

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

Man, in his existence is always confronted with the question, that is, “to be itself or not itself.”¹ But then a question is raised, what does it mean to be one’s self, how is it, if man is to act as such? Is to be one’s self to act in conformance with one’s nature, that is, to how one should be, granted by experience and light of natural reason that man knows it is such. But what is this nature? Human nature, that is, when referring to man. Of man’s experiences he develops his nature, or is it the other way around, that his nature dictates his experiences. How valid is this nature and/or these experiences? Man knows, his reason can assess which is which, but can reason suffice as an assessment tool? Are there standards that man can look up to and measure himself so as to see if he was himself by virtue of these standards? And if ever there are, how valid are these? Where do they derive? The questions are legion, but it points to one designation, that a question of priority has not been answered: what is man? In fact even, of a question before the question: what is that which makes man be known, that which grants man to be known? The circumstance that the question is asked presuppose that it has not been answered, if so thus answered, it was not adequate. Thus there is an inquiry. The questions will guide the attempt at a discovery.

¹ Heidegger, Martin, Being and Time, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962)33. This will be referred to as *Being and Time*.

Man is a being alongside other beings, that is, of other men and things. This being alongside supposes nearness and being near allows him to inquire into them. Inquiry then supposes knowing, but what is it that man has known. Everyday man is surrounded with things, thus he has grown familiar with them. If so doing, he has known them, and if to know, out of an understanding, there to foster is a relationship that is both good and beneficial. But then looking at the present human situation, of his relationship to the world (that is of things and men) is there such a good and beneficial relationship? Yes, benefits there are, but who benefits, only man. Good? Yes, but only man is in a condition that is good. Even worst still is to consider that there are only some men, that is, others (men) are part of those who are suffering, reduced to be like things used and abused. Thus there is an inquiry. Where have man and his understanding of the things around him strayed to? Did man, in the first place really understand that which he was supposed to be familiar with. Where lies the problem?

Statement of the Problem

For the German philosopher Martin Heidegger man in the contemporary age is living an inauthentic life. This inauthenticity he accounts for man's misrelating to the world, that is, of things and other men. He sees this misrelating as a threat to man's existence, that if not given immediate attention leading to a resolution, man is to perish together with his history. This inauthenticity that he speaks of is grounded in oblivion, the forgetting of *being*. But what is *being*? In its basic linguistic formulation it is understood as that which *is*, has existence and not nothing. Man is a being and so are things, and in this fundamental structure he can relate, make sense and know. And yet this definition does not capture its essence for it can easily be assigned to anything as long as it is, thus

it can be reduced to a mere *entity*, but being is more than mere existence in space and time. Heidegger understands being to be that which gives significance or meaningful presence to things and men, that they are as they are is because of their being. Man is always attuned to being, of his own being and that of others. He is able to understand because it is being that grants knowing, just as a book is a book or man is a man, it is because being gives to them their designation, so there is a relationship made possible by an encounter between beings, that they be known and understood there is harmonious relationship to develop. This is conditioned by a primordial understanding, of man having not yet forgotten, he understands things and other men unto their being.

But everyday man is surrounded with entities, himself being one, and this made him grow familiar with them. This familiarity turned man's attitude towards neglect, for since he thinks that he already knows their being, it no longer becomes a matter of continuously knowing and understanding them, but instead it happens that there is a taking for granted. The familiarity leads man to take *beings* for granted unto their essence, thus he forgets and no longer knows, worst is, that man does not even know that he no longer knows, that he no longer remembers.² Man lives in a state of oblivion. He relates to entities as if he understands them in their being, but is not. This lead to man's misrelating to things and other men, he misuses beings and this misuse backfires and threatens him and his existence, man is endangered. But man need not just wait for his destruction, for he can do something to prevent the impending threat and it is through a re-trieve of his original understanding of being. The researcher gives a proposal as to how a retrieve is to be accomplished, and this is through the asking of the fundamental

² Polt, Richard, Heidegger: An Introduction, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1999)1-2.

question, that is, of “Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?”³ To ask the question is an attempt of man to restore his fundamental bearing, to re-orient himself of his original place and relationship in-with the world. Thus in the development of the paper the following objectives are to be met:

1. Man will have to identify the problem of being and have to make it his own, as for the being that he is, that which affects the totality will always have to relate to its parts.
2. Man asks the question. The inquiry into being supposes that man has decided to ask the fundamental question (Why is there something rather than nothing?) and that this is a privileged asking, that is, it comes from a unique relation of man to himself, as a being (*Dasein*) capable of inquiry into his own being and of others. An asking that is out of his own freedom.
3. The technicality of the language of being, its development throughout the entire exposition, of the terms like *Dasein*, of the difference between mere entities and Being, will have to be clarified and thoroughly exposed so as to establish a concrete formulation towards a resolution, that is of the meaning of man, authenticity, and their original relation to Being.

Significance of the Study

Looking at a particular human situation, of his abuse of the environment and its resources, it can be emphasized the importance of man’s need for re-trieve of his originary understanding of being.

³ Sheehan, Thomas, “Reading Heidegger’s ‘What is Metaphysics?’” in The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Studies I (2001) 185. This will be referred to as *Reading*.

Man is here seen as a mindless consumer who views the environment as a reserve where goods are stocked, waiting and ready for consumption. He challenges the environment to give up everything that she has in order to provide for his needs, even when it is no longer necessary. Because of man's disorientation, that in turn made him selfish; he could not resist his dominating tendencies and just keeps going. These resulted to the natural resources now running dry and that sooner it could no longer provide. Man endangers his world and himself, of this situation he is blind. Global warming and other environmental calamities are resultant of these abuses. If man is to save himself, he must find a way to retrieve his original understanding of being, that is, of himself and others. An effort towards a re-establishing of the fundamental relation must be attempted.

Scope and Limitation

This study is an attempt to restore man of his original understanding of being via the asking of the fundamental question. With this asking, which is not achieved by merely reading and hearing but really to ask, that is, to participate into that which are brought up by the questioning, is to properly approach the reading of the research.

The whole paper is an inquiry into being. This primarily being the core of Heidegger's doing of philosophy, concentration on his exposition and attempt at definition via the *fundamental question* will be given priority. The topic in discussion will also be localized in order to address a particular social problem, that is, of the environment. As to what may be implied after an understanding of being, that would lead to a resolution.

Methodology

The researcher recognizes the difficulty of Heidegger's thought in his pursuit of being, and that an attempt to synthesize his work becomes if not impossible a dangerous task as it may be misinterpreted and certain judgments be not justified. The entire work will then anchor on careful analysis and interpretation, to safeguard a way of doing philosophy of a thinker.

Careful readings of Heidegger's text and by other various reliable authors are to be appropriated. Analysis is then to follow in the localization of the topic in discussion, where the process is to be guided by observation of events in a macro level. Reading of texts or articles of current events will also be done, so as to assure of an up to date paper that is to address the particular epoch, which is of today.

Review of Related Literature

An article by Tad Beckman titled "Martin Heidegger and Environmental Ethics"⁴ talks about the destruction of the environment caused by man's misunderstanding of the essence of technology. Here he elaborates the threat man is facing because of his challenging of the environment to give up its resources through the use of technology which is then clearly not its case. Here he writes of man's poetic relation with the environment where if he is able to restore, a beneficial relationship arises. He also makes the attempt to uncover the essence of technology and makes it clear to the readers what it is really with technology that in its originary sense it is not meant to do or give harm to the person or his environment but instead it develops and promotes life and

⁴ Beckman, Tad, "Martin Heidegger and Environmental Ethics," (2000), in [http://www2.hmc.edu/~tbeckman/personal/HEIDART. HTML](http://www2.hmc.edu/~tbeckman/personal/HEIDART.HTML) (accessed October 29, 2009).

understanding between beings. The author anchors his report on Heidegger's celebrated essay entitled "The Question Concerning Technology,"⁵ where he gives a clear exposition of its content.

Another article is Damon A. Young's "Not Easy Being Green: Process, Poetry and the Tyranny of Distance."⁶ Here he gives the facts and presents the many places that must be saved from destruction, and the sad reality that these places are too distant for man. The distance, he mentions does not allow man to authentically speak of their *being*, and if man cannot speak of their *being*, of what *is*, it would be very difficult to address the problem as it would turn out to be a mere pondering upon of that which is not really the case and just imagined, therefore relying in mere theorizing. This would hurt the attempt to restore man's original understanding, for how can man understand if he is too far from that which he attempts to understand. Thus, he suggests that these distances be overcome with Whiteheadian process metaphysics, and of poetics as understood in the Heideggerian sense, and as developed in a concrete community life.⁷ Young anchors his presentation by concentrating on the human condition and he builds support from a careful reading of numerous texts on philosophers of language and metaphysics, all which have contributed to making sense of things in relation to the environment.

⁵ Heidegger, Martin, "The Question Concerning Technology" in Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964), ed. by David Farrell Krell (U.S.A.: Harper San Francisco, 1977). This will be referred to as *The Question*.

⁶ Young, Damon, "Not Easy Being Green: Process Philosophy, Poetry and the Tyranny of Distance," in Ethics, Place and Environment, 5:3(2002):189-204.

⁷ *ibid.*, 189.

CHAPTER 1

MAN AND HIS BEING-SITUATION

Prologue to an Inquiry into Being

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger, in his published lecture entitled “An Introduction to Metaphysics”⁸ wrote:

...it is in the very nature of philosophy never to make things easier but only more difficult....it is the authentic function of philosophy to challenge historical being-there and hence in the last analysis, being pure and simple.⁹

These are the thoughts that run in Heidegger’s doing of philosophy. He speaks of a difficulty, grounded in philosophy’s nature and functions to challenge man and his attempt to understand himself and the things around him. Man, endowed with his capacity to think, asks many questions in his lifetime and these questions he attempts to answer. Man makes the effort to find out that which will satisfy his need to know. This is a human peculiarity, and in this quest man employs different methods to attain that he wants to achieve, of a knowing of the things and of other men.

One of the methods that he employs in this wanting to know is philosophy. Philosophy like a tool is utilized to facilitate the operations of his act. Results are expected in the process. But is philosophy really such a tool?

This paper will have to deal with philosophy. In formulating the problem of the research and exposing the arguments towards a resolution, philosophical methods

⁸ Heidegger, Martin, An Introduction to Metaphysics, trans. and with an intro. by Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959). This work will be referred to as *Introduction*.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

and techniques are to be employed so that there be results. But the question arises: what is philosophy? And what right does it have to become the ground of the research, that it be philosophical? First, that which is spoken of, philosophy, will have to be understood in terms of generality, that is, where all its branches and systems meet (particular to this research are metaphysics and phenomenology). Now, it is to be made clear, and as Heidegger would write that all that can be said of philosophy is what it cannot be and what it cannot accomplish.¹⁰ Thus, it has first to be developed the ground where the research is to be laid upon, to present a foundation, which is of doing philosophy with an understanding of it, or better yet, of which it is not.

Heidegger writes of three things that can be said of philosophy, of which it cannot be. First, “All essential philosophical questioning is necessarily untimely.”¹¹ A particular doing of philosophy, though usually understood as being done so as to address a particular epoch, is not really its case, as it is intended to address that which is of the future or that it is to connect with its past. It is always either projected or retraced. Its actualization does not settle in the present, questions are always moving back and forth. It does not stop. It only develops. Thus, it cannot be adjusted in the present but it compels the present to be adjusted.

Second, since philosophy is untimely, that it does not settle, “it is one of those few things that can never find an immediate echo in the present.”¹² A philosophy is never popular in its present, it does not show. A doing of philosophy is always in the process of thinking, drawing from its past, projecting into the future. It is not a quick fix to any problem in the present. A philosophy does not become “...fashionable, either it is no real

¹⁰ Heidegger, Introduction, 9.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹² *Ibid.*

philosophy or it has been misinterpreted and misused for ephemeral or extraneous purposes.”¹³ But if philosophy is designated as such, is it then that philosophy becomes useless and being a thinking process it remains just in the level of theory?

The third point presents an argument against this way of looking into philosophy as useless and being purely theoretical. Heidegger would write, “... philosophy cannot be directly learned like manual and technical skills; it cannot be directly applied or judged by its usefulness in the manner of economic or other professional knowledge.”¹⁴ He would stress that what is useless is a force. If philosophy does not appeal to the present and gives an appearance of being expendable this is because there is no way of determining its task and what must be expected of it. The developments of philosophy have in its every stage its own laws.¹⁵

Philosophy is untimely. “What is untimely will have its own times.”¹⁶ Thus there is no basis for a saying of philosophy as useful or not, only in man’s historical development that he will have to wait hoping that he may know.

Question: What weight is there in an elaboration of philosophy, of what it is not?

It is to safeguard the exposition that is to follow. The exposition will be philosophical; it will be useless in the sense of philosophy having not been understood unto its essence. Here runs the danger to thought, that what is understood as useless is to be disregarded since nothing can be done with it. But Heidegger would write:

It is only wrong to suppose that this is the last word on philosophy. For the rejoinder imposes: granted that *we* cannot do anything with philosophy, might not philosophy, if we concern ourselves with it, do something *with us*?¹⁷

¹³ Heidegger, Introduction, 8.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 12.

This paper will first have to address this, so as to prevent the impending threat. Readability taken in the sense of popularity and usefulness will have to be dismissed so as to open the possibility of thought and that thinking takes place. Difficulty in Heidegger's way of doing of philosophy will always discourage the uninitiated reader, and this leads to minimizing that which he does not understand as useless, for it has been said that ignorance breeds contempt. Difficulty is a demand of philosophy, and that which is difficult, in order for it to be overcome requires one to be great, that is to do great. And this is always a challenge. Here lies the power of human possibility.

This paper is an invitation to philosophy, that is, to philosophize.

The Difficult Nature of Elucidating What Philosophy is

But what is to philosophize? How is man to philosophize? Heidegger writes that it can only be elucidated what philosophy *is not*. If to philosophize is to have an understanding of philosophy, and one's actions are grounded in this understanding, if here elucidated is what philosophy is not, does it not imply that man acts in the understanding of this negation? It can be said, maybe. But if man does philosophize by virtue of what philosophizing is not, could it be that what he does be then a basis for answering the question of what philosophy *is*? To act in an understanding of what philosophy *is not* is to act in a way opposite of what is thus presented and with these lay the foundation for such a definition, that philosophy is. But what does this presuppose? Man acts in a way opposite of what he understands philosophy to be what it is not, but what it is not demands an understanding of what *is*, that it need have an object examined beforehand in order for it to be said that it is not rather than *it is*. Thus it can be said that

philosophy has an object, and in the manner of the discussion, philosophy is the object, of what it is.

Philosophy *is*, it can vaguely be said. That something as something can be examined in many different ways, in ways that it be scientific, historic, linguistic, can something like philosophy be examined by these? That they determine whence and what is philosophy, will it suffice? That they are able to say what philosophy is does it give them the final word?

Every pursuit has an object pursued, and that which it pursues becomes totally its own, but in a manner that it is to be designated as such in accordance with the process of pursuing, that what is pursued by science becomes scientific, of history becomes historic, that of language becomes linguistic, and that of philosophy it can be said either of these and/or other methods of inquiry. But can philosophy be examined philosophically? That what is known of a person is not known better by the person himself, can it be that a knowing of philosophy stems from philosophy itself that it reveals itself so that it be known.

But how is this to be done?

To examine philosophy philosophically as to what it is demands that an understanding of philosophy be known in advance so as to proceed with the inquiry, but what is given is what it is not, and it has been established that this is the only thing that can be said about it and to determine what it is be a difficult task.

“Anyone can easily see that we are moving in a circle.”¹⁸ Heidegger makes this point in his lecture on the origin of the work of art. Similar is the problem encountered by

¹⁸ Heidegger, Martin, Poetry, Language, Thought, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971)18. This will be referred to as *Poetry*.

the inquiry into philosophy, of what it is, there is the danger of the vicious cycle peculiar to logic and that this attempt must then be abandoned for it will just be a tour around the circle and it will never end. The circle must be avoided. But should it really be avoided?

Heidegger would write:

...we are compelled to follow the circle. This is neither a makeshift nor a defect. To enter upon this path is the strength of thought, to continue on it is the feast of thought, assuming that thinking is a craft....every separate step that we attempt circles in this circle.¹⁹

Thus there lays in man the possibility to inquire, and that this possibility into an inquiry is grounded in his ability to decide, therefore he decides into his inquiry to know philosophy. A knowing of philosophy, in its essence, has not been properly elucidated and yet man inquires into it as if guided by it, being lead to its own unfolding. It can be said of philosophy then that it pursues itself. Philosophy is a seeking for its own unfolding.

Again the question is posed: what is philosophy?

Philosophy Opens the Possibility of an Inquiry into Being

There is an initial understanding of philosophy, though not clear, it makes possible the asking of the question, allows an inquiry into it. What is common here? It is that two things are constant. First, that *there is always an asking*. Second, that philosophy *is treated as an object to be known*, philosophy, thus is.

To ask a question, the questioner is demanded. That which can ask is only man, en F3DjFWn

and supplemental to his being; even unnecessary questions will contribute to his being, for it makes possible the distinction of the unnecessary from the necessary questions.

Man seeks the answers to these questions. It is decisive of his being. How he lives his life, how he relates to other beings will depend on his understanding, an understanding acquired after an inquiry, which is an asking. Thus an asking is always critical. If man is to have an authentic relationship with the world, his asking must be in accord with what is, that is, prior to an asking that seeks for answers, an authentic, more radical constitution must first be established so as to ground and safeguard any future questioning.

Since man asks questions in order to understand the world, and him being the source of his own questions, asked out of a knowing prior to the question itself, it can be asked: what is this a priori knowing before the question. There is a question before the question. And thus there is an understanding even before the asking, that man understands that he need to ask questions and that this constitution allows him to ask, he has long preceded to ask without even understanding this peculiarity.

Man asks questions about others without even inquiring into himself as to what makes this possible. Man inquires of others without even knowing himself first. This threatens the questioning, as to the authentic constitution of the question that stems from the authentic understanding of the questioner, there is no such thing. And if man has not yet understood himself, an understanding of the questions asked and the attempt to answer these questions will prove to be a useless endeavor, given that something authentic cannot ground from that which is inauthentic. Thus there are no authentic questions, even authentic answers, as man that which strives to know, if he does not even have a knowing grounded in the self that knows of the validity of his knowing, because

he is certain that he is such, and such capable of asking and knowing because it is his constitution as a human being, unless there is this force, there can be no authentic thinking. Man should strive for this kind of thinking, thus he should strive to become authentic. Man first examines his self, his constitution as a human being. That being which can ask questions, can inquire and is capable of knowing.

This paper is an investigation, an investigation of the being that is human and of the questions before the asking of the question, of the questions fundamental and prior to a knowing. Thus the inquiry begins with these two questions: 1. what is man? 2. What makes this question possible?

The discussion originally bears the question of what philosophy is. Peculiar to this inquiry as mentioned is the asking of the question and the object of the inquiry which is philosophy. Already exposed is the nature of the asking and it has lead to a more fundamental concern that has to be addressed in order to proceed. Now philosophy as an object of inquiry is yet to be elucidated. The treatment of the nature of the question has transported the question to the realm of philosophy itself, that there be a need to address the question of what makes possible the questioning, consequently of knowing in the human being and that of the human being which also asks of his own nature as a being that questions, there is the invitation to grow with philosophy. As there does a re-evaluation of all knowing by re-examining all that has been held as a product of the questioning, that all knowing of what philosophy *is*, is to be held in doubt, that where root man's understanding of philosophy is to be located, thus where he comes nearer to the source, philosophy develops and is understood, therefore a growing process. Here peculiar is philosophy treated as an object, sought and is yet to be known. Philosophy *is*. But what is this *is*?

Philosophy just like everything else *is*. Things *are*, and they are encountered, it makes possible the inquiry into them. Does this connote existence? But what is existence? Existence *is*. Is is-ness a property attributed to things in order for them to be what they are? But what is it *to be*? How does man know that what *is* is in its being? *Being*? What is being? The question into philosophy has now been redirected as to its being. And consequential of this an inquiry into being in general has also been laid, as to its possibility for inquiry. Philosophy is a being among other beings, and to give priority into it as an object of inquiry poses the question of what right does it have to be regarded as such. To inquire into philosophy philosophically demands that it be known in its totality. But philosophy being a being among other beings, without other knowledge of it except for what it is not, and now partially of what it is, that it *is*, allows it to be examined only in these terms and to examine philosophy as it is will account for an inquiry into the *is*. Thus there is no inquiry into philosophy as there fixed as to its own being, but it is examined to be something that grows from the *is*, known only when the *is* is already encountered. An inquiry into the *is* will first have to take place. The inquiry still moves in the realm of philosophy, and it attempts to know philosophy within it, as a knowing partial yet still to be completed.

Heidegger's doing of philosophy lies in this realm of the *is*. In this realm of being his doing of philosophy goes full sway. His power of thought is concentrated in the attempt to define the *is*, then developing to understand that which grants being to man's knowing. This paper of the researcher will have to deal with this doing of philosophy of the philosopher, the task is of which to expose and interpret.

Two things turn out as a result of this prologue prior to formal development of the thesis. First that man, of the being that he is, is to be examined and inquired into as to

what makes of all his possibilities that of an inquiry into what makes him ask the question binding to his being is to be made clear so as to make way for all authentic knowing and inquiry. Second, that all that is to be known is in the form of an *is*, of a being. That man encounters being in his lifetime and that to inquire into the *is* so as to understand it will demand the question of that which is to be prioritized so as to be representative of all that *is*. An inquiry into something as it *is* will always concern other things for they also are, and that all of them have a constitution similar to one another consequence of their *is*-ness. Therefore the question is posed as to what being deserves the priority of inquiry. Both realizations are interrelated and both are critical to an overall understanding of what *is*, of being, of man, and of the world, as it is. It is geared towards a better relationship with the self and to the world, thus living authentically.

Appropriating Heidegger's philosophy the inquiry is to commence.

The Problematic: Oblivion of Being

Man lives in the world. In the world are things and other men. What are these things and other men? Things are encountered in man's everyday living. Things are used, utilized, observed. They are known by the senses, intuited to man's understanding. Things *are*.

Other men, speaking of man and besides him there are others. Very much like him and yet different. As the line goes that everyone is unique, here it applies. Man is born in the world where he is not to be alone. Man is in the world with other man whom he relates to, deals with, and converses. Just like things (but are not), they are known by the senses, intuited to his understanding, but with a particular place as to that which can be distinguished as the I am that he is. Other men *are*.

Since things are and men are, just as man is viewed by other men as the similar other, he also *is*. The *is*-ness denotes existence in traditional philosophy. That things and men are as they are, they are always encountered. To be encountered is to be known, either partially or completely. This knowing directs the manner in which man relates. Just as man is able to understand completely, as to everything unto their essence, he can live in accord with what *is*, that is, he lives in the natural order of things. And if he distorts his understanding that he ceases to know, out of this destitute situation, things are obscured and man disorients his relation. Man lives in danger of blunder, of a life of untruth. There is no understanding, but that only which roots from misunderstanding, which is chaos. How man relates to things and other men, are decisive of his life. He exists in an unfolding of truths and untruths, grounded in a deciding that is critical and essential to one's living,

Things are. They exist in space and time. And yet this fact, though simply stated has within it something more.

Heidegger when making an attempt to understand things, he sees them first as entities pure and simple. Entity is designated as anything that is or can be. For example God, human beings, communism, angels, and the color red are all entities. But prior to that, and this is not to be taken in the sense chronological, but of a more fundamental bearing which grounds things in their existence, Heidegger considers entities as to having being. The being of an entity, just as things and men are, has to do with the *is* of whatever. What an entity is, how it is, and the fact that it is at all is designated by its

being. Being *is* and the meaning of *is*, is what Heidegger investigates.²⁰ This distinction between entities and being is what is referred to as the “ontological difference”²¹

Heidegger’s philosophical project is in the understanding of the meaning of being and, in his later developments, the disclosure of being within human understanding. The question then is: what is being?

The question cannot yet be given full exposition in this part of the paper unless a more radical step has been taken in order to assure of a full-grown development and discussion as to its unfolding. The warrant has not yet been given, that is, of a fundamental question be asked that allows the journey to an unfolding of being. The question “what is being?” is prematurely asked. Grounded in an understanding of what *is*, product of a development in time that had evolved it to what it is now, the question has to be faced in a more radical sense. It is not to be reduced to a process of gathering that which had been given by the past so that there merely be a process of recollection, assembling pieces presupposed to be broken and it is as if there is a whole to be fixed.

There must be a new beginning. Heidegger would write it thus:

...to recapture, to repeat <wieder-holen>, the beginning of our historical-spiritual existence, in order to transform it into a new beginning. This is possible. It is indeed the crucial form of history, because it begins in the fundamental event.²²

The fundamental event is the aim of this paper, and it is in the asking of the fundamental question that the event unfolds (this is developed in the second chapter). Yet Heidegger notes:

But we do not repeat a beginning by reducing it to something past and now known, which need merely be imitated; no, the beginning must be begun again, more radically, with all the strangeness, darkness, insecurity that attend a true beginning.²³

²⁰ Sheehan, Thomas, “Martin Heidegger” in *A Companion to the Philosophers*, ed. by Robert L. Arrington (Oxford and Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) 289. This will be referred to as “*Heidegger*”.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Heidegger, *Introduction*, 39.

It is of an encounter that would make man to ask the question, out of a decision. It is, thus, an authentic inquiry.

The question cannot yet be asked for there be a need of critical and fundamental ground. Yet there can be an inquiry as to the question of being be asked: why ask the question of being, of what is being?

Man is himself a being, and he *is*. In his encounter of things and other men he encounters being. An example of this is that of a student of whom upon entering a library goes towards the shelves and picks a book. The book, just as all of the books not chosen, is an entity, and as to what it *is* and that it *is*, it is because of its being. The student encounters the being of the book and this he knows because, “an understanding of being is already included in conceiving anything which one apprehends.”²⁴ But this understanding is limited to that which he understands as to what makes the book a book. Like the Greek ideal of the essences of things, there is the danger of reducing being to mere essence attributed to things. Then a thought comes to mind: essence is also an entity; it has a being which is constitutive of it, so where lay its being? Of the Greeks’ *to on* and *ousia*, and of the mediaeval scholastics’ *ens* and *esse*, two distinct philosophical traditions who gave full emphasis on the problem of being, Heidegger gives a different approach. He sees being not as mere existence in space and time, but “the being of an entity as the significance or meaningful presence of that entity within the field of human concern.”²⁵ Everything that man *is*, is correlative of being, his possibilities and concerns.

²³ Heidegger, Introduction, 39.

²⁴ Heidegger, Being and Time, 22.

²⁵ Sheehan, “Heidegger”, 289.

“To point out an entity’s being is to indicate how that entity is meaningfully involved – and what significance it has – within a given set of such concerns.”²⁶

And yet the problem still poses itself: man encounters being and knows it, but as to that which points to being, to where and how it *is*, why it *is*, clouds the supposed to be clear sky of the unfolding. The example of the student, holding the book he asks the question, “where is being?” It is not known. He looks inside the book and finds bounded papers where printed is a work of an author, an entity. The hard bound cover that protects the contents of the book and makes the book appear as a book, also an entity. The student looks into every part of the book and sees entities. But where is being? It cannot be found anywhere and yet it makes its presence felt, like a ghost haunting the present of which is past, and this is surely the case.

That the question is to be asked, “What is being?” it signifies forgetfulness. That the question can be asked (though man may deny) it has always been a concern. What has been forgotten is that which has been once known and recognized, that being *is*. Man is surrounded with entities and everyday he encounters being. Being always imposes itself unto man, and man recognizes this because he comes to know things. It is an everyday encounter. That which is encountered in an everyday basis is bound to become familiar, and what is familiar is in two things either known. What can be familiar is either *known as to its entirety*. Or it is that what can be familiar be *taken for granted and forgotten*. The former is the case of the few, and the latter of the many.

The forgetfulness of being out of a taking for granted is the problem of being, and this cause for man’s problem that is yet to be elucidated.

²⁶ Sheehan, “Heidegger”, 289.

An exposition of the reason for the forgetfulness of being cannot be developed here in this chapter for it must first be understood the nature of being before any expounding takes place. There must first be a remembering so that which has been forgotten, so as to its forgetfulness, there be a clear recall of the entire process of oblivion, grounded in the trust of one's own being, knowing its own.

What can be elucidated here shortly is the effect caused by the oblivion of being.

Being is said to be that which gives significant or meaningful presence to an entity within the field of human concern. Thus, an entity with its being has within it an original bearing of meaning. An entity when encountered is always treated with regards to its fundamental meaning, that is, that it be used according to what it is and how it is. Thus when an entity is understood as to its meaning, a meaningful relationship is realized between the two and a harmonious conjunction takes place. An example would be that of a hammer and a carpenter. The carpenter understands that the hammer is used to drive nails and beat metals, thus he relies on these functions to accomplish the tasks which he is set to do. The being of the hammer allows the carpenter to understand it as it is and because of these the hammer is not used for any other purposes. A distortion of an understanding of the being of the hammer happens when the carpenter gets too familiar with its bearing that he forgets that it *is* and rather uses it for extraneous purposes. The hammer has been used to beat other beings either for the purpose of inflicting pain or to cause immediate death. The being of the hammer is not understood, thus it is misused. And the misuse of an entity for ephemeral purposes leads to man's slow decline towards destitution.

But there is a greater danger that accompanies this forgetfulness of being. Just as entities are forgotten as to their being and misused, man is also an entity among others.

Man also forgets his own being. The question of what man *is*, who man *is*, and everything that is fundamental to man in his being can no longer be addressed, that it no longer allows man to be in the circumstances that he needs to be. Man's familiarity with himself makes him take for granted things that are of vital concern. He thinks that he is this and that when in reality he is not. External factors may also be considered, that man may have an authentic relationship with his being, but because the *crowd* is no longer, he cannot help but join in with the majority for he thinks that he might be different if he continued the way he was. Worst is, man thinks that these continuous shifts are part even of his being, of who he really is. But in reality man does not even know that he no longer knows his fundamental relation. Being is forgotten, man and his world are in danger.

When things are treated not in accord with their being, they are misused. Man not seen in accord with his being, a dehumanizing relationship arises. He is not seen as man with an identity, similar to the one that views him and is subject to whatever humanity there is as provided by his being, but rather he is seen as an object, a thing used for purposes non-human, exploited and abused. This is what Heidegger calls, in the German word, as "Gestell"²⁷ or enframing. Suffering in this world is caused by this enframing brought about by the forgetfulness of being. No sooner man will suffer the consequences of his actions, unless, he makes that renewed effort to ask the fundamental question and regain that authentic relationship with his being, and to the whole in general.

The enframing also suggests a greater danger in the part of that being which manipulates. When man thinks that he is far better off because he can manipulate and

²⁷ Heidegger, The Question, 301.

control people, he is utterly mistaken. The fact is that he is himself a victim. He is also being enframed, for that he can no longer find that relationship called for by his being, that is, to relate in an authentic dwelling in the abode of being. He no longer knows himself and that when he could no longer control himself he is isolated from his own being. He is not himself, not the man that he is.

Heidegger warns of this situation when he writes:

At a time when the farthest corners of the globe has been conquered by technology and opened to economic exploitation; when any incident whatever, regardless of where or when it occurs, can be communicated to the rest of the world at any desired speed; when the assassination of a king in France and a symphony in Tokyo can be “experienced” simultaneously; when time has ceased to be anything other than velocity, instantaneousness, and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from the lives of all peoples; when a boxer is regarded as a nation’s great man; when mass meetings attended by millions are looked on as triumph—then, yes then, through all this turmoil a question still haunts us like a specter: What for?—Whither?—And what then?²⁸

The question is: What then?

Man is Dasein²⁹; Therefore He can ask the Question

Dasein in everyday German usage means existence. But Heidegger gives it a special designation by breaking it into its components of *da*, there and *Sein*, being. It is the there of the being that is here.³⁰ He gives this designation only to the being that is human. The human being as Dasein is the only being that can make a problem out of his own being. Man is able to encounter other beings and these beings he understands. Unlike the table or chair which cannot know the being of man or other entities, neither his own being, man is privileged above all beings. And man having this privilege, he knows of the concern of his being and thus can think about it towards a resolution. The

²⁸ Heidegger, *Introduction*, 38.

²⁹ *Idem*, *Being and Time*, 27.

³⁰ The discussion of these lines, of Dasein in general, as priority, is given in the second chapter of this paper, on the part “**Dasein Re-visited.**”

problem of being is a concern of the being which is Dasein. This is a reality and man cannot escape the project towards a renewed attempt to restore his relationship with his being. No other being can do the job for him, except him alone. Thus man is to ask and indeed can ask the fundamental question. This is a fundamental reality.

The preliminary sketches had been laid. An inquiry so as to the asking is now to begin. The question will now be presented.

CHAPTER 2

THE FUNDAMENTAL QUESTION

Nothingness Reveals the Question

To close his lecture on Metaphysics, Heidegger asked the question, “Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?” Twice he asked the question, the second he posed as an opening to a different though related lecture titled, “An Introduction to Metaphysics.” The giving of the question, as to how it is presented in both lectures is diachronic in nature, wherein the former is given after an exposition of nothingness as to that which makes possible the giving of being, and the latter of an attempt to pose it as a question of necessity and answer it, as to why there be something rather than nothing. Heidegger points to the necessity of the question. In its development, it lays bare the path towards man’s restoring of his originary understanding of being. The question, wherein if man is to make an attempt to inquire into being, he must first ask the question (and here he considers it to be fundamental) and with its strength, is led to an authentic unfolding.

In WM (What is Metaphysics?) the question of nothingness is developed. Here nothingness is given exposition and is understood to be something more than that which man conceives of nothing to be nothing. In WM nothingness is given in its originary sense, *that it gives being*. Because of this understanding that man is able to recognize the nothing and of his relationship to it as something fundamental, he gets to formulate the fundamental question.

For Heidegger, the question, “Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?” is only possible when the nothing is not conceded and instead recognized. But to recognize nothingness is difficult for there is nothing to consider. Man in his everydayness wants to know nothing about nothing, he is too concerned with things that *are*, of *beings*. Man is with physicality and *is*, his thinking and reasoning is attuned to something and not nothing. Heidegger would write that to think and speak of nothing is to violate logic, for it is a contradiction, to pursue it is to be illogical. To ask of nothing is to rob the question of its object, for it then becomes something, a *being*, an *is*. Nothing is non-being, not an entity, opposite to that which is something, an *is-not*. The question is defeated. Again man risks’ being illogical for there is a contradiction. The stamp of logic as the supreme authority marks it as an inquiry into the absurd, therefore not valid.

But this is not the final word on nothingness, the inquiry is to be pushed further. For if to make an attempt is to arrive at something, and that it be a philosophical attempt, mediocrity is out of the question and it is always a case of bringing the point whether an answer becomes possible or the impossibility of an answer becomes clear.³¹ Thus logic is to be interrogated if it is such a final authority.

Nothing is located in the category of what-is-not in logic and thus a negation, and negation is a specific act of discursive reason, therefore it cannot be dismissed. Man will have to recourse to logic whenever nothingness is spoken of. Here is a presupposition, since nothingness follows after a negation, it is the negated. But Heidegger would ask if it could not be the other way around that the nothing need not depend on negation in order for it to occur but that through nothingness negation is made possible. The need for a nothing is necessary in order for something to be negated, that it be understood that there

³¹ Sheehan, Reading, 187.

is-not opposite to what-*is*. This point, and Heidegger would concede, has never been explicitly raised; therefore it has not been decided. It can only be said, that if this thesis is correct, reason would have no decision-power over the nothing and logic would be dependent on the nothing in order for it to establish itself.³² Thus in order for this to be understood there is a further inquiry, that is, in a sense being illogical.

Logic is shown to be an inadequate approach in the attempt to inquire about nothing. To push the inquiry further is to stumble on other inadequate formulations that are to endanger a full unfolding of nothing, but nevertheless they are to be examined. The question of the nothing, just like any question, has to satisfy a basic minimum requirement, if it is to be raised. To ask of the nothing it must first be given, that it be encountered in order for it to be inquired. But where is nothing to be found? How can it be found? To look for something is to know in a general sense that it is there, an anticipation of its presence takes place, but nothing as nothing; what then? Heidegger inquires if there could be such possibility of a pure discovery?³³

He observes that a basic knowledge of the nothing, that it is known, is through ordinary language. It is easy to define, runs unnoticed in usual conversations, it is the negation of everything that is, simply nothing. This understanding of the nothing gives a hint as to how man will be able to encounter the nothing. The totality of whatever-*is* must be already given beforehand so that it may be subjected to a direct act of negation and that the nothing itself may show up. How man is to proceed is think all-that-*is* in an idea then mentally negate that which has been imagined, then think of it as negated. Seems to be a plausible procedure but to look closely is to find a flaw. Man seems to have arrived

³² Sheehan, Reading, 188-189.

³³ *Ibid.*, 189.

at nothing, and yet it is only an imagined nothing, never the nothing itself. Worst that in a more chronological sense man has no concrete knowing of nothing; therefore it cannot be distinguished between the nothing as imagined and nothing that is real. The fact that real nothing would only be a disguised and still absurd concept of the nothing, that it *is*. Reason still poses its objection on the search, it will be difficult to proceed further if there is a continued reference to this hard-headed superior, therefore there will have to be a recourse to the basic experience of the nothing, which would be in a sense more concrete.³⁴

Heidegger, in his inquired approach to nothingness writes of two things equally certain:

(1) all-that-is can never be grasped absolutely in itself; and (2) the beings among which we find ourselves disposed always appear in the unity of a whole. In the final analysis there is an essential difference between grasping *all-that-is* in itself and finding ourselves among beings in terms of a *whole*. The first is impossible in principle, the second always happening in our openness.³⁵

Man in his relationship with other beings is always in a sense of particularity. What is that of immediate concern in his everydayness is that which would matter most. A relationship in a sense total is absent hence unthought-of. If to experience nothing is to negate the whole, given the condition of a particularity-oriented relation of man to things, it would still be impossible. But as just stated that there would be a recourse to experience, this impossibility is due to the demand of being logical, hence it be disregarded and a discussion of a particular mood of man, that is, of “boredom”³⁶ as that which allows man to encounter the totality of things take place.

³⁴ Sheehan, Reading, 189.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 189-190.

³⁶ Sheehan, Reading, 190.

The whole is experienced through boredom, that is, of genuine boredom. As Heidegger would put it:

Genuine boredom occurs when *one's whole world is boring*. Then abysmal boredom, like a muffling fog, drifts where it will in the depths of our openness, sucking everything and everyone, and ourselves along with them, into a numbing sameness. This kind of boredom reveals what-is in terms of a *whole*.³⁷

Here man's fragmented situation in the abode of beings comes to a union. A union made possible by a dis-union, between man and his pre-occupation with things. When man is "equally removed from despair and joy, and everything...seems so hopelessly commonplace"³⁸ that it no longer matters whether a thing *is* or *is not*. Everything is fused to form a whole, a boring whole. Boredom reveals the whole and in this whole the nothing is concealed. But this experience of boredom which allows an encounter with the whole is still inadequate in the attempt to know the nothing. For the whole cannot be negated, and this is because boredom makes it impossible, a more original encounter is then to be inquired into, a mood whose disclosive essence is dedicated to revealing that nothing, and this is the more originary "dread."³⁹

As a preliminary, dread would first have to be contrasted with fear. Heidegger would write that fear is always a fear of something. When a thing threatens man in a specific way, he is seized, held and affected by it. There is always an involvement of a specific thing, where man makes the attempt to save himself against this thing, thus becoming unsure of his relation to other things and lose his bearing as whole. Dread on the other hand never lets this kind of confusion occur; rather it is with a peculiar kind of calm that it is characterized. Though dread, in a way similar, that it is a dread *of*, it is different from fear that it is not dread of this thing or that thing, not of a specific thing but

³⁷ Sheehan, Reading, 190.

³⁸ Heidegger, Introduction, 1.

³⁹ Sheehan, Reading, 190.

that it is a dread *for*. The *for* is indeterminate, not because man is not able to define it, but because it itself cannot be defined. There is a feeling of indifference, of strangeness that it cannot be known what it is or who feels it. There is a receding of beings, of the whole of what-*is*. Being as a whole slips away, towards man, he is then pressed and oppressed. “Without the whole there is no hold.”⁴⁰ And what overwhelms man in the absence of everything is precisely nothing. Nothing is revealed through dread.⁴¹

The nothing is thus encountered and the experience of it is not an ordinary event. Here a basic realization touches upon man in his identification with the nothing. That there is the nothing that hides beyond things that *are*, and man, who in his everyday existence, seldom if never, gets to experience it, as if he is being pushed away by it, away from itself, and towards things that are where he is always to dwell. Between beings and nothingness, with a realization of the nothing, man is confronted with the question: why are there beings at all instead of nothing?

The Question as a *Challenging*

Why are there beings at all instead of nothing? The question can now be asked since the nothing is recognized. Nothing is the negation of being, a non-being, where the act of negation is necessitated by the nothing, it strikes its force on things that *are* so as to make them be. Now, it is to be asked, if there is nothing why still there be something? The question may strike man as absurd and irrelevant. He may challenge the question as to why it even be asked. The question threatens man’s own existence and of the things around him. His understanding of *everything, including of his own Being* is held as an

⁴⁰ Sheehan, Reading, 191.

⁴¹ Ibid.

option in opposition to the nothing, where in the final analysis, it might be, that it is the case of nothing instead of something. Beings are then taken to be mere accidents in the abode of the nothing, that nothing could just be nothing and there be nothing except for nothing, being is situated as a squatter in nothingness' property. Just as it cannot be asked: "why is there *nothing* at all instead of *something*?" for man is something and he is with things, and they *are*, man is always given the burden of proof, he is to prove that he *is* rather than *is not*, not nothing, for nothing has the greatest advantage, where when things ceases to be, what is left is nothing, and where that which is something is always in a path where it either continues to be or it ceases to be something, nothing will have the final say. It would not be of interest here to speak of the formulation: something equals something, for it will be an absurdity and a never ending attempt at an inquiry, that there always be a necessity of a starting point that would lead to the present epoch, from where all things begin including man, it cannot be then *something*, and if it is, beyond it is the *nothing*, the more primordial condition prior to things and man.

Thus, the question attacks the structures, models or systems that are found inherent in any historical-spatial existence, that everything known by men, even of that which are yet to be known, are in danger of being hailed obsolete, and that since what is known determines man's achievements, his existence becomes a mere living of a dream, it becomes nothing. That all of man's knowing is supported by a weak foundation where an understanding of things is always a case of relations with this and that particularity, as to that which makes it as it is during the exact moment of inquiry, when a recognition of the nothing is absent, when it is denied, there is not an original ground from which an authentic knowledge is to be derived. Everything is superficial, where from the start an error has been committed and can no longer be corrected. Unless there be a re-trieve of

man's original understanding, and that the nothing is recognized, as the primordial source, and that things came into being in its presence thus chronologically structured, if man can ask the question why, when there is already the nothing, still there be something, a new beginning is to commence. Here it can be recalled Heidegger's idea of how a new beginning is to be like (for quotation see page 11, citation number 19). The idea of a something coming out of nothing, of this event where everything then was possible, if man is to understand the very reason, inquire into the essence of the event, any attempt to understand what *is*, then becomes, if not simpler, can always be attuned to what is real, of a ground void of inauthenticity.

The fundamental question is an *invitation* to know being. Only through being, of an encounter with it, is an inquiry, guided by the question, made possible. An examination of being, unto its essence will gauge the discussion into the extremes of its possibilities, given the extent of the study, and into the underlying realms where it would reach to a point where *nothing* could be exhumed, and all that is to be known is made clear, and there is already the return to *nothing*, thus a purpose be found, a reason for the appearing of being, from where all understanding originates, there is truth. Nothing is given and it is without reason, for it can stand for itself, but for the something it has yet to be determined, and this becomes an either/or situation. If man is to ask the question, he is to be truthful and if to reject it, is to live a life of inauthenticity.

The Priority of the Question

Man is able to encounter the question in the differing moods that he happens experience in his existence as a human being. Boredom has already been discussed and it accounts for an experience of the nothing, which in turn allows the question to be posed.

But it can also be encountered when man is in moments of great *despair*, when things tend to lose all their weight and all meaning becomes obscured and in *rejoicing* when all things are transfigured and seemed to be there for the first time.⁴² These moods disclose the question, for it evokes a particular perception of being wherein if it is to be seen not just according to how it is and what it is, but in a way totally different, a new sense of relation arises and the question is therefore asked.

But then, if the question is to be asked, where does it lead to?

The question, in its being a question will first have to be given exposition as to its structure that in effect it opens the inquiry into *being* then leading to an inquiry into man as *Dasein* and in turn into addressing a particular social problem that is an agenda of this paper.

Heidegger asserts that question is no ordinary question. For him it is the first of all questions, though not in a sense chronological but in rank. And it is in three ways, first because it is the *most far reaching*, second because it is the *deepest*, and finally because it is the *most fundamental*.⁴³

The question is the *most far reaching* of all questions because it does not confine itself to a particular being. The question takes in everything, and not only everything that is of the present but even that of its past and is yet to come. It points to no particular being of whatever kind, but into being as whole. The question finds its limit only in nothing, thus as long as things are, that they were and will be, the question will no longer be able to go further, but only in these.⁴⁴

⁴² Heidegger, Introduction, 1.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁴⁴ Heidegger, Introduction, 2.

The question is also the *deepest* of all questions. The “why” seeks for the ground, from what source does being derive? On what ground does being stand that instead of the nothing, something *is*? Just as being is taken to be in its entirety, the ground that is sought is not just any particular ground, that being *be* because of another being, the formulation presents an inquiry into the absurd for it will just never end, that another ground again be sought in order to account for the being-source which is just another being, therefore the ground needs to be the “ground of what is insofar as it is.”⁴⁵ Heidegger would write it thus:

Be that as it may, the ground in question must account for the being of the essent as such. This question “why” does not look for the causes that are of the same kind and on the same level as the essent itself. This “why” does not move on any one plane but penetrates to the “underlying” <”zu-grunde” liegend> realms and indeed to the *very last of them* (italics mine), to the limit; turning away from the surface, from all shallowness, it strives toward the depths; this broadest of all questions is also the deepest.⁴⁶

Lastly, the question is the most *fundamental* of all questions. In what sense it is the most fundamental can be observed in its collective structure that takes in being as a whole. Heidegger would write that when being as a whole enters into the question, a privileged and unique relation arises between it and the act of questioning. Just as the question allows the inquiry into the possible ground of being and with it is kept open, the questioning is then viewed not as any ordinary act of questioning, not like the falling of raindrops as Heidegger would write it, but as a *breaking out*, though not completely, of the question from the inquiry. What is meant by this? When the question is asked concerning being (i.e. why) the question reacts upon itself. The question in itself being a *being*, thus makes an inquiry into its own, as to “Why the why?”⁴⁷ “What is the ground of

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Heidegger, Introduction, 4.

this question ‘why’ which presumes to ask after the ground of the essent as a whole?”⁴⁸
This is the reason why Heidegger considers the act of questioning as privileged, it confronts being as a whole but does not break loose from it.

The entire process of the object of the question reacting on the act of questioning is what Heidegger refers to as the “event”⁴⁹. To participate in the event is not to be taken in by its seeming uselessness of the derived formulation “Why the why?” but it is to find the significance in the rebounding of the question. Just as peculiar to man is the intellectual energy, and that he uses this energy in the asking, to make the question react, he opens to himself possibilities, thus opening other whys. Thus being a pragmatic step towards an authentic re-trieve of his understanding of being.

This participation in the *event* Heidegger would call as the “leap”⁵⁰. Here man throws all his previous security, and this is critical for there is no asking without it.

Given these threefold structure of the question it can then be said that it is the question of all questions. It does not allow any inquiry to survive without this self questioning question. And where any authentic questioning is to take place and authentic answers are sought, it lies implicit.

The Question as an Inquiry into *Being*

In *Being and Time* Heidegger gives an analysis of being and its implications to the human being which is *Dasein*. Here an assumption can be made, that Heidegger transcends the fundamental question and moving from an abstract to a concrete formulation, from the original being-as-a-whole approach of the question, *being* has then

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 6.

become central of his inquiry anterior to his asking. Heidegger concedes of this assumption when he poses the question, “How does it stand being?”⁵¹

This transition is important to take note in the development of the question for given the original aim of this paper which is to restore man of his originary understanding of being through the fundamental asking⁵²; it can be observed that it has lead, from the question and all of its implications, to an inquiry into being. Given that it would no longer suffice for the question to dwell in its original aim which is to confront the totality of things as a whole, that it need to move from general to particular (*Dasein*) and that which is constitutive of this determined particularity, which makes of it as it is and how it is, *being* then is thus inquired into.

Being as that which gives entities their meaningful presence and thus it is always known unto its being, to inquire into being then is to know the original bearing of things and men. And true to the formulation of understanding, that to know and not to be disoriented to an entity’s being is to be in a meaningful relationship with it, man is sure to be in significant bearing, where he is to live his life in concord.

***Dasein* Re-visited**

Exposed briefly in the first chapter of this paper is the Heideggerian term *Dasein*. Here it has to re-visited. After giving exposition to the priority of the question and there is the transition from an abstraction of the more general being-as-a-whole to the particular, it is *Dasein* which then becomes the priority of the questioning.

⁵¹ Heidegger, Introduction, 39.

⁵² See *Being and Time*, here one can understand the different approaches to the re-trieve of being. It cannot be attempted here an explication of its contents, though an application as to a re-trieve will be undertaken in Chapter three of this paper in order to give, by way of representation, a methodology of such an attempt.

Why *Dasein*? Heidegger writes of it as the being which is the closest and yet the farthest.⁵³ This distinction is in the understanding that man, also a being alongside other beings, is least inquired into its essence. The inquiry into being demands that in its manifold presence a particular being be given in order for it to be examined, thus *Dasein* in its structure is that particularity demanded. Man is the being that is *Dasein* and this is a primordial constitution. For Heidegger *Dasein* is an entity which does not just occur among other entities, rather it has a privileged status as the being which can make an issue of its own being and that of others.⁵⁴ This is the being of *Dasein*, which has an extended relation to itself and that of others, and this relationship is one of *Being*. Thus man as *Dasein* can understand, either in a way total or partial.

What does this imply? That man makes an attempt to know being, he needs first to inquire into the being that *he is* in order that any future inquiry be grounded in an authentic knowing. The authentic knowing is that of the self, where an understanding springs out of an interpretation of being (i.e. the Sciences). Critical for man is this because he always behaves in accordance with his authenticity and this is always affective of the propositions that he makes. Propositions are decisive of a conclusion's validity and from conclusions (either true or false) actions are then made, and that is towards being. This action is a relation unto being and it is either authentic or inauthentic. This accounts for the necessity of the inquiry into *Dasein*.

⁵³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 37.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

Dasein is also decisive of the existence of being. Heidegger would write that Dasein comporting itself in one way or another, and always comport itself somehow will be called “Existenz”⁵⁵. He further writes it thus:

Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence—in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself. Dasein has either chosen these possibilities itself, or got itself into them, or grown up in them already. Only the particular Dasein decides its existence, whether it does so by taking hold or by neglecting.⁵⁶

Here it can be said that the being Dasein is the only being which has the characteristic of existence in the restricted Heideggerian sense. That whoever is capable of choosing and willing his possibilities so as to be or not be cannot deny his participation in the greater scheme of things, that man will always be of a meaningful presence. This is important to take note for what is the point of an inquiry and of all the efforts exerted if in the first place man is nonexistent, though not a non-being but nonexistent, that is, having no history, therefore living a meaningless life.

Another important characteristic that is derivative of an understanding of *Dasein* is its having of a world and being-in-that-world.⁵⁷ This can be explicated briefly. That *Dasein* has access to other beings, these beings are accessible only in the world where man *dwells*. This world is the world of possibilities for man, and here man lives maintaining an essential relationship with it via an authentic understanding of being. Thus he keeps and restores this world unto its being. Man continues to pursue being unto its original bearing. This will be made clear in the third chapter of this paper.

⁵⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 32.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 33.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 3

RESTORING THE RELATION

This chapter will now attempt to make sense of all the discussions so far given, as to a methodology proposed in the attempt to restore man's ordinary understanding of being. Here it is directly related to proposing a solution to the problem that threatens man's existence in the present epoch. The threat is that of *Global Warming* and the ecological destruction it entails. This danger is clear to be brought about by man's abuse of his environment and its resources, a clear indication of his forgetfulness of being.

The title of this paper is suggestive of the aim intended, for after an asking of the fundamental question and that there is a return to being, a formulation is then given so that man is able to re-think his condition in relation to his environment. Man being able to formulate anew his relationship is directed towards an authentic living that benefits not only man, but beings-as-a-whole, thus stresses the need for the inquiry in the first place.

Two implications are to be explicated here in this part of the paper as derivative of man's restored relationship with being; this is of *Physis* as *emerging and enduring* and of *Dwelling* as *the essence of man*. All of these will be localized in the *Mindanaoan* environmental situation where the attempt is addressed in order that the problem it presses be resolved.

Being as *Physis*

Heidegger would write of the Greek word *physis* to mean:

...self-blossoming emergence (e.g. the blossoming of a rose), opening up, unfolding, that which manifests itself in such unfolding and perseveres and endures in it; in short, the realm of things that emerge and linger on.⁵⁸

This definition is a characteristic of being and its forgetfulness marks the event where man started to misuse, in the topic of this exposition, his environment, and has resulted to its slow transition towards destruction where man's existence is now then threatened as an effect. This forgetfulness is a result of the mistranslation of the term which then alienated man from its real signification, and here it is necessary that man restores his original understanding of it if he is to rethink his environment and resolve the concerns it entails.

Physis as that can be observed everywhere, in the rising of the sun, rolling of the sea, in the growth of plants, in man's appearance and of the animal from the womb is not synonymous with nature, as all of these are part of. It is not a process among other processes and it is not limited to such that are observable and in accordance with the literal bearing of its meaning.⁵⁹ "*Physis* is being itself,"⁶⁰ where entities in their process of becoming (emerging) sustains itself and lies in the world (endures). "*Physis* means the power that emerges and the enduring realm under its sway."⁶¹ It includes *becoming*, that is, of coming into being, where in the earlier discussion there is the issue of the overcoming of nothingness by being which is yet then to be clarified and given

⁵⁸ Heidegger, Introduction, 14.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

exposition perhaps in another paper and of *be-ing* in the sense of sustaining and enduring and not as a name (substantive) that points to the result of all of these.

All of these implications of *physis* are important to take note for in man's oblivion of being he has started to reduce being as a thing and nothing more. Being as something 'thingly' is easily manipulated and controlled and unmindfully used to purposes extraneous to a being's authentic bearings. A forgetfulness of being as *physis* accounts for this. As to how it would be of contribution to resolve the environmental problem will be given in synthesis form in the later part of this chapter.

Dwelling as a Taking Care of

Another formulation that is an implication of being is that of *dwelling*, where it is assigned only to the being which is *Dasein*. It is important to take note of this particularity in the exposition for it points to man as responsible for his world given his other particularity which is *being-in-the-world*. It has been discussed that man as *Dasein* is privileged among other beings in the sense that it is the only being which can know of itself and the being of others and these are accessed in the world where he dwells.

But what is it to *dwell*? Heidegger writes of *dwelling* as the being of man. This has been forgotten, and similar to *physis* that it followed the same line of degeneration and oblivion, it also has to be restored. Just as man can access beings in the world there is that demand of his authenticity that he relates to these beings unto their essences. And this is carried out through an understanding of *dwelling*. *Dwelling* in its original meaning, as Heidegger would write of it is "to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for,

specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine.”⁶² It is the taking care *of*, the preserving and nurturing *of* the *earth* where one’s *world* is. A being, *dwelling* on the earth has this characteristic which is of a primordial constitution.

By way of example evident of this are the earliest cultures whose *dwelling* are still rooted in the authentic understanding of being and where they continue to exist in the present epoch, they live their lives in the preservation and nurturing of this world that they have come to know. Particular are the *Lumads* residing in the various parts of Mindanao who are representatives of these cultures. Visible in their clothes and the ornaments they wear, housing, economic activities, cultural habits and often religion are all very traditional.⁶³ And these distinguish them from the bustling structure of the modern busy world. The element of *dwelling* is present in them. As authentic *dwellers* of the earth they provide a clue as to how man that is disoriented of his understanding of being be restored of his original relation. Where when the Lumads are caring for the environment and that they are also Dasein, the modern man in contrast destroys his environment and yet he is also Dasein.

But it will first have to be set aside the synthesis of both formulations, of *physis* and *dwelling*, so as to arrive at a resolution, and that the major problems that are to be addressed by this paper be presented first so as pinpoint accurately the necessary steps of such an attempt. It will first have to be made clear the global problem of climate change and its immediate impact in the more local Mindanao, where the researcher is situated.

⁶² Heidegger, *Poetry*, 146-148.

⁶³ De Schoolmeester, Ed, “The Indigenous People of Mindanao,” in <http://www.philippines.hvu.nl/mindanao2.htm> (accessed February 23, 2010).

The Global Situation

Climate change is not that much of a recent phenomenon as man would think of

living of the masses, more fuel fossils for heat, transportation and manufacturing are then generated increasing the levels of greenhouse gases.⁶⁶

These results to a rising temperature then raising sea levels, reducing levels of fresh water as flooding occurs along coastlines and saltwater reaching inland. Many of the world's endangered species will also become extinct as rising temperatures change their habitat. Millions of people will suffer especially poor people who live in unsecured locations or depend on the land to provide for their needs. And certain vector-borne diseases carried by animals or insects, such as malaria, would become more widespread as warmer conditions expand their range.⁶⁷

Man quickly finds himself in a situation where if he is not to do anything, life will soon become unbearable that it threatens the continued existence of his kind on the planet. No sooner that he initiated measures so as to prevent the impact of global warming in the future. Evident of these are researchers and policy-makers around the world calling for controls on greenhouse gas emissions.⁶⁸ Dependence on fossil fuels is also being lessened, increasing the use of renewable energy, forests are being expanded and a change of lifestyle that would help in sustaining the environment.⁶⁹

But despite of these efforts, difficulty is to be found in the entire process and unprecedented occurrences take place that leaves man worrying of his situation. Records of ion ice cores reveal that the climate can change far faster than ever imagined, in just years rather than millennia. Multiple Greenland glaciers are retreating into the sea, where larger amounts of ice are being carried off. Storms are getting more intense and

⁶⁶ West, Greenhouse Effect.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ CCH.

⁶⁹ West, Greenhouse Effect.

destructive, Hurricane Katrina being an example nearly wiping out New Orleans back in the United States.⁷⁰ Here lies the danger of global warming, and it is a race against time if man is to save himself.

Also important to take note is one of the key findings of the United States Global Change Research Program⁷¹, that global warming is unequivocal and primarily human-induced. “Global temperature has increased over the past 50 years. This observed increase is due primarily to human-induced emissions of heat-trapping gases.”⁷² Here is an implication of man’s oblivion of being and the need for a retrieve of it. That there is a need for man to re-orient himself with being; unto its essence, it is then further emphasized by these data.

The Mindanao Situation

Climate change, as global phenomena is not reserved to some areas only where there are more emissions of greenhouse gases but it affects the whole regardless of whether it has not been reached by the industrial taint or it has a strict implementation of greenhouse gas reduction policies. Just as everyone is called in to participate in the efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions it is due to the fact that whatever is to happen at any point in the globe because of the change in the climate, the corresponding effect is sure to be felt in almost all of man’s dwelling. Thus everyone should be involved.

⁷⁰ CCH.

⁷¹ United States Global Change Research Program, “Key Findings”(2009) in <http://www.globalchange.gov/publications/reports/scientific-assessments/us-impacts/key-findings> (accessed February 23, 2010). This will be referred to as *Key Findings*.

⁷² Ibid.

The island of Mindanao where the researcher is situated would concede that it sure has felt the effects of climate change evident in the massive and destructive flooding that had hit it in the past few years. Unusual to most places affected by the flooding where most if not all of the time are spared from such catastrophe it now takes its toll on the minds of the Mindanaoans that indeed something is wrong. Last year's flooding in Cagayan de Oro is an example of this.

Mindanao shares the same concern and fear as those of whom who are in much worst situation, owing to the possibility that Mindanao might be in the same picture as they are, if its own environmental issues be not resolved. Numerous are the threats to the environmental condition of Mindanao and all of these can be traced back to man's abuse rooted in his forgetfulness of being.

Just as Mindanao can boast a large land area which occupies one-third of the Philippines' total land area, a rich soil which accounts for the production of most of the Philippine's major crops, rich mineral resources, and a cultural diversity and natural beauty which makes it one of Asia's favored destination, just as much is given to this humble island in the south, much will also be lost.⁷³ If the issues of illegal logging, mining, quarrying, land conversion, waste disposal and pollution will not be addressed. Also that it is not only the internal degeneration of the environment is at issue, but also of the island contributing to the speeding up of the effects of climate change, by promoting destruction and setting aside remedial efforts.

⁷³ Mindanao Economic Development Council, "Mindanao," (2004) in <http://www.medco.gov.ph/medcoweb/mindanao.asp> (accessed February 24, 2010).

To find solution to these problems there will be recourse to the formulations given in the earlier part of the exposition, and here it will be of suggestive nature as to how man may employ it, particularly of Mindanaoans, which includes the researcher, as to a resolution beginning from the homeland contributing to the larger global scale efforts to stop the change in climate.

Resolution after the Inquiry

The researcher now relates the implications of the inquiry into being to the global problem of climate change via starting ground the more local Mindanao and here he applies them bringing the paper to a productive close resolving the issue being addressed.

Given are the two implications of being which is that of *physis* and *dwelling* and here they are taken as formulations that will goad man to re-think his environment and the concerns it entails. But how is he to proceed having such an understanding?

Physis and *dwelling* are derivatives of being. Here it is understood as necessary that every Dasein in his relating to the environment, which is in itself a being, possess the capacity to transcend the seeming ordinariness of entities and transform this transcendence into a force that is regulating of all of his understanding, that in his every relating he stays true to the call of being which is of himself and others.

Man will have to experience the environment as *physis*, the environment as being and as well as *physis*, where *physis* is the *emerging* and *enduring*, a creative becoming and not mere existence as object, to be manipulated, used and controlled. He is then to find the conjunction between his Dasein structures as being no different to that of the environment which is also a being; they both come to be in the process of emerging and

enduring. Man realizes then his presence as a co-existence that he *dwells* among beings. Whereby everything came from the same processes of becoming, every being is with a role in the world, and man as privileged above all beings, as the being that can understand, his privilege then becomes that of a responsibility, assuming that he knows better, his task becomes that of a taking care *of*, to dwell. It is *of* the environment and of his entire world that he is responsible to, and this is a demand of his being.

Here it can be seen how physics and dwelling as formulations can allow man to re-think his environment and its concerns. This is arrived at through a reflection of being and it is further stressed by way of acting upon that shows in the change of attitude towards entities, where an example is that of the environment. And with the threat of climate change, where it affects the locality where the researcher is situated, to reflect and act upon, and prior to that where there is an asking that leads to being it then gives a reason for hoping, that there still be a better future.

Man is to do all of these, but it is only through a deciding upon doing that he ceases not in the first place to be inauthentic. Nothing is actually new, as it is the usual approach of man to the environment that is resultant of the formulations. What is critical to point out here is that the discussions are grounded in a more fundamental bearing where much insight can be gathered from and that an anchor is thus casted so as to give hold and weight to the issue and all its implications, therefore making it relevant.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Man lives in an epoch where he is oblivious to the meaning of being. Being, taken not just to be a mere entity or a thing existing in time and space but that which gives meaningful presence to things and men so as to make them be is decisive of man's history. As to his thought and existence is characterized by his understanding of being, his disorientation is rooted in his forgetfulness. Where there is no authentic knowing that relates to being unto its essence, thus chaos and destitution springs forth and man is threatened as to his continued existence in the world. Unless there is a renewed attempt to restore man of his originary understanding of being, the problem continues to pose itself.

Man is then to inquire into being, but prior to this is a more fundamental *event* which is to take place granted that man decides upon it and this is to become the ground of departure from where all other questioning stems; and this is the asking of the fundamental question. Why are there beings at all instead nothing? This is the fundamental question and from here it leads man to an inquiry into being via the different implications it gives. Some of these are that of *nothingness* which brings being to the fore, of *Dasein* as the priority of the inquiry into being and of *physis* and *dwelling* as characteristics of being. Where the question is asked it guides the inquiry into being, giving it the full expression of its possibilities. It stretches the inquiry unto its limits, where when the inquiry ends, it is begun anew, where when it stops, and it is to start all over again. Paths are opened by the question, and these paths lead somewhere, if to be in truth is what is sought after, surely one of these paths is the right one. And here man restores his originary understanding of being, and it is a constant struggle.

The inquiry is evident of man's search for meaning. And this may also be the case for Heidegger, where he sought for the meaning of being in its manifoldness and that it has led him somewhere to the point that he had already made an important contribution to the world. It is one of the vital implications that an inquiry gives to man's understanding regardless of whether it bears out results worth knowing or rejecting: that man does not cease to know in order for him to improve himself and his world. Man will always have to attune himself to what is true and this will be his noble task. As Heidegger writes of it, with regards to the seeming extraordinariness of the fundamental question, and here it can be applied to the situation of man's search for meaning:

Nor is it part of everyday life: there is no requirement or regulation that forces us into it; it gratifies no urgent or prevailing need....It is entirely voluntary, based wholly and uniquely on the mystery of freedom, on what we have called the leap.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Heidegger, Introduction, 12.

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