

What is a Natural Conception of the World?

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Abstract

Continental philosophers such as Heidegger and Nicolai Hartmann and analytic philosophers such as Ryle, Strawson, and Jennifer Hornsby may be interpreted as using competing intellectual strategies within the framework of one and the same research programme, the programme of developing a natural conception of the world. They all argue that the Manifest Image of the world (to use Sellars's terminology) is compatible with, or even more fundamental than, the Scientific Image. A comparative examination of these strategies shows that Hartmann's strategy of stratification is superior to those of Heidegger, Ryle, and Strawson.

Keywords: manifest image; scientific image; Heidegger; Ryle; Strawson; Hornsby

1 Introduction

In section 11 of his masterpiece *Sein und Zeit*, Martin Heidegger speaks of a '*desideratum* which philosophy has long found disturbing but has continually refused to achieve: *to work out the idea of a "natural conception of the world"*' (SZ: p. 52, BT: p. 76).¹ Manifestly, Heidegger sees himself as someone who achieved what so many others 'refused' to accomplish. Indeed, by developing a conception of the daily world as an 'existential' of our human mode of everyday existence, he claimed to have constructed a notion of the world that deserves the panegyric epithet 'natural'. We may wonder, however, what exactly is this research programme of working out a natural conception of the world. What is its historical background and its rationale? Furthermore, did Heidegger truly accomplish what he claimed? Do we find any other 'natural' notions of

the world on the market of philosophical ideas, notions which may successfully compete with Heidegger's conception? Lastly, what 'natural' idea of the world should we ourselves adopt?

It is my objective in this paper to answer these five questions. The second section sketches the research programme of developing a natural conception of the world and provides some historical background. In the remaining sections, I discuss four different strategies for elaborating a natural conception of the world: (1) Heidegger's transcendental strategy of *Sein und Zeit*; (2) the 'aspect' or 'abstraction' strategy that we find in, for example, Gilbert Ryle's *Dilemmas*; (3) the strategy of 'points of view' or 'standpoints' embraced by Peter Strawson in *Skepticism and Naturalism* and by Jennifer Hornsby in *Simple Mindedness*; and (4) the strategy of stratification developed by among others Nicolai Hartmann, who was Heidegger's colleague in Marburg during the years 1923–8, and whose stratified conception of the world Heidegger rejected in *Sein und Zeit*. I argue that the strategy of stratification is superior to the other strategies and that it explains the extent to which these other strategies may seem to succeed.

2 Natural versus Naturalist Conceptions of the World

The desideratum of developing a natural conception of the world may be seen as having its historical roots in the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. This revolution witnessed not only the development of new experimental tools and new branches of mathematics, and the appearance of novel scientific theories such as the optics of Kepler, Descartes, or Newton, and Newton's classical mechanics. The scientific revolution was also an ontological revolution. The teleological and hylemorphic ontology of Aristotle, which had become the dominant conception of the world after it had been absorbed and integrated into Christianity by Western thought during the thirteenth century, came to be replaced by a very different ontology which was anti-teleological and anti-essentialist: the corpuscular philosophy of Descartes, Gassendi, Hobbes, Boyle, Locke, and Newton.

In its early stages, the corpuscular model was mechanistic: all natural phenomena had to be explained by the push of imperceptibly small particles or 'corpuscles', and the laws of impact were seen as the fundamental laws of physics. However, when Newtonian mechanics triumphed over the Cartesian tradition in the early eighteenth century, mechanism was abandoned. Newtonian gravitation is a mysterious force that does not meet the demands of mechanism: it operates instantaneously at any distance. These nuances need not bother us here, however. Although it is misleading to label the new picture of the world 'the bogey of mechanism', which is Ryle's label in *The Concept of Mind*, Ryle was right in holding that the

new corpuscular view of nature caused a great many philosophical problems.

Whereas Ryle focused mainly upon the philosophy of mind, I want to distinguish six different areas in which the corpuscular philosophy (or its successors) engendered philosophical troubles. It caused these troubles because of its claim to hegemony: if everything consists, ultimately, of material particles, and if these particles behave according to Newton's laws, it seems that a great many features that we attribute to items in the world cannot belong to them. In order to be legitimated as 'real', these features seemed to need a vindication of a certain sort: they had to be fitted into corpuscular reality. Yet it also seemed evident that such a vindication was impossible: these features were incompatible with corpuscular reality. Although Newton's theory has been superseded, modern subatomic physics still inspires the same kind of philosophical worries.

The six problem areas that I intend to mention briefly are the following. First, since corpuscular philosophers wanted to avoid circular explanations in physics, they assumed that empirical phenomena such as colour and heat had to be explained by mechanisms that lack colours and heat. In Locke's terminology, secondary qualities had to be explained by corpuscular mechanisms that possess primary qualities only. However, as macroscopic bodies were deemed to be aggregates of corpuscles, and it was a mystery how secondary qualities could be produced by the aggregation of particles that lack these qualities, it was concluded that macroscopic bodies also lack secondary qualities. As a consequence, the observable physical world was thought to be very different from what we perceive it to be, and the 'scientific image' of the world became incompatible with the 'manifest image'.

Inevitably, this thesis of incompatibility wreaked havoc in the theory of perception, which is my second area. If secondary qualities as we perceive them are not actual physical features of bodies, they must be 'impressions' produced by sensory stimulation in the perceiving subject, impressions which are then projected upon physical reality. This projective theory of perception raised the issue of whether the perceived world as such in its entirety could perhaps be a projection of the perceiver, a spectre that haunted philosophy from Descartes and Berkeley until well beyond the 1950s. Kant deemed it a 'scandal of philosophy' that the resulting problem of the external world had not been solved satisfactorily by Descartes, Berkeley, and Hume, but he did not succeed in solving it himself, nor did the philosophers of the nineteenth century produce convincing solutions.

Philosophy of mind is a third area in which vexing problems were raised by the ontological aspect of the scientific revolution. If the perceiving subject somehow 'contains' the phenomenal secondary qualities that the corpuscular philosopher denies to matter, the perceiving subject cannot consist of matter. It must be a mind which is very different from matter,

as indeed Descartes concluded in his *Dioptrique*: 'c'est l'âme qui sent, et non le corps'. This dualist conclusion was reinforced by the fact that according to Descartes three further phenomena could not be reduced to corpuscular reality: consciousness, language, and intelligent behaviour. Hence, he stipulated minds as substances separable from bodies and held that common-sense psychology is primarily about minds, even though these minds are intimately connected to human bodies. He further held that although we may formulate some boundary conditions for the interaction between human bodies and minds, only God would be able to understand the real nature of this connection. From behaviourism onwards, a primary ambition in the philosophy of mind has been to avoid Cartesian dualism by attempting to reduce the mental to the physical or to eliminate the mental altogether. It was thought that common-sense psychology had to be vindicated by invoking a standard from the outside, the standard of science. However, if common-sense psychology requires an external vindication and also lacks such a vindication, a radical type of scepticism is the result: we would not be able to take ourselves seriously as perceivers, as cognizers, as agents, in short, as human beings (Hornsby, 1997: pp. 5–7).

The fourth and fifth areas in which the ontological aspect of the scientific revolution wreaked havoc are the fields of philosophy of action and of language. Aristotelian philosophy and primitive religions assumed that everything in the world is animated or purposeful. However, the scientific revolution banished the categories of finality and the mental from the domain of physics. Admittedly, we may assign aims and purposes to physical systems, such as clocks. But as Descartes observed, such assignments are 'external denominations': in itself, the system has no finality because the explanation of its workings is conducted purely in terms of efficient causality. The research programme of eliminating final causes from science has had tremendous success, particularly in biology. The fact that living organisms are well 'adapted' to their ecological niches, for instances, had been the main secular reason for postulating a purposeful Creator in the eighteenth century. But the huge mass of empirical evidence supporting this 'physicoteleological' argument for God's existence, accumulated by scientifically minded ministers and priests, could then be used by Darwin to show that this finality of nature was only apparent: it could be explained, in principle, by the two mechanisms of random variation and natural selection. Yet we must doubt whether we may dispense with finality in the animal kingdom altogether. Even though the attempts to reconcile the theory of evolution with religion by assigning finality to the evolutionary process as a whole (Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, Whitehead) are clearly mistaken, it seems that we cannot avoid attributing finality and intentionality to individual animals such as higher primates and ourselves. Humans and other animals display intentional and purposeful behaviour. It is difficult to explain away the finality of actions.

Language is one form of action among others, and by using language we are aiming at perlocutionary effects. Yet contrary to what Husserl and many others thought, the category of intention falls short of accounting for meaning and language. Here, the notion of a rule and the correlate notions of correctness and incorrectness are indispensable. Frege's and Husserl's attempts to refute psychologism in the philosophy of logic betray a dim awareness of the irreducibility of norms and rules to regularities, and of the irreducibility of the domain of reasons to the domain of causes. Later philosophers such as Sellars and Wittgenstein made a strong case for this irreducibility. Norms and rules are yet another example of items that cannot be fitted into the naturalist ontology which became dominant during the scientific revolution.

Finally, pace Hume, the notion of human freedom is also incompatible with the naturalist ontology of the world, as Kant forcefully argued. The realm of freedom and reason, to which belong morality and law because *ought* implies *can*, is yet another realm that is part of the world as we conceive it naturally, but which is excluded by the world as conceived naturalistically.

Around 1900, philosophical debates in these six areas, initially triggered by the scientific revolution, had continued for more than two centuries, and yet there was no prospect of agreement about solutions for the philosophical problems involved. The time had come, it seemed, for a perceptive diagnosis of, and therapy for, this unsatisfactory intellectual predicament. The research programme of working out a natural conception of the world was intended as such as diagnosis and therapy.

According to this diagnosis, the problems in each of the six areas are insoluble, because, by taking the problems seriously, philosophers had overlooked the real causes of the disease called modern philosophy. The astonishing successes of the natural sciences had seduced philosophers into assuming that the picture of the world and its inventory suggested by these sciences contains all that there is. Yet this naturalist picture excludes many items, features, occurrences, and events of which we naturally think that they belong to the world. The naturalist picture, then, is incompatible with the natural picture, or, in Wilfrid Sellars's terminology, the scientific image is incompatible with the manifest image. Proponents of a natural view of the world hold that insoluble problems in the six areas that I have mentioned were caused by the fact that the naturalist picture had been considered as the true and complete picture. This assumption had produced the dialectics of unfulfillable demands that is typical of modern philosophy. On the one hand, items that no sensible person doubts are real seemed to require a vindication by science; on the other hand, such a vindication seemed unattainable.

The research programme of working out a natural conception of the world was set up as a radical therapy for this disease of modern philosophy.

The idea is to dispel the illusion that scientific vindications are needed for items that cannot be so vindicated, and to do so by developing a natural notion of the world, a notion that is more hospitable to these items. This is what Heidegger called the desideratum of working out a natural idea of the world, and what Jennifer Hornsby recently called 'naive naturalism'. Hornsby's book is typical of the analytic tradition, in that she ignores her Continental precursors. She merely notes that by rejecting the scientific conception of nature and by preferring a 'naive' or 'natural' conception, she finds herself in opposition to 'the whole drift of the last thirty or forty years in philosophy of mind in the English-speaking world' (Hornsby, 1997: p. 9). It would have been profitable for Hornsby to compare her attempts with those of kindred minds, such as Heidegger, Ryle, Strawson, and Nicolai Hartmann. We will not be clear-headed about the strategic choices and methodological problems that we have to face in working out a natural conception of the world unless we prepare our endeavours by an exercise in comparative philosophy.² The first station on our *tour d'horizon* will be Heidegger's masterpiece *Sein und Zeit*.

3 The Transcendental Strategy of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*

Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* is a complex intellectual fabric composed of many different threads. In order to understand the book well, one has to trace these fibres separately and to explore their interweavings (Philipse, 1998: pp. 67–210). Fortunately, the desideratum of working out a natural conception of the world determines only part of the fabric, albeit an important part. In order to fulfil this desideratum, Heidegger thought, two separate tasks have to be carried out. First, he claimed that throughout the philosophical tradition of the West, philosophers had misunderstood human existence, or *Dasein*, as he called it, and the world in which we humans live, because they conceived of human existence and its world in terms of categories that were derived from the domains of artifacts and of physics. Accordingly, Heidegger wanted to construct new categories for human live existence and its world, the so-called 'existentialia, and to 'destroy' the traditional categories by showing their limitations. This constructive–destructive programme explains the original set-up of the book, according to which a constructive first part would be followed by a destructive second part. What Heidegger published in 1927 as *Sein und Zeit* contained merely two 'divisions' of Part One.

Heidegger's conception of this first, constructive–destructive, task was informed by Husserl's empiricist idea that concepts are 'abstracted' from phenomena and that we must be acquainted with these phenomena in order to elucidate the relevant concepts (Philipse, 1998: pp. 98–109). Allegedly, phenomena of different ontological regions are essentially different, and categories abstracted from one region are inadequate for

understanding entities belonging to other regions. Hence categories abstracted from physical nature or from the domain of artifacts cannot be used to conceive of human life or *Dasein*. However, Heidegger tried to merge this 'phenomenological' conception of his method, according to which ontological concepts are answerable to 'essences' of phenomena which are always and everywhere the same, with a very different conception that he inherited from Schleiermacher and Dilthey, called 'hermeneutics'. According to hermeneutics, human existence *is* different in different historical epochs and cultures, because human beings interpret themselves differently.

Although Heidegger's methodology is sketchy and incoherent – essentialist phenomenology cannot be merged with historicist hermeneutics (Philipse, 1998: pp. 115–21) – his 'existential' notion of *Dasein* and its world greatly impressed his contemporaries. According to Heidegger, the world we live in is meaningful (*bedeutsam*) because it consists of human institutions, artifacts, and tools which inherently refer to each other and, ultimately, to human aims. It is the everyday world of houses and roads, horses and carriages, offices and schools, farms and fields, a world which is natural to us and inseparable from human existence. Heidegger claimed that the problem of the external world is a pseudo-problem resulting from the fact that we overlook this natural world and try to conceive of the world and of ourselves on models borrowed from science.³

The second task that Heidegger wanted to carry out consists of showing that the natural world of daily human life is ontologically more fundamental than the world as science understands it. Heidegger attempted to do so by borrowing the framework of transcendental philosophy as developed by Kant, his teacher Rickert, and Edmund Husserl, and by adapting this transcendental framework to his own philosophical needs. Kant had tried to solve the conflict between the moral and the scientific by distinguishing between on the one hand a phenomenal world constituted by the transcendental subject and on the other hand a noumenal world or a world *an sich*. He identified the world as science conceives it with the phenomenal world, whereas items that did not fit in with the naturalist notion of the world, such as human freedom and God, were relegated to the world *an sich*.

Heidegger will have seen this Leibnizian view as a step in the right direction, because according to Kant the scientific conception of the world is concerned with a superficial phenomenal realm only, while the world as it is *an sich* contains human freedom and the Divine. Yet Kant's solution had two serious and interrelated drawbacks. First, the world *an sich* was said to be unknowable, whereas we are acquainted with the natural and meaningful world of daily life. Second, Kant believed that all knowledge and understanding were of the scientific type, because the forms and categories of Newtonian mechanics were thought to be inherent in

the knowing subject, which constitutes the phenomenal world by applying these forms and categories to the multiplicity of sensations.

In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger tried to overcome these drawbacks by advancing two claims. First, the world *an sich* is the meaningful world with which we are acquainted in daily life, the world which Husserl later called *Lebenswelt* (*SZ*, §§15–18; pp. 71, 87, 106, 212; *BT*: pp. 101, 120, 141, 255). Second, the scientific image of the world is not an inevitable product of the workings of the knowing subject. Rather, it is produced by an optional transcendental scheme which human *Dasein* projects onto the world (*SZ*, §§19–21 and 69b). This transcendental scheme is optional because alternative schemes are possible and because scientific facts depend upon the scheme and do not exist apart from it (*SZ*, §69b, p. 362; *BT*: p. 414). Hence no matter of fact can compel us to endorse the scientific view of the world.

Heidegger's transcendental strategy for developing a natural conception of the world still assumes an incompatibility between the natural and the naturalist conception of the world. But it reverses the order of their priority. The natural conception is the true one, since it corresponds to the world as it is in itself (*an sich*). And the naturalist conception of science is false in that it 'skips' (*Überspringt*) the world as it really is and abstracts from the 'meaningfulness' of things (*SZ*: pp. 65, 95, 100; *BT*: pp. 93, 128, 133). Whereas items in the natural world are 'ready for being used by us' (*Zuhanden*) and are therefore meaningful to us, things in the naturalist world are merely occurrent (*Vorhanden*). We may now ask whether Heidegger's transcendental strategy for working out a natural conception of the world is a viable one. Are we entitled to hold that the meaningful world that is natural to daily human life is the world as it is *an sich*, and that accepting the facts established by science is optional because these facts essentially depend upon a transcendental framework that we humans project onto the world?

There are ample reasons for answering these questions in the negative. First, Heidegger's view of scientific facts is confused. Although we may need the conceptual framework of mathematical physics, say Newtonian mechanics or the general theory of relativity, in order to discover that specific objects exist, say the planet Pluto or black holes, the *existence* of these objects in no way depends upon the fact that we humans hold these theories. If what science discovers exists independently of science, and if it confirms our theoretically informed guesses, accepting scientific views of the world is not optional. Rather, it would be irrational not to endorse the factual discoveries of science. Second, it seems that Heidegger persuasively redefined the expression 'world in itself' (*an sich*). According to the tradition of transcendental philosophy, the world 'in itself' is the world as it exists independently from us humans (or from 'the transcendental subject'). But it is implausible to hold that the meaningfulness of our daily

world, which consists in the fact that we perceive things as 'ready to be used by us', is independent of humans. Indeed, this is not at all what Heidegger claims. According to *Sein und Zeit*, the meaningfulness of the world is internally connected to human aims and it is a product of projective understanding (*entwerfendes Verstehen*). Allegedly, the 'worldliness' of the daily world is just as much a transcendental framework as the framework of mathematical physics.

However, if our perception of the world as meaningful is also the product of a transcendental projection, the natural world cannot be the world *an sich* in the usual sense of this expression. Heidegger admits this in section 69c of *Sein und Zeit*, where he says that if *Dasein* did not exist, there would not be a world either (SZ: p. 365; BT: p. 417).⁴ We may wonder what is left of the priority of the natural world in relation to the naturalist world, if both are the product of transcendental projections. In section 13, Heidegger promises to show that the scientific projection is due to a *deficiency* in our ordinary and natural involvement with the world (SZ: p. 61; BT: p. 88). But when he finally attempts to fulfil this promise in section 69b, he has to confess that the scientific projection is not motivated at all by deficiencies in the natural projection. Clearly, then, Heidegger was unable to establish his thesis that the natural world is somehow more fundamental than the world of science, or that *Zuhandenheit* is more fundamental than *Vorhandenheit* (Philipse, 1998: pp. 324–6).

Even worse, Heidegger has to admit that a meaningful world cannot be projected onto entities unless these entities already exist apart from such a projection. In the phenomenological description of *Angst* of section 40, Heidegger says that whenever we are in a state of anxiety, the meaningful world as such collapses. Such a collapse does not cause the annihilation of existent things. In the experience of *Angst*, these things merely lose their significance for us. What can this mean but that these things subsist as occurrent (*Vorhanden*)? This conclusion is confirmed, it seems, by some passages in *Sein und Zeit* in which Heidegger says that entities exist independently of human experience although *being* depends upon human understanding.⁵ If one interprets Heideggerian 'being' as the *significance* that entities have for us within the framework of a projected transcendental scheme, these passages seem to confirm the view that without pre-existing entities, *Dasein* would not be able to project transcendental frameworks onto them.⁶ And if interpreting things as merely occurrent is identical with abstracting from the significance that humans project onto things, things are seen as they are in themselves (*an sich*) if they are seen within the framework of occurrentness. In short, the logic of Heidegger's transcendental position implies that the scientific framework is fundamental after all, which means that his transcendental strategy for rescuing a natural view of the world collapses. Fortunately, other strategies are available.

4 Aspects, Points of View, Stratification

Let me now briefly discuss three other strategies for working out a natural conception of the world. We find examples of each of these strategies in many authors, both Continental and analytic, and my choice of philosophers is somewhat arbitrary. One strategy, the strategy of aspects, was advanced by Gilbert Ryle. In 1929 Ryle wrote a perceptive review of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*. Like Heidegger, Ryle set himself two tasks in developing a natural view of the world. First, he wanted to show that our daily knowledge of ourselves and the ordinary world is in good order as it is, and does not stand in need of an external vindication. Second, he had to show how this natural picture of man and world is related to the scientific picture (if any!).

In both these tasks, Ryle's objectives were more modest than those of Heidegger. He did not aim at developing new philosophical categories for human existence but tried to show that what he called the 'bogy of Mechanism' had distorted our view of the grammar of everyday psychological concepts. These concepts apply not to actions, states and processes of a ghostly mind that is concealed in the machine of the body, but to human beings as persons, the very human beings whom we perceive and with whom we interact in daily life. Ryle developed his natural view of the world by sorting out the logical geography of common-sense psychological concepts, and by tracing the category mistakes that we make if we are influenced by the scientific conception of the world. His masterpiece *The Concept of Mind* (1949) was closely related to the later works of Wittgenstein.

As far as the second task is concerned, the task of showing how the natural and the naturalist conception of the world are related, Ryle was far from thinking that the natural conception is more fundamental than the naturalist conception. Rather, he thought that these two conceptions highlight different aspects of one and the same reality. In chapter 5 of *Dilemmas*, 'The World of Science and the Everyday World', Ryle tries to undermine the idea that we have to choose between two views of the world, an idea that had become quite popular after Eddington had published his book on *The Nature of the Physical World* in 1928. By way of a preliminary, Ryle argues that there are many different scientific disciplines apart from physics, such as philology, botany, entomology, meteorology, and geology. As Ryle says, 'Most of these sciences are such that acquaintanceship with them or, what is even more captivating, hearsay knowledge about them has not the slightest tendency to make us contrast their "world" with the everyday "world"' (1954: p. 71). We display this tendency with respect to two branches of science only: elementary particle physics and the physiology of perception.

Another cautionary remark is concerned with the word 'world'. We may use this word in loose parlance, as in 'the world of art' or 'the poultry

world'. Here it is a collective noun used to single out everything pertaining to art or poultry-keeping. Obviously, the expression 'the world of physics' or 'the physical world' is innocuous if used in this collective sense. The problem is, however, that philosophers and some physicists also use the expression 'the physical world' in another sense, in which it is not innocuous. They suggest that in principle physicists are able to know everything there is to know about the world, and hence that all non-physical knowledge must either be reducible to physical knowledge or be illusory. There are two motives for thinking that this must be the case, but Ryle merely mentions the motive that is less compelling. There is nothing that any natural scientist studies of which the truths of fundamental physics do not hold. From this it may be tempting to infer that the physicist is talking about everything and that his picture of the cosmos must be complete. Ryle argues at length that this inference is fallacious, and he does so by a prolonged analogy with college accounts.

An undergraduate member of a college is one day permitted to inspect the college accounts and to discuss them with the auditor. The auditor tells him proudly that 'all the activities of the college are represented in these columns'. But clearly, although the columns contain the price of the book that the student has borrowed from the library, they will not contain the information that is in the book. Like the college accounts, physics may give us information about everything, but it does not give us all the information there may be about any individual thing. It is misleading to talk of different 'worlds' or 'pictures' of the world and to suggest that we must choose between them. For there is but one world, of which physics studies but one aspect. It is 'natural' to hold that, apart from the physical aspect, there are many other aspects that we may study for their own sake, and hence there is no reason to assume that we have to choose between a physical account of a table and an everyday account of that same table, as Eddington had claimed.

Ryle's more or less Aristotelian solution to our problem is not false and yet it is seriously incomplete. For we might ask: why has an entity such as an Oxbridge college so many different aspects? Clearly, not all entities have all these aspects. Interstellar dust, for example, has different aspects and we may ask different questions about it. But we must suppose that all sensible questions that we may ask about interstellar dust admit an answer that belongs either to physics or to chemistry.

I announced a second motive for thinking that, after all, the hard sciences must be able to tell us everything there is to know. This reason is derived from the evolution of the universe. The theories of the Big Bang and of the evolution of stars explain how chemical elements came into existence and how ever more complex structures develop in the course of evolution. We humans consist of these chemical elements. But if everything which now exists is a product, ultimately, of the matter and forces

present in the early universe, should physics not be able to explain everything? Ryle's strategy for working out a natural conception of the world falls short of diffusing this type of worry.⁷

The same shortcoming is shown by another strategy, that of distinguishing different 'points of view'. In his Woodbridge Lectures, delivered at Columbia University in April 1983, Peter Strawson distinguished between two varieties of naturalism: the reductive or strict variety, which I have called the naturalist picture of the world, and the liberal, non-reductive, or catholic variety, which I have called the natural conception of the world. Strawson holds that we might resolve vexing philosophical problems, such as the conflict between a scientific view of human behaviour as the outcome of determining causes and the moral view of human behaviour as laudable or reprehensible, by relativizing these conflicting views to different 'points of view' (1985: pp. 41–2). Similarly, the impression of irreconcilable antagonism between the common-sense view of observable things as having properties such as colour and the scientific view of macroscopic things according to which colours cannot be assigned to physical objects as they really are would disappear as soon as 'we are prepared to recognise . . . a certain ultimate relativity in our conception of the real'. Strawson distinguishes two different standpoints, the standpoint of daily life and the standpoint of physical science, and holds that criteria of reality are relative to these distinct standpoints. Once the relativity of criteria of reality to standpoints is acknowledged, the appearance of contradiction between freedom and determinism, or between the idea that colours are real properties of observables and the idea that they are mere impressions in the mind, disappears (1985: pp. 44–5, 49–50). As we cannot give up either of these standpoints, 'we lack reasons for saying either that the scientific-objective standpoint or that the human-perceptual-and-moral standpoint gives us the exclusively correct type of conception of the real nature of things' (p. 52).

Both Strawson and Jennifer Hornsby argue against identity theories of the mind. If John suddenly recognizes an old friend in the crowd, we may describe and locate the event by ascribing an instantaneous property – recognition – to John and by saying that it happened to John in Victoria Station under the clock. According to the identity theories, this event should be identical with a brain event localized inside John's skin. Although Hornsby believes that the difference of location is a problem for the identity theory, whereas Strawson does not, they agree that we have no real use for the concept of identity here (Hornsby, 1997: pp. 70–2, 141). Admittedly, we may say that from the exclusively physical point of view, what we called John's recognition of his friend simply *is* the relevant particular brain event. Yet this identity statement is obtained at the price of simply bracketing out the personal story in favour of the physical story. 'We have made no step, such as a genuine identity theory would require, toward unifying the stories' (Strawson 1985: p. 62).

Both Strawson and Hornsby hold that the difference between the two points of view is irreducible, and that we cannot give up either of them. As Hornsby says, speaking about human action, from the personal point of view 'an action is a person's doing something for a reason, and her doing it is found intelligible when we know the reason that led her to it'. From the impersonal point of view, on the contrary, 'an action would be a link in a causal chain that could be viewed without paying attention to people, the links being understood by reference to the world's causal workings'. Speaking about points of view is not very different from speaking about aspects of reality. The reason is that if what we see from a specific point of view is not a delusion, what we see must belong to reality. This is precisely what Hornsby has to conclude where she argues against the scientific dogma that the personal point of view is legitimate only to the extent that it can be integrated into the impersonal point of view. Admittedly, the impersonal point of view might be 'complete' in the sense that there are no pieces missing where people and their actions should be. But this cannot imply that every aspect of reality is present to it. The points of view are not in conflict, Hornsby argues, for although they cover the same portions of reality, different aspects of reality are visible from each of them (1997: pp. 149–50).

If speaking of 'points of view' implies speaking of 'aspects' of reality, the strategy of discerning different points of view will have the same drawback as the strategy of aspects. Assuming that we want to resist the far-fetched conclusion of Teilhard de Chardin, that each and every element of reality possesses the aspect of consciousness or 'interiority, we will have to explain why it is that some portions of reality have more aspects than other portions.

The most promising philosophical strategy that appears likely to meet this requirement is the stratification strategy as worked out by authors such as Nicolai Hartmann (1940). According to the stratification strategy, we may distinguish different levels of complexity in reality, and at each 'higher' level of complexity we may find properties and relations which are 'emergent' in the sense that they cannot be fully 'reduced' to properties of and relations between the elements of which the complex is built up. This strategy explains to what extent the strategy of 'points of view' or 'aspects' is correct, because it explains why 'higher' complexes have properties or aspects that are lacking on lower strata of complexity.

The strategy of stratification is not merely a philosophical strategy. Most of the work that has to be done consists of empirical research. Within the constitution of matter, for example, physicists distinguish many different levels of complexity, and physical properties on one level of complexity, such as the properties of a drop of water, may be irreducible to properties and relations on a lower level of complexity, such as water molecules. Whereas in the case of Heidegger's transcendental strategy for working

out a natural conception of the world, the sciences and philosophy were seen as antagonistic endeavours, they are now thrown into each other's company. However, the more scientific literature we read about levels of complexity in reality, the more we will be inclined to think that most real work for carrying out the stratification strategy will be done by the scientists and that not much is left for the philosopher. What, then, is the proper job of the philosopher within the framework of the strategy of stratification?

We may distinguish three different tasks, each of which is a major research programme in itself. First, the notions of emergence and reduction have to be made more precise by analysing specific examples in science and the humanities. Much work has been done in this area, and it is clear that there is a variety of types of reduction and emergence. Second, a number of philosophical difficulties may be resolved by showing that they are produced by confusing different levels of complexity and different conceptual levels of analysis. Often, philosophers may discover purely conceptual reasons for irreducibility. For instance, if the human mental make-up is thoroughly determined by language, and if rules are irreducible to causal regularities, this is a good reason for thinking that common-sense psychology is irreducible to causal regularities. Philosophers of language such as Wittgenstein, Ryle, Strawson, and Austin have contributed to this field. Third, philosophers may try to construct an overview of the main levels of complexity and their specific characteristics. Such a synthetic enterprise is alien to analytical philosophy, and it is here that Continental authors such as Nicolai Hartmann may be a source of inspiration (even though his prose does not satisfy present-day standards of precision). In any case, the strategy of stratification cannot be carried out without constantly keeping an eye on empirical research. In this respect, this strategy is very different from Heidegger's transcendental strategy.

However, if my argument is persuasive, the stratification strategy for working out a natural conception of the world is vastly superior to the strategy that Martin Heidegger attempted to carry out and, indeed, to all other philosophical rivals.

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Notes

- 1 For a comparison with Husserl's notion of the 'natural attitude', see Philipse, 1995: pp. 249–54.
- 2 Cf. my review of Hornsby, 1997: 'How To Succeed in Being Simple Minded', *Inquiry*, 41 (1998), pp. 497–507.
- 3 Both Heidegger and Carnap claimed that the problem of the external world is a pseudo-problem. But they thought so for opposite reasons.

- 4 'Wenn kein *Dasein* existiert, ist auch keine Welt "da".'
- 5 E.g. *SZ*, §39, p. 183: 'Seiendes ist unabhängig von Efrahrung, Kenntnis, und Erfassen, wodurch es erschlossen, entdeckt und bestimmt wird. Sein aber "ist" nur im Verstehen des Seienden, zu dessen Sein so etwas wie Seinsverständnis gehört'. See also §43c, p. 212, and §44c, p. 230.
- 6 There is another interpretation, defended by Blattner and others, which says that in these passages Heidegger merely explains what is the case according to the scientific understanding of the world. Like Kant, Heidegger would be an empirical realist within the scientific domain. But clearly, the passages are completely general and not limited to the scientific understanding of the world at all. They express transcendental realism rather than empirical realism. See Blattner, 1994 and Philipse, 1998: pp. 432–3, n. 258.
- 7 See Oppenheim and Putnam, 1958.

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