'Meaning of Being' in Early Heidegger
Compared to 'Meaning' in Late Wittgenstein

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Abstract

There are not a few studies which enrich Heidegger's thought and our life as well. However, Heidegger's concepts have been unavoidably accepted in the ineradicable traditional way of thinking and ordinary usage. Without the true understanding of his words, we can never get into the core of his thinking. Among his keywords which arouse the misunderstanding for him, I will focus on the 'meaning' in this paper.

Heidegger's early thinking is called a 'thinking of meaning of Being.' In general the pervasive understandings of 'meaning of Being' contribute to the interpretation which tacitly frames Heidegger's thinking into 'transcendental epistemology in traditional way.' However, 'Being [Sein]' is different from 'beings [Seiende],' and it is why we can never treat the Being as the same as beings, so to speak as the things from which a meaning can be read off.

For explication of meaning of Being, I begin with Wittgenstein who stands in totally different horizon. The question of 'meaning' is most frequently asked in language critical tradition as well as in phenomenological tradition. Although Wittgenstein stands in the heart of the language critical tradition, he goes beyond the tradition at the same time. Especially the late Wittgenstein tries to criticize his own early thinking as 'Augustinian (metaphysical)' and consigns the concept "meaning" into question. Here, I will compare the two masters to find out the true sense of 'meaning of Being.' It will be shown that it can not be true that Heidegger's thinking presupposes dichotomy between subject and object, and that therefore, it can not be a modification of modern epistemology. Heidegger had the critical mind against metaphysic in common with Wittgenstein, and so Heidegger's thinking can not remain in the horizon of transcendental philosophy in traditional way.

Keywords

1   Introduction

There are not a few studies which enrich Heidegger's thought and our life as well. In concerning with the masters of thought, we have to enter their locus and think after them first of all. Without such modesty, we can not recognize the real sense of the thought and improve it. However, Heidegger's concepts have been unavoidably accepted in the ineradicable traditional way of thinking and ordinary usage. The words of unique thinker sail between scylla of conventionality and Charybdis of subjectivity. That is why not a few critics regard Heidegger as a seductive mystic on one hand, and a modern subjectivist on the other hand. Among his keywords which arouse the misunderstanding for him, I will focus on the 'meaning' in this paper.

Heidegger's early thinking is called a 'thinking of meaning of Being.' In general the pervasive understandings of 'meaning of Being' contribute to the interpretation which frames Heidegger's thinking into 'transcendental epistemology in traditional way.' However, 'Being [Sein]' is different from 'beings [Seiende],' and it is why we can never treat the Being as the same as beings, so to speak as the things from which a meaning can be read off. Therefore the 'meaning of Being' which he sought to explicate can be regarded neither as meaning of object which is called Being nor as meaning of the concept, "Being". In this paper, I would like to reject the attempt to interpret Heidegger's thinking as transcendental, by discussing what is Being and what can be the meaning of Being in his thinking. It will be made clear that Heidegger's 'meaning of Being' is more original than the 'meaning' in our ordinary usage, and the former gives ground to the latter.

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2   'Meaning' in Wittgenstein's language philosophy

1) 'Meaning' in early Wittgenstein

Wittgenstein's early thinking is well known as 'anti-metaphysical.' He regards the metaphysical questions as 'meaningless,' and supposes to make a stepping ladder of his own propositions and throw them away because they are meaningless either. This self-refutative proposition which means that it is meaningless has been a point of disputes.

In Wittgenstein's thinking, the 'world' is the totality of 'facts [Tatsache],' and the latter means the 'existence [Bestand]' of 'states of affairs [Sachverhalte].' A state of affairs is a combination of 'things' which are the constant simples, substances. And the essence of a substance includes not only its internal properties but also its 'relations' (logic). Of course nothing in logic is accidental.

Therefore, the possibility of 'states of affairs' is determined in the thing itself, and only the 'configuration' of states of affairs can be accidental. Wittgenstein's world is constructed on the substantial simples.

And our thinking is the picture of the world and shares the 'logical form' with the pictured world. Every proposition is the result of truth-operations on elementary propositions, and the latter consists of names which correspond with the substantial simples. And since a elementary proposition assert a possibility of existence (and non-existence) of states of affairs, it has a meaning [Sinn] and can be true or false.

While propositions can represent the whole of reality, they can not represent the logical form itself which they have in common with reality in order to represent it. Because in order to do represent the logical form, we should be able to stand outside the logic, that is to say outside the world, which is impossible (Tractatus 4.12). A propositions just shows its meaning (Tractatus 4.022). Therefore, so many philosophical propositions and questions which seek to make the logic clear and so arouse the skepticism, are meaningless rather than false. The philosophical propositions and questions should be denied.

With restriction of the 'meaning,' the world and the language world came to include the 'logical necessity' and 'highest universality' in them. Here is ignored the 'configuration' of the states of affairs. Should we however say that the configuration or the accidental is nothing for our ordinary life and language usage?

2) 'Meaning' in late Wittgenstein

Contrary to his early standpoint, the late Wittgenstein insists on the value of 'ordinary language.' In *philosophical investigation* he criticizes his own early thinking. He confesses that he has stuck to the requirement for the crystalline purity of logic (investigation 106–7). This unjust requirement added to language is called 'Augustinian picture of language' which means: 'every word has a meaning. To have a meaning, a word should signify an object. A word has no meaning if nothing corresponds to it'.

However, there is no 'object' which corresponds to a concept and a meaning. Wittgenstein says: the word "meaning" is being used illicitly, if it is used to signify the thing that 'corresponds' to the word (investigation 40). For example, when we point to a piece in a chess game as a knight, here we don't think a piece of horse shaped wooden sculpture as a knight. That is just a bearer of the meaning of 'knight.' Furthermore it was not until the 'setting of rules' was completed that the thing came to bear the meaning of 'knight.' The rules of a game did not have to be like that. Therefore, the meaning is itself nothing more than a part of rules of the designed game.

The fact that you can never find a pure and clear-cut concept, however hard you may seek for, and that there is no perfect definition, demands a whole new way of looking at language. There is nothing common to all we call "A". They are related to one another in many different ways. And it is this relationship, or these relationships, the family resemblance (investigation 67) that makes us use a concept.

Of course we want to say that there can not be any vagueness in logic and that the ideal 'must' be found in reality. However, the requirement is just requirement and can not determine the reality. Wittgenstein who came to realize that Augustnian picture is just a requirement, regards 'meaning'

of a word as no more monosemy in its real language use.

In that he rejects one order which is supposed to be hidden, Wittgenstein's thinking is indeed 'anti-metaphysical.' This attitude reminds us of another philosopher Heidegger who has the totally different horizon. I will concretize the two thinker's proximity in anti-metaphysic, without forgetting that our main concern is to elucidate the true sense of 'meaning of Being' in Heidegger.

3   Heidegger's question of Being and 'Meaning of Being'

1) Proximity between Wittgenstein and Heidegger

Just as late Wittgenstein sets count for more on ordinary 'using' of language than the 'monosemy meaning,' early Heidegger sets count for more on 'using' of beings than the 'theoretical recognition' of them. Their standpoint is important in that it is abandonment of traditional metaphysical view, that is objectifying attitude. That is to say the proximity of two thinkers' is not the emphasize on the mere 'using' alone. The 'monosemy meaning' is closely connected with the 'theoretical recognition' of beings. The two warriors fought against the same opponent.

The early Wittgenstein was under the spell of the requirement of the perfect 'universality and necessity.' And the 'monosemy meaning' is a product of such a requirement. And the late Wittgenstein says: People say that what is important is not a word but its meaning, and then they regard the meaning as a sort of 'thing' (investigation 120). To regard what is not a thing as a thing, is what Heidegger's criticism aims at.

Radical criticism on philosophy of 'Beingness [Seiendheit]' and ontology of 'presence [Anwesen]' was the core of Heidegger's philosophy. Traditional metaphysic has concern in 'the constant' in Being of beings, that is in what is to be the ground of universality and necessity. Because in reality we can not find such a thing, metaphysic sets it as essence or substance in somewhere 'outside' of real space and time. Therefore such universality and necessity has the characteristic of eternity.

However, for Heidegger the true Being can never be such 'Beingness,' and therefore the true recognition of Being can never be as clearly evident as theoretical recognition. Being and beings are ontologically different. When Wittgenstein made mention of the 'form of life' which makes us follow the same rules in games, he definitely had some non-metaphysical origin of generality in mind.

2) Embodiment of 'Meaning of Being' in early Heidegger
(1) 'Meaning of Being' compared to Aristotelian tradition

Because what determines the use of a word is for Wittgenstein through and through the gamers ourselves who participate in the language game, there is nothing like the secret which is unexposed and hidden from our usage. On one hand, this assertion is the fruit of the effort to elucidate our thinking and language without appealing to the metaphysical apparatus, but on the other hand, it makes us ask how far we can get from the nominalism or modern subjectivism with his thinking. However, by emphasizing two masters' proximity, I did not mean to insist that their recognitions are falling into the subjective.

Heidegger's early thinking is clearly an ontology rather than an epistemology. Because it begins with the premise which is definitely different from that of epistemology, that is to say, the rec-

ognition of 'givenness [Vorgegebenheit].' Heidegger's Being is, as 'origin,' prior to beings. However, this very fact arouses the criticism that he belongs to the traditional way of ontology.

In different context from language criticism, Husserl questioned the 'meaning,' and he thought that categories are not concepted by the worldless subject alone, but already in the disclosure which unites consciousness with its objects. Husserl gained the insight that categories already have the characteristic of 'givenness.' Heidegger evaluates this insight as one of the most important contribution to the construction of phenomenology and he inherited Husserl's critical mind concerning the 'givenness.' In the givenness Heidegger found the possibility to overcome the nominalism.

However, In *Prolegomena* Heidegger criticizes that Husserl goes back to the immanentism of constituting consciousness by omitting to ask the question of 'Being' and therefore to adopt the 'givenness' in proper way. Concerning Husserl's most fundamental distinction of Being, so to speak distinction between Being as consciousness and Being as 'transcended' by consciousness, Heidegger thought that each Being and the distinction or union between these two Beings are not asked enough. If the consciousness makes intentional phenomena possible and analyzes them at the same time, but the possibility can not be given from something absolute outside the world and subject, then how is the consciousness able to be as it is?

Held asserts that Heidegger can never get over Husserl by asking the 'Being.' Held believes that Husserl questioned world [Welt] properly and the genuine interest of phenomenology is just the 'world' as the universal horizon of beings. It will be proper that Held takes notice of the 'unity of consciousness.' Husserl's consciousness can not be separated from its objects and the phenomenological world implicates the impossibility of separation of them. However, Held thinks that Heidegger improperly assumed that there was 'Being' outside the phenomenological world and we could stand outside the world when Heidegger says that Husserl omitted to ask the question of the 'Being.' And this assumption was definitely absurd. Held criticizes Heidegger that he was just motivated by the experience of 'prior to' the nominalism and he succeeded to the idea of absolute philosophy prior to the Cartesian skepticism, that is to say the question of Being by Aristotle. According to Held, Heidegger should have elucidated that Husserl's consciousness is transcendental already rather than immanent, but on the contrary Heidegger brought the 'Being' which is non-phenomenological concept.

However, this criticism is from the misunderstanding of Heidegger's 'Being.' As is said already, Heidegger firmly denies the traditional concept of Being. His 'Being' is not 'constant' forever outside the real space and time. His Being does not offer the universality and necessity in old way. It is sure that Heidegger was partly motivated by Aristotelian ontology. But what he has learned from Aristotle was not oneness of beings but 'diverseness' of beings. How a being as a being is different from another? He devoted himself to the question on what is true of Being which makes all the diverseness of beings possible. Therefore, the Aristotlian thinking which vested 'Being of substance' with the diverse Beings and sought for the 'categories and the completeness of them' was the object that Heidegger's deconstruction aimed at. Heidegger regards Aristotelian substance-centrism as the serious obstacle which hinders Husserl's original project.

That Heidegger's *Being and time* begins with the criticism on the Aristotelian Being is not a mere coincidence. Traditional philosophy regards Being as transcendental universality, analogical oneness by contrast with the diverseness of actual facts. In that way "Being" is objectified and

becomes the most universal and still the darkest at the same time. By now, what the Being is, so to speak the 'meaning of Being' (not the 'essence' of Being) has never been asked sufficiently.

(2) 'Meaning of Being' compared to the language critical tradition

I just mentioned the concept 'meaning.' However, how different is the meaning of Being from the meaning of a word "Being"? Heidegger definitely asked the meaning of Being, but there are criticisms that he actually sought for the clear meaning of the concept, "Being." Where Heidegger asks the meaning of Being, we can find the examples of usage of the verb, 'be [sein].' Certainly Heidegger may ask also the meaning of the concept "Being." Could we not say then that Heidegger seeks for a firm Beingness [Seiendheit], when he tries to find out one original meaning of Being? Phillipse asserts that Heidegger has the 'Augustinian picture of language,' because the "Being" is a referring expression which refers to Being. If it is true, Heidegger falls into a metaphysician in traditional way.

However, Heidegger could ask the question of meaning of Being with the question of meaning of "Being" at the same time, because of the peculiar relation between the Being and the 'understanding' of human being who is the 'consciousness' defined in his Being.

The Being which is his one and only concern, is only in the way of appearing as Being of beings at every moment, so to speak as (non-absolute) origin of beings. And the place where this Being occurs is called Being-there [Dasein]. The Being concretes itself and comes open 'through' the understanding [Verstehen] of Dasein. Therefore, the understanding of Dasein is more than mere subjective, isolated. And the understanding of Dasein is completed in the interpretation [Auslegung] which defines a being as it, and the predication is just the derivation of the interpretation. In this way, the using of the word "Being" as well as the using of beings comes to be possible. In brief, the way we understand the Being determines the way of using language and vice versa.

To get into the core, Being can not be a thing from which a meaning can be read off afterwards. Dasein is as the place [Da] of disclosure [Erschloßenheit] of Being. Since Dasein itself comes into being from the Being, a Dasein can not be a empty vessel where the passing Being comes from outside and stays for a while. Rather, by accomplishing the Being of itself in some direction, Dasein lets the Being go on. This is why we can not start with the Nothingness as emptiness of recognition. We should be the continuum of ourselves and the all beings in the world. Since the world, the correlation of Beings of beings, in which Dasein dwells is newly woven at every moment, the understanding of Dasein should move on as what is unable to be completed in its concreteness.

Dasein who destined to understand is able to be born newly at every moment. Dasein's understanding means the 'ability to be [Sein-können]' and in this ability Dasein attains its 'possibility to be.' Still, from where are the new 'possibilities' drawn up? If we regard the possibility of Being as 'mere' possibility, that is to say as the unrealized or the unrealizable on the contrary of 'reality,' we come to demand another power to make a possibility turn into a reality beside Being itself. Therefore, the possibility of Being of Dasein includes the reality (SZ 51–2) and is more than it. However, this possibility is not outside the reality. Rather, the possibility comes open with the reality, with its finitude, and Dasein is always its own possibility itself at every moment (SZ 193). As matter of fact, our ordinary concept 'possibility' is grounded on this actuality. When you say 'A is possible for me now,' you have in mind the possibility which is defined by your reality just now, and which is more

than the reality at the same time, rather than the logical possibility which is isolated from your real situation. That is why Dasein's possibility is 'actual possibility' (SZ 195).

Therefore the understanding of Being of Dasein exists 'with' the 'whereupon [Woraufhin]' that understanding of Dasein throws itself and obtains itself again. And this 'whereupon' is called the 'meaning [Sinn]' of Being of Dasein (SZ 429). Here the 'meaning' of Being of Dasein 'is' as the possibility. **We call the possibility in this way, so to speak, the ground for Being of understanding Dasein, 'meaning of Being of Dasein.' After all, the meaning of Being of Dasein is 'the ground as possibility.'**

The possibility is the temporal which modifies as the past and the current as well as the futuristic. Therefore, as is hinted enough, the 'temporality' constitutes the original meaning of Being of Dasein (SZ 312). That the meaning of Being of Dasein is temporality should be considered over and over again. The Being of Dasein does not have a separate 'ground' which is called 'temporality' outside it. In that case, we deal the possibility as the 'present-at hand [Vorhandene]' which is the object of theoretical recognition. Rather, the 'temporality' is just the constitution of Being of Dasein who is supposed to be and able to be. Here matters the way of Being of Dasein who never standstills and never stops coming to be. To be temporal is the way of Being of Dasein.

Because the primary question was the meaning of Being, if we consider not only Dasein but also the beings which are not Dasein, all the beings are possible only in the horizon of 'time,' so to speak timely, in finitude. In other words, all the beings are possible only when the Being make itself timely. When Heidegger asked the question of the meaning of Being, he had the timely, finite Being in mind. Now, we confirm that Heidegger's 'meaning of Being' is asked, just to establish the 'ground as possibility' of Being of beings which appears at every moment and in every diversity, in contrast to the Being as the constancy [Ständigkeit] or presence [Anwesen]. In context above, the criticism that Heidegger has the Augustinian picture of language does not relate to the fact.

4   Conclusion

Heidegger's Being is throughout timely. Being unfolds itself at every moment and in every diversity, and does so only through understanding of Dasein. That is why Heidegger asked the meaning of Being of Dasein who is gifted with the 'givenness.' However, Heidegger's thinking strengthens the characteristic of ontology after the conversion [Kehre] by asking the question of 'truth of Being,' so to speak the occurrence of appearance of Being itself. The main concern of later Heidegger is: "What is the truth of Being?" (Beiträge 171)

However, the early thinking of Heidegger can not be underestimated in compare to the later thinking. It has its peculiarity in its own way. The peculiarity of Heidegger's thinking lies in that it is the 'question' of Being. His early thinking is the obvious denial of the correspondence between beings and recognition which is grounded on the dichotomy between object and subject, that is to say the obvious denial of the truth as the 'rightness [Richtigkeit].' To secure the condition which makes the truth as the rightness possible, Heidegger determined the understanding of Dasein as the place of truth of Being. In this way, Heidegger asks the question of the truth of Being again.

Heidegger's early thinking does not remain in the traditional transcendental horizon any

more, and every criticism should not fail to notice this point. <u>That the Being in Heidegger's early thinking is already the refusal of the universality, necessity and objectivity, should be admitted by even the one who goes beyond Heidegger.</u>

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