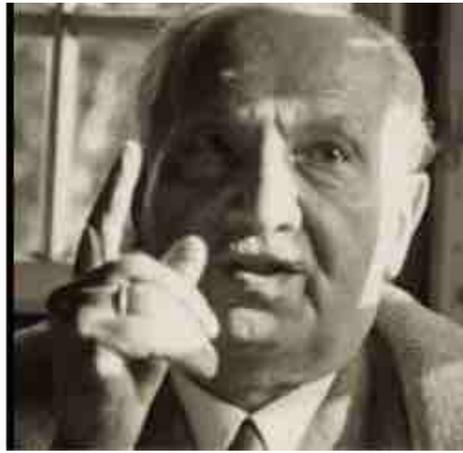


Heidegger's What Is Called Thinking?



Thinking involves a questioning and a putting ourselves in question as much as the cherished opinions and doctrines we have inherited through our education or our shared knowledge. Putting in question is not a "method" that proceeds from "doubt" as it was for Descartes.

The questioning or inquiring is a "clearing of the path" (and anyone who has had to 'clear a path' through dense jungle in this part of the world knows the difficulty of "clearing a path") with no destination in mind. Questioning and thinking are not a means to an end; they are self-justifying.

What is thinking? What Calls for Thinking?

"We all still need an education in thinking, and first of all, before that, knowledge of what being educated and uneducated in thinking means. In this respect Aristotle gives us a hint in Book IV of his Metaphysics (1006a if.): . . . – "For it is uneducated not to have an eye for when it is necessary to look for a proof and when this is not necessary. –"Martin Heidegger "The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking"

The 20th century's great philosopher, Martin Heidegger, said: "Most thought-provoking is that we are still not thinking – not even yet, although the state of the world is becoming constantly more thought-provoking." (*What is Called Thinking?* p. 4) For us, thinking is traditionally thought to be "rationality", "reason", "judgement". Heidegger, somewhat provocatively, says: "[M]an today is in flight from thinking." (*Discourse on Thinking* p. 45) Not only do we not think; human beings are actively avoiding thinking. For Heidegger, all the scientific work today, all the research and development, all the political machinations and posings, even contemporary philosophy, represents a flight from thinking. "[P]art of this flight is that man will neither see nor admit it. Man today will even flatly deny this flight from thinking. He will assert the opposite. He will say – and quite rightly – that there were at no time such far-reaching plans, so many inquiries in so many areas, research carried on as passionately as today. Of course." (*Discourse on Thinking* 45)

Part One primarily deals with posing the titular question and then discoursing on Nietzsche's idea of "the wasteland grows" in relation to the ideas of "the last men", the superman, and the "highest and heaviest thought to emerge from Western metaphysics", the eternal recurrence of the same. These are contrasted with an indictment of "technological" thinking- the pervading mode of thought in contemporary societies, "common usage" of language, which propagates a dulling of the true world-exploratory power of language, through abuse and degradation of the fullness of the meaning of words. "Technological" thinking by nature does not reveal *essences*, but is rather devoted to sapping as much energy as possible from the objects of our experience for the purposes of material progress. This is where Heidegger makes the (in)famous claim that "science does not think." By this he does not mean to dismiss or degrade natural science as a valuable practice, but to put it in its proper element. By its very nature, science seeks and discloses one side of a multi-sided existence, sticks to one track of thinking toward a specific end, and is barred by its form from seeing or explaining its essential relation to Being or beings. Heidegger identifies this scientific, progressive, and ends-oriented mode of thinking as coming to have subsumed almost the entirety of modern thought and thus now is to be taken for the whole of thought - which implies the beginning of the age of Nietzsche's last men, who *blink* in the place of thinking. (His analysis of the term "blink" as used by Nietzsche is unforgettable.) Heidegger then discusses what he determines to be the culmination of Western metaphysics, Nietzsche's idea of the eternal recurrence of the same, in relation to the emergence of the superman - the mortal being capable of Thinking equal to the task of confronting the modern world.

Heidegger's main claim is that since Plato thought has been dulled by the overuse and low valuation of language, and that the problematics of Being in Western metaphysics are related to a fundamental lack in the way we speak of things, and therefore in our concepts, that our common usage of words has blighted our relation to the objects that they envelope and to which we are disclosed as they are disclosed to us. Our relationship to the presences in the world and what they leave unconcealed when they are present depend on the path we take to Thinking them, so that we must relearn the "radiant" value of each word, since words are the only medium through which we come know the world - a limited sense of the potentiality of language would mean a delimited path to knowing.

So what is called thinking? Paying heed to the presence of what is present. Letting what lies before us in the world lie before us, while at the same time taking it to heart, to keep it in the only place where it is safely kept, in the thinking of our own Being as beings. *"Unconcealedness, the rising from unconcealedness, the entry into unconcealedness, the coming and the going away, the duration, the gathering, the radiance, the rest, the hidden suddenness of possible absencing."*

'what is called thinking?' is a series of lectures, each with helpful repetition, and though not declaimed in non-philosophical poetry, he does use poetry, he gets etymological, he translates, transforms, interprets previous works- primarily parmenides but also socrates, plato, aristotle. and this is the doubling of a problem for me. i read neither german nor greek, so there are two levels of interpretation on the go which i must accept. does the greek work that way, how does that work for german, is there significance in german lost in translation to english, is there something that simply confuses, that does not clarify but rather muddies this or that quote, these are all questions inspired by his writing...

'what is called thinking?' part one goes into nietzsche a lot, and not much in a way i understand, only interesting in his prescient diagnosis of where 'european man' was headed, some time before anyone else was concerned. 'the wasteland grows', well yes that sounds like n. the superman (overman) must be understood as exactly the same and thus 'heaviest thought' as 'eternal recurrence', must be understood in plain meaning as: 1) the passing over 2) the site from which passage leaves 3) the site to which passage goes... but this is just all h warming up. and then i do not know if i will appreciate n as he should be...

'what is called thinking?' offers the four ways that question works in lecture one of part two. perhaps part one is all warmup, all setting the stage, training the reader, to understand that there are four ways to understand this apparently transparent question. there is 1) what is designated by the word 'thinking'? 2) what does the prevailing theory of thought, namely logic, understand by thinking? 3) what are the prerequisites we need to perform thinking rightly? 4) what is it that commands us to think? h asserts we must answer 4) first. and that all are one question seen different ways. if your mind is not warmed-up by now, best read part one again- or, like me, soldier on in relative ignorance...

'what is called thinking?' in 4) can only lead the reader into the twisty ways of translation by way of h, for whom it is the questioning aspect of the question that must be understood, rather than headlong rushes of something traditional and empty as propositions, orders, truths, such as is usual in analytic attempts, answering when you do not yet understand the question. and here it comes for me, when to say 'it is all greek to me' is not polite, deprecating escape when the topics addressed escape my limits of thought. for yes, it is all greek. through german. h starts by interpreting the question/answer in a new translation: 'one should both say and think that Being is'... and here is the first hurdle for those who think language and thus corresponding logic are always already there rather than work in progress...

'one should both say and think that Being is' becomes what the rest of the book is dedicated to explicate, such that i think of later 'deconstruction' and all those post-structuralists, postmodernists, of continental lineage, who can no more escape h than say nietzsche. so i take refuge, i comfort myself, i soften my lack of comprehension, all by finding or recognizing quotes i had read elsewhere or original formulations that i discover again. for there is 'shifting sands, better billowing waves of the ocean' as finding words not yet 'over-used' to get his ideas across. there is the use of thinking, or rather uselessness: 1) does not bring knowledge as in sciences 2) does not produce usable practical wisdom 3) solves no cosmic riddles 4) does not endow with power to act... this certainly suggests 'thinking' is not dependent, constrained, supported by/supporting anything other than thinking...

Heidegger gave voice to the vague skepticism probably held by a majority of the world toward new new technology. Not more than 50 years in advance of the initial publication date, reinforced concrete was being developed and submarines were still on the drawing boards. In his lifetime, technology had progressed from an almost comical

state to nuclear weaponry delivered by bomber.

Heidegger never sounded petulant in his criticisms, and never went on as slanted an attack on values, morals, religion and the like, as Nietzsche did. His observations were quite organized and heavily researched.

In the first part of the book, Heidegger engages with Nietzsche to show us what thinking is and how thinking takes over the thinker. Heidegger takes as starting points some of Nietzsche sayings like: "the wasteland grows: woe to him who hides wastelands within", "this alone is revenge itself: the will's revulsion against time and its 'it was'", and "that everything recurs is the extremest approximation of a world of Becoming to the world of Being: - the highest point of meditation." As such, Nietzsche's fundamental thought is "the eternal recurrence of the same", a thought that is wrapped in a darkness from which even Nietzsche had to shrink back in terror. Zarathustra is the first man to be delivered from this revengeful/metaphysical thinking and to think properly, lightly, and joyfully. Nietzsche's thinking is sharply opposed to the modern men who just "blink" and do not think at all.

In the second part of the book, Heidegger goes all the way back to Parmenides. He starts by reminding us that what we encounter at first is never what is near, but always what is common. As such, the common possesses the unearthly power to break us of the habit of abiding in what is essential, often so definitively that we never come to abide anywhere. Moreover, Heidegger points to Plato and Parmenides in order to remind us that everything that lies near and right before us is ambiguous and that thoughtful questioning is by its nature unsettling. Such ambiguity and unsettling declares itself in Parmenides saying: "it is useful to let-lie-before-us and so the taking-to-heart also: beings in being."

Moreover, for Parmenides "it is the same thing to think and to be". For Heidegger, Parmenides' saying is the basic theme of all Western-European thinking; and consequently the entire history of this Western thinking is at the bottom just a sequence of variations on this one theme. As such, Kant's fundamental saying that "the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience" is such a variation of Parmenides' saying. For the modern Kant, the individual being appears as an object of experience, while "Being" indicates the objectivity of the object. Kant's saying limited the original Parmenides' insight and trapped us into an objective, scientific, technological, subjective, logical, and so thinking/understanding of Being.

Time is here, too, in the question of memory, and that is the element that is least developed here, though overwhelmingly "behind" the issues of the text: Cyril Welch says in the blurb that Heidegger here "has tried to reinterpret the purport of...Being and Time, as meaning an opening of the horizon of Being through man's horizon of thinking." The man who can think is related to Nietzsche's superman, in that he is not defined by the spirit of revenge that resents the going-past of time. And so maybe in thinking man is able to not only take in the world and take it to heart, but also change the nature of what it means to be "present" in Being. Heidegger doesn't talk about this, but I think that his project emphasizes the way in which thinking is not only something necessary, something we are drawn to by our very being, but also something that is utterly transformative (of experience, of the nature of being in time). On the last page he says, "Thinking is thinking only when it *recalls* in thought the *éón*" - what is crucial here is the nature of recalling, that which summons again the presence of what was once present, that which now dwells in memory. The supposed opposition in Heidegger between dwelling and thinking seems least strong here: thinking requires the dwelling of the presence-of-what-is-present within myself. But this taking-to-heart must always be accompanied by a laying-out, a telling, and so the nature of language is implicated as well. Thinking can only be done in language, and can only be done in terms of the presentness of what is present -- we can get "outside" of neither language nor presentness, but in memory we can transform our experience of both.

So, "what is called thinking?":

It is "being present to thought" or "continuing to ask the question" or "the letting-lie-before-us and so taking-to-heart" by being present to what is present.

He seems to want to engage in a similar project as Nietzsche by trying to "reach back" and grab some insights he thinks have been especially overlooked since after the rise of Platonism and subsequent Western philosophies (but were present for the pre-Socratics and in the tragic age of the Greeks) and their emphasis on the supersensible; however, he does this in a less polemical way.

Heidegger takes the superficiality or "blinking" of modern culture to task. Good on him. Much better for us to be attentive to beings' Being and its call for us, not just to beings on a "surface" level. This IS thinking, and it is also Nietzsche's eternal recurrence.

The first part, in the main, is an appreciation of and confrontation with Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*—A Book for Everyone and Nobody and the Persian prophet's cry that 'The wasteland is growing. Woe to him who hides wastelands within!', a sentence addressed to the superman, whose nature and difference with the last man is discussed at length in this section.

Essentially, the bridge to the superman is one of renunciation, in the sense of the gentle releasement of being let and of letting be, and manifests in the deliverance from revenge, defined as the 'ill will towards time and its "it was"' rooted in past suffering and, prey to that which has been and cannot be changed, gets frustrated by its incapacity to will backwards.

According to Heidegger, the beginning of the modern world began the moment when the type 'man' thought that he was running out of time.

In learning thinking we are learning to deliver ourselves from revenge and to think our habits in a non reactive way.

This is no easy task but unavoidable for the advancement of homo sapiens who has been defined by the metaphysical tradition as the animal rationale, 'the beast endowed with reason.'

The second part of the book deals most of all with a fragment from the pre-platonic thinker Parmenides, illuminating in the process the phenomenon of thinking beyond the narrow confines of a shallow rationality content with calculating and representational ideation in favour of a more heart-and-head based approach to reality, but, I would add, not without heeding the words of German poet Friedrich Hölderlin's 'Good Advice':

'You've a head and a heart? Reveal only one of the two for
They'll damn you doubly should you reveal both equally.'

A knowledge of the Greek alphabet and Greek pronunciation is recommended by this reviewer to read through this section of the book, since Heidegger always goes back to the original tongue—most usually Greek or Latin—of the thinkers he brings to task and whose fruits he unravels in his immense bibliography.

In conclusion, this book will appeal to profound natures who want to overcome the spirit of revenge which mires our world today and who want to reflect in a way that is deeper and more holistic than the norm.

This recognition of thinking, this desire for thinking, this will to thinking, cannot be said to belong essentially to all human being in the world, since there are many who refuse it and who are no less human for this refusal. It cannot even be said to belong potentially to all human being in the world, since there are many who are not even capable of thinking in this way and who are no less human for this lack. Yet there is something, something that appears only in relation to human being in the world, something that nevertheless, in some cases, perhaps only here and there, but again and again, recognizes, and desires, and wills thinking. What is this thing? Though I may not yet know how to think, though I may not yet even have undertaken the way to thinking, why is it that I desire to undertake it? Why do I want to know what is called thinking?

But for Heidegger, science does not think: and this is its *blessing*. "This situation is grounded in the fact that science itself does not think, and cannot think – which is its good fortune, here meaning the assurance of its own appointed course." (*What is Called Thinking?* p. 8) What Heidegger is saying is that if science actually thought, we would cease to have science as we know it. And if this should happen, we would no longer have clean toilets, penicillin, and all of the wonderful discoveries of science. Science does not think because the grounding of science is in a faith: its belief is that what is real is what it reveals.

the West, thought about thinking has been called "logic" which we have associated with "reason as a way of knowing" based on the principle of reason. This "logic" has received its flowering in the natural and human sciences under the term "logistics". Logistics, today, is considered the only legitimate form or way of knowing because its results and procedures ensure the construction of the technological world. Logistics is an interesting word in that its use as a noun implies "symbolic logic" (mathematical algebraic calculation) and it is also related to the conduct of warfare. Its use as mathematical calculation is found in what is called logical positivism which is a new branch of the branch of philosophy that was previously known as empiricism. The thinking in logical positivism is the thinking expressed as algebraic calculation: only that which can be calculated can be known and is

worth knowing. To elaborate how this has come to be the case would require an analysis of 17th century philosophy and mathematics beyond what we intend in this writing. Suffice it to say that this is part of our inherited shared knowledge that we have received from the philosopher Rene Descartes. It is called Cartesianism.

Indeed, it seems very strange that if "these times" (those were Heidegger's times, but it extends to today, I think) are really so thought-provoking, how could it be, at the same time, that we are not yet thinking? Well, maybe some are, but the question formulated quite as a question, but rather a and I don't think it's -- statement persists and persists. If these times -- are so thought-provoking, what on earth does it mean for Heidegger to issue the charge that we are not yet thinking, even when many, if not everyone, would agree that "these times" are already thought provoking. Yet, here comes Heidegger, provoking us to thought, and doing so in this strange, double formulation: the times are already thought provoking, and we know it: thus, we are already provoked to thought, by the times, yet here is Heidegger, saying that that is not enough. We are provoked to thought, but Heidegger provokes in a way on top of that and says that we are not yet thinking. A provocation. And yet, a great question operates in the book's title: What is called thinking? The book provokes to thought and asks a question. Or, in a way, the question asks itself, or even, the question simply asks, if we could, for a moment, think of the question somehow releasing itself from the book's title, or having been already articulating itself before the book was even written: what is called thinking?

When we use the word 'thinking', our thought immediately goes back to a well-known set of definitions that we have learnt in our life or in our studies, what we have inherited from our shared knowledge. Definitions provide the limits to things, their horizons so that they can be known to us. These limits we call "meaning". To us thinking is a mental activity that helps us to solve problems, to deal with situations, to understand circumstances and, according to this understanding, to take action in order to move forward. It is *algorithmic*. Thinking for us also means to have an opinion, to have an impression that something is in a certain way. Thinking means reasoning, the process of reaching certain conclusions through a series of statements. Thinking is "a means of mastery" or control over the 'problems' which confront us and stand as obstacles in our achieving our ends.

On the special kind of thinking that occurs in science, Heidegger says that it is true that "[s]uch thought remains indispensable. But – it also remains true that it is thinking of a special kind." (*Discourse on Thinking* 45) That is reasoning, rationalization, analysis by concept, logical operation are all part of a particular form of thought, one with presuppositions and operational rules. This is, and has been called, "method". It operates within a *system*. It is the thinking that you are required to do in order to be successful in the TOK course. It is not, however, a universal way of thought. Nor is it the oldest means of thought; human beings of the past did not approach the world in the manner given by Aristotle, but rather human beings (Aristotle, specifically) had to think in this manner after reaching certain conclusions about the world and human nature. For Aristotle, this view came from his understanding and critique of the Greek philosopher Plato.

The kind of thinking we are probably accustomed to is what Heidegger names "calculative thinking", and it is the thinking proper to the sciences and economics, which we, belonging to the technological age, mainly — if not solely — employ. Calculative thinking, says Heidegger, "calculates," "plans and investigates" (1966b, p. 46); it sets goals and wants to obtain them. It "serves specific purposes" (ibid., p. 46); it considers and works out many new and always different possibilities to develop. Despite this productivity of a thinking that "races from one aspect to the next"; despite the richness in thinking activities proper to our age, and testified by the many results obtained; despite our age's extreme reach in research activities and inquiries in many areas; despite all this, nevertheless, Heidegger states that a "growing thoughtlessness" (1966b, p. 45) is in place and needs to be addressed. This thoughtlessness depends on the fact that man is "in flight from thinking" (ibid., p. 45).

Thoughtlessness", Heidegger states, "is an uncanny visitor who comes and goes everywhere in today's world. For nowadays we take in everything in the quickest and cheapest way, only to forget it just as quickly, instantly. Thus one gathering follows on the heels of another. Commemorative celebrations grow poorer and poorer in thought. Commemoration and thoughtlessness are found side by side. (1966b, p. 45)

Heidegger's main claim is that since Plato thought has been dulled by the overuse and low valuation of language, and that the problematics of Being in Western metaphysics are related to a fundamental lack in the way we speak of things, and therefore in our concepts, that our common usage of words has blighted our relation to the objects that they envelope and to which we are disclosed as they are disclosed to us. Our relationship to the presences in the world and what they leave unconcealed when they are present depend on the path we take to Thinking them, so that we must relearn the "radiant" value of each word, since words are the only medium through which we come know the world - a limited sense of the potentiality of language would mean a delimited path to knowing. For instance, my favorite part of these lectures might have been the section on the Old English origin of "To think", *thanc*, which originally implied a simultaneous gathering together of perception, memory, and *thanks* into a projecting-forward of

the total fullness of ourselves- Thinking as a kind of devotional activity, almost in the religious sense, in relation to Being, to the presences that emerge in the world, involving and amassing every aspect of ourselves and our past experiences. This idea of *thanc* might ultimately come the nearest to what Heidegger would value as Thinking- an inseparable, essential duality of Being and Thinking.

So what is called thinking? Paying heed to the presence of what is present. Letting what lies before us in the world lie before us, while at the same time taking it to heart, to keep it in the only place where it is safely kept, in the thinking of our own Being as beings. *"Unconcealedness, the rising from unconcealedness, the entry into unconcealedness, the coming and the going away, the duration, the gathering, the radiance, the rest, the hidden suddenness of possible absencing."* These lectures make for a deep and slow moving, wide-flowing book, generous, gentle, actually quite simple in its conclusions that we should take seriously our call to Being, to search out what it is that calls us into being, and be grateful and humble and thankful for our fate as rational animals, to take up our mortal task.

n What is Called Thinking (which could also be translated as What Calls for Thinking, the German has both connotations) Heidegger tells us that we do not know what thinking is, that we have just now begun to think about thinking, but that we are still not yet thinking. He sets us up with the confusing division between thinking about thinking, and Thinking. Real Thinking is not the kind of ratiocination that occurs when we use reason to arrive at a conclusion (which includes thinking about thinking), instead, Heidegger illustrates that Thinking and thanking are etymologically linked.

Just imagine one servant who master calls for to do something, to see how servant could not respond if were unresponsive dead or deaf, nor master do call if had no voice or was stupid and didn't know who exactly to call, who his servers were etc (which btw Heidegger learnt straight out of Kants textbook "the matter of cogitation ie, object, makes even cogitation possible ie, as cogitation, and then also as object etc..") As an other way Kant puts the same: How could you really ever say something about another thing if that thing already contained it— eg, 'Tree is green' would not be real predication if tree and green were no where separate or if tree already contained green or if green was always in tree etc—in other words you must also be able to conceive of them separately, imagine them without relation, and keep so imagination and contemplation ie, you must be able to take all greens and put together with other greens, and keep away from any trees, and otherwise. And same of course if you didn't know who your obedient slaves were and who to call a slave and who to call for, then how would you really still be able to keep calling yourself slave owner or even think yourself as one such seriously?

Heidegger is not opposed to science per se insofar as he does not reject the human project of understanding nature. The most well-known basis for dismissing him as simply "anti-science" is the claim he makes repeatedly in *Was Heisst Denken?* that "science does not think" (WD, 4/8, et passim). But he also says often in this text that "most thought-provoking of all is that we are still not thinking" (WD, 2/4, et passim). His objection is not so much to science as to scientism, that is, the preclusion of other ways of thinking by the representational thinking of the sciences, and the marginalization, displacement, and devaluation of other methodologies and bodies of knowledge by the scientific standard of objectivity that has become epistemologically dominant in modernity.

Inspired by his mentor Edmund Husserl, who invented a method for philosophical investigation called "phenomenology" in hope of making a fresh start, Heidegger strove to return to "the things (or matters) themselves" (setting aside what 2,500 years of philosophical discussion and debate had said about these matters). One of the (many) reasons that *Being & Time* is so difficult to read is that Heidegger is attempting to describe human beings not as they have traditionally been described by philosophers (the rational animal or a consciousness confronting objects) but as an openness—a there that is interacting with a meaningful environment. Post-*Being & Time*, Heidegger struggles to further evade the terminology of the metaphysical tradition by adopting an oracular, almost poetic prose. He really isn't doing philosophy any longer, because he believes that philosophy=metaphysics and that this tradition (Plato to Nietzsche) has played itself out. He wants to talk about art, technology, and language without using any of the words which previous philosophers have used.

Heidegger makes the point that in every sentence that is written or spoken there is a mention of Being, of is and was, and were and will be. We think we know what it means to be, we think we know what Is is. But, precisely because we think we know what it means to be, we look past the burning questions that are revealed when we look closer at the thing closest to us, our own being, our human being, and the Being that all this being participates in.

Heidegger is telling us that we need to alter our perception to the ordinary thing right in front of us, that we always

speaking about, that concept that makes language possible at all, but is so close to us that we never question it. We have looked past it, because in our minds it was unquestionable, there were other important questions, other places we thought we should be looking, but it turns out the question, like our lost keys, were right out in the open.

1. Heidegger is a difficult writer only because he is a difficult thinker. Relative to the difficulty of what he is writing and thinking about, he is in fact extraordinarily clear—and also very pedagogical.
2. Heidegger's thought is so difficult not because it is talking about things that are distant from everyday experience and obscure (e.g. high-energy particle physics, transfinite numbers) but what is closest to us, and which, for that very reason, has resisted explicit treatment by philosophy and science.
3. Heidegger's thinking is fundamentally non-linear, and cannot be read like a mathematical proof — It does not start out with adequate definitions and axioms, but with "indications" of phenomena that, in the course of investigation, will be presented more concretely, and whose reciprocal intertwinement will be demonstrated. This non-linear mode of exposition is demanded by the very nature of that which is under investigation.
4. Heidegger must be read at once intuitively and philologically — one must pay close attention to his terminology, yet never forget that his terminological innovations are compelled by "philosophical intuitions" that he struggles to do justice to without falling into the misleading clichés of established metaphysical discourse.

Dasein is a construct, whose only purpose is to establish a pseudo-being that can pass from past to present to future in a timeless flux and can apprehend Being in a manner that a real flesh-and-blood man cannot. The questions that a human being asks must be at first limited to establishing the atemporal traits of Dasein.

The concept of a "human being" is a tricky one. Heidegger's Being (upper case) is not the flesh-and-blood person who lives on planet Earth. When he wishes to reference the ethereal essence of a man that floats somewhere in a dimension outside of this one, he uses Being. Conversely, he uses "being" (lower case) for real people. There are three traits that mark the Being of Dasein. First, is "thrown-ness." Here, Being is "thrown" into another dimension that always already has existed, does exist, and will exist for perpetuity. This pre-conditioned atemporal dimension is not filled with already existing objects like tables, chairs, and spoons nor does it contain already-born Dasein-type pseudo-beings who live there, work there, and ultimately die there. What are there are possibilities that can be willed into fruition that may emerge within an environment replete with both material and non-material phenomenon in a matrix that is not guaranteed to happen. Second, is "existence." Existence is the dimension into which Dasein is thrown. Dasein looks about his new home, which exists in a non-spatial non-temporal Twilight Zone of infinite possibilities, and begins to make choices about his future, which in any event does not operate according to clock-time. These choices occur in non-Einstein space/time where a nano-second is equal to a trillion years. Eventually (now there is another word that is irrelevant in Dasein's new home) Dasein does make deliberate choices that are/will be meaningful in the future (another linguistic irrelevancy). Thus these choices cross the plateau from what-could-be to what-is. The result is a newer and better Being. Third, is "fallen-ness." Fallen-ness is a complex of actions that begins after (still another out-of-place temporalized word) Being begins his/her/its new life. Think of Being making friends with other Beings who have made similar such transfers to this mystical realm of non-being. Presumably, these Beings act more or less like their human counterparts on planet Earth. Some Beings act alone like hermits while others organize into groups connected by like interests. The more that Beings interact with other Beings in pursuit of commonalities the more likely it is that these Beings (including our Being) will morph into the Corporate Being, dressing alike, acting alike, and thinking alike. After some unknown period of non-Einstein time, our Being will forget just what it was that he had chosen as his life style. As soon as that tipping point happens, then our Being, like Satan from Paradise Lost, falls from grace in a process unsurprisingly called "fallen-ness." Prior to that point, while he/she/it was still living/existing on the right path of correct individuality, his/her/its life style was authentic. After that point, our de-individualized Being is now seen as inauthentic.

When a Being has been re-classified as inauthentic, he (I shall use "he" from now on) is in crisis mode. What is he to do? What can he do? Presumably inauthenticity is not a desirable condition. One cannot imagine Being wishing to remain inauthentic. Crisis mode leads to panic mode, which in turn fills him with dread. Dread removes Being from even wishing to continue living his formerly useful authentic lifestyle. Thoughts of death begin to percolate in his brain, perhaps not suicide as we know it, but Being's nearest nihilistic equivalent. This burgeoning thought of dread/death has a transformative effect on Being. Now for the first time in his proto-life as Dasein, Being becomes uneasily aware of his threatened mortality (if one can be mortal as Being). This growing awareness is an inevitable outcome of how he sees himself. Once he acknowledges that dread/death is looming, Being now finds himself at an ontological fork in the road. On one side, he can continue as he is and die (or whatever the Being equivalent is) or he can decide on a specific course of action. This specificity requires that Being take a long and hard look at his life from the moment he first popped into existence until right now. What went wrong with his original plan? Why did he not have a self-activating Early Warning System go off in his head? What he does have as an option--perhaps his

only one--is conscience.

Since phenomenology requires human beings to understand the universe in which they live before they can hope to classify the objects in it, Dasein is the mechanism that is—in a manner of speaking—“already there.” Dasein thus eliminates the need for human beings to establish a pre-existing grounding presence. The next generation of theorists (the deconstructionists) would borrow Heidegger’s concept of an incorporeal Dasein and term it “metaphysics of presence.” As soon as Dasein is conjured into existence, then human beings can make that transcendental leap to apprehending the many “solid” objects that remained un-seeable until just now. Once Dasein “opens” up the material world, then human beings can involve themselves with whatever is solidly there. These beings do not pour emotion into things. Rather—and this is the tricky part—they “transform” ephemeral essences into solid objects by caring about them. Without this “caring” there is no “there” there. “Caring” is not the only way to alter a “possibility” of existence to a confirmed existence. “Mood” is a second means in which human beings can move from one plane of seeming reality to a higher one of ethereality. The mood that would most likely do the trick is angst or anxiety. Fear does not qualify since fear inevitably involves fear of a specific object in the real world—a lion or tiger perhaps. Angst is more generalized, an emotion which opens the door for human beings to enter. “Conscience” is the third and final way for Dasein to become aware of the existence of un-seeable objects. When society’s rules overwhelm a human being’s desire to act, that desire is silenced, leading him or her to rely on conscience of what to do next. It is the interplay of care, mood, and conscience that permits Dasein (remember that Dasein is a construct or substitute for a flesh and blood human being) to make yet another mind shift. As long as a human being does not care or worry too much of his looming death, then Heidegger calls him “inauthentic.” But when that human accepts his looming death, he becomes “authentic,” and it is this authenticity that allows him to elevate himself from that “fallen” state of in-authenticity to the point that he can now interact with physical objects of the external world.

While Being is thrown into his new realm, ultimately falls from it, and eventually decides whether to re-ascend to achieve his former status as authentic, time is passing but not the clock-time that is traditional with mortal beings. Heidegger’s time is both indeterminate and integral to Being’s very proto-existence. One might think that time is no more than the temporal continuum into which one is born, one grows, and eventually one dies. Time for Dasein is more interactive, more fluid, and more likely to contour itself to fit the specific needs and vision of those Beings within. Time for a mortal is uni-dimensional, flowing only from present to future. A mere mortal can remember his past but cannot alter it. Time for Being is multi-dimensional, allowing him a god-like perspective from which he may at his leisure review the totality of his life from start to finish. Dasein can do more than recall a fixed past. He can alter it at crucial nodes of temporality. He can envision a future scenario and in so doing cause it to happen. What is required from Being to re-shape his time-line is to exercise the will to do so. Heidegger looks with favor on any Being that wishes to pick himself up by his temporal bootstraps to leave the doomworld of inauthenticity and enter the lifeworld of authenticity.

“The answer to the question “What is called thinking?” is, of course, a statement, but not a proposition that could be formed into a sentence with which the question can be put aside as settled...The question cannot be settled, now or ever...Thinking itself is a way. We respond to the way only by remaining underway.” (Heidegger: What is Called Thinking?)

“Just as it is with bats’ eyes in respect of daylight, so it is with our mental vision in respect of those things which are by nature most apparent.” Aristotle (Metaphysics Ch. I, Bk 2, 993b)

“The conditions of the possibility of experience in general are at the same time conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience.” Kant (Critique of Pure Reason, A 158, B 197)