EDITED BY
BRIAN LEITER
MICHAEL ROSEN

The Oxford Handbook *of* CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY

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BRIAN LEITER

and

MICHAEL ROSEN

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INTRODUCTION

BRIAN LEITER AND MICHAEL ROSEN

SINCE the 1970s we have entered a 'Golden Age' for English-speaking scholarship on the so-called 'Continental' traditions of philosophy, meaning (primarily) philosophy after Kant in Germany and France in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Much of this work has been concerned to introduce and interpret the writings of major individual thinkers and to locate them within a conceptual framework that is familiar to those with a background in the mainstream of philosophy as conventionally taught in Anglophone departments.[1] At the same time, a hallmark of recent scholarly developments is the renewed appreciation for the sometimes distinctive historical and philosophical contexts in which Continental philosophy has been produced, allowing us to appreciate both where the Continental traditions depart from those familiar in the Anglophone world and to assess the philosophical merits of the distinctive philosophical positions developed.

This volume aims to give a representative sample of these important developments in philosophical scholarship, and, more importantly, to give a broad and inclusive *thematic* treatment of Continental philosophy, treating its subject matter *philosophically* and not simply as a series of museum pieces

[1] More recently a tendency has become noticeable, under the auspices of mostly French authors, for writing on Continental philosophy to appear in English that does not attempt to establish such connections but, rather, to detach itself entirely from what it takes to be the misguided rationalism of the mainstream philosophical enterprise. The approach of this volume is very different.

from the history of ideas. Each of the essays takes up a topic from within the field in such a way as to bring key ideas into focus and capture their distinctiveness as well as providing a critical assessment of their value.

Of course, the label 'Continental philosophy' is itself problematic—uninformative at best and misleading at worst. The geographic demarcation will not suffice, since Continental Europeans like Frege, Carnap, and the early Wittgenstein are routinely excluded while, on the other hand, there is a strong case on grounds of intellectual community for including within it some Anglo-American authors (for instance, Green, Bradley, and Royce). However, the most common alternative—'post-Kantian'—presents its own difficulties. After all, reactions to Kant, albeit to different aspects of his work, have been almost as important in determining the course of philosophy in Britain and America in the twentieth century as they were in Germany and France. Nor would 'post-Hegelian' be any better, for that would make no particular sense of the inclusion of Nietzsche or Husserl. Indeed, the problems and issues to which Husserl's early writings were a response (late nineteenth-century psychologism) were much more similar to those which moved Frege, the foundational figure of the 'analytic' tradition, than to those that motivated such paradigmatic 'Continental' figures as Marx or Nietzsche.

In the face of this, the difference between analytic and Continental philosophy is sometimes characterized by analytical philosophers as one of style: analytic philosophy is careful, rigorous, and clear; Continental philosophy is not. As far as clarity is concerned, things vary drastically from author to author. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche are gifted writers of German prose, while, to the extent that Habermas is, he certainly does not go out of his way to manifest it in most of his writing. But it would strain credibility to maintain that what marks out such distinguished analytical philosophers as Michael Dummett or John McDowell from their Continental brethren is their emphasis on 'clarity'.

As a first approximation, we might say that philosophy in Continental Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is best understood as a connected weave of traditions, some of which overlap, but no one of which dominates all the others. So, for example, German Idealism marks the immediate reception and criticism of Kant's philosophy in figures like Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, who use a comprehensive conception of reason to provide connected answers to a broad range of questions of metaphysics, epistemology, and the theory of value. The breakdown of the German Idealist view was, in turn, of central importance in motivating Marx, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, and, more indirectly, Nietzsche.

The reactions against Hegel's Idealism in the decades after his death in 1831 were, in fact, manifold; they included: (1) the German Materialism of the 1850s and 1860s in writers like Büchner, Moleschott, Czolbe, and Vogt (though with resonances in better-known philosophical figures like Feuerbach, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche), who took seriously the development of modern physiology, and advocated crude versions of mind–body identity theories and the replacement of philosophy by science; (2) Marx's own repudiation of the domain of philosophy as the attempt to establish doctrines in metaphysics and epistemology in favor of a political, critical, and scientistic conception of philosophical method; and (3) the emergence of neo-Kantian thought in the latter years of the nineteenth century (e.g. Lotze, Helmholtz, Fischer, Cohen, Windelband, and Rickert) as a response to the emergence of psychology as a scientific discipline by anchoring the Kantian idea of philosophy as a transcendental enterprise within a historically and empirically defensible account of human knowledge and action.

Most of the major twentieth-century developments in 'Continental' philosophy can, in turn, be seen as responses to one or more of the nineteenth-century philosophical currents. Inasmuch as there is a Marxist tradition in philosophy, for example, it is marked by a dissatisfaction with Marx's professed ideal of a scientific, historical approach to the study of society from which all philosophical questions have been purged, a dissatisfaction expressed in figures like Lukács, Gramsci, Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse, and, finally, Habermas, who returns Kantian-style questions about *justification* to center stage. (The analytical Marxists in Anglophone philosophy end up, arguably, with a similar dissatisfaction.) Modern Phenomenology arose, like neo-Kantianism, in reaction to the development of modern psychology, in particular the attempt to reduce issues regarding the nature of thought, meaning, and logic to questions to be answered by an empirical scientific investigation of the facts of mental life. (Frege, foundational figure of so-called 'analytic' philosophy, was responding, as noted earlier, to exactly the same tendencies.) In the hands of Heidegger, however, the tradition is importantly transformed, with a new emphasis on the relationship between structures of meaning and the lived experience of particular individuals that inspired the French Existentialists (like Camus and Sartre) in their belief in the priority of 'existence' over 'essence'.

Other important intellectual developments associated with Continental Europe in the twentieth century do not map neatly on to the story sketched so far. The philosophical tradition we associate with 'Hermeneutics', for

example, which asserts the centrality and distinctiveness of interpretation for any understanding of language (and, hence, of human beings in whose lives language plays a constitutive role), intersects with both the German Idealist and the Phenomenological traditions and brings to them a distinctive set of issues regarding the relationship between language and thought, the nature of historical and social understanding, and the essential finitude of human understanding, issues that are manifest in hermeneutically minded writers from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries, including, Herder, Schleiermacher, Dilthey, and Gadamer.

So, too, 'Structuralism' was a movement initially not in philosophy, but in linguistics and the social sciences—associated with figures like Saussure, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes, Althusser, and others—which placed emphasis on the explanatory autonomy of systems in contrast to psychological, historical, or teleological explanations. But once this idea was imported into philosophy and psychology itself (for instance, by Lacan and Foucault) the consequence took the form of the so-called 'death of the subject' out of which in turn the tendencies known as 'post-structuralism' and 'post-modernism' emerged (in figures like Derrida, Deleuze, and Foucault again). In its most radical forms—informed by Heidegger and one (contentious) reading of Nietzsche—post-structuralism is best understood as a modern form of skepticism, calling into question not just the possibility of objective truth but of determinate understanding.

In Part I ('Problems of Method'), contributors consider the methodological problem central to all philosophy since the scientific revolution, namely, its relation to the epistemic standards and methods of the natural sciences, on the one hand, and its connection to the historical and practical situation in which philosophy finds itself, on the other. Where most of the Continental traditions differ is in their *attitude* towards science and scientific methods. While forms of philosophical naturalism have been dominant in Anglophone philosophy, the vast majority of authors within the Continental traditions insist on the distinctiveness of philosophical methods and their priority to those of the natural sciences. (Materialism and Marxism are the most obvious dissenters on this score.) Contributors examine a variety of anti-naturalist philosophical postures in the Continental traditions: phenomenology (Taylor Carman), hermeneutics (Michael N. Forster), the centrality of aesthetic experience to philosophical knowledge (Sebastian Gardner), the constitutive role of history of philosophy to philosophy (Michael Rosen), historicism (Frederick Beiser), French skeptical themes in the history and philosophy of science (Gary

Gutting), and the connection between philosophy, especially in the Marxist traditions, and practice (Alex Callinicos).

In Part II ('Reason and Consciousness'), we consider some different ways in which Kant's Copernican revolution in philosophy—his claim that philosophical questions concern the relationship between the human mind and a reality which has been, in some partial sense, *produced* by the mind—lead to a reformulation and sometimes deflation of the classical questions of metaphysics and epistemology, with a particular emphasis on the relationship between theoretical and practical reason (and their limits), and between metaphysical and epistemological problems and the nature of selfhood and consciousness. In this regard, contributors examine the very idea of a *transcendental* philosophy (Paul Franks), the purported unity of theoretical and practical reason in Kant and later figures in German philosophy (Fred Rush), the project of 'overcoming epistemology' (Herman Philipse), the metaphysical problem of 'individuals' from Hegel onward (Robert Stern), and the reorientation of metaphysics and epistemology in phenomenology, especially Husserl's (Peter Poellner).

In Part III ('Human Being'), contributors take up a family of questions with which the Continental Traditions are most often associated. What is it to be a human being (a person, an embodied being, a social being)? What is the meaning of the human (individual, social) situation? What makes human lives morally worthy and what role should moral worthiness actually play in human life? From the fundamental 'existential' questions—the meaning of life (Julian Young), the role of the 'transcendent' (Stephen Mulhall), and the import of our bodily being (Maximilian de Gaynesford)—to the fundamental moral and political questions—the moral ideal of autonomy in human life (Kenneth Baynes), the influence of the Hellenic ideal of 'harmony' in social life (Jessica Berry), the idea of a 'critical theory' of society (Gordon Finlayson), 'humanism' and the 'death of the subject' in ethical thought (Thomas Baldwin), and skepticism about morality and its value (Brian Leiter)—contributors here consider the ways in which Continental philosophers have tackled both perennial and distinctively post-Kantian philosophical questions about human life, its social and bodily nature, and its value and meaning.

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PART 1

PROBLEMS OF METHOD

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CHAPTER 1

PHENOMENOLOGY AS RIGOROUS SCIENCE

TAYLOR CARMAN

Edmund Husserl, the founder of modern phenomenology, always insisted that philosophy is not just a scholarly discipline, but can and must aspire to the status of a 'strict' or 'rigorous science' (*strenge Wissenschaft*).[1] Heidegger, by contrast, began his winter lectures in 1929 by dismissing what he called the 'delusion' that philosophy was or could be either a discipline or a science as 'the most disastrous debasement of its innermost essence.'[2] What was all the fuss about?

[1] Husserl, 'Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,' *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1911–1921). Husserliana XXV*, ed. T. Nenon and H. R. Sepp, (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987); 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science', trans. Q. Lauer, *Husserl: Shorter Works*, ed. P. McCormick and F. Elliston (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). Hereafter *AV/SW*.

[2] Heidegger, *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt-Endlichkeit-Einsamkeit. Gesamtausgabe* 29/30 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1983), 2; *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. W. McNeill and N. Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). Hereafter *GM*, with page references to the German edition.

1. Discipline and Doctrine

To understand what Husserl had in mind, it is important to begin by remembering that the word *Wissenschaft* has a wider extension than the word 'science'. German distinguishes the *Naturwissenschaften* from the *Geisteswissenschaften,* or human sciences, which Husserl and Heidegger both believed could be perfectly 'rigorous' in their own way.[3] Speakers of English, by contrast, tend to draw a threefold distinction among the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. We happily apply the word 'science' to the natural or physical sciences, less so (or with less conviction) to the (so-called) social sciences, and not at all to the humanities. No one would call a classicist or a professor of literature a 'scientist', whereas in German *Wissenschaftler* can simply mean scholar or academic.

Philosophers, too, we say, are scholars and academics, not 'scientists.' Do philosophers nevertheless think of philosophy itself as a kind of science, or as aspiring to something like scientific rigor and respectability? Evidently so, though all efforts along these lines, including Husserl's, have thus far met with what can only be called abject failure. And yet, as we know, self-images, both positive and negative, can be resistant to countervailing evidence and argument, so perhaps it should come as no surprise that philosophers continue to go about their work as if it held out the promise of definitive results, widespread consensus, and unambiguous progress. Moreover, culturally speaking, affiliation with the problems and methods of the natural sciences is deeply ingrained in the self-conception of contemporary academic philosophers, just as affiliation with Catholic dogma was central to the self-understanding of Christian thinkers in the Middle Ages.

What did Husserl envision for philosophy in 1911, when he wrote his manifesto, 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science'? Roughly speaking, three things: (1) prior, foundational status vis-à-vis the empirical and deductive sciences, (2) systematic unity, and (3) positive 'doctrinal content' (*Lehrgehalt*) based on firmly established results. This concept of rigorous science stood opposed to the then popular idea that philosophy is essentially the expression of a cultural or intellectual 'worldview' (*Weltanschauung*), an idea Husserl attributed to the influence of Hegel and saw above all in the historicism of Wilhelm Dilthey.

[3] See Heidegger's remarks in 'The Age of the World Picture', *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1950; 6th, rev. edn. 1980), 77; *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. J. Young and K. Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 60.

Husserl dismissed *Weltanschauung* philosophy as failing to come to grips with the concept of science as absolute knowledge for its own sake: 'For modern consciousness, the ideas of culture (*Bildung*) or worldview and science . . . have been sharply separated, and from now on they remain separated for all eternity' (*AV* 51/*SW* 191).

With respect to the first and possibly the second but not the third desideratum, philosophy as rigorous science stands opposed to *naturalism,* that is, the attempt to regard all phenomena as empirically given facts of nature. Psychologism, for example, is a form of naturalism with respect to consciousness, and Husserl began his *Logical Investigations* (1900/1) with a detailed critique of the fallacy of conflating the normativity and ideality of mental content, above all the cognitive content of logic and mathematics, with brute psychological facts. Indeed, what unites historicism and naturalism, Husserl argues, is their shared failure to distinguish facts from essences, hence their failure to recognize the way in which ideal logical and mathematical structures make reality, including psychological reality, intelligible: 'Naturalists and historicists . . . both . . . misconstrue ideas as facts and . . . transform all reality, all life into an unintelligible, idealess jumble of "facts". The superstition of the fact is common to them all' (*AV* 56/*SW* 193).

In his 1919 'Recollections of Franz Brentano,' Husserl describes how his conception of philosophical scientificity had been initially inspired by his teacher: 'It was from his lectures that I first formed the conviction that gave me the courage to choose philosophy as my life's work, namely, that philosophy too is a field for serious work, that it too can and must be conducted in the spirit of a most rigorous science'(*AV* 305/*SW* 343). Husserl's conception of what rigorous scientific philosophy would require, however, soon departed from Brentano's. Of Brentano Husserl says,

> Though deeply penetrating and often ingenious in intuitive analysis, he moved relatively quickly from intuition to theory . . . He had little esteem for thinkers like Kant and the post-Kantian German idealists, for whom the value of original intuition and anticipatory presentiment was so much greater than that of logical method and scientific theory. That a philosophical thinker could be esteemed as great though all his theories taken strictly were unscientific . . . Brentano would have scarcely conceded. . . . Devoted to the austere ideal of rigorous philosophical science (represented for him by the exact natural sciences), he regarded the systems of German idealism as merely degenerate. Guided entirely by Brentano at the beginning, I myself later came to the view now shared by so many researchers intent on a rigorous scientific philosophy: that the idealistic systems . . . must rather be seen as youthful and immature, but must also be valued to the utmost. Kant and the

subsequent German idealists may have offered little that was satisfactory or tenable in the scientifically rigorous development of the problems that motivated them so powerfully. Yet anyone capable of really understanding and becoming acquainted with those problems in their intuitive content knows that entirely new and utterly radical dimensions of philosophical problems emerge in the idealistic systems, and that the final and highest goals of philosophy emerge only with the clarification and development of the methods characteristically demanded by them. (*AV* 308–9/*SW* 344–5)

That same year, and in a similar vein, Husserl wrote, 'I speak of phenomenology as a mathematician speaks of mathematics: that it is a genuine science, forged out of clear evidence, a field of possible true and false propositions—he speaks this way in spite of all skeptics and confused philosophers, because he "sees" '[4] At least by 1919, then, Husserl was closer to the idealist tradition than Brentano ever was; moreover, it was precisely that tradition's emphasis on direct intuitive insight, as opposed to abstract analysis and theory construction, that informed his mature understanding of what true scientific rigor would mean for phenomenology.

Of course, just as there were deep and important differences between Kantian critical philosophy and the speculative systems that came after it, so too the differences between Kant and Husserl with regard to science and intuition are crucial as well as instructive. Near the beginning of 'Philosophy as Rigorous Science' Husserl writes, 'Kant was fond of saying that one could not learn philosophy, but only to philosophize. What is that but an admission of philosophy's unscientific character? As far as science, real science, extends, so far can one teach and learn, and this everywhere in the same sense' (*AV* 4/*SW* 166–7). Kant's remark occurs in the Architectonic chapter in the Doctrine of Method, near the end of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.[5] Earlier Kant distinguishes between a discipline (*Disziplin*), which corrects reason and is thus wholly negative, and a teaching or doctrine (*Belehrung*), which instructs and delivers positive content (A710/B738n). Mathematics has positive doctrinal content since reason can grasp synthetic a priori truths by pure intuition of formal spatial and temporal relations. Philosophy, by contrast, can have no such speculative or theoretical content of its own, since it deals only with concepts, not intuitions, and so cannot construct content

[4] Letter to Arnold Metzger, *SW* 363.

[5] *Kants Werke*, Akademie Textausgabe, iii and iv, ed. Königlich Preußische Akademie der Wissenschaften (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1968). *Critique of Pure Reason*, ed. and trans. P. Guyer and A. W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). I quote the Guyer and Wood's translation, with very minor emendations.

beyond what is already contained in the concepts it considers: '*Philosophical* cognition is *rational cognition* from *concepts,* mathematical cognition that from the *construction* of concepts. But to *construct* a concept means to exhibit a priori the intuition corresponding to it. For the construction of a concept, therefore, a *nonempirical* intuition is required' (A713/B741).

For Kant, then, philosophical cognition, at least in its speculative or theoretical application, must be critical, not dogmatic; theoretical philosophy can only be a discipline, not a doctrine; it can be practiced, even mastered, but not acquired in the form of new information: 'all transcendental logic is in this respect nothing but a discipline' (A796/B824). 'Among all rational sciences (a priori), therefore, only mathematics can be learned, never philosophy (except historically); rather, as far as reason is concerned, one can at most only learn *to philosophize*' (A837/B865). Traditionally, in pursuing its systematic aims, philosophy has tended to swing like a pendulum between bold epistemic confidence and radical doubt; philosophers have proceeded, like Wolff or like Hume, 'either *dogmatically* or *skeptically*'. But both paths are dead ends, Kant claims to have shown, and 'The *critical* path alone is still open' (A856/B884).

In calling for a philosophy that could be learned in the form of a substantive doctrine, rather than merely mastered as a critical discipline, Husserl was in effect arguing that philosophy ought to be 'dogmatic' in the Kantian sense of the word. Philosophy must aspire not only to disciplinary rigor, but positive 'doctrinal content' (*Lehrgehalt*), as one finds in the empirical and deductive sciences. Such positive content, Husserl says, will not constitute 'a philosophical "system" in the traditional sense, like a Minerva springing forth complete and full-panoplied from the head of some creative genius, only in later times to be kept along with other such Minervas in the silent museum of history.' Instead, it will be 'a philosophical system of doctrine (*Lehrsystem*) that, after the enormous preparatory work of generations, genuinely commences from below with an indubitable foundation and rises up like any secure construction in which stone is set upon stone, each as solid as the next, in accordance with guiding insights' (*AV* 6/*SW* 167).

Kant regarded that philosophical goal as unrealizable in principle, at least for theoretical reason, which lacks the intellectual intuition necessary to supply knowledge beyond the bounds of experience, that is, beyond appearances to things in themselves. Husserl rejected Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena; moreover, he believed that phenomenology could deliver rational synthetic insights based on what in *Logical Investigations* he calls 'categorial

intuition,' and later in *Ideas I*, the 'intuition of essences' (*Wesenserschauung*).[6] Husserl's idea of philosophy as rigorous science, then, rests not just on his polemic against naturalism and historicism, but on a substantive epistemological theory of intellectual intuition. It was precisely that theory that Heidegger rejected, and with it Husserl's ambitious but forlorn conviction that transcendental phenomenology could play a vital role in laying the foundations for the sciences and expanding human knowledge.

2. Intuition and Understanding

Essential to Husserl's conception of scientific phenomenological method is what he calls 'the principle of all principles,' namely, 'that every primordially presenting intuition (*Anschauung*) is a source of legitimacy for cognition, that everything that presents itself to us primordially in "intuition" (so to speak, in its incarnate actuality) is to be accepted simply as what it presents itself to be' (*Id I* 43).[7] This is because, for Husserl, 'immediate "seeing", not merely sensuous, experiential seeing, but seeing in general as primordially presenting consciousness of whatever kind, is the ultimate source of legitimacy of all rational assertions' (*Id I* 36). Husserl, that is, felt he could justify his own claims concerning the intentional structure of consciousness only by showing intuition itself to be a legitimate and legitimating source of philosophical evidence, capable of delivering general, intelligible contents, not just brute particulars. He therefore insisted that we enjoy not just sensuous, but also categorial, or logically structured, intuitions. The 'principle of all principles,' then, is a methodological application of the theory of categorial intuition, and what Husserl also later simply called the 'seeing' of essences. Categorial intuitions are intuitions satisfying or fulfilling attitudes whose contents include formal elements such as *is* and *not*, the logical connectives *if, then, and*, and

[6] Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie, Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1913; 1993), 10 ff.; *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1983), 8 ff. Hereafter *Id I*, with page references to the German edition. By 'essence' (*Wesen*) Husserl does not mean the *defining* property of a thing, but *any* property or form understood as ideal or general, as opposed to real or particular.

[7] Heidegger refers explicitly to this passage some forty years later in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1969), 69–70; *Time and Being*, trans. J. Stambaugh (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 63.

or, and quantifiers like *all, some, many, few*, *a*, and *none.* Contrary to classical empiricism, such logical or conceptual content cannot be derived from sensations simply through processes of association and abstraction. Instead, we must have immediate intuitive insight into the logically structured states of affairs that render our higher-order judgments true or false.[8]

So, for example, we see objects (such as leaves) and their properties (such as green), but we also *see*— and not just metaphorically—that the leaf *is* (or *is not*) green. Similarly, without having to see the knife *and see* the fork (in two acts of seeing), we see the knife *and* the fork together on the table: we see their conjunction; we see the *and.* Similarly, we see that *if* the child pulls the cord, *then* the lamp will fall, or that *either* the child will tug on the cord *or* the lamp will *not* fall. When I look at the sky, I see the *manyness* of the stars or the *fewness* of the clouds without having to count them. Sartre makes the same point in *Being and Nothingness* when he says that whereas one *sees* that Pierre is *not* in the café, one at best idly judges, but does not literally see, that the Duke of Wellington and Paul Valéry are not.[9]

Is there such a thing as categorial intuition? The concept is easier to disparage than to refute, especially considering the implausible alternative of epistemically inert sense data disconnected from and radically heterogeneous with the conceptual contents of judgment.[10] More problematic than the idea of categorial intuition itself, however, is Husserl's insistence that it grounds our understanding of the world; that it is primitive, authoritative, and neither in need of nor susceptible to further critical analysis or genealogical scrutiny.

It is widely but wrongly assumed that Heidegger embraced the theory of categorial intuition, indeed that he simply took it for granted as licensing his own phenomenological claims in *Being and Time.* This is not so, though it is true that the theory made a powerful impression on him and inspired his effort to pursue the question of *being* by means of a phenomenology of everyday understanding. Heidegger, of course, was especially drawn to the account of 'the origin of the concept of being' in §44 of the Sixth of the *Logical Investigations*, in which Husserl argues that we have a direct intuition not just of sensible particulars, but of being (and nonbeing). No doubt Husserl's theory

[8] Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, ii/2 (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1921; 1980), §40; *Logical Investigations*, ii, trans. J. N. Findlay (London and New York: Routledge, 1970; 2001), §40.

[9] Sartre, *L'Être et le néant* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1943), 43 ff.; *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, trans. H. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), 40 ff.

[10] For a recent influential anti-empiricist argument along these lines, see John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

also appealed to Heidegger in offering an antidote to the intellectualism of neo-Kantian epistemology, according to which all objective experience must be mediated by judgment. Whatever attraction the theory held for Heidegger thus had less to do with its assertion of the primacy of intuition than with its claim that we have a prepredicative understanding of being, prior not just to reflection and introspection, but to all attitudes with fully propositional content.

If Heidegger ultimately rejected the theory of categorial intuition, then, it was not because he reverted to a sharp Kantian distinction between intuitions and concepts, but because he thought all forms of intuition, whether sensible or categorial, are derivative of a more basic form of intentionality that is *not* passive intuition or observation, but engaged practical agency, or 'understanding' (*Verstehen*). Heidegger's objection was thus not an objection to the notion that conceptual content can be apprehended in intuition prior to its articulation in an act of judgment, but rather to the idea that understanding must always be grounded in intuition, rather than vice versa. Husserl inherited the assumption of the primacy of intuition, whether sensible or categorial, from the epistemological tradition going back to Plato, and it was this assumption Heidegger emphatically rejected: 'Under the unbroken hegemony of traditional ontology, the genuine mode of registering what truly is has been decided in advance. It lies in *noein*, "intuition" in the widest sense, from which *dianoein*, "thinking" (*Denken*), is simply derived as a founded form.'[11]

The reduction of intentionality to intuition on the one hand and thought on the other is, according to Heidegger, part of a broader ontological assumption that entities can *be* only by being object-like or 'occurrent' (*vorhanden*), hence ideally accessible to theoretical attitudes such as observation and judgment. Husserlian phenomenology, notwithstanding its laudable injunction to return to a concrete description of phenomena, is yet another case of philosophical fixation on intuition, presence, and the temporal present:

> The thesis that all cognition has its goal in 'intuition' has the temporal meaning that all cognition is a making present (*Gegenwärtigen*). Whether every science, or even philosophical thought, aims at a making present shall remain undecided here.—Husserl uses the expression 'making present' (*Gegenwärtigen*) to characterize sense perception (*SZ* 363n.).

[11] Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1927; 1979), 96. *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962). Hereafter *SZ*, with page references to the German edition.

In *Being and Time* Heidegger attempts to supplant these long-standing epistemological and metaphysical prejudices, including those still at work in Husserl's phenomenology, with a *hermeneutical* account of understanding as situated projection into future—or more precisely, future-*constituting*—possibilities. Such an account is meant to reveal the untenability of the idea that understanding is grounded in thought and intuition directed exclusively to objects and objective states of affairs:

> By showing how all sight is grounded primarily in understanding . . . we have robbed pure intuition of its privilege, which corresponds noetically to the privileging of the occurrent in traditional ontology. 'Intuition' and 'thought' are both derivatives of understanding, indeed rather remote ones. Even the phenomenological 'intuition of essences' (*Wesensschau*) is grounded in existential understanding. (*SZ* 147)

The allusion to Husserl here is unmistakable, as is the implication that phenomenology cannot vindicate its scientific pretensions by appeal to any such notion of grounding and authoritative intuition. But again, the reason is not that Heidegger doubted that intuition can have categorial or conceptual content, but rather that he took conceptual content to be parasitic on the content of understanding, which is neither intuitive nor judgmental, but *projective* in character.

3. Description and Interpretation

What does Heidegger's rejection of Husserl's theory of intuition imply concerning the character and authority of phenomenological description? It is important to remember, first, that Husserl and Heidegger agree that phenomenology must be a qualitative and descriptive rather than a hypothetical or explanatory enterprise, let alone an exact science. But what is *description*? How do the relevant qualitative features of the world and ourselves manifest themselves? How are they available to us? Husserl, for his part, conceived of phenomenology on analogy with representation and taxonomy in natural sciences like botany. Geometry, for all its exactness, he says, lacks the resources for depicting qualities like '"serrated", "notched", "lens-shaped", "umbellate", and the like' (*Id I* 138). Husserlian phenomenology thus aspires to a kind of 'systematic and eidetic morphology' of the structures and contents of consciousness (*Id I* 302).

Heidegger agrees that phenomenology must be descriptive rather than explanatory, but he is suspicious of what he calls 'the at bottom tautological expression "descriptive phenomenology".' Since there is no *other* kind of phenomenology, the qualifying adjective 'descriptive' is empty and misleading. Very probably with Husserl's gloss on the difference between exact and descriptive sciences in mind, Heidegger goes on to explain how he understands the descriptive aims of phenomenology: ' "Description" here does not mean a procedure in the manner of, say, botanical morphology' (*SZ* 35); rather, 'the meaning of phenomenological description as a method is *interpretation*'. For Heidegger, that is, 'The phenomenology of Dasein is a *hermeneutic*' (*SZ* 37).

Interpretation is not to be contrasted with description as such, then, but with a certain kind of description, one that purports to point us directly to some immediately given object, which we can simply *see* to be as the description says it is. A paradigm case might be, for example, calling the sky 'blue' or the grass 'green' and then pointing them out to someone and saying, 'See for yourself!' And in such mundane cases, hopefully, we can indeed simply see for ourselves.

Can the claims of phenomenology be vindicated in this way? If so, one is tempted to say, as some critics have, then surely the whole operation could be wrapped up pretty quickly and controversies settled once and for all. Why has this not happened? If Heidegger is right, the reason is that the kind of 'evidence' available to phenomenology is radically unlike the objects and states of affairs perceptually available to the empirical sciences and common sense and more like what is available to ethical interpretations of human conduct and aesthetic interpretations of works of art, namely, a certain way things have of *hanging together* and *making sense* in a context, under an aspect, which goes beyond anything we simply register or straightforwardly observe. As Heidegger says, 'Interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehension of something pregiven' (*SZ* 150). The intelligibility underlying and legitimating the claims of phenomenology, then, reveals itself not to intuition, but to understanding and interpretation.

This is why, as early as 1920, in his 'Comments on Karl Jaspers's *Psychology of Worldviews*,' Heidegger expresses his distrust of blunt appeals to phenomenological intuition, in contrast to the always open-ended work of interpretation:

> The path to the 'things themselves' under consideration in philosophy is a long one, so that the excessive liberties that certain phenomenologists have taken recently with

insights into essences (*Wesenseinsichten*) appear in a highly dubious light, which hardly accords with the 'openness' and 'devotion' they preach.[12]

Intuition of essences, as Husserl describes it, can only look like a highly questionable shortcut in the ongoing effort of philosophical interpretation. Are such intuitions really as plainly manifest and self-evident as Husserl maintains? Are they not instead parasitic on prior interpretations that merely lend them the appearance of self-evidence? And what are the worldly phenomena themselves underlying those intuitions? Are they not phenomena we have already understood very differently than the intuitions now purport? In short, what understandings do our intuitions presuppose? There is arguably no such thing as getting back behind or around our presuppositions. Instead, what Heidegger calls the 'hermeneutic situation' in which fundamental ontology finds itself consists precisely in the presuppositions that always already situate such inquiry as a matter of principle (*SZ* 232).

And yet, if phenomenology must be hermeneutical in order to be descriptive in the right way, as Heidegger maintains, might it not still be 'scientific' in Husserl's sense? Heidegger's view about this seems to have oscillated during the decade of the 1920s. In his 1920–1 lectures on the phenomenology of religion he insists on a 'difference in principle between science and philosophy' and dismisses what he calls 'the prejudice of philosophy as a science'.[13] Similarly, in his 1923 Freiburg lectures on 'ontology' he cautions that the word should not be taken to mean a 'discipline, one belonging, for instance, within the field of inquiry of neo-scholasticism, or of phenomenological scholasticism and the directions of academic philosophy influenced by it'.[14]

However, during his five-year teaching stint at the University of Marburg, an untenured but prestigious appointment to which Husserl gave his enthusiastic support, Heidegger seems to have changed his tune. In his 1927 lecture on

[12] Heidegger, *Wegmarken. Gesamtausgabe* 9, ed. F-W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1976), 5; *Pathmarks*, ed. W. McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4. Hereafter *W/P*.

[13] Heidegger, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Lebens. Gesamtausgabe* 60, ed. M. Jung, T. Regehly, and C. Strube (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1995), 3–4; *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. M. Fritsch and J. A. Gosett-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 3–4.

[14] Heidegger, *Ontologie (Hermeneutik der Faktizität). Gesamtausgabe* 63, ed. K. Bröcker-Oltmanns (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1988), 1; *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, trans. J. van Buren (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 1. Interestingly, Heidegger's choice of words here echoes Dilthey's reference to Brentano's 'psychological scholasticism' and his observation that 'Husserl is the extreme instance of this.' See Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences. Selected Works*, iii, ed. R. Makkreel and F. Rodi (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 257.

'Phenomenology and Theology', for example, he glosses the relation between theology and philosophy as a '*relation of two sciences*': the former, a 'positive' science (a science of entities); the latter, '*the* science of being, the ontological science, philosophy'. Theology, he still insists, is 'therefore as such absolutely distinct from philosophy' (*W*47–9/*P*40–1). Similarly, in *Being and Time* itself Heidegger refers to fundamental ontology as 'a science *of being as such*' (*SZ* 230), and in the summer lectures of 1927 he seems to follow Husserl in dismissing *Weltanschauung* philosophy in order to affirm more emphatically the true 'scientific' character of philosophy. And yet, here again, he does so not exactly by endorsing Husserl's argument, but by casting doubt on the terms in which Husserl framed the issue:

> The distinction between scientific philosophy and *Weltanschauung* philosophy is invalid . . . since the concept of a *Weltanschauung* philosophy is not even a coherent concept. . . . To anyone who has even the slightest understanding of the concept of philosophy and its history, the notion of a *Weltanschauung* philosophy is an oxymoron (*hölzeres Eisen*). If one of the terms of the distinction between scientific philosophy and *Weltanschauung* philosophy is a nonconcept, then the other must also be ill-defined. If one sees that *Weltanschauung* philosophy, if it is to be philosophy, is fundamentally impossible, then the distinguishing adjective 'scientific' is no longer needed to characterize philosophy. That it is that, lies in its concept.[15]

Like 'descriptive phenomenology,' then, the expression 'scientific philosophy' is inappropriate not because it's incorrect, but because it's redundant. Tellingly, in *Being and Time* Heidegger lodges the same objection to the expression 'philosophy of life' (*Lebensphilosophie*), since for him philosophy is *essentially* bound up with human being-in-the-world and cannot *not* be, so the term is vacuous (*SZ* 46). This observation should have led readers to doubt Heidegger's commitment to the programmatic intentions behind such labels, since evidently he regarded them all as at best empty and misleading.

It nevertheless may have come as a shock to anyone familiar with Heidegger's habit of echoing (or seeming to echo) Husserl's rhetoric of scientificity when, in his lectures of 1929–30, he dropped all ambiguity by explicitly repudiating the notion that philosophy was or could be anything like a science. That idea, he now says, is not merely empty or tautological, but fundamentally wrong. Heidegger opens his lectures with a rhetorical question:

[15] Heidegger, *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie. Gesamtausgabe* 24. Marburg lectures, summer 1927, ed. F-W. von Herrmann (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1975), 16; *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982; rev. edn., 1988), 12.

'What if it were a *prejudice* that metaphysics is a fixed and secure discipline, and an *illusion* that philosophy is a science that can be taught and learned?' Having reiterated the familiar observation that modern philosophy has failed to establish any decisive results since its inception with Descartes, Heidegger asks,

> Or is all this talk of philosophy being the absolute science a delusion? Not just because the individual or some school never achieves this end, but because positing the end is itself fundamentally an error and a misunderstanding of the innermost essence of philosophy. Philosophy as absolute science—a lofty, unsurpassable ideal. So it seems. And yet perhaps even judging philosophy according to the idea of science is the most disastrous debasement of its innermost essence. (*GM* 2)[16]

Heidegger still insists that 'the interpretation of philosophy as the propagation of a *Weltanschauung* involves the same mendacity as characterizing it as science.' In the end, he says, philosophy is '*determinable only in terms of itself and as itself—comparable to nothing* in terms of which it could be positively defined. In that case philosophy is something *original and autonomous* (*Eigenständiges*), something *ultimate*' (*GM* 3). Philosophy, in any case, 'is something totally different from science' (*GM* 15), not just because it has failed to achieve definitive results, but because philosophical truth is different from and incommensurable with scientific, and particularly mathematical, truth:

> We do not deny philosophy the character of absolute science because it has never yet attained it, but because this idea of the philosophical essence is attributed to philosophy on the basis of its ambiguity, and because this idea undermines the essence of philosophy at its core. . . . Although it objectively comprises a great wealth, mathematical knowledge is in itself, in terms of its content, the emptiest knowledge that can be conceived, and as such is at the same time the least binding for human beings. (*GM* 24–5)

Hence, for Heidegger, as for Kant before him, 'mathematical knowledge cannot be advanced as the ideal of philosophical knowledge' (*GM* 25).

By the winter semester of 1929/30, then, Heidegger had shed whatever remained of his lingering ambivalent loyalty to Husserl's vision of phenomenology as a rigorous and 'purely' descriptive scientific discipline.

[16] It is hard not to read the following caricature of academic philosophers as an allusion to Husserl and the technical jargon of phenomenology: 'And the teacher—what can he not prove, what a forest of concepts and terminology he moves about in, wielding some scientific apparatus, so that the poor listener is scared away. He enters in, as if with him philosophy has come to the world as absolute science for the first time' (*GM* 18).

The consistency that (re)emerged in Heidegger's view in 1929 was due in part, no doubt, to the professional and intellectual autonomy he now enjoyed, having taken over the chair in philosophy at Freiburg upon Husserl's retirement, and apparently having severed all personal and professional ties with his former friend and mentor. The truth is that the fervent antiscientism that surfaced in the 1929–30 lectures was the culmination of a sustained battle Heidegger had been fighting all along against Husserl's phenomenology, and indeed his entire conception of philosophy, throughout the 1920s.[17]

Heidegger was initially drawn to the theory of categorial intuition because it offered an alternative to Kantian intellectualism. But he rejected Husserl's assumption that understanding, which *projects* meaning beyond what is presently given, presupposes and must always appeal to intuition, which simply *presents* what is given as present. Heidegger's assertion of the priority of *understanding* to intuition—and of the *future* to the present—constitutes perhaps the deepest philosophical difference between his thought and Husserl's, and so too between the scientific ideal of pure description and the hermeneutic model of projective interpretation.

4. Appearances and Phenomena

Not surprisingly, then, Husserl and Heidegger turn out to have had radically different notions of what the *phenomena*, or the 'things themselves' are, to which phenomenology calls us to return. Remarking that the word 'phenomenon' is ambiguous 'between *appearing* and *that which appears*,' Husserl insists that the term be 'used primarily for the appearing itself, the subjective phenomenon,' that is, for the contents immanent in consciousness, not the objects transcendent to it.[18]

Heidegger, by contrast, initially treats the term 'phenomenon' as what he calls a 'formal indicator' referring simply to 'that which shows itself, the manifest' (*SZ* 28), a notion that 'has in the first instance nothing

[17] See my *Heidegger's Analytic: Interpretation, Discourse, and Authenticity in 'Being and Time'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 57–60.

[18] Husserl, *Die Idee der Phänomenologie: Fünf Vorlesungen*, ed. W. Biemel, 2nd edn., Husserliana II (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1950; rev. edn. 1973), 14; *The Idea of Phenomenology*, trans. W. P. Alston and G. Nakhnikian (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1973), 11.

whatever to do with what one calls "appearance", or indeed "mere appearance" ' (*SZ* 29).[19] Heidegger's point is that the phenomena of phenomenology are not 'appearances', if that term means something *indicating* or *referring to* something else, as for example, Husserl supposed, consciousness indicates or refers to its objects in the way linguistic expressions refer to theirs, by means of intervening descriptive, hence in principle explicable, semantic contents. For Heidegger, that is, the phenomenon of phenomenology is not what Husserl's calls 'the subjective phenomenon', namely the *immanent* content of consciousness standing in representational or referential relations to *transcendent* objects, which appear in or through it. Rather, a phenomenon is what 'appears' in the bland (nonrepresentational, nonreferential) sense of simply *showing up*, or *manifesting itself.* Heidegger thus refuses to define phenomenology from the outset in terms of its putative domain of application: 'The word only informs us of the *how* of the way of showing and treating *what* is to be dealt with in this science' (*SZ* 34–5); it does not yet specify the *what*, or subject matter, itself. Heidegger's deliberate redefinition of phenomenology is thus bound up with his repudiation of Husserl's representationalism, internalism, and mentalism.

In addition to the purely formal notion, Heidegger also offers a substantive, or what he calls the specifically 'phenomenological', concept of phenomena. Taken formally, a phenomenon is just anything that manifests itself, as opposed to appearing in or through some representational or referential intermediary. Substantively, however, not every aspect of what manifests itself is 'given' in the sense of being self-evident or fully open to intuitive inspection. Indeed, 'what is to become phenomenon can be hidden. And it is precisely because phenomena are first and for the most part *not* given that there is a need for phenomenology' (*SZ* 36). A phenomenon in the substantive phenomenological sense, then, is

> something that first and for the most part precisely does *not* show itself, something that, in contrast to what first and for the most part shows itself, is *hidden*, but is at the same time something that essentially belongs to that which first and for the most part shows itself, and belongs to it in such a way as to constitute its meaning and ground. (*SZ* 35)

The task of phenomenology is therefore not to give a 'purely' descriptive report of something self-evidently given, but rather to let the ordinarily

[19] By 'mere appearance' Heidegger means *phenomenon* in the Kantian sense, that is, the appearance of something that *never* shows itself, namely the thing in itself. That point is not directly relevant to Husserl, who rejected the phenomenon/noumenon distinction.

hidden aspects of what shows itself *show themselves*, or make themselves manifest. Moreover, since Heidegger interprets *logos* as a 'letting something be seen' (*SZ* 33), he takes the interpretive work of the phenomenologist to lie in *drawing out, evoking, and uncovering* what is covered up and buried over in what ordinarily shows itself in our everyday understanding.

5. Projection and Presentation

Why, then, according to Heidegger, can such an effort of hermeneutical uncovering never be rigorously scientific, in Husserl's sense? Because, in short, the *phenomena* of hermeneutical phenomenology are not objects or objective facts available to intuition and pure description, but rather aspects or conditions of intelligibility. They are not subjective conscious states, nor even, as Husserl would have it, objective essences of subjective conscious states, available to inner intuitive reflection on our own minds. They are hidden aspects of the ways in which things *show up* as making sense to us. Such aspects of intelligibility are not objects of intuition, but instead constitute an always transcendent horizon of understanding. The way something shows up as making sense, that is, consists in *how we are to* understand it, what *kind* of thing it is for us, how one *ought* to treat it, and so on. Such things are neither outwardly perceptible nor available to inner reflection, but go beyond any given objective or factual data. And where there can be no objective or factual data, there can be no empirical or intuitive inquiry, no fixed or enduring doctrine, no science. What is at stake in hermeneutical phenomenology, then, is neither *facts* nor essences regarded as objectively given data in intuition, but rather *norms* and conditions of understanding and interpretation.

Consider an analogy with textual interpretation, an analogy made at once obvious and inevitable by the hermeneutical model to which Heidegger appeals. When we interpret a text, we may be concerned with matters of fact about the letters or words on the page, original manuscripts or early editions, what the author was thinking, where or how or with whom he or she was living, and so on. And of course there can be (more or less) scientific inquiries into such matters of fact. Questions concerning the *meaning* or *significance* of the text, however, are questions of a radically different order. Crudely put, what is at stake in the interpretation of the text is nothing merely factual, but *normative*, not an *is* but an *ought*, namely *how to* understand the text, how it

ought to be read. Hermeneutical questions, that is, cannot always be answered by appeal to facts, for what is often at issue in the interpretation of a text is not *how things are*, but rather, as Wittgenstein says, *how to go on.*

Does it make sense to talk about direct intuitive apprehension of a *norm* of this sort, that is, a way something *is to be done*? We rely freely on visual metaphors to describe both practical and theoretical insight, of course. Heidegger himself says, 'Dealing with things by using and handling them . . . is not blind, but has its own kind of sight (*Sichtart*), which he calls 'circumspection' (*Umsicht*)' (*SZ* 69). But ordinary locutions and metaphors like these leave entirely open whether the insight of circumspective intelligence is projective or intuitive, that is to say, whether it *anticipates* possibilities or merely *apprehends* actualities. To what degree is *seeing* my way out of an awkward conversation, or *seeing* how to repair a watch, like seeing the shape of a flower? Granted, there are borderline or hybrid cases: seeing how to get downtown by looking at a subway map involves both seeing the de facto layout of the lines and seeing *how* to get from here to there. But the borderline and hybrid cases just make the difference between projective understanding and passive perception that much clearer: seeing how to get out of debt is utterly unlike seeing the moon on the horizon.

Of course, what Heidegger says about practical understanding could also be said of disciplines involving deductive insight, as opposed to empirical intuition. Logic and mathematics are perfectly rigorous sciences, after all, even if it turns out that the kind of intelligence they require has more in common with the spontaneity of projective understanding than with the receptivity of sense perception. Suppose deductive insight is no more literally 'intuitive' than practical circumspection; surely logic and mathematics remain paradigms of rigorous scientific achievement nonetheless.

Two replies are open to Heidegger, one that he did make and another that he could have. First, as we have seen, Heidegger dismisses logical and mathematical knowledge as 'the emptiest knowledge that can be conceived, and as such . . . at the same time the least binding for human beings' (*GM* 25). This provocative remark raises deep issues about whether and how logical and mathematical norms are indeed 'binding' for us. A charitable reading might suggest that what Heidegger means is that such norms are not constraints on our freedom, since what they rule out is nothing one could knowingly want to think or assert. Indeed, what they prohibit is arguably precisely and only the kind of fallacies we already know to avoid and deny; it is not as if we are thwarted and barred from those fallacies because some obscure

and arbitrary external authority forbids them. Similarly, in dismissing logical and mathematical knowledge as 'empty', Heidegger could be suggesting that, though formally valid, such disciplines do not strictly speaking supply us with *knowledge*, precisely because they are by definition indifferent with respect to all material content. These are not implausible claims, and if true, they do indeed distinguish phenomenology, which, after all, like the sciences, aspires to genuine cognitive constraint and content, from purely formal disciplines, which do not.

The second reply, of which Heidegger could have availed himself, though he did not, is to say that logic and mathematics are rigorous sciences not because they rest on passive intuitions of essences, as Husserl supposed, but simply because they have in fact achieved definitive and lasting results and established widespread and enduring consensus among knowledgeable experts. How they have done this, one might say, remains at some level an epistemological mystery. But they have done it, and their sheer success is arguably what vindicates their claim to scientific rigor. If philosophy enjoyed comparable success, it would hardly matter whether it did so by means of intuition or some other form of intelligence or insight. Platonism, after all—which is to say the assimilation of theoretical insight to visual perception—is a philosophical *interpretation* of the experience of understanding something by grasping it in an instant; it is not a condition or criterion that we know a priori scientific knowledge must satisfy.

It is important to remember, then, that Heidegger's argument against the scientificity of philosophy is at bottom an argument against Husserl's conception of what makes rigorous science possible, namely categorial intuition and the intuition of essences. If in principle, *pace* Husserl, rigorous science requires no such grounding in intuition, then arguments for and against the prospect of a scientific philosophy would have to proceed by appeal to some other criterion, for example rational systematic unity in the organization of knowledge as a whole.

6. Architectonic and Rhapsody

Systematic unity was the criterion of scientific knowledge for Kant and the German idealists, and Husserl too regarded it as a necessary though not a sufficient condition of rigorous science. According to Kant, 'systematic unity

is that which first makes ordinary cognition into science, i.e. makes a system out of a mere aggregate . . . Under the government of reason our cognitions cannot at all constitute a rhapsody but must constitute a system' (A832/B860). What is a system? 'I understand by a system . . . the unity of the manifold cognitions under one idea. This is the rational concept of the form of a whole' (A832/B860). The organizing force of a single idea is what distinguishes a coherent body of scientific knowledge from a mere list or catalogue of facts and insights: 'The whole is therefore articulated (*articulatio*) and not heaped together (*coacervatio*)' (A833/B861). Scientific knowledge, that is, must exhibit not merely 'technical' but 'architectonic' unity:

> What we call science . . . cannot arise technically, from the similarity of the manifold or the contingent use of cognition *in concreto* for all sorts of arbitrary external ends, but arises architectonically, for the sake of its affinity and its derivation from a single supreme and inner end, which first makes possible the whole. (A833/B861)

More recently, owing to the unanticipated spectacular growth of human knowledge and the failure of attempts to impose any kind of overarching unity either across or within the sciences, defenders of the idea of scientific progress in philosophy have taken comfort in the truism that nothing succeeds like success. If, like logic and mathematics, philosophy can be shown to have achieved some firm results and won widespread consensus among leading experts in the field, then *how* it has managed to do this—by means of some special form of intuition or just ordinary intelligence, and whether systematically or rhapsodically and haphazardly—is less important than the sheer fact of success itself.

Thus, in 'The Age of Specialization,' the concluding epilogue of his recent two-volume history of twentieth-century analytic philosophy, Scott Soames argues that a kind of scientific progress has indeed occurred in philosophy since the 1970s, not because the discipline has at last become unified and systematic, but on the contrary precisely because it has splintered into small, conceptually isolated, hence potentially manageable, problem areas: 'Gone are the days of large, central figures, whose work is accessible and relevant to, as well as read by, nearly all analytic philosophers. Philosophy has become a highly organized discipline, done by specialists primarily for other specialists.'[20] Soames observes, 'the discipline itself—philosophy as a whole—has become an aggregate of related but semi-independent investigations, very much

[20] Soames, *Philosophical Analysis in the Twentieth Century*, ii: *The Age of Meaning* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 463. Hereafter *PATC*.

like other academic disciplines' (*PATC* 467). This lack of systematic unity represents, for Soames, not a loss but a gain in scientific respectability. Nor is it a sociological accident extraneous to the problems themselves: 'what seems to be the fragmentation in philosophy found at the end of the twentieth century may be due to more than the institutional imperatives of specialization and professionalization. It may be inherent in the subject itself.'

More specifically, with respect to semantics, 'What we now see at the end of the century is . . . the beginnings within the philosophy of logic and language of a less introspective, more theoretical and scientific, perspective on meaning' (*PATC* 476). What does this 'less introspective, more theoretical and scientific, perspective on meaning' amount to? Above all, abandonment of the idea of semantic incorrigibility, or what Soames calls the 'transparency of meaning', and with it the methodological notion that philosophy begins and ends with problems about language. From the new perspective, meaning is not immanent in the mind, but entangled in complex ways with the physical and social world:

> Though facts about the meanings of our words and the information semantically encoded by our sentences are, from this perspective, real and important, we have no privileged epistemological access to them.
>
> If this is right, it means that, as philosophers, we have no privileged and secure linguistic starting point, of the sort imagined by so many of our analytic predecessors. Meaning is neither the source of all philosophical problems, nor the key to solving them all. (*PATC* 476)

The new perspective Soames describes may indeed reflect current prevailing opinion among contemporary professional philosophers of language. Interestingly, it also comes closer to the views of externalists like Heidegger, Gadamer, and Merleau-Ponty than to those of their internalist predecessors in the Continental tradition, above all Husserl.

But does the new perspective represent unambiguous rational progress and a 'more theoretical and scientific' approach to philosophy itself than, say, the logicism of Frege and Russell, the positivism of the Vienna Circle, the Oxford ordinary language philosophy of the 1950s, the naturalized epistemology of Quine, or for that matter the transcendental phenomenology of Husserl? Why should we not suppose, on the contrary, that the intellectual transformation Soames describes is just another drifting of philosophical opinion from one more or less compelling cluster of assumptions and arguments to another? Why suppose that today's professional philosophers have finally entered into genuinely scientific research, while yesterday's were still merely groping

in the dark? Indeed, why not suppose that the disciplinary fragmentation Soames observes, far from representing an increase in scientific seriousness and theoretical progress, instead reflects a timid retreat from the kind of holistic vision that has inspired and sustained philosophical reflection from the profound musings of the Presocratics to the grand but failed programs of the twentieth century? Why, in short, should we believe that sheer technical specialization and intellectual compartmentalization, for all their professional comfort and emulation of scientific rigor, constitute philosophical virtues?

More precisely, if Soames believes that recent developments in the philosophy of language constitute a more scientific approach to philosophy, what are the criteria of that scientific status? What makes recent externalist theories of meaning and reference more rigorous than their predecessors, beyond the fact that many (though not all, perhaps not even most) experts have found them convincing? Were it true that new theoretical approaches had finally settled, or even just terminated, long-standing disputes about such things as meaning, reference, truth, and necessity, then one could perhaps argue plausibly that philosophy had indeed turned a corner and at long last inaugurated something like what Kuhn called 'normal science', that is, widespread consensus about the problems at hand and how to go about solving them. If, however, no such consensus has emerged in philosophy, then the new perspective in semantics is just what historicist and hermeneutical thinkers like Heidegger maintain all philosophical perspectives amount to, namely bold projective interpretations destined to remain as obscure and dubious as they are deep and stimulating.

CHAPTER 2

HERMENEUTICS

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For the purpose of this chapter, 'hermeneutics' means the theory of interpretation, i.e. the theory of achieving an understanding of texts, utterances, and so on (it does *not* mean a certain twentieth-century philosophical movement). Hermeneutics in this sense has a long history, reaching back at least as far as ancient Greece. However, new focus was brought to bear on it in the modern period, in the wake of the Reformation with its displacement of responsibility for interpreting the Bible from the Church to individual Christians generally. This new focus on hermeneutics occurred especially in Germany.[1]

Two fairly common but competing pictures of the course of modern hermeneutics in Germany are that it began with a fumbling germination in the eighteenth century and then flowered in the systematic hermeneutics of Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher in the early nineteenth century,[2] or that it began with a fumbling germination in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and then eventually flowered in the philosophical hermeneutics of Martin Heidegger and Hans-Georg Gadamer in the twentieth

[1] On the history of hermeneutics in general, and on the role of the Reformation in particular, see W. Dilthey, 'Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics' (1860) and 'The Rise of Hermeneutics' (1900), both in W. Dilthey, *Hermeneutics and the Study of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

[2] This is roughly the view held by the German scholar of hermeneutics Manfred Frank, for example.

century (hence the very word 'hermeneutics' is today often treated as virtually synonymous with 'Gadamer's philosophy').[3]

I take both of these pictures to be deeply misguided (especially the latter). What I would like to substitute for them in the present essay is something more like the following picture. There has indeed been impressive progress in hermeneutics since the eighteenth century. However, this progress has consisted, not in the attainment of a hermeneutical system or a philosophical hermeneutics, but instead in the gradual accumulation of particular insights, both into the very nature of interpretation itself and into the scope and significance of interpretation. And the thinkers who have contributed most to this progress have not been the ones who are most likely to spring to mind at the mention of the word hermeneutics (e.g. Schleiermacher and Gadamer), but instead certain thinkers less commonly fêted in this connection (especially, Johann August Ernesti, Johann Gottfried Herder, Friedrich Schlegel, Wilhelm Dilthey, Friedrich Nietzsche, and more recently John Langshaw Austin and Quentin Skinner).

With a view to establishing this picture, this article will attempt to give a fairly comprehensive survey of the field of modern hermeneutics, focusing on the ideas of its most prominent representatives more or less in chronological sequence, and providing some critical assessment of them along the way.[4] The chapter will conclude with some suggestions for new horizons in hermeneutics.

* * *

A seminal figure in the development of modern hermeneutics in Germany was Johann August Ernesti (1707–81). Ernesti's *Institutio Interpretis Novi Testamenti* [*Instruction for the Interpreter of the New Testament*] of 1761 constitutes an important transition from a hermeneutics focused exclusively on the Bible towards a more general hermeneutics. The work was greatly respected by, and strongly influenced, important immediate successors in the German hermeneutical tradition such as Herder and Schleiermacher. It makes many points which can still be read with profit today.

[3] This is roughly the view held by Gadamer himself, for example.

[4] One of the more unusual and confusing features of modern hermeneutics lies in the fact that many of its most prominent thinkers tend to suppress rather than celebrate the intellectual influences on them. Accordingly, one of the tasks of this essay will be to try to bring some of these influences to light—in particular, Herder's influence on Schleiermacher, Nietzsche's on Freud, Nietzsche's on Gadamer, and Gadamer's on Derrida.

Ernesti in particular takes five vitally important steps in hermeneutics. First, he argues that the Bible must be interpreted in just the same way as any other text.[5] He does not follow through on this principle fully or consistently—for, while he does indeed forgo any reliance on a divine inspiration of the interpreter, he assumes that, as the word of God,[6] the Bible must be true and hence also self-consistent throughout,[7] which is not something that he would assume in connection with profane texts. However, Herder and Schleiermacher would soon go on to embrace this principle in a full and consistent way.

Second, Ernesti identifies the following twofold obstacle that he sees facing interpretation in many cases: (1) different languages possess markedly different conceptual resources;[8] and (2) a particular author's concepts often diverge significantly from those of his background language.[9] The conception that interpreters face such a twofold obstacle in many cases would subsequently be taken over by Herder and Schleiermacher, who would indeed make it even more fundamental to their theories. In particular, this conception is the source of an acute awareness which they both share of an ever-present danger in interpretation of falsely assimilating the concepts (and beliefs, etc.) expressed by a text to one's own, or to others with which one happens already to be especially familiar. And principle (2), specifically, also grounds an intuition which they both share that *linguistic* interpretation needs to be complemented by a side of interpretation that focuses on authorial *psychology*, namely in order to make it possible to penetrate authorial individuality in conceptualization.

Third, Ernesti argues that the *meaning* of words depends on *linguistic usage* (*usus loquendi*), so that interpretation is fundamentally a matter of determining the linguistic usage of words.[10] This is another vitally important move. It would eventually lead, in Herder, Johann Georg Hamann, and Schleiermacher, to a stronger version of the same thesis which grounded it in the further, revolutionary claim that it is true because meaning *is* word usage.[11] Ernesti's thesis also formed a sort of base line from which such successors would later

[5] *Ernesti's Institutes*, trans. C. H. Terrot, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1832–3), i. 30–2, 127. A step of this sort was also taken at around the same time by other progressive Bible scholars in Germany, such as Michaelis, Semler, and Wettstein.

[6] Ibid. ii. 1–4. [7] Ibid. i. 36, 38. [8] Ibid. i. 56–7.

[9] Ibid. i. 63–4. Ernesti identifies the language of the New Testament as a good example of this (cf. i. 121–3).

[10] Ibid. i. 27, 63.

[11] Ernesti did not himself go this far. Instead, he still conceived meaning, in continuity with the tradition of British empiricism (especially Locke), as a matter of a regular connection between words and *ideas* (see, for example, ibid. i. 15–17, 27).

set out to look for *additional* tasks that interpretation needs to accomplish (e.g. determining aspects of authorial psychology).

Fourth, Ernesti insists—in opposition to a tradition of exclusively text-focused reading of the Bible which was still alive in his day—[12] that interpretation must deploy a detailed knowledge of a text's historical, geographical, etc. context.[13] Subsequently, Herder, Schleiermacher, and August Boeckh would all take over this position in their hermeneutical theories.[14]

Fifth, Ernesti insists on various forms of holism in interpretation:[15] the parts of a text must be interpreted in light of the whole text;[16] and both of these in light of an author's broader corpus and other related texts.[17] Such holism is in particular necessary in order to acquire sufficient evidence to be able to pin down word usages, and hence meanings.[18] This principle of holism would subsequently be taken over and developed much further by successors such as Herder, Friedrich Ast, and Schleiermacher. Herder in particular would already place much greater emphasis on it,[19] and also expand it to include consideration of the author's whole historical context,[20] and of his whole psychology.[21] Such a principle of holism leads to the notorious problem of a 'hermeneutical circle' (later highlighted by Dilthey among others). For example, if interpreting parts of a text requires interpreting the whole of the text, then, given that interpreting the whole obviously also requires interpreting the parts, how can interpretation ever be achieved at all? Herder in the *Critical Forests*, and then following him Schleiermacher, already anticipate, and also develop a plausible solution to, that sort of problem: since understanding is not an all-or-nothing matter but instead something that comes in *degrees*, it is possible to interpret the parts of a text in sequence with some measure of adequacy, thereby achieve a measure of understanding of the whole text, then deploy that measure of understanding

[12] See on this Dilthey, 'Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics', 67, 73–4.

[13] *Ernesti's Institutes*, i. 210, ii. 260–2. This move was again shared by other progressive Bible scholars in Germany from the period, for example Semler and Michaelis.

[14] Hermeneutics threatened to go full circle on this issue in the first half of the twentieth century with the de-contextualizing position of the New Critics. But this particular piece of retrograde foolishness has mercifully receded into abeyance again.

[15] This principle was not altogether new with Ernesti.

[16] *Ernesti's Institutes*, i. 70–1. [17] Ibid. i. 74. [18] Ibid. i. 70–1.

[19] See especially his early works on biblical interpretation and his *Critical Forests* (1769).

[20] See especially his *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity* (1774).

[21] See especially his *On Thomas Abbt's Writings* (1768) and *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (1778).

of the whole text in order to refine one's understanding of the parts, thereby refining one's understanding of the whole text, and so on (in principle, indefinitely).

* * *

Another very important early contributor to the development of hermeneutics was the man already mentioned, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803).[22] In addition to taking over and developing the five principles just described, Herder also made several further important moves.

Perhaps the most important of these was to set hermeneutics on the foundation of a new, and moreover arguably correct, philosophy of language. In particular, Herder grounded hermeneutics in the following three principles: (1) Meanings are—not, as many philosophers have supposed, referents, Platonic forms, empiricist ideas, or whatnot, but instead—word usages. (2) Because of this, all thought (as essentially articulated in terms of concepts or meanings) is essentially dependent on and bounded by the thinker's capacity for linguistic expression—i.e. a person can only think if he has a language and can only think what he can express linguistically. (3) Meanings are also essentially grounded in (perceptual and affective) sensations—either directly (as in the case of the 'in' of 'The dog is in the garden', for example) or via a sort of metaphorical extension (as in the case of the 'in' of 'Jones is in legal trouble', for example).[23] Principles (1) and (2) essentially established modern philosophy of language in one fell swoop, and would still be widely accepted by philosophers of language today. Principle (3) would meet with much more skepticism among contemporary philosophers of language, but may nonetheless very well be correct too (contrary to first appearances, it need not conflict with principle (1); and the widespread anti-psychologism concerning meaning due to Gottlob Frege and Ludwig Wittgenstein that is likely to make it seem dubious to philosophers of language today is arguably itself mistaken).

Now these three principles all carry very important consequences for interpretation. Principle (1) grounds at a deeper level Ernesti's thesis that it is

[22] Most, though not all, of Herder's works discussed in this article can be found in *Herder: Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. M. N. Forster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[23] Herder also in a way believes the converse: that the sensations of a mature human being are essentially grounded in meanings, and hence in language. This, together with his idea of metaphorical extensions, distinguishes his position in principle (3) from that of a traditional empiricist like Hume. I shall accordingly describe it as quasi-empiricist.

an essential task of interpretation to determine linguistic usage and hence meaning. Principle (2) implies not only that in order to access an author's thoughts an interpreter must explore the author's language, but also that there is no danger that an author's thoughts will transcend his capacity for linguistic expression. And the quasi-empiricist principle (3) implies that interpretation requires the interpreter to perform some sort of imaginative reproduction of an author's meaning-internal sensations (this is an important aspect of Herder's notorious thesis that interpretation requires *Einfühlung*, 'feeling one's way in').[24] Versions or variants of these three principles, and of their consequences for interpretation, would subsequently be taken over by Schleiermacher.[25]

But Herder also took further seminal steps in his theory of interpretation. One of these was to argue for the need to complement the focus on language which Ernesti had already championed with a focus on authorial *psychology*.[26] Herder has several reasons for making this move. A first is the idea just mentioned that interpretation requires an imaginative recapturing of certain authorial sensations. A second is the idea that recourse to authorial psychology is often necessary in order to resolve ambiguities in a text. A third is the idea that a focus on authorial psychology is an important means for penetrating an author's conceptual-linguistic individuality. Schleiermacher would subsequently take over Herder's principle of complementing linguistic with psychological interpretation, and especially the third of the rationales for doing so just mentioned (which he developed significantly). Indeed, one good way of characterizing the development of hermeneutics after Herder more generally is as a sort of progressive confirmation of his thesis that linguistic interpretation needs to be complemented with a focus on authorial psychology, a progressive confirmation taking the form of the identification of increasingly precise and additional reasons why that is so (examples of this trend are, besides Schleiermacher's

[24] For some further details concerning these three principles and their consequences for interpretation, see my 'Herder's Philosophy of Language, Interpretation, and Translation: Three Fundamental Principles', *The Review Metaphysics*, 56 (2002). For a discussion of the various aspects of Herder's multi-faceted concept of *Einfühlung*, see my *Herder: Philosophical Writings*, editor's introduction, pp. xvii–xviii.

[25] Schleiermacher's debt is most straightforward in connection with (1) and (2). His variant of (3) lies in his mature theory that concepts consist in empirical schemata, or rules for the production of images.

[26] See especially Herder's *On Thomas Abbt's Writings* and *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul*.

development of Herder's third rationale, a novel point of Schlegel's that a text will often express thoughts not explicitly in any of its parts but instead implicitly and holistically, and Austin and Skinner's novel assignment of an essential role in interpretation to the identification of illocutionary force).[27]

Herder also argues that interpretation, especially in its psychological aspect, requires the use of what he calls 'divination', by which he essentially means (not some sort of divinely guided insight or infallible intuition, but instead much more reasonably) a method of fallible and corrigible hypothesis based on but also going well beyond the relatively meager linguistic and other behavioral evidence available.[28] Schleiermacher would again subsequently take over this principle, similarly holding that a method of 'divination' predominates on the psychological side of interpretation, and similarly conceiving this as a method of fallible and corrigible hypothesis based on but also going well beyond the meager evidence available.[29]

Another of Herder's vital contributions to the theory of interpretation lies in his emphasis on the essential role played in interpreting a work by a correct identification of its *genre*, and on the difficulty of achieving such a correct identification in many cases. Herder conceives of a genre as consisting in a general purpose together with certain rules of composition which serve it.[30] He believes that identifying a work's genre correctly is crucial for interpreting it not only because identifying the genre is in itself partly constitutive of fully comprehending the work, but also because the genre often carries meanings which are not explicitly articulated in the work itself, and because a proper grasp of the genre is moreover essential for correctly interpreting many of the things which *are* explicitly articulated in the work. This much would probably have been broadly agreed to by several of Herder's forerunners in the theory of genre (for example, Aristotle and Herder's contemporary Gotthold Ephraim Lessing). But Herder adds an important new twist. Just as concepts often vary in subtle ways across historical periods and cultures,

[27] With a modicum of interpretive charity, Herder and Schleiermacher can indeed be seen as already hinting at these two additional rationales. For a little more discussion of this (focusing on Schleiermacher), see my 'Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics: Some Problems and Solutions', *The Harvard Review of Philosophy*, 13/1 (2005).

[28] See especially *On Thomas Abbt's Writings* and *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul.*

[29] As a clue to understanding Herder and Schleiermacher's conception of 'divination', it is more helpful to think of the French *deviner* (to guess, to conjecture) than of the Latin *divinus* (of a god, prophetic.)

[30] This conception arguably requires a little modification. For example, sometimes *multiple* purposes are constitutive of a genre.

and even between individuals within a single period and culture, thereby complicating the task of interpretation, in particular by creating ever-present temptations falsely to assimilate the concepts found to ones with which the interpreter is already familiar, so likewise the task of identifying a genre correctly is complicated by the fact that genres often vary in subtle ways across historical periods and cultures, and even between authors working within a single period and culture, indeed sometimes even between different relevant works by a single author,[31] so that interpreters face ever-present temptations falsely to assimilate an encountered genre to one that is already familiar.[32] In addition, Herder applies this whole position concerning genre not only to linguistic works but also to non-linguistic art.[33] Herder's insight into the vital role that identifying genre plays in interpretation and into the difficulty of accomplishing this properly would subsequently be taken over by Schlegel and Boeckh (by contrast, Schleiermacher emphasizes this much less).[34]

The points discussed so far have all been concerned with the question of the very nature of interpretation itself, but Herder also makes several important contributions in connection with the question of the scope and significance of interpretation. One contribution which straddles both questions concerns non-linguistic art (e.g. sculpture, painting, and instrumental music). Herder's views on this subject underwent a dramatic evolution early in his career. In the *Critical Forests* he was initially inclined to suppose that principles (1) and (2) in his philosophy of language precluded non-linguistic art expressing meanings and thoughts, and he therefore took the position that it did not. However, in the course of writing the work he came to recognize the (really rather obvious) fact that non-linguistic art often *does* express meanings and thoughts, and he came to realize that this is not inconsistent with principles

[31] For example, ancient Greek 'tragedy' is not really the same genre as Shakespearean 'tragedy', Shakespeare's 'tragedy' not quite the same genre as Jonson's 'tragedy', and indeed the genre of 'tragedy' even varies between some of Shakespeare's own 'tragic' works.

[32] See on this especially Herder's classic essay *Shakespeare* from 1773 (in its several drafts). Herder even countenances the possibility of a genre being found in just a single work by an author. That might seem incoherent at first sight, but it is in fact not. For, as Boeckh would later go on to point out explicitly, what is essential to a genre is not multiple instantia*tion*, but only multiple instanti*ability*.

[33] See, for example, his discussion of ancient Egyptian vs. ancient Greek portrait sculpture in *This Too a Philosophy of History for the Formation of Humanity*.

[34] Boeckh, who includes generic interpretation among the four basic types or aspects of interpretation which he distinguishes (along with historical, linguistic, and individual), seems to credit Schlegel as its real inventor. But Herder has a stronger claim to that title.

(1) and (2) after all, provided that the meanings and thoughts in question are ones which the artist possesses *in virtue of his linguistic capacity*. That was henceforth Herder's considered position. This position entailed two important consequences for interpretation: first, that non-linguistic art often requires interpretation, just as linguistic texts and discourse do (this constitutes a sort of broadening of the scope of interpretation); and second, that its interpretation needs to proceed via interpretation of the artist's language (this can be seen as a further insight concerning the very nature of interpretation itself). One of the most interesting and contested questions in modern hermeneutics is whether this position of Herder's is correct. For, while Herder's attribution of meanings and thoughts to non-linguistic art is beyond much dispute and has been accepted by most hermeneutic theorists since (for example, by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Dilthey, and Gadamer), his further thesis that such meanings and thoughts are always parasitic on the artist's linguistic capacity is far more controversial, and has been contradicted by several prominent theorists (including Hegel and Dilthey). I have argued elsewhere that this further Herderian thesis *is* in fact correct, however.[35]

Herder also effects another sort of broadening in the scope of interpretation. He recognizes that animals have mental lives even in the absence of any proper language, but he also holds, plausibly, that once language is acquired it transforms the character of a person's whole mental life, so that (for example) even his perceptual and affective sensations become implicitly linguistically articulated.[36] This position implies that any proper identification of a mature person's mental states requires interpretation of his language—an implication which constitutes a further sort of broadening of the scope of interpretation. Hegel would subsequently take over this whole position.[37] It also reappears in Heidegger's famous conception in *Being and Time* that *Dasein*, or Man, is of its/his very nature an interpretive being, a being possessed of an understanding of meanings, even for example in its/his perceptual sensations.[38]

[35] See my 'Gods, Animals, and Artists: Some Problem Cases in Herder's Philosophy of Language', *Inquiry*, 46 (2003); and 'Hegel and Some (Near) Contemporaries: Narrow or Broad Expressivism?', in W. Welsch and K. Vieweg (eds.), *Das Interesse des Denkens: Hegel aus heutiger Sicht* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2003).

[36] See especially *Treatise on the Origin of Language* and *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul*.

[37] See, for example, G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, paras. 2, 24 (Zusatz 1), and 462 (Zusatz), which argue that all human mental life is imbued with thought and that thought is impossible without language.

[38] See M. Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), paras. 31–4. Reading through *Being and Time*, one might initially wonder whether Heidegger conceives the understanding of meanings

These two steps of broadening the scope of interpretation begin an important trend in hermeneutics which continues after Herder. For example, Hegel not only follows these two steps (as already mentioned), but he also identifies a range of *socio-political institutions* which he calls 'Objective Spirit' as expressions of meanings and thoughts, and therefore as requiring interpretation, and he notes that human *actions*, since they essentially express human mental life (in particular, beliefs and desires), which is essentially imbued with meanings and thoughts, can only be properly understood with the aid of interpretation as well. Dilthey subsequently takes over this even broader conception of the role of interpretation from Hegel.[39] And as we shall see in the course of this article, further forms of broadening have occurred since Herder as well (for example, in connection with certain seemingly meaningless behaviors such as acts of forgetting and slips of the tongue, and in connection with animals).

In addition, Herder makes several seminal moves concerning the *significance* of interpretation. One of these lies in his assignment to interpretation of a central role in the discipline of history. He argues for this on the grounds that historians should focus less on the history of political and military events than they usually do, and instead more on the history of culture, where interpretation obviously plays a paramount role.[40] However, the sort of broadening of interpretation to cover human mental life generally, socio-political institutions, and actions which Herder himself began and Hegel extended further implies a central role for interpretation even in the historian's treatment of political and military events. And accordingly, Hegel would go on to assign interpretation a central role across the whole range of the historian's work, political and military as well as cultural. Subsequently, Dilthey would generalize this idea of the central role of interpretation in history, identifying interpretation as the central task not only of history but also of the human sciences more generally (as distinguished from the natural sciences, whose main task is rather causal explanation). He would thereby provide a plausible solution to two vexed questions concerning the human sciences: first, the

in question here essentially to involve language, for his opening discussion of the matter at paras. 31–2 focuses on understanding and meaning alone. However, he goes on at para. 34 to make it clear that language *is* essentially involved (and the later Heidegger is even more emphatic on this point).

[39] For a little more discussion of this whole subject, see my 'Hegel and Hermeneutics', in F. Beiser (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Hegel*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

[40] For some details, see my *Herder: Philosophical Writings*, editor's introduction, pp. xxv–xxviii.

question of their appropriate method, and second, the question of how they can claim the status of genuine sciences. (On this more anon.)

Also, Herder introduces the vitally important insight that interpreting, or coming to a proper understanding of, (historical and cultural) others is essential for achieving a proper *self*-understanding. There are two main reasons for this, in his view. First, it is only by interpreting (historical and cultural) others and thereby arriving at a knowledge of the nature of their concepts, beliefs, etc. that one can come to see what is universal and what by contrast is distinctive in one's own concepts, beliefs, etc. Second, it is only by interpreting (historical) others who are one's forerunners in one's own cultural tradition that one can come to see how one's own concepts, beliefs, etc. arose over time, this insight in itself constituting an important contribution to their comprehension (this is Herder's justly famous 'genetic method'). This whole position has been central to much hermeneutically oriented thought since Herder. For example, it plays a vital role in Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Michel Foucault (all of whom are in particular strongly committed to enhancing our self-understanding by means of versions or variants of Herder's 'genetic method').

Herder also develops several further compelling ideas concerning the significance of accurate interpretation, especially in cases involving historical or cultural distance. One of these is the idea that (once we drop the naïve and narcissistic assumption that we represent a sort of historical and cultural pinnacle) it turns out that we have a lot to *learn* from the sources in question, for example in relation to ethical and aesthetic ideals.

Another is the idea that accurate interpretation of historical and especially cultural others is important for the ethical-political good of promoting intercultural respect: accurate interpretation of such others both expresses and encourages such respect, whereas sheer neglect or careless interpretation both expresses and encourages depreciation, and hence supports disrespectful treatment.

In sum, Herder makes a number of vitally important contributions to hermeneutics, both in connection with the very nature of interpretation and in connection with its scope and significance.

* * *

One of the best-known theorists of hermeneutics is Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768–1834), who developed his views on the subject in

lectures delivered during the first third of the nineteenth century.[41] Schleiermacher is indeed commonly regarded as the father of modern hermeneutics. I would suggest, however, that this title may more properly belong to one of his predecessors.

Like Herder, Schleiermacher grounds hermeneutics in a philosophy of language (one closely related and heavily indebted to Herder's) — in particular, doctrines that meaning consists in 'the unity of the word-sphere', that thought is identical with language (or inner language), and that meanings are constituted by empirical schemata, or rules for the production of images (à la Kant).

But Schleiermacher is especially famous for insisting on the following points: that hermeneutics should be a universal discipline, applicable to all types of interpretation alike; that, contrary to a common assumption that 'understanding occurs as a matter of course', in fact 'misunderstanding occurs as a matter of course, and so understanding must be willed and sought at every point'; that interpretation needs to complement a linguistic (or 'grammatical') focus with a psychological (or 'technical') focus; that while a 'comparative' (i.e. plain inductive) method should predominate on the linguistic side, a 'divinatory' (i.e. hypothetical) method should predominate on the psychological side; and that an interpreter ought to understand an author better than the author understood himself.[42]

I would suggest, though, that there has been a tendency to exaggerate Schleiermacher's importance for the development of hermeneutics, and that his contribution, while significant, was fairly modest.

To begin with the negative side of this assessment, when one views Schleiermacher's theory against the background of Ernesti and Herder's, it turns out that much of what is good in it is not new, much of what is new not good, and that it omits much that was good in the preceding theories.

Much of what is good in it is not new

This applies to the philosophy of language on which Schleiermacher founds his theory of interpretation, which largely repeats Herder's. It also applies to Schleiermacher's complementing of linguistic with psychological

[41] F. D. E. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), and *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1986).

[42] These doctrines can all be found in the two works cited in the previous note.

interpretation, and even to his primary justification of this in terms of the need to penetrate authorial individuality in conceptualization—both moves which, as we saw, Herder had already made. It also applies to Schleiermacher's conception that the predominant method on the psychological side of interpretation should be 'divination', in the sense of fallible and corrigible hypothesis based on but also going well beyond the meager empirical evidence available—a conception which, as we saw, Herder had already introduced. And it also applies to Schleiermacher's insistence on various sorts of holism in interpretation, and to his conception that, contrary to first appearances, this does not make interpretation impossible because understanding comes in degrees and so can be achieved by means of a provisional understanding of parts which then affords a provisional understanding of a whole, which can then in turn be used to refine the understanding of the parts, and so on—an insistence and conception which, as we saw, Ernesti and especially Herder had already developed.

Much of what is new in it is not good

This applies to Schleiermacher's modification of Herder's doctrine of thought's essential dependence on and boundedness by language into a doctrine of their outright identity (on reflection, this proves to be philosophically untenable). It also applies to Schleiermacher's modification of Herder's quasi-empiricism about meanings into an equation of meanings with empirical schemata à la Kant, for the sharply dualistic way in which Kant had conceived schemata as only contingently related to language leads to an inconsistency here with Schleiermacher's equation of meanings with rules of word usage, or 'the unity of the word-sphere'. It also applies to Schleiermacher's transformation of Ernesti and Herder's *empirically grounded rule of thumb* that authors *often* conceptualize in idiosyncratic ways into an *a priori principle allegedly grounded in the very nature of reason* that people *always* do so, so that *exact understanding of another person is never possible* (a principle which is implausible in its very a priori status, in its specific a priori argument concerning the nature of reason, and in that argument's highly counterintuitive implication that exact understanding of another is never possible). It also applies to Schleiermacher's novel specification of the central function of psychological interpretation as one of determining an author's 'seminal decision' (*Keimentschluß*) which unfolds itself into his whole work in a necessary manner (for how many

works are actually written in such a way?). It also applies to Schleiermacher's restriction of the empirical evidence that can be adduced in order to arrive at an estimation of an author's psychology to *linguistic* evidence, rather than, as Herder had held, behavioral evidence more generally (for cannot non-linguistic behavior constitute just as valid and important evidence for relevant psychological traits as linguistic behavior?). Finally, it also applies to Schleiermacher's argument, contradicting Herder's predominant tendency in works such as *On Thomas Abbt's Writings* to treat interpretation as a science rather like the natural sciences, that due to the role of 'divination', or hypothesis, in interpretation, interpretation is not a science but an art (for have we not since Schleiermacher's day come to see hypothesis as a *paradigm* of natural scientific method?).

It omits much that was good in the preceding theories

This arguably applies to Schleiermacher's omission of Herder's conception that *Einfühlung*, 'feeling one's way in', has an essential role to play in interpretation. It also applies to Schleiermacher's relative neglect, in comparison with Herder, of the importance to interpretation of determining *genre*, and of overcoming the serious obstacles that often stand in the way of doing so.

So what is Schleiermacher's real achievement in hermeneutics? I would suggest that it mainly consists of four things. First and foremost, he draws together in an orderly way many of the important ideas about interpretation that had already been developed by Ernesti and Herder (Herder in particular had left his own contributions to the subject scattered through a large number of works, moreover works largely devoted to other subjects). This process would subsequently be carried still further by Schleiermacher's pupil and follower August Boeckh (1785–1867) in his *Encyclopedia and Methodology of the Philological Sciences* (1877), which distinguishes four basic types or aspects of interpretation that need to be undertaken: historical, linguistic, individual (i.e. what Herder and Schleiermacher had called psychological), and generic.

Second, Schleiermacher's theory of the nature of meaning arguably takes one important step beyond Herder's, in that Schleiermacher introduces several forms of semantic holism (as distinct from—though no doubt also providing reasons for—interpretive holism): (1) a doctrine of 'the unity of the word sphere', which basically says that the several different usages and hence

meanings which typically belong to a word (and which will be distinguished by any good dictionary entry) are essentially interdependent; (2) a doctrine that the usages and hence meanings of cognate words in a language are likewise essentially interdependent (this would apply both to morphologically evident cognates, for example 'to work', 'a worker', and 'a work' in English, and to morphologically non-evident ones, for example *physis* [nature] and *nomos* [custom] in Attic Greek); and (3) a doctrine that the distinctive *grammar* of a language is internal to the usages and hence meanings of the particular words in the language.[43] These several forms of semantic holism entail corresponding tasks for an interpreter (and furnish one specific rationale or set of rationales for holism in interpretation).

Third, as has already been mentioned, Schleiermacher embraces the project of a *universal* hermeneutics, a single theory of interpretation that will apply to all types of interpretation alike—as much to the interpretation of sacred works as to that of profane, as much to the interpretation of modern works as to that of ancient, as much to the interpretation of oral statements as to that of written, and so on. The conception of such a project already had precedents earlier in the hermeneutical tradition,[44] and Herder had recently in effect erased the sacred/profane and modern/ancient divisions in particular. But Schleiermacher's explicit commitment to this project still constitutes a significant contribution (and his idea of applying general hermeneutical principles to the interpretation of oral statements is perhaps especially noteworthy).

Fourth, Schleiermacher further develops Herder's idea that one reason why linguistic interpretation needs to be complemented with psychological interpretation is that the latter is required in order to penetrate authorial conceptual-linguistic individuality. Schleiermacher sees this, more specifically, as due to the fact that where an author's rules of word usage and hence meanings are idiosyncratic, rather than shared in common with a whole linguistic community, the relevant actual uses of a word which are available to serve the interpreter as his evidential basis for inferring to the rule of word usage that governs them will usually be poor in both number and

[43] Doctrine (1) is prominent in the hermeneutics lectures; doctrines (2) and (3) are especially prominent in Schleiermacher's essay 'On the Different Methods of Translation' (1813), in A. L. Willson (ed.), *German Romantic Criticism* (New York: Continuum, 1982). Note that Schlegel had already developed a version of doctrine (3) in his seminal work *On the Language and Wisdom of the Indians* (1808).

[44] See on this K. Vorländer, *Geschichte der Philosophie*, 3.1: *Die Philosophie in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1975), 58–9.

contextual variety, so that the interpreter will need to have recourse to a further source of guidance, namely a general knowledge of the author's distinctive psychology.[45]

* * *

A figure of at least equal, and probably greater, importance for the development of hermeneutics is Friedrich Schlegel (1772–1829). During the late 1790s, the period when they both began working intensively on hermeneutics (and also translation theory), Schlegel and Schleiermacher were close friends, even sharing accommodation for a time, and there is a serious question as to which of them can claim the greater credit for the ideas which Schleiermacher eventually articulated in his hermeneutics lectures.[46] However, Schlegel's claim to importance in the development of hermeneutics does not, I think, turn mainly on that question. Rather, it rests on three contributions that he made which are not really found in Schleiermacher.

First, Schlegel makes the point that texts sometimes express meanings and thoughts, not explicitly in any of their parts, but instead through their parts and the way in which these are put together to form a whole.[47] Schlegel apparently believes that this feature is especially characteristic of ancient texts,[48] though not exclusive to them.[49] This point is correct and extremely important.[50] Consider, for example, *Iliad*, book 1. There Homer

[45] For further discussion of certain aspects of Schleiermacher's hermeneutical theory, see my 'Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher' in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (online), and 'Schleiermacher's Hermeneutics: Some Problems and Solutions'.

[46] Concerning this question, see J. Körner, Friedrich Schlegels "Philosophie der Philologie", *Logos*, 17 (1928), and H. Patsch, Friedrich Schlegels "Philosophie der Philologie" und Schleiermachers frühe Entwürfe zur Hermeneutik", *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, 63 (1966).

[47] *Athenaeum Fragments* (1798–1800), in F. Schlegel, *Philosophical Fragments* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 31: 'The teachings that a novel hopes to instill must be of the sort that can be communicated only as wholes, not demonstrated singly and not subject to exhaustive analysis' (cf. p. 64).

[48] Schlegel writes, quoting a famous fragment of Heraclitus: 'But Apollo, who neither speaks nor keeps silent but intimates, no longer is worshipped, and wherever a Muse shows herself, people immediately want to carry her off to be cross-examined' (ibid. 64).

[49] See Schlegel's reference to modern novels in the note before last.

[50] Note that it is a further question whether or not the meanings and thoughts involved *could* in principle have been linguistically expressed by the artist in the usual way. In the passage quoted a few notes back from *Athenaeum Fragments*, 31, Schlegel seems to commit himself to the position that they at least sometimes could not have been. But if so, then this is really a further thesis on Schlegel's part. Hence this point *need* not stand in conflict or tension with Herder's doctrines that meaning is word usage and that thought is essentially dependent on and bounded by language.

communicates something like the following message, not by means of explicitly stating it anywhere, but instead by means of artfully juxtaposing and contrasting, on the one hand, the quarrel between the mortals Agamemnon and short-lived Achilles (which Nestor attempts to mediate), with all its grandeur, passion, and seriousness, and, on the other hand, the structurally similar but parody-like quarrel between the immortals Zeus and Hera (which Hephaistos attempts to mediate), with all its ultimate triviality and even ludicrousness:

> You may well have supposed that the immortality and the other apparent advantages enjoyed by the gods would be a huge boon to any being who possessed them, raising their lot far above that of mere mortals like us, as indeed the gods' traditional epithet 'blessed' implies, but in fact, if you think about it, since nothing would ever be seriously at stake for such beings as it is for us mortals, their existence would be reduced to a sort of unending triviality and meaninglessness, so that our lot is in a very real sense the better one.[51]

Note that this point of Schlegel's provides an additional reason why, or sense in which, Herder was correct in thinking that linguistic interpretation needs to be complemented with psychological interpretation.

A second contribution of Schlegel's is as follows. Already before Schlegel, Ernesti had allowed for the imputation of inconsistencies and other forms of confusion to profane texts, and Herder had extended that principle to sacred texts as well. Schlegel emphasizes and develops the principle still more, not only stressing the importance of acknowledging the presence of confusion in texts when it occurs, but also insisting that in such cases the interpreter must seek to understand and explain it.[52] This principle is valid and very important.[53] It is particularly valuable as a corrective to certain

[51] That this message is not merely being read in here but is indeed intended by the poet is confirmed by a famous episode in the *Odyssey*, book 5 in which the fair nymph Calypso invites Odysseus to stay with her as her consort and become immortal as she is, but he (the most intelligent man in all of Homer, note!) declines the invitation, choosing instead to return to Ithaca and his aging wife Penelope as a mere mortal and eventually to die.

[52] Schlegel writes in about 1797: 'In order to understand someone, one must first of all be cleverer than he, then just as clever, and then also just as stupid. It is not enough that one understand the actual sense of a confused work better than the author understood it. One must also oneself be able to know, to *characterize*, and even *construe* the confusion even down to its very principles' (*Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ed. E. Behler et al. (Munich: Schöningh, 1958–), xviii. 63).

[53] More questionable, though, is a philosophically ambitious general explanation which Schlegel sometimes gives for the presence of, and consequent need to recognize, confusion in texts, namely that this is due to the chaotic nature of the *reality* which texts aim to characterize: 'Is this infinite world [of the texts of science and art] not formed by the understanding out of unintelligibility or

misguided ideas about the need for 'charity' in interpretation which have become widespread in recent Anglophone philosophy. Some recent theorists of hermeneutics who, by contrast, are in substantial and commendable agreement with Schlegel in insisting on a principle of this sort are Jacques Derrida and Skinner.[54]

A third important contribution of Schlegel's concerns the role of *unconscious* meanings and thoughts in texts, and hence in their interpretation. The general idea that unconscious mental processes occur already had a long history in German philosophy by Schlegel's day: it had been a commonplace among the Rationalists, Kant had been strongly committed to it, and so too had Herder, who had moreover discussed it in close connection with questions of interpretation in his *On the Cognition and Sensation of the Human Soul* (1778). However, it is above all Schlegel who develops this idea into a principle that the interpreter should penetrate beyond an author's conscious meanings and thoughts to include his unconscious ones as well: 'Every excellent work . . . aims at more than it knows';[55] 'In order to understand someone who only partially understands himself, you first have to understand him completely and better than he himself does.'[56] This is a very important idea.[57] It has been pursued further in the present century by Freud and his followers. However, their pursuit of it has perhaps done less to realize its full potential than to reveal its epistemological hazardousness, its encouragement of arbitrariness due to the fact that the appropriate criteria for imputing unconscious meanings

chaos?'; 'It is a high and perhaps the final step of intellectual formation to posit for oneself the sphere of unintelligibility and confusion. The understanding of chaos consists in recognizing it' ('Über die Unverständlichkeit', in *Athenaeum*, ed. A. W. Schlegel and F. Schlegel (1798–1800), iii/2. 350 f., 339).

[54] Derrida's commitment to such a principle will be discussed later in this chapter. For Skinner's, see his 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', in J. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

[55] 'Über Goethes Meister' (1798), *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, ii. 140.

[56] *Athenaeum Fragments*, 81. Schleiermacher uses the formula of understanding an author better than he understands himself as well, but he means something much less ambitious by it—roughly, just that the sorts of rules of word usage and grammar which the native speaker of a language masters unconsciously should be known consciously by his interpreter—and is in general relatively hesitant to impute unconscious mental processes to people.

[57] Schlegel again has certain specific ways of developing it which are more questionable, though. In particular, he conceives this situation less as a matter of properties that belong to an author than as a matter of properties that belong to his text (a position which would no doubt find favor with recent French theorists of 'the death of the author', but perhaps not correctly), and that are moreover 'infinite' or divine in nature. (Concerning this aspect of Schlegel's position, see Patsch, 'Friedrich Schlegels 'Philosophie der Philologie' und Schleiermachers frühe Entwürfe zur Hermeneutik', 456–9.)

and thoughts are even less clear than those for imputing conscious ones.[58] Developing a proper methodology for, and application of, this aspect of interpretation arguably remains a work in progress.[59]

* * *

Another thinker who might be thought to have played an important role in the development of hermeneutics is Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831). As in the case of Schleiermacher, however, the picture turns out to be equivocal.

Hegel can certainly claim considerable credit for taking over and further developing some of Herder's most important principles concerning the scope and significance of interpretation. As has already been mentioned: he takes over Herder's principles that non-linguistic art (architecture, sculpture, painting, instrumental music, etc.) often expresses meanings and thoughts, and hence stands in need of interpretation; and that the whole mental life of a mature human being is implicitly linguistically articulated, and hence stands in need of interpretation. He adds the principles that the socio-political institutions which he calls 'Objective Spirit' express meanings and thoughts and hence stand in need of interpretation, and that human actions, as expressions of a mature human being's mental life, do so too. And he accordingly espouses a richer version of Herder's principle that the central task of the discipline of history is an interpretive one. In addition, he adopts a form of Herder's principle that interpreting (historical and cultural) others is essential for a full *self*-understanding, both as making possible insight into what is distinctive and what universal in one's own outlook, and as enabling one to comprehend its historical emergence.

But Hegel might also be thought to have achieved important progress on the question of the very nature of interpretation itself. For he makes two moves in this area which sharply contradict previous theorists of hermeneutics and

[58] Derrida has aptly criticized certain Freudian readings of literature on the score of such arbitrariness. For a helpful discussion of these criticisms, see Matthew Sharpe's treatment in J. Reynolds and J. Roffe (eds.), *Understanding Derrida* (New York: Continuum, 2004), 67 ff.

[59] As in the case of Schlegel's first point, it might be thought that this third point violates or stands in tension with Herder's principles in the philosophy of language that meaning is word usage and that thought is essentially dependent on and bounded by language. However, once again this need not be the case. For it could be that the unconscious meanings and thoughts in question are always ones which an author has the linguistic capacity to express (as Lacan indeed seems to hold).

which have been extremely influential on subsequent theorists (especially Dilthey and Gadamer):

(1) Prior to Hegel hermeneutic theorists assumed that the meaning of a text or discourse was as objective a matter as any other, in particular that it was independent of whatever interpretations of the text or discourse might have taken place since—and that the interpreter's task was therefore to recapture such an original meaning, which in particular required resisting frequent temptations falsely to assimilate it to his own (or other more familiar) meanings and thoughts. Hegel often seems to hold otherwise, however, to *embrace* the assimilation of past meanings to one's own meanings and thoughts. And this Hegelian position has been warmly praised and imitated by Gadamer.[60]

(2) As we have seen, Herder had argued that the expression of meanings and thoughts by non-linguistic art is always in fact parasitic on the artist's capacity to express them linguistically. Hegel denies this, however—in particular arguing that ancient Egyptian architecture and ancient Greek sculpture already expressed meanings and thoughts (of a broadly religious nature) which were not yet linguistically expressible by the cultures in question.[61] This position of Hegel's was subsequently taken over by the later Dilthey (who, having begun his career more favorable to a position like Herder's, apparently absorbed this position of Hegel's while working on his classic study of the young Hegel, *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels* [1905]).

Exciting as these two moves are, and influential as they have been, I strongly suspect that they are both errors. Having argued this case at some length elsewhere,[62] I shall confine myself here to a few brief remarks.

Concerning move (1), Hegel seems to rest his case for this on three main arguments:

(a) All past meanings and thoughts, when interpreted strictly, turn out to be implicitly self-contradictory, so that we may as well undertake to interpret them charitably as approximate expressions of self-consistent and true Hegelian meanings and thoughts instead.

[60] See H-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 2002), esp. 165–9. As Gadamer notes, Hegel holds this position in the 'Religion' chapter of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807), for example.

[61] See especially *Hegel's Aesthetics*, trans. T. M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975).

[62] See my 'Hegel and Hermeneutics' and 'Hegel and Some (Near) Contemporaries: Narrow or Broad Expressivism?'.

(b) All past meanings and thoughts can be seen to have been implicitly teleologically directed towards the achievement of Hegelian meanings and thoughts in the modern world.

(c) All mental conditions, including in particular all acts of meaning, are constituted by physical behavior (including linguistic behavior), but in an open-ended way such that it is always possible, at least as long as a person is alive, for his 'past' mental conditions, or acts of meaning, to be modified by his future behavior. Furthermore, meaning is essentially constituted by the linguistic behavior, not merely of an individual, but of a community or communal tradition to which he belongs. Putting these two principles together, it therefore seems that even the acts of meaning of a dead individual from the past are always in principle open to modification by a later communal tradition.

However, these arguments are problematic. Note, to begin with, that they seem to be inconsistent with each other. In particular, (c) seems to be inconsistent with both (a) and (b), for whereas (a) and (b) presuppose that there *is* such a thing as a determinate original meaning (the point being merely that it always turns out to be self-contradictory, and to be teleologically directed towards the achievement of another, consistent meaning), (c) implies that there is *not*.

But in addition, the arguments face separate problems. For one thing, it surely seems very unlikely in the end that all past (i.e. pre-Hegelian) meanings and thoughts really have been self-contradictory, or that they really have been teleologically directed towards the achievement of Hegelian meanings and thoughts, as (a) and (b) claim. For another thing, both the open-ended behaviorism and the social theory of meaning which serve as the premises in argument (c) turn out to be very dubious. They both conflict sharply with common-sense intuitions—in particular, the former with a common-sense intuition that mental conditions may occur which receive no behavioral manifestation at all, and with a common-sense intuition that, once a mental condition occurs, its character at the time to which we normally assign it is immutable whatever behavior may take place subsequently; the latter with a common-sense intuition that if, for example, a cosmic Robinson Crusoe, all alone in the universe, were to start using chalk marks in a systematic fashion on his cave wall to keep a record of his goats and their numbers, then those marks would have meaning. Moreover, the predecessor in the hermeneutical tradition with whom Hegel is most

taking issue in (1), namely Herder, had already provided a plausible alternative theory of the nature of mental conditions, including acts of meaning, which, unlike Hegel's theory, can do justice to all of the common-sense intuitions just mentioned: mental conditions, including acts of meaning, are real 'forces' (*Kräfte*), in the sense of conditions of a subject that are apt to produce certain patterns of behavior though without being ontologically reducible to those patterns of behavior (hence the 'real')—or in other words, what a philosopher today might call real 'dispositions' to behavior.

Concerning move (2), Hegel's evidence for his thesis that certain forms of non-linguistic art express meanings and thoughts which are not yet linguistically articulable by the artist turns out to be dubious on closer inspection. In particular, while Hegel is clearly right to think that ancient Egyptian architecture expressed religious meanings and thoughts, his conviction that the architects or artists involved were not yet able to express these linguistically seems to be little more than an error due to the fact that he and his contemporaries are not yet able to identify any ancient Egyptian linguistic means for expressing them because Egyptian hieroglyphics have not yet been properly deciphered (Champollion only published his pathbreaking *Dictionnaire* and *Grammaire* in 1832, the year after Hegel's death).[63] And Hegel's conviction that Greek sculpture expressed meanings and thoughts which were not yet linguistically expressible flies in the face of a very plausible point which Herder had already made repeatedly: that the meanings and thoughts which it expressed were drawn from past poetry, myth, and legend (i.e. from linguistic sources).

In sum, while Hegel contributes significantly to the question of the scope and significance of interpretation, his more dramatic ideas concerning the very nature of interpretation itself arguably turn out to be misguided.

* * *

Another important theorist of hermeneutics is Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911). Like Hegel, Dilthey fails to make progress on the question of the nature of interpretation itself, but he does make a very important contribution to the understanding of its scope and significance.

[63] Hegel does mention Champollion's work in *The Philosophy of History*, but he presumably only knew his preliminary publications and those only cursorily.

Dilthey's interest in hermeneutics, especially in Schleiermacher's version of it, began early (his study *Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics* is from 1860) and remained pronounced throughout his career (for example, his classic essay *The Rise of Hermeneutics* is from 1900).[64]

Ironically, though, his conceptions both of Schleiermacher's theory of interpretation and of the actual nature of interpretation turn out to be rather naïve and unsatisfactory.[65]

Instead, where Dilthey really comes into his own is in connection with the question of the *significance* of interpretation. He identifies interpretation as the central task of the human sciences—including not only history but also other disciplines such as literary studies, classical scholarship, anthropology, and art

[64] In the interim, he published the first volume of his *Das Leben Schleiermachers* in 1870, and continued working on volume 2 (eventually published after his death in 1922). This material contains further discussions of Schleiermacher's hermeneutics.

[65] For instance, his account of Schleiermacher's theory of interpretation and his own theory of interpretation tend to emphasize the psychological over the linguistic aspect of interpretation to a degree that is unfaithful both to Schleiermacher's theory and to the actual nature of interpretation. Again, Dilthey conceives the 'divinatory' method which according to Schleiermacher's theory predominates on the psychological side of interpretation as a sort of psychological self-projection by the interpreter onto the author or his text (see, for example, 'The Rise of Hermeneutics', 248–9)—a conception which, while not *entirely* without a textual basis in Schleiermacher (see *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, 92–3), fails to do justice to Schleiermacher's strong and proper emphasis, continuous with Herder's, on the need in interpretation to resist a pervasive temptation falsely to assimilate the concepts, beliefs, etc. expressed by texts (from the remote past, for example) to one's own (see ibid. 23). Again, Dilthey misconstrues Schleiermacher's theory as one that advocates omitting the consideration of historical context from interpretation ('Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics', 217)—an extraordinary misunderstanding of Schleiermacher's principle that consideration of historical context should precede interpretation proper (see, for example, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, 104), a principle whose real purport was in fact exactly the opposite, namely to emphasize that the consideration of historical context is a *conditio sine qua non* of any interpretation worthy of the name taking place at all. More promising-looking at first sight is the mature Dilthey's shift in his own theory of interpretation away from an exclusive focus on linguistic texts and discourse and towards a focus on a broader class of 'expressions' (see, for example, W. Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 168, 173, 230–1). However, the aspect of this shift that is clearly correct, namely its insistence that not only linguistic texts and discourse but also, for instance, architecture, sculpture, painting, and instrumental music express meanings and thoughts requiring interpretation, was not new, having already been emphasized by Herder and Hegel (as previously mentioned). And the aspect of it that is more novel, namely the claim, taken over from Hegel with slight modification (unlike Hegel, who focuses on architecture and sculpture in this connection, Dilthey especially focuses on instrumental music—see ibid. 245), that the additional forms of expression in question are in some cases autonomous of language, arguably turns out to be mistaken (for an argument to this effect, see my 'Hegel and Some (Near) Contemporaries: Narrow or Broad Expressivism').

history.[66] His rationale for this position has two sides—one negative, the other positive. Negatively, he is skeptical of alternative accounts of the main task of the human sciences which have been offered. In particular, he believes that the scope for *discovering causes and causal laws* in these disciplines is severely limited;[67] and he believes that grand systems which purport to *discover an overall meaning in history* (Hegel's system, for example) are little more than misguided after-echoes of a superseded religious outlook.[68] This leaves the task of interpretation as a sort of default. More positively, he emphasizes that the intellectual need for (interpretive) narration is more fundamental than that for (causal) explanation;[69] and he argues that the interpretive achievements of the disciplines in question can enrich our drab lives by acquainting us with types of mental experience that are very different from our own.[70] This whole rationale for regarding interpretation as the central task of the human sciences is heavily indebted to one that can already be found scattered through Herder's works.[71]

In addition, Dilthey holds—in sharp opposition to Schleiermacher's position that interpretation is not a science but an art—that this interpretive function warrants a claim that the disciplines in question have the status of genuine *sciences*, like the natural sciences. His line of thought here does not usually question Schleiermacher's position that the method of interpretation is sharply different from that of the natural sciences. Instead, it is usually that, *despite* that difference in method, interpretation can still claim the status of a science, namely for the following two reasons: (1) Its subject matter, the meaning of 'expressions', is as objective as that dealt with by the natural sciences (like almost everyone in his day, Dilthey takes this for granted).[72] (2) Due to the sorts of deep variations in concepts, beliefs, etc. between

[66] Over the course of his career he vacillates somewhat between assigning this role to interpretation/hermeneutics and assigning it to psychology. However, because of the prominence of psychology in his conception of interpretation itself, this is less of a vacillation than it may seem.

[67] See, for example, W. Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 88–9. Dilthey has a variety of specific reasons for this pessimism.

[68] See, for example, ibid. 145–7.

[69] See, for example, *Hermeneutics and the Study of History*, 261–2.

[70] See, for example, *Dilthey: Selected Writings*, ed. H. P. Rickman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 228, 247, 257.

[71] Concerning this, see my *Herder: Philosophical Writings*, editor's introduction, pp. xxv–xxviii.

[72] *As* objective, note, not simply objective—for in his conception of the subject matters of both interpretation and the natural sciences Dilthey is strongly influenced by Kant's Copernican Revolution.

different historical periods, cultures, and even individuals that predecessors such as Herder and Schleiermacher had already emphasized, interpretation turns out to be a very *challenging task*, requiring very *rigorous methods*—just like natural science.[73] However, Dilthey also on occasion modifies this usual position, *downplaying* the difference in methods between interpretation and the natural sciences, in particular suggesting that induction and hypothesis are central to both[74]—a position which is arguably more correct, and which would furnish yet a *third* reason for according interpretation the status of science alongside the natural sciences.

* * *

A further important development in hermeneutics that occurred during roughly the same period was the growth of what Paul Ricoeur has aptly called a 'hermeneutics of suspicion', exemplified by Karl Marx (1818–83), Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900), and Sigmund Freud (1856–1939).[75] This amounts to a project of *deepening* the task of interpretation in a certain way, adding new levels to it.

More precisely, the defining feature of a hermeneutics of suspicion is a thesis that the evident *surface* meanings and thoughts which a person expresses (and perhaps also certain aspects of his behavior which at first sight seem meaningless, for example bodily posture or slips of the tongue or pen) often serve as representative-but-masking proxies for *deeper* meanings and thoughts which are in some measure hidden (even from the person himself), which are quite different from and indeed often quite contrary to the surface meanings and thoughts involved, and which the person has some sort of motive for thus concealing (both from others and from himself). Three examples of such a position are Marx's theory that ideologies are rooted in class interests; Nietzsche's theory that

[73] Thus in his *Introduction to the Human Sciences* Dilthey's explicit aim is to provide a methodology for the 'Historical School' (including Herder, the Romantics, and Boeckh) which 'considered spiritual life as historical through and through' (p. 48). And in 'The Rise of Hermeneutics' he writes: 'Interpretation and its codification entered a new stage with the Renaissance. Because one was separated by language, living conditions, and nationality from classical and Christian antiquity, interpretation became even more than in ancient Rome a matter of transposing oneself into an alien spiritual life through linguistic, factual, and historical studies' (p. 242).

[74] See, for example, 'Schleiermacher's Hermeneutical System in Relation to Earlier Protestant Hermeneutics', 98, 158; 'The Rise of Hermeneutics', 253–7.

[75] P. Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970).

Christian morality, with its overt emphasis on such ideals as 'love' and 'turning the other cheek', is in fact motivated by hatred and *Ressentiment* (resentment); and Freud's theory that a broad range of both apparently meaningful and apparently meaningless behaviors express unconscious motives and meanings. What warrants classifying such theories as forms of *hermeneutics* is the fact that they offer not only deeper *explanations* of the surface meanings involved but deeper explanations in terms of underlying *meanings*.

These theories constitute a major development in the field of hermeneutics—indeed, one too large and important to be dealt with in any detail here. Accordingly, I shall confine myself to just a few remarks concerning them.

Marx's commitment to a hermeneutics of suspicion is perhaps the least obvious. For he usually casts his theory of ideology in terms of underlying *socio-economic contradictions*, or the underlying interests of *socio-economic classes*. However, even when so cast, the theory's reference to underlying *interests*—i.e. to something psychological and meaning-laden—provides at least some grounds for classifying it as a hermeneutics of suspicion. Moreover, since it seems plausible to say that class interests cannot coherently be conceived of as independent from the interests and motives of the individuals who compose the classes in question, the theory arguably also carries implications concerning the interests and motives of *individuals*.[76] And this points towards a level of the theory which makes it even more clearly a hermeneutics of suspicion.

Consider, for example, what for Marx is the very paradigm of an ideology, namely religious belief. Marx's full account of (Christian) religious belief seems to be roughly as follows: religious belief serves ruling class interests by defusing the dissatisfactions of the working class on whose oppression the ruling class depends; it does so, in particular, by (1) representing the working class's dissatisfactions in this world as natural and inevitable, part of the very order of things,[77] and (2) providing illusory compensations, namely in the form of fictitious satisfactions in a fictitious other world. It

[76] Cf. J-P. Sartre, *Search for a Method* (New York: Vintage, 1968), who argues persuasively that Marxism needs to bridge the gap between socio-economic classes and individuals, and that it should therefore call on auxiliary disciplines such as psychoanalysis in order to enable it to do so.

[77] This side of Marx's theory ultimately owes much to the 'Unhappy Consciousness' section of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

is surely an implication of this account of religious belief that a hermeneutics of suspicion applies at the level of (at least many) individual religious believers: that (at least in many cases) when members of the ruling class hold religious beliefs they do so in part from an underlying, unacknowledged, and rather contrary wish thereby to promote a mechanism which serves their own socio-economic interests at the expense of others'; and that (at least in many cases) when members of the working class hold religious beliefs they do so in part from an underlying, unacknowledged, and rather contrary wish thereby to see their own socio-economic dissatisfactions palliated.

Turning to Nietzsche, a preliminary point which should be noted is that there is a certain tension in Nietzsche's position on interpretation generally. His usual position, which reflects his own background as a classical philologist, is a fairly conventional assumption that texts mean certain things but not others, and that there is therefore a clear distinction between good and bad interpretation. This is the Nietzsche who in *The Antichrist* (1888) champions 'philology' in the sense of 'the art of reading well—of reading facts without falsifying them by interpretation, without losing caution, patience, delicacy, in the desire to understand',[78] claims such philology for himself and certain other people who stand opposed to Christianity,[79] but denies it to Christian theologians.[80] However, there are also certain strands in Nietzsche which seem to point towards a less conventional position—for example, his early hostility to careful philology as inimical to life in *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* (1873), and his general perspectivist position that 'facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations' (which presumably implies that in particular there are no facts about meanings).[81] In my view, Nietzsche's former position is his best one.[82]

Now to our main topic, Nietzsche's hermeneutics of suspicion. In works such as *The Gay Science* (1882) and *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887) Nietzsche prominently develops all of the central theses of a hermeneutics of suspicion: that beneath a person's superficial conscious meanings (and other behaviors) there lie deeper unconscious meanings, that his superficial conscious meanings (and other behaviors) function as representative-but-masking

[78] *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. W. Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1976), 635.
[79] Ibid. 600, 627–8. [80] Ibid. 635.
[81] F. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power* (New York: Vintage, 1968), para. 481.
[82] I shall not argue the case here, but for some hints as to why I find his latter position unattractive, see my criticisms of Gadamer later in this chapters.

proxies for those deeper unconscious meanings, that the latter are moreover typically contrary to the former, and that the person involved has motives for thus concealing or 'repressing' the latter (even from himself).[83]

Furthermore, Nietzsche applies this general model in some very plausible and interesting specific ways. For example, in *On the Genealogy of Morals* he argues that Jesus's explicit, conscious message of love in fact concealed and represented at a deeper, less conscious level a quite contrary motive of hatred and revenge (directed especially against an oppressing Greek and Roman imperial order) that he shared with his Jewish forebears and contemporaries—[84] a thesis which close scrutiny of the New Testament shows to be highly plausible.[85]

Finally, a few observations about Freud. As I have already implied, Freud's hypothesis of the unconscious, and even of unconscious meanings, was by no means new with him (nor, in fairness, did he claim that it was).[86] Indeed, as we just saw, even the additional features of his theory which turn it into a real hermeneutics of suspicion—his theses that superficial conscious meanings (and other behaviors) function as representative-but-masking proxies for those deeper unconscious meanings, that the latter are moreover typically contrary to the former, and that the person involved has motives for thus concealing or 'repressing' the latter—already had precedents in Nietzsche.[87] So Freud's claim to real importance in this area largely rests on the plausibility of his specific explanations (the worry, to put it pointedly, would be that he has merely added to a generic theory inherited from predecessors a lot of false specificity).

In that connection, the picture is in fact very mixed. Generally speaking, the more ambitious Freud's theory becomes, either in terms of the universality of its claims or in terms of their surprise, the less plausible it tends to be. For example, his position in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) that *all* dreams

[83] See esp. F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (New York: Vintage, 1974), paras. 333, 354; *On the Genealogy of Morals* (New York: Vintage, 1967), 57–8, 84–5.

[84] Ibid. 34–5.

[85] See, for example, Mark 7:27, where Jesus contrasts Jews and Greeks as children and dogs. As Nietzsche points out, Jesus' ideal of love can be plausibly seen as part of a broader systematic inversion of Greek and Roman values which he undertakes, for example in the Sermon on the Mount.

[86] For Freud's explicit recognition of forerunners, see for example S. Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (New York: Avon, 1965), 650 ff.

[87] Freud does not acknowledge this intellectual debt to Nietzsche. However, it seems clear. Cf. the evident indebtedness of Freud's critique of morality in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1929) as aggression redirected against the self to Nietzsche's critique of morality in *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

are explicable in terms of wish-fulfillment seems very implausible indeed;[88] as does his similar position concerning *all* poetry in *The Relation of the Poet to Day-Dreaming* (1908); as does his position in *The Interpretation of Dreams* and elsewhere that an 'Oedipus Complex' plays a pervasive role in human psychology;[89] as does his position in *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) that all religion arises from an infantile longing for a protective father; as does his position in *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) that the Judeo-Christian tradition in particular arose out of, and replays, the trauma of a prehistorical murder of a 'primal father' by other male members of his tribe. By contrast, where Freud's theory becomes more flexible and intuitive in character—for example, in *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), where his explanations of 'parapraxes' such as slips of the tongue or pen and acts of forgetting are quite various in nature, and usually quite intuitive (for instance, in terms of repressed sexual impulses and feelings of aggression)—they are proportionally more plausible.

So much for Freud's attempts to *deepen* interpretation in a hermeneutics of suspicion. Another aspect of Freud's position which deserves emphasis in connection with hermeneutics, though, is its plausible *broadening* of interpretation to include, not only phenomena which are usually seen as expressing meanings and thoughts and hence as interpretable (for example, literature), but also many phenomena which are not usually seen in that light at all (e.g. neurotic behaviors, parapraxes, and what we would today call body language), or which are at least usually seen as expressing meanings and thoughts only in an obvious and trivial way and hence as scarcely requiring or deserving interpretation (e.g. dreams and jokes).[90] This move significantly extends a broadening trend in hermeneutics which we have already encountered in such predecessors as Herder and Hegel.

[88] He does recognize the most obvious class of prima facie counter-examples: anxiety dreams. But his attempts to explain these in conformity with his theory—see *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 168 ff., 595–6—are unconvincing. And as Jonathan Lear has pointed out, he seems eventually to have conceded that such dreams constitute genuine exceptions (J. Lear, *Freud* (New York and London: Routledge, 2005), 110, 154 ff.). A less obvious, but perhaps no less important, class of prima facie counter-examples consists of what might be called neutral dreams: dreams which seem not to relate to wishes either positively or negatively.

[89] Cf. Lear, *Freud*, 180–3. Freud's theory of the 'Oedipus Complex' probably in the end tells us a lot more about Freud's own troubled relations with his parents than about the human condition generally.

[90] Concerning jokes, see Freud's *The Joke and its Relation to the Unconscious* (1905).

* * *

At this point in history, namely the early twentieth century, real progress in hermeneutics more or less comes to an end in Germany, and indeed in continental Europe as a whole, it seems to me (in keeping with a precipitous decline in the quality of German philosophy generally at the time). However, there are several further continental thinkers who are commonly *thought* to have made major contributions to the subject, including three who are bound together by ties both of influence and of shared views: Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900–2002), and Jacques Derrida (1930–2004). One fundamental view which they all share, and which they can be commended for sharing, is a—probably correct—conviction, continuing Herder and Schleiermacher, that all meaning and thought are essentially dependent on language.

Martin Heidegger has had a strong influence on the course of hermeneutics in the twentieth century. But the value of his contributions to the subject has been greatly exaggerated, in my view.

One of Heidegger's key ideas, developed in *Being and Time* (1927), paragraphs 31–4, is that the understanding of meanings, and hence also the possession of language, are fundamental and pervasive modes of the existence of *Dasein*, or Man. However, as we have already seen, this (certainly very plausible and important) point essentially just repeats an insight originally developed by Herder in his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* and elsewhere, and then taken over by Hegel.

Another of Heidegger's key ideas, found in the same paragraphs of *Being and Time*, develops an aspect of that first idea in a more specific way: fundamental and pervasive in *Dasein*, or Man, is a sort of 'fore-understanding' (*Vorverständnis*) which essentially underpins explicit linguistic understanding, and which is involved for example even in cases of perceptual or active engagement with the world where explicit linguistic articulation is absent. Versions or variants of this idea have been fundamental to other twentieth-century German hermeneutical theories related to Heidegger's as well, in particular those of Rudolf Bultmann and Gadamer. Now it seems likely that this principle is correct in some form, and also important. In particular, as I hinted earlier, one should be skeptical about what is likely to be the main source of theoretical resistance to it, especially in the Anglophone world, namely a Fregean–Wittgensteinian tradition of anti-psychologism about meaning,

which denies that psychological states or processes play any essential role in semantic understanding, on the grounds that semantic understanding instead consists purely in grasping a quasi-Platonic sense (Frege) or in possessing linguistic competence (later Wittgenstein).[91] However, Heidegger's principle is again much less original than it may seem. In particular, it is similar to Herder's quasi-empiricist principle in the philosophy of language (described earlier). Its claim to novelty as compared to Herder's principle rests mainly on two features: (1) Heidegger, and following him Gadamer, would be loath to equate fore-understanding with something as subjective as the possession of sensations, since it is an essential goal of their philosophies to overcome the subject–object dichotomy (in a *Dasein* or a 'Life World' that bridges or transcends it). (2) Heidegger, and following him Gadamer, would claim that fore-understanding is more fundamentally a matter of active engagement with the world than of theoretical contemplation of it, more fundamentally a matter of the world being 'ready-to-hand' (*zuhanden*) than of its being 'present-at-hand' (*vorhanden*)—which can seem to contrast sharply with Herder's conception in his *Treatise on the Origin of Language* that an attitude of theoretical detachment, which he calls 'awareness' (*Besonnenheit*) or 'reflection' (*Reflexion*), is fundamental to and distinctive of human language.[92] However, it is doubtful that these two features really constitute a major difference from and advance over Herder. Note to begin with that they would at least leave Heidegger and Gadamer's position belonging to the same general family as Herder's, constituting only a sort of family dispute within it. Moreover, feature (1) rests on a rather questionable philosophical theory. And feature (2) is arguably much closer to Herder's position than it may seem. For Herder's position in the *Treatise on the Origin of Language* in fact seems to be the very similar one that the detached 'awareness' or 'reflection' that is fundamental to and distinctive of human language emerges from a background of active engagement with the world which human beings share in common with the animals.

Finally, Heidegger is also famous for espousing a principle that, especially when interpreting philosophy, 'every interpretation must necessarily use violence'.[93] This principle hovers between two ideas, one of which is valid

[91] While the later Wittgenstein's arguments that psychological states and processes are never *sufficient* for semantic understanding are extremely strong, his arguments that they are never *necessary* are far weaker.

[92] See 'Treatise on the Origin of Language', in *Herder: Philosophical Writings*, esp. 87–9.

[93] M. Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (1929; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 141.

and important, the other of which is more questionable, but neither of which is original. One thing Heidegger has in mind here is a version of Schlegel's insight that a text often conveys meanings and thoughts which it does not express explicitly.[94] That is a valid and important point, but unoriginal. Another thing Heidegger has in mind, though, is something more like a principle that one should interpret texts in the light of what one takes to be the correct position on the issues with which it deals and as attempting to express that position, even if there is no real textual evidence that the author had the meanings or thoughts in question in mind, and indeed even if there is textual evidence that he did not. This idea is again unoriginal—in particular, versions of it can already be found in Kant,[95] and in Hegel (as discussed earlier). Concerning its value, much depends on exactly how it is conceived, and exactly how executed. Provided that it is not meant to exclude more textually faithful forms of interpretation, that the person who applies it is clear about what he is doing (both in general and at specific points in his interpretation), and makes this equally clear to his readers, and that the quality of his own opinions concerning the subject matter involved is sufficiently high to make the exercise worthwhile, then there is probably no harm in it, and there may even be a little good.[96] However, in practice these conditions are rarely met, and in particular it is far from clear that Heidegger himself meets them.

* * *

The most influential twentieth-century German theorist of hermeneutics, though, has been Heidegger's student Hans-Georg Gadamer. Gadamer's discussions of hermeneutics in *Truth and Method* (1960) and elsewhere are certainly learned and thoughtful, and can be read with profit. But what is distinctive in his position is, I think, misguided and indeed baneful.

Gadamer rejects the traditional assumption that texts have an original meaning which is independent of whatever interpretations of them may have occurred subsequently, and which it is the interpreter's task to recapture.

[94] See ibid. 140–1.

[95] For example, this is the force of Kant's famous remark in the *Critique of Pure Reason* concerning the interpretation of Plato that we often 'understand an author better than he has understood himself' (A314). (This slogan would subsequently be taken over by Schlegel and Schleiermacher, but in each case with a significant modification of its meaning.)

[96] For some similar thoughts delivered with greater enthusiasm, see R. B. Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), ch. 3.

Instead, Gadamer conceives meaning as something that only arises in the interaction between texts and an indefinitely expanding and changing interpretive tradition. Consequently, he denies that interpretation should seek to recapture a supposed original meaning, and instead holds that it must and should incorporate an orientation to distinctive features of the interpreter's own outlook and to the distinctive application which he envisages making of the text in question.

Despite the strong generic similarity between this position and the Hegelian one discussed earlier which Gadamer holds up as its inspiration, Gadamer's arguments for it are different from Hegel's.

A central part of Gadamer's case consists in a large family of urgings that we should assimilate interpretation, in the sense of achieving *understanding* of a text, discourse, etc., to various other sorts of activities from which, prima facie at least, and almost certainly also in fact, it is crucially different—in particular, *explicating* or *applying* a text, discourse, etc.; *translating* it into another language; *conversation* aimed at achieving agreement; *legal 'interpretation'*; and *re-presenting* a work of (theatrical or musical) art. These Gadamerian urgings hardly amount to an argument, however. Rather, they are just invitations to a nest of serious confusions, and should be firmly refused.

Gadamer does also offer several somewhat more substantial arguments, though, in particular the following four:

(a) Both in the case of linguistic and non-linguistic art and in the case of linguistic texts and discourse more generally, interpretations change over time, and these changing interpretations are internal to the meaning of the art, text, or discourse in question, so that there is after all no such thing as an original meaning independent of these changing interpretations.[97]

(b) The original meaning of artistic and linguistic expressions from the past is always strictly speaking unknowable by us owing to the essential role in all understanding of a historically specific form of 'fore-understanding' or 'prejudice' which one can never entirely escape.[98]

(c) The original meaning is something 'dead', something no longer of any possible interest to us.[99]

[97] See, for example, Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 339–40, 388.

[98] See, for example, ibid. 246 ff., 293, 301–2, 265–307; also, H-G. Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990), ii. 475; viii. 377.

[99] See, for example, *Truth and Method*, 167; *Gesammelte Werke*, viii. 377. Gadamer sometimes alludes in this connection to Nietzsche's famous argument along similar lines in *The Use and*

(d) *All* knowledge is historically relative, so interpretive knowledge is so in particular.[100]

But how convincing are these arguments? A first point to note is that arguments (a)–(c) seem to be inconsistent with each other: argument (a) says that there is no such thing as an 'original meaning', whereas arguments (b) and (c) say that there is (but that it is unknowable and 'dead'); argument (b) says that it is unknowable, whereas argument (c) implies that it is knowable (but 'dead', of no possible interest to us). However, since the arguments also face separate problems, I shall not here dwell further on this problem of their mutual inconsistency.

Argument (a) seems to be implicitly incoherent. Consider the case of texts, for example. To say that interpretations of a text change over time is presumably to say, roughly, that the author of the text meant such and such, that there then arose an interpretation A which meant something a bit different from that, that there then arose a further interpretation B which meant something a bit different again, and so on. In other words, the very notion of changing interpretations *presupposes* an original meaning (indeed, a whole *series* of original meanings, one belonging to the text, and then one belonging to each of its subsequent interpretations).[101] Moreover, as far as I can see, Gadamer has no real argument to begin with for his surely very counterintuitive claim that subsequent (re)interpretations are internal to an author's meaning. In particular, the mere facts (both emphasized by Gadamer in this connection) that (re)interpretations occur, and that authors often expect and even welcome this, by no means suffice to establish it.

Disadvantage of History for Life (see, for example, *Truth and Method*, 304; *Gesammelte Werke*, iv. 326; viii. 377). The debt to Nietzsche here is indeed probably a good deal greater than Gadamer lets on—being downplayed by him not so much from a wish to seem more original than he is (he is often generous in crediting influences, for example Hegel and Heidegger) but rather from embarrassment over Nietzsche's association with Nazism. (As we shall see, Derrida subsequently repays Gadamer for this obfuscation of an intellectual influence.)

[100] See, for example, *Truth and Method*, 199–200, 230 ff. Here again there may well be a suppressed debt to Nietzsche, namely to his perspectivism. Anglophone interpreters have tended, misleadingly, to deny or downplay this relativistic aspect of Gadamer's position (see, for instance, several of the articles in R. J. Dostal (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)).

[101] Gadamer's strange suggestion at one point that the interpreter's contribution always gets reabsorbed into the meaning and so vanishes (*Truth and Method*, 473) is evidently a symptom of this incoherence in his position. What he is really trying to say here is that there both is and is not a reinterpretation involved, but he masks this contradiction from himself and his readers by casting it in the less transparently self-contradictory form of a process of precipitation followed by reabsorption.

Argument (b) runs into an epistemological problem. For if one were always locked into a modifying fore-understanding, then how could one even know that other perspectives undergoing modification existed?[102] Moreover, as I have argued elsewhere, this sort of epistemological problem eventually leads to a conceptual one as well: a problem about whether in that case it would even make *sense* to speak of such perspectives.[103] Furthermore, Gadamer's assumption that fore-understanding is internal to understanding and that it is always historically specific in an epistemically insurmountable way is very questionable to begin with. One objection to it which many Anglophone philosophers would be likely to find attractive is that the conception that fore-understanding is internal to understanding violates an anti-psychologistic insight about meaning and understanding which we owe to Frege and Wittgenstein. But, as I have already mentioned, such anti-psychologism seems quite dubious on reflection, so it is not on *this* ground that I would question Gadamer's assumption. Nor would I question its idea that fore-understandings are historically specific (that too seems true). Rather, I would suggest that what is really wrong with it is its implication that such historical specificity is epistemically insurmountable, that it is impossible to abstract from one's own specific fore-understanding and recapture the specific fore-understanding of a historical other. Indeed, I would suggest that Herder's conception that *Einfühlung* ('feeling one's way in') plays an essential role in the interpretation of texts from the past already quite properly pointed towards an ability which we possess to perform just this sort of imaginative feat, and towards the essential contribution that exercising this ability makes to our attainment of an exact understanding of past texts' original meanings.

Argument (c) is one of the weakest parts of Gadamer's case. Far from inevitably being 'dead', or of no possible interest to us, the original meanings of texts and discourse from the past, and also from contemporary others, can be of *great* interest to us, and for *many* different reasons (a number of which had already been pointed out by Gadamer's predecessors). One reason (which Herder and Dilthey had already pointed out) is simply that the

[102] In one formulation of his position which especially prompts this sort of objection, Gadamer writes that 'the discovery of the historical horizon is always already a fusion of horizons' (*Gesammelte Werke*, ii. 475). My brief statement of the objection here is meant to be suggestive rather than probative. For a fuller statement of an objection of this sort against a relevantly similar position of Wittgenstein's, see my *Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 168–72.

[103] See ibid., esp. 169–83. The argument is fairly complicated, so I shall not go into it here.

discovery of such meanings and of the views which they articulate satisfies our intellectual curiosity and enriches our experience. Another reason (again already important to Herder) is that it both expresses and promotes our respect and sympathy for others. Another reason (again already important to Herder) is that it promises to acquaint us with concepts, convictions, values, techniques, and so on which can help us to improve our own in various ways. Another reason (again already important to Herder) is that it makes an essential contribution to our *self*-understanding, both by enabling us to understand our own perspective in a comparative light and by enabling us to understand how it arose. And no doubt there are many further good reasons as well.[104]

Finally, argument (d) is unconvincing as well. One problem with it lies in the well-known fact that the thesis of relativism seems to run into problems of self-contradiction in connection with the awkward question of whether this thesis is *itself* of merely relative validity. Gadamer touches on this problem at various points, but his answers to it are naïve and unconvincing.[105] Another problem with the argument is that, contrary to Gadamer's wish to claim that meaning's relativity to interpretations makes it distinctive in comparison with other subject matters, such as those dealt with by the natural sciences, and consequently resistant to the sorts of methods which can legitimately be used in connection with these, in particular the 'positivist', or objectivity-presupposing, methods of the natural sciences, this argument would leave meaning *no less (if also no more) objective than anything else*.

In short, Gadamer fails to provide any good argument at all for his surely very counterintuitive position.[106] The position is therefore in all probability false. Moreover, if it *is* false, then it is so in a way which is likely to prove baneful for interpretive practice, in that it actively encourages (as allegedly inevitable

[104] Insofar as Nietzsche's case from *The Use and Disadvantage of History for Life* lies behind Gadamer's argument here, a full response would need to include some additional points (e.g. concerning the actual twentieth-century results of the attempt to enliven German culture by sacrificing scrupulous human science in favor of new mythologies).

[105] In one place (*Truth and Method*, 344) he concedes that a self-contradiction arises, but responds that this merely shows the weakness of the sort of 'reflection' that reveals this and objects to it! In another place he argues that the thesis of relativism is not 'propositional' but merely something of which one has 'consciousness', so that it and its own subject matter are 'not at all on the same logical level' (ibid. 448). But surely, the alleged circumstance that what is involved here is merely a consciousness that relativism is true, rather than, say, an explicit assertion that it is true, would not diminish either the fact or the unacceptability of the self-contradiction one whit.

[106] Despite widespread assumptions to the contrary. See, for example, recently R. B. Pippin, 'Gadamer's Hegel', in *The Cambridge Companion to Gadamer*, 236.

and hence appropriate) just the sort of assimilation in interpretation of the meanings and thoughts of (historical or cultural) others to the interpreter's own which it was one of the most important achievements of earlier theorists of hermeneutics such as Herder and Schleiermacher to identify as a constant temptation and to outlaw.[107]

* * *

Another twentieth-century continental figure who has been very influential in hermeneutics is the French philosopher Jacques Derrida.[108] However, here again performance falls short of promise.

Derrida encapsulates his theory of meaning and interpretation in such concepts as that of an open-ended 'iterability' (a word which he uses in the double sense of *other* and *again*) and 'différance' (a word which he uses in the double sense of *differing* and *deferring*).[109] In its synchronic aspect, this is largely just a cryptic way of repeating Saussure's point that meaning only arises through a system of linguistic oppositions.[110] In its diachronic aspect, it is largely just a cryptic way of repeating Gadamer's conception that meaning is something that only arises through an open-ended process of (re)interpretation.[111] Derrida provides even less of an argument for this surely

[107] It should be mentioned here that the later Heidegger's continued commitment to the principle of doing 'violence' to texts, Gadamer's denial to texts of an original meaning and consequent encouragement of interpretations which adapt them to the interpreter's own purposes, and also the similar position held by the deconstructionist Paul de Man have a much more sinister aspect as well. All of these men were Nazis or Nazi collaborators who had left a trail of embarrassing pronouncements behind them during the Nazi period. How convenient that they develop general methodologies of interpretation that warrant the reinterpretation of such pronouncements to their own current advantage and taste!

[108] One of Derrida's most explicit general discussions of interpretation is 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences', in J. Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), but many of his other works bear on this subject as well.

[109] For the concept of 'iterability', see especially the essay 'Signature, Event, Context', in J. Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982). For the concept of 'différance', see especially the essay 'Différance', in the same volume and J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974; corrected edn. 1997).

[110] See esp. *Writing and Difference*, 280.

[111] See esp. *Of Grammatology*, 66–7, 163, 296, 304, 311–14. There can be no doubt about the intellectual debt to Gadamer here: like Gadamer, Derrida stresses the open-endedness of this process (p. 163), takes the re-presentation of such things as theatrical works as a model (p. 304), even has a version of Gadamer's strange idea that the interpreter's contribution always gets reabsorbed into the meaning and so vanishes (pp. 313–14), and also in effect repeats Gadamer's sharp contrast between this whole model of interpretation and Romantic hermeneutics' allegedly misguided contrary conception of interpretation as the recapturing of an original meaning (*Writing and Difference*, 292). This raises an ugly question of plagiarism. For, to my knowledge, Derrida nowhere acknowledges

very counterintuitive conception than Gadamer does, however (and as we have seen, Gadamer's own arguments for it are woefully inadequate).[112]

Derrida also has a number of more interesting ideas about interpretation, though. One of these is a thesis that philosophical texts typically contain hidden contradictions, which interpretation should reveal (Derrida famously calls this revelation 'deconstruction', and practices it on many philosophers from the tradition, including for example Rousseau and Hegel).[113] This thesis is probably true of many texts, including philosophical ones, and is important. The thesis is not new; as we saw, Schlegel had already articulated it. But Derrida's commitment to it is at least superior to dubious contrary ideas about the need for interpretive 'charity', and in particular the need to avoid imputing logical inconsistencies to texts, which are currently widespread among Anglophone philosophers and historians of philosophy.[114]

Another interesting idea of Derrida's (shared with several other French theorists similarly influenced by structuralist linguistics, including Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault) concerns what is sometimes called the 'death

this intellectual debt to Gadamer. One might have been tempted to ascribe that sin of omission charitably to a political motive, namely aversion to Gadamer's conservatism and association with Nazism. However, this explanation seems implausible, given that Derrida is far from shy about giving credit to Heidegger, a figure who is even more conservative and tainted by Nazism.

[112] This state of affairs also carries negative consequences for Derrida's central thesis in *Of Grammatology* that *writing is primordial*. This thesis is far more ambitious than the sound and important point that the introduction of writing not only itself involved significant novelties, such as the spacing of words, but also thereby affected speech. And its greater ambition makes it prima facie absurd. How does Derrida propose to defuse this prima facie absurdity? One strategy to which he resorts is that of more or less completely redefining 'writing' (see, for example, pp. 54–5 on 'writing in the colloquial sense', 'a vulgar concept of writing' as contrasted with Derrida's 'reform[ed] . . . concept of writing', which he sometimes calls arche-writing). But this strategy is altogether intellectually boring, rendering the thesis that writing is primordial merely a gratuitously confusing way of saying something quite different and much less surprising. However, a more sophisticated strategy to which Derrida sometimes appeals is rather to exploit Gadamer's theory about the nature of meaning and interpretation: since we end up in history with writing and speech influenced by writing, this retroactively becomes internal to the nature of all *earlier* language use as well (see esp. pp. 314–15). But if Gadamer's theory is mistaken, then even this more interesting of Derrida's two strategies for defending his prima facie absurd thesis that writing is primordial fails.

[113] For examples of this approach at work, see *Of Grammatology*, *Margins of Philosophy*, and *Writing and Difference*.

[114] Such ideas in the Anglophone tradition often stem in part from a sort of double error: a principle, espoused by many philosophers in one version or another (including Aristotle, Kant, the early Wittgenstein, and Quine), to the effect that it is impossible to think inconsistently; plus an inference from that principle to the inevitable erroneousness of imputing inconsistencies to texts. This is a double error, first, because the principle in question is mistaken (see on this my *Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar*, ch. 5), and second, because even if it were true, it would only plausibly apply to *explicit* inconsistencies, whereas the ones which need to be imputed to texts are normally *implicit* ones.

of the author', or in other words the alleged erroneousness of imputing what is expressed in a text to an individual author and his intentions.[115] This idea involves a huge exaggeration; much of what is expressed in texts *is* imputable to authors and their intentions. But it is at least useful as a counterweight to equally one-sided author-centered positions which ignore the large role played in texts by inherited linguistic conventions, borrowed formulas and tropes, and so on. Avoiding both the Scylla and the Charybdis here—or in other words, recognizing that texts involve a *synthesis* of 'universality' and 'individuality'—had in fact already been a driving and noteworthy ambition behind Schleiermacher's hermeneutical position.[116]

Finally, Derrida is also significant for espousing 'decentering' in interpretation. By this, he sometimes mainly means recognizing the (alleged) situation that there is never a discrete, pre-given meaning to interpret because of the sort of situation that Saussure and Gadamer had described.[117] But sometimes he rather means reading texts with a focus on aspects which the texts themselves present as only marginally important (e.g. aspects which carry an implicit political or social ideology).[118] Such readings can indeed on occasion be legitimate and illuminating.

* * *

A far more important contribution to the development of hermeneutics than any made by Heidegger, Gadamer, or Derrida is due to several recent theorists from the Anglophone world, especially John Langshaw Austin (1911–1960)[119] and Quentin Skinner (1941–present).[120] The contribution in question lies in their recognition of the central role that *illocutionary force* plays in texts and discourse, and in their interpretation.[121] This role

[115] See, for example, *Writing and Difference*, 226–7.

[116] See on this M. Frank, *Das individuelle Allgemeine* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).

[117] See especially 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences'.

[118] Closely related to this strategy (or perhaps really just a special form of it) is Derrida's strategy in the interpretation of visual art of focusing on such seemingly marginal features of an artwork as the 'subjectile' (i.e. the material medium), the 'trait' (e.g. the brushstroke), and the 'parergon' (e.g. the frame, the title, or the signature). For a good account of this, see J. Wolfreys' discussion of Derrida's theory of art in *Understanding Derrida*, ch. 10.

[119] See J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (1955; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975).

[120] See Skinner's essays in Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*.

[121] The division of labor here was roughly that Austin invented the concept of 'illocutionary force' and saw its relevance for interpretation in a general way, whereas Skinner then brought it to bear on the interpretation of historical texts in particular.

can be seen as a further form of vindication of Herder's basic intuition that linguistic interpretation needs to be complemented with psychological interpretation.

In order to see that interpretation requires the identification not only of linguistic meanings but also of something like illocutionary forces, consider the following example (loosely borrowed from Skinner). If I encounter a stranger by a frozen lake who says to me 'The ice is thin over there', I may understand the meaning of his words perfectly, and yet still not fully comprehend what he has said—for in order to do that I would in addition need to know whether he was simply informing me, warning me, joking (for example, by stating the obvious), threatening me (e.g. by alluding to the expression 'You're skating on thin ice'), or whatnot.

I say 'something like' illocutionary force because in order usefully to appeal to this concept originally introduced by Austin,[122] one probably needs to drop from it certain implications that he built into it. In particular, one probably needs to drop his restriction of it to cases where there are corresponding 'performatives' (it does not seem helpful to include here only such linguistic acts as promising, telling, and commanding, but to exclude such linguistic acts as joking and insinuating, simply on the grounds that one can promise, tell, and command by saying 'I promise', 'I tell [you]', and 'I command [you]' but one cannot joke by saying 'I joke' or insinuate by saying 'I insinuate').[123] And one probably also needs to drop his inclusion of 'uptake' by other people in his definition of an illocutionary act (there is indeed *a* sense of, for example, the verb 'to tell' in which it is a success word, so that one only tells someone if he actually hears and understands what one tells him, but there is surely also another and equally important sense of the verb in which one may tell someone even if he fails to hear and/or fails to understand).[124] The really crucial point is just that there are clearly aspects of any intelligible writing or discourse which are additional to its linguistic meaning, and which must be identified as well in order for full comprehension of the writing or discourse in question to occur (aspects which can at least be defined by

[122] Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*.

[123] For a similar point, cf. J. R. Searle, 'A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts', in his *Expression and Meaning: Studies in the Theory of Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 7. It may not therefore after all be necessary to invoke additional categories such as Skinner's 'oblique strategies' in order to cover cases like irony which fail Austin's performative litmus test (in my broader sense of the term, these too can qualify as examples of illocutionary force).

[124] For a similar point, cf. P. F. Strawson, 'Intention and Convention in Speech Acts', in his *Logico-linguistic Papers* (Bristol: Methuen, 1977), 156.

giving examples, such as the ones already mentioned in passing—informing, warning, etc.).

However, there are also some important further features of this situation which have been overlooked or even denied by the theorists mentioned and their followers, and which complicate the interpreter's task here still more. One of these is the fact that, despite Austin's and especially John Searle's resistance to the point,[125] but in accordance with a hint of Wittgenstein's,[126] the number of possible different illocutionary forces seems to be indefinitely large.[127] This raises the prospect, and the potential challenge, for an interpreter that he may on occasion encounter an illocutionary force with which he is unfamiliar, and which he therefore needs not merely to select correctly from a range of already understood types but to interpret in the first place in order for its selection to become possible.

A second further feature of the situation which complicates the interpreter's task is that in some cases the divergence of a newly encountered illocutionary force from any with which he is yet familiar may take the specific, subtle form of similarity to one with which he is already familiar but with significant differences (so that he might eventually be inclined to say, not that the alien people involved employ an entirely unfamiliar type of illocutionary force, but rather that they, for example, have a slightly difference practice and concept of 'assertion' than ours).[128] In its own way, this feature of the situation may be even more challenging for an interpreter than the former one, because it insidiously tempts him falsely to assimilate the illocutionary force in question to one with which he is already familiar.

These two additional challenges facing the interpreter in connection with illocutionary forces are precisely analogous to ones which Herder and Schleiermacher already identified as facing him in connection with *concepts* and *genres*.

* * *

The points just made constitute a potential new horizon for hermeneutics. Let me conclude this essay by briefly mentioning two more.

[125] See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, and especially Searle, 'A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts'.

[126] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953; Oxford: Blackwell, 1998; 3rd edn. 2001), par. 23.

[127] For a defense of Wittgenstein's position on this subject against Searle's attack on it, see my 'A Wittgensteinian Anti-Platonism' (forthcoming).

[128] For an argument that this situation in fact occurs historically, see ibid., where I draw in this connection on some of my work in ancient philosophy concerned with the nature of Pyrrhonism.