

Heidegger's Reception Within Sociology

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Heidegger is not a name well-known to sociologists. Whatever his fame in Continental philosophy very few mentions occur in sociological literature. My main evidence for this lack of explicit attention is the many theoretical or historical discussions which do *not* mention him. Nevertheless, the impact of Heidegger's ideas on more recent sociology, and especially in some avenues of sociological theory are considerable, albeit subtle. This paper attempts to uncover some of these lines of influence.

Heidegger's ideas

Given that this is a reception study it is hardly relevant to try to canvas here the whole of Heidegger's work: quite an impossible task. Nevertheless, a very brief account of his work, seen from a sociological slant is relevant, in order to provide some idea of the foundation upon which his sociological impact has been built.

Heidegger is more concerned to inquire philosophically into the nature of being and the forgetting of the question of being through the history of Western metaphysical thought, rather than necessarily develop consistent answers to this question. Nevertheless, he does outline some tentative answers, or guidelines of inquiry. His central ideas are about being and time. His concern was to dismantle the approaches to reason, which had been developed by Plato and later by Descartes: often referred to as the 'metaphysics of presence'. Universal concepts such as truth, justice and morality were to be deconstructed. This approach opposed the central thrust of much Western philosophical thinking. As the philosopher Polt writes (2001: 11):

One way of considering Heidegger's significance for philosophy in general is to view him as dealing the death blow to the typical modern picture of the human condition, according to which human beings are fundamentally private minds, atomic subjects who relate to external objects by means of representations and judgements.

Instead, according to Heidegger, philosophy needs to integrate an understanding of how people related to the society in which they lived. He sees existence (and its key attributes such as intuition, feeling and sensation) as prior to the centrality of reasoning in Western analytical philosophy. Understanding involves an historically-situated interpretation from the perspective of the interpreter.

We are rooted in a past and thrust into a future. We inherit a past tradition that we share with others, and we pursue possibilities that define us as individuals. As we do so, the world opens up for us, and beings get understood; it makes a difference to us that there is something rather than nothing (Polt, 1999: 5).

Polt (2001: 11) further points out that we are "...social beings who interpret themselves and their surroundings primarily through engaged action" and in relation to groups and traditions.

Unfortunately, developing this approach is not easy, and seemingly requires a complex vocabulary and mode of expression, which in particular draws on potentials within, and dislocations of, (German) language. This linguistic accoutrement severely limits the diffusion of Heidegger's thinking, including into realms such as sociology. As with many other thinkers, there are at least two phases in the development of Heidegger's thinking, with a broad and

contested historical boundary-line or turn (kehre). The turn follows Heidegger's difficulties in completing his initial programme of work. Polt argues that "Heidegger's late thought does not present a systematic doctrine, but circles around several topics of enduring concern" (2001: 11) often involving more fluid poetic and even mystical evocations. Will and subjectivity are increasingly de-emphasised in favour of "...waiting for the granting of being". This later work was quite different in its impact on sociology.

Having very broadly and very briefly sketched out something of the flavour of Heidegger's overall work, it is important, for current purposes, to focus on those aspects more relevant to sociology. In his translucent account, Polt (2001: 11-12) presents five key aspects of Heidegger's conception of *Dasein* which have important sociological implications.

- (1) "...the priority of engaged involvement over theory and assertion" (i.e. "...we are primarily in the world by means of *doing* things ... rather than by means of beliefs, theories, concepts of propositions").
- (2) "...Dasein's being is 'being-with'; ... we are essentially social beings".
- (3) the 'they': "as essentially social beings, we share a basic repertoire of practices and self-interpretations with other members of our community" ... but these repertoires are anonymous rather than individualised allowing the interchangeability of everyday roles.
- (4) "The anonymity of the 'they' both enables and encourages an 'inauthentic' mode of existence, in which one exists as a 'they-self' [in which] instead of making our own choices we usually simply allow ourselves to act and judge as 'one' does – even when we take ourselves to be individual or original".
- (5) historicity: "An entire community or 'people' (volk) has a shared past (a 'heritage') and a shared range of future possibilities (a 'destiny'); a people 'happens' historically by stretching from a heritage into a destiny".

In other sections of this paper, I will develop how these aspects have become worked into many realms of contemporary social theory.

Another somewhat separate strand of the intellectual heritage of Heidegger arises as a result of his 'flirtation' with the Nazi regime. Besides his actions in becoming briefly a University rector during the Nazi period, a strand of his thinking arguably involved an engagement with Nazi ideology. This linkage is widely discussed in the commentary literature, and has in turn had wider impacts. To some extent, this line of concern is important as it raises critical issues concerning the morality embedded in Heidegger's thinking, but in other ways it can distract from serious attention to Heidegger's thinking.

Overview of the impact of Heidegger's ideas

It is clear from the review of the direction of Heidegger's thinking that it has a 'social' thrust, but not just any move in a more social direction. Often more socially orientated thinking comes with a determinism which Heidegger abhorred. As Polt suggests, "Rather than wrestling with who we are and what it means to be, we would prefer to concentrate on manipulating and measuring present beings" (1999: 5). Torn between these two directions of thought, Heidegger's philosophy is profoundly ambivalent about much sociological thinking. However, Heidegger's potential for sociology is not exhausted by his attitude to sociology.

Polt, focusing first on Heidegger's early work, suggests that this "...holds promise for our understanding of society. His provocative descriptions of everydayness and authenticity have the potential to enrich and transform the standard concepts of sociology" (2001: 17). On the other hand, Polt argues that the later (more macro-level) work is:

...too abstract and reductive to provide genuine insight into how society works and into the varieties of possible human regimes and cultures ... Heidegger's late thought tends to function as an unfalsifiable framework rather than as a hypothesis that can be confirmed or countered by empirical studies. As such it should be treated as a suggestive tool for social interpretation, but not as the last word (2001: 17).

The impact of Heidegger's ideas on sociology has been, largely, mediated through several sources. One is the broad cumulative impact (which might broadly be termed 'hermeneutics' or 'phenomenology') which has ramified through the cluster of philosophers amongst which Heidegger's work can be placed: in particular the sequence of Husserl, Heidegger, Gadamer and Merleau-Ponty. Polt mentions influences on Sartre, Arendt, Gadamer, Derrida, Foucault, Dreyfus and Rorty (2001: 15, 16). A second, rather more direct, impact is through some of "Heidegger's children" (Wolin, 2001), amongst whom Arendt and Marcuse in particular have considerable cache amongst sociologists with critical leanings. But the most important source is through the work of sociology's leading theorists of the 1980s: Bourdieu, Giddens and Marcuse. While the manifest reactions to Heidegger of these three theorists are quite different, the latent impact Heidegger had on their work may have been quite similar.

Sociology and philosophy

In different conjunctures the relationship between philosophy and sociology has varied considerably. In Anglo-Saxon thinking the two have often been seen as entirely separate. Given these tendencies for philosophy and sociology to remain quite separate discourses, perhaps a lack of influence across the disciplinary barrier is to be expected.

Evidence of this traditional separation of the two came from the shocked rejection, by philosophers in the 1960s, of Gellner's (1959) argument that the Wittgensteinian philosophy which dominated post-war English philosophy is essentially a sociology. (Note that in turn Wittgenstein was undoubtedly influenced by Heidegger.) Wittgenstein's approach emphasised that philosophy should be an 'under-labourer' assisting other modes of inquiry in cleaning up difficulties created by language, and that the ruling meaning of words is best discovered in their everyday use. But to retain the armchair setting of philosophy, everyday usage was to be garnered from dictionaries rather than socio-linguistic study. But, Gellner's intuitively appealing attempt to label this as a 'sociology' was sharply denounced by the analytical philosophers he was labelling. Instead, Wittgenstein's approach was applied to sociology through the highly impactful work of Winch (1963) who explicitly spelled out the implications.

On the other hand, in some periods the two disciplines have been less separate. Indeed, over the last quarter century there has been a remarkable flowering and agitation within social theory, led often by sociologists, in a quest for deeper intellectual sources. Reflecting on this disciplinary interest, Kilminster (1998: 14) writes:

During the expansion of sociology in the 1960s and 1970s it was the sociologists, not the British philosophers, who mainly brought into the intellectual debate in Britain the work of Continental philosophers such as Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Western Marxists, including the Frankfurt School. Many of the recognised authorities on the work of these philosophers are sociologists or teach on sociology courses.

The reception of philosophy into sociology may also be influenced by timing. It is arguable, for example, that the relevance of Heidegger for sociology might increase over time. For one thing, translations from German take time to be published and for the ramifications of the thought to permeate. The agenda of sociological attention has more recently moved to make links with philosophy more readily achievable. For example Bryan Turner, in introducing a major synoptic sociological text which he edited, argues (1996: 17):

...the major moral questions of the next century will probably revolve around technology, the environment and the human body. Current changes in medical science, specifically in the area of reproductive technology, have raised major questions about the nature of the body in relation to human identity. ... The pollution of the environment and the rapid transformation of technological possibility have raised questions about the habitable status of the universe and the problem of creating and defending habitable social structures.

These are topics that Heidegger's work may have helped promote, although the case for such an impact is weak. Nevertheless, Turner invokes Heidegger's work as an influence on his own work in the fast-developing field of the sociology of the body. However, he suggests Bourdieu as more relevant to the emergent theme (identified in the above quote) of technological transformation, despite Heidegger's famous attention to this topic.

Finally, the likely reception sociologists grant to ideas emanating from philosophy will depend on the relative status of the two in terms of academic standing. As a range of material has shown (for example, the work of Giddens) for Anglo-Saxon sociological theorists over the last few decades, much kudos attaches to fermenting ideas from Continental philosophy. (Why this should be so is another matter, but there is not room to explore that line of thought here.)

The combined impact of shifts in sociology's agenda to areas where Heidegger's thought is more apt, and a more receptive attitude to philosophy amongst sociologists, will undoubtedly have increased the likelihood that his ideas might migrate across a more permeable barrier.

The Phenomenological Movement: a 'group multiplier' effect

Receptions of ideas are often affected by the social contexts in which they originated and are diffused. For example, it is a sociological common-place that, even in the realm of ideas, the impact of groups has a cumulative effect above and beyond that of the individual members of the groups.

Thus, the importance of Heidegger's work has been reinforced by the social framework within which he worked, and through which his ideas ramified. Accounts of these lineages include several contributed by sociologists, most importantly Collins (1998: see the diagram on p. 740, and the more extended discussion on pp. 741-751) who locates Heidegger as influenced by Husserl, Natrop and Hartmann, while sharpening his position through interaction with Rickert and Cassirer as well as interacting with the theological grouping of Otto, Tillich and Bultmann, and influencing Gadamer, Lowith, Marcuse and Arendt and through Becker, Apel, Habermas and Foucault. The extent of this 'group effect' in which Heidegger's thought becomes caught up, is not made so apparent in more philosophical accounts.

In the course of these generational and intergenerational intellectual linkages and conflicts, the philosophical ideas can change considerably. Collins (1998: 718) portrays this process as involving "intellectual energy [that] is propagated down the wires of interpersonal contacts, while the content of ideas is rearranged by horizontal strains of opposition reconfiguring the attention space". In this process of sequence and branch in the social production of ideas, Collins sees each network as working with the same set of cultural capital, and on similar issues, and riding a changing trajectory with its own internal dynamic and external influences.

A library of texts in the history of philosophy deals with the individual strands of such connections, so they do not need to be pursued here, although the 'group effect' needs emphasis. Rather, attention can be turned on the particular intellectual linkages emanating from Heidegger.

"Heidegger's Children"

Ironically, despite his very serious flirtation with Nazi-ism, Heidegger's cutting-edge approach to philosophy attracted many Jewish disciples. Of the four disciples analysed by Wolin (2001), Hannah Arendt and Herbert Marcuse, in particular, have had impacts on sociology.

Hannah Arendt was Heidegger's student and lover. But despite not only her Jewish background and difficult experiences and her concern as a social analyst with the Holocaust, she failed to engage with him on his support for Nazism. Arendt is famous for her analysis of the features of totalitarianism and for providing explanations of this social phenomenon (most famously: 1958), linking Germany and Russia as sharing many common features despite their apparently opposed ideologies. She also wrote, often controversially (e.g. 1964), on contemporary Jewish issues. Some of her critics felt that she retained an aristocratic view, including a nostalgia for Ancient Greece, which coloured her interpretation of some features of Jewish life.

But despite a life-long involvement with Heidegger it is difficult to pin down his effect on her writing. Villa (1996) argues that Arendt attempts to deconstruct the anti-political bias of Western philosophy, drawing on/turning to Heidegger's similar deconstructive attempt. However, unlike Heidegger, Arendt was concerned about the viability

of the public/political sphere. Her involvement with Heidegger is complex, rife with ironies, and perhaps deeply antagonistic.

In his major study analysing the relationship between Heidegger and Arendt, political theorist Dana Villa writes (1996: 13):

I see Arendt as appropriating Heidegger in a highly agonistic manner; as twisting, displacing and reinterpreting his thought in ways designed to illuminate a range of exceedingly un-Heideggerian issues; for example, the nature of political action, the *positive* ontological role of the public realm, the nature of political judgement, and the conditions for an anti-authoritarian, anti-foundational democratic politics. Indeed, no small part of Arendt's originality lies in her ability to see the political implications of a body of work in a way that goes against the grain of authorial intent. Arendt is no epigone; it is important to stress that her appropriation of Heidegger is implicitly and explicitly opposed to 'Heideggerian politics', whether by this phrase we are referring to what Bourdieu, Ferry and other critics have called the 'revolutionary conservatism' of the mid-thirties or to the anti-voluntarism of 'releasement' which dominates the later work. [Despite the ironies] ...the fact remains that her political theory, more than any other 'recovers' Heidegger's thought for the task of rethinking the political. In the process she provides us with the tools for the most powerful and convincing critique of his philosophical politics.

However, it is not entirely clear what the influence of Arendt, as a political philosopher, has been on sociology. It is unlikely that she has provided a substantial conduit for the passage of Heideggerian thought, as her influence is likely slight except in some areas of political and macro-sociology.

Another early but wayward disciple was Herbert Marcuse. Marcuse studied under Heidegger, who re-ignited his passion for philosophy. However, Marcuse then came under the sway of the Frankfurt School and, indeed, its leading theorist. He therefore became far more removed from Heidegger, and his interest in Heidegger's thought quickly waned. Of the main members of the Critical Theory group, Marcuse was the one most prominent for remaining in the USA rather than returning after World War II, and for attracting a major American following. His famous critique of 'one dimensional man' (1964) emphasised the emptiness associated with modern development of technology. Marcuse reacted more positively to the late 1960s student rebellions than many other leading intellectuals in that period, and while not seeing them as replacing the proletariat in terms of revolutionary potential, nevertheless attributed to them an important historical role.

According to Jürgen Habermas, Marcuse was the first "Heideggerian Marxist [heideggermarxist]". However, as with Arendt, Marcuse quickly twisted the impetus he obtained from Heidegger to other concerns. "Like many others of his generation, Marcuse was deeply impressed with *Being and Time*, which he saw as a breakthrough beyond the sterile positivism and neo-Kantianism that had dominated philosophical debates in Germany for several decades" (Abromeit and Cobb, 2004: 7). He was fascinated by the concreteness of individual subjectiveness, historicity and authenticity portrayed by Heidegger as opposed to the sterile abstractness of post World War II Marxian thought. So, Marcuse's early essays tried to import subjectivity and historicity into Marxist theory. However "...as much as Marcuse praises Heidegger's attempts to restore the full historicity of Dasein, he still argues that Heidegger does not go far enough in analysing the concrete social and material conditions that are at the root of inauthentic forms of existence" (Abromeit and Cobb, 2004: 137). An appealing commonality is the anti-bourgeoisie tone of Heidegger. "But Marcuse never became a Heideggerian himself; his purpose from the beginning was to use the most advanced aspects of Heidegger's project to revitalize the reified Marxist theory of his day" (Abromeit and Cobb, 2004: 7). Later, as the unfortunate political implications seeped through, Marcuse explicitly rejected Heidegger.

Textual tracking of the direct influence of Heidegger is difficult. "It is true that Marcuse's ontology and the theory of historicity begins with a deferential gesture to Heidegger ... But Marcuse quickly departs from the path marked out by Heidegger" (Abromeit and Cobb, 2004: 137). "Dilthey plays only a very marginal role and Heidegger is not mentioned at all in the rest of Marcuse's Habilitationsschrift..." (Abromeit and Cobb, 2004:139).

Again, whatever influence Marcuse may have had on sociology has itself been subject to a complex 'career' in which his period of fame was fleeting and its effects in large part deleterious.

During the 1960s Herbert Marcuse was more widely discussed than any living philosopher ... almost alone among contemporary philosophers, Marcuse's ideas became topics of debate not only in scholarly journals but in the popular press as well. But one effect of Marcuse's sudden popularity was that his critical theory was often treated in a grossly simplistic way (Abromeit and Cobb, 2004: 2).

Moreover, the linking of Marcuse to the New Left led to a stereotyping of his views and indeed "has created myths which continue to hinder an adequate reception of his theoretical work" (Abromeit and Cobb, 2004: 7).

However, since neither Arendt nor Marcuse established continuing research programs with followers, the extent to which they were able to impel a wider take-up of Heidegger's ideas remained quite limited. Nor were they able to markedly extend Heidegger's ideas into other contexts, and so they did not contribute much to the further conceptual development of his thought.

Bourdieu, Giddens and Habermas

The main route for the reception of Heidegger's ideas into sociology is more indirect. In the 1980s (and surrounding decades) sociology's three main theorists were Bourdieu, Giddens and Habermas, each strongly influenced by Heidegger. However, the differences in stance towards Heidegger between these three are instructive. There is much in common in the work of these theorists: in particular they are each sociologists of 'practices' which were seen as the fairly concrete ways through which social life was conducted.

In providing an overview of Bourdieu's work, and in particular to convey a picture of the differences between Anglo-Saxon and Continental sociology, Wacquant situates it within Continental strands of social theory, which he characterises as including, as a central role:

... the opposition between Sartrean phenomenology and Levi-Straussian structuralism, which Bourdieu regarded very early on, as the embodiment of the fundamental option between objectivity structuralism and subjectivist social phenomenology; the subtle yet profound influence of Husserl and Heidegger (Bourdieu came close to becoming a Heideggerian philosopher in the late 1950s), as well as of the epistemological and political stances of Merleau-Ponty; the desire to undercut the claims of both structural Marxism and philosophies of the subject; the mediation of Mauss and Halbwachs and the historicist philosophy of science advocated by Bachelard and Canguilhem; and the writings of Cassirer, Saussure, Benveniste, Schutz and Wittgenstein (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 245).

Bourdieu himself admits to a considerable influence. In contemporary social thought, theorists often provide their most intelligible answers in interviews, which are subsequently included in collections of their works. In answering an interview question probing into his interest in existentialism Bourdieu replied (in a typically tortuously constructed prose):

I read Heidegger; I read him a lot and with a certain fascination, especially the analyses in *Sein und Zeit* of public time, history and so on, which, together with Husserl's analyses in *Ideen II*, helped me a great deal – as was later the case with Schutz – in my efforts to analyse the ordinary experience of the social. But I never really got into the existentialist mood. Merleau-Ponty was something different, at least in my view. He was interested in the human sciences and in biology, and he gave you an idea of what thinking about immediate present-day concerns can be like when it doesn't fall into the sectarian oversimplifications of political discussion – in for example his writings on history, on the Communist Party, on the Moscow Trials (Bourdieu, 1990: 5).

More specifically he locates Heidegger as amongst the influences which he drew upon in shaping up his central concept of habitus: "... certain phenomenologists, including Husserl himself who gives a role to the notion of

habitus in the analysis of antepredicative experience, or Merleau-Ponty, and also Heidegger, opened the way for a non-intellectualist, non-mechanistic analysis of the relations between agent and world" (1990: 10).

In addition, Bourdieu directly confronts Heidegger. Bourdieu's first foray was an essay published in 1975 which was then consolidated in his 1990 book. His purpose in doing this is somewhat murky. Clearly, this is in large part a fairly traditional attempt at a sociology of knowledge interpretation: developing the sociology of philosophy. But there are further connotations. Robbins (1990: 133) argues that his analysis of Heidegger was part of Bourdieu's own attempts to clarify what a sociology might involve. "He wanted his understanding of the integral relation between 'form' and 'content' in Heidegger's work to operate as a caution in respect of his own practice" (1990: 134). Clearly, too, Bourdieu is concerned to 'shut-down' some of the Heideggerian lines of analysis by drawing attention to its Nazi-association stigma.

Bourdieu attends to both the content and form of Heidegger's philosophical work. "The title of Bourdieu's essay was very important. It was 'the political ontology of Martin Heidegger' and Bourdieu was indicating in this title that the 'form' of Heidegger's philosophizing performed a political function which shaped its content" (Robbins, 1990: 133).

The extent to which Heidegger's philosophy echoed some of the depressive intellectual climate (especially in the writings of Schmitt and Spengler, and also Junger) of the conservative fringes of Weimar culture is well known, and is developed considerably in Bourdieu's account. (See also Collins's depiction, 1998.) In addition, Bourdieu argues that the scene for philosophical revolution was set with the high demand for student places in German universities in the late 1920s.

But Heidegger's philosophy cannot be simply 'read off' this social and cultural context. Indeed, as a philosopher, Heidegger's practices transformed these simple ingredients. Robbins describes what was involved (1990: 134):

One of the characteristics of Heidegger's strategy ... was that he deliberately transformed (literarily, that is, put into new form) common words, by seeking to invest them with a significance which was other than the practical meaning of ordinary usage. He used neologisms as well so as to separate his discourse, as sacred, from the profanity of vulgar practice.

One of the consequences of this approach was to close down some avenues of possible criticism, as Robbins points out (134):

The style of writing adopted by Heidegger enabled him to establish the kind of context within which his work should be considered. It invited interpretations and commentaries which were all parts of the process of differentiation from normal discussion. In his own lifetime, Heidegger generated the sense that only certain kinds of response to his philosophy could be legitimate and the denial, for instance of any sociological approach to his work, is one which has remained potent to the present. It was Bourdieu's intention to challenge that particular aspect of the rejection of potential criticism which he thought was an intrinsic part of Heidegger's pre-emptive, self-authorising strategy.

To repeat, Robbins suggests "... the trade of the philosopher, as evidenced by Heidegger ... depended on constructing an artificial discourse so as to transcend mundane social affairs" (1990: 135). (Note that this is not an analysis that Heidegger would accept as he would argue that the language is a way of 'revealing' rather than 'transcending'.)

Safranski (1998: 212) extends this point in his discussion of Heidegger's reaction to Mannheim's famous 1928 paper on the sociology of knowledge which attempted to "... save liberalism at the end of the Weimar Republic by underpinning it with a kind of ontological pluralism". But in his (indirect) commentary on this attempt, in his 1931-1932 winter lecture series on Plato, Heidegger denies that this approach comes any closer to resolution of any philosophical issues (see Safranski, 1998: 214).

Bourdieu also explains why Heidegger might have adopted this languaging strategy: it was a way in which he could "...establish his social distinctiveness from the masses" (as depicted by Robbins, 1990: 134). Further, Bourdieu is clearly drawing attention to the political shortcomings of Heidegger. Bourdieuan intellectual biographer Lane notes that references to Heidegger were removed from reissues of Bourdieu's major works after the publication of his attack on Heidegger (Lane, 2000: 112).

Collins, however, is highly dismissive of Bourdieu's analyses (1998: 1020: fnnt 41). He counter-argues that the structure of the field of philosophy differs in important respects from that of society more generally and that therefore the homology between wider society and the field of philosophy is incorrect. Further, he suggests that the 'overcrowding' argument has limited purchase since "[s]imilar overcrowding occurred in the 1830s and 1840s, but the result was not anti-modernist conservatism but the radicalism of the Young Hegelians". (However, Collins seems to concede at least half the argument: i.e. that overcrowding does at least lead to intellectual ferment even if the direction taken in that ferment may need explanation drawn from a wider set of causes.).

More seriously, Collins argues (couching his point in anachronistic terms) that "[t]he attempts to discredit Heidegger by means of his Nazi phase are part of the intellectual manoeuvres of a later period". He explains that this criticism is invalid in as much as "the external resonances of Heidegger's philosophy was among Protestant and Catholic theologians, and among the French existentialists of the anti-Nazi underground, and it received its widest fame in France in the years immediately after liberation" (Collins, 1998: 1020).

The second major sociological figure to attend to Heidegger's work was the enormously widely published English sociologist, Anthony Giddens. Giddens, also, was consciously influenced by Heidegger. In summarising the central thrust of his 'structuration theory' Giddens provides a personalised account (1984: xxii):

I admit the central significance of the 'linguistic turn', introduced especially by hermeneutic phenomenology and ordinary language philosophy. At the same time, however, I hold this term to be in some part a misleading one. The most important developments as regards social theory concern not so much a turn toward language as an altered view of the intersection between saying (or signifying) and doing, offering a novel conception of *praxis*. The radical transmutation of hermeneutics and phenomenology initiated by Heidegger, together with the innovations of the later Wittgenstein, are the two main signal markers on the new path. But to pursue this path further means precisely to shake-off any temptation to become a full-blown disciple of either of these thinkers.

However, throughout the rest of his writings, there is only fleeting reference to Heidegger, in line with Giddens's buccaneering borrowing from many sources. Heideggerian themes occur most especially in relation to time and place and more generally, the body. Indeed, it is mainly through commentators on this aspect of Giddens's work that the ways in which Heidegger have become incorporated are made more clear.

In particular, Heideggerian effects are most explicitly traced in the work of several geographical theorists, and in John Urry's concerns with the sociology of time and space which reach back to earlier philosophers in order to justify their bringing in these quotidian aspects:

Three major contributors to a more phenomenally oriented social theory of time have been Heidegger, Bergson and Mead. Heidegger was concerned to demonstrate the irreducibly temporal character of human existence. He stresses in *Being and Time* (1927) that philosophy must return to the question of 'being', something which had been obscured by the Western preoccupation with epistemology. And central to Heidegger's ontology of being is that of time, which expresses the nature of what subjects are. Human beings are fundamentally temporal and find their meaning in the temporal character of human existence. Being is made visible in its temporal character and in particular the fact of movement toward death. Being necessarily involves movement between birth and death (Urry, 1996: 372).

In a further passage, Urry relates this time/space dimension in Giddens's work to wider sociological themes:

In this section I will show how Giddens placed the analysis of time and space at the very heart of contemporary social theory in the early 1980s. ... Drawing on Heidegger, Giddens elucidated five ways in which, because of their temporal character, human subjects are different from material objects. First, only humans live their lives in awareness of their own finitude, something reinforced by seeing the death of others and of how the dead make their influence felt upon the practises of the living. Second, the human agent is able to transcend the immediacy of sensory experience through both individual and collective forms of memory; through an immensely complex interpenetration of presence and absence. Third, human beings do not merely live in time but have an awareness of the passing of time, which is embodied within social institutions. Furthermore, some societies develop an abstract conception of rational, measurable time, radically separable from the social activities it appears to order. Fourth, the time experience of humans cannot be grasped only at the level of intentional consciousness but also with each person's unconscious in which past and present are indissolubly linked. And fifth, the movement of individuals through time and space is to be grasped via the interpenetration of presence and absence, which results from the location of the human body and the changing means of its interchange with the wider society (Urry, 1996: 381).

Since Giddens reinforces his interest in more abstract time/space issues with an incorporation of the more pragmatic 'time-geography' approach, several geographical theorists have paid this aspect of his work some attention. This utilisation of Continental philosophy by theorists of space has not gone unchallenged, and attempts to utilise these concepts in close-in analyses has led to useful criticism, as in the following passage:

Although he makes much of the death-bound 'time of the body', of the back-front spatiality of the body, of the Heideggerian notion of the task-orientated body 'being in the world', of the body's integration into the flow of activity, of the body as the 'locus'; of the self, and although his familiarity with time-geography makes him take some account of the body's mobility and of the time-space co-ordination of bodies necessary to collective activity, Giddens does not make enough of the body's material continuity, of the uninterrupted path traced out by every body and the consequences that follow therefrom (Pred, 1990: 126).

The third major sociological theorist of recent fame is Jürgen Habermas. Habermas followed some 20 years later in the virtual footsteps of Marcuse – with an early engagement with Heidegger followed by immersion in the Frankfurt School (albeit the later Frankfurt School). According to Outhwaite (1994: 6) in Habermas's early work there are three preoccupations with a theory of modernity/pathology of modernity:

First, a working-through of the classical philosophical texts: Marx and Weber, but also Kant, Fichte and Hegel – not to mention the Greeks. Second, a preoccupation with technology and the attempt to construct a 'left' alternative to the ideological determinism arising in part from Heidegger and in post-war Germany from Arnold Gehlen and Helmut Schelsky. Third, and relatedly, a concern with the conditions of rational political discussion or, more grandiosely, practical reason, in the conditions of modern technocratic democracy.

These various strands were developed in several directions with "...the somewhat diffuse anxiety about 'technology' which Habermas first acquired from Heidegger and from the general post-war ambience, has become a more focused concern with scientism" (Rockmore, 1995: 37). Tom Rockmore detects a lasting influence: "Although he later became sharply critical of Heidegger, Marcuse's peculiar form of Marxism never entirely lost its phenomenological tone, which does not mean that it ever took on an existentialist tone" (Rockmore, 1995: 22). (Note that Heidegger, too, in reacting to Sartre's work also denied being an existentialist.)

In the early 1980s Habermas returned to consider Heidegger again: this time as part of a major project reassessing the whole of Western philosophy, and in particular the philosophical issues developed by post-modern philosophers. The *Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (1986) recounts the unfolding of philosophical discourse since Kant, and in particular how it has sashayed down (to Habermas) unfortunate lines of development as a result of

the writings of Nietzsche and several lines of following philosophers. In particular, Habermas decries the negative orientation of the other philosophers, as well as the ultimate limitations of their rejection of modernity. "Nietzsche, the fearless leader, led Heidegger, Bataille, Foucault and Derrida out of modernity, but for reasons that could only be conceived in the terms given by the very project of modernity" (Rasmussen, 1990: 9). Moreover, following the somewhat *ad hominem* attacks of those few other sociologists who have dealt with this issue, Habermas finds that Heidegger's good insights are "...set against the background of an overblown conception of philosophy and a messianic mysticism, reduced to absurdity in Heidegger's nasty and brutish, if short, identification with Nazism and his subsequent 'turn' to a 'philosophy of origins'" (as portrayed by Howe, 2000: 126). This issue is a site of great tension in the way Heidegger has been subsequently perceived in post-Heideggerian Western thinking, but given their slighting concern with Heidegger anyway, this issue has not troubled sociologists.

Rather, Habermas wants to defend and rebuild the normative and emancipatory promise of the Enlightenment. This requires him to shift beyond the philosophy of subjectivity. In going down this route "[i]n some ways, Heidegger is the greatest challenge because, for Habermas, Heidegger is the one philosopher who most effectively undermines normativity implied in theory of modernity" (Rasmussen, 1990: 100).

Confronting Heidegger's position requires extended technical work which can hardly be summarised here, although something of its flavour can be glimpsed from a key passage in D'Entreves's (1990: 4) astute introduction to a volume of criticisms of Habermas's *magnus opus*:

According to Habermas, Heidegger's *Being and Time* suffers from a basic inconsistency vitiating its ontological turn. In dealing with the question of 'authentic Dasein' and being-toward-death, Heidegger relapses into a form of Kierkegaardian subjectivism, if not solipsism. Having initially undermined the philosophy of the subject through the appeal to the notion of the world as the pre-understood background of all cognition and action, Heidegger subsequently succumbed to the conceptual constraints of subject-centered reason; a solipistically construed Dasein reoccupies in the end the position of transcendental subjectivism.

However, Dallmyr (1990) attempts to rebut these charges (but following him into this argument is too detailed for present purposes; see also Rasmussen, 1990). After his 'turn', Heidegger's viewpoint seems more readily dismissable from Habermas's viewpoint. The later Heidegger seems to lead to a passive celebration of, and surrender to being, with fateful political consequences. So, for Habermas, Heidegger is a philosopher to be taken extremely seriously. And, very much as a philosopher. A pathway back to sociology from these erudite discussions has yet to be found.

General reception in sociology

If some of the elite in sociology have attended to Heidegger, the question then arises about the extent to which sociologists in general have picked up on this attention. A study was done, over the last quarter-century, of the extent to which Heidegger's work has been referred to in the sociological literature (especially the journal literature) as revealed by the abstracting service: Sociological Abstracts. Some 500 references were found, and these items were retrieved, for analysis, into a data-base. Many of the articles deal centrally with Heidegger, at least as indicated by their title: some 45% of the articles include Heidegger in their title. Most include relevant material only in support of broader or other thematics. It was found that the two main authors to attend to Heideggerian work are Norman Denzin, who is most well-known for his work on methodological issues arising in the qualitative area, and critical theorist Fred Dallmayr. Heidegger's work is seldom cited in portions of the sociological literature which have any empirical relevance (i.e. involving substantive sociology). Some one dozen references are involved in the sociology of technology. A similarly sized literature is linked to radical/Marxian sociology. History of ideas, history of sociology, general theory and the sociology of knowledge are by far the main categories within which the Heideggerian references appear. Other less popular categories are the epistemological aspects of methodology, and social psychology.

Three-quarters of the literature is published in English (slightly less than the almost total-hegemony of English in sociology), with the rest evenly spread across French, German and Spanish. In terms of the country of publication,

the general Anglo-Saxon monopoly, which pervades sociology, is not so extreme in terms of Heidegger's reception: with several more peripheral countries (e.g. Canada, Mexico, Italy) having substantial contributions. There is a steadily rising pattern of interest. Since the mid-1990s some 25-35 items a year have appeared, with the average over the late 1970s being more of the order of 10-15. Before then, interest was slight.

In sum, the empirical evidence of the overall effect of Heidegger on sociology provides quite solid backing for the more textually-based analysis provided in other sections.

Conclusion

Although almost all sociologists are unaware of Heidegger's influence, his work has been incorporated into some of the major social theoretical work of recent decades. However, even then the impact is 'foundational' rather than direct, and Heidegger's influence on the provision of sociological concepts has been minimal, since much conceptual work has been required to develop his philosophical insights into useful sociological concepts. Some of the influence of Heidegger was already picked up through disciples and several threads of allied work. However, again, much of this material is rather diffusely related to on-going sociology. Indeed, the main lesson of this paper is that the translation barriers between philosophy and sociology remain difficult to overcome: there are many subtle and perhaps powerful links, but direct impacts are hard to see. Many sociologists have spent effort on the political and ethical aspects of Heidegger's involvement with the Nazi regime, but this seems largely a separate area of writing endeavour.

There may be peculiar difficulties with reception studies involving the transfer of philosophical ideas into sociology (or another substantive discipline). Certainly, any simple notion of a transfer of ideas is sharply challenged by the historical experience of Heidegger's influence, which is complex, subtle and difficult to trace. Another difficulty I found in working through the issues in this paper, is that not only are there conceptual difficulties which arise through the fragile and difficult interaction between sociology and philosophy, but there is also the conceptual negotiations which must be handled through the complex and difficult interstitial area of applied philosophy/political theory/social theory.

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