Modes-of-being and Heidegger's Ontological Pluralism

Modos-de-ser y el pluralismo ontológico de Heidegger

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Abstract

In this article, I offer an account of the concept mode-of-being that aims to define the central role that this notion plays in Heidegger's ontology and clarify the underlying reasons of what I call the Heideggerian meta-philosophical thesis of ontological pluralism. To do so, I examine two contrasting interpretations of the notion of mode-of-being: the first one considers modes-of-being as categories of Dasein's understanding-of-being that enable the interpretation of the ontic world of entities that is independent of the Dasein ways of understanding it. In this view a single entity can be discovered in more than one mode-of-being. By contrast, the second position considers modes-of-being as categories that metaphysically distinguish different kind of entities, so that a single entity cannot have more than one mode-of-being. Finally, I briefly sketch my proposal, which conceives modes-of-being in terms of the *intrinsic ontological possibility of the entity*, which manifests itself in Dasein's understanding-of-being. I frame this discussion within the debate between a monistic ontological conception—which Heidegger criticizes and attributes to the tradition—and an ontological pluralism of modes-of-being, which I attribute to Heidegger.

Keywords: modes-of-being; Dasein; Heidegger's meta-ontology; ontological monism; ontological pluralism; ontological difference; T. Carman; K. McDaniel; idealism; realism.

Resumen

En este artículo, ofrezco un análisis del concepto de "modo-de-ser" que pretende definir el papel central que esta noción desempeña en la ontología de Heidegger y aclarar las razones subyacentes de lo que yo llamo la tesis metafilosófica heideggeriana del pluralismo ontológico. Para ello, examino dos interpretaciones contrapuestas de la noción de "modo-de-ser": la primera considera los modos-de-ser como categorías de la comprensión-del-ser del Dasein que permiten la interpretación del mundo óntico de los entes que es independiente de los modos de comprensión del Dasein. Desde este punto de vista, un mismo ente puede descubrirse en más de un modo-de-ser. Por el contrario, la segunda posición considera los modos-de-ser como categorías que distinguen metafísicamente diferentes tipos de entes, de modo que un mismo ente no puede tener más de un modo-de-ser. Por último, esbozo brevemente mi propuesta, que concibe los modos-de-ser en términos de la *posibilidad ontológica intrínseca del ente*, que se manifiesta en la comprensión del ser del Dasein. Enmarco esta discusión en el debate entre una concepción ontológica monista —que Heidegger critica y atribuye a la tradición— y un pluralismo ontológico de los modos-de-ser, que atribuyo a Heidegger.

Palabras clave: modos de ser; Dasein; meta-ontología de Heidegger; monismo ontológico; pluralismo ontológico; diferencia ontológica; T. Carman; K. McDaniel; idealismo; realismo.

Introduction[1]

A central notion of Heideggerian ontology is that of mode-of-being.[2] Heidegger defined his philosophical investigation as an elucidation of the meaning of being in general and the correlative problem of the unity of different modes-of-being. In *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, he questioned the fundamental theses of traditional ontology,[3] which having omitted the question of being, have made coincide the realm of entities in general (*der Bereich des Seienden*) with the realm of the occurrent[4] entities (*der Bereich des Vorhandenen*) (BPP, p. 119; DGP, p. 169). Heidegger pointed out that there is an entity—Dasein—whose being (*Existenz*) is so disparate compared to that of occurrent entities "that it seems at first as though the two ways of being are incomparable and cannot be determined by way of a uniform concept of being in general" (*aus einem einheitlichen Begriff des Seins überhaupt*) (BPP, p. 176; DGP, p. 250). This fact—said Heidegger—forces us to rethink the question of

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[1]   Heidegger's works (*Gesamtausgabe*, GA) are abbreviated as follows: GA 2: *Being and Time* (BT), *Sein und Zeit* (SZ); GA 24: *The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (BPP), *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* (DGP); GA 26: *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic* (MFL), *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Logik* (MAL); GA 29/30: *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude* (FCM), *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit* (DGM); GA 33: *Aristotle's Metaphysics Theta 1-3. On the Essence and Actuality of Force* (AMF), *Aristoteles, Metaphysik Theta 1-3. Von Wesen und Wirklichkeit der Kraft* (AMK).

[2]   "Modes-of-being," or "ways of being," is the translation of the Heideggerian terms *Seinsmodi, Seinsarten, Seinsweisen*, or *Weisen zu Sein*.

[3]   By traditional ontology I understand what Heidegger calls the *Ontologie der Vorhandenheit*, which conceives the sense of being primarily as pure presence or effectiveness.

[4]   Some scholars—such as Taylor Carman—translate the Heideggerian terms *Vorhandenes* and *Vorhandenheit* as *occurrent* and *occurrentness*, while others—like Kris McDaniel—translate them as *present-at-hand* and *presence-at-hand*, respectively. In a similar way, Carman translates the Heideggerian terms *Zuhandenes* and *Zuhandenheit* as *available* and *availability*, while McDaniel does it as *ready-to-hand* and *readiness-to-hand*, respectively. When discussing their interpretations, I will use each author's translations, but in the rest of the text I will use Carman's translation, as it is consistent with that of David R. Cerbone in *The Cambridge Heidegger Lexicon* (Wrathall, 2021, pp. 78-81 & 538-541).

being, and the issue of the unity and multiplicity of modes-of-being. This problem—known today as the problem of ontological pluralism[5]—was raised in 2009 by Kris McDaniel and Jason Turner, who stated that "there are different ways, kinds or modes-of-being" (Turner, 2010, p. 5).

The meta-philosophical problem that I have just described may be stated as the debate between a monistic ontological conception—which Heidegger criticizes and attributes to the tradition—and an ontological pluralism of modes-of-being, which I attribute to Heidegger. According to ontological monism, the realm of entities in general must be thought of as a single metaphysical order, and the multiplicity of modes-of-being must be understood as categorial differences[6] within that same order. By contrast, the pluralist thesis holds that the realm of entities in general is constituted by different orders[7] or modes-of-being irreducible to each other, which in turn admit internal categorial differences (Ramos dos Reis, 2017, p. 1021). According to Heidegger, the monistic ontological conception occludes the possibility of an adequate ontological conceptualization of Dasein's being and of the sense of being in general.

My general hypothesis is that the notion of mode-of-being allows Heidegger to conceptualize Dasein's being as irreducible to that of occurrent entities, but without breaking down the notion of being in distinct and irreconcilable domains. Furthermore, I hold that this notion enables the conception of a unity in which a multiplicity of modes-of-being is comprehended without losing their irreducible character. This peculiar unity takes place in Dasein's understanding-of-being. Thereby,

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[5]   Ontological pluralism is the meta-ontological conception that admits more than one way or mode-of-being. Each mode-of-being is irreducible to one another. One of the philosophical challenges for this pluralist position is the requirement to elaborate a conceptual system that, on the one hand, provides a unitary notion of being and, on the other, allows one to discriminate the differences and to identify possible relationships between the different modes-of-being without sacrificing their mutual irreducibility.

[6]   In this context, a *categorial difference* refers to the differentiation among types of determination that do not imply a distinction between modes-of-being. For example, having-a-color and having-a-weight are categorial differences, since they determine conditions of predication within a homogenous ontological field (or mode-of-being). On the other hand, being-odd-or-even and having-a-color are not, because these two forms of determination do not belong to the same mode-of-being.

[7]   Here, "order" must be understood as normative horizon.

Heidegger provides the phenomenological ground for an account of ontological pluralism.

The concept of mode-of-being has been the subject of various discussions in the Heideggerian literature, as there is a certain tension in the texts that demands clarification. One of the controversial questions refers to the status of modes-of-being and the type of ontological articulation they enable. On the one hand, Heidegger seemed to maintain a certain idealism regarding modes-of-being—when sustaining that they belong to Dasein's understanding-of-being (BT, p. 228; SZ, p. 183). On the other hand, he seemed to maintain a kind of realism regarding entities—when claiming that entities give the measure to our understanding of them (FCM, p. 342; DGM, p. 496). There is no full agreement between commentators about the ontological status and the role that modes-of-being play in Dasein's experience of entities. For example, Howard D. Kelly (2014, p. 678) affirms that Heidegger is "a metaphysical and epistemological *realist*," opposing Cristina Lafont's interpretation, considered by Kelly as a transcendental idealist position. Another controversial question is whether a single entity may have more than one mode-of-being: there are passages in which Heidegger maintained that the same entity can be available and occurrent, while in others he seemed to endorse the opposite position (BT, §§ 39 & 69). For instance, Kris McDaniel maintains that a single entity—for example, a hammer—cannot have more than one mode-of-being, and he opposes authors like Edgar Boedeker, who claims that the hammer can be "once as a present-to-hand object weighing two kilograms, and another time as a ready-to-hand item of equipment useful for hammering" (Boedeker, 2005, p. 159).

As we shall see, the answer to the first question—regarding the status of modes-of-being—depends on a previous understanding of Heidegger's thesis of ontological difference. While the answer to the second question—regarding the co-determination of a single entity by more than one mode-of-being—concerns the debate between ontological monism and ontological pluralism mentioned above. These two questions overlap in such a way that the answer to the former entails a certain way of answering the latter. Thus, an adequate understanding of Heidegger's philosophy demands an account of the notion of mode-of-being that, on the one hand, defines the status and the ontological function that this concept plays in his ontology and, on the other, clarifies the reasons underlying a pluralism of modes-of-being.

To shed light on these questions, I will examine two competing interpretations of the Heideggerian notion of mode-of-being that can be schematically presented as follows: the first interpretation—held by Taylor Carman—regards modes-of-being as categories of Dasein's understanding-of-being that allow for the interpretation of the ontic world of entities that is independent of Dasein's ways of understanding it. From this view, which I call *hermeneutical pragmatism*, a single entity can be discovered in more than one mode-of-being. By contrast, the second position—held by Kris McDaniel—considers modes-of-being as categories that metaphysically distinguish different kinds of entities, so that a single entity cannot have more than one mode-of-being. I call this second interpretation *metaphysical realism*. Finally, my proposal—that I call *modal pluralism*—conceives modes-of-being in terms of the proper *ontological possibility of the entity*, which manifests itself in Dasein's understanding-of-being.[8] I frame this discussion within the debate between a monistic ontological conception—which Heidegger criticizes and attributes to the tradition—and an ontological pluralism of modes-of-being, which I attribute to Heidegger.

To evaluate these three viewpoints, I will establish some conditions that the notion of mode-of-being must satisfy. I consider that an adequate interpretation of the notion of mode-of-being must be coherent with two fundamental theses of Heidegger's ontology: (i) Heidegger's thesis of ontological difference and (ii) Heidegger's meta-philosophical critique of the *Ontologie der Vorhandenheit*, i.e. the monistic ontological conception that Heidegger attributes to the tradition.

> (i) The Heideggerian thesis of ontological difference requires one to simultaneously sustain that "being is not an entity" and that "being is always the being of an entity." In other words, the ontological dimension of being is heterogeneous from the ontic dimension of the entity but, at the same time, these two dimensions are inseparable or intrinsically unified. In this way, Heidegger defended the structural internal duality that

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[8]   I follow the interpretation of Ramos dos Reis (2014, pp. 190-207). See also Ramos dos Reis (2017, p. 1033; my translation): "modes-of-being must be understood as a very peculiar type of modal structure: existential possibilities or internal possibilities."

ontologically characterizes all that is (BT, pp. 127, 251 & 272; SZ, pp. 94, 208 & 230)

(ii) The Heideggerian critique to the *Ontologie der Vorhandenheit* stated that the primary sense of being should not be thought of as pure presence or effectiveness (*pures Vorhandensein*) and that the different modes-of-being should not be conceived as stratified or derivable structures of a primary sense of being. This may be stated as the thesis of ontological pluralism of modes-of-being, which sustains that there is more than one way of being, and these modes-of-being are irreducible to each other (BPP, p. 176; DGP, p. 250).

Next, I will address the questions about the ontological status and role played by modes-of-being in Dasein's experience of entities, as well as the problem concerning the co-determination of the same entity by more than one mode-of-being.

1. Hermeneutical pragmatism: modes-of-being as hermeneutic conditions

A way of interpreting the notion of mode-of-being is what one may call "hermeneutical pragmatism."[9] In this interpretation, modes-of-being are categories of Dasein's understanding-of-being that enable the intelligibility and interpretation of entities.

Taylor Carman (2003) holds this view. The general purpose of Carman's text is to show the relevance of the Heideggerian concept of "interpretation" (*Auslegung*) and the correlative elucidation of what he calls "hermeneutic conditions" (Carman, 2003, pp. 1-2). Carman suggests that the notion of mode-of-being corresponds to the hermeneutic conditions that enable Dasein's interpretation of entities. Each mode-of-being "specifies what is involved in or what it means to understand objects *as* objects, useful things *as* useful, useless things *as* useless, and

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[9]   I call this position "hermeneutic pragmatism" in the following sense: "pragmatism" only insofar as this position considers that the foundation of normativity is socially instituted (Haugeland, 1998, p. 317), and "hermeneutic" because it considers modes-of-being as "hermeneutical conditions" that enable our interpretation of entities.

human beings *as* humans" (Carman, 2003, p. 27). However, according to Carman, modes-of-being are categories that say nothing about the ontological status of the entities that are interpreted through them. For instance, they do not say whether and how such entities "depend on us and our practices or attitudes" (Carman, 2003, p. 4); some entities—like the useful ones (*Zuhandenes*)—ontologically depend on Dasein's attitudes and social practices, while other entities—such as mere objects (*Vorhandenes*)—exist independently of Dasein's understanding of them.

Carman also holds that Heidegger's famous distinction between "occurrentness" (*Vorhandenheit*) and "availability" (*Zuhandenheit*) aims to point out the normative and non-causal nature of hermeneutic conditions (modes-of-being). Thus, in emphasizing Heidegger's anti-naturalist stance, Carman explains that the hermeneutic conditions should not be thought of as what causally triggers the psychological or physiological processes involved in the interpretation of entities. Causal conditions, as specified by positive sciences, do not account for the essentially normative nature of intentionality. Then, emphasizing Heidegger's anti-logicism, Carman maintains that the hermeneutic conditions are not "mere logical conditions of thought, independent of the way things are in fact given to us to understand" (Carman, 2003, p. 27). On the contrary, these conditions are inherent to the normative structure of the world, which Carman understands as the world of social practices. Accordingly, he sustains that social norms define what it is *to be* something and what it is to do something correctly.[10] He further claims that social norms "constitute what it is to have a conversation, what it is *to be* angry or offended or bored, and what it is *to be* a cabinet, an antique, a living room or a museum" (Carman, 2003,

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[10]   Following Haugeland (1998), I argue against Carman that the normative structure of Dasein's social practice is not sufficient in itself to ground the understanding of entities as such. According to Haugeland, the possibility of objective knowledge requires the ability to distinguish and articulate two different kinds of norms: a norm defining that something is the case, and a norm determining the proper way to respond to it. Nevertheless, in Carman's interpretation, the norm that defines that something is the case and the norm to respond appropriately to it are one and only. For instance, what it means for something *to be available* is socially defined by what is commonly done when interpreting something *as available*. Yet, if *interpreting it as available* is what defines the meaning of *being available*, then there is no independent correction criterion *to interpret it rightly as available*, beyond mere social consensus.

p. 145). Carman concludes that Heidegger conceives the constitutive conditions of intentionality as hermeneutic conditions inherent to the normative structure of social practices (2003, p. 139). In this sense, I label his interpretation "hermeneutical pragmatism."

However, in Carman's position, it is not clear how the entities themselves "give the measure" to our ways of understanding them, as sustained by Heidegger (FCM p. 342; DGM, p. 496). To clarify this issue, I shall ascertain how Carman understands the relationship between the ontic and the ontological realm in Heidegger's ontology.

Carman identifies the ontic with the realm of physical nature and occurrent entities, and holds that Heidegger is an "ontic realist" (Carman, 2003, p. 17). As such, the ontic world would be ontologically independent of Dasein and of its ways of understanding it. That is, the ontic world is *ontologically independent* insofar as it exists even if no Dasein exists and "falls outside" the hermeneutic conditions that make it intelligible. To justify this thesis, Carman says—paraphrasing Heidegger—that "Being (*Sein*) depends on Dasein, […] but what is (*das Seiende*)—more precisely, what is "occurrent" (*vorhanden*)—does not," following on to conclude that "being is simply what we understand when we understand *what* and *that* things *are*" (Carman, 2003, p. 4).

Regarding the ontological realm, Carman identifies it with Dasein's understanding-of-being, conceived as the intelligible order of the ontic world: "The ontic world, the world of entities, remains the same […] the ontological world, the world understood as the intelligible ordering of those entities as the kinds of entities they are, has changed" (Carman, 2003, p. 132). Thus, according to Carman, modes-of-being and the ontological realm depend on Dasein, but the ontic world of entities is independent of Dasein's existence and ways of understanding it.

Summarizing, Carman interprets modes-of-being as ontological categories that show the specific conditions of the interpretability of entities, and he emphasizes the independence of the ontic regarding the ontological dimension.

To clarify the shortcomings of this view, I will analyze two notions, whose interpretations by Carman seem particularly problematic: the first is the ontological concept of reality (*Realität*) and the second is the mode-of-being of occurrentness (*Vorhandenheit*).

At the end of the first section of *Being and Time*, Heidegger raises the need to reach "a more precise characterization of the concept of *Reality*" (BT, p. 228; SZ, p. 183) that enables one to account for the ontological

connections between the different modes-of-being. I claim that, in these paragraphs, Heidegger is making a meta-ontological critique of the concepts of traditional ontology that has primarily understood *being* in the sense of occurrentness (BT, p. 228; SZ, p. 183). This ontological monism—which I already mentioned in the introduction—has prevented the proper ontological determination of Dasein's being and of the being of the intramundane entity. I argue that Heidegger intends to refute the monist thesis of traditional ontology and proposes an ontological pluralism of modes-of-being. Conversely, Carman suggests that Heidegger intends, in this case, to highlight the independent existence of the ontic world of entities with respect to the ontological world of Dasein's understanding-of-being.

To solve this discrepancy, I shall examine the treatment of this problem in the very text of *Being and Time*. In paragraph § 43, Heidegger distinguishes between the *ontological* concept and the *traditional* concept of reality:

> "Reality," as an ontological term, is one which we have related to entities within-the-world. If it serves to designate this kind of Being in general, then readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand function as modes of Reality. If, however, one lets this [word] have its traditional signification, then it stands for Being in the sense of the pure presence-at-hand of Things**.** But not all presence-at-hand is the presence-at-hand of Things (BT, p. 254; SZ, p. 211).

According to the text, the definitions of the *ontological* concept of reality and that of the *traditional* concept—which I will label R1 and R2, respectively—are the following:

- Def. R1: the *ontological* concept of reality is the mode-of-being of the intramundane entity in general, of which availability and occurrentness are its modifications.

- Def. R2: the *traditional* concept of reality is the being of the pure occurrentness of Things.

From the aforementioned quote (BT, p. 254; SZ, p. 211) we can also extract two concepts of occurrentness, one *ontological* and the other *traditional*, that I will label V1 and V2, respectively:

- Def. V1: the *ontological* concept of occurrentness corresponds to one of the modes of reality (*Modi der Realität*) in the *ontological* sense (R1).

- Def. V2: the *traditional* concept of occurrentness is the concept of being in general of traditional ontology.

I claim that V1 proposes a pluralistic ontological conception while V2 proposes a monistic one.

In addition to these concepts, in the same paragraph Heidegger distinguishes two levels of Dasein's understanding-of-being:

> Furthermore, in the factical disclosedness of the world, entities within-the-world are discovered too. This implies that the Being of these entities is always understood in a certain manner, even if it is not conceived in a way which is appropriately ontological. To be sure, the pre-ontological understanding of Being embraces all entities which are essentially disclosed in Dasein; but the understanding of Being has not yet Articulated [*sic*] itself in a way which corresponds to the various modes of Being (BT, p. 245; SZ, pp. 200-201).

In the text, we can see that there is an immediate or *pre-ontological* understanding-of-being—which I label C1—and an *ontological* conceptualization of it, labeled C2:

- Def. C1: Dasein's *pre-ontological* understanding-of-being is the first level and it is immediate, non-thematical, and presupposed in our experience of entities.

- Def. C2: Dasein's *ontological* understanding-of-being is the philosophical conceptualization of the immediate understanding-of-being (C1).

As is widely recognized, Dasein's *pre-ontological* understanding-of-being (C1) is unclear and tends to objectify the phenomena and hide the ontological structures that make it possible. According to Heidegger, this tendency should be taken into account at the moment of the *ontological* conceptualization (C2); he also criticizes the traditional ontology for not doing so (Vigo, 2014, pp. 81-82).

Taking all of the above into account, I hold that, through these conceptual distinctions, Heidegger shows at a meta-ontological level—corresponding to C2—the difference between an adequate and an inadequate philosophical conceptualization of the being of the intramundane entity:

- The *ontological* concepts R1 and V1 arise from an adequate philosophical conceptualization that conceives reality (R1) as the being of the intramundane entity in general, and the mode-of-being *Vorhandenheit* (V1) as one of the possible modifications of reality (R1).

- The *traditional* concepts R2 and V2 result from an inadequate philosophical conceptualization that conceives reality (R2) as the primary mode-of-being in general that collapses with the mode-of-being *Vorhandenheit* (V2). Inasmuch as R2 and V2 are a way of conceiving ontology (ontological monism), they are meta-ontological concepts.

Conversely, referring to the first quote (BT, p. 254; SZ, p. 211), Carman maintains that, in this case, the relevant distinction for Heidegger is between "the real" and "reality":

> […] whereas Heidegger refers to the totality of occurrent entities as "the real," he reserves the term 'reality' (*Realität*) for the mode of being of the real: "If we grant this word its traditional significance, then it means being in the sense of the pure occurrentness of a [mere] thing (*pure Dingvorhandenheit*)" (*SZ* 211). Consequently, although reality as an ontological category is dependent on Dasein's understanding of being, the real is not (Carman, 2003, pp. 130-131).

Throughout his book, Carman insists on using the term "independence" to fundamentally separate two realms: that of the occurrent entities themselves, and that of Dasein's understanding of them. The real is indifferent to our existence and to our ways of understanding it. We only understand the real in a negative way, "as existing independently of us" (Carman, 2003, p. 136). Instead, "reality" is an ontological category that depends on Dasein's understanding-of-being.

From the above analysis, we can first conclude that Carman does not pay attention to Heidegger's criticism of traditional ontological conceptualization and continues to operate with the traditional concept of reality (R2) and that of *Vorhandenheit* (V2). Second, Carman grants the mode-of-being *Vorhandenheit* a sheerly epistemic status, reducing it to the conditions of interpretation of occurrent entities. Carman defines occurrent entities in a purely negative way, as those that must be interpreted as existing independently of us and our ways of understanding them. However, I have shown that according to the first quote (BT, p. 254; SZ, p. 211), Heidegger criticizes the traditional conceptualization of the being of the intramundane entity because it reduces it to mere *Vorhandenheit*. But he goes beyond criticism and proposes an adequate ontological concept of *Vorhandenheit* (V1) that is not merely an a priori category of Dasein's understanding, as Carman claims. The *ontological* concept of reality (R1) is the being of the intramundane entity in general, and both *Zuhandenheit* and *Vorhandenheit* are modes of reality. Therefore, if both modes-of-being are possible modifications of the being of the intramundane entity, then, there is a positive sense in which the entity can be occurrent.

Now, regarding the two adequacy conditions that I established in the introduction—namely, the coherence with (i) the ontological difference, and with (ii) Heidegger's critique to the *Ontologie der Vorhandenheit*, one can conclude the following: first, Carman reconstructs Heidegger's ontology emphasizing the independence of the ontic realm with respect to the ontological one in a sense that contradicts the thesis of the ontological difference (i), which demands differentiating without splitting the ontic and the ontological dimensions that constitute the unitary structure of all that is. Second, Carman's interpretation is not consistent with (ii), insofar as he does not address Heidegger's meta-philosophical critique of the concepts of traditional ontology and continues to operate within a monistic ontological conception.

2. Metaphysical realism: modes-of-being as the essential properties of entities

Another way of interpreting the concept of mode-of-being is as categories that metaphysically distinguish different kinds of entities. Modes-of-being are then conceived in extensional terms and underpin the essential properties of the entities that they constitute, so that the same entity cannot have more than one mode-of-being.

One of the authors that supports this interpretation is Kris McDaniel (2012), who understands modes-of-being as "kinds of being."[11] McDaniel considers that a mode-of-being determines the essential properties of the entity constituted by it. Therefore, he maintains that a single entity cannot have more than one mode-of-being. McDaniel restricts his analysis to the scope of what he labels "material beings" –which correspond to Heidegger's concept of intramundane entities– and he refers only to the modes-of-being *Zuhandenheit* (which he translates as readiness-to-hand) and *Vorhandenheit* (presence-at-hand). According to McDaniel (2012), "readiness-to-hand and presentness-at-hand are two different kinds of Being that are had by two disjoint sets of entities" (p. 22). That is, these modes-of-being metaphysically divide the entities of the world: on one side, there are what he calls "works" or cultural entities (*Zuhandenes*), such as "hammers, doorknobs, books, can-openers, and pinball machines"; and on the other side, there are what he calls "inerts" or natural entities (*Vorhandenes*), such as H_2O molecules, electrons and

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[11] Another author who supports a similar interpretation is Howard D. Kelly (2014). He states that at least in *Being and Time* the concept of mode-of-being is a universal that defines a district (*Bezirk*), which is a natural class of entities that demand a peculiar mode of conceptualization (Kelly, 2014, p. 671). On the one hand, Kelly (2014, p. 678) explicitly attributes to Heidegger a metaphysical realism insofar as the world exists and is as it is independently of the human way of conceiving it". On the other hand, he attributes to Heidegger an epistemological realism, which holds that we can obtain knowledge of the entities themselves, if we find the correct way to conceptualize them. In Kelly's interpretation, modes-of-being are at the same time the properties that characterize the entities themselves and the concepts with which entities can be thought of as being, as two ways of speaking about the same thing (Kelly, 2014, p. 683). Kelly also states that it is a fact that no entity simultaneously has more than one mode-of-being (Kelly, 2014, pp. 671 & 677).

atoms (McDaniel, 2012, p. 1). When considering Heidegger's distinction between the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand as a metaphysical distinction, McDaniel concludes, "nothing that is ready-to-hand is numerically identical with anything that is present-at-hand" (2012, p. 1).

McDaniel defines his position as "the two domains view" according to which "a ready-to-hand entity is never numerically identical with a present-at-hand entity" (McDaniel, 2012, p. 2). The opposite position, called "the one domain view," holds that "one and the same entity can be present-at-hand in one encounter or experience, but ready-to-hand in another" (McDaniel, 2012, p. 4).

To demonstrate that two different modes-of-being cannot be predicated of the same entity, McDaniel presents three arguments. But, for the purpose of my argument, I will only focus on the first one, "the argument from Leibniz's Law":

> Leibniz's Law states that x is numerically identical with y if and only if x and y have the same properties. Heidegger ascribes incompatible properties to the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand. So either Heidegger's view is inconsistent, or the properties are ascribed to distinct entities (McDaniel, 2012, p. 7).

In the development of the argument, McDaniel identifies readiness-to-hand with the mode-of-being of culture, and presence-at-hand with the mode-of-being of nature. He then claims that the difference between the two "kinds of being" implies a difference between the two "kinds of entity." That is, there is a correspondence between the mode-of-being and the "essential features" of the entity:

> Cultural works, which are ready-to-hand entities, differ with respect to their kind of being from extant, i.e., present-at-hand, entities. This is why Heidegger says that, "Culture *is* not in the way that nature is." Because of this difference with respect to their kind of being, there is a corresponding difference with respect to their essential features (McDaniel, 2012, p. 8).

Next, based on textual evidence, McDaniel shows that Heidegger characterizes cultural entities as opposed to natural ones. For instance, the former are essentially intramundane, while the latter may not be, as they can exist independently of Dasein. McDaniel continues to

describe other "properties" that Heidegger attributes to cultural entities as opposed to natural ones, such as their conditions of individuation, their type of temporality, and their significance. By equaling the ready-to-hand with the cultural and the present-at-hand with the natural, McDaniel (2012, p. 10) concludes that Heidegger ascribes incompatible modal, temporal, and axiological properties to the ready-to-hand and to the present-at-hand. Therefore, the properties can only be attributed to numerically different entities, as shown by his example: "You are holding a hammer. You are holding a hunk of wood and metal. The hammer is *numerically distinct from* the hunk of wood and metal. The former is ready-to-hand, the latter is present-at-hand. These two entities are distinct, and yet intimately related" (McDaniel, 2012, p. 23). Following McDaniel's reasoning, and taking his example, one can make a list of the properties of "the hammer I am holding" and oppose them to the properties of "the hunk of wood and metal that I am holding." The next table of comparison illustrates this idea:

Properties of the hammer	Properties of the hunk of wood and metal
Individuated by its place in a network of equipmental relations	Individuated by its spatiotemporal location
Ready-to-hand form of temporality	Present-at-hand form of temporality
Essentially a bearer of value	May not have significance or value

Table 1
Comparison between the properties attributed to the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand according to McDaniel's example.

When comparing the list of properties in table 1, it is evident that the properties of the hammer —which is ready-to-hand—and the properties of the hunk of wood and metal –which is present-at-hand—are contrasting. Based on the criterion of numerical identity from Leibniz's Law—in which it is contradictory to attribute incompatible properties to a single entity—McDaniel concludes that something that is ready-to-hand must be numerically distinct from something that is present-at-hand; in other words, a single entity cannot have both modes-of-being.

Let Z be a ready-to-hand entity and V be a present-at-hand entity. If we formalize McDaniel's argument, we have the following:

P1: Z is numerically identical to V if, and only if, Z and V have the same properties.

P2: Heidegger ascribes incompatible properties to Z and V.

C: Z must be numerically distinct from V.

However, I will demonstrate below that P2 is false: Heidegger does not ascribe "incompatible properties" to Z and V. In addition, I will argue against McDaniel that a single entity can be ready-to-hand and present-at-hand without contradiction.

Before beginning the discussion on the argument, a terminological clarification is in order. To avoid a possible confusion regarding McDaniel's use of the notion of property, I will distinguish hereafter between a broad sense and a strict sense of that notion. I will use the term "property" (*Eigenschaft*) in a strict sense, that is, to refer to the specific form of determination that enables the mode-of-being presence-at-hand. I will distinguish it from the term "determination" (*Bestimmung*), which I reserve for a broad, non-univocal use including all the forms of determination made possible by the different modes-of-being. In his ontology, Heidgger distinguishes between different forms of ontic determination, precisely because there are entities whose means of determination cannot be ontologically elucidated in terms of the instantiation of properties. As Ramos dos Reis suggests, each of the different modes-of-being prescribes the conditions under which an entity can be determined by the specific form of determination that corresponds to it (Ramos dos Reis, 2014, p. 196; FCM, pp. 353-354; DGM, p. 514; DFD, p. 240). As presented below in table 2, the mode-of-being presence-at-hand prescribes the conditions under which an entity can be determined by properties; analogously, the mode-of-being readiness-to-hand prescribes the conditions for the determination of the entity in terms of dispositions; the mode-of-being life (*Leben*) does so in terms of capacities (*Fähigkeiten*), and the mode-of-being existence (*Existenz*) in terms of the projection of existential possibilities (*Vermögen*).[12]

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[12]   The proper forms of determination of the mode-of-being of life (*Fähigkeiten*) and that of the mode-of-being existence (*Vermögen*) are taken

Mode-of-being	Form of determination (*Bestimmung*)	Entity
Presence-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*)	Properties (*Eigenschaften*)	Object (*Ding*)
Readiness-to-hand (*Zuhandenheit*)	Dispositions (*Geeignetheiten*)	Equipment (*Zeug*)
Life (*Leben*)	Capacities (*Fähigkeiten*)	Living organism
Existence (*Existenz*)	Existential possibilities (*Vermögen*)	Dasein

Table 2
Comparison between the forms of ontic determination made possible by each mode-of-being.

Taking this terminological clarification into account, I agree with McDaniel that no material being, by definition—or by its mode-of-being—can possess "incompatible" properties. However, I sustain that there is no such incompatibility among the features that Heidegger attributes to the different modes-of-being. Moreover, I argue that McDaniel reaches a false conclusion because he does not take into account the heterogeneous nature of the ontic dimension with respect to the ontological one. Accordingly, I will show next that McDaniel does not respect the first adequacy condition (i)—the ontological difference—and with that he misconstrues Heidegger's ontological pluralism.

Heidegger distinguishes in his ontology between two dimensions and levels of articulation: the ontic and the ontological one. The first level is the intentional articulation—of a concrete entity and its forms of determination—which he considers *ontic*. The second level is the articulation of the different modes-of-being in Dasein's understanding-of-being, which is the properly *ontological* one. These two levels—which

from *The Fundamental Concept of Metaphysics*. For the concept of "existential possibilities" in Heidegger's ontology, see Ramos dos Reis (2014, pp. 26-38).

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I label D1 and D2, respectively– are distinguished by the different nature of their unity and the mode of differentiation of what they unify:

- Def. D1: let D1 be the "ontic dimension" in which the "ontic articulation," the "ontic determination," and the "ontic differentiation" occur. The ontic articulation allows the differentiation between entities within a single ontological order[13] or a single mode-of-being. This mode-of-being is the horizon[14] or unity within which ontic features could be compared to achieve a valid "ontic differentiation" among entities.

- Def. D2: let D2 be the "ontological dimension," in which the "ontological articulation," the "ontological determination," and the "ontological differentiation" take place. The ontological articulation allows for the differentiation between ontological orders or modes-of-being. Dasein's understanding-of-being is the horizon or unity within which ontological features[15] can be compared to achieve the corresponding ontological differentiation among modes-of-being.

From the above I want to highlight two issues that are relevant to my argument against McDaniel: first, I want to point out that Leibniz's criterion of numerical identity—and the principle of non-contradiction that supports it—operates within a single order that is *common* to everything that is compared within. In other words, it is a single homogeneous law what normatively determines the differences within that same order. As I will show next, Leibniz's law is legitimately

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[13]   Later I will show that modes-of-being have a normative character and that, in this sense, they are ontological "orders" or horizons that make possible the ontic determination.

[14]   In a similar way as I consider modes-of-being as "horizons," Daniel McManus explains modes-of-beings in terms of "original havings" (McManus, 2012, pp. 210-214).

[15]   These ontological features are in turn "possible" ontic determinations intrinsically determined by each mode-of-being.

applicable only to the ontic level (D1) and to entities within a single mode-of-being. Second, I want to bring up that, according to Heidegger's anti-monism, each mode-of-being is an ontological order *irreducible* to any other. Therefore, the ontological differentiation (D2) among modes-of-being cannot be determined by a single law or by "a single order *common* to what is compared within" but, on the contrary, this differentiation (D2) is *intrinsically* determined by each mode-of-being. For these reasons, I hold that it is a category error to apply Leibniz's Identity Law to modes-of-being (D2), or to entities from different modes-of-being. In what follows, I will show that McDaniel's argument falls precisely into this error.

To prove the possible numerical identity of a ready-to-hand and a present-at-hand entity, McDaniel compares the following features: conditions of individuation, type of temporality, and significance (as shown in Table 1). But in Heidegger's ontology these features are not ontic forms of determination (D1) that could specify a differentiation between entities within a single mode-of-being –as Leibniz's Law enables. For Heidegger, these are ontological features (D2) that specify the differentiation among modes-of-being. I therefore argue that McDaniel makes a category error when treating the differentiating features of modes-of-being (D2) as if they were features that should be compared to test the numerical identity of an entity, that is, as ontic determinations (D1) within a single mode-of-being. In this regard, McDaniel does not acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of the ontic differentiation (D1) among entities and of the ontological one (D2) among modes-of-being.

Summarizing, my argument against McDaniel is the following:

- Leibniz's Identity Law enables the testing of the numerical identity of an entity by means of a comparison between ontic determinations (D1) within a single determinate order.

- The differentiating features of modes-of-being are ontological determinations (D2), that is, they are constituent features of ontological orders, which are irreducible to each other. The irreducibility of each mode-of-being implies that they cannot be differentiated by means of being subsumed under a single determined order—as Leibniz's Law

requires—without ceasing to be precisely what they are, namely, "irreducible" orders.

- Therefore, if Leibniz's Identity Law is only legitimately applicable to the comparison of entities within a single mode-of-being, it should not be applied either to compare modes-of-being or to compare entities within different modes-of-being, as McDaniel has done.

So far, I have only negatively shown that the criterion of numerical identity—on the basis of which McDaniel constructs his first argument—is not legitimately applicable to entities within different modes-of-being. However, I shall now positively show that—in Heidegger's ontology—a single entity can be ready-to-hand and present-at-hand without contradiction.

Starting from our daily experience, it seems intuitive to argue that a single entity, for example, a pencil, can *be* useful for writing (Z) and *be* a compound of molecules (V). "Being useful for writing" is not the same as "being a compound of molecules" but, *prima facie*, there is no contradiction for this pencil to be both. The ontological conditions[16] that determine the pencil's possibilities to *be* useful for writing and to *be* composed of molecules remain the same in either case. Similarly, in McDaniel's example, the entity that "you are holding" has the same ontological conditions that determine its possibilities to *be* useful for nailing (Z), and to *be* a compound of wood and metal (V). It seems that at the level (D2) of the ontological possibilities of an entity, there is no contradiction in having both modes-of-being.

Now, from a philosophical point of view, Heidegger's anti-monism states that the multiple forms of ontic determination (D1)—made possible by the different modes-of-being—should not be conceived in a univocal way, because they are irreducible to one another. For instance, Heidegger shows that the being of an intramundane entity can be ontically determined by dispositions that are not reducible to properties: "Anything ready-to-hand is, at the worst, appropriate for some purposes and inappropriate for others; and its "properties" are, as it were, still

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16   Ontological conditions are what I later refer to as the *intrinsic ontological possibilities* or possible modes-of-being of an entity.

bound up in these ways in which it is appropriate or inappropriate, just as presence-at-hand, as a possible kind of Being for something ready-to-hand, is bound up in readiness-to-hand" (BT, p. 115; SZ, p. 83)

Taking the above into account, one can rewrite McDaniel's list and compare the "dispositions" of the hammer and the "properties" of McDaniel's hunk of wood and metal. This time I will consider the features—ontic determinations (D1)—that Heidegger attributes to a hammer as ready-to-hand (Z) and as present-at-hand (V) (BT, pp. 412-413; SZ, pp. 361-362):

Disposition of the hammer (Z)	Properties of the hunk of wood and metal (V)
Is for nailing	Has the property of hardness
Is too heavy	Has the property of weight
Has its own place	Has a spatiotemporal location

Table 3
Comparison between the ontic determinations (D1) attributed to Z and V according to Heidegger's examples in *Being and Time* §§ 39 & 69.

If one compares the lists of features in Table 3, one can see that the hammer (Z) and the hunk of wood and metal (V) have different but not incompatible determinations. Therefore, it is not contradictory to maintain that all of them—the dispositions and the properties—can belong to the same numerically identical entity. Of course, the dispositions of the hammer are not applicable to the hunk of wood and metal as such. For instance, the predicate "is for nailing" does not apply to the hunk of wood and metal, precisely because this form of ontic determination does not correspond to something present-at-hand (V). However, according to Heidegger's ontological pluralism, the absence of the disposition "is for nailing" does not imply that the hunk of wood and metal has an "incompatible" determination such as "is *not* for nailing." If there is no contradiction between both forms of ontic determination (dispositions and properties), then the possibility of numerical identity between the hammer (Z) and the hunk of wood and metal (V) is not excluded.

Given the above, I can say—contrary to McDaniel—that, in Heidegger's ontology, it is not contradictory to affirm that a single entity

can be both, a hammer (Z) and a hunk of wood and metal (V). That is, a single entity can be both ready-to-hand and present-at-hand, and also remain numerically the same entity.

In summary, McDaniel's interpretation has the following problems: primarily, regarding the first adequacy condition—the ontological difference (i)—he does not adequately acknowledge the heterogeneous nature of the ontic differentiation (D1) with respect to the ontological one (D2); secondly, McDaniel's interpretation of the notion of mode-of-being as categories that metaphysically distinguish different kinds of entities misconstrue Heidegger's ontological pluralism (ii), inasmuch as the diversity of the forms of ontic determination (D1)—made possible by each mode-of-being—is univocally understood.

3. Modal pluralism: modes-of-being as the proper ontological possibilities of entities

In this third section, I propose an alternative that attempts to overcome the shortcomings of the interpretations previously analyzed. Such shortcomings can be summarized as follows. The first interpretation—Carman's view—considers the ontic and the ontological dimension as two independent strata in a way that it cannot satisfy the requirements of the ontological difference condition. The second interpretation—McDaniel's position—in turn reduces the heterogeneous nature of both dimensions and considers the ontic articulation in a univocal way, misconstruing Heidegger's ontological pluralism. By doing this, McDaniel is also not consistent with Heidegger's critique to the *Ontologie der Vorhandenheit* insofar as he treats the ontological differentiation of modes-of-being (D2) as if it were an ontic one (D1).

My challenge is, therefore, to show how the notion of mode-of-being is to be understood so that it can meet the two conditions I have identified as core aspects of Heidegger's ontology. In a nutshell, the notion of mode-of-being should preserve the inextricable unity and the heterogeneity of both ontic and ontological dimensions, and enable one to understand the articulation of being in a non-univocal sense.

Hence, I will divide my argument into the following two statements: first, according to the ontological difference condition (i), I argue that the notion of mode-of-being should be understood as the *intrinsic articulation* of the ontological-ontic structure that constitutes all that is. This interpretation allows the ontic and the ontological

dimensions to be distinguished in their heterogeneous nature without separating or reducing them one into the other. Second, in accordance with Heidegger's meta-philosophical critique of the *Ontologie der Vorhandenheit* (ii), I maintain that the notion of mode-of-being should be understood within a pluralistic ontological conception that enables for the conceptualization of the articulation of being in a non-univocal sense. With this, Dasein's existence can be elucidated as irreducible to occurrentness and, at the same time, determinable by a unitary concept of being in general. The latter is possible because the notion of mode-of-being—within a pluralistic ontology—enables the conception of a unity in which irreducible modes-of-being (*Zuhandenheit*, *Vorhandenheit*, *Leben*, *Existenz*) can be comprehended (manifested). This peculiar unity takes place in Dasein's understanding-of-being conceived as "primal transcendence" (*Urtranszendenz*) (MAL, p. 170; MFL, p. 135).

In support of these statements, I will consider some relevant aspects of Heidegger's critique of traditional ontology, focusing on how the latter has misconceptualized both the relation of Dasein to entities and the articulation of the different domains of being. To justify the first statement, I focus on Heidegger's notion of primal transcendence as opposed to the traditional concept of intentionality. This analysis should help clarify the role (the status and ontological function) that modes-of-being play in Dasein's experience of entities. For the second statement, I base my argument on Heidegger's analysis of the univocal way in which tradition has conceived the articulation of being in terms of *essentia* (*Washeit*) and *existentia* (*Vorhandensein*) (BPP, p. 120; DGP, p. 170). Through this argument, I want to foreground the reasons underlying the meta-philosophical thesis of ontological pluralism that the notion of mode-of-being demands. Finally, I present my interpretation of the notion of mode-of-being as the proper *ontological possibilities of the entities.* My proposal intends to shed light onto these problems and to fulfill the adequacy conditions that I established in the introduction.

3.1. First argument: modes-of-being as the intrinsic articulation of the ontological-ontic structure

In *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, Heidegger explains that tradition has wrongly conceptualized Dasein's intentionality as if it were the ultimate ground for our experience of entities. According to Heidegger, intentionality itself—which he calls "ontic transcendence"—

is only a moment[17] of a more fundamental unitary structure, which is Dasein's "primal transcendence" or "being-in-the-world": "The problem of transcendence as such is not at all identical with the problem of intentionality. As ontic transcendence, the latter is itself only possible on the basis of original transcendence, on the basis of *being-in-the-world*. This primal transcendence makes possible every intentional relation to beings" (MFL, p. 135; MAL, p. 170). Thus, in a similar way as he did with the concept of *Realität*, one can see in this passage that Heidegger made a conceptual distinction to show at a meta-ontological level (C2) the difference between an adequate and a deficient philosophical conceptualization of *das Transzendenzproblem.* The traditional concept of intentionality results from an inadequate philosophical conceptualization of Dasein's transcendence, that has reduced its twofold structure down to its mere ontic dimension. In short, tradition has collapsed Dasein's transcendence with the ontic transcendence. Heidegger distanced himself from this model, recognizing instead its twofold structure, which he conceptually distinguished as "primal transcendence" (*Urtranszendenz*) and "ontic transcendence" (*ontische Transzendenz*), respectively, acknowledging that the former is the condition of possibility of the latter.

In this regard, and referring to Husserl's view, Heidegger argued that to account for the intentional capacities of Dasein, it is not enough to show the essential *intentio-intentum* correlation (which is ontic). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger claimed that this correlation or ontic articulation—between a particular entity and its forms of determination—necessarily presupposes a more fundamental ontological reference: "the whole correlation," Heidegger writes, "necessarily gets thought of as 'somehow' *being*, and must therefore be thought of with regard to some definite[18] idea of Being" (BT, p. 252; SZ, p. 208).

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[17]   See Husserl's distinction (*LU* III, § 17) between the terms "piece" (*Stück*) and "moment" (*Moment*). "Pieces" are the parts of something that are independent of the whole; for example, a wheel can be a piece of a car. Instead, "moments" are those parts of something that are not independent of the whole; for example, color is a moment of an extension.

[18]   This is a "definite" idea of being, that is, it is not the idea of being in general. Modes-of-being are determined with respect to being in general and therefore they are multiple. However, as I stated above, this "determination" of

According to my interpretation, this "definite idea of Being"—in reference to which the entity and its forms of determination are articulated as *being in some way*—is precisely the mode-of-being of the intended entity. The mode-of-being functions as a normative criterion for determining what counts as an entity in each case.[19] I argue that what Heidegger's criticism brings to the forefront is that the tradition did not acknowledge that in every intentional act there is an underlying sense of *being* already operating and determining a specific mode of articulation of the *intentio-intentum* correlation. For instance, the "idea of Being" (mode-of-being) as pure presence will normatively determine what counts as an occurrent entity. However, this "idea of Being" as pure presence is adequate only for discovering occurrent entities and not for understanding other kinds of entities. Crucially, it is not adequate for understanding Dasein, the entity that we are in each case, ourselves. This is the core of Heidegger's critique of traditional ontology.

I want to point out that, by inadvertently operating with an "idea of Being" as pure presence, tradition has misconceived Dasein's capacity to exceed the ontic realm and, in a sense, to be free[20] but not separated from it. Heidegger wants to get out of the reductive monistic conception that understands being (and reality) only in reference to actuality, as ontic presence. Dasein has the possibility of not being actual (in the traditional sense); consequently, the being of Dasein cannot be measured only in reference to the ontic dimension. In this sense, the being of Dasein is independent of the ontic realm[21] (Agamben, 1999, p. 180), but this "independence" should not be understood as Carman understands it,

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modes-of-being (D2) is of another nature than the determination of the entity (D1). Moreover, modes-of-being are determinant with respect to the entities.

[19]   For instance, the reference to the occurrentness of a stone normatively regulates beforehand Dasein's adequate relation with that occurrent entity. This means, for example, that Dasein should not talk to a stone as he could properly do to another Dasein, or he should not treat a stone as something fertile as he could adequately do with a living entity. Analogously, the reference to other modes-of-being, such as availability, life, or existence, regulates beforehand the "adequacy" of Dasein's intentional relation with available entities, with living entities, and with another Dasein, respectively. However, this binding character must not be understood in causal but in normative terms.

[20]   Dasein is free regarding the ontic determinations insofar as he has the capacity to normatively evaluate what counts as being.

[21]   The potentiality of Dasein is not simply the potential of doing this or

namely, as the independence of the ontic world with respect to Dasein's understanding of it.

I summarize the argument supporting my first statement with the following: Heidegger clearly distinguished the ontological and the ontic dimension of Dasein's transcendence and claimed that the former is the condition of possibility of the latter. This entails that the differentiation of modes-of-being at the ontological level (D2) should not be homologated to the differentiation of entities at the ontic level (D1), as McDaniel's interpretation implies. According to my interpretation, the notion of mode-of-being must be understood as the necessary underlying ontological reference that regulates the ontic determination and makes it possible beforehand.

According to the ontological difference condition, the ontological and the ontic dimension are not to be thought of as two *separate* realms but as a unitary structure of Dasein's transcendence that makes possible all intentional relation with entities. Both ontological and ontic reference appear in Dasein's intentional behavior as necessary moments of a single intentional act intrinsically articulated by the mode-of-being of the intended entity, and not as two *independent* domains, as Carman maintains. Contrary to Carman's position, I have indicated that the relevant independence is not that of the ontic realm with respect to Dasein's understanding of it. Rather, it is Dasein's ontological relation to being –which transcends the ontic realm– that enables him to evaluate the ontic and to be, in this sense, independent but not separate from it.

Thus, my interpretation of the notion of modes-of-being—as the *intrinsic articulation* of the ontological-ontic structure—acknowledges the irreducible heterogeneity and the intrinsic unity of the ontological and ontic dimensions, as Heidegger's thesis of ontological difference demands. Therefore, it fulfills the first adequacy condition (i).

3.2. Second argument: the pluralistic conception of the articulation of being

I will now turn to another aspect of Heidegger's critique, albeit more briefly, because I have in part already developed the argument in the previous sections. In *The Basic Problem of Phenomenology*, Heidegger

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that, but the potential to non-doing, the potential of not passing into actuality (Agamben, 1999, p. 180).

refers to the univocal way in which tradition has conceptualized the fundamental articulation of being in terms of *essentia* (*Washeit*) and *existentia* (*Vorhandensein*). Heidegger claims that this form of articulation—which corresponds to Dasein's intentional relation to occurrent entities—is only a particular form within a plurality of possible forms of determination. In fact, it can be phenomenologically shown that in Dasein's intentional behaviors there are multiple forms of ontic determinations, as shown in table 2. And as explained above—based on Heidegger (BT, p. 252; SZ, p. 208)—every ontic determination is necessarily enabled and regulated beforehand by some definite mode-of-being. Thus, if there is a multiplicity of forms of ontic determinations, there must be a corresponding multiplicity of modes-of-being. In this sense, I'm entitled to suggest that Heidegger proposes an ontological pluralism of modes-of-being.

This pluralist thesis that I attribute to Heidegger acknowledges that (a) there is more than one domain of being, or more than one sense of *being*. For instance, according to Heidegger, Dasein *is not* in the way nature *is*. At the same time, ontological pluralism demands (b) to account for the unity of the different modes-of-being without reducing them or disintegrating the concept of being in irreconcilable domains. In this peculiar unity, multiple modes-of-being (*Zuhandensein*, *Vorhandensein*, *Lebensein*, *Existenz*) should be differentiable without losing their irreducible character.

As I will show next, this peculiar unitary horizon—that gives unity to a multiplicity of irreducible modes-of-being—corresponds in Heidegger's ontology to the concept of primal transcendence. Heidegger identifies the primal transcendence with Dasein's understanding-of-being:

> If then primordial transcendence (being-in-the-world) makes possible the intentional relation and if the latter is, however, an ontic relation, and the relation to the ontic is grounded in the understanding-of-being, then there must be an intrinsic relationship between primordial transcendence and the understanding-of-being. They must in the end be one and the same (MFL, pp. 135-136; MAL, p. 170)

Hence, Dasein's understanding-of-being is the unitary horizon that makes the ontological differentiation (D2) of *multiple modes-of-*

being possible. At the same time, each mode-of-being is a horizon that makes the ontic differentiation (D1) of *multiple entities* possible. In this sense, Dasein's understanding-of-being is a *horizon of horizons*.

So, regarding the question about the unitary horizon capable of unifying a multiplicity of irreducible modes-of-being, Heidegger gives us the following indications. He defines the understanding-of-being in general—which is the unity of irreducible orders or modes-of-being—as an *intrinsic possibility* of Dasein's being. Then, he explains what this possibility consists of: "This understanding-of-being, however, first secures the possibility of beings manifesting themselves as beings. The understanding-of-being bears the light in whose brightness a being can show itself" (MFL, p. 135; MAL, p. 170).

Now one can understand the role played by Dasein's understanding-of-being, a role Carman underlines but overemphasizes, not acknowledging the way in which modes-of-being are horizons for the discovery of entities. Heidegger describes Dasein's understanding-of-being as a light that ensures the possibility of entities revealing themselves as such. That is, the entity can be discovered according to its own being or—in Heidegger's words—according to its own "intrinsic possibility." I interpret the latter as the entity's mode-of-being. At the same time, by illuminating, Dasein manifests its own *intrinsic possibility*, which consists in being the clarity where the entity manifests itself as it is: "the constitution of Dasein's being is such that the intrinsic possibility of the understanding-of-being, which belongs essentially to Dasein, becomes demonstrable" (MFL, p. 136; MAL, p. 171). In accordance with the above, I claim that the mode-of-being or intrinsic possibility of Dasein's understanding-of-being consists in illuminating the mode-of-being or *intrinsic possibility* of the intended entity. This implies that Dasein's understanding-of-being does not impose an extrinsic order to what it comprehends. On the contrary, Dasein's intrinsic possibility consists precisely in letting the entities be shown according to their own mode-of-being. Therefore, the peculiar unifying capacity of Dasein's understanding does not alter the unity of what it understands, because it only illuminates it and thus lays it bare. In this way, Dasein's understanding is capable of differentiating and articulating "irreducible orders" (modes-of-being) while preserving their essential irreducibility, as Heidegger's ontological pluralism demands. In summary, my interpretation of the notion of mode-of-being as the *intrinsic ontological possibilities* of the entity also fulfills the second adequacy condition (ii).

4. Conclusion

The Heideggerian model of Dasein's transcendence is a unitary but articulated structure, comprised of two moments—one ontological and the other ontic. These two moments are, on the one hand, heterogeneous or, in Heidegger's words "do not coincide," and, on the other hand, they are inseparable or intrinsically unified. The tradition has thought of Dasein's intentionality and its ontological-ontic structure in two misleading ways that Heidegger rejects: separating the intrinsic unity of the ontological and the ontic dimension as if they were two independent domains, as does Carman, and reducing the heterogeneity of the ontological and the ontic determination, as McDaniel seems to hold. I claimed that Heidegger is neither an idealist nor a realist; rather, he proposes a path for considering the unity of the two irreducibly heterogeneous dimensions by means of the notion of mode-of-being understood in terms of the proper *possibilities* of the entity. Moreover, according to the Heideggerian thesis of the ontological difference, I claimed that the notion of mode-of-being is a concept that allowed Heidegger to think of the internal link that articulates the structural ontological-ontic duality—heterogeneous and inseparable—that characterizes the unity of all that is. In turn, the notion of mode-of-being, understood within a pluralist meta-ontological conception, enabled Heidegger to elucidate Dasein's existence as irreducible to occurrentness and, at the same time, comparable in a unitary concept of being in general.

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