

Heidegger Introduction

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Being and Time

- Published in 1927, under pressure
- Dedicated to Edmund Husserl
- Initially rejected as “inadequate”
- Now considered a seminal work of 20th century philosophy
- Projected Part Two and Division Three of Part One never completed

Being

- Heidegger’s career was devoted to answering the “question of Being”
- Being was investigated by ancient philosophers, then covered up by medieval and modern philosophers
- First treated by Parmenides (5th century B.C.E.), who distinguished on (being) from me on (non-being)
- For Parmenides, being is one and non-being is impossible

Plato on Being

- For Plato (4th century B.C.E.), there is both being and coming to be (*genesis*)
- Real beings (*ontos onta*) are distinguished from generated beings
- Onta are known by thought (*noesis*) through a rational account (*logos*)
- Generated beings are objects of opinion (*doxa*) based on sensation (*aisthesis*)
- There is a form (*eidos*) of being

Aristotle on Being

- Being is spoken of in many ways, but always in reference to a single principle
- Being *qua* being (*to on he on*) is the subject of metaphysics
- Primarily, being is substance (*ousia*)
- Individual beings (*onta*) are the subjects of other sciences
- But sometimes Aristotle claims that metaphysics studies the unmoved mover, an individual being

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* IV.1

“There is a science that studies being insofar as it is being, and also the properties of being in its own right. It is not the same as any of the so-called special sciences. For none of them considers being quite generally, insofar as it is being; rather, each of them cuts off some part of being and studies the relevant coincident of that part, as, for instance, the mathematical sciences do.” (Irwin/Fine translation)

Aristotle's *Metaphysics* IV.2

“Being is spoken of in many ways, but in all cases it is spoken of with reference to one principle. For some things are called beings because they are substances, others because they are a road to substances, or because they are perishings or privations or qualities of substance or of things spoken with reference to it, or because they are negations of one of these or of substance.” (Irwin/Fine translation)

Medieval/Modern Treatment of Being

- Since Aristotle, Being has been treated according to a prejudice
- Being is a “transcendental” concept
- Being is the most universal concept
- By being most universal, it is devoid of content (Hegel)
- It is undefinable, since there is no higher concept by which to define it
- It is said to be self-evident, because we use it every day in predication: “The sky is blue.”

Overturning the Prejudices

- Being is not a clear concept, but the most obscure of all
- The obscurity of Being conflicts with the fact that we live with an understanding of Being
- If Being cannot be defined, then it is problematic
- These considerations themselves show that the question of Being is not well-formulated

How Do We Question Being?

- Plato's "knower's paradox": how can we search for what we do not know, unless we already know it? (*Meno*)
- To investigate Being, we must have some knowledge of Being already
- If Being cannot be defined, then it is problematic
- We begin with an "average and vague" understanding of Being
- But this understanding can be contaminated by philosophical theories of Being

Being and Beings

- We question Being through beings
- We ask, how is it that Being accounts for the being of beings?
- The answer is not to be found in telling a story of generation, since this just explains the being of one being by that of another
- Which aspect of beings reveals Being? Properties? Existence? Being at hand?

Inquiring Beings

- The choice of beings to be investigated is the beings that inquire into Being
- Questioners of being are called *Dasein*
- '*Dasein*' as a noun indicates existence
- The verb form '*dasein*' means 'to be there'
- How does Being explain the being of Dasein?

Circularity?

- We must first determine the Being of *Dasein*
- But we are investigating Being through an investigation of *Dasein*
- So how can we understand Being through an investigation of *Dasein* when we first must understand the Being of *Dasein*?
- Answer: We have a pre-investigative understanding of the Being of *Dasein*
- There is no deductive argument here, so no formal fallacy

Being and Positive Sciences

- Sciences which investigate beings (history, nature, life, human being, language) are based on pre-scientific interpretation of Being
- They grow through fundamental crises
- Fundamental conceptual change is progress
- Fundamental concepts of science are based on pre-scientific investigation of Being

The Ontic and the Ontological

- The sciences deal with things “ontically,” i.e., without regard to their Being
- Ontological investigation concerns the Being of beings
- Ontically, *Dasein* is a being who investigates Being
- So ontically, *Dasein* is ontological (or at least pre-ontological)

Existential Analysis

- The Being relating to *Dasein* is existence (*Existenz*)
- *Dasein* understands its existence in terms of the possibility of being itself and the possibility of not being itself
- We can try to come to terms with existence through existence itself (*Existentiell*)
- Or we can analyze the ontological structure of existence “existentially” (by discovering its “existentiality”)

Being in a World

- *Dasein* is essentially being in a world
- There is a world of beings accessible to *Dasein* for questioning
- Thus, the positive sciences depend on being in a world
- Fundamental ontology must be sought in the existential analysis of *Dasein*

The Priority of Dasein

- Ontic: *Dasein* is defined by existence, while other things are defined differently
- Ontological: *Dasein's* existence is that of a questioner of Being
- Ontic-Ontological: It is the primary being to be interrogated, and so is the basis of all ontology
- Aristotle and Aquinas saw this dimly, holding that the soul is the kind of being that can “meet with all beings”
- But the soul does not reduce all other beings to something existing only subjectively

How to Understand *Dasein*

- Ontically, *Dasein* is closest to us and is the object of human disciplines
- Ontologically, *Dasein* is farthest away from us, because we reach it through reflection on the world to which it is related
- We must not impose a structure on this world, but rather allow it to disclose its structures in its “average everydayness”

Temporality

- The meaning of the Being of *Dasein* is Temporality
- Temporality is not the same as the common notion of time
- Common time is treated like a being among other beings
- It also creates a gap between atemporal things and temporal things

History

- Because *Dasein* is temporal, it has a history
- Temporality is the basis of world history
- Dasein's past is more than just a property that exerts a causal influence on occasion
- The past is responsible for *Dasein's* interpretation of itself, which discloses its possibilities for the future
- It can be discovered through historical examination of traditions

The History of Being

- *Dasein* is a being that inquires into its Being
- The inquiry into Being is part of the history of Dasein
- So we must investigate the history of the investigation of Being
- The investigation shows that Being has been covered up by the tradition

Phenomenological Method

- Phenomenology is a method, rather than a "science" whose content is appearances
- It is the most basic method, closest to the things themselves
- The maxim of phenomenology is, "To the things themselves!"
- The method is based on the interpretation of the Greek terms '*phainomenon*' and '*logos*.'

The Concept of Phenomenon

- The phenomenon is what shows itself, or can be brought to light
- The Greeks identified this with beings, which could be brought to light as they are in themselves or misleadingly
- Appearing depends on self-showing
- An appearance is of something else, while a phenomenon shows only itself
- What are the phenomena for Dasein?

The Concept of *Logos*

- *Logos* has come to mean such things as reason, judgment, concept, definition, ground, or relation
- But its original meaning is that of speech
- The *logos* is what makes what is spoken of manifest to another
- It can be revealing or misleading, because it involves seeing something as something

Truth and Falsehood

- Truth and falsehood have traditionally been understood in terms of agreement or disagreement between a judgment and what it is about
- But it should be understood in terms of unconcealing and covering up
- When we see something as something, it either reveals itself (as with a simple apprehension of color) or conceals something

The Meanings of ‘*Logos*’

- Judgment: seeing something as something
- Reason: letting something be apprehended
- Ground: the seen as such, which is the basis of discourse and discussion
- Relation: becoming visible in relation to something else

Phenomenology Again

- Phenomenology is “to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself”
- In other words, “To the things themselves!”
- So phenomenology is not a discipline with a special object
- It does not describe its “phenomena” in the way of biological morphology, for example

Phenomenology and Ontology

- The object of ontology is to discover the meaning of Being
- This is investigated through the Being of beings
- As phenomena, these beings show themselves
- They can be covered up and this not entirely phenomena, especially by being “distorted”
- How do we discover the distortions and separate them from the truth?

Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

- Phenomenology, as *logos*, involves seeing as: interpretation
- Hermeneutics is the science of interpretation
- Phenomenology is also hermeneutical in two other senses
- It works out the conditions for any possible ontological investigation
- It analyzes the existential structures of Dasein

Philosophy

- Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology
- Being is the transcendent, which is everywhere and the focus of all beings
- Husserl pursued phenomenology but without ontology
- Normal grammar and normal thinking will have to be abandoned, as in difficult ancient investigations by Plato and Aristotle

Destructuring the History of Being

- Since ancient times, the Being of Dasein has been understood through its world
- The world, in turn, is investigated by seeking its structure
- But the investigation succeeded in hiding, rather than revealing the structure of the world
- The focus has been on bringing beings under fixed abstract categories
- To overcome this hiding, the history of Being must be “destructured”

The Traditional Investigation of Time

- Aristotle found time to be central to our understanding of Being, and all subsequent philosophers have followed him
- Kant recognized the intimate connection between time and the human being
- But Kant mistakenly began with Descartes's interpretation of the Being of *Dasein*
- A human being is a created being, so its Being is found in another being, God

Presence

- Aristotle is interpreted as looking at apprehension of what is at hand
- What is at hand is a "presence"
- Presence is something essentially temporal, a "making present" of something
- The temporal structure of presence should be the focus of the investigation of the meaning of the Being of *Dasein*