

# On Actors, Networks, and Plasma: Heidegger vs. Latour vs. Heidegger

Graham Harman

*American University in Cairo & University of Amsterdam*

ISRF, ISI Group, LSE

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# Heidegger-Latour Fusion

- most recognized philosopher of 20th century (Heidegger)
- meets least-recognized (Latour)

# Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)

- Strength
  - things not reducible to their relations
- Weaknesses
  - preserves dominance of human beings over all entities
  - specific entities treated mostly with contempt

# Bruno Latour (b. 1947)

- Strengths
  - rejects dominance of human beings over all entities
  - specific actors treated on their own terms
- Weakness
  - things fully reduced to their relations

# Heidegger and Latour Need Each Other's Strengths

- Heidegger's question of being:
  - things are always deeper than their presence
- Latour's actor-network theory:
  - human and nonhuman actors on equal footing

# A Proposal for Philosophy

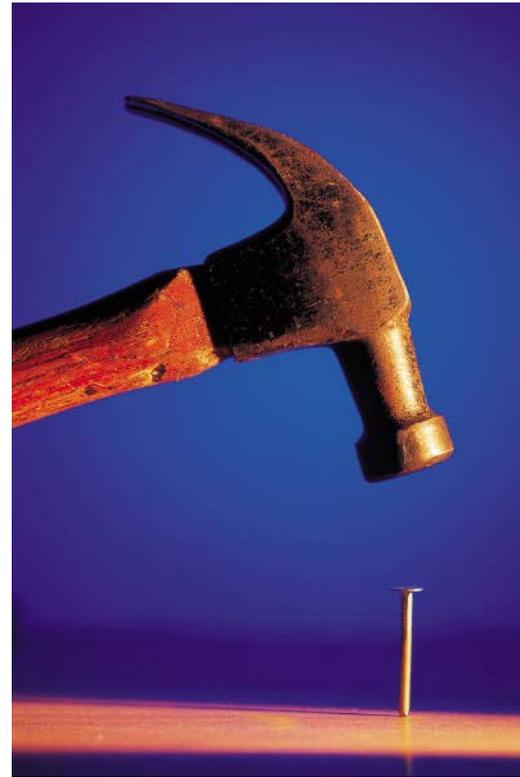
Return to Metaphysics =

Heideggerized Actor-Network Theory

A Network of Translations Between Cryptic,  
Veiled Objects

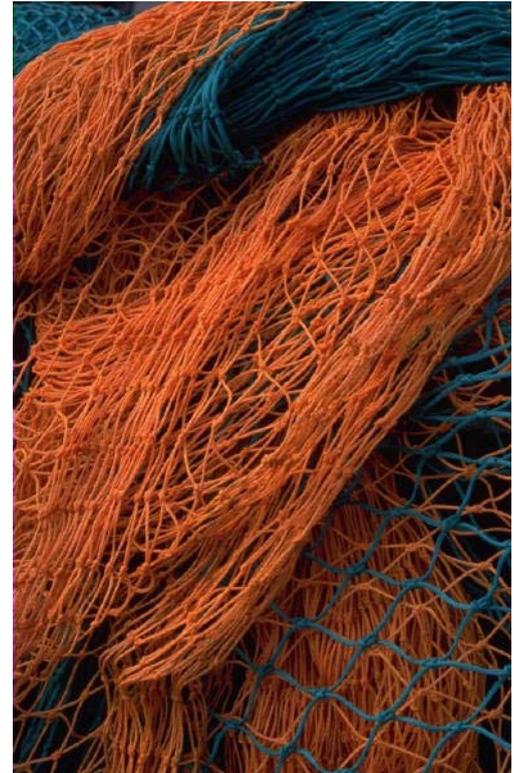
# Heidegger

## The Tool-Analysis & Its Consequences



# Latour

## The Relational Model of Actors & Its Consequences



# Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)

Founder of Phenomenology

- A Phenomenon is in Tension With Its Qualities

~~British Empiricism~~

# Heidegger Again

~~Presence-at-hand of Things~~

=

~~Relationality of Things~~

# Latour's Onefold Actor

- Nothing is Deeply Hidden
- An Actor is the Same as its Accidents and Relations

problem: unclear how change or relation can occur

# Heidegger's Fourfold Actor

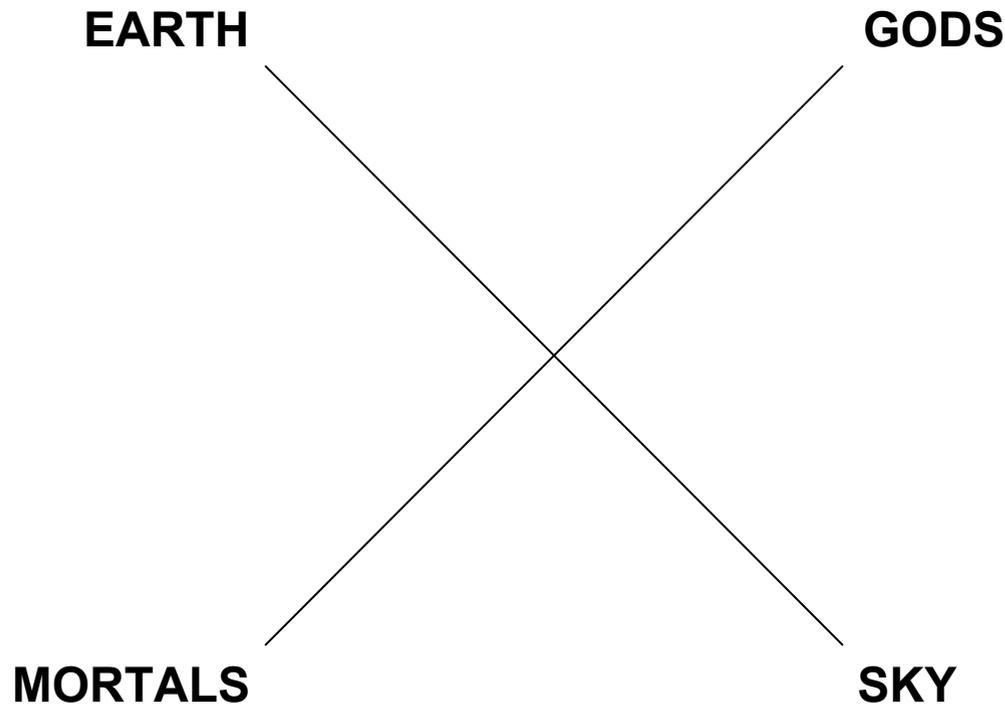
- Every Entity is Partly Hidden
- An Actor is in Tension with its Accidents and Relations

problem: apparently pompous, pseudo-poetic terminology

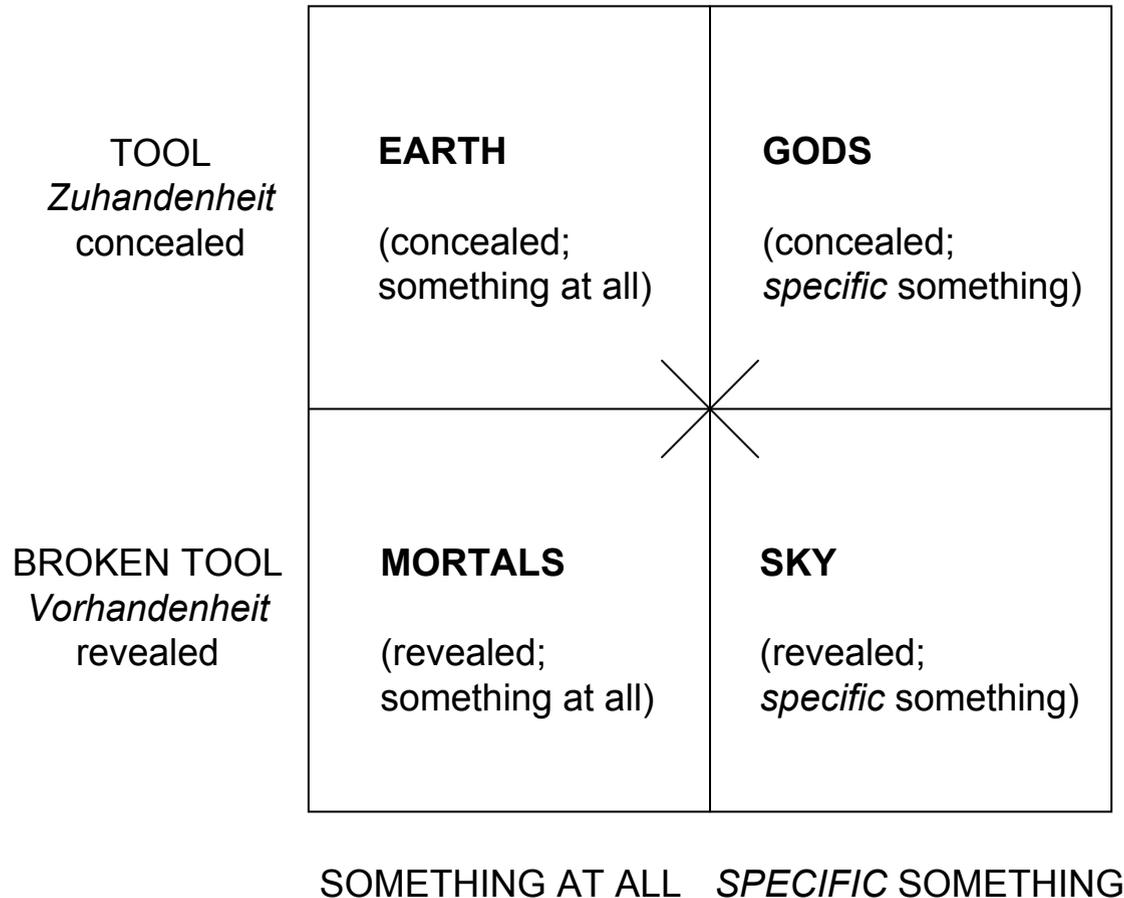
# The Fourfold (*das Geviert*)

“Product Launch”

Bremen. December, 1949



# The Fourfold (*das Geviert*)



# Latour: The Plasma

“If Networks were the Size of the London Underground, the Plasma would be the remainder of London.”

- strength: plasma accounts for sudden breakdowns in strong networks
- weakness: plasma seems unarticulated in its own right

# A Latourianized Fourfold

- The Fault-Lines Within an Actor Itself Make Translations Possible

Heidegger's Future is Latour

Latour's Future is Heidegger