The Use of Heidegger

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Nobody could be more kosher than Jaakko Hintikka in the bracing climate of Anglo-American analytic philosophy. In the festschrift recently offered to him, nevertheless, Dagfinn Follesdal evidently thought nothing of writing as follows:[1] "Heidegger's main contribution to philosophy, *it seems to me, is to* focus attention on the idea that all human activity, all our ways of relating to the world, to one another and to ourselves, contribute to constituting the world". A few pages further on he writes: "Heidegger's analyses of the many ways in which we may relate to the world . . . anticipate in many respects some of Wittgenstein's later analyses of forms of life". That last statement, of course, implies a somewhat controversial reading of Wittgenstein's later work. The only point here, however, is that, for an analytic philosopher, such statements as those just quoted represent an unprecedentedly positive assessment of Heidegger's work. This is of particular interest to students of recent theology, both Protestant and Catholic, where, for better or for worse, Heidegger's influence has been considerable.

Scandinavian philosophers have always been well placed, culturally and linguistically, to mediate between the analytic and the phenomenological camps into which philosophers are still largely divided.[2] Roughly speaking, the genealogy of the analytic line begins with Frege (1848 - 1925) and runs through Bertrand Russell, Wittgenstein and Carnap to such philosophers as Quine, Donald Davidson, Elizabeth Anscombe and Michael Dummett. The alternative line descends from Hegel (1770 - 1831), deviates by reaction into Kierkegaard and Marx, and is disseminated diversely through Nietzsche, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, to such contemporaries as Foucault, Derrida, Gadamer and Habermas.[3] The choice, or perhaps rather the fate, is to be overwhelmed by the accomplishments of logic since Frege, or to be fascinated, like Hegel, with the historical relativity of all thought.

Neither of these genealogies is indisputable. In particular, the position of Wittgenstein has come to seem controversial. The earliest comparison between him and Heidegger in a reputable pro-

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fessional journal on the analytic side goes as far back as 1959 and the author and the place of publication were predictably Scandinavian.[4] The comparison has been attempted repeatedly since then.[5] Now, with Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, we have the spectacle of a well-known analytic philosopher presenting the "convergence" between Heidegger and Wittgenstein as almost a commonplace and indeed practically the only way to make interesting sense of what has been happening in philosophy in the past fifty years.[6] In effect, Rorty has changed sides, or re-examined the logical-analytic tradition from the standpoint of the historical position. Most analytic philosophers will no doubt remain unmoved in their belief that the best way to understand Wittgenstein (early or late) is to keep on reading Frege. They would no doubt also think that, whether or not the best way to understand Heidegger is to read Nietzsche and Hegel, it is a matter of no great philosophical interest and indeed all too likely to be the case.

Wittgenstein himself, on the other hand, in the preface which he wrote in 1945 for the text which appeared posthumously as *Philosophical Investigations,* ascribes the ideas in the book which are most pregnant with consequences to the stimulus of criticism he had received over many years from his friend Piero Sraffa. The nature of what the two discussed has not been disclosed.[7] Sraffa, with his contributions to the theory of economics, already has an important place in the intellectual history of the last fifty years, even if he had not also evidently been the essential catalyst for the development of Wittgenstein's later work. The notion that Wittgenstein was an isolated figure with no intellectual antecedents or interdependencies has collapsed, if it ever had much substance. There is obviously no compulsion to go to the other extreme and find him only echoing other men's ideas. But those who have never read William James, for example, must be just as much at sea in the *Investigations* as those who have never studied Frege. Wittgenstein continued to hold discussions with G E Moore and Bertrand Russell, although, (or no doubt *because*) the results for him were negative. For the rest, he seems to have had little discussion with professional philosophers apart from students who venerated him. Sraffa is an economist with Marxist sympathies: his friendship with Antonio Gramsci played a crucial part in making it possible for him to go on thinking in Mussolini's prisons and thus to produce what many competent judges would regard as the most interesting attempt to follow up the work of Marx. Sraffa travelled from Cambridge to visit Gramsci shortly before his death in 1937. Certain individuals have no difficulty in keeping their friends apart; there is no reason to suppose that Sraffa ever even mentioned the existence of Gramsci to Wittgenstein or vice versa.

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It is, for all that, quite remarkable that Sraffa should have played a key role in the development of two of the greatest posthumously published bodies of thought in our time. It is certainly hard to imagine that the side of Sraffa which made him a close friend and supporter of Gramsci was kept entirely averted from Wittgenstein. In 1935 Wittgenstein visited Russia, where he was apparently told by a woman philosopher in Moscow that he should read more Hegel! He is said to have had "at all times, a shrewd idea of what was going on about him in the wider world" – Fania Pascal continues: "One thinks of the economic crisis and unemployment, commercialism and vulgarisation, and above all the imminence of war, as matters that were familiarly present to his mind in these years".[8] Sraffa apart, however, Wittgenstein apparently went out of his way to continue his friendship with the Marxist classical scholar, George Thomson, and to hold "interminable discussions" with Nicholas Bachtin, who had by then also become a member of the Communist Party. In fact, Bachtin was the friend with whom Wittgenstein had occasion to re-read the *Tractatus* in 1943.[9] It would be ridiculous to try to make out that Wittgenstein was in any way subjected to Marxist influences. On the other hand, it would seem odd to suppose that these men talked of nothing but the weather: none of them could possibly have debated logical matters with Wittgenstein, and it is difficult to imagine what else he can have discussed with these Marxist intellectuals which did not draw them out on Marxist theory one way or another. It is thus not *prima facie* absurd to attend to Wittgenstein's later work with the expectation that, indirectly or by reaction, he might owe something to the "Hegel and history" tradition.[10]

So far as the reception of Heidegger's work is concerned there have been several straws in the Oxford wind recently. The most substantial study of Heidegger by a philosopher with an Oxford training, Roger Waterhouse,[11] concludes on an extremely hostile and negative note, referring to "the anti-scientism, the anti-intellectualism, the elitism and the religiosity". But his final assessment of Heidegger's work includes the following "truly progressive elements" – namely: "the appeal to phenomena as a critical method, the use of the 'life-world' as a weapon against false abstraction, the analysis of time-experience, the stress upon human interest and emotion as forces shaping the world and our conception of it, the critique of the mind/body dualism, the attack on epistemology as distorting man into a bodiless intellect". Now, even if these elements were the only nuggets in the Heideggerian dross, would they not amount to a considerable achievement? It would surely suffice, by any reasonable standards, to retrieve Heidegger's work from the realm of charlatanry, etc. to which the deep and ignorant

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suspicion of analytic philosophers has hitherto always consigned it. On Waterhouse's view, furthermore, the last fifty years of Heidegger's life (he died in 1976) was a steady decline into appalling confusion. The achievement just catalogued, then, was presumably completed, to all intents and purposes, by *1927* – in effect, in *Sein und Zeit*. At that time, philosophy in Oxford was in the state so memorably described in Collingwood's autobiography, while Wittgenstein, having been a village schoolmaster and a monastery gardener, was building a mansion for his sister in Vienna. It may be noted, in passing, how much in the "truly progressive elements" resembles the achievement that is now commonly attributed also to Wittgenstein. For that matter, it would not be difficult to find critics who would accuse Wittgenstein of anti-scientism, anti-intellectualism, elitism and religiosity.

The history of the reception by analytic philosophers of Heideggers's work took its most remarkable turn in 1979, with Sir Peter Strawson's review of George Steiner's *Heidegger*.[12] His praise of the book was unstinted and even fulsome: "It is better that a thinker should have an oversympathetic, rather than an undersympathetic, interpreter; and Steiner's short book, in its generosity of feeling and range of reference, is a continuous pleasure to read". In fact, since Steiner himself is not a professional philosopher, no special effort is made in the book to make Heidegger's work available to neo-Fregeans. Nevertheless, in an extended review, in which Strawson commends, and exhibits detailed knowledge of, at least the first third of *Sein und Zeit*, we find comments in this vein: "Heidegger makes a significant contribution . . . he has excellent and telling things to say . . . His criticisms of some great predecessors are shrewd, penetrating and fundamental . . . he seems to anticipate Wittgenstein . . . There are good precepts here, not very darkly expressed and reasonably clearly illustrated", and suchlike. This favourable and appreciative tone has not been heard from any English philosopher since Gilbert Ryle's lengthy review of *Sein und Zeit* in *Mind* in 1929.

But the point comes when Strawson begins to resist Heidegger's charms. The second half of his review speaks in a more familiar and predictable style, referring *inter alia* to "fervid emotionalism . . . opaque idiom . . . obscurity . . . cumbrous wordplay", etc. But even here Strawson's resistance is prompted by one of Heidegger's deepest and most disturbing thoughts, of which he gives a defensible account before proceeding to argue against it. Our understanding of ourselves cannot be separated from our understanding of our role as social, mutually communicating beings – a well-worked theme in analytic philosophy which is also central in *Sein und Zeit*. Heidegger, however, goes on to say, according to

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Strawson, that "what is essential to our nature is also what falsifies it, makes us less than, or foreign to, ourselves". And he continues as follows: "For it is precisely our involvement with others, our role in society, which introduces 'inauthenticity', a second-hand, second-rate conventionality, into our lives. We lose ourselves in idle chatter, in daily business, in absorption in conventional projects and small purposes, finding superficial comfort and reassurance in these distractions, but also suffering from profound confusion, alienation, dissatisfaction". This is certainly not an unfair or eccentric summary of what Heidegger says. The only way out of this "inauthenticity" would seem, according to Strawson's reading, to lie in the occasional, quite gratuitous and unpredictable moment of vision when, at least to some privileged men, everything suddenly appears "appareled in celestial light", or something of this kind. But this, so Strawson now contends, is one of the great over-simplifications of Romanticism. He argues as follows: "There is more to human life and human nature than a sense of the numinous on the one hand and a blind and trivial busyness on the other. Many people, for much of the time, are seriously or lightly engaged in projects, enterprises, roles, or social relations which are not worthless, even if they are conventionally valued or generally approved. Our choice does not lie between being busy, insensitive gossips or exalted enthusiasts. We may, and should, for much of the time, be neither".

That seems well put, and might never have been drawn from Strawson in quite those terms but for the irritation of seriously reading Heidegger. This notion of "authenticity" clearly draws on, or harks back to, such writers as St Augustine, Pascal, Tolstoy, and particularly Kierkegaard, all of whom are alluded to non-trivially in the course of *Sein und Zeit*. The very idea of the privileged existential moment of vision that suddenly illuminates the tedious round of everyday life certainly trails elitist and religiose associations. Heidegger started out from the biblical notion of *kairos*: "redeeming the *time*", "My *time* is at hand" etc. But nostalgia for the ecstasy that interrupts the apparent triviality of the daily round is surely a very common and deepseated feeling. Perhaps Strawson's riposte has not altogether neutralised or uprooted it. Indeed, he could not be expected to go to the roots of such a mistaken yearning (if it is mistaken) in the space of a review article. It would, however, be quite unfair to attribute his protest against Heidegger's doctrine of authenticity to his being imprisoned in what J N Findlay has described as "that sheer banality of commonsensicality that can be called (without meant libel) 'North Oxford'".[13] That might be an appropriate comment on *some* analytic philosophers' incapacity to deal with existentialism. Here, however, over against

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the metaphysical Heidegger (with religion in the offing), Strawson is appealing to a form of the Principle of Charity: "Global confusion, like universal mistake, is unthinkable, not because imagination boggles, but because too much confusion leaves nothing to be confused about and massive error erodes the background of true belief against which alone failure can be construed".[14] In other words: if inauthenticity is almost total what is there left for anyone to recognize as substantively authentic? How, if things are so bad, could we even identify authenticity when we see it? The sudden illumination would not be anchored long enough in the stream of chatter to make any difference. If idle chatter is nearly all then no wonder that silence would be the most authentic course. But this is an obscure and difficult topic in Heidegger's work. The theory of authenticity may not be quite as Strawson represents it: "The *authentic* way of being ourselves is not something that floats airily above the everyday routine; on the contrary, it is only an altered perception of it".[15] Here too, as so often elsewhere, Heidegger may actually be far less "existentialist" and "Kierkegaardian" than he at first appears. The only point here, however, is simply that, after an interval of fifty years, a distinguished Oxford philosopher has found it possible to argue seriously with some of Heidegger's ideas, on the basis of an informed and non-caricatural reading of the text. Admittedly, the form of a review article in a non-academic journal may have encouraged the adventure. None of Strawson's other published work shows any sign of his acquaintance with *Sein und Zeit*.

Translating Heidegger into comprehensible English is no easy task, although ignorance of German and of every kind of philosophy on the part of some of the translators has made the existing corpus far worse than it need have been. The recent selection by Professor Krell puts the English-bound philosopher in a reasonably good position now to explore Heidegger's ideas in the confidence that, if they still seem utterly and unutterably absurd, it isn't because of incompetent translations. The best introduction for the same kind of reader is now Michael Murray's anthology of essays by divers hands – from Ryle to Richard Rorty, in fact, with the page by Wittgenstein himself as recorded by Waismann in 1929.[16]

II

Heidegger's work has fascinated theologians ever since he taught at Marburg in the 'twenties. His friendship with Bultmann, in particular, is well known. Dr Thiselton, of Sheffield University, has recently published a very substantial study of Heidegger and Bultmann, together with Gadamer and Wittgenstein, against the background of New Testament exegesis, which is his own field of specialization.[17] The fragmentation of our philosophical and

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theological culture is so far advanced that this collocation of such different bodies of writing will only arouse suspicion in the minds of the various specialists, all of whom could no doubt find something to jib at in his or her own protected territory. Few would fail to be provoked to fresh thought by Thiselton's book if they were once able to come off the safety of their own corner in the midden.

Heidegger committed himself on theological matters much more than Wittgenstein ever did. After all, Heidegger was once a seminarian while Wittgenstein's background was in aeronautical engineering. It may well be, on the other hand, that what each of them writes about God, interesting although it certainly is, may well prove far less productive theologically than what he writes about understanding man. Anyhow, Heidegger's most explicitly theological texts have recently been translated into English, with a commentary by the editors which runs to twice the length of the texts.[18] The six items are as follows, in order of composition:

1 the second part of a lecture given at Marburg in 1928;
2 a review published in 1928 of Cassirer's volume on mythical thinking;
3 notes made by one of a group of Protestant theologians with whom Heidegger had a conversation in 1953;
4 a paper on "Principles of Thinking", which appeared in 1958;
5 a letter to the Drew University symposium in 1964;
6 a brief note with which Heidegger prefaced the German edition of items 1 and 5, which appeared in 1970, dedicated to Bultmann.

Some of these items barely deserve admission. The paper on "Principles of Thinking" certainly cannot have been chosen to impress or even interest analytic philosophers. After some extremely simple considerations about identity, contradiction, and excluded middle, it ambles over to Hegel's dialectic. It makes no reference to theology and is included, according to the dust-jacket, because it "brings the other essays together". One reader at least has not been able to work out quite how.

The Cassirer review, on the other hand, although it too makes no explicit reference to theology, nevertheless brings up important questions about *myth*. Ernst Cassirer (1874 - 1945), being Jewish, left Germany in 1933. He taught at Oxford and in Sweden before settling in the United States in 1941. He was much more respected as a historian of philosophy in the English-speaking world than for his speculative philosophy. Heidegger offers a summary of Cassirer's ideas about myth, commending him for rejecting all reductionist and would-be "scientific" attempts to "explain" it. Myth, rather, is "an autonomously legislative form of the functioning of spirit"

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(p 40; I haven't been able to check the German behind that phrase). However, as students of *Sein und Zeit* will not be surprised to learn, Cassirer remains trapped in neo-Kantian epistemology, with the result that "an interpretation of the mythic understanding of being is much more intricate and steep than one would gather from Cassirer's presentation" (p 44 – *"steep"*?). In other words, as it seemed to Heidegger in the late 'twenties, it could not be profitable to discuss the nature of myth until the prevailing Kantian philosophy of mind had been demolished, and such concepts as consciousness, intuition, etc. if possible entirely discarded. That was only to say that Cassirer should have paid more attention to *Sein und Zeit*.

As for the conversation in 1953, the notes suggest that the theologians held forth at great length, insisting that philosophers never paid proper attention to the Christian message. Heidegger was eventually able to chip in, insisting that philosophy had nothing whatever to do with theology. Nothing could be done in philosophy either to prepare for or to confirm that which occurred in the grace of faith. Theologians have too little belief in themselves; they have too much traffic with philosophy. "Theologians should abide in the exclusiveness of revelation" (p 64). The theologians then seem to have fallen into arguing among themselves. Heidegger kept insisting on a sharp separation between philosophy and theology: "We understand one another better when each speaks in his own language" (p 65). But the discussion seems to have rolled on at such a level of grand generality, and the note-taker himself (Hermann Noack) seems to have participated so actively, that nothing very interesting really emerges in the end. The heart of the matter may be summed up in the following quotation (p 65): "Heidegger denied that philosophy has any significance for theology. The thinking of the philosopher is and remains exposed to the questionableness of being. Faith, on the other hand, is ultimately protected, being a confidence which can of course falter, but basically holds steady. Indeed, because so many people cannot endure the questioning of philosophy – and, as everybody knows, 'philosophy is nothing but asking questions' – they become converted. But 'questioning is the piety of thinking'". Heidegger was well over sixty in 1953 but one cannot help suspecting, behind such reiterations as these, the dilemma of the young seminarian some forty years previously. It sounds as if the only choice then was between an extremely authoritarian and unquestioning faith and a life of such radical questioning that Christian faith was simply ruled out in advance. Heidegger broke off his theological studies in 1911, when he was twenty-two; can it just be a coincidence that the anti-Modernist oath was imposed on clerics in 1910?

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The Marburg lecture is a good deal more substantial. Here again, Heidegger insists on the radical incompatibility between philosophy and faith: "faith, as a specific existential possibility, remains in its inmost core the mortal enemy of the form of existence which pertains essentially to philosophy, and which is in any case always changing" (p 20). However, this profound opposition between the life of faith and the life of those who dispose freely over themselves (as he puts it) "must bear the possibility of community between theology and philosophy as sciences, provided that this can be a genuine communication, free of all illusions and of feeble attempts at mediation" (p 20). Heidegger immediately makes this quite specific: "accordingly, there is no such thing as a Christian philosophy; that is quite simply a 'square circle'". In 1928 the great French controversy involving Maritain, Gilson, Journet, etc. on *la philosophie chretiénne,* had not yet got going. Heidegger may have been thinking of the earlier, and even more furious, controversy in the eighteen-fifties, involving Denzinger. More likely, he was thinking of the grip of so-called neo-Thomism on Catholic thought. Equally, however, as he goes on to say, "There is likewise no such thing as neo-Kantian, axiological, or phenomenological theology, any more than there is phenomenological mathematics". By these three labels he is plainly referring to Cassirer, Scheler,[19] and Husserl: his most influential contemporaries in German philosophy at that time. The very idea of *Heideggerian* theology would only be another piece of nonsense in Heidegger's eyes. His desire to stop trendy theologians from appropriating fashionable philosophical projects is strong and intelligible. However it *sounds,* it is not altogether clear that he is formulating any kind of *law* that theology and philosophy must always be conducted independently of one another.

The Drew University (New Jersey) colloquium in 1964 was arranged to discuss "The problem of a non-objectifying thinking and speaking in today's theology" and Heidegger was invited to contribute. Here, as we see him trying to unravel a very specific theological problem, we can understand why he so much wants to keep theologians from dabbling in philosophy. The sly way in which he slowly deflates the great issue also exemplifies his characteristic irony.

The immediate background of the problem has faded. Whether our talk of God is necessarily "objectifying", *objektivierend,* was a controversy that never flourished among analytic philosophers of religion in any case – at least in these terms. But the basic problem is familiar enough. The root of the problem is whether we can speak of God as (some kind of) an *object;* should we not rather content ourselves with speaking of God, from within our relationship with

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him, as *Subject* ("Thou") – or something along these lines. Obviously the only sensible move is immediately to challenge the option, but the dilemma bemuses many ordinary Christians when they think about God and crops up perennially, however keenly philosophers cut back the growth.

Knowledge which is "objectifying" is supposed to be detached, disinterested, objective, scientific, etc. But knowledge of *God* must surely always be personal, self-involving, subjective, existential, etc. How then is it really *knowledge* at all? Of course, analytic philosophers would (have) put it very differently: the meaning of theological assertions is not of the same logical type as that of scientific statements; the test of the meaningfulness of a scientific hypothesis is that it should be capable, in principle, of falsification by observation of external events, but the distinctive statements of theology do not seem to be subject to this kind of verification – or something along these lines. The Drew University symposium was apparently set up at the stage of that particular local version of the argument when it was required that somebody should try to show what talking of God *non*-objectifyingly might mean. It was being assumed by this stage that talking of God *objectifyingly* must be improper, impossible, blasphemous, etc. The agenda had been shaped by Bultmann's very Kantian considerations. As he wrote in 1925:[20] "Anyone who is persuaded by arguments to believe the *reality* of God can be certain that he has no comprehension whatever of the reality of *God.* And anyone who supposes that he can offer evidence for God's reality by proofs of the existence of God is arguing over a phantom. For every 'speaking *about*' presupposes a standpoint external to that which is being talked about. But there cannot be any standpoint which is external to God. Therefore it is not legitimate to speak about God in general statements, in universal truths which are valid without reference to the concrete, existential position of the speaker". This version of the *status quaestionis* could hardly be put more succinctly. Bultmann goes on to say this: "It is as impossible to speak meaningfully about God as it is about *love.* Actually, one cannot speak *about* love at all unless the speaking about is itself an act of love. Any other talk about love does not speak of *love,* for it stands outside love".

Heidegger opens his response to the Drew University theologians by remarking that if they are going to discuss *non*-objectifying talk they had better be clear about what is meant by *objectifying* talk. On this, as a philosopher, he can perhaps help them – but only by way of raising a few questions: "The impression must be avoided that dogmatic theses are being offered in terms of the Heideggerian philosophy – when there is no such thing" (p 23). So

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what is *objectifying?* He cannot go into the whole story, but the immediate background may be found in the doctrines of Nietzsche, Bergson, and the so-called vitalists. Whenever we *say* anything we inevitably *fix*, and therefore *falsify*, what is *real* only in the ever-flowing process of the "stream of life". One text from Nietzsche will be enough for Heidegger's purpose: "The means of expression of language are no use for expressing 'becoming': it is part of our inescapable need to preserve ourselves that we keep positing a coarser world of durables, of things etc. (of objects)". Whether Heidegger knew of "process thought" (Whitehead, Charles Hartshorne), and the likelihood is that he did, he is certainly touching here on one of the deepest and most intractable "myths" that have bemused many more of us than just the philosophical fraternity. Ever since people realized (whenever that was) that endless process is the only reality, and that *becoming* is more "real" than *being*, it has seemed that the "stream of life" vastly exceeds any of our capacities to capture in description or to catch in any net of concepts. Life goes through language like a sieve; what is left is only a residue of husks. To put *life* into *concepts* is to kill it. The story is familiar and extraordinarily attractive. To *survive* we have to keep on pretending to ourselves that we have a tight grip on the process; we have to pretend to take some things in the ceaseless flow of events as relatively stable, substance-like poles of reference, simply in order to cope with the overwhelming flow of experience. And so on. It would be easy to illustrate the idea in more local sources (D H Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, William James, for a start).

In fact it is the question of *language* that lies at the root of the problem, so Heidegger tells the symposiasts (p 24). The symposiasts are wondering about non-objectifying language in theology, on the assumption that some if not all language is objectifying. Their question touches the centre of contemporary "philosophy", so Heidegger tells them (his quotation marks there), from one end to the other, "from its most extreme counter-positions (Carnap to Heidegger)". Of course he knows that about all that any analytic philosopher is likely to know of his work is Carnap's famous mocking of the claim that "The nothing nothings": the classical example of a metaphysical pseudo-statement upon which generations of young analytic philosophers have ground their logical milk teeth ever since it was first cited by Carnap in 1931, or anyway since the relevant passage in his essay passed into the manuals (it is included in the Murray volume mentioned above). The two extreme positions have been labelled, so Heidegger goes on, "the technico-scientistic conception of language" and "the speculative-hermeneutic encounter with language". For Carnap, and by implication for the whole

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neo-Fregean line, "philosophy of language" means working out formal techniques to get a grip on language in the empirical spirit of the natural sciences. For Heidegger, on the other hand, "philosophy of language" means an "encounter" with language (*Spracherfahrung*) in the style of the interpretative disciplines of the arts faculty. As Heidegger says: "The first position wants to bring all thinking and speaking, including that of philosophy, under the rule of a symbolism that is constructible in 'formal-logical techniques" (p 24; translation modified, as elsewhere). That does not seem too unfair an account of the manifest aspirations of e.g. formal semantics, systematic theories of meaning, Montague grammar, and much else that is most intellectually demanding in contemporary analytic philosophy.

"The other position", Heidegger goes on, "has grown out of the question of what is to be encountered as the proper matter for philosophical thinking, and how this matter (Being as Being) is to be said". You don't have to be an analytic philosopher to find that description somewhat less than totally perspicuous. In one sense, of course, it is merely a commonplace historical remark. The opposite extreme from Carnap certainly developed out of Heidegger's ontological considerations in *Sein und Zeit*. But he goes on to spell out what he means, in a somewhat more intelligible way.

"The phenomenon most worthy of thought and questioning remains the mystery of language" (p 25). This becomes most insistently clear when we realize that "language is not a work of human beings". Language is not a human achievement. Speech is not something that human beings could ever have sat down and invented. Is it not, then, one wonders, a divine gift? "Der Mensch spricht nur, indem er der Sprache entspricht": human beings speak only to the extent that they comply with language. Of course we can invent artificial languages, symbol systems, etc. so Heidegger goes on to say; but this we can do only on the strength of an already existing natural language. Fine – who would disagree? But this simple observation supports the following thought: "Language is a primary phenomenon, of which the proper character is simply not amenable to demonstrative proof on the basis of facts but perceptible only in an unprejudiced submission to language". That last phrase – *Spracherfahrung* again, which Hart and Maraldo translate correctly enough as "experience of language" – has to be rendered in some way that brings out Heidegger's notion of how language surrounds us. An "experience" of language, however "unprejudiced", sounds far too like something "subjective" that we may have or work up. What Heidegger is getting at, however, is the thought that we may be capable of an encounter (*Erfahrung*) with the language which always surrounds us. This way of learning to

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attend to what the language itself says depends upon breaking the grip of some *prejudice*. What he means, presumably, is that the language that houses our way of life is a primary phenomenon in the sense that it cannot be traced back, or reductively analyzed into, anything else that would supposedly be its ground or source. He is certainly saying that the proper character of language cannot be established through matters of fact (*Tatsachen*). Of course we remain *critical*: "Even faced with primary phenomena thought remains critical. For to think critically means to discriminate (*krinein*) all the time between that which demands a proof for its justification, and that which desires, for its verification, nothing more than looking and accepting". Language is thus a primary phenomenon which we can test (understand) only by submitting to it on its own terms.

It is difficult not to recall Wittgenstein's remarks at this point: "Don't *think*, just *look!*", and "What has to be accepted, the given, is – so one could say – forms of life" (*Investigations*, 66 and p 226). The prejudice which tends to prevent us from submitting to language in Heidegger's way sounds remarkably like the kind of "scientific considerations" which Wittgenstein identified as getting in *his* way. He came to reject the very desire "to refine in unheard-of ways, or to complete, the system of rules for the use of our words" (ibid. 133). Our mistake, so Wittgenstein wrote, no doubt thinking of his own early work as well as that of others in the Fregean. tradition, "is to seek an explanation where we ought to have seen the facts as 'primary phenomena', i.e. where we ought to have said: *this language-game is being played*" (ibid. 654 – translation modified). It is not a matter of "explaining" a language-game by reference to our "experiences", as if they were more fundamental; it is simply a matter of noting a language-game (ibid. 655).

The mistake is to trace the language game back to something supposedly more fundamental than itself. This might either be our own experiences (ibid. 655) or that "logic of language" whose "crystalline purity" so deeply tempted Wittgenstein himself (e.g. 93, 108). Whatever Heidegger may have had in mind, it is clear that he regarded himself as being at the opposite pole from Carnap and what we should call philosophical logic, formed semantics etc. Wittgenstein surely turned back from that road also. But what Heidegger rejected is one thing; what he went on to attempt on his own account is another matter.

In the last analysis, so Heidegger is saying, our language, with its characteristic logic, is the inescapable medium (matrix) of all discourse and all communication. Whenever we introduce new modes of expression we have to formulate their terms in the same old native tongue. On this view, that is to say, we can never step

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back and look at our language as it were from the outside – as if it were a calculus which could be reinterpreted as we like. But one of the foremost exponents of this kind of view of language is none other than Gottlob Frege. It is not at all difficult to find analytic philosophers who refuse to follow him in this view of language – Jaakko Hintikka, to name but one.[21] For such philosophers the "success" of logical semantics in solving the problems of language seems the best disproof of this view of language.

One manageable problem may be settled. In his response to the Drew University symposium Heidegger next asks what "objectifying" means anyway. In the Middle Ages, so he says, an *objectum* was that at which some mental attitude was directed: that which is perceived, imagined, judged, wished, etc. For Kant, however, an *Objekt* had become that which is encountered in some empirical science – and nothing else. Things such as the categorical imperative, moral obligation, duty, and so on, which could not be objects of natural sciences, are not objectified when we speak of them. Indeed our everyday dealing with, and seeing to, things is never objectifying. If we are sitting in the garden, so Heidegger goes on, enjoying the roses in bloom, we are not making them an *Objekt*, although of course they are an *objectum* in the medieval sense. We can treat the statue of a Greek god as an object in the Kantian sense, by weighing it or investigating its physical or chemical properties, etc. "Thinking is not necessarily a representing of something as an *Objekt*. It is only thinking and speaking in the natural sciences which are objectifying. If all thinking as such were already objectifying, then the shaping of works of art would remain senseless, for they could never show themselves to any one because he would immediately make the phenomenon into an *Objekt*, and thus he would prevent the work of art from appearing at all" (p 27). In short, the Drew University symposium has set itself the task of discussing whether theological discourse is non-natural-scientific – "The problem as set is a pseudo-problem because it has been framed on a supposition of which the senselessness is obvious to anybody – theology is not a natural science" (p 30). Collapse of the symposium, presumably. Theology could not but be a form of non-objectifying discourse if by that is meant non-natural-scientific discourse. Heidegger concludes by advising the theologians to consider poetry (Rilke in particular) as an example of the kind of non-natural-scientific discourse which might offer illuminating parallels with theological language.

To be continued

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1 Hintikka, who teaches in Helsinki and in American universities, has given the John Locke Lectures in Oxford (1964) and was, with Donald Davidson, the editor of *Words and Objections* (1969), the most important set of essays on the work of W V Quine. His own festschrift appeared in 1979; my references are to pages 365 and 371.

2 Timothy Potts: 'Metaphilosophy', *New Blackfriars,* May 1968

3 Michael Dummett, *Frege* (1973); Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (1975)

4 Ingvar Horgby, *Inquiry,* 1959

5 Even, in sketchy fashion, in our own pages – Cornelius Ernst, 'Words, Facts and God', *New Blackfriars,* July/August 1963; and Fergus Kerr, 'Language and Community', *New Blackfriars,* November 1967

6 Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1980)

7 According to Norman Malcolm's *Memoir* (p 69), Sraffa once made a Neapolitan gesture which greatly illuminated Wittgenstein; but there must have been a great deal more to it than that.

8 Now in *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Personal Recollections* (1981)

9 See the Preface to the *Investigations:* Wittgenstein made a mistake about the year. Nicholas Bachtin (1896 - 1950) was a White Russian aristocrat who served in the French Foreign Legion before turning to classical studies in Paris and Cambridge. In 1945 he founded the linguistics department in Birmingham. His preference for Aristotle's sense of the particular over Plato's tyranny of the universals was so passionate that it must have been a topic of conversation with Wittgenstein. His brother, Mikhail Bachtin (1895 - 1973), who remained in Russia and disappeared for years, with his books on Dostoevsky (1929) and Rabelais (1965, but written in 1940), not to mention *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1929) which he seems to have written under the name of V N Voloshinov, is now recognized as one of the greatest literary critics and theorists of our time.

10 Two recent books may be noted – *Language and Perception in Hegel and Wittgenstein* by David Lamb (1979) and *Marx and Wittgenstein* by David Rubinstein (1981).

11 Roger Waterhouse, *A Heidegger Critique* (Harvester Philosophy No 15); the substance appeared, much more cheaply, in *Radical Philosophy* nos. 25 - 27.

12 *The New York Review of Books,* 19 April 1979; Steiner's book is in the Fontana Masters series.

13 *Mind,* January 1976, p 67

14 Donald Davidson's formulation in his *Essays on Action and Events,* p 221

15 *Sein und Zeit,* p 179: my translation-interpretation.

16 *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings,* edited by David Farrell Krell (1978); *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy,* edited by Michael Murray (1978)

17 Anthony C Thiselton, *The Two Horizons* (1980). He has also made an interesting contribution to the recent report of the Church of England Doctrine Commission: *Believing in the Church* (1981).

18 *The Piety of Thinking: Essays by Martin Heidegger,* translated by James G Hart and John C Maraldo (Indiana University Press: Bloomington and London, 1976), of which this is a somewhat belated review.

19 Karol Wojtyla's special subject – see *The Acting Person* (1979)

20 *Faith and Understanding* (1969), p 53

21 In *Philosophy of Logic* (1976), p 262

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