"Innerworldly" Objects: Understanding Heidegger through Wittgenstein

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Abstract

This study aims to shed light on the phenomenon of the "object" in Heidegger. The analysis of the object in Being and Time takes a one-dimensional approach to the everyday world. The paper takes as its central theme the dialectic between the ready-to-hand and the simultaneous unreadiness-to-hand of objects. The paper argues that the "innerworldly" being of the "things" in the world carry a specific modality of being understood only within language.

The ontological reality of Dasein is primordially constituted in *being-with*[112]. The element that concerns me for the current research is Heidegger's understanding of the "innerworldly". Heidegger's notion of the "innerworldly" nature of entities is twofold: having modes of reality such as present-at-hand and readiness-to-hand(2). The present-at-hand is a type of being that has an objective presence "in" the world, whereas the readiness-to-hand is the mode of being "known" in the *handiness* of the object, or in the *usage* of it[113]. I try to point out in the course of the paper that the Heideggerian definition of the "innerworldly" is insufficient, and it needs to be complemented with another specific modality—that of the sign[114].

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[112] According to Heidegger, our everyday engagements with objects are predicated in living with other beings, owing to what "one" does. Hence he denotes the essential rootedness in beings, as long as we encounter them belonging to our world, as the *being-with*. Polt, R. (2013). *Heidegger: an introduction*. Routledge.

[113] The *use* of the object in "taking care of" things in general, is the "specific pragmatic character" of that "thing". p.64

[114] The present course of argument considers the sign as an idea, concept, or connotation of the "thing" which may be different from its objective form, as understood by Heidegger.

An analytic reading of Heidegger's ontology

The field of my argument deals with a meta-ontological enquiry. If one were to use the analytic tradition in inspecting the ontology of these inner-worldly elements, there is revealed in the "thing" a commitment to the ontology of the mere "physicality" of objects. For instance, a hammer is a "thing"; but when it exists as being-with-the-hammer for the purpose of pounding nails on the wall, the hammer, in its usage, becomes transparent; furthermore, Dasein becomes a part of the referential whole (in this example, the "pounding nails on the wall") in which he is its end; the referential whole being using the hammer *in order to* pound nails on the wall *in order to* hang a clock on the wall *in order to* know time and so on. I will call the modality of such an articulation of beings as (A). Let us now consider the same "thing"(hammer) as having a slightly different modality -- hammer as a signifying tool. The hammer is a part of the whole in that it is a part of broader signifying mechanisms but its modality is such that the hammer comes-to-be-in-the-world only in its unreadiness-to hand. I will consider the modality of such an articulation, present in language, as (B). In considering the existence of the hammer as only "physical", the equivocacy(ambiguity) of its *usage* is lost—the being of the hammer articulated in (B) is of the same logical sense as (A), except, here in (B), the hammer is an abstraction. Thus I would argue that Heidegger's analysis of Being of beings is strictly one dimensional. The signifying system forms part of Dasein's transcendental finitude. It shows beings *to be* in different articulation than one generally denoted in the ready-to-hand nature of objects.

With respect to the analytic tradition, language employs the equivocacy of beings which rather than being "disclosed"[115] in Dasein, is communicated. The semiotic system takes an ontological dimension in Dasein's primordiality of *being-with*. Dasein (being there) in its pre-ontological sense is a dispensation that apriori comprehends the Being of beings. In the next section, I will bring such a description of beings against the Wittgensteinian model.

Wittgentstein, in his seminal work(3) hints toward a pre-ontological nature of "things" present in its state of affairs[116],

"If all objects["things"] are given, then at the same time all possible states of affairs [of the "things"] are also given. (2.0124)[..] The possibility of its occurring in states of affairs is the form of an object.(2.0141)"

The possible state of affairs include not just the *handiness* of the "thing", but also its unreadiness-to-hand[117]. Thus, the totality implies an infinite possibility of state of affairs that are predetermined before their use in language. Thus the possible state of affairs in which an object can be placed in language is determined "always already". There is therefore a kind of facticity in language, although the facticity implies only finite possibilities. It makes sense therefore that Lee Braver in his work *Groundless Grounds A Study of Wittgenstein and Heidegger* speaking of a "specific picture/conception of being", refers to it as "what Wittgenstein sometimes calls "meaning-objects" and early Heidegger calls present-at-hand objects"(4).

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[115] Heidegger calls the "taking care of" the physicality of other beings as a mode of Da-sein(the human entity), in which the being of the "other" is disclosed to the subject. "In being-with as the existential for-the-sake-of-others, these others are already disclosed in their Da-sein." p.116

[116] State of affairs could be viewed as configuration of objects as they stand in relation to one another.

[117] "Heedful association" to "things" that are not very handy after all.

The question of the "Who" of Da-sein?

Dasein is an ontico-ontological existence. Heidegger argues that "'I' must be understood only in the sense of a noncommittal *formal indication* of something which perhaps reveals itself in the actual phenomenal context of being as that being's 'opposite[118]'"; the "I" is lost in the worldliness of the world. The always already present meaning of a word in the construction of signs leads to a similar losing-oneself in the world characterised by being-with-others. The objects become meaningful in language when the "I" becomes its opposite (not I) — that is the "I" is lost in the discourse of the Other.

What happens outside "the philosophy room"?

An opportunity lies here in giving a necessary comparison to the logical form of the physical and the signifying. It is for this purpose that one should lean into what happens outside "the philosophy room". Hedeigger crafted his ontology of beings on a peculiar ontology of entities that satisfy the equation, "person and bodies are identical". David Lewis, in search for an adequate materialist standpoint of this equation postulates the thesis: "Necessarily, a person occupies a body at a time if and only if that person is identical with that body at that time.[...]X and Y are identical at a time *t* if and only if they both have stages at *t*—that is, exist at *t*—and their stages at *t* are identical."(5)

It is through this argument that I approach the "thing" in the analytic tradition, and ask: When is the "thing"(person) identical with the handiness(body) of its being? In an attempt to have a dialogue with

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[118] The opposite is what Heidegger calls the "not I", where he adds, "Then "not I" by no means signifies something like a being which essentially lacking "1-hood," but means a definite mode of being of the "I" itself; for example, having lost itself." p.109

Lewis, I will take up the defense articulated by Peter Van Inwagen, which is an analysis of a being both "outside" and "inside" the room. For instance, the sentence "Chairs exist" is used *differently* by someone who is outside the room doing the "ordinary business of life", in contrast to the context used by one inside the room. In explaining his argument, he employs the sentence "Chairs exist", in a non-physical manner, while still conveying a meaningful proposition:

"You and I may be brothers, but no two people could be less alike. I have devoted my life to working for peace and justice, and your only goal in life is to get rich selling furniture."

"What can I say? I deal in reality and you deal in dreams. Chairs exist. Peace and justice don't and never will."(6)

Coming back to the thesis, a person and a body can be said to be identical in the outside proposition(outside of an ontology room) *if and only if* the "concept" of a chair(representing logical X) in the context of utterance, and the "objective presence" of a chair(representing the logical Y) have stages at *t* and exist at *t*. However in cases of them being non-identical, one cannot dismiss the object itself—for it still carries in itself an ontological reality that goes beyond its objective presence, into the symbolic, "known" and disclosed within the language in which the object is *used*.

I will introduce here the notion of temporality in Heidegger to bring a full circle to my argument. The above example illustrates that the temporal nature of being in whichever modality is opened up (revealed) to us only at time t. At time t, the heterogeneity of the history of the object (physical, signifying or symbolic articulation) comes in line with the ontic possibility of being. The time t presents to us the specific "inner-worldliness" of the object that it carries with it. It is only here at time t that our being-in-the-world is made

meaningful, albeit not just in the readiness-to-hand of objects but also in its very unready-to-hand.

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