Heidegger and the Analytic Tradition on Truth

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I. Introduction

Heidegger's reception among analytic philosophers, with Richard Rorty as almost the sole exception, has been dismal. The reason is not that Heidegger is a metaphysician (by his own account, which presents him as "thinking the end of philosophy", he is in any case not one, or at any rate not in the usual sense). The trouble is, rather, that Heidegger uses a vocabulary of traditional-seeming metaphysical notions, but fails to deliver satisfactory answers to the most elementary problems that such a vocabulary raises. Is Being a characteristic of existents or their "ground"? Why do existents require this kind of grounding? What exactly is the relationship between Being and existents if not a causal one? If there are different modes of existence, as there presumably have to be to account for the alleged "ontological" distinctions between Being itself, particular existents and human consciousness (Dasein), how is that compatible with the claim that Being is the substance of the universe?[1] Faced with such criticisms, Heideggerians are apt to reply that their master is not using such terms as "Being" in their traditional metaphysical senses; that, on the contrary, such Heideggerian terms as "Being" can only be understood through grasping their role in a radically new philosophical language designed precisely to allow us to talk about what has been "forgotten" by the entire metaphysical tradition since Aristotle. There are plenty of useful books which offer explanations of Heidegger's works with a view to making clear the interrelationships of his terms. The trouble with all of them, at least as seen from an analytic point of view, is that they all appear to end by explicating metaphors in terms of other metaphors. What is produced seems less like philosophical argument than like *explication de texte*, though admittedly a highly structured and systematic *explication de texte*. With such writings, analytic philosophers are inclined to feel, there can be no argument: all depends on whether you find Heidegger's tissue of metaphors and bogus etymologies moving and illuminating, or whether like Thomas Bernhard you find it a farrago of Black-Forest kitsch;[2] in which case you will not find it hard to agree with Paul Edwards that "sober and rational persons will continue to regard the whole Heidegger phenomenon as a grotesque aberration of the human mind."[3]

This might be the last word, were it not that Heidegger's work continues to find readers, even in Anglo-Saxon countries, not all of whom are netted by, or even conscious of, the Heidegger industry, not all of whom are philosophically illiterate. No doubt, as Edwards suggests, there will always be an audience of some sort for oracular nonsense with a vaguely edifying flavour, but this does not quite explain Heidegger's influence, or the pervasive sense that there is something to be found in him which is not fatally damaged by analytic objections of the sort leveled by Edwards or Grossman, evidently sound and telling, at least at first blush, though those are. However, if one wishes to make a case for Heidegger, even a limited one, which will stand against such criticisms, *explications de texte* of the usual sort will plainly not suffice. One obvious way of proceeding in such circumstances is to try to state without benefit of Heideggerian terminology whatever insight it is that one supposes Heidegger to have achieved, and then to see whether the restatement will in turn throw any light on that terminology. This is the method I shall adopt here, and I propose to apply it to Heidegger's extraordinarily puzzling account of the relationships between truth and what, taking his usual high hand with Greek, he calls *aletheia*, or 'unconcealment' [*Unverborgenheit*]. The account I shall offer is not intended to be a scholarly one. I am a casual rather than a systematic reader of Heidegger, and can certainly lay no claim to anything worthy of the name of scholarship where he is concerned. Perhaps I shall offer no more than some ruminations of my own upon themes suggested by rather than found in Heidegger. That risk,

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however, is probably unavoidable when one approaches one philosophical tradition from the perspective of another: in any event, it is a risk I shall take.

2. Heidegger on truth

Heidegger's account of *aletheia* and its relationship to truth is not entirely consistent. It does have a guiding thread, however, in the shape of Heidegger's doubts about the adequacy of what he variously describes as the 'usual' or the 'traditional' conception of truth. In *Being and Time* Heidegger takes this, uncontroversially enough, to be Aristotelian in origin, and to consist in the claims "(1) that the 'locus' of truth is assertion (judgment); (2) that the essence of truth lies in the 'agreement' of the judgment with its object."[4] Heidegger then quotes (inaccurately) the passage in *De Interpretatione* I, 16a.6 at which Aristotle says that the soul's experiences are representations of things, and identifies this as the source of Aquinas's definition of truth as *adaequatio intellectus et rei.* This familiar conception, again according to the Heidegger of *Being and Time*, has two defects. The first, to which I shall return later, is that it is (*BT*, 215) "very general and empty", and that its vacuity renders it, in particular, neutral with respect to the choice between a Realistic and an Idealistic interpretation of the object of judgment, thus saddling all subsequent attempts to account for the relationship between knowledge and its objects with an in principle irresoluble metaphysical antinomy. The second defect of the traditional account (*BT*, 215—216) is that it leaves unclear the nature of the 'agreement' supposed to subsist between a true judgment and what makes it true. Heidegger's remarks on this difficulty in *Being and Time* are brief and oracular. They are restated and developed further in his late essay 'On the Essence of Truth' (1967).[5] Here the problem is taken to stem from the disparity between a statement and the object or state of affairs whose characteristics make it true. Heidegger's example is the statement "This coin is round", asserted of a five-mark coin. Truth on the traditional account requires some sort of accordance or agreement between the two.

> But wherein are the thing and the statement supposed to be in accordance, considering that the relata are manifestly different in their outward appearance? The coin is made of metal. The statement is not material at all. The coin is round. The statement has nothing spatial about it. With the coin something can be purchased. The statement about it is never a means of payment. ... How can what is completely dissimilar, the statement, correspond to the coin? It would have to become the coin, and in this way relinquish itself entirely. The statement never succeeds in doing that. The moment it did, it would no longer be able as a statement to be in accordance with the thing. ... How is the statement able to correspond to something else, the thing, precisely by persisting in its own essence? (*ET*, 122—123)

According to the Heidegger of 'The Essence of Truth', the belief that the the definition of truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus* is unproblematic — is, in fact, a harmless truism — depends upon an unacknowledged but ultimately theologically inspired belief in the unity of the divine plan of creation, which ensures that "matter and proposition measure up to the idea [in the divine intellect] in the same way and therefore are fitted to each other" (*ET*, 120). This theological notion can also be "represented in a general and indefinite way as a world-order", but some such notion is required to sustain the belief that the traditional definition of truth as correspondence is unproblematic. Once the credentials of such a belief are questioned we no longer "know what is meant by accordance of a statement with the matter" etc. (*ET*, 122).

Heidegger is here questioning, it seems to me, an assumption which goes very deep in the Western metaphysical tradition: the assumption that the world, as a subject for thought — as a subject, that is, for theoretical analysis and description — is as simply and perspicuously present to the human mind as it is in sense-perception. The idea is this: just as the senses offer us a world already organised into objects of perception: colours, trees, clouds, animals, mountains, standing in readily apprehensible relationships to one another in the structural matrix provided by a three-dimensional space and a linear time; so thought is presented with an array of ready-made objects of such logical operations as reference or predication, linked by natural, in the sense of directly given, relationships which comprise amongst themselves all the possibilities of logical syntax capable of being exemplified by well-formed declarative sentences. Versions of this enticing thought are to be found throughout the Western metaphysical tradition since Plato, who may be said to have founded it in the *Cratylus*, and in our own century dominate works as apparently diverse and unrelated as Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and Husserl's *Logical Investigations.* In the *Tractatus* the representative or pictorial vision of the foundations of language is enshrined in Wittgenstein's

doctrine that the basic signs of a language are names, that names pick out objects, and that objects are intrinsically characterised by their possibilities of articulation into states of affairs; so that, correlatively, the possibilities of sentential occurrence of a name can be gathered simply from a knowledge of which object that name picks out.[6] In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl, after distinguishing between the indexical and the expressive functions of signs, expression being, among other things, what allows signs to express propositions, claims that signs become expressive simply by coming to stand for the systems of intentional acts which constitute, phenomenologically speaking, the world of the sign-user. These acts stand outside Cartesian self-presence as long as we remain in the stance characteristic of scientific naturalism — "the natural attitude", as Husserl calls it — but can be restored to presence by means of the various 'reductions'. By questioning whether we "know what is meant by accordance of a statement with the matter" Heidegger is certainly breaking with Husserl's theory of signs, and by implication with much else in the phenomenological metaphysics of presence. But the Cartesian associations of Husserl's metaphysics make it more than an isolated phenomenon of thought in the present century: in breaking with it, Heidegger is breaking with the perceptual metaphor which allows us to assume that the world presents us with an array of objects of thought as directly and unambiguously as it presents us with an array of objects of perception.

Heidegger's account of unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) is (among other things, no doubt) his attempt to solve the problem of how, if it is not, after all, just naturally unproblematic, the notion of accordance between proposition and world can be made clear. Both the content of the concept of unconcealment and its putative relationship to the concept of truth undergo substantial changes in the course of Heidegger's philosophical development. In *Being and Time* truth is simply equated with unconcealment. Heidegger's thought at *BT* 217—221 seems to be that an assertion is linked to the phenomena which verify or confirm it in virtue of the fact that one and the same 'way of Being towards' the world is manifested both in the articulation of the judgment and in the articulation of the experience which confirms it. The way of Being in question is a "Being that uncovers." Asserting and confirming the truth of an assertion are, equally and relatedly, acts of uncovering. This position, in Heidegger's view, transcends both the traditional account of truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus* and the equally traditional options of treating truth as a relationship of coherence between propositions or other mental representations and treating it as a relationship of correspondence between the mental and the non-mental.

> What is to be demonstrated is not an agreement of knowing with its object, still less of the psychical with the physical; but neither is it an agreement between 'contents of consciousness' among themselves. What is to be demonstrated is solely the Being-uncovered [*Entdeckt-sein*] of the entity itself — *that entity* in the "how" of its uncoveredness. This uncoveredness is confirmed when that which is put forward in the assertion (namely the entity itself) shows itself *as that very same thing*. "*Confirmation*" signifies *the entity's showing itself in its selfsameness*. The confirmation is accomplished on the basis of the entity's showing itself. This is possible only in such a way that the knowing which asserts and which gets confirmed is, in its ontological meaning, itself a Being *towards* Real entities, and a Being that *uncovers*. (*BT*, 218)

What is it, to adopt Heidegger's way of talking, to *be* towards Real entities in a way which uncovers? On occasion, when Heidegger is talking about Readiness-to-hand (at *BT* 71, e.g.) it looks as if uncovering is essentially a matter of our discerning technological potentialities in things. But at *BT* 220 we are told that "Circumspective concern, or even that concern in which we tarry and look at something, uncovers entities within-the-world." It begins to look as if Heidegger's text simply refuses the gloss I put on it a moment ago: as if Heidegger does think that simply looking about us reveals not only a world of perceptual objects but a world of objects of reference.

At the same time, Heidegger seems to want to assert the existence of two senses of "true", or two kinds of truth.

> These entities [the ones uncovered by 'circumspective concern'] become that which has been uncovered. They are 'true' in a second sense. What is primarily 'true' — that is, uncovering — is Dasein. "Truth" in the second sense does not mean Being-uncovering (uncovering), but Being-uncovered (uncoveredness).[7]

This distinction between senses of 'true' is bound up with a thesis about the meaning in Greek philosophy of the term *aletheia*, which in turn connects with Heidegger's claim that during the development of Greek philosophy there occurred that "forgetting of Being" which determined the whole subsequent course of Western metaphysics. In the *Introduction to Meta-*

physics (1953), Heidegger represents this as a transition from thinking of the real, of Being, as something intrinsically external to the human, and thus as something external to language; as something, therefore, profoundly strange and alien to our minds, to be made understandable to beings like ourselves only partially and only through some non-trivial effort of construal; to thinking of the world as essentially transparent to human thought and language. From the earlier point of view, Heidegger suggests, truth is conceived as a property of our existential standpoint: a matter of being somehow in a fruitful practical-cum-intellectual attitude with respect to Being; so that something about the world which would otherwise have been concealed because unthinkable by us becomes thinkable: unconcealed. From the later point of view truth becomes a property of thought and ultimately of language: correctness; the relationship between a proposition and what makes it true.

> Initially the logos as gathering *is* the event of unconcealment, grounded in unconcealment and serving it. Now logos as statement becomes the abode of truth in the sense of correctness. And this process culminates in Aristotle's proposition to the effect that logos as statement is that which can be true or false. Truth that was originally unconcealment, a happening of the dominant essent itself, governed by gathering, now becomes an attribute of the logos.[8]

Unfortunately, though unobtrusively, Heidegger appears to abandon this entire thesis in the history of ideas, by abandoning the claims about the meanings of Classical Greek words in context upon which it rests, in a brief passage[9] in an essay in *Zur Sache des Denkens* (Tubingen: Max Niemayer Verlag, 1969).[10]

> To raise the question of *aletheia*, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as raising the question of truth. For this reason it was inadequate and misleading to call *aletheia*, in the sense of opening, truth. . . . The natural concept of truth does not mean unconcealment, not in the philosophy of the Greeks either. It is often and justifiably pointed out that the word *alethes* is already used by Homer only in the *verba dicendi*, in statement and thus in the sense of correctness and reliability, not in the sense of unconcealment. But this reference means only that neither the poets nor everyday language, not even philosophy see themselves confronted with the task of asking how truth, that is, the correctness of statements, is granted only in the element of the opening of presence.[11]

It looks, then, as though we can forget the forgetting of Being as a thesis supported by Greek etymology and/or textual analysis; though a ghost of that doctrine remains alive in a footnote to the passage: the Greeks from the earlier times used *aletheia* and its cognates to refer to the correctness of a judgment only because they took as self-evident the validity of some such distinction as Heidegger now wishes to mark with the terms 'truth' and 'opening' or 'unconcealment'.

> How the attempt to think a matter can at times stray from that which a decisive insight has already shown, is demonstrated by a passage from *Being and Time* (1927) (p. 262, New York, Harper & Row, 1962). To translate this word (*aletheia*) as "truth", and, above all, to define this expression conceptually in theoretical ways, is to cover up the meaning of what the Greeks made "self-evidently" basic for the terminological use of aletheia as a philosophical way of understanding it.[12]

Where does this leave us? What is the "decisive insight" which is distorted by the identification of truth with *aletheia* in *Being and Time*? The only possible candidate for that title, it seems to me, is the thought that the nature of the relationship of correspondence postulated by 'the traditional conception' of truth as subsisting between a proposition and what makes it true is not self-explanatory or perspicuous: it requires further elucidation. The later view seems to be this, then; that there is nothing fishy or ill-formed about the notion of truth-as-correspondence: it is the one we ordinarily use and rely upon, and we are perfectly justified in doing both those things.[13] What justifies that confidence, however, is something deeper than truth-as-correspondence: something which explains and grounds the possibility of our having access to the 'ordinary' or 'traditional' conception of truth-as-correspondence. That deeper something is *aletheia*, or 'opening', or 'unconcealment'.

When we ask for further enlightenment about the nature of unconcealment, however, or about the precise manner in which it grounds the possibility of a correspondence conception of truth, we get only the sonorous opacities of Heideggerian metaphor. In 'On the Essence of Truth', in §3, headed *The Ground of the Possibility of Correctness*, Heidegger tells us that "The openness of comportment as the inner condition of the possibility of correctness is grounded in freedom. The essence of truth is freedom."[14] To the objection, sensibly raised by Kockelmans, for instance, that this sounds like abandoning truth altogether to "arbitrariness and human caprice"[15] Heidegger offers only the following dark saying: "What forced itself upon sound judgment again and again in the preceding discussion now all the more clearly comes to light: truth is here driven back to the subjectivity of the human subject. Even if an objectivity is also accessible to this subject, still such

objectivity remains along with subjectivity something human and at man's disposal."[16]

The temptation to close the book and stroll along to the coffee-room to talk to Paul Edwards instead is, I must confess, very strong indeed at this point. But there is something curiously touching about Heidegger's clearly sincere conviction, in, of all places, the 1969 essay in *Zur Sache des Denkens* ('Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens') in which he candidly admits that a great deal in his earlier and recent thinking about truth has been either erroneous or founded upon a string of false etymologies, (a) that he is on to something, (b) that it is extraordinary that people find it so difficult to see the need for a distinction between truth-as-correspondence and unconcealment, and (c) that the question about the grounding of presence in unconcealment is deeper, more fundamental, than the question about Being which gives rise to *Being and Time.*

> How is it that aletheia, unconcealment, appears to man's natural experience and speaking *only* as correctness and dependability? . . . Does the name for the task of thinking then read instead of *Being and Time*: Opening and Presence?[17]

Is the topic of 'Opening and Presence' likely to prove more persuasive to analytic philosophers than the topic of Being as a point of entry into Heidegger's thought? I think it might, since I think that something can be made, in analytic terms, of Heidegger's persistent thought that, although the correspondence theory of truth is at some level true, unavoidable and unexceptionable, more can be, and needs to be, said about the nature of the correspondence relationship itself. I shall now try to make this claim good.

3. Correspondence in the analytical tradition

Sir Peter Strawson, in a well-known article published in 1950, concludes, against J. L. Austin's attempt to find a decent way of formulating the correspondence theory of truth, that "The correspondence theory requires, not purification, but elimination."[18] Strawson's grounds are, immediately, that Austin's very traditional account of the theory offers a satisfactory account neither of the two terms of "the truth-conferring relation", nor of the relation itself; and, more profoundly, that what makes the theory so hopeless is that "The only plausible candidate for the position of what (in the world) makes the statement true is the fact it states; but the fact it states is not something in the world."[19] My argument here, though along very different lines from Strawson's, will be broadly in agreement with him on these points.

Since Strawson wrote, the correspondence theory of truth has not been eliminated. On the contrary, a version of it, derived from Frege, has come to seem, as in a sense it is, a harmless truism. To know the meaning of an expression, wrote Frege, is to know how it contributes to determining the truth-conditions of sentences in which it occurs. Many, probably most, analytic philosophers at present find the notion of "truth-condition" supposedly invoked by this Fregean formula quite unproblematic. A truth-condition is simply any natural feature, regularity or characteristic whatsoever whose occurrence would count in favour of the truth of a given sentence.

This confidence in the unproblematic character of the relationship between a sentence and its truth-conditions is, it seems to me, misplaced. Of course it is a truism that all the truth-conditions of *S* count in favour of the truth of *S*: the question is whether that is all that can be said, or needs to be said, about the relationship between *S* and its truth-conditions. Not all truth-conditions "count in favour" of the truth of *S* in the same way: at the very least there are functional differences between sets of truth-conditions; differences which concern the ways in which the members of one set relate functionally to the members of other sets in actual determinations of the truth of a given sentence.

The most general of these functional differences arises in connection with the interesting issue of how natural circumstances (or features, or characteristics, or relationships) get designated in the first place as truth-conditions for a given sentence *S*. My suspicion is that the reaction of many philosophers to this will be that the matter is neither interesting nor an issue. What singles out one or another natural circumstance as having the status of a truth-condition is simply the dispositions of speakers to ascribe that status to it. Such dispositions can be, and are, picked up by each individual speaker from the other members of his or her speech community for no other reason than that these just happen to be the dispositions commonly honoured in use.

I doubt, though, whether this is quite the end of the matter. Granted that something along the lines of Dummett's "manifestation principle" has to be correct, it still remains open to us to ask what, exactly, it is that is manifested in use, and so picked up by a speaker who

comes to grasp, by observing others' speech-dispositions, the truth-conditions of a sentence *S*. One answer, adequate at least for simple declarative sentences of the form *Fx*, used to ascribe to some present individual a property manifest to immediate observation (where *Fx* is read '*x* is a fox', foxhood, for instance), might be that what a speaker picks up by observing the speech-dispositions of other speakers is an ability to recognize *F*s. Learning the truth conditions of '*x* is a fox', on this view, is a matter of learning that certain characteristics, $\langle C1 - Cn \rangle$, say, a knowledge of which is derivable from observation of the objects about which native speakers exercise their dispositions to assent to or to dissent from utterances of "*x* is a fox", are diagnostic of foxhood. An immediate difficulty with this is that, whatever predicate replaces '*F*', no single set of characteristics will correlate with assent to utterances of *Fx* across all occasions of use. In the case of foxes, Arctic, albino, manx or Malayan foxes will all require the addition or deletion of characteristics from $\langle C1 - Cn \rangle$; related problems will arise for other predicates. Knowledge of how to recognise *F*s will thus consist, for different speakers, in knowledge of different, though no doubt overlapping, sets of diagnostic characteristics. Two questions now arise: (1) What holds the members of the resulting list of sets of characteristics together as diagnostic of the presence of a *single* property, *F*-hood, or to put it another way, as truth-conditions for a *single* sentence, *Fx*? (2) What enables a speaker to extend the list by adding a new item — a new set of characteristics — to it? A possible answer to question (1), often arrived at by putting a Humean construction upon Wittgenstein's familiar remarks about "family resemblances" is this one: the various sets of characteristics by appeal to which individual *F*s of one sort or another can be recognised as *F*s all count as truth-conditions for a single predicate, '—— is *F*', just in case their contents overlap.[20] This will not do. The sets of characteristics which allow one to recognise something as an apple-tree no doubt display a very high degree of overlap with those which allow one to recognise something as a pear-tree or as a tree; nevertheless, two predicates and not one are at stake. Conversely, there is almost no overlap between the set of characteristics which enable one to recognise a Chippendale chair, say, as a chair, and the set which enables one to recognise a modern folding canvas deckchair of the familiar type as a chair, yet only one predicate, '—— is a chair' is at stake. Something more is needed to bind the sets of characteristics — call them *recognition-conditions* — by appeal to which we recognise instances of the application of a given predicate *F* together as truth-conditions for the corresponding sentence *Fx*. And it is plain what more is needed. We simply need to designate some further natural characteristic as the criterion — call it a *relevance-condition* — by appeal to which users of the language are to designate sets of recognition-conditions as relevant to the truth or falsity of *Fx*. In the case of chairs this will obviously be the characteristic of having been made to serve a certain complex of needs met within a given culture by the construction of objects having a certain characteristic organisation into parts — back, seat, etc. — interdefined functionally by reference to those needs. Faced with the first of the questions we raised a moment ago, now we can answer that what makes all of the rather disparate sets of recognition-conditions by appeal to which we recognise different sorts of chairs as chairs count as truth-conditions for '*x* is a chair' is simply that they are all selected as truth conditions for '*x* is a chair' by the relevance-condition which governs the predicate '—— is a chair'. Faced with the second question, we can answer that what enables the language-learner to extend the list of sets of recognition-conditions for '—— is a chair' to include a new item is, again, his grasp of the relevance-condition governing '—— is a chair'. Someone familiar with other kinds of chair who makes acquaintance for the first time with canvas deck-chairs, and learns to recognise them in the ways — no doubt ways which it will be within the scope of some standard version of behaviourism to describe — in which we do learn to pick out reasonably unerringly feature-clusters which recur frequently in our experience, will not need to be told, that is, provided he knows the relevance-condition for '—— is a chair', that what he has learned to recognise in this way is a new and unfamiliar kind of chair, and not a new and unfamiliar kind of potato, or a new and unfamiliar kind of aspiration.

There is no particular connection between the fact that the specification of chairhood I gave in the preceding paragraph satisfies the requirements of a relevance-condition and the fact that it happens to be a functional specification of a kind of artifact. Relevance-conditions turn out to be quite as mixed a bag as recognition-conditions. What satisfies the requirements of a relevance-condition for '—— is a tree', for instance, is presumably the characteristic of (a) being a plant, and (b) having what botanists call a *habit* of a certain sort,

one which involves the presence in trunk and branches of a substance, wood, which presents a consistent set of characteristics to casual observation; characteristics which correspond, as it happens, to the presence of a particular chemical substance, lignin, in the cell-walls of the woody parts of trees. Here we have a condition sufficient to collect, as truth-conditions for '*x* is a tree', the very different sets of characteristics by appeal to which we recognise offhand such diverse objects as apple-trees, Sequoias, bonsai or the stunted pines of Arctic tundra as trees. What collects the recognitional characteristics of different kinds of apple-tree as truth-conditions for '*x* is an apple-tree', on the other hand, is the fact that they all bear apples. Again, the assertion that an object is ten centimetres long may be warranted in practice by all sorts of diverse conditions; for instance, by the fact that it appears about half the length of an object standing next to it that we know, as it happens, to be twenty centimetres long, or simply by the fact that it just looks about that length. What justifies us in taking the diverse considerations by appeal to which we recognise in practice that an object is of a given length to have the status of truth-conditions with respect to the corresponding assertion is the fact that we can refer back to the relevance-condition supplied, in this case, by the general notions of measurement and of a specific modulus of measurement. Finally, to go back to my original example of foxhood, it will presumably be the notion of genetic relationship as causally responsible for similarities in physical appearance between individuals which ties together sets of diagnostic characteristics none of which, though they may overlap, need be thought of as either necessary or sufficient for foxhood. The *point* of getting interested in those sets of characteristics in the first place, that is, is just that they do as a matter of empirical fact permit one to recognise an individual animal as belonging to a certain *sort, which is not defined simply as the class of individuals possessing the diagnostic characteristics in question*, irrespective of whether we formulate our notion of the sort in question in terms of the biological notion of a species or in terms of the looser, 'folk' conceptions of *breed* or *family*.

It might be objected at this point, though, that no real distinction of kind whatsoever between recognition-conditions and relevance-conditions has so far been established. Since both types of condition are admitted to be simply natural features of the world, and since what turns a natural feature into a truth-condition — namely, conventional association with a simple declarative sentence — is also admitted to be the same in both cases, it is difficult to see why the distinction should be supposed to involve any departure from the ordinary view, generally held among analytic philosophers of language, that a truth-condition is simply any natural feature of the world which competent speakers of a natural language take as warranting the assertion of a given declarative sentence.[21] Again, if the distinction is supposed to be a functional one, is it not immediately under threat from the obvious fact that relevance-conditions clearly could, if one simply goes by the examples which have so far been offered, function equally well as recognition-conditions? Can't one recognise something as a tree by recognising that it is a woody plant, for instance, or as a chair by noticing that people use it as one? Obviously one can.

These objections are sound. There is a certain temptation to respond to them by claiming a residual functional asymmetry between the two kinds of condition. The fundamental hunch at stake here is that a natural language, for some deep and not very easily articulable reason, needs relevance-conditions to supplement recognition-conditions, and the temptation is to try to formulate this hunch by claiming that whereas any relevance-condition can in principle function as a recognition-condition, at least some recognition-conditions are debarred by their nature from functioning, even in principle, as relevance-conditions. But once again, it seems, the philosophical obstetrician has merely succeeded in strangling the child he is attempting to deliver, since there seems nothing at all to be said for the residual claim on which the distinction is now supposed to rest. Suppose, as is quite plausible, that I recognise oak-trees as such by the overall visual *Gestalt* which they exhibit. Why should this Gestalt not serve as the relevance-condition which collects recognition-conditions for the predicate '—— is an oak-tree'? No reason at all; and evidently the same could in principle be said, *pari passu*, for any other recognition-condition and its corresponding predicate. There is nothing about the *content* of the natural features which we select as truth-conditions which debars any of them from serving in either functional role, as relevance-condition or as recognition-conditions.

The failure of the distinction as a distinction, drawn in terms of content or the matching of content to role, between types of natural feature, however, in no way threatens its viability as a distinction between types of

functional role in which natural features can stand to one another in the determination of truth and falsity. Suppose we do decide to take the overall *Gestalt* by appeal to which — mostly — we recognise oak-trees in England as the relevance-condition for the predicate '—— is an oak-tree'. If recognition-conditions and relevance-conditions were functionally equivalent the change should make no difference to either the meaning or the extension of the term 'oak-tree'. But in fact it changes both. 'Oak-tree' ceases to be a name for a biological genus and becomes a name for a specific *Gestalt* which (as we can now *a fortiori* no longer say) a certain species of oak happens characteristically to exhibit. Consequently any species of oak — the cork oak, for instance — which happens not to exhibit the *Gestalt* will now fall outside the denotation range of 'oak-tree', while if (let us suppose) there happens to be an African forest-tree which does exhibit a closely similar *Gestalt*, it will on that account fall within the denotation range of 'oak-tree' even if it is not a member of the genus *Quercus*. Suppose, now, some English speakers use the term 'oak-tree' in the usual way, as a name for a genus of plants, whereas another group uses it as a name for a certain *Gestalt* which one species of oak (among other kinds of tree) happens to exhibit. In ordinary daily life the difference between them may hardly make itself felt, since all use the same recognition-condition when assigning truth or falsity to assertions made by means of the sentence '*x* is an oak-tree', since most English oaks are of the common species *Quercus robur*. The difference between the two groups will become perfectly apparent, though, as soon as we begin to investigate what other sets of natural circumstances count, for each group, as recognition-conditions for the predicate '—— is an oak-tree'; and we shall find it very difficult to account for this difference in any way which avoids saying that the two groups use different criteria for selecting the sets of natural circumstances which each takes as having the status of recognition-conditions for that predicate. Here, then, is a fairly deep, though not the deepest reason, why we need to distinguish between truth-conditions according to whether they happen to occupy, with respect to a given predicate, one or other of these two functional roles.

4. The complexity of truth-conditions

The move of distinguishing between two distinct but functionally related types of truth-condition may still seem to many analytic philosophers arbitrary and unmotivated; without roots in the philosophical tradition they represent, and thus deserving of the suspicion which attaches, no doubt rightly, to philosophical novelty.

In fact the originality involved in formulating the distinction I have just drawn is not of a very high order. The materials needed to construct such an account of the truth-relationship as internally complex lie scattered throughout the literature of analytic philosophy; dormant only because separated from one another. What has kept them apart, more than anything else, it seems to me, is that analytic philosophers, though they pay lip-service to Frege's dictum that to know the meaning of a sentence is to know how to set about establishing its truth-value, still contrive, most of the time, to discuss meaning and truth as if they were quite separate topics.

Many leading figures in analytic philosophy have taken it for granted that it makes sense to talk of *meanings* or *concepts* as entities distinguishable as possessing different contents or modes of functioning; and thus that it makes sense to speak of different languages or bodies of theory as possessing or deploying distinct *conceptual schemes*. Strawson, Feyerabend or Kuhn provide obvious examples, but such talk crops up everywhere, sometimes offering Aristotelian or Thomistic credentials, as in Peter Geach's talk of the *ratio* of a concept[22]; more often, though unfashionably at the moment, in the context of Frege's arguments for the indispensability to the theory of meaning of some notion of sense.[23]

Such assumptions and arguments have seemed to many unpersuasive in recent years, largely, it seems to me, for two reasons. First, it has seemed plausible that putatively intensional notions such as Geach's *ratio* or Frege's *sense* should in principle be reducible to the notion of a set of truth-conditions. And secondly it has come to seem almost axiomatic to many that the identity of truth-conditions is to be established by correlating native speakers' dispositions to affirm the truth or falsity of sentences with the circumstances in which they exercise such dispositions. This second move, pioneered by Quine in *Word and Object*, had become, little more than a decade later, sufficiently standard to be captured by Donald Davidson in a single slogan-like sentence:

> Truth (in a natural language) is not a property of sentences, it is a relation between sentences, speakers, and dates.[24]

As Davidson's work has shown, this move at a stroke restores the unmediated contact between sentences and the world postulated by the traditional *adaequatio* account of truth which Heidegger distrusts, at the same time removing both the need for and the possibility of talk of concepts or conceptual schemes.[25]

> . . . in giving up the dualism of scheme and world, we do not give up the world, but reestablish unmediated touch with the familiar objects whose antics make our sentences and opinions true or false.[26]

I suggested in Section 2 that Heidegger's account of truth was motivated by resistance to the assumption, implicit in the traditional *adaequatio* account, that the world is as perspicuously present to us as an array of logical objects of reference and predication as it is as an array of physical objects of perception. It would not be a distortion, it seems to me, to take Davidson's arguments in such essays as 'True to the Facts' and 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' as constituting a powerful defence of that very assumption; as, in effect, continuing the perennial tendency in empiricism, by means far more subtle than Locke's, to assimilate concepts to percepts.

The literature of analytic philosophy contains some redoubtable, if scattered, passages of opposition to any such assimilation. One section heading of Peter Geach's well-known critique of abstractionism declares roundly "Making Concepts Is Not a Finding of Recurrent Features."[27] Geach's argument is Wittgensteinian: the ability to recognise a set of recurrent features does not in itself show how a term is to be used in discourse. But Geach, no doubt intentionally and for reasons which also stem from Wittgenstein, chooses not to supplement this negative critique with any positive account of what concept formation does consist in. The late Julius Kovesi on the other hand, in his remarkable little book *Moral Notions*,[28] does offer a positive account which does not seem to me to fall foul of Wittgenstein's structures against philosophical theorising, and in the course of giving it arrives at a distinction in many respects similar to the distinction between recognition- and relevance-conditions offered in the present essay. Kovesi distinguishes between "features which enable us to recognise or identify the thing in question" (p. 40), which he calls 'recognitors', and other principles which capture the *point* of selecting certain features rather than others as recognitors for a given concept. Recognitors "are not the criteria for the proper use of the word" (*loc. cit.*), because the point of selecting the recognitors in question "is not expressed even by stating all the possible recognitors" (p. 46). Kovesi weakens the force of his distinction, however, partly by choosing to define the role of his selection criteria in terms of the not particularly perspicuous notion of *point*, which leaves him open to the question whether the *point* of labelling a recurrent cluster of features with a kind-name might not simply be that those features have been observed to recur consistently in just that kind of cluster, and partly by suggesting (p. 24) that the distinction applies, if not exclusively, at least more importantly to moral notions, which lets in the possibility that there might be some concepts (Kovesi seems at times prepared to consider colour concepts in this light) to which it does not apply at all, in which case, evidently, the distinction fails as an account of what is necessary to the possession of a concept.

The version of the distinction proposed here meets the first of these objections by defining the functional role of relevance-conditions not in terms of *point*, but in terms of the requirement that there be some criterion for extending the range of recognitors relevant to a given concept. The argument is that without access to a relevance-condition we simply have no means either of connecting up the various sets of recognitors which any concept will accumulate in the natural course of events as recognitors for one and the same concept, or of adding a new set of recognitors to the total array of recognitors for that concept. This argument, it seems to me, makes Kovesi's second concession not only unnecessary but indefensible. The distinction applies to every concept without exception because without relevance-conditions in addition to recognitors we cannot answer Frege's question, as rephrased by Moravcsik (note 23), "What connects a term with its denotation range?" Making this move in effect turns Kovesi's distinction into an account of the truth-relationship. The resulting account differs from Davidson's, however, in making truth not a relationship between sentences, speakers and dates, but a relationship between sentences, speakers, dates and practices; the argument being that Davidson's relationship between sentences, speakers and dates can be established only if we have access to the practices which define relevance-conditions, since otherwise we have no means of knowing which features manifested at a given date are related in the required way to any given sentence. But adding this element to Davidson's definition means that

sentences are no longer in "unmediated touch with" the "familiar objects" of the sensory world, but in mediated touch with the unfamiliar logical objects of a conceptual scheme. We have moved a step closer to Heidegger.

My argument against Davidson, which is essentially that the features manifested at a given date can be correlated in many ways with any given sentence, is doubtless reminiscent of Wittgenstein's arguments against the theory of ostensive definition in the *Philosophical Investigations*. In fact, both Kovesi's and my own version of the distinction between relevance and recognition seem to me to derive fairly directly from Wittgenstein's remarks sketching, in the *Blue and Brown Books*, a distinction between "symptoms" and "criteria", and in the *Philosophical Investigations* between "ostensive teaching" and "training". A *locus classicus* for this last form of the distinction is paragraph 31 of the *Investigations*:

> When one shews someone the king in chess and says: "This is the king", this does not tell him the use of this piece — unless he already knows the rules of the game up to this last point: the shape of the king. You could imagine his having learnt the rules of the game without ever having been shewn an actual piece. The shape of the chessman corresponds here to the shape or sound of a word. . . . We may say, only someone who knows what to do with it can significantly ask for a name.

We have here two teaching procedures. One, Wittgenstein's "ostensive teaching", simply involves pointing to the chess-king and uttering the name of the piece: "king". The other involves teaching the rules of chess. Wittgenstein's point is simply that the first procedure would be unintelligible to someone who was not already familiar with the game of chess and its rules. The argument is that just showing someone the king and indicating its name does not "tell him the use of the piece." "Use", here, plainly refers in the first instance to the use of the piece in the game of chess. But Wittgenstein laconically adds, "The shape of the chessman corresponds here to the shape or sound of a word." It appears, then, that Wittgenstein intends us to take a remark ostensibly about learning chess as a remark about learning language. How is the analogy to go? The thought is, plainly, that, while ostensive teaching can suffice to associate "the sound or shape of a word" with a particular type or object, the little crenellated cylinder which represents the king in the standard European version of chess, it cannot show us "how to do something with it." It is clear, within the terms of the example, what it is to know how to "do something with" the chess-king; what is it, though, to know how to do something with a word: say the word "chess-king"? One obvious possible answer would be, "to know how to deploy it in sentential contexts." Accordingly, the point of Wittgenstein's critique of ostensive definition, in *Philosophical Investigations* I. 31 and elsewhere, has often been taken to be the thought that ostensive definition alone cannot establish how a term is to be used in sentences. The effect of this, very popular and familiar, interpretation is to detach the critique of ostensive definition from any obvious connection with the topic of truth, and the relationship between truth and meaning, and to cast it instead as an argument for the familiar Fregean contention that sentences, and not words, are the primary bearers of meaning. I have no doubt that the Wittgenstein of the *Philosophical Investigations* did hold some version of that thesis of Frege's, but I doubt if that is at stake in I. 31 and related paragraphs. To "know what to do with" a *name* is also, and primarily, to know how to apply it. This is something, evidently, which can, up to a point, be taught simply by showing someone the king in chess and saying: "This is the King." This clearly teaches the learner something: it teaches him that English speakers call a certain type of odd but easily recognisable little object 'the King' or 'a King'. Knowing this amounts, certainly, to knowing a fact about English speakers: does it, or rather could it, amount to knowing the meaning of the English word 'King', even in this context? One relevant thought here, I suppose, is that in another chess-playing culture the role of the king might be played by a quite different, though equally standardised and so easily recognisable little object: an elephant with a little Rajah riding in a howdah, for instance. Would someone who had been taught ostensively to associate the word 'king' with the standard European chess piece of that name have learned, *ipso facto*, to call the little rajah on his elephant a king too? Plainly not: for such a person the name 'king' simply labels a certain easily recognisable type of object, having a certain shape and size; and the little elephant has, so far as appearance goes, nothing in common with that type of object. So has he learned the meaning of the English word 'King' in this context? Plainly not; for nothing he has learned so far could enable him to apply the term as English speakers apply it. Of course, if he knows the game of chess, and knows that 'king' is meant in this ostensive context to be the name of a chess-piece, then he does have sufficient knowledge to enable him to work out for himself that the little elephant is also a

chess-king; for he will pay attention now not to the manifest disparities in appearance between these two types of object, but to their equally manifest identity of role within the game of chess. But to say this is to make what I take to be part of Wittgenstein's point: that ostensive definition is insufficient on its own, not merely to explain the acquisition of the ability to deploy names in sentential contexts, but also to explain the ability to apply names in ways which match the practice of other speakers.

5. Realism, anti-realism and idealism

This, no doubt far too brief and sketchy, discussion of Wittgenstein on symptoms, criteria and practices may serve to give us a grip on a further, and serious, potential objection to the way of construing the truth-relationship suggested here. Traditionally, what the correspondence theorist wishes to avoid at all costs is, on the one hand, any suggestion that truth consists in the coherence of truth-claims with one another, and on the other hand what one might call *linguistic idealism*: the thesis that the entities picked out by the basic semantically significant elements of a language are in any sense linguistic constructions; the objection to such accounts being the entirely reasonable one that a decent theory of language ought to show how it is possible for language to be about the world as well as about itself. On this view of the matter we want an account according to which concepts are not messily human fabrications, but cleanly (for instance, behaviourally) specifiable entities of an entirely extra-linguistic and extra-human kind. This, I take it, is one, if not the ultimate thrust of Davidson's arguments against talk of conceptual schemes.

The chief objection from the analytic side to Heidegger's account of truth, indeed, apart from distaste at the sloppiness and obscurity of Heidegger's way of expressing himself, is that Heidegger's two-tier account of correspondence, with its insistence that the correspondence relationship is not immediately perspicuous to inspection, but needs to be founded upon some deeper and vastly more obscure relationship of "unconcealment" which appears to make the possibility of reference to "existents" dependent partly upon Being and partly upon our ways of comporting ourselves towards it, is, to put it bluntly, that the whole thing stinks of linguistic idealism.

What I want to suggest, now, is that these grounds of objection to Heidegger are not necessarily as solid as they look because the way of dividing up the issues upon which they rest is not necessarily as solid as it looks. The account of truth which I developed, with, as it now appears, a good deal of help from Geach, Kovesi and Wittgenstein, in Section 3 bears, to say the least, a strong family resemblance to Heidegger's. Like Heidegger's account, it gives the correspondence theorist, on one level, everything he wants. Truth is a relationship of correspondence between a sentence and some set of features which satisfy it. Again like Heidegger, however, it immediately takes back this concession. The sets of features which stand to a given sentence in the right relationship of satisfaction are not naturally and extra-linguistically constituted; they need to be selected by a further, non-associative linguistic rule, called a relevance-condition, which may require a considerable provision of complex conventional stipulation to make clear what is involved in its application to particular cases. Concepts, it seems, have to be regarded as linguistic constructions after all; all the old bad jargon about conceptual schemes comes flooding back in, and with it, one might suppose, the threat of linguistic idealism.

It is hard to see, though, how a charge of linguistic idealism against the account of the truth-relationship outlined in Section 3 can be made to stick. On that account, indeed, concepts are not formed simply by associating names with behaviourally specifiable recognitional capacities whose coherence as dispositions antedates language and is to be explained, if at all, psychologically rather than linguistically. The truth-conditions of even a simple declarative sentence cannot be regarded as equivalent to a list of descriptions of the natural circumstances which prompt native speakers to assent to and dissent from assertions made by means of the sentence in question. More is needed, namely, a grasp of the principles of selection or relevance through whose operation the natural circumstances in question acquire their status as dissent- or assent-prompting considerations. This certainly offers one way of articulating Strawson's thought that "the fact [a statement] states is not something in the world". In fact, if one wanted to be provocative, one could reasonably add that what the Wittgenstein-derived arguments of Section 3 show is that outside language there are not only no such things as facts but no such things as properties. Statements like these will certainly distress the linguistic Realist. But is there really anything here which should

rouse the Realist to dissent, once the arguments thus summarised are spelled out in full? For, after all, we are not saying that concepts, let alone the external world, are mental entities, or that language is incapable of referring to what is outside language. On the contrary, the stipulation of both recognition-conditions and relevance-conditions can only occur through human interaction with what-Is-outside-language, or as Heidegger would say in his cranky "ontological" terminology, with Being. It is just that what-Is-outside-language does not come, as it were, already semantically divided up for purposes of reference and assertion, and only gets to be semantically divided up as a result of our stipulating some linguistic rules. But this last claim comes in essence to no more than Frege's principle, to which Wittgenstein gave allegiance in both periods of his work, that signs acquire meaning only through explicit stipulation and lack it wherever stipulation is faulty or wanting.

Talk of 'stipulating linguistic rules' has a ring of conventionalism about it, of course, and that might raise a suspicion, to say the least, that the charge of linguistic idealism is being evaded, not answered. But that of course depends upon what one means by a 'linguistic rule'. Writers on the Positivist and post-Positivist wing of the analytic tradition have generally been prepared to countenance talk of semantic rules only on the condition that such rules be understood simply as associative conventions, linking names to their bearers or sentences to sets of truth-conditions. If this is what we mean by a 'rule of language' then the choice between linguistic realism and linguistic idealism does seem to be a real one, and to depend upon the issue of whether the entities with which such rules associate the semantic elements of a language are individuated wholly extralinguistically, since, if they cannot be wholly extralinguistically individuated, it would appear that a language cannot speak about what exists wholly independently of its rules and operations. A relevance condition, however, while it certainly connects semantic elements of a language with the world, does not do so associatively. It does so by establishing a rule or principle for selecting sets of recognition-conditions. Such a principle itself refers to the extralinguistic world. It does not, however, 'refer' to the world in the way that a name 'refers' to its bearer, but in the way that a practice 'refers' to the characteristic objects about which it is exercised. In this way chess as a practice refers to some physical objects which can be moved from one place to another on a checkered board, or off the board altogether. The practice and its rules are certainly required to individuate the entities to which talk about chess refers: the king, the pawns, the Knight's Move, and so forth. But such objects of reference, although they are plainly not wholly extralinguistically individuated, are equally plainly not to be construed as constituting a Veil of (linguistic) Illusion cutting us off from the possibility of linguistic reference to the Extralinguistically Real. In referring to the King we are referring to something extralinguistically Real, namely, to one of the little physical objects with which the practice of chess is concerned: it is just that we are referring to that object under an aspect which it could not present to us except in virtue of our mastery of a human practice. The argument is, in effect, that the fact that the referents of the predicate-terms in a natural language are not individuated wholly extralinguistically fails to yield linguistic idealism as a consequence because the linguistic principles which do the individuating are already richly provided with extralinguistic reference, although not, of course, reference in the linguistic sense.

6. Truth as correctness and as unconcealment

It seems to me that at least a good deal of what Heidegger wants to say in terms of the distinction between truth as correctness and truth as unconcealment can be put without substantial distortion in terms of the distinction between recognition-conditions and relevance-conditions. In saying that I am not arguing for the replacement of Heidegger's text by a suitably reinterpreted version of Wittgenstein's. Philosophical texts differ from scientific ones, among other ways, in this one: that as well as being collections of arguments they are records of journeys. Heidegger's journey was a different one from Wittgenstein's, and has different things to teach us. At the same time the thoughts of one philosopher, even a great one, are seldom altogether without parallel in the thought of others, and there is generally some gain in clarity and depth of understanding to be obtained, in both directions, by tracing out the parallels. All I am suggesting is that Heidegger is no exception to this rule.

The negative side of Heidegger's fundamental thesis about truth is, it seems to me, that truth is not a relationship between a collection of signs and some entity which simply is apparent to us when we survey the world about us, provided, that is, that we survey it by the light

of some philosophical method (Descartes', Plato's, Husserl's, Russell's, for instance) capable of making apparent what is, in the required sense, apparent. The positive alternative which Heidegger offers to such views is not, however, that we are free to constitute in any way we pleased the entities which stand at the world end of the truth relationship. On the contrary, because the constitution of the entities to which sentences are truth-related involves work, a practical existential interchange between human beings and the world which they confront in common, it involves the kind of relationship between freedom and constraint which any practical activity involves. Reality both allows us a choice, that is, and limits the range of choices open to us as a variable function both of its nature and of our ingenuity and insight. Hence, it seems to me, Heidegger's insistence at *BT* 263 that "Being-true as Being-uncovering, is a way of Being for Being-in-the-world." And hence, also, his well-known identification of truth in the sense of unconcealment with freedom.

Both the negative and the positive claim can be reformulated with minimal distortion, it seems to me, in terms of the distinction between recognition- and relevance-conditions. The burden of that distinction is (1) that the world is semantically inscrutable until we make it semantically scrutable, and (2) that what makes it semantically scrutable, viz., the devising of relevance-conditions, is essentially a matter of practical activity. Because the devising of relevance-conditions is not, in the nature of things, constrained by any pre-given semantic categories it can, at least metaphorically speaking, be regarded as taking place in Heidegger's "open region" — the celebrated *Lichtung*, or "clearing" — which it is in the nature of Dasein to open in the face of Being. The absence of pre-given semantic categories in this existential situation is what, I take it, Heidegger wishes to characterise in this context as freedom.

This freedom, however, is not an arbitrary freedom. "Freedom for what is opened up in an open region," says Heidegger on p. 123 of 'On the Essence of Truth', "lets beings be the beings they are. Freedom reveals itself as letting beings be." The practical activity which goes into devising relevance-conditions also "lets beings be" in the sense — not too remote from Heidegger's — that it is not (the late Heidegger's particular bugbear) *technological* activity. It does not devise, by the light of an assured conceptual and theoretical standpoint, that is, ways of *manipulating* nature. Rather, it must wait upon nature to reveal, through its hospitality to our attempts to structure it in terms of some new form of "comportment" (*Verhalten*), some new way in which it may be apprehended conceptually. This neatly fits Heidegger's talk of "a comportment which stands open to Being" (*ET*, 127), and such remarks as "To let be is to engage oneself with Being" (*ET*, 127).

Heidegger's talk of "shepherding Being", and of language as "the House of Being", may now appear also somewhat more concrete and less mystical. Perhaps, too, we have at least the beginnings of an explanation of the fact, so bitter and so puzzling to Heidegger, that nobody, the Presocratics included, has ever seriously supposed truth to consist in "unconcealment", or indeed in anything other than the correspondence between a sentence and a fact. The explanation is that the devising of relevance-conditions has as its outcome, if successful, the founding of the possibility of asserting or denying truth of one or more new classes of sentences. To put the same remark provocatively, once we have some relevance-conditions we have some facts for the sentences governed by the relevance-conditions in question to correspond to. Truth, for those sentences, just is the relationship of correspondence in which they stand to those facts. Hence the processes by which we arrived at the relevance-conditions in question tend to drop out of the picture, the more so since, as we saw earlier, unless we focus very carefully on the — not terribly obvious — functional relationships between relevance-conditions and recognition-conditions there is every temptation to regard the former as simply more of the latter.

But can this be right? If the Shepherd of Being can be identified as easily with the scientist in his role as conceptual originator as with the obscurantist Heideggerian mystagogue with whom he is equated in Paul Edwards' essay, what becomes of Heidegger's reputation as the purveyor of a profoundly anti-scientific brand of existentialist mysticism? What in Heidegger is construed as opposition to science can with equal justice be construed, it seems to me, as opposition to certain forms of scientism. Heidegger's opposition to "positivism" seems to me to come down in the end to dislike of the idea that any conceptual scheme can be regarded as metaphysically ultimate in the sense that its terms and articulations simply express the way things are (the burden of Heidegger's account of truth, looked at from this point of view, is that while an assertion can be correct, it makes no sense to say of a concept, or a language, that it is correct). Richard Rorty's attempt to

contrive an *Anschluss* between Anglo-Saxon and Continental philosophy rests in part on the thesis that the neo-Pragmatist turn which positivism has taken in the hands of writers like Quine, Davidson or Putnam has divested it also of any commitment to a metaphysically privileged language. This is, at any rate, questionable, it seems to me. Post-Quinean pragmatists not only tend to believe, as a rule, that scientific description gets you closer to the nature of Reality than other forms of description (moral or aesthetic description, say); they also tend to believe, as a rule, that one, if not the, function of philosophy is that of clearing the way in principle, in the manner, if not with the epistemic and metaphysical caution, of Locke's underlabourer, for an exhaustive description of Reality in terms of some future natural science continuous with, at least in the sense of subsuming, the natural science which we at present possess: a programme which finds expression, for instance, in Quine's characterisation of his own and Dewey's pragmatism as consisting fundamentally in the belief that "knowledge, mind and meaning are part of the same world that they have to do with, and that they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural science."[29] Heidegger's account of truth is certainly incompatible with such philosophical aims and beliefs as these. But are such philosophical programmes, and the beliefs which go with them, part of science, or do they belong to metaphysics, and more specifically, to the metaphysics of presence?

If we abandon the thesis of a metaphysically privileged language as radically as Heidegger suggests, the result is not, it seems to me, to weaken our belief either in the possibility of scientific understanding of an indeterminately wide range of natural phenomena, or in the truth (in the straightforward, *adaequatio* sense of "truth") of a very large number of scientific statements; but to strengthen our belief in the possibility of being serious about other things besides science. Since Hume, philosophy in the empiricist tradition has been saddled with a very sharp distinction between the way things brutely are and the more or less delusive interpretations which human beings impose upon the brute facts. Philosophical disagreements within the tradition have tended to focus not on the basic Humean construal of the human situation as a permanently unsuccessful endeavour to embroider the unyielding surface of the brutely factual with the motifs of religion, morality or art, but on the question, recently hotly debated anew between Realists and anti-Realists about truth, whether the brute facts are to be characterised epistemically or realistically. One interesting feature of Heidegger's account of truth is that, by making "unconcealment" a precondition of truth in the sense of correspondence or correctness, it radically weakens both the contrast between brute fact and cultural embroidery and the contrast between Realism and Idealism. I shall conclude by taking a closer look at this aspect of what Heidegger has to say about truth.

In *Being and Time*, discussing the example of the statement "the picture on the wall is hanging askew", Heidegger suggests, in effect, that what makes the statement true need not be construed either Realistically or anti-Realistically.

> What is to be demonstrated is not an agreement of knowing with its object, still less of the psychological with the physical; but neither is it an agreement between 'contents of consciousness' among themselves. What is to be demonstrated is solely the being-uncovered [entdeckt-sein] of the entity itself — *that* entity in the "how" of its uncoveredness.

I feel inclined to sketch the following, very tentative, interpretation of this. If one construes the truth-relationship as a relationship of simple association between a sentence and some circumstances which make it true, then clearly it becomes a real and important question whether the circumstances in question are to be understood realistically or epistemically. And a powerful argument for the latter option, which we owe, I am inclined to think, to Michael Dummett rather than to Wittgenstein, suggests itself. The identity of truth-conditions must be capable of manifesting itself in the behaviour of speakers; but this requirement cannot be met by a condition which speakers cannot know to obtain. The apparent requirement of Realism, that it be possible for a statement to be true independently of the possibility of its being known to be true, now appears an impossible one.

If we think of truth, on the other hand, in the way in which Heidegger, as I have glossed him in this essay, does, then these options become less clear-cut. The truth-relationship now has to be thought of as a pair of complementary relationships. One the one hand there is the relationship between a sentence and whatever considerations lead us to recognise it as true on a given occasion. On the other hand there are the criteria which license us in taking those considerations as bearing upon the truth or falsity of the sentence in question. This

vision of things is, as we have been, inhospitable to the kind of metaphysical Realism which postulates a direct relationship between sentence and fact. On the other hand it is also inhospitable to metaphysical anti-realism, in two ways. First of all there seems no room for an anti-Realist treatment of the relationship between the world and the practices which found relevance-conditions. Those practices work, after all, in the sense that they mediate public processes of communication, only because we are sustained in them by Reality, or as Heidegger would say, by Being. The askewness of Heidegger's picture, then, stands there before the observer neither as an appearance-which-might-be-illusory nor as a property which Reality simply possesses and as simply displays to the observer (as "present" to him). As an 'entity' it is a construction, which the observer can pick out and refer to only because he has access to certain relevance-conditions and the practices which found them. It stands there solidly before him "in the 'how' of its uncoveredness", however, with a solidity which no merely philosophical doubt can threaten, because the practices upon which both the reference and the verification of any assertion which the observer may make about it depend are themselves sustained, as ordinary people say, by the nature of things, or as Heideggerians say, by Being. Secondly, the new picture of the truth-relationship offers the possibility of rearticulating the fundamental thought of Realism, that the truth of a statement is independent of our means of knowing it to be true, in a way which renders it invulnerable to the manifestation argument. Realism reappears, in short, as the thought that, somewhere in the universe, '*Fx*' may be made true by some set of considerations which, though it is impossible for us ever to come to know of them, we should, if we could come to know of them, be required by the relevance-condition governing the predicate '—— is *F*' to recognise as relevant to the truth of '*Fx*'. The kind of Realism which this view of things supports might, I suppose, be termed 'folk-Realism'. It consists in the beliefs, incompatible from the standpoint of the debate between metaphysical Realism and metaphysical anti-Realism, that although Reality is what all the truths we are able to utter are about, and though Reality is what sustains us in the possibility of uttering truths at all, or for that matter distinguishing between truth and falsehood, Reality is ultimately unfathomable, and beyond any possibility of being once and for all brought within the sphere of what is epistemically accessible to us, because fathomed only through the mediation of our practices and "comportments".

If this is Heidegger's vision of things, it would explain why Heidegger is equally unhappy with Platonism and the 'Metaphysics of Presence' in all its forms, and with naturalism. Both have a philosophical story to tell about the relationship between language and reality. If Heidegger is right there is no such story to be told, not even a scientific-looking one, since for Heidegger, as for Wittgenstein, the relationship between language and Reality runs, not *via* some propositions which happen, as a matter of metaphysical demonstration or contingent fact, to be true, but *via* a vast and in principle unlimited array of human practices.

Notes

[1] A fairly damaging collection of such criticisms can be found in, for instance, Reinhardt Grossmann, *Phenomenology and Existentialism: An Introduction*, London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan, Paul, 1984, and Paul Edwards, 'Heidegger's Quest for Being', *Philosophy*, October 1989.

[2] Thomas Bernhard, *Maîtres Anciens*, tr. Gilberte Lambrichs, Paris: Gallimard, 1988, pp. 64—69.

[3] Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 469.

[4] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, tr. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962, p. 262. Subsequent references are to *BT* plus the German page number.

[5] Martin Heidegger, 'On the Essence of Truth', in *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings*, ed, D. F. Krell, New York, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977. Subsequent references are to *ET* plus page number.

[6] Cf. *Tractatus*, 3.2—3.22.

[7] *Loc cit.*

[8] Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. Ralph Manheim, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1959, p. 186.

[9] I am grateful to Kevin Mulligan for drawing this passage to my attention.

[10] Published in English as *On Time and Being*, tr. Joan Stambaugh, New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper and Row, 1972.

[11] Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[12] *Op. cit.*, p. 70, n. 5.

[13] I agree here with Joseph J. Kockelmans' reading in *On the Truth of Being: Reflection on Heidegger's Later Philosophy*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984. See especially p. 16, penultimate paragraph.

[14] *Op. cit.*, p. 125.

[15] *Op. cit.*, p. 9.

[16] *Op. cit.*, p. 126.

[17] *Op. cit.*, English version, pp. 71—73.

[18] P. F. Strawson, 'Truth', *Proceedings of The Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume*, 1950.

[19] P. F. Strawson, *Logico-Linguistic Papers*, London: Methuen, 1971, p. 195.

[20] For an account of this kind, see John Searle, 'Proper Names', *Mind* **LXVII** (1958), 166—171.

[21] I am grateful to Eddy Zemach, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, for sharpening my sense of the force of this objection.

[22] P. T. Geach, 'Good and Evil', *Analysis* **17** (1956), 33—42; reprinted in Philippa Foot, *Theories of Ethics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 69: "It belongs to the *ratio* of 'want', 'choose', 'good', and 'bad', that, normally, and other things being equal, a man who wants an *A* will choose a good *A* and will not choose a bad *A* — or rather will choose an *A* that he thinks good and will not choose an *A* that he thinks bad."

[23] Julius Moravcsik offers a sound defence of the indispensability of something like a Fregean concept of sense, which incidentally makes the main point of the present essay, in his *Understanding Language*, The Hague: Mouton, *Janua linguarum, series minor*, no. 169, p. 23: "... the question Frege asks is: what connects a term with its denotation range? The relation cannot be a direct one, otherwise in order to understand a term one would have to be acquainted with its entire range of application. This is in most cases impossible since such ranges, linked to many predicates, are spatiotemporally unbounded. Thus the relation between term and denotation range or extension must be mediated by something, something the grasp of which enables us to say what does fall and what would fall within the extension of a given term. This element has to be the mode of representation of the extension, and it is called the sense of the term."

[24] Donald Davidson, 'True to the Facts', in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 43.

[25] For an insightful discussion of, *inter alia*, the connection between Davidson's account of truth and his scepticism about conceptual schemes, see Andrew Benjamin, *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy*, London and New York: Routledge, 1989, pp. 60—85.

[26] Donald Davidson, 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', in *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation*, p. 198.

[27] P. T. Geach, *Mental Acts*, London: Routledge, 1957, p. 38.

[28] Julius Kovesi, *Moral Notions*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967, Chapters 1 and 2, esp. pp. 37—55.

[29] W. V. Quine, *Ontological Relativity, and Other Essays*, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1989, p. 26.

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