Continental Philosophy from Hegel

Michael Rosen

I The Continental Tradition

Historians of philosophy writing in English typically construct their narratives as if the authors whom they are discussing were all taking part in a single argument -- an argument that is conducted in terms of those problems that we now recognize to be relevant. This appears to leave no place for those who do not share our current assumptions regarding the nature of the issues — who lie outside what we think of as "our tradition".[1] Yet what is the alternative? Unless we can situate the authors whom we study in relation to our own concerns what *philosophical* value (rather than value of a historical, biographical or sociological kind) is there in engaging with them?

Fortunately, this apparent dilemma rests on a misunderstanding. Philosophy is not a discipline carried on according to rules and assumptions fixed once and for all. On the contrary, it has always involved an attempt to examine and call into question ideas and commitments that are otherwise taken for granted. Thus we do not need to share assumptions with the authors whom we study (or, worse, pretend that we share them, when we do not) in order to include them in our discussion. Indeed, it may be the very fact that authors proceed from an underlying position very different from our own that makes studying them valuable: the difference challenges us to reflect on commitments that we would otherwise not even realize that we had. The problem is to explain the distinctiveness of the authors' own concerns in sufficient detail to make them intelligible and to find enough common ground to make the challenge that they represent a productive one. That is the purpose of this chapter.

---

[1] One of the most trenchant critics of the way in which conventional approaches to the history of philosophy neglect and distort the context within which authors write has been the Cambridge historian of political thought, Quentin Skinner. His views are presented and discussed critically in J. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988). A collection of essays on the history of philosophy written by a variety of authors who share similar misgivings is: R. Rorty, J. B. Schneewind, Q. Skinner (eds.), *Philosophy in History* (Cambridge: Cambridge U.P., 1984).

The authors to be dealt with fall within the tradition that is known as "Continental" philosophy, in contrast to the "analytic" tradition that dominates in the English-speaking world. Both labels are, however, potentially misleading. Although the authors discussed (Hegel, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Husserl and Heidegger) did indeed live and work in the countries of Continental Europe, so too did many other philosophers who are not counted as part of that tradition. Two groups in particular are, by convention, excluded: Marxists and those, principally Austrian, thinkers known as "positivists" and "logical positivists". While it is true that these two groups are intellectually distinctive, it should be remembered that they were an important part of the intellectual environment within which Continental authors were writing.

The term “analytic" is misleading for another reason. It suggests that those authors to whom the label is applied share a common commitment to a single philosophical method: analysis. But this is plainly untrue. Not only have very different ideas as to what analysis might amount to been put forward in the course of time (Bertrand Russell's conception is quite different from J. L. Austin's) but many of the most distinguished members of the analytic tradition do not seem to be practising analysis in any very distinctive sense at all. In the face of this, the difference between analytic and Continental philosophy is sometimes characterized -- by analytic philosophers in particular -- as merely one of style: analytic philosophy is careful and rigorous, paying attention to the nuances of language, and Continental philosophy is -- what? Loose and careless? Put like this, the contrast is hardly very flattering to Continental philosophy: the difference seems to be simply that analytic philosophers are good ones and Continental philosophers aren't!

A more sympathetic way to try to characterize the Continental tradition is in terms of the kinds of answer that it gives to certain problems whose force we (whether we agree with those answers or not) can recognize and appreciate. It will be helpful, I suggest, to start by identifying four recurrent issues which in one way or another have concerned almost all of the philosophers in the Continental tradition.

(1) The first is the question of philosophy itself. Is philosophy possible at all? And, if so, how -- what is its method?

(2) A second question concerns the relationship between philosophy and the natural sciences. Where does science end and philosophy begin? Is there a sharp dividing line at all between the two disciplines?

(3) Thirdly, there is the relationship between philosophy and history. Is the fact that philosophy is part of a process of historical change itself a fact of philosophical significance?

(4) The final issue concerns the unity of theory and practice. If philosophy is something other than a form of science (if it is, instead, an exercise in self-knowledge, for example) it seems reasonable to suppose that it will affect one's attitudes and practices in a more direct way than the discovery of some new scientific fact.

Clearly, these issues interact. If the truth about the physical world can be discovered only via the experimental method of the natural sciences then does not that make philosophy redundant -- at least insofar as philosophy's objective is the traditional one of "metaphysics", to discover the ultimate nature of reality? Either philosophy must find some other objective (and a corresponding method to suit) or it must accept that it will find itself time and again sitting like King Canute on the beach, watching its claims being refuted by the incoming tide of scientific progress.

The idea of history, too, poses a challenge to philosophy. Let us suppose (as seems reasonable) that a "post-metaphysical" philosophy takes as at least part of its subject-matter the study of those fundamental concepts through which the human mind comes to perceive and understand the world. Now, what if it is also true (as it again seems reasonable to suppose) that those concepts vary in the course of history and from society to society? Philosophy would appear to be limited in consequence to the articulation and exploration of

one limited point of view; it would no longer possess the vantage point from which it could claim to have universal validity.

These are troubling issues -- and not just for Continental philosophers, of course. But Continental philosophers have tended to see their significance in a particular way, partly because of the historical context which has shaped their approach to them. Another term which is often applied to the Continental tradition is "post-Kantian" philosophy and this label gives us an important insight into the way in which almost all the thinkers under consideration here viewed their place within the history of philosophy: they saw themselves as continuing, but at the same time critical of, the work of Kant. Let us then orient ourselves in relation to Kant's successors by examining first Kant's own attitude towards these four issues.

As Kant describes it in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the task of philosophy is to set up what he calls a "court-house which will assure to reason its lawful claims".[2] The metaphor carries important implications for the way in which the task of philosophy is conceived. First, it implies that philosophy is a *normative* discipline. Like a court, its objective is to adjudicate disputes that are brought before it. Philosophical disputes are neither to be decided *dogmatically* -- in response to some authority whose legitimacy consists solely in its established power -- nor to be by-passed *sceptically*. Philosophers are engaged in a kind of philosophical jurisprudence, allowing as admissible only what it is open to reason to determine. This is why Kant, his thinking interwoven as ever with the political vision of the Enlightenment, compares philosophy's role in bringing peace to the "battlefield of metaphysics" with the political order established with the foundation of civil society.[3]

But what is the extent of reason's competence? What method can it use for its critique? To answer this question Kant employs another, even more famous, metaphor: philosophy is to carry out a *Copernican revolution*. Philosophical disputes would not be capable of rational resolution were the issues involved questions about the ultimate structure of reality, independent of the human mind. But they are not. Philosophical questions, for

---

[2] Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by N. Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1970), A xi.
[3] *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A753, B781.

Kant, concern the relationship between the human mind and a reality which has been, in some partial sense, *produced* by the mind -- a reality whose features have been "synthesized" by the activity of a non-empirical agency, the *transcendental subject*. What we have made (or "constituted") in this sense we can know -- not because the subject's transcendental activity is accessible to us introspectively, just by our own awareness of our own thinking, but because its effects can be determined by a process of philosophical argument. It is this idea -- that philosophy should give its attention first and foremost to experience -- that, for Continental philosophers, is the significance of Kant's "Copernican revolution".

Kant's normative conception of philosophy was presented in the form of a deliberate contrast to that of his empiricist predecessors, Locke in particular. Although Locke in the *Essay concerning Human Understanding* had also set out to draw boundaries and justify knowledge-claims (its object, he wrote, was to "inquire into the original, certainty and extent of human knowledge"[4]) the method that he used was, in the eyes of Kant and his successors, merely psychological and descriptive: Kant refers to Locke's philosophy as "physiological".[5] Whatever their reservations about Kant's own philosophy, Kant's successors in the Continental tradition can, almost without exception, be said to endorse (and, indeed, extend) Kant's negative view of this kind of enterprise. While there has been a great deal of sympathetic interest among analytic philosophers in the idea that philosophy should be continuous in method and subject-matter with the natural sciences -- what is commonly referred to as "positivism" -- Continental philosophy has generally dismissed such ideas as no more than a reversion to a pre-Kantian conception of the philosophical enterprise.[6] For similar reasons, Continental philosophy has also been hostile to what it calls "psychologism", another unfortunately slightly elastic term, that is generally used to denote the attempt to substitute a description of mental phenomena of the kind to be found in psychology for a

---

[4] John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1975), I.1.2.
[5] *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A87, B119
[6] An interesting and fair-minded account of positivist philosophy written from a point of view sympathetic to Continental Philosophy is L. Kolakowski, *Positivist Philosophy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972). A famous (or notorious) clash between positivism and Continental philosophy is recorded in T. W. Adorno (ed.), *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, translated by G. Adey and D. Frisby (London: Heinemann, 1976).

philosophical account of such phenomena as knowledge, judgement and meaning.[7] Thus there has been a certain symmetry in the relationship between the two traditions: just as analytic philosophers fail to take Continental philosophy seriously, Continental philosophers are inclined to dismiss analytic philosophy as simply a reprise of an "Enlightenment project" whose limitations are essentially the same as those criticized by Kant and the German Idealists in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

So far, we have concentrated on those aspects of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* with which Continental philosophers have in general agreed. We shall, of course, deal with specific disagreements in the course of the discussion of individual authors, but, again, it is worth outlining some widely-held reservations, all of which can be found in at least one of the authors to be discussed, as well as being raised elsewhere in the Continental tradition.

The first set of reservations relate to one of the *Critique of Pure Reason*'s central features: its dualistic conception of experience and the (closely connected) doctrine of transcendental agency implicit in the idea of "synthesis". According to Kant, our encounter with reality (insofar as that encounter amounts to experience and is capable of being a matter for judgement and reflection) takes place through the joint operation of *intuitions* and *concepts*. Intuitions and concepts are species of "representation" (*Vorstellung* -- Kant's generic word for mental items) each of which is associated with a mental power or "faculty" -- *sensibility* and *understanding* respectively. Concepts, Kant says, guide the process by which we synthesize what is given to us through the senses into the everyday reality of objects and events. Yet Kant, many of his immediate critics objected, gave no satisfactory answer to the question how these two faculties related to one another. Indeed there was, they argued, little advance over Descartes. Kant, it is true, had got rid of Descartes's dualistic division between extended substance and thinking substance, but he had merely replaced it with a no less problematic doctrine in the form of a contrast between two radically different aspects of the human mind.

---

[7] See the discussion of Husserl below. We may note that this is a point of agreement between Continental philosophy and one important strand of analytic philosophy. Many analytic philosophers influenced by Wittgenstein also regard the opposition to "psychologism" as a central issue for the philosophy of mind. John McDowell is one contemporary author who has pursued this line of argument with particular vigour.

Dissatisfaction with Kant's "faculty psychology" is by no means confined to the Continental tradition. What is striking, however, is that, while this criticism has led analytical philosophers (for example, P. F. Strawson, in *The Bounds of Sense*) to try to reconstruct Kant's theory purged of the idea of a synthesizing subject altogether, Kant's most immediate critics, the German Idealists, went in just the opposite direction and reinterpreted the transcendental subject as something more than just a psychological capacity on the part of the individual agent to give form to what is given to it from outside. As one commentator very pithily puts it: in German Idealism after Kant, "the place of transcendental processes of determination is taken by transcendental processes of generation".[8]

The Continental philosophers' disagreements with Kant are not confined to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. As well as the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant wrote two other Critiques: the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgement*. In the former Kant envisages a more ambitious role for reason. Human beings, insofar as they are the subjects of action -- of moral action, in particular -- can, he argued, be treated as part of a higher realm, a world not just appearances but of things in themselves. Human beings are free to the extent that they are subject to a self-given law and reason is capable of developing such a law: the categorical imperative. It is fair to say that criticism of this aspect of Kant's thought in the Continental tradition has gone in two completely opposite directions. For the German Idealists (represented here by Hegel) Kant's categorical imperative is a major insight that Kant himself does not take far enough. In particular, they believe, it demonstrates the capacity of reason to generate content *a priori* -- an important discovery with implications that go far beyond the realm of ethics. For Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, on the other hand, Kant's belief in an unconditionally necessary "moral reason" is precisely where he goes wrong: there is, they maintain, no such thing.

The *Critique of Judgement* deals with two further topics that might seem to us nowadays to be only very remotely related to one another: the nature of beauty and aesthetic judgement, on the one hand, and the understanding of nature insofar as it is systematic or

[8] Karl-Heinz Haag, *Philosophischer Idealismus* (Frankfurt: Europäischer Verlagsanstalt, 1967), p. 31.

purposive on the other. In each case, however, Kant is dealing with a phenomenon that threatens to contradict the carefully set-out hierarchy of faculties presented in the first *Critique*. According to the definition of objects given there, the concept of an object embodies a kind of universal rule in subordination to which particular elements of experience are organized. But beautiful objects appear to contradict this picture. It seems to be characteristic of them that there is an inherent appropriateness in the way in which their particular elements express universal characteristics. As it is sometimes said, beautiful objects *embody* the universal in the particular, rather than having concepts imposed indifferently on the raw material subsumed under it.

Similarly, organic nature may appear to conflict with Kant's confident definition of nature as "the existence of things so far as it is determined according to universal laws".[9] The *organized* character of organic beings -- the purposive adaptation of parts to whole, and their capacity for developmental growth, self-maintenance and self-reproduction -- seemed to the eighteenth century, at least, not to be capable of being explained according to deductively-structured bodies of physical law. There would never be, Kant asserted, a "Newton of a blade of grass".[10]

Kant's response, both in the field of aesthetics and in his account of organic nature, was not to deny the existence of such phenomena altogether, but to deny that they fell within the domain of objective explanation. For his successors and critics, however, this restriction represented a regrettable failure of nerve on Kant's part. On the contrary, they argued, art and organic nature give the lie to the simplistic division of experience between sense and understanding of the first *Critique* and Kant's reductive definition of nature in terms of universal laws. The subject-matter of the third *Critique*, or so the German Idealists would argue, shows that, Kant's own views to the contrary, the highest faculty -- reason itself or the "Idea" -- does, in certain cases, play an objective or constitutive role in experience, helping to reconcile intuitions and concepts by a kind of "intuitive understanding".

---

[9] I. Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* (Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill, 1950), p. 42.
[10] I. Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, translated by J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1968), p. 248

Versions of this appealing (if highly obscure) position are advanced, as we shall see, by such otherwise opposed thinkers as Hegel and Schopenhauer. For the moment let us note merely its most general consequence. It gives aesthetic experience a central philosophical importance: art is an epistemologically distinctive realm where the otherwise harsh antitheses of human experience are mediated, an alternative to the technocratic and instrumental conception of nature that is, supposedly, characteristic of a scientific civilization. This is, of course, a theme that came to occupy a central position in Western culture at the time of Romanticism -- and has retained it ever since.

Although Kant presents a highly original answer to the question of what the method of philosophy should be, one which separates his enterprise both from traditional metaphysics and from the empirical parts of the natural sciences, his conception of philosophy is in one respect quite traditional. Kant, no less than Descartes or Spinoza or Leibniz, wants philosophy to give objective answers to questions that are general in scope. If follows then that, for Kant, philosophy is not in any sense a historical discipline: philosophers aim, at least, to settle things once and for all:

> When, therefore, someone announces a system of philosophy as his own creation, he is in effect saying that there has been no other philosophy prior to his. For, were he to admit that there is another (and true) philosophy, then he would be admitting that there are two different philosophies concerning the same thing, and that would be self-contradictory.[11]

Yet while, for Kant, philosophy tries to rise above history, it is easy to see how certain aspects of Kant's ideas can be given a quite different twist. Kant believes that the fundamental concepts through which we experience the world -- the categories -- are the same for all human beings. Indeed (notoriously) he tries to deduce their necessity from the structure of logic. What if the categories are historically and culturally variable, however? If that is so, then concentrating on the concepts through which we come to appropriate the world will give us something much more specific: an understanding, insofar as that is

[11] I. Kant, *The Metaphysical Elements of Justice* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 6.

possible, of our own particular perspective. It follows from this that philosophy is a different kind of activity from the investigation of empirical truths about the world. To discover that one sees the world in a certain way (for instance, partially, refracted through a certain matrix of concepts) is to discover that one approaches the world within a certain kind of structure of pre-understanding.

This brings us to the final contrast between the analytic and the Continental traditions that should be borne in mind: the concern to be found in the Continental tradition for the relationship between life and philosophy. Analytic philosophers, as we have noted, have most commonly adopted a conception of the task of philosophy that ties it closely with science (clearing the ground for scientific theory, for example, or providing its own quasi-scientific account of the nature of thought and language). Where they have not (for instance, in so-called "ordinary language" philosophy) the analytic philosophers' account of the practical role of philosophy has been primarily negative, as a "therapy" for the illusions endemic within philosophy itself. Kant's conception of philosophy combines elements of both these views.

Post-Kantian Continental philosophy, by contrast, has most frequently taken a view of the relationship between theory and practice much closer to that of the great progenitor of the tradition of Western philosophy, Plato. For Plato, in coming to *know* a truth human reason would have to make that truth its own -- *appropriate* it, as we might say -- so philosophical knowledge is supposed to transform both our understanding and the way in which we live our lives. The question in dispute in the Continental tradition has been not so much whether this aspiration towards the unity of theory and practice is intrinsic to philosophy, but whether it is capable of fulfilling it. For those who deny that this is so (a position that is most obviously associated with Marx but is to be found in this chapter represented by Nietzsche) philosophy as traditionally conceived is not so much a means to the good life as one of the obstacles in the way of achieving it, "another form and mode of human alienation",[12] as Marx puts it.

II Hegel

[12] Karl Marx, *Early Writings*, translated by R. Livingstone and G. Benton (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1975), p. 381.

Hegel -- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, to give him his full name -- was born in 1770, the son of an official in the service of the Duke of Baden-Württemberg. He studied from 1788-93 at the Tübinger Stift, a higher education seminary that specialized in training candidates for state service. There he formed friendships with two fellow-students who would also make very significant contributions to intellectual life in Germany, the great poet Friedrich Hölderlin and the philosopher Friedrich Schelling. The three young men were extremely close during the seventeen-nineties and shared a common outlook in relation to politics, art and philosophy. Like many others, they were inspired by the early years of the French Revolution and hoped for a corresponding political regeneration to transform the patchwork of absolutist states into which Germany was then divided. Culturally, they contrasted the fragmentation of contemporary art and religion unfavourably with the harmony, as they saw it, of Greek life. Only in philosophy did they consider Germany to be a leading force, thanks to the work of Kant. Yet here again they were by no means uncritical. Hölderlin compared Kant's significance to Moses. Like Moses, that is, he had led his people out of bondage; someone else must be found to enable them to enter the Promised Land.

These sorts of idea are apparent in a remarkable short piece written in 1797, known as the "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism".[13] Until recently the author of the *System-Programme* was generally believed to have been Hegel himself, but there is now evidence that points strongly towards Hölderlin. In any case, there is no doubt that Hegel endorsed the piece since it is in his handwriting. The author of the *System-Programme* articulates, albeit very cryptically, a programme for a radically new kind of philosophy, one in which philosophy will become continuous with art: "The philosopher must have as much aesthetic power as the poet."[14] Like J. G. Fichte, whose philosophy had come to prominence in Germany in the early 1790s, the author of the *Oldest System-Programme* takes the fact that human beings are capable of a distinctive kind of moral rationality to be of central

[13] "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism", translated by Taylor Cowan, *European Journal of Philosophy*, August 1995, pp. 199-200.
[14] "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism", p. 199

metaphysical significance. The starting-point for philosophy, the author writes, must be the conception of the individual as an "absolutely free" moral being. The key idea here is the Kantian one that freedom consists in subjection to a law, but a law given to the individual from within him or herself. The fact that human reason is capable of generating such a law (and of having insight into its validity) is held to be a sign that -- in direct contradiction to Kant's own view -- reason need not be limited to a purely regulative role. Reason, the faculty of Ideas, can break Kant's restriction of knowledge to the mere application of concepts to intuitions. The question by which philosophy should be guided is thus, according to the *Oldest System-Programme*: "How must a world be ordered for a moral being?"[15] The answer to that question, the author claims, will be a vision of the world as a system of Ideas (understood in a sense that combines both Kant and Plato) something that he supposes to have implications in two directions.

First, the Ideas are to give philosophy the capacity to animate physics -- to "give wings" to what would otherwise remain a "slow and plodding" experimental science.[16] Secondly, they form the basis for a revolutionary critique of the state: "I wish to show that there is no *Idea* of the state, because the state is something mechanical, as little as there is an Idea of a machine. Only what is an object of freedom can be called `Idea'. So we must go beyond the state! For every state must treat free men as mechanical gear-cogs." The role of philosophy as it is envisaged in the *Oldest System-Programme* is to provide the symbolic foundations for a future egalitarian society, based on the "absolute freedom of all minds [*Geister*] that carry the intellectual world within themselves and seek neither God nor immortality outside".[17]

Thus it is apparent that, at the outset of his career, Hegel saw philosophy as part of a movement of radical political transformation. His first publication, a defence of his friend Schelling against Fichte, called *The Difference Between the Fichtean and the Schellingean*

[15] "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism", p. 199
[16] "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism", p. 199.
[17] "Oldest System-Programme of German Idealism", p. 199.

Systems of Philosophy (1801) takes up a similar theme. Hegel there locates the origin of philosophical systems in the need to re-establish unity in human life:

> Division [*Entzweiung*] is the source of the need for philosophy... [18]

The very existence of philosophical systems, he claims, is a product of the fact that "that which is a form of appearance of the Absolute has isolated itself from the Absolute and become fixed as something independent."[19] According to Hegel at this stage of his intellectual development, philosophy is the symptom of a divided culture as well as a remedy for it: philosophy is a theory whose practical function is to restore the unity of theory and practice. The idea that philosophy is both a kind of disease and an attempt to cure it is familiar enough to analytic philosophers from the writings of Wittgenstein, but there is an important difference that should be noted. Hegel, unlike Wittgenstein, does not suppose that when the cure is completed philosophy itself will become redundant. Rather, thought based upon the understanding will lose its hegemony, giving place to (and becoming integrated as a subordinate part within) a new, higher, speculative form of thought.

As we shall see, this theme of the supersession of the understanding by speculative reason will continue throughout Hegel's philosophical career. But by the time of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) Hegel's view of the place of philosophy had become far more conservative. Instead of being part of a movement of social and political transformation, its role was now to bring to consciousness a cultural development which had already been achieved, implicitly, by the agency that Hegel calls *Geist*, that common intellect in which, he claims, all human beings, as individual intelligences, participate.[20] (*Geist* -- pronounced to rhyme with "spiced" -- is most frequently translated into English as "Spirit", but sometimes also as "mind"; to avoid confusion, I shall leave it untranslated.)

---

[18] *The Difference Between the Fichtean and the Schellingean Systems of Philosophy*, in R. Bubner (ed.), *German Idealist Philosophy* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1997), p. 262.

[19] *The Difference Between the Fichtean and the Schellingean Systems of Philosophy*, in R. Bubner (ed.), *German Idealist Philosophy* (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1997), p. 262.

[20] This past existence is an already attained possession of the universal *Geist*, which is the substance of the individual and so, although it appears as external to him, constitutes his non-organic nature. *Bildung*, in this respect, seen from the side of the individual, consists in acquiring what is thus present, absorbing his non-organic nature into himself, and taking possession of it.

Phenomenology of Spirit translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: O.U.P., 1977), p. 16.

The *Phenomenology* has always been the most admired of Hegel's works. Though difficult, it has a breadth and grandeur of presentation that carry the reader through its complexities. On one level, the starting-point for the *Phenomenology* lies in the rejection of Kant's dualistic conception of experience. According to Hegel, Kant's philosophy makes use of a model -- of the mind imposing its form on an essentially non-mental reality -- that is psychological, not philosophical, in origin. The idea that we could discover the necessary structures of experience by somehow standing outside the knowing process and taking a "sideways view" of our mental activity misconceives the mind as if it were an instrument or medium, Hegel argues in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*. Moreover, Hegel explicitly rejects Kant's account of concepts as simply "functions of unity among our representations",[21] given by the faculty of understanding. On the contrary, *Begriff* (Kant's German word for "concept") for Hegel must be understood in a quite different, speculative sense (for this reason, Hegel's use of the term is most often translated as "notion"). As Hegel remarks rather loftily in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*:

> The concept [*der Begriff*] in the speculative sense is to be distinguished from what is commonly called concept. It is in this latter, one-sided sense that the assertion has been made, repeated countless times and turned into a common prejudice that the infinite cannot be grasped by concepts.[22]

And yet, although it rejects the Kantian conception of experience, the *Phenomenology* is, at another level, profoundly Kantian. Hegel, like Kant, aims to disclose the fundamental structures underlying experience. Now, for the reasons just given, Hegel cannot proceed by trying to isolate the form of experience and treating it as something to be analysed independently of its content. Instead, he adopts an approach which traces the forms which *Geist*'s relation to the world takes at each stage of historical development. Thus human beings' political and cultural relations (which, from *Geist*'s point of view, are simply forms of

---

[21] *The Critique of Pure* Reason, A68, B93

[22] *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Vol. 1, translated by William Wallace (Oxford: O.U.P., 1975), para. 9.

its own self-relation) are just as much part of the *Phenomenology*'s subject-matter as the traditional questions of body and mind.

An obvious objection presents itself. The traditional goal of philosophy is not just the mapping of thought but its justification: the demonstration that certain structures do indeed underlie reality (or, at least, reality insofar as it is thinkable for us). Simply to record the historical forms of human experience is to show only how something has come to be. In that case the *Phenomenology* would be, at best, an exercise in historical psychology or a piece of cultural history. But that is far from the limit of Hegel's ambition. Instead, he claims that, however it may seem (or once have seemed) as an actual historical process, the development from one form to another is a necessary one. Each transition has, to use Hegel's terminology, a *logical* force, in the sense that each succeeding stage is a completion of the one that preceded it and to that extent the final form of thought can be seen to be justified.

Of course, it is easy enough to show that a feature was not present in that former stage, but it is something else again to show that this is an inadequacy or deficiency of the earlier stage and that the new feature is in some way a completion of what went before. We must be able to see the resulting stage as a completion or fulfilment of the preceding stage, a development from that earlier stage and not a mere replacement of it. Hegel describes the way in which one form of thought gives place to another as follows: "... it is only when it is taken as a result of that from which it emerges that it is, in fact, the true result; in that case it is itself a *determinate* nothingness, one which has a *content*."[23] This idea of "determinate negation" is essential to what Hegel means by the term "dialectic". The *Phenomenology* assumes that we, its readers, are capable of comprehending the forms of thought from a developmental vantage point, seeing each one as the completion of its predecessor. But this assumption is itself, surely, not something everyone would accept: from a certain metaphysical position such a claim seems contrary to common sense. It appears, then, as though the *Phenomenology* presupposes its own result: it assumes a form of philosophical reasoning that it is its duty to justify.

---

[23] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 51.

Hegel does not regard the objection of apparent circularity as fatal; he actually makes the point himself. As he puts it, "a knowledge which makes this one-sidedness its very essence [i.e. which fails to see new forms as *developments*] is itself one of the patterns of incomplete consciousness which occurs on the road itself."[24] The *Phenomenology* presupposes that consciousness has *already reached* the stage at which "Science" (in Hegel's sense) is possible. The development leading to the "standpoint of Science" has, Hegel writes, "already been *implicitly* accomplished; the content is already the actuality reduced to a possibility, its immediacy overcome, and the embodied shape reduced to abbreviated, simple determinations of thought."[25]

Thus the *Phenomenology* draws on a conception of philosophy that reminds one strongly of Plato's idea that philosophy is recollection. Our mind has certain structures, in Hegel's view, but it is not aware that it has those structures. As he puts it in a crucial phrase in the Preface: *Was bekannt, darum nicht erkannt*, which we might translate as: what we are acquainted with, we do not therefore know. But while, for Plato, the dialectic by which we aim to restore ourselves to the realm of reason is a matter of pure, timeless argument, for Hegel, it is a matter of tracing through the forms of thought as they were to be found in history. If Hegel is right, then history has reached a point at which consciousness can retrace its own forms so that it sees in each one a *determinate negation*. To start with, it has this capacity merely practically, implicitly -- it does not know *that it has the capacity*. It comes to acquire this knowledge through the practical exercise of the capacity itself, in the process of following the course of the *Phenomenology*.

As we trace through the development of *Geist*, it becomes apparent, according to Hegel, that *Geist* is more than just a psychological or epistemological structure which *human beings* happen to have in common. On the contrary, at the highest point of *Geist*'s development, which Hegel calls Absolute Knowledge, the individual, he claims, becomes aware that *Geist*'s structure permeates all of reality, nature as well as history. The opposition between *Geist* and external reality is, in Hegel's famous technical term, *aufgehoben* -- raised

[24] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 51
[25] *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 17

up, removed and preserved. With this, the development of *Geist* has reached a point of completion. History has, in some sense, ended, and the stage is set for a study that will present the forms of thought in complete *a priori* purity: the *Science of Logic*.

While the *Phenomenology* traces the appearance of philosophical "science", the *Science of Logic* is to present "the system of pure reason, as the realm of pure Thought".[26] The term that Hegel uses here, Thought (*Denken*) is an important technical one. For Kant, the generic term for the contents of the mind is *Vorstellung*, conventionally translated as "representation". Thus, according to Kant, intuitions, concepts and even Ideas are all species of "representation".[27] For Hegel, however, the realm of representations is characteristic of thought limited to the understanding. It is to be contrasted with the higher, speculative nature of Thought, the true method of philosophy. He puts the point very explicitly in the *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*:

> The difference between *Vorstellung* and Thought is of special importance because philosophy may be said to do nothing but transform *Vorstellungen* into Thoughts.[28]

The *Science of Logic* presupposes that the reader has attained the capacity to carry through metaphysical reasoning in the pure realm of Thought -- that was the conclusion of the *Phenomenology*. What is presented in the *Science of Logic* is a self-developing system of categories that incorporate, in true Platonic fashion, the necessary, ultimate structure of reality -- "the presentation of God, as He is in His eternal being before the creation of nature and of a finite spirit", as Hegel puts it at one point.[29]

The *Logic*, then, is the very centre of Hegel's mature philosophy, but Hegel's interests are by no means confined to it. On the contrary, his later writings include extensive works on art, religion, history, politics, the history of philosophy and the philosophy of nature. In each case, Hegel is concerned to discover and make explicit a conceptual structure within the diverse empirical material that he is dealing with. Philosophy, then, articulates *a priori*

---

[26] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, translated by A.V. Miller (Oxford: O.U.P., 1969), p. 50.
[27] This use of terminology becomes somewhat more comprehensible when we appreciate that *Vorstellung* was the German translation for the term "idea" as used by Locke and the British Empiricists.
[28] *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Vol. 1, para. 20.
[29] *The Science of Logic*, p. 50.

structures within the realm of the empirical sciences and, in so doing, he believes, gives them an extra kind of necessity:

> Philosophy, then, owing its development to the empirical sciences, gives their content in return that most essential form, the freedom of Thought: an *a priori* character. These contents are now warranted as necessary instead of depending on the evidence of facts merely as found and experienced. The fact becomes a presentation and a copy of the original and entirely independent activity of Thought.[30]

It is obviously not possible here to follow through in detail how Hegel imagines that this programme is to be realized. Suffice it, in conclusion, for us to review Hegel's position in relation to the four issues that we identified in the previous section.

(1) Hegel's conception of philosophy is affirmative and rationalist. It represents a rejection of Kant, to the extent that Kant denied that philosophy was capable of giving *a priori* knowledge of the ultimate structure of reality. Hegel's use of the term "speculation" is significant in this respect. While, for Kant, this is a pejorative term, characteristic of the "dogmatic" metaphysics that he claims to have superseded, Hegel affirms the speculative nature of philosophical truth.

(2) For Hegel, the method of philosophy is not the same as that of the natural sciences. But it is not, for that reason, to be seen as subordinate to or dependent on the sciences. On the contrary, philosophy is supposed to be at least as rigorous as the sciences and, in articulating the categorial structure that is implicit within the explanatory frameworks of scientific knowledge, it has a foundational and justificatory role to play in relation to the latter.

(3) Hegel's account of philosophy is historical in a way that subordinates history to philosophy rather than the other way round. In other words, instead of philosophy being threatened with contingency by having its categories shown to be merely the product of some

[30] *Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, Vol. 1, para. 20.

particular time and place, Hegel's grand ambition is to show that each apparently accidental manifestation of *Geist* is in fact a part of the process of *Geist*'s coming to self-knowledge: a process that can be seen from a rigorous and timeless point of view (even if that vantage point is one that can only be attained by human reason in retrospect).

(4) Finally, for Hegel, philosophical understanding, in bringing the individual to an awareness of what *Geist* has achieved, is supposed to reconcile him or her to existing reality. Philosophy articulates the rationality and necessity that are the governing structures of the world, and, in this sense, as Hegel puts it in the *Philosophy of History*, it contains the true "theodicy": the justification of God's works to mankind.[31]

III Schopenhauer

Arthur Schopenhauer was born in 1788, in Danzig (the Hanseatic city now known in Polish as Gdansk) and he died in 1860, in Frankfurt. He studied philosophy in Göttingen and Berlin and originally hoped to pursue a university career as a philosopher. That was not to be, however. The famous story is told of how, when he was given the right to teach at the university in Berlin, Schopenhauer scheduled his lectures in direct competition with those of Hegel, the principal professor of philosophy. The result was humiliating. Whilst Hegel's audience was in the hundreds, only a very few attended Schopenhauer's course. Schopenhauer (who had an independent income, inherited from his businessman father) withdrew into private life. In his writings, however, he never misses an opportunity to pour scorn on professors of philosophy in general and on Hegel in particular, for whom Schopenhauer always retained a vivid loathing.

Wounded vanity apart, Schopenhauer's objection to the German philosophers of his day lay in his belief that they had perverted Kant's legacy and that only he, Schopenhauer, was capable of understanding Kant's thought and taking it further. The very title of his

[31] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, translated by J. Sibree (Dover: New York, 1956), p. 15.

masterpiece, *The World as Will and Representation*, published in 1819, echoes two of Kant's central terms. Representation (*Vorstellung*) is crucial for Schopenhauer, as it is for Hegel. But the two thinkers differ quite fundamentally in their attitudes towards it. Hegel, as we have seen, thinks that the task of speculative philosophy is to raise everyday thought to a vantage-point beyond the dualism of subject and object. Schopenhauer denies that this is possible, in agreement with Kant's doctrine that objective knowledge must remain limited to the world of representation. Schopenhauer's account of the division between sensibility, understanding and reason and the role that they play in perception and knowledge is very similar to Kant's. According to Schopenhauer, sensibility and understanding between them give us a world with three fundamental intellectual characteristics: position (in time), location (in space) and a kind of immediate awareness of causal necessity. Reflection and the application of concepts, on the other hand, are a matter of the faculty of reason and so do not enter into the world as we find it to be given to us. (There is a contrast here with Kant, who thought that the categories were concepts applied unconsciously within experience by the understanding.)

Like Kant, Schopenhauer thought that the twin doctrines of transcendental idealism -- that objects cannot be given except in relation to some subject, and that the content of experience is not produced by the subject alone -- point inevitably to a further question: What is the nature of reality independent of the activity of the subject? This question, the question of the "thing in itself", is, according to Kant, both inescapable and unanswerable. To answer it satisfactorily we would have to be able to transcend the dualism of subject and object, the basic condition of knowledge itself. Yet Schopenhauer, although he too accepts this Kantian premise, claims nevertheless to be able to say something philosophical about the thing in itself: its nature is, he says, *will*. What does Schopenhauer mean by this claim and how does he justify it?

The best place to start in understanding the claim is with Schopenhauer's account of causality. According to Schopenhauer, our experience of causality is of the existence of a law-governed, necessary connection holding between items (Schopenhauer says between "changes") such that when one occurs another always follows. What we do not have in the

normal case, however, is any understanding of the *kind* of connection that there is between cause and effect. We know the *that* of causality, one might say, but not the *how* or the *why*. Now, on a certain view of causality -- what might be called a *phenomenalist* view - that is all that there is to understand. Yet Schopenhauer disagrees, for in one particular case, he claims, we can understand the causal process not just from the outside but from the inside as well. That is the case in which we both observe and exercise our own will. When we will, the relationship between our mental state and the bodily state that follows is not just part of a universal sequence: it is also intelligible. Although, according to Schopenhauer, "For the purely knowing subject as such this body is a representation like any other, an object among objects", the movements and actions of the body are "unravelled for [the subject] in an entirely different way"[32]. Not that we can give an account in discursive terms of what it is in which our willing consists, but we are aware of that willing nonetheless as a kind of amorphous and purposeless driving and striving beyond the fixed determinacy of the "principle of individuation". This then, according to Schopenhauer, is a paradigm of what we discover when we penetrate beyond the dualism of subject and object.

Many commentators have objected that Schopenhauer's argument does not entitle him to the much stronger claim that he now goes on to make: that will is the thing in itself. Even if Schopenhauer is right in saying that the key to the inner nature of human action is the directionless striving of the will, why should we think that that is true of reality as a whole? Many people would argue that it is irrational to universalize on the basis of only one instance. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, clearly believes that this generalization is perfectly reasonable, even rationally compelling:

> The reader who with me has gained this conviction, [namely, that will is the inner nature of human action] will find that of itself it will become the key to the knowledge of the innermost being of the whole of nature, since he now transfers it to all those phenomena that are given to him, not like his own phenomenon both in direct and indirect knowledge, but in the latter solely, and hence merely in a one-sided

[32] A. Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol I (Dover: New York, 1969) sect. 18., p. 99

> way, as *representation* alone. He will recognize it not only in those phenomena that are quite similar to his own, in men and animals, as their innermost nature, but continued reflection will lead him to recognize the force that shoots and vegetates in the plant, indeed the force by which the crystal is formed, the force that turns the magnet to the North Pole, the force whose shock he encounters from the contact of metals of different kinds, the force that appears in the elective affinities of matter as repulsion and attraction, separation and union, and finally even gravitation, which acts so powerfully in all matter, pulling the stone to earth and the earth to the sun; all these he will recognize as different only in the phenomenon, but the same according to their inner nature. He will recognize them all as that which is immediately known to him so intimately and better than everything else, and where it appears most distinctly is called *will*.[33]

Reading this passage, it is hard to escape the conclusion that the merciless critic of the pretensions of Hegelianism was rather prone to jump to sweeping metaphysical conclusions himself. There is, I think, no way of giving further arguments in support of Schopenhauer's claim that, in understanding human agency, he had discovered the "key to the innermost being of the whole of nature" (to be fair, he himself is clear that it depends upon an intuitive analogy) but it is, at least, possible to put it into its intellectual context. We can see in Schopenhauer's thought at this point another post-Kantian reprise of the tension in Kant's own thought between the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the rest of the Critical Philosophy.

The *Critique of Pure Reason* had restricted objective knowledge to the mathematical laws governing the sequence of events in space and time. Yet, as Kant himself recognized, this excluded from the sphere of objective knowledge those aspects of nature which gave it an *organized* character. Schopenhauer was enough of a Romantic philosopher of nature (he had collaborated with Goethe on the latter's researches into colour) to find such a restriction intolerably reductive. To do justice to the richness of nature he adopts a version of Platonism. Between the will as thing in itself -- the ultimate source of everything -- and the ordered

---

[33] *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol I, sect. 21, p. 109-110

necessity of the world of phenomena there exists, he asserts, a realm of Ideas: transcendental entities that act as a kind of governing focus for natural processes. Of course, by assumption, we cannot have direct access to these entities, but it is thanks to them, Schopenhauer claims, that things in the natural world (and organic processes in particular) take the forms that they do. "For us", says Schopenhauer, "the will is the *thing-in-itself*, and the *Idea* is the immediate objectivity of that will at a definite grade".[34]

It is not just the organic realm, for Schopenhauer, that points us beyond the world of phenomena. Art, too, can be properly understood only from the point of view of the duality between the world of phenomena and the thing in itself as will. Art offers us two things. In the first place, in the form of music, it allows us a grasp of reality beyond the "principle of individuation". Music, like the empirical world itself, Schopenhauer claims, is an *"immediate*... objectification and copy of the whole *will*", but one whose form is quite unlike the differentiated and individuated realm of phenomena.[35] Furthermore, the contemplative beauty of art -- the "disinterested pleasure" that Kant had identified as characteristic of the aesthetic realm -- gives human beings a chance to escape, if only briefly, from the remorseless striving of the will and the suffering that that entails. Thus art appears in Schopenhauer's thought as both metaphysically dignified -- it gives access to the transcendent realm in a way that mere empirical investigation or logical reasoning cannot -- and of the highest human value. It is not perhaps surprising that Schopenhauer's philosophy has proved congenial to many very distinguished artists over the years (one might mention, amongst others, Wagner, Mahler, Richard Strauss, Hardy, Proust and Thomas Mann).

Schopenhauer was one of the earliest Western European philosophers to write from an explicitly atheistic standpoint (a-theistic in the strict sense: the Eastern religions that he admired and to some extent endorsed were, he believed, religions without God) and he adopts a position regarding the nature of evil that is quite different from those which are to be found in the tradition of Judaeo-Christian monotheism. Three main accounts of the nature of evil have been used in the Judaeo-Christian tradition to reconcile the existence of evil with an

---

[34] *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol I, sect. 31, p. 170
[35] *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol I, sect. 52, p. 257

ultimately benevolent Creator. The first is that evil is a deserved punishment, visited on mankind for its sinfulness in eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. This is the most orthodox Christian doctrine, associated in particular with St. Augustine. The second is that what human beings see as evil is not really so. What is apparently evil is really good when properly understood in terms of the overall benevolent purpose that it helps to realize. This idea can be found in the early modern period in Locke, Leibniz and, most strikingly, Hegel. Finally, there is the idea that evil is really human in origin: that the so-called "natural" evils -- death and disease -- are not true evils, while other evils are a direct result of the abuse of human freedom, something for which man, not God, should be counted responsible. Perhaps the best-known expression of this view is to be found in the "theological" section of Rousseau's *Émile*, known as the *Confession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar.*

These three accounts are all forms of "optimism" —attempts to show that reality is part of an ultimately benevolent order. Optimism, Schopenhauer says, "seems to me to be not merely an absurd, but also a really *wicked*, way of thinking, a bitter mockery of the unspeakable sufferings of mankind."[36] The ultimate character of reality is impersonal, not personal, he believes, and, insofar as the striving of the will is the source of intrinsically meaningless suffering, the nature of the world is bad, not good.

One final aspect of Schopenhauer's philosophy deserves mention, for it seems to have been quite unjustly ignored: his views on ethics. Schopenhauer's highly original position comes from playing off against one another two aspects of Kant's ethical thought (as Schopenhauer understands them). Kant, famously, maintains that the only thing that can be thought of as good "without restriction" (as he puts it at the beginning of the *Groundwork to the Metaphysics of Morals*) is a good will. Thus the will, and the responsible action associated with it, form the starting-point for Kant's ethical system from which all its value-judgements can, in principle, be derived. Well and good, says Schopenhauer. But has Kant not demonstrated in the *Critique of Pure Reason* that free will in the sense required for full ethical responsibility is an illusion; that there is freedom not in the world of phenomena but

[36] *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol I, sect. 59, p. 326

only at the level of the thing in itself? Since human beings decide and act in accordance with the characters they have in the phenomenal world, it follows, Schopenhauer believes, that, from the standpoint of human agency, determinism is true. Schopenhauer rejects the "soft determinist" strategy of trying to find a sense for human freedom while accepting the overall truth of determinism. When we act, we cannot but act according to our characters, Schopenhauer believes, and so, since these are as subject to fixed laws as any other natural processes, we are simply not free in the way that an ethical system based on the notion of responsibility would require.

There have, of course, been many determinists in the history of philosophy, but for the most part they have been subjectivists in some form: emotivists or ethical sceptics of one kind or another who deny the possibility of ethical objectivity. What is unusual about Schopenhauer is that, while he rejects the ideas of freedom and responsibility, he retains Kant's conviction that objectivity is essential to ethics. That objectivity, however, lies not, as it does for Kant, in the existence of an objective principle to guide moral reasoning, but in an emotion which has impartiality built into it: sympathy. In acting on sympathy, Schopenhauer claims, we are moved, not by some kind of rational recognition of the justice of the claims that others make upon us, but by a perception of the ultimate artificiality of the distinction between their welfare (or, rather, from the Schopenhauerian perspective, their suffering) and our own (those familiar with current writing in ethics might see some similarities here between Schopenhauer's position and ideas to be found in the writings of the contemporary Oxford philosopher, Derek Parfit). In ethical action, according to Schopenhauer, the individual transcends his or her own individuality. It is striking that a man who, from what one can tell, seems to have been particularly narrow and self-centred in his dealings with others, should have been inspired by such a generous ethical vision.

IV Nietzsche

In one guise, Nietzsche is an anti-philosopher: an unsparing critic of the aspirations and procedures of philosophy, prepared to attack his targets by whatever means he feels will be effective -- sarcasm and parody as well as critical argument. He does philosophy (as he puts it in the sub-title to his *Twilight of the Idols*) "with a hammer". Yet, behind all his jokes and aphorisms, Nietzsche is also committed to distinctive and trenchant positions regarding Continental philosophy's central preoccupations. Thus Nietzsche occupies a position both outside and within philosophy: outside it, to the extent that he believes that the implication of his position is to deny philosophy's right to exist as an independent discipline; within it, because his position is a sceptical one that challenges philosophy to defend itself.

The scepticism with which philosophers are most familiar is scepticism about our knowledge of the external world, the idea that perhaps there is nothing objective corresponding to what is given to us in consciousness. But Nietzsche's scepticism is aimed at a different target. He challenges received ideas of truth and knowledge by denying our capacity to find a unique, objective vantage-point from which to know the world. The term that Nietzsche himself uses for his position is "perspective". What Nietzsche means by perspective amounts, in effect, to a variation of Kantian epistemology. The traditional knowing subject, Nietzsche claims, is like a perspectiveless eye, "an eye that is completely unthinkable, an eye turned in no particular direction, in which the active and interpreting forces, through which alone seeing becomes seeing *something*, are supposed to be lacking".[37] Like Kant, however, Nietzsche believes that our encounter with reality is always mediated by the character of the cognitive apparatus through which we come to apprehend it. We can never escape from the shaping, limiting influence of our own interpretations. Thus we are condemned to see the world from one particular perspective:

> There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective knowing; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our "concept" of this thing, our "objectivity" be.[38]

[37] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 12
[38] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 12

In advancing this view, Nietzsche, it should be noted, has not simply denied the truth of traditional philosophical treatments of the problem of knowledge; he has asserted a position of his own (to deny perspective, he says, "means standing truth on her head"[39]). Yet how can he claim that perspectivism is true? Two objections present themselves. In order to establish the truth of perspectivism, would we not require some vantage-point from which we could determine that ours is only one perspective amongst many? But, beyond that, is it even meaningful for Nietzsche to talk about "truth" in relation to a philosophical position? If all our assertions are just assertions made from a particular perspective, does that not undermine the force of the concept of truth itself (which implies, one might think, that the content of our assertion corresponds to the way that reality, determinately, is)? In many passages Nietzsche himself does not appear to shirk this consequence:

> What is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonymies, anthropomorphisms -- in short, a sum of human relations which, poetically and rhetorically intensified, become transposed and adorned and which, after long usage by a people, seem fixed, canonical and binding on them. Truths are illusions which one has forgotten *are* illusions, worn-out metaphors which have become powerless to affect the sense, coins which have their obverse effaced and are now no longer of account as coins but merely as metal.[40]

Yet can any scepticism consistently go so far? It may seem that a scepticism so radical as to call into question the concept of truth itself must be self-undermining. Arthur Danto expresses the apparent dilemma forcefully:

> ... was it [Nietzsche's] intention, in saying that nothing is true, to say something true? If he succeeded, then of course he failed, for if it is true that nothing is true then something is true after all. If it is false, then something again is true. If, again, what he says is as arbitrary as he has said, critically, that all of philosophy is, why should we accept him if we are to reject the others?[41]

---

[39] *Beyond Good and Evil*, Preface, p. 14
[40] *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-moral Sense*, in K. Schlechta (ed.), *Friedrich Nietzsche: Werke* (Frankfurt: Ullstein, n.d.), Vol. 3, p. 314.
[41] A. Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (New York: Columbia U.P., 1980), p. 230

It is possible, however, to reconstruct Nietzsche's position in such a way that it is at least not corrosively paradoxical. To explain how, let us start by noting that when we say of a proposition that it is true we mean (at least) two different things. (1) We are, in the first place, *commending* the proposition in question: it is the sort of thing that it is good to believe. But, more than that, (2) we are also conveying to our hearer something about the reason why it is a good thing to believe -- namely, because it expresses the way that the world is.

Now Nietzsche's fundamental claim is that (2) is mistaken. Since, according to perspectivism, we do not have access to the way that the world ultimately is, it follows that it could not possibly be the ground according to which we establish the validity of beliefs. But this does not mean that the concept of truth has been entirely abandoned: that one belief is simply as good as another in Nietzsche's view. Nietzsche can still retain the concept of the true as what it is "good to believe" whilst disputing the traditional interpretation of why it is good to believe it. The Oxford philosopher, John Mackie, in his book *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong*, famously puts forward what he calls an "error theory" of morality. According to him, we naturally (but falsely) believe that moral properties are a part of objective reality, when, in fact, they are subjective. In a similar spirit, we might say that Nietzsche has an "error theory" of truth: when we say of a proposition that it is true we naturally, but falsely, believe that its value consists in its articulating the nature of the one true world. There is nothing inconsistent in this position.

Somewhat confusingly, however, Nietzsche sometimes chooses to make this point the other way round: retaining the concept of truth as correspondence to the world, but denying that this is what it is good to believe. Thus when he writes: "The falseness of a judgement is to us not necessarily an objection to it: it is here that our new language perhaps sounds strangest"[42] we can interpret him as follows. A proposition may be worth believing (it may embody that part of the concept of truth) *even if* it cannot meet the standard of representing the world as it really is (it is, in that sense, false). Nevertheless, that cannot be the end of the

[42] *Beyond Good and Evil*, 4, p. 17

matter, for when he describes perspectivism as true, however, it seems clear that Nietzsche is straightforwardly commending it.

What, then, for Nietzsche, makes a proposition good to believe, if not the simple fact that it corresponds to the way that the world is? The answer to this has, in my view, two parts. The first, and most familiar, is that we should ask of any proposition (as, indeed, of other products of our minds): What is its value for those who hold it?, noting that, for Nietzsche, that value is not to be confused with the utilitarian goal of maximising pleasure or minimising pain (a reduced conception of the human good for which Nietzsche felt loathing and contempt). Nietzsche's second idea, however, on my reading of him, is that beliefs that he claims to be true in the sense that he claims that perspectivism is true are (although he himself would not have used the word) rational beliefs, beliefs which there are good -- impersonally good -- reasons to hold. This interpretation will strike many readers of Nietzsche as very odd, not least because, if beliefs are not justified by being shown to correspond to the way that things are, what other kind of good reasons could there be in their favour?

To answer this sort of objection let us turn to the discussion in the third essay of *On the Genealogy of Morals* of the relationship between what Nietzsche calls the "ascetic ideal" and the "will to truth". The "ascetic ideal" embodies, he maintains, the mental impulse behind the Judaeo-Christian tradition; it represents an attempt to escape from the world by turning away from it and denying its value. Many similar accounts of Christianity are to be found elsewhere in Nietzsche's works, but in this case he turns the discussion towards some of Christianity's (apparently) most vigorous opponents: contemporary scientific materialists. Are these "last idealists left among philosophers and scholars... the desired *opponents* of the ascetic ideal, the *counteridealists*?"[43], he asks. They are not, he replies, for, so far from being free from all ideals, the scientific materialists themselves adhere to a form of the ascetic ideal: they "*still have faith in truth*."[44] Appearances to the contrary, the will to truth is not

[43] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 24
[44] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 24

opposed to the religious impulse that, on the face of it, would-be scientific materialism contradicts:

> Everywhere [except in Nietzsche's own thought] that the spirit is strong, mighty, and at work without counterfeit today, it does without ideals of any kind -- the popular expression for this abstinence is "atheism" -- *except for its will to truth*. But this will, this *remnant* of an ideal, is, if you will believe me, this [ascetic] ideal itself in its strictest, most spiritual formulation, esoteric through and through, with all external additions abolished, and thus not so much its remnant as its kernel.[45]

Nietzsche characterizes the ascetic faith in truth in various ways. It is a desire to be honest, a desire not to be deceived, to stand on solid ground, a search for foundations, for sufficient reasons; in modern terms, we might say, it is a commitment to critical rationality. Whilst Nietzsche criticizes its asceticism, he also plainly admires the faith in truth. His faith in truth makes the philosopher "more rigid and unconditional than anyone", he writes.[46] But the value of the will to truth for Nietzsche depends upon its honesty ("All honour to the ascetic ideal *insofar as it is honest!* so long as it believes in itself and does not play tricks on us!"[47]) and the final test of that is its willingness to apply its critical standards to itself. It was its own impulse towards truthfulness that undermined the credibility of Christianity; and it is nothing but the will to truth that will lead to the overcoming of Christianity's philosophical legacy, the belief in a firm, unique foundation to our knowledge:

> All great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming... After Christian morality has drawn one inference after another, it must end by drawing its *most striking inference*, its inference *against* itself; this will happen, however, when it poses the question "*what is the meaning of all will to truth?*"[48]

Nietzsche's thought at this point embodies a form of what the Frankfurt School authors, Adorno and Horkheimer, were to describe as the "dialectic of the Enlightenment". Initially, Enlightenment, in the form of philosophy, turns its standards of rationality against

---

[45] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 27
[46] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 24
[47] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 27
[48] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 27

the world of myth and finds the latter wanting. Yet it is found to be reluctant to turn those standards on itself: "[the philosophers] are all oblivious of how much the will to truth itself requires justification".[49] When we see that the will to truth cannot meet its own central requirement Enlightenment is exposed as being itself a form of myth and a new question arises, according to Nietzsche, "that of the *value* of truth".[50]

Thus an important part of what makes something "truthful" for Nietzsche, in the sense of being good to believe, is that it should be able to withstand the probing, critical activity of the will to truth. Yet philosophy, as traditionally practised, fails its own test. Insofar as what is believed is the philosophical theory that beliefs are true if they can be established on a firm foundation then that belief itself falls to the force of criticism: the traditional concept of truth is, to that extent, untrue.

With this in mind, let us now return to what Nietzsche has to say about perspectivism. If Nietzsche is commending it by calling it "true" (as he surely is) then this cannot be because it is something established from just the kind of vantage-point whose existence the doctrine denies. Nietzsche makes this point himself in a section of *The Gay Science* that he titles "Our new `infinite'":

> Whether... all existence is not essentially actively engaged in *interpretation* -- that cannot be decided even by the most industrious and most scrupulously conscientious analysis and self-examination of the intellect; for in the course of this analysis the human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspective and *only* in these. We cannot look around our own corner: it is a hopeless curiosity that wants to know what other kinds of intellects and perspectives there *might* be; for example, whether some beings might be able to experience time backward, or alternately forward and backward (which would involve another direction of life and another concept of cause and effect).

It seems, rather, that Nietzsche believes that the grounds for the acceptance of perspectivism have something to do with the situation of modern man:

---

[49] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 24
[50] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 24

> But I should think that today we are at least far from the ridiculous immodesty that would be involved in decreeing from our corner that perspectives are permitted only from this corner. Rather has the world become "infinite" for us all over again, inasmuch as we cannot reject the possibility that *it may include infinite interpretations*.[51]

In the light of what has been argued above, we may interpret this as follows: what makes perspectivism reasonable for us now is that the contrary view, the idea of "perspectiveless seeing", has become a piece of "ridiculous immodesty", shown to be unsustainable by philosophy's own critical standards, the "will to truth".

So far, we have discussed Nietzsche's view of philosophy as seen "from the inside". But this is only a part of his enterprise. Nietzsche is also concerned to place philosophy in context, to diagnose its place within the wider systems of human life and culture. These two aspects of Nietzsche's undertaking are not opposed to one another. On the contrary, the one leads to the other, in Nietzsche's view, since it is only from the wider point of view that we can answer the question which, according to Nietzsche, is raised by the internal development of philosophy: the question of the value of truth.

One of the clearest presentations of Nietzsche's views regarding the nature of the search for truth is to be found in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*. The book deals with its main subject, the nature of Greek tragedy, in the context of a remarkable diagnosis of the human condition. Nietzsche sees human culture as faced with an overriding standing problem: how to deal with the perennial fact of death and suffering (it is apparent here how much Nietzsche owed to Schopenhauer). Among the ancient Greeks Nietzsche identifies two kinds of response to suffering which he calls, famously, Dionysian and Apollonian. Put very briefly, they involve either intoxication or fantasy; self-abandonment or the imagination of another world. Nietzsche sees classic Greek tragedy as drawing on both these elements. Yet for our purposes it is a third impulse, the impulse which Nietzsche calls "Socratism", which is significant. This, too, Nietzsche identifies as a response to suffering, one which is, indeed,

---

[51] *The Gay Science*, 374, p. 336

powerful enough to undermine the Dionysian and Apollonian alternatives. It consists in the search for reasons: the desire to find an explanation for *this world*.

It is easy to see how Socratism provides a response to suffering when we see it in the context of Christianity (or other forms of monotheism). If we can explain that suffering, death and other apparent evils have their origin in the will of an omnipotent (and benevolent) being then, of course, we have given a reason to accept that suffering. But Nietzsche's point is more radical. It is not just explanations that relate events back to a benevolent being that are consoling; even impersonal explanations can console us by at least making the world appear to be governed by a comprehensible necessity. Thus "stoicism" -- the desire to understand the anonymous necessity of the universe and to submit oneself to it -- is, for Nietzsche, an important form of the Socratic impulse. Although he was later to criticize some of the specific positions that he adopted in *The Birth of Tragedy*, his account of Socratism as a response to suffering is plainly the ancestor of his later account of the ascetic ideal and the will to truth. Thus he writes at the end of the third essay of *The Genealogy of Morals*:

> Apart from the ascetic ideal, man, the human *animal*, had no meaning so far... Man, the bravest of animals and the one most accustomed to suffering, does *not* repudiate suffering as such; he *desires* it, he even seeks it out, provided he is shown a meaning for it, a purpose of suffering. The meaninglessness of suffering, not suffering itself, was the curse that lay over mankind so far -- and the ascetic ideal offered man meaning![52]

In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche diagnosed the end of Socratism as having been brought about by its own corrosive internal momentum. Specifically, he attributes to Kant and Schopenhauer the philosophical achievement of having shown Socratism's limitations. In its place, he announces a "rebirth of tragedy" which will, he hopes, move beyond the limitations of the purely theoretical attitude which had dominated European culture in the two millennia since Socrates. Later, Nietzsche was to regard this view as hopelessly naive. Yet the cultural problem, as he sees it, remains essentially the same: how to deal with the fact

---

[52] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 28

that the will to truth -- the ascetic ideal -- has reached its limits. Nietzsche is haunted by the idea that, with the demise of the ascetic ideal, Western culture may collapse into a kind of paralysed melancholia which he calls "nihilism":

> [The ascetic ideal] was the only meaning offered so far; any meaning is better than none at all... In it, suffering was *interpreted*; the tremendous void seemed to have been filled; the door was closed to any kind of suicidal nihilism.[53]

It is in this context that we should see the point of many of the most striking aspects of his writing: his rhetorical presentation of himself as the lonely prophet, the Anti-Christ, Zarathustra, the advocate of the Eternal Return, the revaluer of all values. In each case, we may say, Nietzsche is trying to provide an alternative to the demoralizing effects of the collapse of Christianity -- to the loss of cogency of the drive that lies behind established religious institutions and which, appearances to the contrary, also animates the apparently "secular" and "scientific" alternatives to Christianity.

In conclusion, then, we may say that Nietzsche's appropriation of Kant leads him to a radical critique of philosophy and its relation to society. Philosophy, when pushed to its limit, undermines itself to the extent that it can no longer continue to exist as an independent discipline, aiming at objective knowledge. What the critique of philosophy calls into question -- our belief that knowledge of the world can be given a firm and determinate foundation -- is just as central to the natural sciences, however, so, their own self-understanding to the contrary, the sciences do not represent a real alternative to the discredited world-views of religion and metaphysics. To recognize that philosophy is incapable of providing timeless, objective knowledge is to recognize its embeddedness in history. But this is not to establish history as the master-discipline that can offer us a perspective-free vantage-point; our grasp of history is always itself only interpretation from a perspective. Finally, we must understand that philosophy, even (indeed, especially) when it pretends to be objective and impersonal, is part of a drive to make sense of the world, to give it value for individuals. Even if we accept

---

[53] *Genealogy of Morals*, III, 28

that the philosophical strategy of giving meaning to the world by making it intelligible has come to an end, Nietzsche believes, the need to give value to the world remains.

V Husserl

We have characterized the Continental tradition in philosophy as "post-Kantian" in the sense that its leading figures are best understood in terms of a legacy of issues inherited from Kant's critical philosophy. Edmund Husserl represents a partial exception to this. The reasons lie in Husserl's philosophical background. Husserl came to philosophy late, having originally studied mathematics, and his training in philosophy took place under Franz Brentano, an important and original thinker but one whose approach was at odds with the dominant trends in the German philosophy of his day.

Husserl's first writings were concerned with two issues which are, in fact, more closely associated with the analytic tradition than the Continental: the nature of *a priori* knowledge (and of mathematical knowledge in particular) and the possibility of giving a philosophical account of the structure of judgement. These issues were also preoccupying the acknowledged founder of analytic philosophy, Husserl's near-contemporary, Gottlob Frege (indeed, it seems that Frege's sharp criticisms of Husserl's early views of mathematics were important in pushing the latter towards his mature position). Both philosophers believed that any adequate account of thought must draw a clear distinction between the content of thought, on the one hand, and the process of thinking, on the other, and that, whilst the former was the proper concern of philosophy, the latter was a matter for psychology. To fail to make such a distinction was to commit the error of "psychologism".

But, despite their agreement on this important point, the difference between Husserl and Frege remains fundamental. Frege believes, first, that language is primarily a public institution, and, second, that language is prior to (in the sense that it gives significance to) thought. From which it follows, for Frege, that the private character of thought -- the fact that it takes place for each of us individually, "in our heads" -- is actually its least interesting or

philosophically important feature. For Husserl, on the other hand, philosophy itself consists in a certain "turn inwards", a reflexive self-examination on the part of the thinker, but one which focuses on those aspects of thought that are necessary and structural to the exclusion of those which are merely contingent.

It could be said that all of Husserl's voluminous writings are nothing but a repeated series of attempts to explicate and defend the idea of phenomenology (the title, incidentally, of one of his books) and so it is here that we shall start. The word "phenomenology" itself had been used in a number of senses prior to Husserl, all of which denote in one way or another a study based on appearances (thus, according to Hegel, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is supposed to present the forms of appearance of consciousness that lead to the emergence of philosophical science). Husserl makes two important statements regarding his own conception of phenomenology: first of all, that it is "descriptive" and, secondly, that it involves a suspension of judgement, a "bracketing" of the empirical beliefs that we hold (either explicitly or tacitly) about the world.

An immediate objection presents itself. If phenomenology simply describes the contents of consciousness -- the way that the world is given -- it would appear to exclude from the outset the most philosophically important questions: for example, whether we have any warrant for believing that something exists outside our consciousness or whether it is possible to provide any justifications for our claims to knowledge. In which case, the great ambitions that Husserl has for phenomenology -- that it should embody a revolution in philosophical method which will establish the status of philosophy as a science -- appear quite unjustified. Phenomenology, if one follows this objection, is no more than an exercise in empirical psychological description.

We may present Husserl's response to this objection in two stages. First of all, he would argue, we must not misunderstand what he means by "description". On a certain conception of things (which to philosophers of an empiricist bent may seem to be no more than "common sense") to describe is simply to record whatever happens to be there; it carries no further implication regarding what there might or must be. This does indeed seem to be a

fair account of our empirical practice of describing the world. But it would be a mistake, according to Husserl (one form of the mistake of "psychologism", in fact) to assume that descriptions of our mental life must have the same character. Insofar as descriptions are descriptions of features of thought that have general or relational characteristics, they can indeed be necessary and structural, in Husserl's view.

What sorts of thing form the subject-matter of such descriptions? This question brings us to the second stage of the response that we might attribute to Husserl, his rejection of a picture of mental life (a picture derived in part from the legacy of empiricist philosophy, in part from the attempt to apply the methods of physics to psychology) that he considers to be fundamentally misguided. According to this received view, the basic constituents of the mind are a collection of independent mental items. Although each of these mental items ("ideas", as they are usually called in the empiricist tradition) is intrinsically particular, it has the power of being associated with other items, whether by being "bundled together" to form single complex objects, or by being ordered into sequences according to laws. The contents of consciousness have no existence outside consciousness on this view: their being consists simply in their presence to consciousness. Consciousness itself is conceived as a kind of invisible screen, something to which contents are given but which is itself without content.

This sketch of the received view is, of course, a caricature. Nevertheless, it has value in providing us with a sharply contrasting background against which to focus Husserl's own view of the mind. Husserl can be said to reject the received view at five crucial points.

1. *Simplicity vs Relation*. On the received view, the fundamental constituents of the mind are like atoms: individual and not further divisible. Against this, Husserl believes that the "objects" that phenomenology describes are complex, in the sense that, although they have internal structures, they are not capable of being analytically decomposed into self-subsistent elements.

2. *Particularity vs Generality*. Similarly, the received view supposes that the contents of the mind are particular. Husserl, by contrast, claims that phenomenological objects are, as

he calls it, "eidetic"; that is, that they have essences -- ones that they are capable of revealing when subjected to philosophical inspection.

3. *Immediacy vs Intentionality*. For the received view, as we have described it, consciousness is a kind of screen whose sole function is to be that *to which* items are given. For Husserl, on the other hand, consciousness is active and this activity has a structure which (following Brentano) Husserl calls "intentionality". Intentionality, Husserl claims, is "the unique peculiarity of experience to be `the consciousness *of* something'".[54] In other words, mental life does not simply consist in a series of self-contained events; those events have *content*.

4. *Givenness vs Reflection.* Any reasonable picture of the mind must be able to account for the fact that we do not just have experiences; we also have thoughts about those experiences -- and, indeed, thoughts about our thoughts. Notoriously, however, the received view finds it difficult to give an account of such reflexive thoughts. For Husserl, on the other hand, it is intrinsic to the nature of our mental acts that we should be capable of becoming conscious of them, and that this becoming conscious should itself be a possible subject for further consciousness.

5. *Transparency vs Differential Givenness*. For Husserl, as for the received view, to experience is to be conscious. But there is also an important difference. On the received view, if an item is given to consciousness then the thinker is aware of it, just as it is. Husserl's view, on the other hand, is that not everything that is perceivable in principle is, in fact, perceived at any one time:

> We see that *it is the intrinsic nature of experience to be perceivable through reflection*. Things also are *perceivable*, on principle, and in perception they are apprehended as things of the world that surround me. Thus they too belong to this world without being perceived, they are thus *there for the Ego even then*.[55]

Thus consciousness, for Husserl, is a matter of light and shade rather than perfect self-transparency (although that does, indeed, remain the ideal).

---

[54] E. Husserl, *Ideas*, translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier, 1962), p. 223
[55] E. Husserl, *Ideas*, translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier, 1962), p. 129

From this background we can assess the objectives that Husserl sets for phenomenology and the methods by which he hopes to achieve them. Phenomenology, in Husserl's view, is to be an *a priori* science, directed towards what is essential in our thinking. "Essence" here, it should be noted, does not signify (as one would normally suppose) simply what our different thoughts have in common. The *eidos* of a thought is, Husserl says, its *meaning*: whatever it is that makes that thought the thought that it is.

As for the method of phenomenology, it depends, Husserl believes, on a special kind of insight or intuition, an ability to grasp "eidetic truth", as he calls it. Although this capacity is not something with which only a few, privileged individuals are endowed, its significance has not been appreciated until now. The reason, Husserl argues, is that the importance of phenomenological understanding has been obscured by the domination over our intellectual life of two other powerful paradigms of knowledge: the formal methods of mathematics and the observationally-based practices of the natural sciences.

What is necessary in order to engage in phenomenology is a kind of ground-clearing that will enable us to focus directly on what is at issue. Husserl calls this process the "phenomenological reduction" and it is, by common consent, one of the most obscure features of his work. The basic thought is this. The subject-matter of phenomenology, according to Husserl, is the object "in the manner of its givenness", and to attend to this requires that we should examine our thoughts without reference either to the state of the world or to the particular psychological states or attitudes of the thinker who thinks them. We are supposed to "bracket" or "suspend" those aspects of our thoughts that involve commitments regarding the nature of empirical reality:

> [This suspension] is not a transformation of the thesis into its antithesis; of positive into negative; it is also not a transformation into presumption, suggestion, indecision, doubt (in one or another sense of the word)... And yet the thesis undergoes a modification -- whilst remaining in itself what it is, *we set it as it were "out of*

> *action"*, we *"disconnect it", "bracket it"*... We can also say: The thesis is experienced as lived (*Erlebnis*), *but we make no use of it*.[56]

Thus purged, the essential aspects of the thought in question will "emerge" in response to the phenomenologist's investigation.

But there is a very serious problem with this idea. It is easy enough, of course, to suspend some particular belief about the world. Husserl, however, wants us to suspend *all* our beliefs about the world while at the same time maintaining the content of our thought. There are very strong reasons for thinking that this is impossible. On the most plausible view, the very content of many of our thoughts depends on beliefs about the world, in such a way that if we were to suspend those beliefs then we would alter the content of the thoughts in question. Consider the following. When I look out of my window I see my next-door neighbours' house. I see it *as* my neighbour's house; that is, I don't just have a mental image. I see it as something that is made of bricks and stone, is suitable for being lived in, has its kitchen at the back, is lived in by Ros and David, and so on. These are all beliefs about the world that go into my understanding of the house as I see it. How could I "bracket" those beliefs and still go on seeing it in the way that I do? The only way for that to be possible would be if I were able to make a distinction and say that these beliefs are not *part of* what I see but beliefs *about* what I see. But then what would remain that I could be said to see? The only answer seems to be that what I would see would be some kind of perceptual image, bare of all the judgements and pre-conceptions associated with it. Yet that cannot be Husserl's view, for that would return phenomenology to just the kind of empiricist picture of the mind that he so vehemently rejects — the idea that what is given to us in experience is a series of bare sensible particulars. Husserl might be thought to recognize this problem when he claims in the passage quoted above that "the thesis [that is, our beliefs about the reality that we experience] is experienced as lived, *but we make no use of it*". Yet (as is typical of his writing) this is not so much a counter-argument on Husserl's part as an assertion -- and a wholly implausible one at that: surely it is simply wrong to say that when I see the Houses of

---

[56] E. Husserl, *Ideas*, translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier, 1962), pp. 97-98

Parliament as the Houses of Parliament I am "making no use" of my belief that what is in front of me is the building in which Parliament meets.

Phenomenology faces many other difficulties and objections. Husserl, especially in his earlier writings, describes the objective of phenomenology to be the study of "logic" and "meaning". Later, he starts to use Kantian terminology and to speak of this as the study of "transcendental logic" and of revealing the "constituting" function of consciousness in the origin of meaning. Analytical philosophers will object that the study of meaning is senseless except as part of the study of a social institution: language. Even those who are not committed to this view might still doubt how helpful it is to think of meaning as having its origin in some constituting process. It seems as though Husserl is thereby raising again all of the most acute difficulties of the Kantian doctrine without allowing himself even Kant's own (admittedly dubious) solution: the transcendental-psychological doctrine of synthesis. To this objection the phenomenologist can, of course, always reply that those who doubt phenomenology's ability to give an account of transcendental processes are merely expressing their own inability to attain the level of phenomenological reflection. But this reply, common though it is, is by no means satisfactory -- it reminds one all too much of the tailors' reply to those who objected that they could not see the emperor's new clothes. Even if we are too unintelligent to see them ourselves, we would still like to have some good reason to believe that they are there.

Yet, in conclusion, it is not right to dwell on the objectionable features of Husserl's philosophy in assessing his importance. While Husserl's philosophy now has only a few devotees (who make up in zeal for what they lack in numbers) his influence on the tradition of Continental philosophy has been much broader. It can be seen, I suggest, in three main ways.

1. *The Anti-Empiricist View of the Mind*. Whilst the empiricist conception of the mind as a collection of discrete items, pushed together and pulled apart by a kind of mental gravity, still haunts analytic philosophy, Husserl and Brentano can be said to have laid it to rest in the Continental tradition. If anything, it is the opposite doctrine -- the idea of the mind as an

independent self-knower -- that has been made into an unquestioned dogma, particularly amongst German philosophers.

2. *Anti-positivism*. Closely associated with this empiricist view, have been a series of attempts (going back all the way to the seventeenth-century distinction between primary and secondary qualities) to distinguish between "real" and only "apparently objective" aspects of what we experience. The basis for such a distinction, Continental philosophers argue, following Husserl, always comes back to the superimposition on the experienced "life-world" of an account based upon the natural sciences and the claim that it is only those features that figure in that latter account that have the highest degree of reality. This dogma they most vehemently reject.

3. *A priori knowledge*. Finally, and perhaps most seductively, there is Husserl's claim that it is possible to develop philosophical knowledge that is both (in some sense) necessary and, at the same time, derived from the world as it is experienced. To philosophers brought up in a tradition saturated with empiricist and positivist assumptions such a claim will, no doubt, seem bizarre. On this view, it seems evident that what is given to the senses is particular; if there are "necessary connections" in the world, these are discovered and tested by the investigations of science, not the reflections of the philosopher. But, against this, the Continental philosopher will argue that what we are dealing with here is the life-world, and it is simply a positivist prejudice to assume that what is true of the world as described for us by science is also true of the world as we live it. If that is so, then it may be possible to find internal connections between parts of our experience purely by philosophical reflection on the way that that experience presents itself to us.

VI Heidegger

Heidegger was Husserl's chosen successor: his most brilliant pupil and later his colleague at Freiburg. Indeed, *Being and Time*, Heidegger's masterpiece, is dedicated to Husserl "in friendship and admiration". Yet by the time that Husserl died his attitude towards Heidegger

was one of bitter disappointment. There are two reasons for this. The first is personal and political. When the Nazis came to power, Heidegger identified himself closely with the new regime: he became the Rector of Freiburg University and joined the Nazi Party. At the same time, he broke off relations with Husserl who, in consequence of his Jewish background, had been forbidden to teach at the university and was subject to monstrous harassment. But the rift between the two men also had an intellectual aspect. At the start of his career, Heidegger was evidently reluctant to allow the depth of his philosophical disagreements with Husserl to become apparent. He presented *Being and Time,* at least superficially, as a continuation and application of phenomenology. Thus in the Introduction to *Being and Time* Heidegger writes at one point: "Only as phenomenology is ontology possible."[57] But a careful reader will soon see that this is rather misleading. Had Heidegger been less concerned to preserve good relations with Husserl, he might have put it the other way around; "only as ontology is phenomenology possible" would be a better expression of his position. Ontology, as Heidegger understands it, is intended to displace phenomenology as advocated by Husserl.

What is ontology? For traditional philosophy, the answer is rather simple: it is the study of what there is. The sort of questions that ontology addresses are: Are there universals? Are numbers real? and so on. In modern philosophy, ontology has been seen as a branch of philosophy subordinate to epistemology -- for how could we settle questions about what there is without having previously settled the question of what we can know? Yet Heidegger, so far from accepting ontology's subordinate role, believes that the revival of ontology and its associated question, the question of Being (*Seinsfrage*) is the key to the renewal of philosophy. Ontology is, Heidegger goes so far as to claim, "more primordial" than the empirical sciences themselves.[58] Clearly, his conception of ontology must be very different from the received view. If we understand that conception and the critique of the received view that it contains we will have the key to the understanding of *Being and Time* -- indeed, of Heidegger's philosophy as a whole.

---

[57] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), p. 60.
[58] *Being and Time*, p. 31

Traditional ontology, in Heidegger's view, rests on a mistake. At least since the Pre-Socratics, philosophers have approached the ontological question as if it were a form of the question: What sorts of things are there? In Heidegger's famous expression, the question of Being has been reduced to the question of what there is. Thus whatever philosophers have come up with as ultimately real -- substances, matter, atoms, events, universals, modes, entities, categories, classes, even consciousness, representations or ideas -- are tacitly assumed to have this positive, thing-like nature. Even if, like Plato's Ideas, the entities in question are supposed to be outside time, they are conceived of as being in some way "present":

> Entities are grasped in their Being as "presence"; this means that they are understood with regard to a definite mode of time -- the "Present".[59]

Like Plato (and Hegel and Wittgenstein, for that matter) Heidegger sees philosophy as an exercise in bringing to awareness something that is, in a sense, already known. A grasp of the "Being of what there is" (*das Sein des Seienden*) is sedimented, Heidegger claims, in our language and is implicit in the attitudes we take up towards the world. And yet philosophical understanding is made difficult because this "ontological" comprehension has been consistently misconstrued. A kind of preconception has become overlaid on the understanding of Being, and Being is thereby made into something objectified and thing-like. This is what makes the task of renewing ontology so pressing:

> The very fact that we already live in an understanding of Being and that the meaning of Being is still veiled in darkness proves that it is necessary in principle to raise this question again.[60]

The mistake is built into our language. The very word "what" in the apparently innocuous question: What is there? reaches out for the wrong kind of answer. So long as ontology is a matter of "what there is", it will appear to be no more than an extension of the scientific enterprise of identifying and classifying reality -- an attempt, like the sciences, to say what reality is composed of, but simply carried out at a higher level of abstraction and

---

[59] *Being and Time*, p. 47
[60] *Being and Time*, p. 23

generality. Yet, for Heidegger, this sort of classifying activity is not ontological but "ontic" and the two must not under any circumstances be confused.

For Heidegger, the confusion of the ontological and the ontic is itself a consequence of ontological misunderstanding: the fact that we impose a single ontological model on reality, thereby distorting its character. When I look at the pen on my desk, I classify it in certain ways: it is blue, cylindrical, spatio-temporally extended, an artefact, a tool for writing. Yet, Heidegger believes, the knowledge of the pen that I have on the basis of observation is different from my ontological pre-understanding; indeed, the former always takes place informed by the latter. But when (to use Heidegger's own language) the Being of an entity is itself made into an entity (that is, when we think of the entity's ontological character as if it were simply a further category under which to classify the object) we lose sight in consequence of the distinctiveness of ontological understanding.

Bearing this in mind, several of the most striking features of Heidegger's philosophy become more comprehensible. There is the fact, for instance (apparent to even the most casual reader) that *Being and Tim*e makes use of a philosophical vocabulary largely of Heidegger's own invention. But this is not just wilful obscurity (or megalomania) on Heidegger's part. The inherited vocabulary of philosophy is, he believes, so saturated with ontological misunderstanding that the only alternative is to start again, so far as possible. Nor is it just in its vocabulary that Heidegger's philosophy is different from traditional philosophical discourse. If Being is not to be reified into an entity, it must, Heidegger says, "be exhibited in a way of its own".[61] Any attempt to express insight into the nature of Being in conventional propositional form risks distorting it:

> Whenever a phenomenological concept is drawn from primordial sources there is a possibility that it may degenerate if communicated in the form of an assertion.[62]

We can see too why *Being and Time* at once resembles and differs from a traditional exercise in ontology. To the extent that *Being and Time* is attempting to provide a comprehensive account of the structure of reality it resembles traditional ontology. Where the

[61] *Being and Time*, p. 26
[62] *Being and Time*, p. 60-61

traditional ontologist sought to divide Being into "categories", Heidegger, correspondingly, tries to identify structures that he calls "existentials". On the other hand, Heidegger's conception of ontology's status is very unconventional. Whilst the traditional ontologist had thought of ontology as an exercise in transcending the limits of the human understanding to attain the truth about a timeless realm of "Being in itself", Heidegger regards this way of conceiving the enterprise as misguided. Heideggerian ontology is directed towards the understanding of Being possessed by the thinking first person -- Dasein, in Heidegger's technical language. Dasein is concerned with the nature of Being not just because it (like everything else) "has" Being. Dasein is distinguished:

> ...by the fact that in its very Being, that *Being* is an issue for it... Dasein is actually distinctive in that it *is* ontological[63]

Yet the fact that Being is always Being-for-Dasein should not be understood as implying that, for Heidegger, the study of ontology is something that is only limited and subjective. On the contrary, Heidegger would argue, the idea of "subjectivity" as something that only gives us a partial view of a wider, subject-independent truth, is itself a typical example of how false ontologies pervert philosophical understanding.

The ontological mode that, according to Heidegger, lies behind much of our ontological misunderstanding is what he calls "*Vorhandenheit*" -- translated as "presence-at-hand". This is, of course, a Heideggerian term of art, but it carries important resonances. There is, in particular, a close affinity with the Kantian (and Hegelian and Schopenhauerian) term "*Vorstellung"* (representation): *Vorstellungen* are what are "placed before" the mind; *Vorhandenheit* is the quality of being present-in-front-of. The idea of presence-at-hand is very closely connected to the conventional notion of an object in space; things that are present-at-hand are salient, unified, objective occupiers of a single location. Now it should be noted that presence-at-hand, for Heidegger, is not simply an illusion: it is one of the existentials that form the structure of Being. What is to be criticized is an ontological

[63] *Being and Time*, p. 32

preconception that extends presence-at-hand beyond its proper scope and uses it as a model for the nature of reality in general.

In allowing the present-at-hand to dominate, we neglect, according to Heidegger, another way in which we have access to the world, an attitude towards reality in which things are not just salient objects and do not present themselves as differentiated spatial items. This is the mode that Heidegger calls *Zuhandenheit* -- translated as "ready-to-handness"; what we have access to in this way are not "objects" but what he calls "equipment" (*Zeug*). Equipment is not a different kind of thing but, we might say, things encountered in a different way:

> In our dealings we come across equipment for writing, sewing, working, transportation, measurement.[64]

When we are concerned with things in this way, our engagement does not allow for the traditional differentiation of subject and object: our attitude towards them is (to use words that Heidegger certainly would not) immediate and unreflective. For those who hold traditional views of ontology, such things are, at best, ontologically secondary -- this table, for instance, they might say, is "really" a piece of wood. But Heidegger would reject this as a concealed piece of prejudice (why should we consider that whatever accounts for something's physical make-up is what it "really" is?) Indeed, there is a sense in which, for Heidegger, the ready-to-hand has priority over the present-at-hand, for it is only when the immediate engagement characteristic of the ready-to-hand is in some way broken or disrupted that the present-at-hand comes on the scene:

> But the ready-to-hand is not thereby just *observed* and stared at as something present-at-hand; the presence-at-hand which makes itself known is still bound up in the readiness-to-hand of equipment.[65]

Conceiving objects as solely present-at-hand leads to important further consequences, however. In the first place, in Heidegger's view, it goes together with a misleading, simplistic conception of knowledge. Heidegger claims that the Greeks had two words for knowing: *legein* -- the word for know in a sentence like "I know that the train will be late" -- and *noein*,

---

[64] *Being and Time*, p. 97
[65] *Being and Time*, p. 104

a kind of knowing which takes a direct accusative, as in "I know Jones".[66] According to Heidegger, it is this latter conception of knowledge that has, perniciously, come to dominate our view of the relationship between mind and world, with the effect that knowing is thought of on the analogy with mental vision:

> Under the unbroken ascendance of the traditional ontology, the way to get a genuine grasp of what really is has been decided in advance: it lies in *noein* -- intuition in the widest sense.[67]

Putting the two prejudices together -- the conception of the world as present-at-hand and the idea of knowing as *noein* -- leads, Heidegger asserts, to a flattened conception of knowledge and perception. On the contrary, he maintains, all perception has an interpretative quality (what Husserl would have called "intentionality") to which accounts of knowledge based on the traditional ontology cannot do justice.

Finally, the traditional ontology leads, in Heidegger's view, to a misconception of the self itself. Insofar as it is supposed to be the function of the self to intuit ("be conscious of") present-at-hand things, Dasein itself comes to be thought of as presence-at-hand, a characterization that is, Heidegger says, "essentially inappropriate to entities of Dasein's character".[68] Not surprisingly perhaps, for Heidegger, the prime example of this way of conceiving the mind is Descartes:

> With the "*cogito sum*" Descartes had claimed that he was putting philosophy on a new and firm footing. But what he left undetermined when he began in the "radical" way, was the kind of Being which belongs to the *res cogitans*, or -- more precisely -- the meaning of the Being of the "*sum*".[69]

Descartes is most commonly represented as a revolutionary whose ideas mark a radical break in the history of philosophy. But for Heidegger it is the continuity that he finds in Descartes

---

[66] Many experts believe that this philological claim of Heidegger's is, in fact, highly dubious. *Legein*, they point out, means "say" or "tell", rather than "know".
[67] *Being and Time*, p. 129
[68] *Being and Time*, p. 67
[69] *Being and Time*, p. 46

with the traditional, received conception of the ontological primacy of the present-at-hand that is the most significant feature of Descartes's philosophy.

I have explained that, for Heidegger, ontology has priority over epistemology, rather than the other way round. We are now in a better position to understand the reasons why he takes this view. In short, it is because he rejects the epistemological project. Heidegger believes that, as they are commonly conceived, the problems that epistemology sets for itself are incapable of solution (or lead to wholly implausible philosophical doctrines) because the terms in which they are posed themselves contain misguided ontological commitments. Thus Heidegger does not set out to answer the questions of epistemology in their own terms but to reveal, criticize and disarm the motivations which lie behind them.

It is easy to see how the standard epistemological difficulties regarding the relationship between mind and the world arise. If we grant that we only have direct knowledge of what is given to us in consciousness then it seems that we are facing an alternative: either our knowledge of objects is indirect or (all natural belief to the contrary) what we call "objects" are really just items in our consciousness. One way of challenging this way of looking at things is particularly associated with Kant. In the Refutation of Idealism of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant calls into question the contrast between the "direct" knowledge that we have of our own mental states and the "indirect" knowledge that we have of non-mental reality. He then goes on to argue that, since knowledge of our own mental states in fact depends on our knowledge of non-mental reality, there is no reason to think that the latter is in some sense secondary or derivative. But Heidegger is dissatisfied with Kant's solution:

> It seems at first as if Kant has given up the Cartesian approach of positing a subject one can come across in isolation. But only in semblance. That Kant demands any proof at all for the "existence of things outside of me" shows already that he takes the subject -- the "in me" -- as the starting-point for this problematic.[70]

[70] *Being and Time*, p. 248

Kant writes of the "scandal" that philosophy still does not have a proof of the existence of the external world. For Heidegger, however, the scandal "is not that this proof has yet to be given, but that *such proofs are expected and attempted again and again*."[71] Such attempts, according to Heidegger:

> ... arise from ontologically inadequate ways of starting with *something* of such a character that independently *of it* and "outside" *of it* a "world" is to be proved as present-at-hand.[72]

But what is Heidegger's alternative? The best way to present his view is as a radicalization of Kant's doctrine of Transcendental Idealism. Kant had believed that objects cannot be given except in relation to some subject -- all of the objects that we know are, he says, "appearances". Space and time, the forms of sense, are also, he says, "in us". Yet this does not mean, Kant claims, that we have to deny our ordinary beliefs about objects existing unperceived, for the sense in which space and time are said to be in us is a transcendental one. Transcendental idealism, for Kant, is thus quite compatible with empirical realism. Although the language that he uses is very different, Heidegger, to the extent that he believes that Being is always Being-for-Dasein, could be said to endorse this position. Where he parts company sharply with Kant, however, is in rejecting the fact that Kant associates transcendental idealism with an account of the way in which we perceive -- the picture of the mind imposing its own order on whatever is given to it through the senses. To include such doctrines, Heidegger believes, is to contaminate philosophy with concerns that are, ultimately, psychological. It is when idealism is interpreted in this latter way that it leads to paradoxical claims (for example, the idea that the world is "in our heads"):

---

[71] *Being and Time*, p. 249
[72] *Being and Time*, p. 249

> As compared with realism, *idealism*, no matter how contrary and untenable it may be in its results, has an advantage in principle, provided that it does not misunderstand itself as "psychological" idealism.[73]

In interpreting idealism in a "non-psychological" way, however, Heidegger at the same time distances himself from the concerns of epistemology as most commonly understood. Such questions as: What form does the connection take between the mind and external reality?, and: To what extent the order that we find in our experience is itself a product of our own activity?, are not properly the concern of philosophy, in Heidegger's view. Thus we might say that Heidegger endorses idealism only in a rather negative sense; it is not so much an affirmative account of the nature of the relationship between mind and world as the negation of a certain (in Heidegger's view, misguided) view of it. To say that the world is "ideal" means only that it is, essentially, *our world*, the world of experience and that it is, as such, open to understanding.

It would be hard to exaggerate the significance that Heidegger has had — and continues to have — for modern Continental philosophy, in France, Germany and elsewhere (his writings are extremely influential in the formerly Communist countries of Eastern Europe, Poland and the Czech Republic in particular). Above all, his conception of the nature and scope of philosophy itself has proved to be of lasting importance. For Heidegger, the philosophical enterprise is not to be wound up or "transcended" completely, as Nietzsche, for example, or Marx appear to want. Yet nor does Heidegger believe that it is possible to attain the kind of timeless vantage-point and impersonal objectivity embodied in the traditional philosophical ideal. Philosophy takes as its subject-matter the world as we live in it — not some reduced description that corresponds to the account of the world that is given to us by science — and its most important sister-disciplines are history and the study of literature

---

[73] *Being and Time*, p. 251

rather than logic and the natural sciences. It is this view of philosophy as, broadly speaking, an exercise in historically limited cultural self-understanding that has become (if anything is) the orthodoxy amongst Continental philosophers in the late twentieth century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BACKGROUND

Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton: Princeton U.P., 1979), Edward Craig, *The Mind of God and the Works of Man* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1987) and Ian Hacking, *Why does Language Matter to Philosophy?* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1975) are three historical works that present philosophy — both analytical and Continental — not just as a self-contained argument but as incorporating ideas and assumptions from elsewhere in society. Each could serve as a useful introduction linking the two traditions. Julian Roberts, *German Philosophy: an Introduction* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988) is an excellent introduction to the main authors. The treatment of Kant is especially good. Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard U.P., 1987), a study of the immediate responses in Germany to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, helps to explain why German Idealist philosophy came to take the form that it did. Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (London: Heinemann, 1972) contains a highly influential neo-Marxist account of the development of Continental philosophy.

HEGEL

There is an excellent collection of short extracts from the writings of the German Idealists (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) edited by Rüdiger Bubner, *German Idealist Philosophy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997). Almost all of Hegel's major works are available complete in English translations. The “Encyclopaedia” Logic (*Hegel’s Logic,* translated by William

Wallace (Oxford: O.U.P., 1975)) is a good starting-point. Although Wallace makes rather freer with Hegel's words than would be considered acceptable nowadays, the result is splendidly readable. The translation of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* by A.V. Miller (Oxford: O.U.P., 1977) is extremely good as is the same translator's version of the *Science of Logic* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1969). The *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* is another of Hegel's more accessible works, but the translation (by E. Haldane and F. Simpson (London: Paul, Trench and Täubner: 1892-96)) is now very hard to find. The introduction and prefaces to *The Lectures on the Philosophy of World History* and *The Philosophy of Right* (both translated by H.B. Nisbet (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1981 and 1990)) also contain important material on wider philosophical issues.

Charles Taylor's *Hegel* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1975) remains the best comprehensive English-language treatment of Hegel. Frederick Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1993) is an outstanding collection with an excellent bibliography. Studies that provide a counterpoint to Taylor include Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1988), Michael Rosen *Hegel's Dialectic and its Criticism* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1982), Robert Stern, *Hegel, Kant and the Structure of the Object* (London: Routledge, 1990).

SCHOPENHAUER

Schopenhauer's major work is *The World as Will and Representation*, translated by E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1969). Schopenhauer himself claimed that *On the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason*, translated by E.F.J. Payne (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1974) was essential to its understanding.

Amongst the secondary literature, two books by Christopher Janaway stand out. *Schopenhauer*, in the Past Masters series (Oxford: O.U.P., 1994) is a model of what a short introduction to a philosopher should be: perceptive, authoritative and beautifully written. *Self and World in Schopenhauer's Philosophy* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1989) deals with these central

themes in greater depth but with equal clarity. Also recommended is John Atwell, *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World: the Metaphysics of the Will* (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 1995).

NIETZSCHE

Most of Nietzsche's works are now available in English translations. The majority (including *The Birth of Tragedy*, *The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *The Genealogy of Morals*, and the posthumous collection entitled *The Will to Power*) are published by Vintage Books, N.Y. in translations by Walter Kaufmann or by Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. Others (including *Thus Spake Zarathustra* and *Twilight of the Idols*) are Penguin Classics, while *Human, All-Too Human* and *Daybreak* are available from Cambridge U.P. *The Gay Science*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *The Genealogy of Morals* would be a good starting-point for a philosophical study of Nietzsche. A translation of the important little essay "On Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense" is to be found in D. Breazeale (ed.), *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early Seventies* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1979).

The Nietzsche literature in English is now extensive. Its quality, however, is variable. The following is a very brief selection. Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard U.P., 1986) is the best recent book. Arthur Danto, *Nietzsche as Philosopher*, Second Edition (N.Y., N.Y.: Columbia U.P., 1980) is another excellent book. Maudemarie Clark, *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1990) is a significant attempt to give a general account of Nietzsche's view of truth. Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice* (Ithaca: Cornell U.P., 1990) takes a distinctive approach to understanding Nietzsche's writing from the inside.

HUSSERL

Husserl was an extremely prolific (not to say rather repetitious) writer. From the point of view of the present chapter his most important writings are the *Ideas*, translated by W.R. Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1962) and the *Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Philosophy*, translated by David Carr (Chicago: Northwestern U. P., 1970). The first is Husserl's most sustained presentation of what phenomenology might be, whilst the latter tries to use phenomenology to reflect on the intellectual situation of Europe in the nineteen-thirties. R. Solomon (ed.), *Phenomenology and Existentialism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), a collection of extracts from Husserl and others, does an excellent job of presenting the main strands of the phenomenological tradition.

The best book on Husserl in English is David Bell, *Husserl* (London: Routledge, 1989) an unusually clear, philosophically sophisticated and outward-looking work. It is also highly critical. *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, edited by Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith (Cambridge: C.U.P., 1995) is a collection of articles that are much more sympathetic to Husserl. It contains an extensive guide to the literature.

HEIDEGGER

Heidegger's masterpiece remains *Being and Time*, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967). Many people find it helpful to read *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, translated by Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana, 1982) alongside *Being and Time*. These are lectures given by Heidegger in the 1920s and in some cases provide a more accessible treatment of topics to be found there. Of the later works, perhaps *What is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) is the most interesting for showing the development of Heidegger's thought after *Being and Time.* The collection edited by Solomon, mentioned in the previous section, is also recommended.

Arne Naess gives a sympathetic introduction to Heidegger in *Four Modern Philosophers* (Chicago: Chicago U.P., 1969). John Richardson, *Existential Epistemology* (Oxford: O.U.P., 1986) is an exceptionally lucid attempt to relate Heidegger to contemporary

Anglo-American philosophy. Hubert Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World* (Cambridge, Ma.: MIT Press, 1991) is a helpful commentary on Division 1 of *Being and Time.* Michael Murray (ed.), *Heidegger and Modern Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978) is a very good collection of essays with a most helpful bibliography.