relation to the tradition was clearly a confrontation with respect to the history of metaphysics, and particularly the question of truth as the truth of beings as beings and, after Descartes, the oblivion of being, as the forgetting of the ground of metaphysics. So, perhaps from one vantage point we are able to open a region for thinking Heidegger along with Lacan that does not commence with the false register of an insurmountable disciplinary difference between philosophy and psychoanalysis, particularly as both thinkers were radical precisely in the fundamental questioning of their fields and the disciplinary borders they undid.

Let’s see what is going on with Lacan. Clearly in the early 1950s he is reading something of Heidegger. Commentators have noted the influence in his “Discourse at Rome” in 1953, “The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis.” It is this paper that consolidates Lacan’s understanding of the unconscious as the discourse of the Other, but crucially Lacan arrives at this through an interrogation of the historicising of the subject who knows. Muller and Richardson, in *Lacan and Language* suggest:

What is clear for Lacan is that the “subjectivity” of the subject includes more than what has been experienced “subjectively,” i.e., consciously by him. That is why the “truth of his history is not all contained in his script.” There is a larger text that supports his discourse, although he himself may know “only his own lines.” The larger text Lacan calls “the discourse of the Other,” “the unconscious” in its strictest sense. It is to this larger text, not speech but language, that he now turns.

I want to emphasise that the question of language for Lacan cannot be separated from a question of temporality as a radical historicising of the subject. There will ensue for Lacan two recourses to settle this primordial relation. Unfortunately these two recourses, taken up intensely are not reconcilable. One will be the positivism of structural anthropology that developed from work done in linguistics, particularly Jakobson, and culminating in Levi Strauss’s own pronouncements on the unconscious that is structured by language; the other will be the phenomenological hermeneutics of Heidegger. Each presents a radical understanding of the temporality of the existent, and construes a fundamental orientation to the question of language outside of any instrumental understanding of human being as a speaking animal. The “It speaks” of Lacan’s structural linguistics will be said to coincide with the “Speech speaks” of Heidegger. Yet, they fundamentally differ in that structural anthropology, and Lacan’s pursuits from within its framing, approaches the question of beings from the beingness of the beings that are; it remains closed to what is decisive for Heidegger: human being as that being in the world who is radically open to being. *Dasein* is openness to being. In as much as Lacan approaches Heidegger, he will in my reckoning not accept this essential scope of Heidegger’s project, and will remain within a questioning of beings as beings. This is hardly a failing on Lacan’s part in the sense that Heidegger is little concerned with correct readings of the Heideggerian corpus. Rather he is concerned

with what horizons of disclosure happen and what paths of thinking happen. However, we may emphasise that the radicality of structuralism's emphasis on synchrony over diachrony opens the question of the historicising of the subject to a radical displacement such that Lacan may pose that the unconscious is structured like a language, meaning that the unconscious is not considered as a repository of content over time from infantile to adult repressions. Freud's fundamental diachrony of the historical subject is displaced by the synchronic structure of the law of the Symbolic as the Discourse of the Other.

This is hardly reconcilable to Heidegger's ecstatic temporality as the primordial structure to Dasein's being in the world. And yet it is to Heidegger's *Being and Time* that Lacan turned in his 1953 text, to emphasise, contra Freud, an understanding of the subject's finitude via Heidegger's being-for-death. Contra Freud in the sense that death in this instance runs against the grain of Freud's understanding of the death instinct. There is an interesting complexity here because what is fundamentally at stake, again, is temporality understood as repetition. Lacan suggests in a sense that the death instinct was Freud's thought of thoughts: "the key to this mystery [of the lack of mastery of the analyst in negative therapeutic reaction], it is said, is the agency of a primordial masochism - in other words, in the pure manifestation of that death instinct whose enigma Freud propounded for us at the height of his experience." Freud is influenced by his reading of the pre-Socratic Empedocles.

As with Heraclitus and Parmenides, we note that for Empedocles physis and being are the same (which should not be thought of as being identical). Freud understands this metaphysically as there being no differentiation between mind and nature. Where Heraclitus offers *Philia*, *physis* and *polemos* as primordial names for being, Empedocles will name *Philia* and *neikos*, where *neikos* is understood as discord. Freud will locate his dual principles of *Eros* and *Thanatos*, though the openness of these names as the naming of being, rather than the beingness of beings that are will be closed to him. Lacan's reading of Heidegger's *Logos* as a meditation on the Heraclitan glimpse of being would have opened his own reading of Freud on Empedocles as a levelling off of thinking with respect to a question of being. And it would only have been reinforced by the fundamental ontology at stake in Heidegger's understanding of being-for-death, which has been all too easily misread in commentaries as some kind of preoccupation of the Heideggerian "subject" with her own demise. If Heidegger was discussing our ontical engagements with the world by this term, that would then surely be what he had meant. But as an ontological concern, it concerns the being of human being disclosed in the fundamental structure of our human being in the world.

Crucial to that structure is our finitude. But such a notion of finitude runs counter to our metaphysical tradition which is also an onto-theology that will pose infinity, the infinite, synonymous with the highest being, in the belonging of the primordial essence of human being to the infinity of the highest being. The radicality of Heidegger in part is that the being of human being is finite, being as such is finite. If Dasein is primordially openness to being as the potential for Dasein to be, in what way is Dasein finite? If this openness to being is the futural possibility to be, in what way can we say for Dasein there is the totality of being in the world? In the face of this open possibility there is a certainty for Dasein that is not ontical but ontological. This certainty is death. It is Dasein's own-most possibility, its authentic possibility in the sense that no other Dasein can go along with my death in the sense of experiencing it.

Yet crucial for Heidegger, Dasein does not essentially exist as a being who experiences its existence as a series of now moments from its birth up to its death. Although in our average everydayness, and with, for example the counting of our birthdays, we go along with our historicity as just such a sequence. Yet, essentially our temporality is ecstatic, which means our futural possibility as openness to being is understood within an horizon of disclosure opened by our thrownness as our having been. Our finitude arrives in the sense of a pastness that is futural. The three ecstases of temporality, pastness, futurity and presentness do not exist in a sequence but rather are equiprimordial as the temporality of the being of our being in the world. Muller & Richardson suggest in their reading of the 1953 text:

Lacan's transition to the Heideggerian conception [of death] is by way of the notion of historicity he comes to when speaking of the repetition compulsion. Freud suggests that this compulsion is best dealt with by searching out the prototypic experience that the subject compulsively repeats through careful analysis of the transference. ... This process Lacan describes by a non-Freudian formula - "the historicizing temporality of the experience of transference" - adding immediately that in similar fashion "the death instinct essentially express[es] the limit of the historical function of the subject. This limit is death."

Lacan suggests: "this limit is at every instant present in what history possesses as achieved. This limit represents the past in its real form, that is to say, ... the past which reveals itself reversed in repetition." He footnotes this phrase, "reversed in repetition" indicating that he has inserted this wording in the place of what he previously phrased as "always present in the eternal return," suggesting a repetition of Nietzsche's ecstatic temporality via Heidegger. The past reveals itself "reversed in repetition" in the sense that for Heidegger repetition is Dasein's "explicit handing over to itself" of its past, a "return upon possibilities of Dasein" as it has been. Dasein's future advances through its past. (Muller & Richardson 92). However, Lacan becomes at this moment decidedly Hegelian. We need to remember a fundamental task for psychoanalysis outlined by Lacan: "The undertaking of the psychoanalyst acts in our time as a mediator between the man of care [i.e., Heidegger's Dasein] and the subject of absolute knowledge [i.e., Hegelian dialectics]." If I intimated the difficulties we encounter in Lacan's two legacies of temporality and language in structuralism and phenomenology, negotiating Hegel and Heidegger makes the former the simpler moment of compromise.

The "repetition" Lacan will allude to will be that of Freud's *fort/da*: a repetition opening not to a primal masochism but to a mastery of absence, the experience of finitude in negation of the (m)other. Logos, "the concrete discourse of the environment" in an originary experience of limit, finitude, "lack of being" constitutes within a symbolic domain the otherness of the mother not as need but as desire. As Lacan emphasises: "born into language" "desire becomes human." Lacan's recourse here is strictly to an Hegelian formulation of the work of negativity, logos and the place of the other. Desire for the mother becomes a desire to be desired by her in turn; to be the object of the mother's desire. This may suggest that Lacan has recourse to read Heidegger's Dasein as openness to being via a particularly Hegelian negativity, such that an openness to being will be construed in Dasein's being-for-death as a fundamental deficit or primordial lack of being, a yet-to-be, for which, in Hegelian fashion, the locus of the Other will constitute the place of identity, where for Lacan the Discourse of the

Other is the enunciation of the unconscious structured by the signifier of the lack constituting the Other - the symbolic domain as becoming present of the absence of the thing. Such may well have been the case had Heidegger been alluding to beings in the world rather than the being of beings when he discussed logos. But then, he would no longer have been Heidegger. It is true that Heidegger continually stresses that Dasein is futural, is its own possibility and so in this sense is yet to be. But we need to have a sense of what Heidegger means by being.

We can get a good sense from the series of four texts produced by Heidegger in the late 1940s collected under the title "Early Greek Thinking." His text "Logos" is included with these. Where the tradition of philosophy has approached the fragments of Anaximander, Heraclitus and Parmenides as proto-philosophical thinking, crude in a positive sense of unrefined and that which was improved upon by the Platonic-Aristotelian texts, Heidegger has quite the reverse thinking. For Heidegger, the earliest sayings of the meaning of being, as the originary source of our tradition are the most vibrant and clearest. The later tradition of metaphysics construes misunderstandings of the saying of being, a covering over and forgetting of being, culminating in an oblivion of being. Anaximander is the earliest. His saying is the sharpest: being is the jointure, the joining or bringing together of nothing to nothing by way of something: "Whatever lingers awhile comes to presence from the jointure between approach and withdrawal. It comes to presence in the "between" of a twofold absence." Crucially, for the pre-Socratics there is no distinction between being and becoming and hence Heidegger can find no antagonism between Parmenides and Heraclitus that the tradition up to Nietzsche (and including Lacan) found. Being is the presencing of what comes to presence in the temporality of its presencing: what comes to presence passes away. Being, in its many names says this primordial jointure of separation from and to the nothing. For Heraclitus, logos, physis, philia and polemos are all names for this primordial jointure.

For the tradition founded by the pre-Socratics, truth had no relation to what metaphysics will come to understand by this word in terms of correctness or adequation. Primordially there is lethe, hiddenness, concealedness, what stays in its hiding. Truth is understood in the privation of this hiddenness, in a-lethia, unconcealing of what is, in its showing. The beings that are may be understood in what brings them to unconcealedness. It is being that shows them. There is no anthropocentrism here, no subject who knows, no world of things. Rather, human beings are those beings in the world who can be open to being as such, i.e., to the being of beings, not willing it, not reasoning it, not having an absolute concept of it, but being an openness to it. This is Dasein, and only that. Heidegger emphasises in *Logos* that the Greek root means literally to lay before, or to let-lie-together. More originary than any saying or talking, logos was that which alluded to the bringing of that which appears and comes forward in its lying before us: "Saying is the letting-lie-together-before which gathers and is gathered." Crucially, logos, this saying is not a speaking in the sense of expression and signification. It is a laying and gathering such that something comes to appearance. It names being as the joining-separation of concealedness, what fundamentally withdraws, and unhiddenness, beings that are in the temporality of their being. "This inclination by which rising and self-concealing lean towards each other" is for Heraclitus a primordial understanding of philia; while the essential reciprocity of philia so understood and physis, the beings that are, constitutes the full essence of being.

We can fruitfully turn to Lacan's understanding of the structure of the unconscious as Discourse of the Other in order to get a sense of the extent to which he understands and moves with some of Heidegger's thinking here, and the extent to which he closes it off or is closed off to it. What is initially crucial for me is that the Freudian unconscious, which Lacan will modify, is fundamentally self-concealing in its bringing to unhiddenness what is. Freud glimpses in a fundamental way something essential to Heidegger's questioning of being. Lacan recognises in his own horizon of disclosure the structure of this primordial relation of human beings to their world as a self-withdrawing that discloses in the structuration of language as a symbolic dimension; not itself a speaking, but "within" the unconscious a saying as a laying before. The veiled phallus is essential to this thinking in its imaginary and symbolic dimensions as the nexus of logos as a laying before and gathering that is yet prior to a saying as a speaking. Indeed fundamental to Lacan, the locus of one does not coincide with the other. Its structural loci will crucially engage *philia* and *polemos*, if not exactly using those terms, and the open possibility of the existent to be: To the question "What am 'I'?" Lacan suggests:

"I" am in the place from which a voice is heard clamouring "the universe is a deficit in the purity of Non-Being." And not without reason, for by protecting itself this place makes Being itself languish. This place is called *Jouissance*, and it is the absence of this that makes the universe vain.

But within the Lacanian formulation what is genuinely lacking, a deficit, is the Other we would have come to recognise in Hegelian dialectics as the place from which identity takes place. The Other is primordially lacking in the sense that there is no Other of the Other. With unconscious enunciation by the subject of the unconscious, the signifier is the signifier of a lack in the Other. This Other is the Other of the demand for love, whose deficit is the fault the "I" assumes as the speaking being. This will be by way of castration. How so? We understand that the speaking "I" takes its place in the self-referential signifying chain. But from the locus of the signifier of the lack in the Other: "the signifier for which all the other signifiers represent the subject: that is to say, in the absence of this signifier, all the other signifiers represent nothing." This signifier is inexpressible or unthinkable from the level of the conscious Cartesian *cogito*. Its withdrawal is the clamour of Being in the locus of *jouissance*. Submitting to the law of the signifier, the speaking subject accepts the consequences of her finitude in the limits imposed upon *jouissance*. Importantly, Lacan will move away from a Heideggerian understanding of Being when he comes to recognise the possibility that Being may become thought of as an Other to the Other, and hence a metalanguage, as with the "language of Being."

But we can see that Lacan limits his engagement with Heidegger to something like an understanding of being derived from metaphysics with its disjuncture between being and becoming. This will be crucial. Hence, for example Lacan will often speak of the Other in terms of Being (Richardson, *Psychiatry & the Humanities*, p.140): "The force of the unconscious comes from the truth and in the dimension of Being." But also:

The fundamental relation of man to this symbolic order is quite precisely that which founds the symbolic order itself - the relation of non-Being to Being - The end of the

symbolic process is that non-Being comes to be and this is because it has come into words.

But we recognise two crucial divergences from Heidegger in this thinking. For Heidegger, Being is essentially the inclining belonging of concealing and unconcealing in the while of a coming to presence and passing away. In this sense, and primordially being is non-being in the being/becoming that is the laying before of Logos. Secondly, for Heidegger the saying that is Logos is more primordial than speaking. Indeed, he emphasises that for the Greeks, what we term language as speaking had the word *glossa* (tongue) and that while Heraclitus glimpsed Logos as being, for the tradition this was closed off with respect to language. There is no Language of Being for Heidegger, while he does suggest that language is the house of being, by which he means the sheltering and preserving of what comes to presence in the temporality of its being.

I want to conclude by stressing a couple of things. I am not seeking to provide a corrective to Lacan's reading of Heidegger, truly a dead-end in thinking. Rather, I am suggesting that there is something essential that belongs to the thinking of Freud and Heidegger that is yet to be engaged with, and that Lacan provides a significant vantage for approaching that belonging. It would engage in a thinking of Freud's great disclosure of the unconscious as an inclination that leans to Heidegger's withdrawal of being in the disclosure of beings. Lacan clearly engages the question of being yet from the vantage point of a metaphysical framework of the question of being. A task would be to ask in what ways we might come to understand Lacanian analysis as a path of thinking that opens to an understanding of being-with that may yet have been closed to Heidegger in the sense that Lacan does in an original way ask the question of being and otherness from the perspective of the withdrawal of the speaking I, as a locus or place of the deficit of non-being. This means asking how we might approach Lacanian thinking from the vantage point of an outside to philosophy precisely in the sense that Heidegger poses it as a task for thinking, or perhaps as an orientation that would dispel a closure that may be invoked by Badiou in noting the anti-philosophical stand of Lacan.