

**Heidegger Guide**  
PHIL410  
Spring 2012

*Being and Time*: pp. 21-63  
Mulhall: pp. 1-33

The Heidegger reading is challenging. The Mulhall discussion is helpful. I recommend alternating sections of both. In any case, here is some further assistance:

Being and beings: with a capital 'B', refers to that quality shared by all beings. Thus, small-b 'being' refers either to any individual thing that has Being (this being, that being) or to a specific kind of Being (human being, hamster being). Heidegger's goal is an exposition of the meaning of Being (reality, existence, in general). Like others, he hopes to find some clue to Being in our own being (Dasein).

Dasein: literally, "there-being" i.e., "being there"; always capitalized (because German nouns are capitalized). This is Heidegger's term for human being. He uses this term both because it captures a basic condition of our existence (we're "just here" in the world) and because he needs a neutral term for our existence, not already loaded with prior philosophical significance. Heidegger will examine Dasein (our being) for an understanding of Being in general.

Ontic/Ontological: 'Ontic' refers to the mode/s of being characteristic of particular kinds of being (e.g., humans, stars, hammers, etc.). 'Ontological' refers to the nature of Being per se. Since Being in general occurs only in the form of particular beings, the study of ontology can be conducted only "ontically" – i.e., by examining particular kinds of Being. As above, Heidegger selects Dasein (us) as the model of Being whose study will lead to an account of Being in general.

The ontico-ontological priority of Dasein: the specific form of Dasein (i.e., our particular kind of Being) makes it ideal for ontological study, according to Heidegger. (In fact, Dasein is the *only* entity capable of ontology.) This is because, first, Dasein (one oneself) is always concerned with (human) being – how to be, what to be; should I be a philosopher? Thus, "ontically" (as a specific kind of Being; because of the kind of Being Dasein is), Dasein is ideally capable of the study of Being. And second, "ontologically", investigation of Dasein (the investigator) is a first requirement in ontology, because the investigator's capacity for true ontology must be established, if the ontology is to be credible.

Transparency: Heidegger believes that Dasein can study Being successfully because of the kind of Being it is (as above – Dasein has special ontic status). Specifically, Dasein is

a *phenomenological* being, in which Being is disclosed (uncovered, revealed) in virtue of its being.

Phenomenology: Heidegger understands this term in terms of its two roots, *logos* and *phenomena*. *Phenomena* are appearances and take different forms – a thing can appear as itself, as something else; it can show something that is hidden. *Logos* implies discourse, meaning, concept, and ground (among other things), so in *logos* Heidegger finds the discursive (language-based) manifestation of meaning. Phenomenology, then, is the discursive manifestation of phenomena – a method for revealing whatever is present (or hidden) in appearances.

Phenomenological Inquiry: If Being is present in phenomena, then it will be revealed where phenomenology is conducted. And if Dasein (human being) is essentially phenomenological, then it is possible that a phenomenological study of Dasein will reveal Being.

Temporality: According to Heidegger, the answer revealed in phenomenological study of Dasein is time. The meaning of Being is Time. (Of course, just what Time is, is itself a complex matter, to be investigated by examining our experience of our own temporality. This project constitutes the bulk of *Being and Time*.)

Our Questions: What does Dasein know as a result of its phenomenological study of itself? What is Knowledge as conceived by Heidegger? How does Heidegger view the epistemological researches of the Moderns (Descartes, Kant, et al)?