

# Medard Boss's Dialogue with Heidegger, Freud, Sartre, Buddha, and Jung: On Being Authentic

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*Editor's Note:* We are happy to welcome back our dialoguers from the 2011 edition of the *Hakomi Forum* in which their initial dialog was "On Being Human," first presented as a conversation hour at the 112<sup>th</sup> annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Honolulu, Hawaii, in August 2004. Here, they continue the conversation with "On Being Authentic." To repeat what I wrote in 2011, their dialogues are "a creative and rich way the authors, all serious clinicians, model the importance of psychotherapists reflecting on the philosophical principles that inform their work. Too often these principles operate at unconscious and uncritical levels. The exchange is an invitation for others to 'go and do likewise.' Our principles in Hakomi Therapy are rooted in the sciences of complex living systems, Eastern wisdom traditions, and the psychodynamic, humanistic, transpersonal, and somatic influences of the post-1960s. The *Forum* invites articles that further explore the underlying assumptions of our work." Correspondence regarding this article can be directed to Steven Bindeman via email at bindeman1@verizon.net.

**Steven Bindeman, Ph.D.** was professor of philosophy and department chairperson at Strayer University, Arlington, VA campus until his retirement at the end of 2010. His teaching experience reflects not only his interest in philosophy and psychology, but in film and media studies, science fiction, world music, and comparative religion. He was elected into *Who's Who in American Colleges and Universities*, and has published articles on Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Levinas, the creative process, postmodernism, and numerous book reviews. His book, *Heidegger and Wittgenstein: The Poetics of Silence* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1981) is currently listed as a recommended text under the "Heidegger" listing in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He has recently completed a book called *The Anti-philosophers*.

**Belinda Siew Luan Khong LLB, Ph.D.** is a practicing psychologist and lecturer at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. She counsels individuals and families on relationship issues, depression, stress management, and personal growth. She is a member of the editorial boards of *The Humanistic Psychologist*, and *Mindfulness*. Her primary interests include integrating Western psychology and Eastern philosophies—especially Existential therapy, Heidegger's philosophy, and Buddhism—in counseling and research. She has published articles and book chapters in these areas. She was guest editor of a special issue of *The Humanistic Psychologist* on mindfulness in psychology (2009), and co-editor of another special issue: "Bringing Heidegger Home: A Journey Through the Lived Worlds of Psychologists and Philosophers" (2013). Belinda conducts workshops on the integration of meditation, mindfulness, and psychotherapy in Australia and overseas.

**Scott D. Churchill, Ph.D.** is currently professor of psychology and human sciences at the University of Dallas, where he has taught for over three decades and served as founding director of its masters programs. A fellow of the American Psychological Association, Dr. Churchill is an elected member of its council of representatives, liaison to its science and education directorates, editor-in-chief of its division journal, *The Humanistic Psychologist*, and was recently awarded the Mike Arons and E. Mark Stern award for outstanding lifetime service to the Society for Humanistic Psychology. His professional focus is on the development of phenomenological and hermeneutic methodologies; he teaches classes in a wide range of psychological topics, from primate studies to projective techniques, Daseinsanalysis, depth psychology, and cinema studies. Scott has been providing reviews of film and the performing arts on local television in Dallas for thirty years, and was recently named a fellow of the Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture.

**Edwin L. Hersch, M.D.** is a psychiatrist with a psychotherapy practice in Toronto, Canada. He studied philosophy and psychology, phenomenological psychology, medicine, and psychiatry at the University of Toronto, Duquesne University, and the University of California, San Francisco. He has published several articles in professional journals, has a chapter in Phillips and Morley's 2003 book, *Imagination and Its Pathologies*, and has presented numerous papers at various professional meetings, addressing topics such as the philosophical underpinnings of psychological theories. His major work is *From Philosophy to Psychotherapy: A Phenomenological Model for Psychology, Psychiatry, and Psychoanalysis*, published by the University of Toronto Press in 2003. He has conducted extensive research into the interface areas among the fields of philosophy, psychology, and psychiatry as an independent scholar and has practiced clinically in both psychology and psychiatry for more than twenty years.

**Doris McIlwain, Ph.D.** is a personality psychologist teaching two, third-year courses in personality and philosophy of psychoanalysis at Macquarie University. She has three broad areas of research expertise: emotion, movement, and memory. She is currently conducting research on ineffective embodiment in long-term yoga practitioners, therapists, actors, and elite sports people. She researches the implications of the depth and range of emotional experience for rumination and reflection, empathy, moral development, and integrity of self, using as case studies affective profiles of Machiavellian, psychopathic and narcissistic personality types. She was part of the Sydney Silvan Tomkins research group into Tomkin's affect theory, and retains a keen interest in his work. She is published in psychology, philosophy, and humanities journals and has a book on charismatic leader-follower relations. She has a small private practice, and loves yoga, poetry and ceramics.

**Louise K. W. Sundararajan, Ph.D., Ed.D.** received her doctorate in the history of religions from Harvard University, and her Ed.D. in counseling psychology from Boston University. She is a member of the International Society for Research on Emotions and publishes regularly on that topic. She is a past president of the APA's Division 32 (humanistic psychology) as well as the International Society for the Study of Human Ideas on Ultimate Reality and Meaning. She is a fellow of APA, and chair of the Task Force on Indigenous Psychology.

### *Abstract*

The year is 1991 and the place is somewhere between the six realms of existence and Heaven. In 1990, when Medard Boss, the Swiss psychiatrist and daseinsanalyst passed away, he initiated a dialogue with the four most influential figures of his life: Sigmund Freud, the Buddha, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Martin Heidegger, to explore the question of what it means to be human. This was a theme that interested him throughout his life, and continues to puzzle him in death. He has invited another colleague residing in this ethereal place, Carl Jung, to join the others in a dialogue to explore the theme: on being authentic.

Louise Sundararajan—Chair/ "Medard Boss"  
Steven Bindeman—"Martin Heidegger"  
Belinda Siew Luan Khong—"Buddha"  
Scott Churchill—"Sigmund Freud"  
Edwin Hersch—"Jean-Paul Sartre"  
Doris McIlwain—"Carl Jung"

*Boss:* Welcome. It is good to meet with all of you again and engage in another dialogue. Since, in the realms of Heaven there is a confluence between the different streams of time, this means that the notions of past, present, and future all come together within the confines of a single moment. However, for many of those here, it was a full year ago that the spirits of the Buddha, Freud, Heidegger, and Sartre were asked to come together and pay their respects

to each other and to me and talk about the nature of being human. During the course of our time together we discussed our different approaches to understanding and overcoming human suffering, and focused on our different views concerning the self, nothingness, discipleship, and the relationship between theory and practice. This time, an additional spirit has come to join us, namely Carl Jung. The theme of today's discussion is on being authentic. We

ask ourselves, how can the inauthenticity of our everyday lives be reconciled with our potentiality for being authentic? In discussing this important question, we may find that related themes demand our attention, namely the process of individuation and the need for personal responsibility. Finally, we may discover the additional need to look further into the nature of change, finitude, temporality, and letting be. All of these themes, of course, relate essentially to the situation of being human.

### *Issues of Authenticity and Inauthenticity*

*Heidegger:* I must say I am very excited to have these themes introduced into such honored company. The related issues of authenticity and inauthenticity are at the very center of my thinking about the special nature of the being that belongs to Dasein, or human being understood within the context of being-situated in the world. I ask the question that demands an answer: What makes the being of Dasein different from the being of all other beings? The answer I find is this: Only Dasein has the capacity to ask about its own nature. Dasein in fact has a choice to face: it can either own up to, disown, or fail to take a stand on this question. Although only the first choice is the authentic one, it must be recognized that not only are the other modes of experiential (or ontic) being far more common, they are themselves certainly not to be denigrated, as they are no less “essential.” It must be acknowledged, however, that the dominant tendency in our lives is a movement towards our own ruination.

*Freud:* At this initial stage in the discussion I find that I am in sympathy with Heidegger’s way of exploring the experience of being human. In my own attempt to appropriate a scientific approach to understanding human existence, I found myself facing a prejudice then existing in the scientific community—an inauthentic prejudice—namely that only physical matter can be approached with scientific rigor. As a natural scientist myself, I found myself with the seemingly absurd and self-contradictory task of investigating consciousness as part of the *res extensa*. In fact, my earlier thesis of the unconscious can only be seen as part of this seemingly impossible task, insofar as what I thought of as “un”-conscious (and thereby “meta-psychological”) was precisely the body. In my earliest use of the expression “metapsychology,” I was, in fact, referring to that which was “beyond the body.” Mental acts, feelings, thinking, and perception—in short, all the phenomena of consciousness—are not to be understood as objective entities in themselves but rather in terms of their specific meanings for a given human individual self. Moreover, they should

not be thought of as entities at all, but rather as dynamic processes. This means that neurotic behavior needs to be understood as consisting of goal-directed acts, so that once we discover the self-preservative purpose of such behavior (for example, flight from anxiety) we will be able to locate the repressed childish fears and anxieties that lie at its core. Not only is the unexplored life not worth living, it is—like the occasional blind prejudice that befalls the scientific community—inauthentic as well.

*Jung:* I too agree with Heidegger that the being of human beings—which includes our conscious selves—is unique. Moreover, I freely acknowledge how very far Freud and I traveled along the royal road of psychoanalysis together. But we parted ways along the axes of scientific understanding and on the focus of therapy. Regarding science, I believe that the increase in scientific understanding since the Enlightenment has led to a blindness regarding the relevance and meaningfulness of religious and mythological truths. Regarding therapy, I believe that Freud focused too narrowly on conflict and neurosis and failed to recognize the potential liberating benefits of directing psychoanalytic practice toward integrative growth. And yes, I agree with Heidegger that we risk inauthenticity when we allow others to draw the line around our dreams, when we hide behind our personae and lose sight of the less differentiated aspects of ourselves, simply because they are incompatible with what it required of us—with what has become the dominant features of our functioning, in accord with what “they” think.

*Sartre:* Ever since my reading of Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*, I have been careful to acknowledge the idea that phenomenological ontology is the appropriate way of approaching “the question of Being,” since the evolution of modern thought has brought ontology to the phenomenon as the true locus of Being. Furthermore, I assert that no true theory of being can take place without consideration of the being of man—what I call “Being for-itself.”—whose being is required for phenomena to be recognized in the first place. Finally, in order to elucidate the ground or foundation for phenomena, I discover two sides of consciousness: on the first side a constitutive consciousness that is the state of being conscious of the phenomenon, and on the second side the being or existence of this very consciousness itself. As to the essence or nature of this Being-for-itself that is consciousness, it can be nothing other than an empty hole, a nothingness; to assert otherwise would be to place an arbitrary meaning on something inherently unknowable. So, this lack, this nothingness, is at the heart of our being, and we are inauthentic to the extent we fail to

own up to this. As long as we fail to take personal responsibility for our life choices, we remain caught up in illusions that are manifestations of our bad-faith. But if we can learn to acknowledge and embrace this incompleteness instead of postulating comforting essences in order to falsely define ourselves, then authentic Being is still possible.

*Buddha:* I find myself listening to these brilliant ideas from some of the greatest minds of all time, and I ask myself what is the purpose of our discussion here? Personally, I am hoping that together we can shed some light for those who are seeking answers to these perennial questions of life. However, at this juncture, I have a more basic question— are we looking in the right place? From a lifetime of meditating, I have discovered that reason may not be the faculty of man that is especially suited to finding his true nature. Once this true nature is found, it can easily be seen that reason admittedly plays an essential role in its elucidation, but the search itself must be initiated from a different path. The story of how I discovered suffering to be at the heart of human existence I leave for another time. But let it be known that my search for the cessation of this suffering was never an intellectual one. I wonder, then, whether we can engage with the questions of authenticity and inauthenticity through an intellectual discussion? Isn't authenticity a way of being, rather than just a way of thinking?

*Boss:* I thank you all for sharing with us your foundational and introductory thoughts on authenticity. Upon reflection, it seems to me that Buddha's assertion—that reason is not especially suited to finding man's true nature—is worthy of further consideration. Especially when you take into account his observation that authenticity is to be experienced rather than just debated. I would like to hear from you about this. Let's start with Heidegger.

*Heidegger:* I want to say that I am in fundamental agreement with Buddha's sentiments. But I feel I need to clarify what I mean by this. The question about "man's true nature"—or as I would put it, Dasein's true nature, should not—nay, cannot—be separated from the history of the "question of Being." By this I mean to say that the question about the nature of man is not an abstract question but rather one that is grounded in history, especially philosophical history. Since these investigations are situated in language, I would say that language is the "house of Being." The different ways in which we have dwelled in this house have been gradually circumscribed by the expanding power of reason and technology to dominate our lives and our thinking and to "enframe" our experience of everything in terms of practicality and calculability. My fear is that we—as products of this modern worldview—are imperceptibly

losing the ability to hear what Buddha has to say about ourselves. We will simply translate it into practical terms.

*Freud:* I find Heidegger entirely too philosophical here. He seems to believe that the concepts with which human beings define themselves are narrowly circumscribed by and grounded in whatever philosophical system is dominant during a specific time. I prefer to view human beings as essentially involved in a struggle for self-discovery. I consider there to be a tension between the demands of culture and the instinctual sexual drives of the individual. Thus, for example, the existence of an incest taboo in a given culture cannot be separated from the traumatic symptoms experienced by an adult female in response to her feelings of guilt and shame with regards to her sexual experiences of early childhood, whether they are byproducts of her fantasy or not. Not only should we not separate adult traits from childhood memories and emotions, we should also recognize how various kinds of adult illnesses are the result of the repression of such feelings, which have a tendency to bubble up from the unconscious. If you shut the front door on them, then they just climb in through the back window. I would also argue against Buddha's observation that we are too intellectual. Our search for a healthy self, free from neurosis, is not primarily an intellectual struggle at all, since the painful emotions and scenes of early childhood have to be revisited—in feeling as well as in thought—if therapy is to be successful.

*Jung:* I must say, Freud, how intrigued I was to hear you speaking earlier of neurotic behavior as having a goal, since you would always chide me about my own tendency to find larger purposes in our behavior. While I had learned to see human beings as being poised between instinct and the spiritual power of the archetypes, believing that to let either have too much sway was perilous, you in contrast seemed to privilege the animal within us. I even recall you suggesting that symptoms were not a message to anyone, that they were not written on the body in that sense, but were substitute pleasures. You conceded, though, that they achieved some aim, granted some indirect, de-conceptualized expression of some yearning. It is with pleasure that I now hear you suggest they have a goal. Your grip on psychic determinism is, perhaps, weakening at last. We face so many challenges in our path towards individuation, towards authenticity, it is no surprise we mistake ourselves so readily, don't you think, for this persona, that mask? But beyond the perils of this compliant, excessive concern with what "they" think lie darker dangers. For example, in believing ourselves to be more advanced than others. Your mention of Heidegger's idea of owning up to or disowning

one's stance regarding the nature of oneself made me think of the shadow part of my own personality. In fact, I think it is essential to own up to the infantile and primordial elements in oneself, if only to protect against their dominion. But it seems to me that we don't readily enough recognize that a tendency to moralism can be the projection of our own dark impulses onto others. At times we deal with our own shadow, the disowned features of ourselves, by projecting onto others. It seems to me a danger to imagine that we can become so good as to have no dark impulses. In becoming authentic, it is crucial to take a stance on our own shadow; to become aware of it, confront it, and assimilate it. We must embrace our flawed nature before we can have any compassion for others. And no, Buddha, I don't think this is an intellectual enterprise!

*Sartre:* Embrace our flawed nature? I wonder, what is man's true nature? I have already explained that human consciousness understood as being-for-itself is that being which is its own nothingness. We confront this nothingness when we learn to acknowledge our own bad faith—when we anguish over the ultimate groundlessness of our choices. Finding ourselves condemned to being our own baseless basis for our thoughts and deeds results in a flight toward justification in reasons, causes, and so-called motives. Although we all lie to ourselves, what's interesting is that for our lies to work we have to be careful to hide them from ourselves. An ordinary liar intends to deceive another person and does not need to hide this intention from himself. This kind of lying is a normal phenomenon belonging to what Heidegger calls the "Mitsein," or being-with-others. The ordinary liar hides the truth from another, and by doing so reaffirms the separate ontological existence of the two. In the case of bad faith, however, since the lie is contained within a single consciousness, I must know the truth very exactly in order to conceal it from myself more carefully. The problem is that since consciousness is translucent, that which affects itself with bad faith must be conscious of its having done so in the first place. To escape from these difficulties, people gladly have recourse to the unconscious. Freud uses the idea of the superego or censor to reestablish the duality of the deceiver and deceived at the level of the supposed unconscious part of the mind that executes the repression. Freud substitutes for the idea of bad faith the idea of a lie without a liar. By distinguishing between id and ego, Freud cuts the psychic whole into two parts: I am the ego but I am not the id. But is this distinction—or the whole construction of the apparatus of the unconscious, for that matter—necessary? Since bad faith is an immanent and permanent threat to every human being, we can never completely escape from its corrup-

tive effects. But our ability to radically escape from bad faith through self-recovery still exists; it is in fact what we have been calling authenticity. But unlike the implied essences or archetypes that Jung suggests we must integrate, our particular form of self-recovery is more of an active, creative process. Authenticity is more a matter of engaging in committed, active life choices and taking responsibility for them precisely as the choices and commitments that we voluntarily make. It is not a matter of finding any pre-formed or pre-determined essential self at all. Rather, our form of being is one in which our existence, or our lived-out actions and choices, precedes our so-called "essence," the latter of which is only to be seen either in hindsight or through the self-deception of bad faith.

*Buddha:* I seem to have triggered a lot of interest regarding my understanding of the relation between thinking and experience. But perhaps we should try and clarify our thinking about what it means to be authentic. The problem is that when we try to discuss our experience concerning such matters, we confront the limits of language. I would like us to return to Professor Boss's important question in his introduction: how can the inauthenticity of our everyday lives be reconciled with our potentiality for being authentic? Perhaps a more fundamental issue in this context is, how we perceive human nature. To me, human nature is essentially good. In my teachings, I often refer to this fundamental part of human nature as "our original face," but today people might refer to it as our unconditioned self. I believe that our original face is naturally good, but having to exist and survive in the everyday world, it may become conditioned or "contaminated"—perhaps in the various ways that Professors Freud, Jung, and Sartre have already indicated. So, I would like to pose a new question: how did we become inauthentic if we have the potential to be authentic?

### *Question of Inauthenticity*

*Boss:* That is a good question. Why are we, for the most part, inauthentic?

*Freud:* I see the human self as a continuing process that operates through the interaction between the three dimensions of the psyche, which I have called the "I," the "it," and the "I Above." (I suppose the Americans might call it the "overseeing I," with their obsession with management!) I often regret that my friend, translator, and former patient, James Strachey, chose to Latinize my own use of the vernacular German, assumedly to make my ideas more palatable to an English speaking medical audience. The Ego? The Id? The "Super-ego"? This sounds like comic book heroes. No, what I was talking about were not three

substances or mechanisms, but rather agencies or processes. My friend, Sartre, was right when he said that in this kind of psychoanalysis—which I would call “wild analysis”—the psyche is made to be what it is not, and it is not what it is made to be!

For we must always work with the “I,” with that part of the person who thinks in the “first person”—and not with any “third person” self-objectifications, which are already the source of inauthenticity or bad faith. When the three aspects of the psyche are in harmony, the individual person acts with the greatest amount of freedom. But since this is seldom the case, the usual state of human affairs is one of suffering. And it is, in fact, civilization which is responsible for this misery, since when we organize ourselves into civilized society to escape the suffering which incurs when we fail to impede the selfish demands of our libidinal drive or death instinct, we inflict it back upon ourselves in the guilt and frustration created by the repression of these same needs. It is, indeed, difficult to escape the neurosis that is the byproduct of such conflict.

*Jung:* Each of us constructs a persona, an inauthentic aspect of our self, which we present to the outside world. There is a danger that we can identify with it too much and mistake it to be all that we are. It is merely a mask. It's not a bad thing to have, and in fact it's necessary for getting along with others. But there is more to individuation than simply becoming aware of our persona. What I call “the first act of courage” is the acknowledgement that we have a shadow side to our self as well. In order to undertake shadow work we need to recognize the power of our shadow projections. Most of these projections are other-directed, negative, and strongly emotional. The main difficulty with shadow work is that it involves confronting parts of ourselves that are neglected, frightening, or shameful. Yet the psychic disequilibrium of the individuation process cannot proceed without this confrontation.

*Sartre:* Like Jung, I also think that we can mistake ourselves. The essential problem is what I indicated before: existence precedes essence. By this I mean we are thrown into the world as free human consciousness, but without meaningful directions. We are thus opaque to ourselves. We aspire to the clarity of thinghood, but remain mired in our own indeterminate nothingness. If we could accept our own freedom and take responsibility for our moral acts, then we might be able to escape from our fate of bad faith. But for this to happen we would have to reach the ontological self-sufficiency of God, and this is, without doubt, a fruitless enterprise.

*Heidegger:* I think that one of the reasons why we become inauthentic is because we get so fixated on the facticity of our everyday lives and with taking the easy way out that we forget to care about anything, and we find ourselves in a state of decadence or fallenness. We turn away from what a heightened awareness of our own death can give us. We pay too much attention to the They.

*Buddha:* I agree with Professor Heidegger that one of our reasons for living inauthentically is because we have learnt to live this way habitually. I also agree with him that this is because we are unable to confront our fear of mortality. I believe, though, that this is related to the bigger issue of our being unable to accept impermanence or change. Even though intellectually we accept the idea that impermanence is at the very heart of human existence, experientially we live as if permanence is the norm. So we continually busy ourselves with acquiring material things and performing endless projects, activities relating to what I call “edifices to permanence,” in order to avoid the knowledge that everything, including life itself, will eventually pass away. In fact, we are rendered inauthentic precisely when we fail to acknowledge this impermanence, which is the true nature of things.

### *Basis for Authenticity*

*Boss:* That is a good point, Buddha. You seem to suggest that taking and confronting certain aspects of previously avoided issues and taking personal responsibility is the starting point for becoming authentic.

*Heidegger:* I agree with Buddha about the ways that we avoid accepting impermanence and finitude, but I would add the observation that finitude also entails that our choices are finite. In my earlier writings, I enunciated the concept of “Being-guilty,” or “Existential guilt.” By that I mean that we are continually confronted with new possibilities that must be taken on and fulfilled. However, the facticity of our situation means that at any given point we can only choose one possibility, and forsake others. Existential guilt arises because of our inability to fulfill these other possibilities. We fail to realize our authentic self since our limited choices leave us with a vague feeling concerning the essential finitude and groundlessness of our lives. I believe that we discover authenticity only when we learn to confront our existential guilt and transform it into an active embrace of our potentialities in a resolute manner, and take responsibility for being our own person. We confront this potentiality through our mood, which is a unique and primary way of disclosing Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Furthermore, only certain moods are authentic.

For example, only in anxiety is Dasein brought face-to-face with itself. Anxiety discloses what Dasein authentically and really is, namely a being that is Being-in-the-world.

*Sartre:* Anxiety, freedom, choice, responsibility, contingency... these are all terrifying and potentially overwhelming experiences to us. As such, we try in vain to hide, deny, or run from them through the defenses of false certainties, projections, etc. These provide a continuous basis for inauthenticity.

*Boss:* So, inauthenticity, while having personal dimensions, is also a larger, existential concern. I agree with Heidegger about existential guilt, which I see as being different from the guilt feelings that clients talk about in therapy. I believe we cannot really make our clients feel free of existential guilt, as this is part of the human condition. At best, we can only help clients become aware of this existential guilt, which is the necessity of having to choose amongst different possibilities so that they no longer experience neurotic feelings of guilt.

*Freud:* However, it may just be the other way around. The job of the psychoanalyst is, perhaps, to free the individual from neurotic sources of guilt in order to make them ready for addressing even deeper issues pertaining to ontological guilt. Our job as medical doctors, psychiatrists, and psychotherapists is to bring the person to a state of readiness for spiritual and philosophical development. I do not think that existential awareness is enough to be able to choose one's way out of neurosis. If you think that, then you fundamentally misunderstand the nature of neurosis. Yes, choice is involved, but there is also reflected in any neurosis the contingencies of individual history. Isn't this what Heidegger has called facticity? I suppose, in this sense, psychoanalysis itself is a kind of "hermeneutics of facticity"—but one that remains more in the subterranean regions of the repressed unconscious than in the light of day. As Sartre pointed out, if having to choose and to take responsibility for our choices is frightening, then we are really dealing with people's defensive postures in the face of taking responsibility. Am I beginning to sound like an existentialist? Oy vey! In my work, I am more concerned with helping clients come to terms with neurotic guilt by dealing with the contents of their unconscious and working through repressed longings and resistances so they can, hopefully, live more authentically.

*Jung:* I agree with Freud that we can help people to become more authentic by enlarging the scope of personality by making the personal unconscious conscious. However, as Boss says, there is more than the personal at stake. My

focus also transcends the personal, since we are also the repository of the remnants of the history of mankind, those inborn virtual images that are the archetypes. Spirit in form, numinous in character. You can use the word spiritual if magic is too strong a word for you. These archetypes are the regulators and stimulators of creative fantasy. We need to attend to their presence within us, as they may also reveal the undervalued, less differentiated aspects of ourselves. My aim, then, is individuation, which can only be achieved via the guided disequilibrium of analysis. There, I seek to bring about a psychic state in which a person may experiment with her nature: a state of fluidity, change, and growth where nothing is eternally fixed nor hopelessly petrified.

*Buddha:* It is interesting to hear that the basis for authenticity revolves around individual resolve, making hard choices, and learning to integrate different aspects of our personalities. I was particularly interested in the discussion on existential and neurotic guilt. When I mentioned responsibility earlier, I was thinking more about responsibility: that is, the ability to respond appropriately to each unique situation. The relevant question here is not so much "What are my possibilities, and how do I choose?" but rather "What is an appropriate response to the situation or the phenomenon that I am encountering?" Sometimes this calls for action, and sometimes for non-action. If we understand impermanence or change to be in the nature of things, our responsibility is to learn to respond skillfully to moment-to-moment experiences. This is because I believe that each new moment is pregnant with possibilities and information that earlier moments could not have shown up, and therefore no moment is privileged. I do not think that it is a case, as Professors Heidegger and Boss suggested, of resolutely choosing one possibility and experiencing existential guilt for having forsaken other possibilities. Rather, it is being mindful of what is called for in the given situation and responding appropriately—what I refer to in my teachings as right mindfulness, right understanding, and right action. If subsequently the response turns out to be inappropriate, then the person goes through the process of seeing what is now appropriate in light of changed circumstances. In such instances, the feeling may be one of remorse rather than guilt. Remorse involves self-reflection and a reappraisal of past actions and choices, rather than self-recrimination and self-blame. In short, I think that the basis for being authentic is to remain open and let things unfold naturally, and then respond accordingly.

*Heidegger:* I concur with Buddha. In my earlier conceptions of authenticity, I focused more on willed resoluteness:

the courage and resolve to break away from what is comfortable and familiar. In my later conception of authenticity, I saw it more in terms of releasement (or what we refer to in German as *Gelassenheit*). Releasement involves adopting a meditative attitude towards things by reducing the ego and just waiting. By waiting, I do not mean to suggest that we remain inactive, although sometimes restraint is warranted. Rather, as Buddha pointed out, in waiting we allow things to be, and in so doing remain more open to other possibilities.

### Being-Authentic

*Boss:* Thank you for that interesting discussion. I would like to move on to our final question: what do you think being authentic involves?

*Sartre:* A life of active engagement in the world and with others, of continuously reflecting and acting in acknowledgement of our contingent choices while attending to both our realistic facticity and our ever-present freedom, is certainly a starting point for one's pursuit of authenticity.

*Buddha:* I see authenticity as a state of being where people are able to cultivate a more open attitude to what they encounter and to experience and respond to what unfolds naturally without needing to change or justify it. It does involve an active engagement with the world, not from the standpoint of one's ego, however, but from the sort of compassion and wisdom that come with understanding the interconnectedness of everything. I see it as similar to enlightenment. I often tell people that before enlightenment, chop wood, draw water. After enlightenment, chop wood, draw water. The difference is not in the activity, but in the attitude we adopt towards what we do. I believe that by learning to let go of our preconceptions and biases through meditation and mindfulness, we engage with the world through egoless responsiveness rather than willed actions.

*Jung:* For me it is the psychic development that fulfills the individual qualities and peculiarities of your nature—stripping away the false wrappings of the persona and gaining a measure of freedom by attending to the suggestive power of primordial images. It is regaining a fluidity vital for personal and cultural development. No longer will we be a touchy bundle of egotistical wishes and fears, compensated for by unconscious counter-tendencies. We will, instead, be free to relate to the world of objects and others, and concern ourselves with collective problems and shared growth.

*Heidegger:* When we are born, we are thrown into a pre-determined world of family, culture, and nationality. We have not chosen this situation, we have instead fallen into it and we can never be authentic if we remain there. This is

the world of the they-self, and it frames our every possibility, unless we escape its hold on us. We can do this only if we discover—by way of the mood of anxiety about the uncanniness of our existence—that it could yet be otherwise. Thus does anxiety reveal to Dasein the possibility of being-authentic, by allowing it the freedom to understand itself outside the control of its own historical conditioning.

*Freud:* Perhaps the angst of which Heidegger speaks is not entirely unlike the angst with which I must deal with my patients. But I do not think that anxiety alone “reveals” to us the possibility of being-authentic. It only prepares us for such an awakening. And besides, Martin, did you not also speak of a “call of conscience”? And is not this “conscience” of yours more precisely what reveals to us, in our being, our very own possibility for being-authentic? I might remind you that what I called the “Ueber-ich” already contains within it the possibility for a conscience, whether it be one that supplies us with “neurotic” guilt or “ontological” guilt. I shall leave the rest of you to your more lofty considerations of mythic ambitions, ontological guilt, and authenticity. For me, I will depart your company with a gentle reminder that a little bit of self-restraint and a little bit of sublimation, coupled with just a modicum of sexual satisfaction, should be enough to provide for the individual's happiness. And if I have a final wish, it is the hope that such happiness shall never be eliminated from among the higher aims of civilization.

*Boss:* Thank you for another interesting dialogue. I believe that in exploring authenticity from the philosophical and psychological perspectives covered today, we have contributed significantly to the understanding of what it means to be human. I am looking forward to continuing our dialogue next year, and engaging in furthering our understanding of human existence.

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