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Reading Reaction paper #3 - Heidegger

I'll start off by saying that I'm honestly still struggling to understand Heidegger, so I'll mostly be talking about phenomenology, because it is the predominant way I think about the world around me. I've never read any works by Husserl or Heidegger before this class, but ever since reading Aristotle, I've thought, "yeah, the forms are cool and all, but why should I care? This really doesn't change *how* I live my life." While I think philosophy's goal is largely to reveal the truth of the world, a subgoal (in my opinion) should be to change the way we live our lives, which most philosophy, bar morality, frankly, lacks for me.

A quote I really like, though I'm unsure of its origin, is, "reality only exists insofar as your own perception of it," and I think this is captured (partially) by phenomenology. This philosophy prompts me to care because I am not merely a bystander to the objective world around me, but rather, I'm a participant - my outlooks, opinions, and dispositions toward the world around me shape the world around me. The difference between waking up and thinking, "I'm going to have a good day", rather than "I'm already ready to go to bed", is drastic - your entire day, the world you exist within for a brief period of time, is potentially altered by this simple change in disposition.

I think another thing I don't like about the subject-object distinction is how it is predominantly about your experience as the subject - but what about the context of self as object? Another quote I've heard, that I think is relevant, is "you are that which you choose to reveal of yourself." In this context, thinking of oneself as the object which a subject interacts with, you really start to grasp what phenomenology is about I think. Another person's outlook on you drastically influences what you are to them - I'd go so far as to say that their outlook is who you are to them. We also, as a sentient object, get to choose what we reveal to them. This "relative" truth is then twofold - someone's perception of you is both a result of their disposition, and a result of what you've chosen to reveal. This kind of goes back to what we were discussing with social media usage, as a different "representative" self is shown on each form of media. I think, then, that social media is not the cause of these subsets of selves, but rather a magnifying glass - you may not think you're doing it if you're not on social media, but if you do use social media, it's amplified like no other.

If I choose to reveal parts of my "self", then, this brings up the question - is there a greater, objective self, from which I choose subsets to share with people? My first thought is that we change throughout our lives, and of course there can't be a static objective self; however, is there even a dynamic one? If you are someone different to every individual subject, is there a *you*? I realize this sounds odd, but I'm struggling to give a definitive answer to this question. Of

course, I exist and know I am a “self”; however, is there any real self, apart from my own & others’ experience of it? I guess it’s a sort of “if a tree falls in the woods” question - can there be a self without that self being experienced? I don’t have a good answer, but it’s an interesting existentialist (I think?) question I haven’t really considered before.

Overall, I think I like Heidegger so far. I don’t know what he’s saying most of the time, and I can’t relate much to him in terms of our experiences of the world, but he’s a bit like a grandpa in this regard - you don’t really get him at first, but he’s always welcome over. I really hope I begin to understand more of Heidegger as we read more about him, because he seems like a cool grandpa, having lots of stuff to say, and not enough people to listen.