**Death, Sex, and the Body: Phenomenology and Foucault**

**Handout/worksheet on *Being and Time*, §§10-14**

You needn’t spend a whole lot of time reading §10, since its main themes should be familiar from the more extended discussion on pp. 90-131 of *History of the Concept of Time*. One important idea is that neither the human sciences (psychology, anthropology, etc.) nor phenomenology up to that point had paid sufficient attention to *describing* what it is to be human. Husserl, for example, engages in numerous phenomenological investigation of intentionality and the time-consciousness that makes it possible, but has little to say about the *being* of those entities that can stand in intentional relations to other entities or itself.

1. On p. 48, Heidegger expresses skepticism that the very traditional definition of human beings as rational animals is the most illuminating one. How can he claim this without denying that we are either rational or animals, which is surely true (at least on our better days)?

The very brief §11 gives the reader a reminder not to mistake Heidegger’s investigation of “originary” phenomena in human beings for an attempt to describe the so-called worldviews of so-called “primitive peoples.”

§12 is very important. Here, Heidegger gives his initial descriptive definition of Dasein: that we are fundamentally “being-in-the-world”; our constitution is basically being-in-the-world. Heidegger hyphenates this term in part to suggest that there is no Dasein without a world for it to be in; and, conversely, no *world* – in Heidegger’s technical sense – without us, Dasein, to be in it. This term indicates his complete break with metaphysically dualistic ways of trying to understand human beings: as having an “inside” of *subjective* consciousness distinct from a “outside” of physical *objects* (cf. pp. 58-59). René Descartes (1596-1650) was perhaps the most influential metaphysical dualist, and Heidegger sometimes accordingly uses his terminology: you as an incorporeal “thinking thing” (*res cogitans*) vs. “extended things” (*res extensa*), including your own body, occupying the three spatial dimensions. Please note Heidegger’s official definition of *world* on p. 65; the third of four possible meaning of the term. For now, think of your world (in this sense) as the complex web of all of your practical possibilities: all the things you can do with certain items of equipment in order to achieve practical goals.

Here’s an important terminological distinction, which Heidegger makes on p. 65. Only Dasein is *in* the world; only Dasein is *worldly*, that is, and ontological descriptions of Dasein’s world are “existential.” Entities like rocks and hammers, on the other hand, are *within* the world; they are what Heidegger calls “intraworldly” entities, and ontological descriptions of them are “categorial.”

2. Admittedly, Heidegger’s first characterizations of “being-in-the-world” are careful and largely negative: saying what he *doesn’t* mean by the term. Nevertheless, what can you gather about what he means by the “in” in “being-in-the-world” (pp. 53-54, 57)? How is this different from, say, water being “in” the glass? And what does he mean by “being-at” (pp. 54-55)? What kind of “touching” things does this involve?

At 55:26 (= p. 55, line 26), Heidegger hyphenates the term “Da-sein.” He does this to show that the word means “being the *Da*.” I translate his term “*da*” as “(t)here,” to rhyme with “here.” Now in German, the word “*da*” can mean either “here” or “there,” and Heidegger exploits this point to characterize Dasein. Your ‘(t)here’ is the huge, complex, interrelated totality of all of your possibilities: all the things that you can do or become. In this sense, it’s “here” (since they’re *your* possibilities), but also out “there” (since most of these possibilities haven’t yet been carried out: brought “here”). The ‘(t)here’ contains those possibilities that make up your practical world (see p. 65), but includes also possible ways to encounter other *persons* and one’s own death. Dasein is the entity that has to *be* its ‘(t)here’; this means that all we can and must do is carry out the possibilities that make up the ‘(t)here.’

3. In §13, Heidegger applies his concept of being-in-the-world to the case of *knowing* things about the world. The traditional metaphysically dualistic view of human nature that Heidegger is rejecting takes it point of departure from a certain picture of knowledge: as a subjective consciousness like a container or box (p. 60) occasionally leaving its enclosure to return with knowledge of external objects as its “booty” (p. 62). Here, Heidegger argues that knowledge is possible only because Dasein is most fundamentally being-in-the-world. How does he describe the relation between knowing and being-in-the-world throughout this section? Perhaps better put: how does he see knowledge of intraworldly entities as a kind of being-*in*-the-world?

4. Explain the four possible meanings of the word “world,” canvassed on pp. 64-65, and how Heidegger uses the terms *world* (without quotation-marks) and *‘world’* (with quotation-marks).

On pp. 65-66, Heidegger sketches out a philosophical “diagnosis” of metaphysical dualism. We have a tendency to focus our attention just on intraworldly *entities*, and not the *world* of Dasein. When we “skip over” the crucial phenomenon of being-in-the-world, we’re left with little by the dualistic picture of human beings and their knowledge of the “external world.”

In the last paragraph of §14 (p. 66), Heidegger introduces the important term “environment.” This isn’t the kind of thing studied by the sciences of biology and ecology, but rather Dasein’s *closest*, *local world*: the practical possibilities open to you right here and now. Another possible translation would be “surroundings.” The German term “*Welt*” means “world,” and “*Umwelt*” means “environment”; the prefix “*um*” means “around.” Similarly, the “environ” in “environment” means “surrounding.” Since your “environs” are your “surroundings,” the term “*Umwelt*” is sometimes translated as “surrounding world”; “surroundings” would be another possibility. Examples of “environments” in this sense would be a kitchen, a workshop, a classroom, a computer lab, etc.